

January 3, 2009
Rick Parfitt
Re: NTMP # 1-06NTMP-011 SON (Bohemian Grove)

To Whom It May Concern:

I believe based upon historical records, recent fires and the opinions of nationally recognized fire scientists that the proposed Bohemian Grove NTMP will not decrease the wildfire risks to: property, homes and people in and around the proposed logging area. In fact, **there is a greater likelihood that the NTMP will increase the risks from future wild fires.**

Geographically, the area around the proposed NTMP is quite similar to the watersheds that drain away from Mt. Loma Prieta in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County. In these two counties, the recent fire history has shown repeatedly what happens when large wild fires break out around redwoods, mixed conifers, hardwoods and chaparral. The Austrian Gulch fire, burning 8,000 acres in 1963, the Lexington Hills fire burning 14,000 acres in 1985, the Croy fire burning 3,127 acres in 2002, and the Summit fire burning 4,200 acres in 2008 all showed common burn patterns. All of the fires were large, dramatically affected by wind, slope, fuel moisture levels, and vegetation. The fires were hard to contain and burned most fiercely on steep, wind swept slopes where the dominate vegetation was chaparral. **These fires were easiest to contain, or even died out where the dominate vegetation was redwood trees. Large diameter redwood trees are hard to ignite, create fog drip that helps keep the under story from drying out, reduce winds speeds during a fire, tend to create a closed canopy which further shades the under story and helps keep it from drying out.**

During each of the fires noted above, **as the fire moved into redwood dominated vegetation, the fire tended to drop to the ground, slow down, or even extinguish itself.** One can easily extrapolate from this fire behavior that removing the largest diameter trees in a redwood forest would increase wind speeds, open the canopy to a denser under story and contribute to lower fuel moisture levels all increasing the risks from future wildfires.

As a resident of the Summit Rd area, I was able to observe the Lexington Hills fire, the Croy fire, and Summit fire first hand. One sees today that the redwood trees in each of these areas either survived without damage or quickly recovered. In a few cases at the boundary between redwood forest and chaparral vegetation, some of the smaller diameter redwoods did die. I also had the opportunity to tour the complete Summit Fire area and attend the Cal Fire Team Leader incident review meeting with our local battalion chief. In November, we flew over the whole area with Cal Fire in a helicopter to look at the historical burn patterns as part of our data collection for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, CWPP.

Just as the proponents of the Bohemian Grove NTMP are claiming that the thinning of redwood trees will reduce fire risk, San Jose Water Company, SJWC, made a similar claim about their NTMP application. As part of concerned group of local community member, Neighbors Against Irresponsible Logging, I worked directly with three nationally recognized wild fire safety experts, Richard Montague, retired Regional Director of the US Forest Service, Professor Scott Stephens, University of California Berkeley, and Professor Philip Omi, University of Colorado. We hired each of these experts to independently review and critique the claims made by SJWC's wild fire expert in their NTMP. In addition, Professor Stephens reviewed his finding with Dr. Mark Finney, who has already reviewed the Bohemian Grove NTMP. Universally, their findings indicated that the proposed logging was unlikely to do anything to reduce the risks of future wildfire and was more likely increase the risks from future wildfires.

I have attached copies of their reports with this letter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rick Parfitt
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