



FORESTS FOREVER

50 First St. Suite 401, San Francisco, California 94105

Phone: 415/974-3636 FAX: 415/974-3664

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2008

Contact:

Paul Hughes, executive director: (415) 974-4201; paul@forestsforever.org
Marc Lecard, communications manager: (415) 974-4202; marc@forestsforever.org

New legislation would set legal limits to scorched-earth logging

Bill would restrict clearcutting in California

Forests Forever has sponsored Assembly Bill 2926, introduced on Feb. 22 by Assemblymember Sally Lieber (D-Mountain View). This measure would significantly restrict the practice of clearcutting and thereby encourage more responsible and environmentally sound methods of timber harvesting such as selective cutting.

“Clearcutting is one of the most destructive methods of logging, and is still the method of choice by the timber industry,” said Forests Forever’s executive director Paul Hughes. “California needs to restrict this practice before all private timberlands in the state are reduced to the bare dirt.”

Current California law allows clearcuts of 40 acres of forest at a time. Timber companies can clearcut a forest immediately next to another clearcut as long as the two parcels are under different ownerships. This has left the state’s forests, especially in the Sierra Nevada, a patchwork of clearcuts.

A.B. 2926 would reduce the maximum clearcut to 10 acres, and prohibit side-by-side clearcuts unless the older cut has grown back at least a 50-percent canopy cover. Also prohibited by the bill are clearcuts immediately next to each other—regardless of ownership— unless their combined total acreage is less than ten acres.

A.B. 2926 faces its first legislative hurdle on April 14th, when it will be considered by the Assembly Natural Resources Committee. Forests Forever is

— more —

Restore • Reinhabit • Re-enchanted

asking its supporters to write to their assemblymembers and to the committee, and urge them to support A.B. 2926.

California's forests are being clearcut at an increasingly rapid pace. Since 1990 nearly 687 square miles of California forests have been clearcut— more than three and a half times the area of Lake Tahoe. One company alone— Sierra Pacific Industries, based in Arnold— has been authorized to clearcut more than 250,000 acres in the Sierra Nevada in the past two decades.

“Clearcutting destroys wildlife habitat, damages water quality, increases the danger of severe forest fires, and impairs forests' ability to sequester carbon dioxide, which contributes greatly to global warming,” Hughes said.

“And the beauty of the forests is destroyed, which has economic implications as well as aesthetic ones. Most people don't want to travel to look at the debris and devastation left behind by clearcut logging. On all these counts, California's logging methods must take a gentler form than clearcutting on a large scale.”