



The Case for Restoring Jackson State Redwood Forest

An incredible bargain

The State of California has an opportunity to turn Jackson State Forest, a 50,000-acre redwood forest, into an ecological, recreational and educational treasure with no expenditure of taxpayer money. What an incredible bargain for present and future inhabitants of California, the United States and the world.

California and the United States governments are paying \$500 million dollars to preserve the 2,000-acre Headwaters redwood grove, only 4% of the size of Jackson State Forest. Of course the Headwaters is a virgin, unlogged stand of redwoods. But Jackson State Forest was at one time an equally magnificent redwood forest. If we begin now to restore its former grandeur, its beauty and value will continually increase. Our children and grandchildren will thank us for our foresight.

The time to act is now

Jackson State Forest is located in Mendocino County. It runs from near the coastline between Mendocino and Fort Bragg eastward almost to Highway 101 near Willits.

Quick action is needed to change the status of Jackson State Forest, because although it is now publicly owned, the California Department of Forestry is operating the forest as a demonstration of commercial logging.

Although Jackson Forest has been logged to varying degrees in various parts, it contains between five and ten thousand acres of second-growth redwoods that haven't been disturbed for almost 100 years. The California Department of Forestry is giving the highest priority to logging these groves of mature second-growth redwoods. The longer the delay in establishing the restoration forest, the greater the destruction of the intrinsic values of the forest and the longer the time required for restoration.

The benefits of allowing the forest to heal itself will come soon. Redwoods grow to awesome size quickly. Year by year, more and more of the forest canopy will become restored. Underbrush will be

shaded out and the ground will become carpeted with needles. Groves will develop to cathedral size, inspiring visitors with awe. The forest will become more and more beautiful, more and more valuable for solitude, species preservation, salmon spawning, ecological research, education, and recreation.



Trail through proposed logging area *Brandon Gulch*

Fifty-year old policies out of touch

Jackson State Forest was acquired by the state in the late 1940's. Times have changed, but not the mandate for the Forest. It is being operated under essentially the same management policies as the ones adopted in the 1940's.

The California Department of Forestry, which under current law manages the Forest, has the policy of cutting each year as much timber as grows in the forest. Although this may sound like a preservation-oriented policy, it is no such thing. When the California Department of Forestry took over management of the forest in the late 1940s, magnificent virgin redwoods filled a quarter to a third of the forest. By 1980, the California Department of Forestry had cut almost every old-growth tree in the forest.

Current policy gives the highest priority to cutting the largest trees, many of which are over 100 years of age. Thus, although the volume of timber in the forest has remained constant, or perhaps even increased, since the California Department of Forestry took over, the current forest is a shadow of its former self. And, it is getting worse year by year. Every year, more of the older trees are cut, lowering the age of the trees and making Jackson Forest look increasingly like a tree plantation.



Aftermath of logging along Bob Woods Trail

The Case For Restoring the Forest

The case for restoring rather than logging Jackson Forest is compelling:

The people of California own Jackson State Forest

There can be no doubt that the vast majority of Californians would prefer to preserve and enhance the forest for its recreational, ecological, and natural values, rather than to continue to degrade it.

No longer a need to demonstrate that second-growth redwood forests can be logged profitably

A primary purpose of acquiring Jackson State Forest was to demonstrate that second-growth redwood forest could be operated profitably. At the time, in the 1940's, there was no market for second-growth redwood, and there was considerable doubt about if and when such a market would appear. This doubt has long since disappeared.

Redwood forests have been decimated

At the time Jackson State Forest was acquired, Northern California had vast redwood forests,

many of them in far more pristine condition than Jackson State Forest. Logging of Jackson State Forest did little damage to the overall redwood forest resources of California.

Today, the picture is vastly different. Almost all of the large commercial redwood holdings of Northern California have been logged almost to extinction.

For example in Mendocino County, where Jackson State Forest is located, the average inventory of timber in large industrial holdings is only 7,000 to 10,000 board feet per acre, a small fraction of the 80,000 board feet contained in an unlogged acre of 100-120 year old redwoods.

The best-preserved forest

Although not an unlogged forest, Jackson State contains four to five times as much timber per acre as the industrial forests, making it by far the best-preserved large redwood holding in Mendocino County.

In current circumstances, the public benefit will best be served by preserving and enhancing the exceptional resources of Jackson State Forest.

Economic benefits as well losses

Jobs in the timber industry would be lost if Jackson State Forest were changed from a logging operation to a restoration forest. It is important to look in detail at the gains as well as losses in jobs and business that would occur. Gains would occur in many areas and could easily outweigh the losses.

- **Restoring the forest will not end all cutting of trees in the forest.** There are many areas overcrowded with young trees. Thinning of these trees would assist in the recovery of the forest. Thinning would continue to occur as groves moved toward maturity.

In keeping with the objectives of restoration, the cutting of trees would be done so as to minimize the effects on the forest. Such careful management of the forest would require significantly more labor per tree cut; so the loss in logging jobs would be less than the reduction in the cutting of trees.

- **Stream restoration would become a source of jobs.** Parts of Noyo River and Big River watershed lie within Jackson Forest. A small addition of land would put all of the riparian areas of Caspar Creek watershed within Jackson State Forest, creating an exciting

opportunity for restoration of an entire native coho-salmon stream.

- **Recreation-related jobs would be created.** There will be a tremendous demand for recreation opportunities within the forest. The exact nature of what will be provided will be part of the task of planning for the forest, but certainly there will be jobs in constructing recreation facilities and trails and in providing services within the forest to those who come for recreation.
- **The biggest increase in jobs would be outside of the forest.** The increase would occur in the multitude of businesses that serve the needs of tourists: motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, retail stores, gas stations, theaters, etc.

An enormous increase in need for undisturbed redwood forest

The need for a public, undisturbed redwood forest has increased enormously since the time that Jackson State Forest was acquired, and it will continue to increase in the future.

- **Population growth.** In 1950, the population of California was 10 million. Today it is 30 million. Population has tripled in less than 50 years and is projected to double again in the next forty years.
- **Closeness to Population Centers.** Because of Mendocino County's close proximity to the Bay area, a restored Jackson State Forest will be especially valuable for recreation.

Population and development are rapidly pushing up from the Bay area into Sonoma County and beyond. There is little doubt that within another fifty years, Sonoma County will be essentially one large urban area, and Cloverdale, Ukiah, and Willits will be significant cities.

- **Desire for nature.** The desire of people for solitude and nature has increased more than the population as the state has become increasingly urbanized. At the same time, the expanding population has spread out and consumed more and more of the open spaces formerly accessible to urban people.

- **Need for sanctuary.** Just as the recreational values of a large redwood forest have grown enormously since 1950, so has the need for establishing a ecological sanctuary for species dependent on late seral-stage redwoods.

Whereas there was vast acreage of virgin redwoods in 1950, there remain in Mendocino County only a few small stands in public hands. The large industrial forest owners have cut not only all old-growth stands, but almost all of the old second-growth stands. There does not now exist in Mendocino County or anywhere south, any large acreage of mature redwood forest outside of Jackson State Forest.



Beautiful forest slated for logging

Camp 3

Wisdom then and now

The State of California was wise and far-sighted when it acquired Jackson State Forest from the Caspar Lumber Company for \$1.5 million in 1947. It also made good sense at that time to demonstrate that the Forest could be profitably managed for the long term.

What made sense then is completely out of touch with current realities. The state would be wise and far-sighted now to restore Jackson State Redwood Forest for recreation, habitat, education, and research.

Campaign to Restore Jackson State Redwood Forest

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