

2023 Annual Report
Environmental Protection Information Center



We speak for the forests, rivers, and wildlife!

2023 EPIC Staff

Tom Wheeler, Executive Director
Matt Simmons, Staff Attorney
Kimberly Baker, Public Land Advocate
Amber Jamieson, Klamath River Advocate
Luis Neuner, Decarbonize the North Coast Advocate
Abigail Lowell, Communications Coordinator
Josefina Barrantes, 30x30 Coordinator & Del Norte County Advocate
Brenda Pease, Bookkeeper



2023 EPIC Board of Directors

Tony Silvaggio, President
Nate Madsen, Vice President
Noah Levy, Treasurer
Ava Biscoe
J.P. O'Brien
Judith Mayer
Karen Maki
Moxie Alvarnaz



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Annual Report Design & Layout by Abigail Lowell.

Our mission is to combine public education, citizen advocacy, and strategic litigation to advocate for the protection and restoration of Northwest California's forests, rivers, and wildlife using an integrated approach based on the best available science.

From the Executive Director

Spring 2024

Dear EPIC friend and supporter,

We are grateful for the strong, record-breaking winter storms that brought an abundance of snow to the high country, cold water to our rivers, and, hopefully, a beautiful display of wildflowers in the coming months. Seeing nature emerge from hibernation in preparation for spring reminds us of the importance of our work advocating for our region's unique, beautiful forests, rivers, and wildlife. Protecting our ecosystems and communities from an uncertain future is a huge undertaking, and we need and deeply appreciate your support.

For the past 47 years and counting, a resourceful, talented, and dedicated team of truly remarkable people has propelled and kept EPIC at the cutting edge of resisting environmental destruction and degradation in Northwest California. From defending mature forests and wildlife on our public lands to watchdogging proposed Humboldt offshore wind energy development, EPIC works continuously to overcome bureaucratic foot-dragging and corporate loopholing in the interest of healthy, sustainable forests, rivers, wildlife, and communities on California's North Coast. Since 1977, EPIC's members have consistently been the sustaining force behind our lifesaving work. We invite you to continue our grassroots legacy in 2024 by making a donation.

Throughout 2023, EPIC worked tirelessly to defend Northwest California's public lands from increasingly ecologically harmful logging projects, advocate for the health of our region's rivers and fisheries, enact and maintain safeguards for endangered species and their critical habitat, and protect our region, state, and planet from climate change. Our work will not slow down in 2024 — we need to keep up the pressure on government agencies and corporations on behalf of precious, voiceless ecosystems and endangered species. In February 2024, we were delighted to welcome Melodie Meyer, previously Associate General Counsel for the Yurok Tribe's Office of the Tribal Attorney, to the team as EPIC's new Conservation Attorney.

Please join EPIC for another year advocating for the environment for current and future generations, and please contribute what you can to our ongoing fight for Northwest California's wild places and the species that depend on them, by returning your remit envelope or visiting www.wildcalifornia.org/donate. Thank you for your dedication, support, and generosity!



For the Earth,

Tom Wheeler

Tom Wheeler

2023 EPIC by the Numbers

 Filed 3 new lawsuits	 Participated in 2 ongoing lawsuits	 Wrote 100 articles to update our members	 Commented on 37 projects	 Signed on to 135 letters from sister organizations	 Recorded 47 radio shows	 Participated in 16 coalitions & collaboratives	 Gained 769 followers on Instagram
 Gained 79 followers on Facebook	 Sent 36 newsletters	 Generated 14,981 comments from online activists	 Sent 16 action alerts	 Hosted 3 invasive plant pulls	 Engaged with 18,070 members & activists	 Mentioned in the news 112 times	 Participated in 50 public hearings

Celebrating 47 Years of Victories!



EPIC is a small organization that packs a giant punch — watchdogging corporations and government agencies in the interest of environmental conservation in Northwest California. We may be small, but we continue to achieve many mighty victories. In 2023, we helped to protect:

- 🌲 **Wildlife and mature forests on public lands** from logging by commenting on ALL of the timber sales proposed in the Klamath, Shasta-Trinity, Six Rivers & Mendocino National Forests, and suing the U.S. Forest Service to challenge California’s largest proposed timber sale in modern history, the more than 417,000-acre Region 5 Post-Hazard Tree Project;
- 🌲 **The planet** from climate change by advocating for the timely development and implementation of a Humboldt County Climate Action Plan, and engaging in the planning process for the proposed Humboldt floating offshore wind energy project;
- 🌲 **631,000 acres of land in California** through our work with the Power in Nature Coalition towards achieving the State’s goal of conserving 30% of lands and coastal waters by 2030;
- 🌲 **Jackson Demonstration State Forest** by working with lawmakers, local Tribes, and forest activists to halt logging, develop a new management plan with environmental review under the CA Environmental Quality Act, and advocate for tribal management of the 48,652-acre state-owned forest as a cultural landscape;
- 🌲 **The ancient redwoods along Highway 101 in Richardson Grove** by filing yet another lawsuit against Caltrans after its fourth attempt to approve the ill-conceived road-widening project through the grove;
- 🌲 **Endangered salmon in the Shasta and Scott Rivers** by advocating to the State Water Board to establish minimum flows, water diversion curtailments, and enforceable Total Maximum Daily Loads for pollutants for each of these important Klamath River tributaries, as well as prevailing in a lawsuit to hold NOAA Fisheries accountable to ensure that Safe Harbor Agreements on the Shasta River actually benefit endangered coho salmon as they purport to;
- 🌲 **Federally threatened northern spotted owls** by suing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for violating the Endangered Species Act by issuing a permit to Sierra Pacific Industries to “take” spotted owls on its private timberlands, filing a complaint with the Forest Stewardship Council against Humboldt Redwood Company for refusing to enact an invasive barred owl removal program, and filing an objection to the proposed Mad River August Complex timber sale that led to the U.S. Forest Service agreeing to log 36% less owl habitat;
- 🌲 **One of Mendocino County’s four currently active bald eagle nest trees** from Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) chainsaws by working with tribal partners to launch an action alert that sent hundreds of emails to PG&E and successfully kept the tree standing; and
- 🌲 **The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)** from well-heeled NIMBYs in the newly-formed group “Citizens for a Better Eureka” who are abusing the law by filing frivolous lawsuits against the City of Eureka for allowing infill development of much-needed affordable housing on city-owned parking lots (instead of building on previously undeveloped land).

Timber Sale Roundup

The U.S. Forest Service continues to propose ever larger, more egregious logging projects under the guise of fire protection. In 2023, EPIC submitted substantive science- and place-based comments to over a dozen proposed timber sales on Northwest California's national forests. Currently, there are roughly 250,000 acres of national forests in our region threatened by commercial logging, including the "take" of up to 20 highly endangered northern spotted owls and thousands of acres of critical habitat and riparian & late successional reserves. EPIC is committed to engaging in public processes during project planning, and will keep advocating for these special places and species by commenting at every opportunity, objecting when appropriate, and, when all else fails, filing lawsuits on behalf of wildlife and wild places on our public lands.



Decarbonizing the North Coast



Work to decarbonize the North Coast saw several important milestones in 2023 and early 2024. Thanks to advocacy by EPIC & our allies, the Humboldt County Climate Action Plan survived attempts by big business to weaken the mandates and reduce our local commitments to climate action. Also thanks to our efforts, the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation & Conservation District passed a resolution committing to developing any offshore wind terminal infrastructure with the fewest emissions possible.

Saving Jackson Demonstration State Forest

The fight to conserve Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) continued in 2023 for its third year. In March, EPIC and the Save Jackson Coalition formally protested two CAL FIRE Water Rights Applications to directly divert water from several salmon-bearing stream systems in JDSF. CAL FIRE is no longer actively pursuing those applications. In April, CAL FIRE unveiled the process for developing a new JDSF management plan that proposes to deliver a new plan by November 2024.



In May, EPIC published an action alert in support of a letter to CAL FIRE from the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians that sent 1,500+ emails urging the State to protect JDSF as an indigenous cultural landscape. In July, however, CAL FIRE announced that JDSF's new management plan would not undergo environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and would, therefore, not really change (or improve) the forest's management. EPIC submitted formal comments and published an action alert that sent 500+ emails explaining that CAL FIRE is legally required to review the new management plan under CEQA.

In December, the Save Jackson Coalition presented at the Board of Forestry (BoF) meeting in Sacramento about our vision for JDSF, our grievances including CAL FIRE's refusal to respond directly to almost all of our communications, a failure to take Tribal Sovereignty seriously, and a demand that the BoF comes to meet in Mendocino County to discuss JDSF further.

In 2024, we plan to bolster the campaign's media strategy, improve forest management under JDSF's current mandate as much as possible, help write the new management plan with proper environmental review, and draft and finalize bill language to conserve the forest as a part of California's 30x30 initiative.

2023 *Sempervirens* Award: Petey Brucker



On Saturday, July 15, 2023, over 160 members of the North Coast community gathered at the Arcata Veterans Hall to celebrate Petey Brucker, and EPIC presented him with the 2023 *Sempervirens* Lifetime Achievement Award for his lifelong activism and advocacy for the forests, rivers, wildlife, people, and salmon of the Klamath and Salmon River watersheds.

As part of his decades of community organizing, lobbying, and environmental stewardship, Petey co-founded the Klamath Forest Alliance in 1989, and the Salmon River Restoration Council in 1992. One of Petey's main goals was Klamath dam removal, and after several decades, the dams are finally coming out. A caring husband, father, and friend; a mountain

adventurer, musician, and activist, Petey shows love in everything he does, and leads with the beliefs that stewardship is our responsibility and working together is the only path to achieve lasting change. He shows how one changemaker can cause a cascade of good downstream.

Looking at the Horizon

As we transition out of yet another winter with numerous intense storms, record-breaking rainfall, flooding, and power outages, we are motivated to double down on our work on local climate issues — both by advocating for the conservation of healthy forests as natural climate solutions, as well as for direct climate action on the North Coast, including the Humboldt Climate Action Plan and the proposed Humboldt offshore wind energy project. We are also delighted to expand our team, and welcome Melodie Meyer as EPIC's new Conservation Attorney!

Meet Melodie Meyer, EPIC's Conservation Attorney

Melodie is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna originally from Rio Rancho, New Mexico. Her family taught her to love the outdoors, and through her cultural practices and teachings, Melodie gained a deep appreciation and respect for the Earth and our plant and animal relatives. Her interest in environmental justice and environmental defense began in college, where she researched and led campaigns to address environmental disasters and their disproportionate impacts on indigenous peoples, and also interned with her Tribe's Natural Resources Department, shadowing staff during environmental monitoring and reporting.

After graduating from the University of New Mexico with a major in Native American Studies, Melodie was determined to go to law school to empower herself and educate herself on environmental protection laws and the dark history of laws dealing with tribes in the United States. During law school, she interned for Fredericks, Peebles, and Patterson, LLP, an Indian Law firm, and the Wishtoyo Foundation, a Malibu-based environmental nonprofit that focuses on protecting Chumash Tribal Cultural Resources.

In 2020, Melodie graduated from the University of California Los Angeles School of Law with specializations in Indian Law and Environmental Law, and soon moved to Humboldt to work for the Yurok Tribe, first as a Justice Catalyst & Public Rights Project Legal Fellow and then as Associate General Counsel.

Melodie is excited to join the EPIC team to continue her focus on environmental defense work and to reconnect to her environmental justice roots. As Conservation Attorney, Melodie shapes policy actions that make up EPIC's core conservation program areas and helps manage EPIC's litigation docket.

Please feel free to reach out to Melodie at melodie@wildcalifornia.org!



Annual Report

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION INFORMATION CENTER

Fiscal Year January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

INCOME

Membership & Donations	\$ 123,830.51
Foundation Grants	\$ 187,441.42
Fundraising Events	\$ 5,248.66
Merchandise Sales	\$ (1.95)
Interest/Dividend Income	\$ 3,258.04
Legal Fees & Awards	\$ -
Realized Capital Gains	\$ 318.96
Unrealized Capital Gains	\$ 27,162.28
Investment Fees	\$ (997.44)

TOTAL INCOME \$ 349,760.48

EXPENSES

General & Admin	\$ 45,822.30
Fundraising	\$ 10,157.27
Programs	\$ 339,689.52

TOTAL EXPENSES \$ 395,669.09

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS \$ (19,868.13)

NET ASSETS @ Start of Year \$ 491,132

NET ASSETS @ End of Year \$ 471,263.87

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Checking/Savings	\$ 308,029.12
Other Current Assets	\$ 163,234.75

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS \$ 471,263.87

FIXED ASSETS

\$ -

TOTAL ASSETS

\$ 471,263.87

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 3,115.48
Credit Cards Payable	\$ 977.74
Other Current Liabilities	\$ 21,938.21
Long-Term Liabilities	\$ -

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ 26,031.43

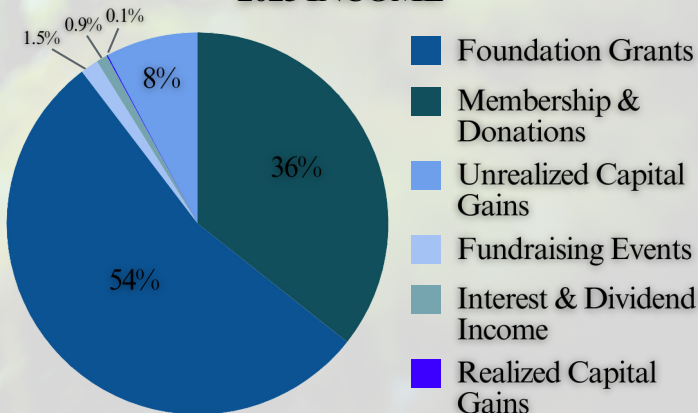
EQUITY

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 331,147.10
Temp. Restricted Net Assets	\$ 159,983.95
Net Income	\$ (45,898.61)

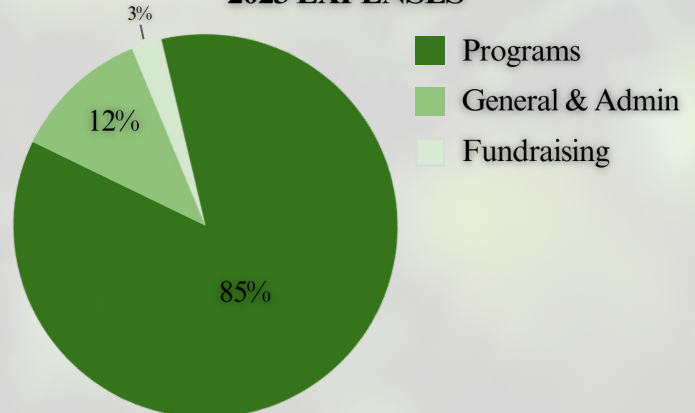
TOTAL EQUITY \$ 445,232.44

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY \$ 471,263.87

2023 INCOME



2023 EXPENSES



Contributing Foundations

Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, Firedoll Foundation, Flora L. Thornton Foundation, Friends of Del Norte, Patagonia, Reclaiming Collective, Bower Charitable Foundation, Resources Legacy Fund, San Francisco Foundation, United States Energy Foundation, Weeden Foundation, and Wild Woods Foundation.



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SUPPORT EPIC, GIVE THE GIFT OF THE FOREST!



Give the gift of the forest by giving a tax-deductible donation to EPIC at www.wildcalifornia.org/donate, or purchasing EPIC-inspired hoodies, t-shirts, beanies, hats, water bottles & stickers with designs by local artists Pen + Pine, Skye Henterly, Fiona Bearclaw & more at www.wildcalifornia.org/shop.



GIVE WILDLY: Enroll in Automatic Giving

Sign up to give recurring monthly donations to EPIC, sustain our work advocating for wildlife and wild places throughout the year, and automatically renew your membership! Visit www.wildcalifornia.org/donate and check "make this a recurring monthly donation."



GIVE DOUBLE: Become a Matching Donor

When you choose to give a donation to EPIC, check with your employer to see if they have a corporate matching gift program. Many large companies will match your donations, an easy way to double your impact!



GIVE STOCKS: Donate Your Stocks to EPIC

It's easy to transfer stocks and bonds to EPIC, and you can write off the gift and reap substantial tax savings — just contact your stock broker! EPIC's investment account is with Edward Jones. Registration Title: EPIC Inc. Account No.: 203-09101-1-7 DTC#0057



GIVE EVERLASTING: Add EPIC to Your Will or Living Trust

Leave a gift to EPIC in your will or living trust. If you currently have a will, you can easily add a codicil (amendment) to include a gift to EPIC. Here is an example of appropriate language for your will or living trust: "I give, devise, and bequeath to the Environmental Protection Information Center, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation with the Federal Tax ID # 94-2798433 and the mailing address of 145 G Street, Suite A, Arcata, California, 95521, the sum of ___ dollars [or otherwise describe asset] for its general purposes and use at the discretion of the Environmental Protection Information Center's Board of Directors."

SAVE THE DATE: EPIC'S 47TH ANNUAL FALL CELEBRATION

CELEBRATING SEMPERVIRENS AWARDEE ROB DIPERNA FOR A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT IN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

SATURDAY,
 NOVEMBER 9TH
 6-9 PM



D STREET
 NEIGHBORHOOD
 CENTER

1301 D ST, ARCATA, CA, 95521

Join the EPIC community!

Sign up for our biweekly email newsletter at www.wildcalifornia.org/subscribe.

