

An article titled “ *MRC wants a Measure M refund* ” was published in the Mendocino Beacon by Chris Calder on June 28, 2018.

Mendocino Redwood Company found a number of comments 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.MendoCo.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><i>Text of article begins below, spaces placed to allow facts to line up with text of article.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Facts about Mendocino Redwood Company</i></p>
<p>[BEGINNING OF ARTICLE BELOW]</p>	<p>Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) was created in 1998 from lands purchased in Mendocino and Sonoma county 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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adopting policies to make MRCs forestlands Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC® C004495) certified (since November 2000); 2. Adding more than <u>1 billion board</u> feet of redwood and Douglas fir trees by lowering the rate of harvest; 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; 4. Elimination of traditional clear cutting from our property; 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; 6. Removal of more than 36 long time fish barriers, increasing fish bearing streams by more than 20 miles. 7. Operating as an open and transparent business; including an open invitation to take interested individuals anywhere in the forest; 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 9. Employing about 300 skilled employees in Mendocino County earning family-level wages and benefits.

[BEGINNING OF ARTICLE]

MRC wants a Measure M refund

The Mendocino Redwood Company's attempt to get a refund on taxes it paid after the 2014 passage of the Measure M parcel assessment funding the Albion-Little River Fire Protection District was heard in Superior Court in Ukiah Friday and Monday. Judge David Riemenschneider did not make a decision in the case.

MRC is suing Mendocino County, which collects Measure M revenues, saying that the company is exempt from local fire protection costs since its property in the ALRFD is also under CalFire's jurisdiction.

Fire district representatives argue that the company benefits from ALRFD's services, and that MRC has waited too long to challenge a tax that at least one executive had said the company would be willing to pay.

In a November 2014 video interview, shortly after Measure M passed, MRC Executive Vice President for Forestry Dennis Thibeault said that the company was well aware of the implications of Measure M and had decided not to oppose it.

"Most timber companies would have opposed a measure like that," he says. "And we chose not to. We chose not to so we could participate in this community, so that we could fund the local fire department. Those were conscious decisions that we made."

[ARTICLE CONTINUES]

The basis of the complaint stems from Health and Safety Code 13811 which defines the types of lands that can be included in districts, including fire protection districts:

"Territory which has been classified as a state responsibility area may be included in a district, except for commercial forest lands which are timbered lands declared to be in a state responsibility area." (Emphasis added.)

MRC lands are commercial forests in state responsibility areas. MRC attempted to work with the Albion-Little River Fire Department by appealing this tax to their board. The appeal was denied.

Subsequent to this video it became apparent after reviewing the Health and Safety Codes that MRC forestlands were not legally part of the ALRFD district. It is at that time we brought the issue to the ALRFD board to appeal the tax. This appeal was denied.

Cal Fire agrees state responsibility areas that are commercial forest lands cannot be part of a district.

MRC has supported numerous fire protection districts when requests are received for assistance. This assistance has taken the form of:

a. Partnering with communities to place dedicated fire-water tanks, improve egress for remote neighbors and coordination of activities with local fire districts.

A representative for MRC this week declined to comment until the case is decided.

ALRFD Chief and Fifth District supervisorial candidate Ted Williams said Monday that the local department responds to incidents on MRC land and should be compensated.

“The largest land owner in our county has fought against paying the special tax residents pay,” he stated in an email. “This case raises important public policy concerns about funding of emergency services. Local fire departments are almost always first at scene. They respond to fires on forest land, but they also provide emergency response to logging accidents, in some cases where local two-wheel drive ambulances cannot transit.

“CalFire firefighters are skilled and put their lives on the line for us, but their stations are typically not staffed year round and their scope of capabilities is more narrow. Local fire districts cover all risk throughout the year with very little funding, many operating on bake sales and with volunteer labor. Out of general fairness, all land owners should contribute.”

[END OF ARTICLE]

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.

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We are working hard to restore the forest we own and set an example for other forest owners, managers and regulators to be good stewards of the forest and at the same time run a successful business. We have made significant progress in that regard:

1. Adopting policies to make MRCs forestlands FSC® certified (since November 2000);

2. Adding more than 1 billion board feet of redwood and Douglas fir trees by lowering the rate of harvest;
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;
4. Elimination of traditional clear cutting from our property;
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;
6. Removal of more than 36 long time fish barriers, increasing fish bearing streams by more than 20 miles.
7. Operating as an open and transparent business; including an open invitation to take interested individuals anywhere in the forest;
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
9. Employing about 300 skilled employees in Mendocino County earning family-level wages and benefits.

MRC is regulated by seven (7) state and federal agencies, including CalFire. Additionally, MRC voluntarily subjects itself to third part verification of forest practices under the guidelines of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and has done so since 2000. We publish our inventory and many other details of our forest management on our website It is straightforward to find information on our management of the forest. 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.