

## Lookout Timber Harvest Plan Update

by Vivian Parker

The Lookout Timber Harvest Plan, or THP, continues to unfold, bringing more incredulity each day for citizens who are working to stop the project. The plan is proposed by Sierra Pacific Industries, or SPI, and would result in clearcutting 809 acres in the Digger Creek watershed above Manton. If the THP is allowed to go forward, this region will have the ignominious distinction of being the most intensively clearcut area in the entire Sierra Nevada. SPI owns considerable property in the Sierra Nevada, and continues to acquire more each year, making the company the second largest private land owner in the entire United States.

A number of inconsistencies in the THP, compared to on-the-ground evidence of clearcuts and ongoing timber harvests in the area, led residents to begin inquiries about previous timber harvest activities by SPI in the region. The California Environmental Quality Act, and the Forest Practice Act which regulates timber harvest in California, require disclosure of other closely related timber harvest activities, or other sources of environmental impacts, that have occurred within the last ten years in the vicinity of each project. The regulations also require disclosure of other activities planned for the future.

Citizens learned that there are actually three additional SPI THPs with contiguous harvest units to the Lookout THP, all within the last five years. This information should have been readily available in the Lookout THP. The Lookout THP abuts harvest units with two other SPI timber harvest plans, Rock Flat and Digger, that were approved in 2003, in the Digger Creek watershed. These are also contiguous with a 2002 THP called Onion Flat, together totaling nearly 4,000 acres of clearcuts. Determining the full extent of harvests in the area is difficult, time consuming and costly for citizens to have to undertake on their own. None of these recent THPs were even mentioned in the Lookout THP, as required by law.

It appears that SPI is misrepresenting the amount of timber harvesting it has already done in the vicinity of the Lookout project, thereby concealing the environmental impacts of its practices and violating the Forest Practice Rules which require disclosure of cumulative impacts that may have significant impacts upon water quality, soil erosion, or wildlife habitat and survival.

The impact of clearcutting in this area, in combination with all the clearcutting that has already occurred to the north of this THP, will likely destroy wildlife habitat for decades, if not centuries. It will likely spell death for many species of plants and animals for which there will no longer be sufficient habitat to sustain them. And the harvests will likely result in irreparable harm to the water supply in Boole Ditch, which supplies water to a large percentage of the community of Manton. Run-off from chemical herbicides, pollution from logging equipment, erosion and sediment run-off all are likely to seriously impact

Digger Creek and Boole Ditch. Ultimately, all of the water quality impacts of this clearcutting regime will be felt by Battle Creek, designated as the premier salmon and steelhead recovery stream for imperiled Central Valley anadromous fish runs.

It is hard to imagine how resource agency managers can fail to recognize the great threat to sustainable forest ecosystems presented by SPI's clearcutting policy, which plans to clearcut 70% of its entire forest ownership. One cannot help but guess that the ultimate plan is to develop these forests into subdivisions in the future, for these forests will surely fail to thrive under this type of treatment.

Perhaps the trees need the bear and the deer, the wildflowers and the birds, as much as the animals need the forest with all of its multiple layers of canopies, age classes, and diverse species of conifers, hardwoods and shrubs. These do not exist in an SPI tree farm.

The THP was published in December 2006, and has undergone one revision. Significant concerns continue to be raised by the public and by the timber harvest review team biologists from the Calif. Department of Fish and Game. Nevertheless, no reduction in the volume of cutting has been conceded by SPI. No final decision has yet been reached by Calfire.

Until a final decision is reached, citizens can still let Calfire know your concerns.

Comments can be sent to:  
[redningpubliccomment@fire.ca.gov](mailto:redningpubliccomment@fire.ca.gov)  
 or by phone to Dan Craig at (530) 224-2445.

## Meeting for Change

by Sorca O'Connor

On September 17, approximately 40 people walked into the Acorn Center in Round Mountain in response to a call for a community meeting about a situation that affects residents on a daily basis, and will continue over their future years and those of their children. Trees are disappearing at a higher than usual rate from the skyline, more trucks are waking residents in the wee hours of the morning and roaring down the road loaded throughout the day, and new loud strange machine sounds are coming from the woods that surround the few hundreds of people who live in the intermountain area east of Redding. Although many people knew everyone else at the meeting, some were surprised to see others who weren't often in their lives. There were not just the handful of usual suspects who have expressed concerns about clearcutting, the topic at hand; there were others as well. The crowd included organic farmers, professionals who work down the hill, retired folks, locals who make their livings at home or at the local clinic, and a few loggers as well as some interested folks from as far away as Redding.

We came together to talk about a precious aspect of our shared locale: The surrounding forest is being clearcut, a logging practice that cuts trees indiscriminately, often using huge machinery that literally cuts a number of trees at one time, destroying everything in between and put-

ting many loggers, especially fallers, out of work. This ravaging practice is compared to a selective logging practice whereby foresters and loggers select trees for cutting based on size and age, condition and location. Such trees are necessarily cut one at a time and care is taken to preserve other trees in the vicinity. This latter practice is part of a sustainable logging tradition that has preserved natural forests with diverse and differently aged species, and one that has employed a much larger number of woodsmen and loggers.

The diversity among the participants at the meeting was a positive sign that no one faction would dominate the conversation. All had an interest in the maintenance of healthy forests in the area. They knew or came to know that evening, that clearcutting increases the danger of forest fire (by replanting same age, mostly same species trees tightly packed together), endangers our water supply (by heavily spraying clearcut sites with powerful herbicides to kill any native plants that might compete with new seedlings), destroys habitat for the many wild creatures and plants who are our natural neighbors, and reduces the availability of forest work as a livelihood for local residents. Because of the extreme damage done by the practice of clearcutting, participants had a stake in changing the clearcutting trend on the vast acreage in the area owned by Roseburg and Sierra Pacific Industries. It became clear that, over time, they would see the leveling of the natural forests that surround their homesteads in the intermountain area.

The meeting was well planned in advance by a half dozen intermountain citizens and an intern

from Forest Ethics who agreed to take on responsibilities for different parts of the meeting. On the evening of the meeting, the entire group of participants sat together as a whole, while a brief history of the area was presented.

Randy Compton, a life long resident of the area and a former logger, welcomed people and told a little about his experience, calling on another logger in the larger group to fill in some details. An overview of the meeting was announced, and everyone broke into one of three small groups to plan three aspects of a strategy.

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### Herbal Medicine Discussion Group

will meet Jan 7, 2008  
to study *Herbs for First Aid*,  
and to make medicine.

The group generally  
meets about 4 pm.

For more information call:  
Kalan Redwood  
at 524-5537.