

What exactly is Canopy Action Network? The vision behind CAN is that as a united front all of our actions will be more effective. This does not mean that all groups listed are using the same tactics or following the same ideology, but we do share a common purpose - we want to see native forests and wildlife left alone. In America, the majority of unprotected intact ancient forests primarily reside in the northwestern states. Originally, we were focusing on this area. We've now branched out to British Columbia and Australia. The hope is that when we speak of a specific action, we speak of it in the context of a larger, connected movement to protect forests. All of these affinity groups are autonomous self-organizing community groups that together can become more of a force to be reckoned with. This larger affinity doesn't allow for easy dismissal of what are perceived as isolated fringe groups.

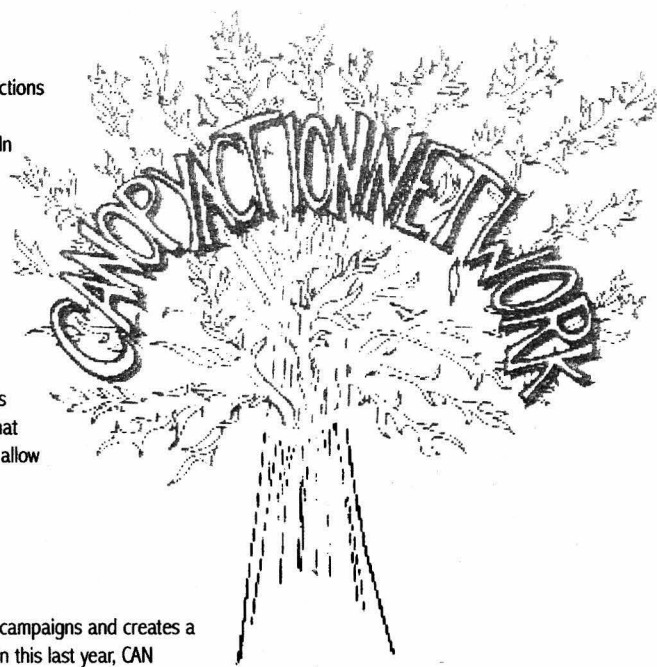
An informal network of Forest Defenders has always existed. When composing the branches list in the centerfold, we were struck with the intensity of effort that has been put forth to protect native forests at the direct action level alone. Isolation and alienation are diseases of our modern life; at least knowing that

there are others out there working on the same issue in another watershed can be a source of inspiration. This network is simple, composed of three elements that will allow for people to get involved wherever they are:

Canopy Action Network's toll-free hotline 1-888-pickAxe

Canopy Action Network's website www.pickaxe.org/can/index.html

And this newsletter... The hope is that different campaigns will take turns at putting out a similar newsletter that connects and updates all the direct action forest campaigns and creates a forum for new ideas and campaign/strategy analysis. The concept of CAN can be as broad as people want to take it such as regional skillshares or treesitter exchanges. In this last year, CAN sponsored nationwide climbing trainings, hikes, in-town climbing events and a road show. People are needed to regularly update the website, hotline and to put out any future newsletters. Please contact us with your ideas and empower yourselves to start organizing around the Canopy Action Network concept and spread this newsletter around freely.



The history of treesitting as a tactic has evolved tremendously since its birth fifteen years ago. The first treesit was in Millenium Grove outside of Sweet Home, OR in 1985. They set the first sit by spurring up the tree. Today treesitters girth trees, shoot fishing line or free climb to set the first line. Later that summer of 1985, sitters started to tie into other trees in the Millenium Grove, creating the first small village of about five to six treesitters. R. Dendron was the first female treesitter in 1986. In 1987, Randy Prince stayed in a seven and one-half foot pod for 42 days in Southern Oregon's North Kalmiopsis treesit. He only climbed down from his suspended pod and typewriter after a logger rendered the sit unstable by chainsawing into a third of the tree. During the summer of 1987, treesitters went south to help with the first redwood sits on so-called private lands. At 130 feet, these sits in the Headwaters groves in Northern California were much higher.

ROOTS

The roots of treesitting reach far into prehistory. The direct action tree villages of today share natural ties with some of the remaining dreaming tribes of New Guinea, Africa, and Indonesia who have made their permanent homes in trees since memory began. There are tree people called Mava and Muscona in New Guinea living in tree houses 75 feet up. They sleep in close quarters, shit from catwalks and have developed a sophisticated yodeling-like language to call from tree to tree. Treesitters today do much of the same except their language is not so sophisticated and their inherited disconnection from the earth necessitates the use of ropes, harnesses and knots learned from books rather than vines and ancient traditions. The Mava and Muscona people live in trees in rugged mountainous terrain because it is the most defensible position. Although law enforcement have been able to pull treesitters down from shorter treesits, they are still one of the more empowered actions to be a part of. The Efe, an African pygmy tribe, climb tall trees to gather fruit and walk fearlessly around on the branches. As many as 20 climbers may be in the crown of a tree at once. Some of the best Cascadian climbers are at home 150-200 feet up, half-naked, barefoot and without their safety clipped on. Using vines, the Efe construct bridges between trees. Similar techniques called traverses are used in modern day tree villages. They are a means not only to connect one sit to the next but to link as many trees together as possible, so they will be protected. The Efe are superb arboreal engineers and can tie vines into many different knots, each with a special function. One climbing technique they use with vines, seems like a combination of girthing with prussic-like vines for stirrups. The Dayak people of Malaysia are amazing tree climbers as well. They have been blocking development and deforestation of their native forests



"IF THE ATTACKERS ATTEMPTED TO CHOP DOWN THE TREE, THEY WOULD BE PELTED WITH STONES AND SPEARS FROM ABOVE"

for the last 15 years. Inherently, tree people are tree defenders.

The practicalities of living in the upper canopy were gleaned by scientists studying rain forests from traditional peoples. In the 1920s, Max Nicholson, who would later be one of the founders of the World Wildlife Fund, was part of an English expedition to explore the forest canopy in what was then British Guyana. With the help of native climbers, they were able to string rope ladders from tree to tree. In the 1960s, an American researcher named Elliot Mc Clure built a treesit in Malaysia 120 feet off the ground. For over three years, he and other students of the canopy were witness to the glorious details of life in the rainforest. This is similar to the magical visits with wildlife that only treesitters today are privy to. Mc Clure last climbed this treesit at the age of 65; by 1977, it and the surrounding forest had been cut down to make way for the Trans-peninsular Highway.

BRANCHES

The evolution of the tree villages of today came out of the Road Wars in England which began in 1994. The Whitecroft woods hosted the first modern day tree village 60 feet up in beech trees. This was where there were at least 45 treehouses and a total of four and half miles of walkways. Another creation of this time period was internets or webs composed of nylon webbing cargo nets, trawler fishing nets or circus nets connecting tree to tree. Activists also used carabiner clips taped onto their wrists to prevent law enforcement from using their harnesses to pull them from the trees. Law enforcement further developed violent, dehumanizing techniques like cutting off every branch below protesters that refused to come down. Another sit to note was the Mother Ship at Kennet Camp, Newbury, which was built between eight slender trees and could hold up to 30 people complete with kitchen. The three-story sit in The Beech at Fairmile took tree squatting to a new level. In 1996, using the arboreal technology developed in the Road Wars in England, the Owl Creek tree village at Headwaters in Northern California was the first US manifestation of the long term upper canopy encampments that we see today. In 1997, the Love Pod was another highlight in treesitters' history. It was the first wrap-around treesit, roomy enough for six or perhaps more.

Today you'll find variations of this original design, now called donuts, in most sit scenarios. In addition, the rocket stove has revolutionized some sits. It is energy efficient, made out of recycled tin cans and ash and can boil a pot of water using about twelve sticks

The Luna treesit may be the originator of the first rain water collection system. While Fall Creek in the Willamette National Forest hosted an exercise bike 200 feet up, platforms made with recycled innertubes and sticks are an innovation of the Winberry treesit also in the Willamette. The Eagle Creek sit in the Mt. Hood NF in Oregon hosts a pod that one can actually walk upright around a 500-year-old tree named Truth. It is complete with propane heating, cooking and lighting.

There have been many other treesits in the past 15 years each with their own unique story. One of the most successful treesit campaigns occurred recently at Watch Mountain, near a timber town called Randle in Lewis County, Washington. It was an ideal example of a community organizing around a treesit.

LEAVES AND BUDS

The occupations of threatened forests are stretching from months to years. The most publicized and well-known treesit campaign was the Luna treesit sat by Julia Butterfly. It was built on her connection to Luna and her personal dedication, but like life, it had a bittersweet ending. Many treesitters continue to sit despite the losses and small successes because treesitting is more than a tactic. It has become a way of life. The life of the tree and the life of the treesitter become intertwined. One also lives a more simple life out in the forest free from most of Babylon. Treesitting can actually heal and sustain people living in our disconnected reality. Spring, who treesat at several Oregon treesits expressed it like this: "Living closer and ever looking to nature, breakthroughs are made, deep personal issues are brought to light, and a new level of trust is necessitated by the willingness to live in the elements for a purpose higher than narrow, self-centered aims. Personal vision, communicated and shared through simple means, weaves the colorful fabric of the community. We eat and sing together, ramble at dawn and rant at the coming of night. Everyday is an exercise in nonhierarchical organization and the irrepressible quest for freedom."

SEEDLINGS AND SAPLINGS

At one point, in fall 1999, there were 11 treesits. Presently in 2001, there are five active ones in Cascadia: Eagle Creek, Winberry, Fall Creek, Snog, and Ramsey Gulch. Around each tree sit or village is a community of dedicated forest activists willing to do whatever is needed to defend the last remaining ancient forests, from sitting in trees to organizing public events, to midnight escapades. In towns, on the ground, and in the trees, these communities are working together to create a new history of living forests.

The future of forest defense may or may not lie in treesitting. Although one of the original intentions of Canopy Action Network was to highlight the impact of treesits, we have learned that this perspective is too limited. The act of treesitting has been a rewarding experience for treesitters. Forest occupations provide an amazing opportunity for people to connect radically with the earth, to create community and break out of the conditioning of consumer "culture". These positive aspects are not normally present in other actions or tactics. For a time, people get a glimpse into what might be possible.

In some ways, however, treesitting has become fetishized as an "end all, be all" tactic. provides some defense of the forest that the sits are tied into. However, logging companies, especially in treesits on public lands, the tactic has proved to be surprisingly effective oponents where large urban greenways are threatened.

Key factors seems to include timing, active community outreach, and avenues have failed, right before logging is about to start, can be a fulcrum areas where forest service and lumber companies are still put off guard and person or group who can challenge them on legal fronts as well.

Treesits, particularly tree villages, can be an intense drain on campaign periods, maintaining a treesit village can be even more difficult. Practically, al-est time possible. Also, one of the hard won lessons of early years was to never come out of the treesit until you have been replaced. It is important to really think about whether it is strategic to put up a treesit and whether you have the time and resources available to see it through to the end. A treesit is not an action to be taken lightly or put together without some long-term thought. Also, risk to treesitters escalates the longer the treesit stays up, requiring safety checks of gear and re-tensioning of ropes and platforms due to overuse. It is also crucial for skills to be passed on or a treesit can become a life-threatening situation. In private timber sales where hired climbers have been sent to physically evict the treesit, safety and defense are particularly an issue.

As seen with the cancellations of timber sales like Watch Mountain, Harry Thomas, Kaisen Gulch, Freshwater and portions of Snog, a well timed, thoughtful strategic treesit with strong community support can change the fate of a forest. However, treesitting is just one of many tactics. Let's not limit ourselves. We should never forget the beauty of imagination, the wisdom of strategy and the bite of surprise. *The sky's the limit!*



Treesitting does have the potential to capture the imagination of the public as a spectacle and nies have taken to cutting around tree villages, diminishing the treesit's effectiveness. Still, tactic. In Oregon and California, treesits have also been used in potential housing devel-

support, particularly in the local area. A well-timed treesit placed when all other point in which to push the sale to be cancelled. This can be especially true in daunted by this tactic. This success is also dependent on a forest monitoring

resources. Climbing gear is very expensive. In times of flux and over winter though sometimes it is not realistic, you want to maintain a treesit for the short-