



Keeping Northwest California wild since 1977

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2, 2012

Contact:

Andrew Orahoske, Environmental Protection Information Center - (707) 822-7711

Billionaire Timber Baron Red Emmerson and Sierra Pacific Industries Asked to Stop Logging Spotted Owl Habitat

Conservation plan needed to end violations of federal law and promote the recovery of native forests

ARCATA, Calif. — Today the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) delivered a formal [notice of intent to sue letter](#) to the billionaire Archie Aldis “Red” Emmerson and his company, Sierra Pacific Industries, Inc., for harming Northern Spotted Owls in violation of the Endangered Species Act. By clearcut logging within known spotted owl territories, the company is engaged in openly hostile actions against individual spotted owls and their young, seemingly designed to eliminate the owl from its lands. The notice letter is required under the law and begins a process that allows EPIC to file a lawsuit after a period of 60 days.

Billionaire Red Emmerson is [listed by Forbes](#) as having a net worth of at least two and half billion dollars. Emmerson’s Sierra Pacific Industries is the largest landowner in the state of California with roughly 2 million acres under its ownership.

“Why does a billionaire need to kill spotted owls?” questioned Andrew Orahoske, conservation director for the Environmental Protection Information Center. “Small landowners don’t have a chance competing with Sierra Pacific Industries, and yet many small landowners conserve spotted owls on their properties. Red Emmerson owes it to everyone to protect the spotted owl” concluded Orahoske.

The Northern Spotted Owl is dependent on late-successional and old-growth forests. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the owl as a threatened species in 1990 due to extensive habitat loss from intensive logging of native forests. Since that time, population analyses have documented range-wide declines that are attributed to the continued loss of habitat from logging on private lands and from the invasion of a non-native competitor, the Barred Owl. Clearcut logging fragments older forest stands and exacerbates the threat posed by Barred Owl invasion into forests occupied by Northern Spotted Owl. Indeed, researchers have found a direct correlation between the likelihood of Barred Owl invasion of Spotted Owl territories and the lack of older forest.

“The high rates and intensities of clearcut logging on Sierra Pacific’s lands are completely out of line with protecting spotted owls,” stated Rob DiPerna, forestry reform advocate for EPIC. “This conflict is completely avoidable, if only Sierra Pacific would simply respect the forests.”

Between 2009 and 2011 alone, Sierra Pacific Industries' submitted logging plans that threaten to destroy over 5,500 acres of suitable habitat within known spotted owl territories. Sierra Pacific is currently operating without an approved "take" permit that is required under the law for supervising industrial activities within a protected species habitat. Instead, Sierra Pacific is operating outside of the law and engaging in the systematic liquidation of spotted owl habitat. If necessary, EPIC is prepared to take Sierra Pacific to court to stop these atrocious acts.

The Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) works to protect and restore ancient forests, watersheds, coastal estuaries and native species in northern California. EPIC uses an integrated, science-based approach, combining public education, citizen advocacy and strategic litigation.

www.wildcalifornia.org

###