

# Update from the Treetops



Photos by E! Humboldt



(Left) Traversing through the tree-village; (above) China-bound cargo ship leaves Humboldt

BY FARMER

As the heavy rains of winter give way to yet more rain, we watch from the tree-tops at the season unfolding before us. Our tree-village has been ongoing since February 2009, when the logging company Green Diamond had the go-ahead from complicit government agencies to destroy this rare grove of residual Old-Growth Redwoods and 100 year old second growth. The company has permits to kill Northern Spotted Owls and destroy their groves through logging, so the presence of a breeding pair of these endangered owls was of no concern to them. The logging permit could expire this August, but could also be extended up to two more years.

We have over 40 trees tied together with traverse lines and we continue to expand this defense network as rope supplies allow. There are five trees containing one or more living spaces. There are wooden platforms suspended from ropes and sturdy webs woven between branches.

Word has it that the company is considering allowing public access to a 2,000 acre swath of land, including the grove we occupy, and may eventually sell it as a "community forest." However, they have not backed off logging the grove we occupy, and we will continue to stand with this forest and its inhabitants until the threat is lifted.

Green Diamond has continued to quietly check on us from the ground, showing up at least once a month, often more. They don't talk to us but sometimes damage or take whatever useful gear they can find.

A large Sitka Spruce tree near the village fell one night during the storms, after much cracking and crashing it thudded to the ground. I caught the scent of crushed evergreen needles from about 500 feet away. More recently two smaller trees lost their tops in the wind. We choose sturdy trees to occupy, hoping that we will be spared the worst.

Due to a boom in housing construction in China, raw logs are now leaving Humboldt Bay by cargo ship. It's said by timber industry people that the Chinese companies use the wood mainly for concrete forms during construction. They are said to have 65 million empty housing units, room enough for 200 million people. "Ghost Cities" as they're called, are nearly devoid of people, yet are the site of lavish construction projects. This construction boom is increasing demand for wood exports all over the Pacific Northwest.

There is much forest here in need of defending, including an area of un-cut fir, cedar and pine forest on the edge of the Six Rivers National Forest and the destructive highway widening project through Richardson Grove State Park, which faces huge public opposition and could also come to a head this summer. We invite serious, action-minded people to this region to learn and teach, to help keep the tree-village going, as well as to join in as we confront emerging threats to old-growth forests.

from **Earth First! Humboldt**