

Below is a transcript from a KZYX program Cal Winslow conducted with Will Parrish as part of a series Mr. Winslow is doing on forests. October 23, 2015.

Mendocino Redwood Company found a number of comments and errors 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.mrc.com](http://www.mrc.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>Text of article begins below, spaces placed to allow facts to line up with text of article.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Facts about Mendocino Redwood Company</i></p>
<p>[ BEGINNING OF ARTICLE BELOW]</p>	<p><i>Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) was created in 1998 from lands purchased in Mendocino and Sonoma counties 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"><li><i>1. Adopting policies to make MRCs forestlands FSC certified (since November 2000);</i></li><li><i>2. Adding more than 1 billion board feet of redwood and Douglas fir trees by lowering the rate of harvest;</i></li><li><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></li><li><i>4. Elimination of traditional clear cutting from our property;</i></li><li><i>5. Long term investments to improve habitat for fish across the property by controlling or holding back more than 1 million cubic yards of sediment (more than 100,000 dump trucks of dirt) from the coastal streams flowing through our forest;</i></li><li><i>6. Removal of more than 36 long time fish barriers, increasing fish bearing streams by more than 20 miles.</i></li><li><i>7. Operating as an open and transparent business; including an open invitation to take interested individuals anywhere in the forest;</i></li><li><i>8. Completing a substantial rebuild of our Ukiah sawmill, assuring that Mendocino County will have infrastructure in the processing of wood products for many years to come; and</i></li><li><i>9. Employing about 300 skilled employees in</i></li></ol>

**Cal Winslow:** Vineyards to forests, maybe we should just get right to that. The state of the redwood forest, in your mind, or in terms of your research, the state of the redwood forests today.

**Will Parrish:** Well, the ecological health of the redwood forest has almost never been worse than it is today. Because we are living in the aftermath of a wave of liquidation logging that wiped out many of the largest remaining stands of redwoods.

In fact, there have been, there's been an ongoing depletion of the redwood forest since around 1850, when the redwood forests were first capitalized and made into products for export all over the world after the founding of California. We're living in a time when the redwoods have never been so depleted.

For example, according to biologists who have studied the historical abundance of redwood forests, to use the timber industry's way of measuring things. A typical redwood forest averaged about 125,000 to 150,000 board feet of timber per acre, in the mid 19th century. Today the number, in most of Mendocino County, you find forests in the 12,000, 15,000, sometimes 5,000 board feet range. We're talking about over 90 percent reductions in the amount of, in the volume of these forests in that time period.

There are some things that I consider promising and there are forests that are protected, including in parks. But overall, the forests have been greatly depleted.

**Cal:** And they still are being depleted? Or is that something in the past? Are things kind of turning

*Mendocino County earning family-level wages and benefits.*

*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. Additionally, we post our inventory and other forest facts on our website. You can find more information at [www.mrc.com](http://www.mrc.com).*

*When MRC was formed in 1998 the forestlands were in a state of reduced conifer volume due to extensive harvesting. One of the goals of MRC is to increase the number of trees on the property while harvesting at a level below growth. To date, MRC has added more than 1 billion board feet of redwood and Douglas fir trees by lowering the rate of harvest.*

around now?

**Will:** Well, they're turning around in some areas. Here in Mendocino County, to take an example here in the Garcia River watershed over on the coast. Which is the drainage that runs into Point Arena. I think there have been some pretty significant strides in starting to replenish the forest there.

But in general, I think the biological potential of redwood forests continues to be diminished by logging. I think that there are still a lot of companies that are depleting their forests. Green Diamond Resources is a company that operates mostly in Humboldt County and Del Norte Counties, for example.

They still clear cut, they still are going after large stands of redwoods to harvest them. You could certainly point to improvements in the way that forests have been managed in many places.

But overall, I think the major dynamics that have led us to this situation are still here. Which, in my opinion, the fundamental problem is that you have forests that are, for the most part, privately owned, over 80 percent of redwood forests are owned by private companies.

For the most part, these companies are seeking to make a profit from the land, and they have a short term time horizon for doing that, typically. The other 20 percent or so that are not privately owned include a lot of parks and the CAL FIRE land near Willits and this sort of thing, between Willits and Fort Bragg. Those aren't necessarily being run in the best way possible. But there is much better management on the CAL FIRE land than there is on other timberland.

I think that there's constantly been attention throughout the history of attempts to conserve redwood forests that arises from the fact that the companies that own the forests hold all the political cards, and are in a position where they get to cut for profit.

The best recourse has always been just, you try to buy the land from them. But we don't live in a system where buying the land from these companies is always feasible or makes sense.

Still, we have a situation where about 80 percent of forests are run by large corporations, for the most part. They continue to profit by minimizing

*MRC owns approximately 16 percent of the land in the Garcia River watershed, approximately 11,509 acres. Due to restoration efforts by MRC and other landowners in the watershed, significant strides have indeed been made, including the return of coho salmon. MRC lands in the Garcia River watershed are managed in the same fashion as the remainder of the MRC forestlands. In 2015, coho salmon were also observed to have returned to Greenwood Creek where MRC owns 59% of the watershed (9,882 acres).*

*The investments to improve habitat for fish across the property and harvesting at less than growth show a commitment to the long term restoration of MRC forestlands. Visit our website at [www.mrc.com](http://www.mrc.com) for additional long term visions for MRC forestlands.*

the biological potential of the forests, as I say.

**Cal:** Let me sort of get back and ask you to dig into a couple of these things a little bit more. When you mention Green Diamond, do you know anything about the company? I mean, we hear that big, big corporations like Weyerhaeuser and GP and Louisiana Pacific, they're all diversifying, getting out of timber and so forth.

I don't know much about Green Diamond. Do you?

**Will:** I know generally about them. They own about 400,000 acres of forest lands, mostly in Humboldt and Del Norte counties. Other than another company that we're going to talk about, which is Mendocino Redwood Company, Humboldt Redwood Company, they are the largest owner of redwood forestlands in particular.

**Cal:** Have they been around for a long time?

**Will:** They have. As far as I understand, they were once known as Simpson Lumber Company.

**Cal:** Oh, Simpson. OK.

**Will:** They adopted the name Green Diamond to evoke warm, fuzzy feelings among environmentalists, and mark a new direction in their branding, and supposedly in their practices, as well.

**Cal:** They're a big, national corporation then.

**Will:** They got their start, as far as I understand, in Seattle. I believe that they continue to be headquartered there.

**Cal:** Going back to ask you to fill out a couple things, strides in the Garcia Watershed?

**Will:** One major reason for that is that after the forest there reached their absolute low point in the 1990s, much of the land that is zoned for timber production there was purchased by a company that has a much lighter touch, which is the Conservation Fund, which is a nonprofit based in Virginia.

While I hear various things about them that aren't entirely positive, I think it is true that they have had a very light touch in their logging there. Also, there have been some strides in getting the regulatory agencies that deal with things like water quality, impacts of timber harvesting, to enforce regulations a bit more stringently there.

*MRC is regulated by seven (7) state and federal agencies. Additionally, MRC subjects itself to third party review and verification of forest practices under the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC-C005200) guidelines and has done so consistently since 2000.*

For example, there's something called a TMDL, or total maximum daily load, which is a Clean Water Act concept that involves regulating the amount of pollution that can be put into streams. Here in the North Coast, the big issue with timber harvesting is erosion from logging that enters into streams and harms the watershed.

There's been a lot of grassroots organizing, lawsuits, and things like that by organizations like Coast Action Group that have forced the regulatory agencies to take that more seriously than they otherwise would. That's my basic understanding.

**Cal:** A bigger question, the fact that you said 80 percent of the forest is privately owned. I'd like to ask you what you think the alternative is to that. I hear many conversations, which seem to go in the direction of, "The big danger really is development."

The alternative to development, which most people are skeptical of, the alternative to development is timber harvesting, the only alternative. I wondered if you could comment on that.

**Will:** I think that to really figure out what would be a better solution for managing timberlands requires some political imagination. I think that we've had over 150 years in redwood country, specifically and longer in other places, of private timber management that has led us to where we are now, which is very depleted forests.

People tend to shy away from anything that smacks of socialism or something like that when you talk about these things, but there was actually a fairly credible proposal that was developed in the late 1990s by various people involved in forestry.

That would have involved Mendocino County and the state entering a partnership to manage the land that now belongs to Mendocino Redwood Company.

For example, which would have involved taking over these 220,000 some cut over acres and managing them for restoration of the forests and having a really light touch approach to logging. Increasing the health of the forest over time through a management that was not driven by

*The regulatory agencies ensure sedimentation of streams does not occur from contemporary forest management activities. There are legacy roads on the property that are being dealt with each year to remove this source of sediment. Long term investments to improve habitat for fish across the property have controlled or held back more than 1 million cubic yards of sediment (more than 100,000 dump trucks of dirt) from the coastal streams flowing through our forest.*

the need for short term profits and feeding timber into mills as quickly as the company's business model said should happen. That didn't end up happening, but I think that things like that need to be kept in mind as things that can be talked about and ideas that can be developed. There have been breakthroughs in certain ways in terms of things like the Conservation Fund. Which I just mentioned, getting public funding to manage these forests, which everyone recognizes as incredibly important assets. Not just for our local economies and for the health of our local streams, and things like that. But also because of things like their carbon sequestration ability, which helps to prevent climate change from getting worse. Everyone recognizes that these forests are incredibly important, and there have been breakthroughs as far as the state putting up monies to management in a more responsible way. Interestingly enough, companies like Mendocino Redwood Company have lobbied strongly against the kind of thing I just mentioned. Which is, the state providing money for these conservation groups, which still do logging, but do it with a lighter touch to manage these lands. Because the companies like Mendocino Redwood Company are afraid of the precedence that these sorts of projects creates, which gives people the idea that maybe Mendocino Redwood Company is not actually the best manager for these forests, and isn't necessarily going to be the one doing it the most environmentally responsible way. I think that in a lot of cases development is a major threat to forests. A great example of that is in the Gualala River Watershed in Southern Mendocino and Northern Sonoma counties. There was recently a proposal to install about 10,000 acres of wine grapes on a 20,000 acre parcel that eventually ended up as something slightly more sane. 2,000 acres of wine grapes were supposedly going to be installed on this 20,000 acre parcel, along with a subdivision. This was a project that the California Public Employees Retirement System invested in, and people organized against

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that and stopped it.

The Conservation Fund now manages that land. It took the state providing funding for that purchase to happen and to protect that land from development.

**Cal:** Let me pause here for a moment. This is KZYX. It's Mendocino County Community Radio. I'm your host this morning Cal Winslow. Our program today continues our discussion of the redwood forest, and our guest is Will Parrish, the activist and journalist who resides in Ukiah. Continuing with some similar thoughts, if we want to think about alternative managements, one thing that would come up would be the National Forest Service, but the Forest Service doesn't always have such a great record.

**Will:** Yeah, absolutely. The Forest Service has a pretty dismal record in terms of auctioning off land to be harvested. They are a division of the Department of Agriculture. They tend to be dominated by timber interests, so the National Forest Service isn't necessarily the best model for how forestland should be managed, certainly. But I do think that there's a big difference between, for example, the Jackson Demonstration Forest between Willits and Fort Bragg. When that land was purchased in the 1940s, it has been absolutely hammered and was a victim of liquidation kinds of logging. While the management there hasn't been ideal, I think that the land there is much improve and there's some multi aged stands of forest there and things like that.

The only reason I bring that up, which isn't necessarily to say that CAL FIRE is the ideal forestlands manager, is to say that the idea that private companies. Such as control most of the land now, are inherently preferable to anything else where the state is involved.

That's an idea that I think lacks credibility, and that I don't think is how people should be approaching these conversations.

**Cal:** That makes me think of there's a conversation around Fort Bragg, here's a new subject for you, about saving our forests. I always gulp when I think of people talking about "our forests," because I don't really know, except for a few people, how welcoming Jackson State

is to the average person.

Saving our forests often refers to saving it from marijuana growers. Have you looked into that subject at all?

**Will:** I think the marijuana growing has been a major problem of course for ecosystems. There's been a lot of the forest land that's been felled to make way for marijuana grows, including on public lands. That is a major problem. It's not something that I've studied in a huge amount of depth, but from living here and covering environmental topics for several years, it's something that constantly comes up. The marijuana industry has metastasized in Mendocino County and other areas of the North Coast, especially since the Prop 215 was passed in 1996.

There have been lots of horror stories that you find about the amount of pollution that marijuana growers leave behind in the Mendocino National Forest, and the fact that they clear cut areas in order to make way for their marijuana patches and things like that.

These things have begun to be studied by regulatory agencies. Now there's a new regulatory system that's been voted in, where the Water Quality Board is going to be enlisting marijuana growers in this regulatory scheme.

I think that the issue is very serious about marijuana growers in the forest. I'm also critical of marijuana cultivation for other things that it does. I think it creates a culture of secrecy and paranoia that is rampant throughout the marijuana country that has a really detrimental effect on the social environment here.

At the same time, I think that marijuana is used as a scapegoat by a lot of people. There are a lot of bigger issues in terms of things that have impacts on ecosystem that get whitewashed or glossed over by people who talk a lot about the fact that marijuana cultivation is the big environmental issue these days.

Private timber continues to cause a lot of damage to forests in certain areas. The wine industry continues to do a lot of damage to watersheds, and the scale at which these industries operate, I think is much larger than the marijuana industry, for the most part. Which

*Illegal trespass grows continue to impact the forestlands of MRC and Mendocino County as a whole through illegal water diversions, use of rodenticides, and tons of human trash and waste. MRC works with third parties to discourage and cleanup sites where this has occurred. MRC also works with legislators to find a remedy to this problem. It is hoped recent legislation passed in Sacramento will have a positive impact on this issue.*

isn't to say the marijuana industry doesn't have a big effect on ecosystems.

It definitely does and it's a huge problem. For example, State Senator Mike McGuire, who introduced the legislation to create the new regulations around marijuana growing that were recently approved, I recall seeing a press release of his.

He said, in no uncertain terms, that marijuana cultivation has by far the biggest detrimental impact on watersheds in the North Coast. That sort of rhetoric I think gives a major free pass to other big industries. I encourage people to keep a sense of proportion about these things is my main point.

**Cal:** We have a history on the coast here of companies like Louisiana Pacific, Georgia Pacific, Maxxam. It's not such a nice story, the story of their work here. I guess in comparison to them, it seems to them that the Mendocino Redwood Company, MRC, seems to get sort of a pass. You've written critically of MRC. I wonder if you could fill us in on your thoughts about that company, both the company and what it does.

**Will:** As you say, the company has sort of got a white hat on, and they've developed a reputation as being a sustainable logging company. I think it is true that Mendocino Redwood Company is not hammering the forest like Louisiana Pacific was, for example. That's not really in dispute.

I was at a Mendocino County Board of Supervisors meeting earlier this year that involved an issue surrounding MRC. Mike Jani, their lead forester, even referred to what he called "Louisiana Pacific's assault on the lands." Even the company uses rhetoric that you would expect to come out of the mouths of environmentalists in certain cases.

There's a couple reasons why I think Mendocino Redwood Company very much should be scrutinized and criticized. One of those is that I'm certainly not convinced that the way Mendocino Redwood Company manages its forests is sustainable or environmentally friendly.

This is a company that relies a lot on herbicides. More than any other company in Mendocino County or Sonoma County, possibly in Humboldt

*MRC uses herbicides to treat previous owners' legacies on the ground which resulted, among other things, in tan oak unnaturally dominating the forest.*

County. Its model of forestry, the company continues to go after large groves of trees in its logging plans.

If you actually read the logging plans, they survey for the diameter size of the tree that they're going to cut. Almost always if they find a tree that's greater than 36 inches in diameter, they tell you that they plan to cut it.

I question whether this is the best thing for the forest. In addition to that, I think that the company has a political role in timber politics in California that very many people understand, but it's important. They use their white hat to serve as a front group for the timber industry as a whole in a lot of its legislative battles and a lot of lobbying situations.

They are able to apply pressure to legislators or regulators, and get them to water things down and make regulations and policies that are less helpful for the environment and more helpful for the timber industry. MRC does a lot of that sort of thing, and part of that is connected to how their ownership is incredibly, politically well connected in California.

**Cal:** Do you know much about that?

**Will:** Yeah. I can give you several examples of that.

**Cal:** Who is the ownership?

**Will:** The ownership is the Fisher family, who are best known as the owners of The Gap retail clothing chain and Banana Republic retail clothing chain.

**Cal:** Are they San Francisco based or Bay Area?

**Will:** Right, they are based in San Francisco.

They also have a large real estate empire that's kind of hard to figure out information about.

They're all billionaires, the individual members of the family. Collectively, they're worth about \$10 billion.

They're very wealthy and well connected. One notable fact is that Governor Jerry Brown's wife, Anne Gust Brown is a former corporate attorney for The Gap, and worked under the Fisher Family in that capacity.

*The treatment of tan oak will return the forest to a mixed Redwood conifer forest in a time that matters to people alive today. MRC timber harvesting has been and remains much lower than the rate of growth of the forest.*

*One of the goals since the establishment of MRC is to move the forest to an all aged condition, also known as unevenaged management. This style of management retains trees of all size classes after a timber harvest is conducted. There are portions of MRC forestlands that are not in this condition but all management decisions are made to move our stands to this desired outcome.*

*MRC owns 228,000 acres. Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) was created in 2008. HRC is a sister company to MRC with the same stated mission to be good stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business. HRC owns 209,000 acres. Employing about 500 skilled employees in Mendocino and Humboldt County earning family-level wages and benefits. Forest management decisions occur locally by Registered Professional Foresters, biologists, geologists, botanists aligned with our publicly declared mission to be good*

Robert Fisher, again one of the co owners of Mendocino Redwood Company, is actually the chairperson of a very powerful cabinet level committee in Sacramento that deals with climate change policy, and is going to be dealing with regulations of the timber industry, as far as its impact on climate change.

My main point there is a very well connected family owns this company. They do care about what's happening with the management of these timber companies up in the north part of California. They've invested about a billion dollars in these companies.

How have they used that influence to shape policies? One example is that in 2006, California adopted something called Assembly Bill 32, which is the Global Warming Solution Act, so called. As part of that policy, California decided to adopt what's called a cap and trade system for climate change.

The idea is that California's capping the amount of fossil fuel emissions that are permitted within the state by its major industries. They create permits that get bought and sold on a market that are essentially pollution credits.

Timber companies can be a part of generating these credits by sequestering carbon, by changing their forest management practices to allow the forests to capture more carbon dioxide from the air.

It's a quirky, confusing thing. Basically, the timber industry was very involved in shaping the regulations of the cap and trade system. The Air Resources Board, which is a state agency that created the regulations, and other people were subject to a lot of lobbying by the timber industry.

The chairman of the California Forestry Association at the time that these regulations were being developed was Mike Jani, the chief forester for Mendocino and Humboldt Redwood companies.

He was the main front person for the state timber lobby, and appeared at all the Air Resources Board meetings having to do with this. Presenting himself as a spokesperson for the industry.

His name is on correspondence representing the

*stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business.*

*The California Forestry Association promotes sustainable forestry and responsible stewardship of renewable natural resources through environmentally sound policies and conservation practices. Many timberland owners in the state have similar goals for the management of their forestlands, including MRC.*

industry as chairman. Some of the things that the industry managed to do was get it so that clearcuts are actually eligible for receiving carbon sequestration credit.

A company can clearcut up to 40 percent of a given area in areas no larger than 30 acres and still, according to the Air Resources Board. Be considered to be generating carbon sequestration through those practices, which I think most people who understand the way carbon sequestration works would consider absurd.

But the industry managed to lobby to get that enacted and Mike Jani was very much involved with that, even though Mendocino Redwood Company itself does not clearcut. He has a reputation of being the white hat forester in Sacramento.

In a way, that gave him more credibility in that context. That's one example of several, that I've found out about.

**Cal:** Before we leave this subject, this is KZYX, Mendocino County Community Radio. I'm your host Cal Winslow. Our guest today, talking about Mendocino's redwood forests is the journalist and activist, Will Parrish.

Just before we switch subjects again, you said a few minutes ago "more herbicides than most." I think that we all know that there's been a big issue over here on the coast about herbicides. People refer to hack and squirt. Could you bring us up to date a bit on what that's all about, for people who maybe don't quite get it?

**Will:** Essentially, the situation is that because the forests have been heavily logged, a lot of tan oak is growing in these forests. Heavy trauma to the land that in this bio region tends to lead to tan oak being the first species of tree that comes back into the disturbed area.

When Mendocino Redwood Company got its land from Louisiana Pacific, there was a very large amount of tan oak growing. The way that they've dealt with that problem, they consider it a problem, for the most part, is to do a technique called hack and squirt.

Which involves, basically, making incisions in a tree and then spraying an herbicide that's called Imazapyr into the gashes in the tree. Imazapyr is

*Beginning in 1998, when MRC was established, we spent several years on a variety of methods to treat*

a systemic herbicide that kills the individual trees.  
They've done that on about 90,000 acres of their land up to this point since buying the company in 1998. That's something that's generated a fair amount of controversy from the beginning.

But in the last year or so, the controversy has intensified a lot because of the recognition that this practice is leading to increased fire danger. Because the company leaves the trees standing dead after squirting them. That is a fire multiplier in the forest, because of just creating fuel for fires that might enter an area. There's been an effort throughout the past year or so to get, if not an outright ban on the practice, get a moratorium, due to the fact that we are living through an epic drought. Climate change is exacerbating the effects of that drought by creating more dry conditions. The Mendocino County Supervisors voted down a proposed moratorium idea earlier this year. Next year, it seems likely that there will be a measure on the ballot here in Mendocino County to vote on, whether standing dead trees should be considered a public nuisance or something to that effect.

*tan oaks (including an ill-fated and expensive effort to make tan oak flooring). After much effort, we concluded the most effective way to bring back a healthy conifer forest in our lifetime was to treat tan oak, selectively, carefully, in the woods, literally tree by tree.*

*Treating tan oak involves using herbicide (about two cups per acre) that is injected directly into the trunk of tan oak trees, following a cut made in the bark. The treatment results in trees dropping most leaves in six to nine months (depending on the time of year), and beginning to fall down within three to four years. After several years, the treated trees largely decompose and their biomass is added to the duff layer of the forest. The treatment of tan oak reduces competition for sunlight and water allowing redwood and Douglas fir trees to thrive.*

*Treating tan oak encourages the emergence of a healthier forest by restoring the health of redwood and Douglas fir trees.*

*CalFire, a Lead Agency on forest regulations, independently reviews and verifies all Timber Harvest Plans (THPs). THPs are considered a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-equivalent Environmental Review Document. Among many things, CalFire reviews THPs for fire safety and insists on mitigations where appropriate.*

*MRC has reviewed its internal policies to encourage fire safety. These include procedures and processes we have used for more than a decade, such as:*

- a. Partnering with communities to place dedicated fire-water tanks, improve egress for remote neighbors and coordination of activities with local fire districts.*
- b. Working in Sacramento to encourage investment in Mendocino county infrastructure through the return of taxes paid locally and deployment of CalFire resources.*
- c. Donations of time, equipment and money to Volunteer Fire Departments.*

*MRC strengthened its practices to improve*

**Cal:** Two questions. It would seem common sense to be concerned about herbicides on that scale. What were the arguments that the supervisors put forward to turn it down?

**Will:** Well, in one case, Supervisor Woodhouse argued that he thinks that the government has a right to tell other government entities, whether to regulate herbicide use. But it doesn't have the right to tell private property owners the same thing.

I don't even remember what McCowen said, but he also voted against it. Carre Brown, who is a former Farm Bureau director. Honestly, I don't remember exactly what her rationale was either. But generally the feeling of the supervisors was that MRC is trying their best to deal with this tan oak problem. That it would cause an economic impact to them to ask them to stop. There's not any clear proof in their minds that this really is creating fire danger for residences nearby.

**Cal:** The company's argument is what? That, to do this helps to regenerate, helps the regeneration of redwood trees?

**Will:** Yeah, that is the idea. The company talks about trying to bring the forests back to a "natural balance." Where there's the kind of balance that you found in sort of a pre European epic of history of redwoods to Doug firs to hardwood trees.

They describe it in these terms, that are based on their brand of being the environmental white hat timber company. Also, they acknowledge that, "Hey, we're trying to increase our stocking of redwoods and Douglas firs, because those are the most merchantable trees that grow in this area."

They talk about the amount of cost that it would take to manage their land in a different way. This is the most economically efficient way to deal with the problem. They've tried to create a

*coordinating with local fire districts, fire experts, climate experts and CalFire on pilot projects for fuels hazard reduction and additional road access in the remote parts of the County.*

*The Board of Supervisors directed the County Executive Officer to coordinate a review of the County Fire Plan through the Mendocino Fire Safe Council and to include a review of the treatment of tan oak as it relates to fire safety.*

*The Board of Supervisors allocated \$25,000 to the Fire Safe Council to conduct this work. The Fire Safe Council initiated a Working Group and invited all interested parties including citizens, students, retirees, employees and public officials to participate in this process.*

*The Working Group brought its findings back to the Board of Supervisors for disclosure and public discussion.*

*Since the inception of MRC, approximately 65,000 acres have been restored to a natural conifer balance by controlling tanoak and planting 8.8 million redwood and Douglas fir seedlings.*

market for tan oak trees and failed in the past, so, they're locked into this approach.

**Cal:** I'm going to switch subjects now a bit, not really too much.

You've mentioned to me that you think that, last week, with Greg King, we talked about various efforts at conservation over the long, longer period, right up to, I think what were called, when was it, in the '80s and '90s, the timber wars.

You've mentioned that you think that in a real sense, the timber wars continue. What did you mean by that? Or, what do you mean by that?

**Will:** Well, I think that that, in a sense, there's been timber wars ever since the indigenous people of the lands that have become timberlands were dispossessed of the land, and in many cases, killed off.

In a sense, but in a different sense, I think the timber wars refer to kind of an ongoing battle over what the best way to manage the forest lands is.

I think that redwood trees, for various reasons, have inspired much more concerted conservation efforts than other types of forests for much longer. Efforts to protect the redwood forest by groups like Save the Redwoods League go back to the early 1900s.

I was interested recently to read that in the 1970s, the Sierra Club was fighting to protect land that ended up becoming part of Redwood National Park in Humboldt County. They said that this would be the last battle of the redwood wars. That was in 1978, and obviously, the most heated battles didn't even start until the 1980s and into the '90s.

I think there's something about the dynamics of redwood country in particular, also, other areas of, where there's a lot of timberland and also a lot of environmentalists and people who think that the land should be managed differently, that creates this enduring conflicts.

There's companies like Mendocino Redwood Company that sort of have this, we're the end of history kind of narrative, we're going to, we're doing so great that we're going to reduce, we're going to basically eliminate conflict in this area.

They said those kind of things in 2008 when they

took over Maxxam Corporation's land in Humboldt County. I mean, that was kind of their narrative.

I don't think that's the case. I think that there's inherently something about the dynamics of this area and of the social arrangements and economic arrangements of this area that lend itself to these ongoing battles over how best to manage these lands or how they should be owned and managed.

A good example, though, if I could go into this for just a minute, is that in Northern Sonoma County right now, a company called Gualala Redwoods that owns about 29,000 acres of timberland there is trying to cut the biggest remaining redwoods on their land.

Which are all in flood plain areas that they've been prevented from logging by environmental regulations in the past, but managed to get it through the regulatory process somehow recently.

The guy who is basically the main technician of those plans was the main forester for Maxxam Corporation when it sought to sell the Headwaters Forest.

I think that's an example of how these sorts of things recur, even some of the same people who were involved with a previous era can resurface. It's going to be an issue until the underlying reasons for it are no longer present.

**Cal:** The underlying reasons, and they are?

**Will:** I think the underlying reasons are that you have entities that are devoted to maximizing their productivity from these lands for the purpose of selling timber products.

That conflicts with the sheer ecological necessity of maintaining these lands for the health of ecosystems or for the climate. As well as, in many cases, for the purpose of long term productivity, for the people who work in the forests.

A lot of times, the interests of people who work in the forests are at odds with the people who own the forest. That's a dimension of the story as well.

**Cal:** What about the people who, like ourselves, who don't own the forest or work in the forest? What about the forest and our health? There's

*MRC owns 228,000 acres. Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) was created in 2008. HRC is a sister company to MRC with the same stated mission to be good stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business. HRC owns 209,000 acres. Employing about 500 skilled employees in Mendocino and Humboldt County earning family-level wages and benefits. Forest management decisions occur locally by Registered Professional Foresters, biologists, geologists, botanists aligned with our publicly declared mission to be good stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business.*

an argument there, isn't there?

**Will:** Absolutely. The forests are critical to just about everything. They're critical to the water of this area, the healthier the forest is, the better quality of water and the more abundant water we have. Forests are critical to biodiversity, which benefits everybody. They're critical to the health of the air, the cleanliness of the air. Even on a global level, the issue of managing forests or allowing forests to maximize their biologic potential is a major issue, for trying to deal with climate change.

In all these ways and more, also, just the health of people's spirits from entering a majestic grove of trees and being a part of the life of the forest. In all these ways, they're critical to our health. All those things have motivated people to work to protect them for a long time.

**Cal:** Thanks very much. It's been very interesting. I hope it'll be useful to listeners. Before we leave you, though, I'd like to catch up with you on another subject.