



COMMUNIQUE FROM THE MATTOLE OCCUPIED SO CALLED CALIFORNIA

It's official, we beat PG&E. When they came to cut in Humboldt Redwood State Park we held the line and turned the tide of destruction. The corporation has now publicly confirmed what we have been hearing, that the EVM Enhanced Vegetation Management project is over, and it's a stark failure. Due to our 4 month long direct action campaign in the fall and winter of 2021-22, many hundreds of trees have been saved across Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Day after day we took action, often in the pouring rain and sometimes snow, carefully and consistently

occupying the 'drop zone' under trees in the park that PG&E contractors were actively trying to cut. There were usually five to ten of them for every one of us yet we held our ground. Our numbers varied from 8-25 while the workers numbered 25-100. Forest defenders often faced the threat of injury or death from falling branches cut by intentionally reckless tree-trimmers as well as accidents like when branches or whole trees were dropped on the power lines. In one instance in November 2021 a falling Douglas fir snapped the power lines after the employee cutting it made a grave error. The live wires landed on Mattole road, slithering

and sparking, narrowly missing many forest defenders and company employees. In the howling wind and rain the entire work site came to a standstill as every person became distinctly aware of their own mortality.

Forest defenders were there every day from early October '21 to February '22 except for when the road was blocked by snow. We were waiting for them there in the morning, and we made sure not to leave before they did. We chased them by truck, Prius, motorcycle and foot, shutting down worksites over miles as an amorphous swarm of coordinated autonomous animals.

Our actions did not rely on anybody else's strategy, be it in the courtroom or in the news, nor did it require special gear, advanced training, or meticulous planning.

PG&E managers on site often encouraged reckless behavior in the name of productivity when they believed no one else would find out. Forest defenders learned to protect ourselves while occupying the drop zones with practices like safety briefings, consistent communication with workers on site, taking video and use of neon vests and hard hats. Other tactics included, to a lesser degree, tree-sitting and slowing or stopping convoys of work vehicles.

Many trees were also spared in other places where PG&E's vegetation removal crews were unable to reach in time. Hoping to overwhelm us, PG&E created a virtual army of cutting crews redirected from places like Briceland, Petrolia, and Avenue of the Giants. Many large trees remain intact in these places, often still marked with yellow paint by the surveyors directed to carry out the misguided and ruinous EVM strategy.

In conclusion, we were successful beyond our wildest dreams at saving old-growth trees on public lands and countless other trees across Humboldt. Although Humboldt Redwood Company continues to log Rainbow Ridge nearby and PG&E is still targeting old-growth trees and seeks to spray poison around power poles, hundreds of irreplaceable trees and the creatures living in them remain thanks to the people who put themselves on the front lines and those who supported them.

contact: forestaction@riseup.net

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