

7/22

July 20, 2010

Re: General Plan Update wording,

Dear Planning Commissioners,

It has come to my attention that you have requested a clear definition and perhaps a clear reasoning for including the word "ecosystem" in the General Plan Update process for Forest Resources. From the publicly available Planning Commission documents I found only a few instances where ecosystem was considered.

From the staff report for the meeting of May 13, 2010:

On 4-15-2010, Commissioners deliberated and agreed on the following language:

FR-G1 Forestland Resources. Public and private forests producing a wealth of multiple economic, natural resource, and healthy ecosystem values. Constructive dialog and cooperation between state, federal and local agencies and private property owners and a regulatory framework that maximizes private and public interests, including a healthy timber industry and a healthy ecosystem.

Staff suggests a minor revision for grammatical purposes:

FR-G1 Forest Resources. Public and private forests producing a wealth of multiple economic and natural resource values, and a healthy ecosystem. Constructive dialog and cooperation between state, federal and local agencies and private property owners and a regulatory framework that maximizes private and public interests, including a healthy timber industry and a healthy ecosystem.

And then in the staff report for June 10, 2010, it was noted that Faust and Gearheart supported the following language changes:

FR-P11. Lot Line Adjustments. Lot line adjustments of substandard TPZ parcels may be approved in order to consolidate logical timberland management units or to protect forest ecosystem values.

I think there still needs some clarifications and wordsmithing on the first example but let me get to that at the end. The reason ecosystem was added was due in part to the public comments received including those I delivered from the Mattole Restoration Council. And the reason the Council so firmly asked for that inclusion was to expand the outdated General Plan vision for Timber Resources to include all the values to the

county that our forests provide in addition to timber. In fact, embracing the ecosystem of the forest ensures that there will be a healthy crop of timber. They go hand in hand. But without an understanding of the whole forest ecosystem, each part, including the trees, and therefore the timber, will suffer. I am confident that it is within the vision of everyone here to protect our forests and hence their ecosystems, into the future.

So, let's get down to the definition. An ecosystem consists of a dynamic set of living organisms all interacting among themselves and with the environment in which they live. The boundaries can be as singular as a dead tree, which is one ecosystem, or as large as the earth itself. To be clear it is the forest ecosystem with which we are focused.

Forest ecosystems are characterized by a predominance of trees, and by the fauna, flora and ecological cycles (energy, water, carbon and nutrients) with which they are closely associated. Forest ecosystems are valued for their ability to produce timber, maintain biodiversity, provide clean water, clean air, educational and recreational opportunities, sequester carbon, protect watersheds, and maintain the beautiful backdrop against and within which we all live.

Forest ecosystems include the wildlife in the aquatic, celestial and terrestrial realms-including humans, all the invertebrates and microorganisms, the soil, the rocks, and the streams. Protecting our forests for timber and other values is never more important. Committing to our forest ecosystems in this General Plan Update shows an integrity and an intelligence about managing timber in 2010 and beyond. Using new words for present-day concepts is part of what this Update is all about. Now I am the first to admit that wordsmithing is not easy. But let me propose again what the Mattole Restoration Council proposed a year ago June.

“Promote the protection and maintenance of forest ecosystem values as a primary purpose for keeping lands timbered across all ownerships

- Add to any discussion of timber production areas the above purpose. For example in FR-P3: Support effective and lower-cost timber management and regulations as a strategy to maintain timber production and forest ecosystem services as the primary uses of forestlands.”

I have some concrete suggestions:

For simplicity's sake it might be best to use forest ecosystem values instead of services.

Use "forest" in front of "ecosystem" in the Forest Resources section.

For FR-G1, I suggest this change: Public and private forests producing a healthy timber economy while sustaining or improving forest ecosystem values. Constructive dialog and cooperation between state, federal and local agencies and private property owners and a regulatory framework that maximizes private and public interests.

FR-P11 works as agreed upon.

Finally, inclusion of forest ecosystems also allows for compatible uses of TPZ land. Thankyou for this opportunity to again voice my support for our forests and the forest ecosystems of Humboldt county.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ali", with a large, sweeping flourish on the left side.

Ali Freedlund
1304 Sunset Ave
Arcata, CA 95521

