



Rainforest Action Network Statement on Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) logging in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, CA:

Rainforest Action Network is gravely concerned about the impacts of Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) logging on 235,000 acres of redwood forest for the past three years in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, California.

Ancient redwood forests are one of the earth's most spectacular natural wonders. Yet after years of logging, over 96% of America's ancient redwoods have been lost, a situation that is endangering many species that rely on old growth forest habitat. For this reason, RAN supports permanent protection as the ideal solution for landowners in the redwood region. Heavily damaged redwood forests (such as MRC's land) should be allowed or managed to return to old growth forest characteristics. We feel that MRC's current program of logging is not ensuring recovery of endangered species, nor is it permitting the return to late successional redwood forest characteristics.

The case of MRC also raises troubling questions about the strategic direction of wood product certification.

The greatest dangers to certification come from pressure to log in areas that should be off limits or to weaken management standards in order to increase the volume of certified products in the marketplace. The quickest route to losing public support is to log old growth forests that should simply be off-limits to any industrial activity. In the case of Mendocino Redwood Company, the problem is at the other end of the spectrum: logging in areas that are already heavily degraded, where endangered species such as Coho salmon and spotted owls are extirpated or barely hanging on.

From both an ecological and public perspective, the FSC endangers its credibility by marketing products from the habitat of endangered species and by certifying logging in areas that are in the midst of land-use controversy. In order to have public credibility, the FSC must be able to ensure that products did not: a) come from areas that should not be logged, and b) where logging is allowed, that it take place in the most ecologically appropriate manner.

Considering the history of degradation on MRC lands and the broad public desire to see the redwood ecosystem restored, RAN believes that the best solution for the redwood ecosystem and the forests of Mendocino County would be for MRC to permanently protect its forest lands.

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