

“Straight from the PALCO Playbook ” by Tom Wheeler was published in the North Coast Journal on July 18, 2019.

Humboldt Redwood Company found a number of comments that would benefit from additional correction, clarification or commentary which are presented on the right side of the page in green italics.

Substantial factual information on Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood forests and its practices are available at www.mendoco.com. Wherever possible we have provided direct links to specific material on our website to help the readers have easy access.

<p style="text-align: center;">Text of Article</p> <p><i>Text of article begins below, spaces placed to allow facts to line up with text of article.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Humboldt Redwood Company Facts Corrections, Clarifications and Commentary</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">[BEGINNING OF ARTICLE BELOW]</p>	<p><i>Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) was created in 2008 from lands purchased in Humboldt county with the publicly declared mission to be good stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business. We have made significant progress in that regard:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Adopting policies to make HRCs forestlands FSC® (C031337) certified (since 2009);</i> <i>2. Adding more than 500 million board feet of redwood and Douglas fir trees by lowering the rate of harvest;</i> <i>3. Defining of old growth down to the level of an individual tree, along with implementation of a policy to protect all individual old growth trees across our property;</i> <i>4. Elimination of traditional clear cutting from our property;</i> <i>5. Long term investments to improve habitat for fish across the property by controlling or holding back more than 470,000 cubic yards of sediment (more than 47,000 dump trucks of dirt) from the coastal streams flowing through our forest;</i> <i>6. Stormproofing approximately 680 miles of forest roads on our ownership.</i> <i>7. Operating as an open and transparent business; including an open invitation to take interested individuals anywhere in the forest;</i> <i>8. Completing a substantial rebuild of our</i>

[BEGINNING OF ARTICLE]

An ember of the old Timber Wars is still smoldering in the woods near Rainbow Ridge in the Mattole. There, a stand-off between forest defenders and Humboldt Redwood Co. is heating up. It is like 1997 all over again — tree-sitters are blocking road construction and logging operations, the sheriff's office and private security are roughing up protestors and humans are locking their bodies to gates and heavy equipment. Only this time, it isn't Charles Hurwitz's Pacific Lumber Co., but its successor, the Humboldt Redwood Co.

In 2008, when Humboldt Redwood Co. purchased Pacific Lumber Co.'s assets during bankruptcy, it promised to be a new kind of timber company: open with the public, protective of old growth and endangered species, a good neighbor and tolerant of criticism, such that they wouldn't call out the dogs when protestors would invariably lock themselves to things (this is Humboldt, after all). The Environmental Protection Information Center, or EPIC, tentatively supported Humboldt Redwood Co.'s purchase during bankruptcy. And we were stunned and thrilled when the company lived up to its word for roughly a decade. But recently, the company has lost course. This letter is a plea to return to form.

[ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW]

Scotia sawmill, assuring that Humboldt County will have infrastructure in the processing of wood products for many years to come; and

- 9. Employing more than 300 employees contributing a payroll of more than \$23 million and another \$75 million paid for contractors, supplies and raw material purchases flowing through the local economy*

HRC has owned timberland including some in the Mattole River watershed for ten years. From our inception we ended the practice of clear cutting, instituted an old growth policy which protects old growth stands and individual trees across the property, among many other policies which have earned certification from SCS as sustainable under the guidelines of FSC® (C031337). Please see our old growth policy at <https://www.hrcllc.com/old-growth> and our policy on harvest methods at <https://www.hrcllc.com/silviculture-harvest-methods>

HRC has been very involved with the Mattole community regarding forest management on our ownership. Since 2008, HRC staff has conducted 13 field tours involving over 50 individuals, 6 stakeholder meetings, and over 70 email and phone conversations. Conversations continue with local neighbors and interested parties. As a result of these interactions, this document was prepared:

At issue is a wild place, a Douglas fir and mixed-hardwood stand along Rainbow Ridge — so precious that people are willing to put their bodies in harm's way to stop logging here. The area has a long history of contention, as well as cooperative work toward a solution. In 2014, the company took some contested areas of old growth off the table and promised that before operations would commence, the company would sit down again with the community to talk about the rest. That discussion never occurred.

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<https://www.hrcllc.com/letters/mattole-2016-managing-humboldt-redwood-companys-ownership-mattole-river-watershed-0>

In an EPIC blog, titled “Tour of Mattole Timber Harvest Plans”, dated June 13, 2014, it states “EPIC commends Humboldt Redwood Company’s old growth protection, and efforts to continue working toward building positive community relationships.”. The old growth retention policies have not changed since HRC’s inception in 2008.

An article titled “North Coast Timber Conflict Flares Up—Again”, published on July 27, 2016, states “... HRC has since been engaged in discussions with locals and environmentalists about a compromise that would allow them to log some of the land, an approach that DiPerna says distinguishes the company from Maxxam, which never entertained input from environmentalists.” As a result of these discussions, 84% of the acres of concern were removed from the THPs equating to 513 acres.

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A result of this stakeholder consultation has been the establishment of a 203 acre High Conservation Value Forest on Long Ridge, located in the Mattole River watershed. This HCVF has a stand structure unique to the watershed with the presence of a significant amount of old growth trees. It is important to note the HRC old growth policy also retains individual old growth trees even when they are located outside of a designated area such as a HCVF.

When the bulldozers and fellers came back, the forest defenders were waiting. Soon, a protestor named "Rook" was sitting in a large old growth Douglas fir tree in the way of a proposed logging road and Mattole-area elders were encamped in front of a logging gate. Instead of living up to their promises to be a different kind of timber company, Humboldt Redwood Co. responded with the ol' PALCO playbook.

The company hired a private paramilitary security firm — replete with guns and dogs — to "enforce" the law. Next, the rent-a-cops allegedly began to make citizen arrests of anyone attempting to resupply the tree-sit, tackling people attempting to bring water or food, and threatening to tase anyone who stood in the way. A company-employed tree climber scaled Rook's tree and cut safety lines to other trees and branches that held caches of supplies. The combined effort resulted in Rook's starvation, as their caloric intake dropped to around 300 calories a day. Only after Humboldt County Fifth District Supervisor Steve Madrone expressed grave concerns over Rook's condition did the company relent. The next day, a care package of food and water from HRC arrived.

When the company wasn't allegedly starving Rook, they tried to bully them out of the tree. Using a large excavator, the company reportedly began to knock down the trees immediately adjacent to Rook's occupied tree, felling the trees toward the occupied tree. Trying to scare protestors with falling trees is not a new tactic. Thankfully, a falling tree only brushed Rook in the occupied tree. Others have been less lucky. In 1998, David "Gypsy" Chain was killed when a PALCO-employed logger felled a tree in his direction before he could get out of the way.

[ARTICLE CONTINUES BELOW]

Safety of employees, contractors and trespassing individuals is our first priority. We have a fully licensed and bonded professional security group looking out for everyone's safety in the area of operations. Because someone is moving about illegally and without warning it can create unpredictable circumstance. Entering our property illegally and during active logging operations it is tremendously unsafe.

The trespasser has been supplied food and water on a daily basis. HRC accompanied Supervisor Madrone to the trespasser as he wanted to confirm this was occurring. This was confirmed.

The trespasser is located in a tree immediately adjacent to a proposed road. During construction of the road all precautions were taken to successfully ensure the safety of the trespasser.

The actions of the sheriff's office are also open to criticism. The close connection between monied timber companies and the cops has a long and sordid history. Again, we see a return to the PALCO playbook. In one instance, the sheriff's office used a cherry picker to dangerously pluck a protestor from the top of a tall ladder secured to a gate — designed to prevent anyone from opening the gate, which would cause the ladder to fall.

According to the Mattole Forest Defenders, the sheriff's office also arrested two citizen-journalists, who had been standing on a public road, attempting to cover the demonstration. In a show of excessive force, deputies allegedly slammed these citizen-journalists to the ground to arrest them, resulting in injury.

The tactics of the forest defenders are part of a great tradition of American non-violent civil disobedience, from Henry David Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes to the civil rights movement's sit-ins and Freedom Riders. In each, the protestor calls attention to an unjust law by refusing to obey it, with full understanding of the consequences of this action. Indeed, it is the weight given by the criminal punishment that gives meaning and clarity to this type of protest, and why civil disobedience has been an effective and well-respected form of American protest. Remember, too, that history has not treated the cops with the fire hoses well.

[END OF ARTICLE]

Entering our property illegally and during active logging operations is tremendously unsafe. It would be better to take HRC up on the offer to come see for oneself, either in the Mattole at completion of operations, or anywhere on the map of the HRC ownership. The Sherriff's office has a lot of demands on resources, so we appreciate the consistency and prompt response of the Sherriff's office to our property.

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From our inception we have encouraged transparency and we have a publicly stated policy of taking anyone to anywhere on the property to see our practices first hand. If you are unable to make the trip you may find videos of our activities in the forest at <https://www.hrcllc.com/videos>

Please contact HRC through their website to arrange for a tour. Additionally, we post our inventory and other forest facts on our website. You can find more information at www.mendoco.com