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In the photo: Shawnee Alexandri, Kerul Dyer, Sharon E. Duggan, Scott Greacen, Kimberly Baker, Andrew Orahoske, Gary Hughes, Natalynne Delapp, Lindsey Holm

design & layout by Trees Foundation
Dear Friends,

The arrival of spring is an auspicious time of year on the North Coast of California. Sublime hints of the complexity of nature’s web of life grace our daily chores. The subtle shades of a blossoming wild iris provide a delicate reminder of the regenerative stamina of the landscape in the redwood region.

For the Environmental Protection Information Center, this change of seasons is more than symbolic—we are excited to welcome new leadership staff as we adapt to the departure of a long-time Executive Director.

Scott Greacen’s departure from EPIC to work with our river defense ally Friends of the Eel River is demanding nimble staffing on our part to replace him. We are proud to announce the arrival of Natalynne DeLapp as Development Director, Andrew Orahoske as Conservation Director, and myself, Gary Hughes, as the new Executive Director.

This new leadership team is excited to carry forth with an array of assertive conservation advocacy strategies in order to secure progress in our core program areas. Whether it be in the courts, the consumer market place, or at the negotiating table, the team at EPIC brings the experience, knowledge, and skills necessary to effectively advocate for industrial forestry reform, for public lands stewardship, and for pro-active ecosystem and endangered species protections.

In the spirit of the rejuvenation of the new spring season, the 34th that EPIC has celebrated on the North Coast, the arrival of new staff also represents the deepening maturity of an organization whose vision and commitment is rooted in the long-term perseverance of the North Coast community in which we work.

Therefore, to celebrate change and resilience in our extended community, it is an honor to be able to share with our members the EPIC 2010 Annual Report. This year's annual report is particularly exciting because it supports our belief that our organization is maturing as an institution on the North Coast, reflecting the perseverance of the communities that support us, as well as the inspiring resilience of the landscape on which our well being relies.

The solid state of the organization as described in the 2010 Annual Report is a direct result of the dedication of the EPIC staff to the daily grind of environmental advocacy and the innumerable tasks of organizational care taking. The Board of Directors has also played a crucial role in assisting EPIC through what is proving to be a relentless economic and fundraising downturn.

Most importantly, it is our membership and our volunteers that make EPIC resilient in these precarious times, supporting us generously with their time, expertise, and financial resources. Without the continued support of our members, our donors, and our volunteers, EPIC would not be entering into this new phase of organizational maturity with such confidence and agility. This maturity that weathers change, like a perennial flowering with the new spring, is positioning EPIC for another year of advocacy successes in the face of increasing threats of environmental degradation and political adversity.

We thank you for being with us every step of the way.

For the wild,

Gary Graham Hughes, Executive Director 2011
National Forestlands

Together, the Six Rivers, Shasta-Trinity, Klamath, and Mendocino National Forests encompass 5.6 million acres, which includes some of the most biologically significant wilderness, roadless areas, and ancient forest habitat left in the Western United States. They provide us with fresh water, clean air, countless recreational opportunities, sustenance, and spiritual renewal.

EPIC’s National Forest Program monitors activities in these forests, which include timber sales, mining, grazing, off-highway vehicle route designations, and more. In 2010 alone, EPIC submitted formal comments on over fifty projects proposed by the Forest Service. Our comments are based upon extensive field reviews, and we frequently work closely with staff from the Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and other agencies to provide strong support for alternatives to destructive activities. We work hard to ensure that projects not based upon the best available science of fire, soils, hydrology, geology, forestry, botany, and fisheries are revised, rejected, or improved.

Advocating scientifically and biologically sound solutions may sound complex, but really the message is simple: We seek to preserve old-growth and fire resistant trees; to prevent the senseless construction of expensive, environmentally destructive logging roads; and to protect our wildlife and water.

Recent Accomplishments:

- Stopping over 500 acres of clearcut logging on the Mendocino National Forest
- Preventing over 10,000 acres of clearcut logging on steep, fragile, post-fire soils in key watersheds critical for salmon recovery
- Preventing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service from removing thousands of acres of Critical Habitat for the Northern Spotted Owl in the Pacific Northwest, represented by Earthjustice.
- Protecting the viability of fish and wildlife populations on national forests by bringing a case to Federal Court where regulations crafted to gut the National Forest Management Act were overturned.
- Advocating for countless positive changes on numerous timber sales throughout the region, results of which included the preservation of hundreds of old-growth trees, the removal and reduction of logging roads, and protection of streams and riparian areas.
- EPIC joined forces with the Karuk Tribe, the Klamath Forest Alliance, and the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center in litigating the implementation of the Orleans “Community Fuels Reduction” Project. The Six Rivers National Forest Service violated both federal law and the trust of community members. In that case, the Forest Service authorized a timber operation contract, which differed from the Environmental Impact Statement, resulting in damage to areas culturally significant to the Karuk Tribe and loss of multiple old-growth trees.


**Clean Water**

Protecting water quality is both one of the fundamental goals of the modern environmental movement and one of the more complicated and challenging arenas for citizens' groups today. Reflecting the need to team up to secure real progress, most of EPIC's Clean Water protection efforts in 2010 have proceeded through coalition efforts.

One of our biggest collective accomplishments has been to help form and mobilize a new coalition the North Coast Stream Flow Coalition—to watchdog California's implementation of new stream flow protection measures; to educate the public about the impact of water diversions and groundwater pumping on our rivers, streams, and especially our imperiled salmon and steelhead; and to advocate for improved policies to secure a living future for the North Coast's rivers and the life that depend on clean, cold, and abundant water. Eighteen groups have joined to form the Stream Flow Coalition.

Among other things, the Stream Flow Coalition is advocating for the state to extend its initial policy for maintaining stream flows from the smaller North Coast rivers to include the Eel and Klamath-Trinity watersheds. While these larger systems are more complex to address, they have the most to gain if policy reforms could succeed.

In addition to policy advocacy, our Clean Water program works to address water as a public trust. Conflict over water could easily be the biggest social and environmental fight for the foreseeable future on the planet.

In the Klamath Basin, water remains the central controversy. EPIC joined the Klamath Riverkeeper and the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, in a legal fight against the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to show that the agency's program to protect coho salmon was inadequate. After they were pressured to create a plan to ensure adequate water for the endangered coho salmon, DFG instituted a program, to be implemented by regional conservation districts, to bring water diverters into compliance with the law.

EPIC joined several other allies to challenge the regional water board's failure to address pollution in North Coast rivers, including the Navarro, Eel, and Klamath. After more than a year of litigation and negotiation, EPIC and our allies secured a settlement agreement with the regional board to ensure Clean Water Act compliance. The successful resolution of this lawsuit caps a long journey in the courts, and now the North Coast's rivers will receive much needed protection.
Tolowa Dunes State Park

An important part of EPIC’s work to protect Northwest California is ensuring that the region’s network of national, state, and county parks is effectively protected.

Tolowa Dunes State Park, in Del Norte county coastal land around the Lake Earl lagoon complex stretches north to the mouth of the Smith River. It is one of the most ecologically significant state parks in all of California. Continuing threats to the integrity of Tolowa Dunes as a park, and to the important habitats it was established to protect, underscore the importance of EPIC’s watchdog role in protecting the North Coast’s unique biological resources.

For years, we have been asking hard questions about State Parks’ habit of casting a blind eye over inappropriate—indeed, flatly illegal—activities at Tolowa Dunes. Probably the most destructive and widespread is off-road vehicle use in the park.

Another has been hunting of waterfowl around some of the dune ponds, especially in the northern part of the Park. While hunting was legal in these areas prior to the 2000 establishment of the Park, California law is very clear that hunting is never allowed in any state park. So when EPIC learned that State Parks was allowing hunting to continue in Tolowa Dunes, we asked the department to explain what was being allowed and on what legal grounds. The department’s own attorneys told them that they could not allow hunting as they had been. What happened next is the really troubling part.

Rather than just enforce the law the agency instead proposed to give the area with the ponds to the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), temporarily, every year, so as to allow the hunting to continue. When the agency’s lawyers said that wasn’t going to work either, the department’s leadership then announced that they were simply going to transfer thousands of acres of the park over to DFG. EPIC and other conservation groups rallied to oppose that disastrous proposal, and state parks backpedaled. But their next proposal was just to transfer a smaller but still significant area to DFG so it could be hunted on. Nowhere in this process did we hear from State Parks leadership that they were prioritizing the protection of Tolowa Dunes’ astonishing biodiversity. Indeed, recent visitors to the park have observed continued hunting in the park, and state parks rangers failing to respond.

As well, the agency neglected even to discuss the issue with the Tolowa people, for whom the area has a particularly sensitive kind of importance. Not only is their ancestral village site of Yontocket within the area proposed for transfer, so too is the cemetery overlooking the old village site on Yontocket Slough. The whole area was the scene of a horrific massacre in the 1850s in which hundreds of Tolowa people were slaughtered, so it’s not hard to see why tribal members today might not be enthusiastic about a proposal to allow hunting at the site.

State parks finally withdrew its proposals to dismember Tolowa Dunes State Park, but has announced that it will instead pursue the same idea under a long-delayed General Plan revision. Ironically, environmental advocates have been pressing for such an update for years, with no traction prior to this controversy.
Richardson Grove State Park

Consistent with EPIC's long-standing effort to defend lands held in trust under the California State Park system, EPIC coordinates a public campaign to stop Caltrans from widening Highway 101 through Richardson Grove State Park.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) first announced their interest in pursuing the Richardson Grove Operational Improvement Project to remove a truck size restriction at the southern end of Humboldt County in 2007. Initially, the agency filed the project as a "categorical exemption", which would have allowed the agency to complete the project without fulfilling their obligation to review environmental issues under the California Environmental Quality Act. EPIC and citizen advocates got news about the project, and engaged in the process from the very beginning. Eventually our efforts forced the agency to conduct environmental assessments of potential threats to biological resources within the park, as required by law. When the draft Environmental Impact Report was released for public review, our staff was shocked to find that the document lacked consistency, overlooked major environmental risks and failed to analyze or mitigate environmental consequences. EPIC and hundreds of others engaged in the CEQA process by submitting formal comments. In addition, we worked to educate the public about the potential threats and poor process that Caltrans had been using to pursue the project.

After Caltrans released their final environmental documents and approved the project with a negative declaration of "no significant impact" to the natural environment, EPIC had no choice but to file a lawsuit in California Superior Court, challenging the plan. Then, the same citizen plaintiffs and three organizational allies resolved that the Richardson Grove project not only violated state environmental laws, it also failed to comply with federal laws, which moved the group to file an additional lawsuit, in federal court.

The complex legal effort has attracted the support of well-known environmental attorneys like former US Congressman Pete McCloskey, Joe Cotchett, Peter Gregory, and others, who take their lead from EPIC's esteemed staff attorney, Sharon Duggan. With the support of the Californians for Alternatives to Toxins and the Center for Biological Diversity, the legal fight is far from over.

Throughout the last three years, EPIC has engaged in a concerted effort to educate the public about the project, resulting in the organization of two well-attended educational forums. In these forums, EPIC focused on the need to protect the irreplaceable biological resources within the grove. In addition, other concerns were voiced including increased safety concerns, impacts to local tourism businesses and cultural resources.

Meanwhile, Caltrans presses ahead with their plans for construction, without acknowledging growing public opposition and unresolved legal issues. With an eye for community resolution, EPIC is now working to identify an alternative that can provide real protection for natural communities within the State park while encouraging community-led, sustainable economic development.
Klamath Chinook Salmon

As Klamath salmon populations struggle to survive, EPIC and our allies filed a petition in late January with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) charging that the Klamath River Chinook salmon should be recognized—and protected—under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Once the strongest run on the Klamath, the wild spring-run Klamath Chinook now return at only a tiny percentage of their historic numbers, causing alarm that the fish could go extinct if immediate actions are not taken. Even in their remaining stronghold, biologists count between 300 – 3,000 wild spawning spring-run Chinook each year. Prior to the construction of dams and other habitat modifications, populations of spring-run Chinook in the Basin numbered over 100,000 fish. The petition seeks protection first and foremost for spring-run Chinook, but also underscores that all of the Upper Klamath Chinook have been impacted and warrant further protection.

The spring-run Chinook are marvels of evolution, living most of their lives in the Pacific Ocean only to return up the river in the spring with enough fat reserves to survive without eating until early fall when it’s time for them to spawn. They have long been prized as one of the best-tasting salmon species and historically the most economically important Klamath fish.

The Klamath River Basin provides the lifeblood for a complex and diverse region stretching from the mountains of Southwest Oregon to the coast of Northwest California. Tremendous diversity of life depends on the health of the Klamath River and its tributaries, including Tribal river communities, fish and wildlife, farmers, and recreational economies. While the basin was once under Tribal management, more recent river management has exacerbated the Chinook’s plight.

In the fall of 2002, Klamath River Chinook suffered one of the worst fish kills in Northwest history when as many as 70,000 adult salmon died before spawning. Excessive water withdrawals, primarily from the federally run Klamath Irrigation Project, resulted in low flows and warm water temperatures that allowed disease to develop and spread quickly. Continued low flows and warm temperatures are key drivers of an ongoing disease crisis in the river that has sharply reduced survival of juvenile wild fish on their way to the ocean. Tribal and federal fishery agencies document these tragedies, but have few tools to enforce policies for change.

One outstanding issue for the National Marine Fisheries Service to resolve includes their Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) designation. In 1998, NMFS included all Trinity and Klamath Chinook—both fall- and spring-
**Northern Spotted Owl**

EPIC continues to advocate for and defend the spotted owl and its habitat across northwestern California. On both public and private lands, committed EPIC staff and volunteers scrutinize numerous projects with the potential to negatively impact the owl.

The State of California's Failure to Protect Owls
In an effort to take a proactive approach, EPIC staff are endeavoring to bring challenges to specific logging plans with the goal of broadening owl protections and restoring scientific credibility. EPIC has initiated a lawsuit challenging the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's rules that remove independent scientific review from the logging approval process.

Federal Protections for the Owl in California
EPIC is working with a coalition of environmental groups to ensure that federal protections for the owl are strong. Currently, the federal Recovery Plan for the owl is being revised, and EPIC's comments are helping U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists stand firm against industry attacks. In providing technical comments and generating public support for the owl, we are ensuring that the final Recovery Plan is a powerful tool in bringing the spotted owl back from the brink.

Similarly, EPIC is a key participant in the regional coalition of conservation groups across Washington, Oregon, and California that have successfully defended the plan against a series of efforts to weaken important protections found in the Northwest Forest Plan.

Here in northwestern California, EPIC works closely with the Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center, the Klamath Forest Alliance, and others to ensure that proposed projects on federal lands avoid degrading owl habitat. Together, we have changed harmful projects in favor of spotted owl and their habitat.

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**Humboldt Marten**

In an effort to support the recovery of the Humboldt marten, EPIC filed a petition with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list the weasel-like carnivore under the federal Endangered Species Act in 2010. The US Fish & Wildlife Service Arcata office is now preparing the initial review, the first step in the process of listing a species under the act. EPIC celebrates this as a difficult accomplishment, as the US Fish and Wildlife Service initially responded to the petition with a response that the agency would not take action because of lack of funding. In February, the agency changed its tune and prioritized the 90-Day status review.

Now the steep road to recovery can be mapped for the extremely rare critter. EPIC will fight for protections for the marten under the ESA and by educating the public about the incredible lifecycle of the species and threats to their survival.

Once thought extinct by leading biologists, the Humboldt marten was re-discovered on the Six Rivers National Forest in 1996. Since that time, biologists have found martens using track plates and hair snares. In 2009, a Humboldt marten was caught on film by a remote sensing camera in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

While the tremendous decline of the Humboldt marten can be largely attributed to historic fur trapping, the biggest threat to the critter is now clearcut logging. Much of the remaining suitable habitat for the marten is threatened by clearcut logging within Green Diamond Resource Company ownership.
Reforming Industrial Forestry

As one of the few organizations dedicated to a conservation strategy on private-industrial timberlands in California, EPIC serves as a watchdog, by monitoring all timber harvest plans (THPs) filed in Northern California. Our program covers over a million acres of forestland across four counties. In 2010, EPIC prioritized fighting logging plans that threatened the Northern Spotted Owl and its habitat. We observed disturbing patterns of agency failures to enforce laws designed to protect endangered species on privately held timberlands.

A handful of large logging corporations dominate the landscape, owning roughly half of the forestland in the region. Even with record-low lumber prices and feasible alternatives available, some of these companies still operate “cut and run” regimes. The pattern includes widespread use of clearcut logging, dependency on chemical herbicides, and extremely high rate of harvest. The result of these actions can be seen across the region: a landscape plagued by young tree plantations, clearcut scars, muddy landslides, and degraded wildlife habitat. The remnants of old-growth forests on private industrial timberlands are now found in small fragment groves.

The agencies responsible for protecting our public trust resources—the fish, the water, the wildlife—do not provide responsible stewardship across California’s forests. In contrast, they work closely with the timber companies and often concede to their demands, which continue the cycle of “cut and run” logging.

In 2008, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) stopped fulfilling its responsibility to provide technical assistance to landowners and the Department of Forestry (Cal Fire). The intention of the interagency consultation between FWS and Cal Fire was to ensure that the owls and their habitat would be spared from destruction through the compliance with FWS’s guidance under the federal Endangered Species Act. Loss of this habitat on industrial timberlands from clearcut logging is significant, because the habitat will be unsuitable for owls for decades to come. Because of the change, Cal Fire itself now calls the shots.

Cal Fire is the state forestry agency in charge of approving of logging plans on California’s private lands. The agency has a history of approving logging plans that result in harm to listed species and their habitat. Since Cal Fire stopped receiving assistance from FWS, they have approved clearcut logging within suitable owl habitat and within known owl home ranges. Since their inception, Cal Fire’s motivation has been to get the cut out. Their oversight of the protections of a vulnerable endangered species is analogous to a fox guarding a hen house.

This scenario has been exacerbated by the advent of “Spotted Owl Experts,” who primarily work for and represent the logging industry. Cal Fire is accepting analysis from these ‘experts’ to justify approval of logging within owl habitat.

In 2010, we focused on seven individual logging plans because of their potential to harm owls and their continued use of antiquated and inadequate regulations within California’s Forest Practice Rules.

Our involvement has forced Cal Fire to back track and recirculate several logging plans after making substantial changes based on our comments. In other instances, our involvement has caused logging operations that may harm owls to be stalled in the Cal Fire review process.

EPIC will continue fighting to ensure that the recovery of the spotted owl and old-growth forests are foremost goals of industrial forestry reform.
ENIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INFORMATION CENTER
Annual Report
Fiscal Year January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

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EXPENSES

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A Special Thank you To Dian Griffith:

EPIC staff and Board would like to extend a special thank you to long-time EPIC staffer, Dian Griffith. For the last 10 years, Dian has brought EPIC the wisdom, organization, and vision for EPIC's overall function as Board Member, Bookkeeper, and Administrative Director. Between working behind the scenes to facilitate effective program work and maintaining EPIC's financial records with integrity, her contributions benefit our community and the forests and watersheds we work to protect.

Thank you Dian, we look forward to working together in years to come!
Be part of the EPIC Community
Join us in helping to protect the wildest corner of Northwest California. Your contribution makes our work possible. Whether you give annually or every month, your membership gift supports effective protection for forests, watersheds, and native species throughout the region.

Become a monthly sustainer
Protecting the wild is an ongoing challenge. Your year-round donations provide dependable funds to keep EPIC in the fight. Sign up online to give monthly and start keeping Northwest California wild today.

Legacy Giving
The Environmental Protection Information Center is grateful to supporter Bruce Cameron for his commitment to the preservation of our unique ecosystems as a legacy for future generations. His gift is an inspiration to us all and will help us to continue our important work to protect and preserve forests, biodiversity, and waters.

Making a legacy gift to the Environmental Protection Information Center or naming EPIC as a beneficiary in your estate plans provides a lasting commitment to Northwest California’s future. For more information, please contact Natalynne DeLapp, Development Director at (707) 822-7711 or Natalynne@wildcalifornia.org.

Sign up online at wildcalifornia.org