



# FORESTS FOREVER

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

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

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Monday, June 26, 2006**

*Contact:*

*Paul Hughes, executive director, Forests Forever; (415) 974-4201  
Ara Marderosian, executive director, Sequoia ForestKeeper; (760) 376-4434  
Carl Ross, executive director, Save America's Forests; (202) 544-9219*

## **Forest Service chief gives false testimony at congressional hearing**

On Thursday, Mar. 9, 2006, U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth made false statements about recent logging in the Giant Sequoia National Monument while testifying at a Forest Service budget hearing before the House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee.

Bosworth was responding to questions by Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) about logging in the Trail of 100 Giants area, the very spot where President Bill Clinton announced the establishment of the 328,000-acre national monument located in the southern Sierra of California. In the name of public safety and fire prevention, the Forest Service took out more than 200 trees, including ancient sugar pines, many of them over three centuries old.

(All quotes and page references are from the official hearing transcript. See \* below for complete citation.)

### **Bosworth's falsehoods included stating:**

• **that the cut trees were a fire threat.** (“Any projects done there would be to do things like I'd explained earlier, to remove the ladder fuels, to allow fire to play a more natural role.” Page 277.) The large trees that were felled, however, were without lower branches that could carry fire into the canopy. They were not ladder-fuel trees, but rather, fire-resistant giants, including the sugar pines and other non-sequoia species. (These downed trees were photographed by environmental advocates. *For copies of these photos, see contacts at top.*)

• **that an environmental study was done before the project began.** (“There would have been either an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.” Page 277.) When asked by Hinchey if he would provide a copy of that environmental assessment or the environmental impact statement, Bosworth said he would. But the project file for the Trail of 100 Giants “hazard tree” removal project contained no environmental assessment or environmental impact statement, no National Environmental Policy Act documents, and did not

– more –

***Restore • Reinhabit • Re-enchant***

show compliance with the Monument Plan. After the hearing, Bosworth provided no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment, only a decision memo.

• **that the value of the timber was the reason the trees were cut.** (“The means of removal was sale as opposed to burning, which was infeasible.” Page 419.) No memo in the Forest Service file indicates that the cut trees were to be sold as a “means of removal.” Indeed, the decision memo to the internal file states only that the wood would be used for camp fires and/or chipped and mulched, whereas many of the trees cut and sold were commercially valuable sugar pines.

“Those trees survived fires in that grove for centuries. The only threat to their survival was the Forest Service, which killed them solely for the financial benefit of their cronies at the local sawmill,” stated Martin Litton, Forests Forever Advisory Council member.

In April 2000 Clinton, under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906, established the monument, stating that the trees and other natural, cultural and historic objects within its boundaries were to be protected. Sequoias are the largest trees on earth and are found naturally only in a small region on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada in California.

The Trail of 100 Giants logging project, which was announced through an informal public phone notification process, was justified by the Forest Service as a small project to protect public safety by removing dead trees, but resulted in a timber sale in the spring of 2005.

### **The public was excluded from the process.**

“The Forest Service attempted to conduct this logging under the public’s radar screen, refusing to do a written project announcement, and producing no environmental documents for the public to review,” said Ara Marderosian, executive director of Sequoia ForestKeeper. “The Forest Service also lied to us orally before the Trail of 100 Giants was logged. They said only 138 small trees would be cut and none sold, but they removed more than 200 large-diameter trees, some of them that had lost their lower branches many decades ago. Many of those were sold. Also, hundreds of small trees were cut, chipped, and scattered.”

Paul Hughes, executive director of Forests Forever, added “Californians, as well as all Americans, are being robbed by outrageous logging in the Giant Sequoia National Monument. Transfer of control of the monument to the National Park Service, where the world’s largest trees will finally be protected, is long overdue. For instance, 3.6 million board feet are currently being logged right now within the boundaries of the monument. Also, a federal district court recently ordered the Forest Service to stop logging four other commercial projects, slated to remove 19 million board feet of trees from the monument, because of the questionable legality of those projects.”

“Fortunately, there is legislation pending in Congress which will transfer the Giant Sequoia National Monument into the national park system with its unmistakable duty to protect all of nature’s treasures in its care,” said Carl Ross, director of Save America's Forests. “That

legislation, The Act to Save America's Forests, also will end logging on millions of acres of ancient and roadless forests in the national forests and will require the Forest Service to attempt ecosystem restoration of the areas damaged by decades of abuse." The Act to Save America's Forests is currently in the Senate as S. 1897 (Corzine) and soon will be introduced in the House by Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA). It is supported by many of the world's leading scientists, including Dr. E.O. Wilson, Dr. Jane Goodall, and the Union of Concerned Scientists, as well as over 100 members of Congress.

***Forests Forever*** is a state-wide California environmental group whose mission is to protect and enhance the forests and wildlife habitat of California through educational and legislative activities.

***Save America's Forests*** is a coalition of citizens, groups, scientists, and businesses dedicated to research, education, and advocacy for the protection and restoration of the world's disappearing wild-forest ecosystems and native biodiversity. Founded in 1990, its primary goal in the U.S. is to establish new policies to protect the last wild areas in the national forests, including ancient and roadless forests, and to permit only ecologically sustainable forestry outside those core areas. Internationally, Save America's Forests is working to protect rare, biodiverse tropical rain forests, as well as the rights of the indigenous people who live in those forests.

***Sequoia ForestKeeper***'s mission is to protect and restore the ecosystems of the southern Sierra Nevada— including both Sequoia National Forest and the Giant Sequoia National Monument— through monitoring forest conditions, increasing awareness of laws, and through education and litigation. By acting as the eyes, ears, and voice of the forest, SFK seeks to improve land management practices, to promote land stewardship, to enforce existing laws and regulations, to implement public awareness programs, to offer assistance to local land management agencies, and to save natural forest ecosystems.

\*Transcription of Bosworth's statements are from *Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations for 2007, Hearings Before A Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives, One Hundred Ninth Congress, Second Session, Subcommittee on Interior Environment, and Related Agencies, Part 6*, U.S. GPO, Washington, 2006.