

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS ON MENDOCINO REDWOOD COMPANY'S MULTI-SPECIES CONSERVATION PLANS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Arcata, Calif., – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the California Department of Fish and Game (Agencies) today announced the availability of draft environmental documents that provide an analysis of the Mendocino Redwood Company's proposed habitat conservation and timberland management plans.

Under the National Environmental Policy Act, the Services have prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement on MRC's Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), while the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and California Department of Fish and Game have prepared a Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report (PTEIR) for MRC's Natural Community Conservation Plan and Timber Management Plan. These documents have been prepared and are issued jointly. With the announcement of the availability of these environmental analyses, a 90-day public comment period has opened through February 21, 2013.

As part of the HCP, Mendocino Redwood Company has applied for take permits for forestry related activities on 213,244 acres in Mendocino County, California. The Company has prepared an 80-year HCP and is seeking an incidental take permit for nine species listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA, and two unlisted species. Covered activities include timber harvest and management; transportation system construction, operation and maintenance; operation of rock pits and water drafting sites; reforestation; site preparation; habitat restoration and improvement, and monitoring and research.

The Fish and Wildlife Service is the lead agency for California red-legged frog, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and Point Arena mountain beaver. Proposed covered species also include two animal species that are not currently listed under the ESA; northern red-legged frog, and coastal tailed frog.

The following five listed species are proposed for coverage under the National Marine Fisheries Service permit: coho salmon (Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast Evolutionary Significant Unit [ESU]; coho salmon (Central California Coast ESU); Chinook salmon (California Coastal ESU); steelhead (Northern California Distinct Population Segment [DPS]); and steelhead (Central California Coast DPS)

Under the terms of the proposed 80-year permit, MRC can operate in compliance with the Endangered Species Act as long as the company implements the mandated conservation and mitigation measures developed in the HCP. HCPs benefit threatened and endangered species by providing an incentive for landowners to integrate conservation measures into the management of their lands.

The NCCP is a cooperative effort to protect habitats and species by identifying and providing large-scale protection of plants, animals, and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity. It is intended to sustain and restore species and their habitat and to maintain the continued viability of biological communities. In addition to the vertebrates identified above, the plan also provides measures to conserve 31 plant species, three common, and four uncommon natural communities. The Timber Management Plan, if certified as part of the Program Timberland Environmental Impact Report, would grant MRC the authority to submit Program Timber Harvesting Plans for individual timber harvesting projects to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Timber Management Plan covers all aspects of MRC's proposed timber operations.

The Agencies invite the public to comment on the draft EIS/PTEIR and related documents. All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and may be made available to the public.

Copies of the draft EIS/PTEIR and related documents are available at [www.fws.gov/arcata](http://www.fws.gov/arcata) or at <http://swr.nmfs.noaa.gov/nepa.htm>. Hard copies can be viewed during regular business hours from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the National Marine Fisheries Service and Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office, located at 1655 Heindon Road in Arcata.

Hard copies are also available at Mendocino County Library, Fort Bragg Branch Library, 499 Laurel Street, Fort Bragg, CA 95437; Mendocino County Library, Main Branch Library, 105 North Main Street, Ukiah, CA 95482; Mendocino County Library, 390 East Commercial Street, Willits, CA 95490; and Mendocino County Library, 225 Main Street, Point Arena, CA 95468.

Send comments by email to [mrc.hcpitp@noaa.gov](mailto:mrc.hcpitp@noaa.gov). Copies of all email comments will be routed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and California Department of Fish and Game. Comments submitted in an email will be accepted provided they do not exceed 6 megabytes in size and are virus free. Hypertext email links to other web pages or publications shall not be deemed the equivalent of written comment.

Comments can also be submitted by regular mail or facsimile to: (1) Eric Shott, National Marine Fisheries Service, 777 Sonoma Avenue, Room 325, Santa Rosa, CA 95404, facsimile (707) 578-3435; or (2) John Hunter, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Arcata Fish and Wildlife Office, 1655 Heindon Road, Arcata, California 95521, facsimile (707) 822-8411.

Comments can also be made at two upcoming public meetings, which will be held on Tuesday, December 11, 2012, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Redwood Empire Fair Fine Arts Building, 1055 North State Street in Ukiah, Calif.; and on Wednesday, December 12, 2012, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the C.V. Starr Center, 300 S. Lincoln St., Fort Bragg, Calif.

The Agencies will evaluate the applications, associated documents, and comments submitted to them to prepare a final EIS/PTEIR. A permit decision will be made no sooner than 30 days after the publication of the final EIS/PTEIR.

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