



Friends of the Gualala River

PO Box 1543, Gualala, CA 95445 (707) 886-5355 GualalaRiver.org

For Immediate Release. February 8, 2010

**Contacts: Friends of the Gualala River, John Holland, 707-886-5355
Center for Biological Diversity, Justin Augustine, 415-436-9682 x302
Coast Action Group, Alan Levine, 707-542-4408**

Lawsuit Filed to Protect Old Growth Redwoods on the Gualala River

San Francisco – Three conservation groups, the Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of the Gualala River and Coast Action Group, filed suit against the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the California Department of Fish and Game on February 5, 2010, over the agencies' failure to protect the last remaining stand of old-growth redwoods in the Doty Creek Planning Watershed.

The suit was filed in Mendocino County Superior Court and seeks to overturn approval of the Bower non-industrial timber management plan (NTMP). The suit describes, among other things, how the NTMP fails to adequately address the project's environmental impacts, fails to consider less destructive alternatives, and fails to include necessary information for proper decision-making.

The Bower NTMP proposes to harvest 615 acres near the Gualala River, which straddles Mendocino and Sonoma Counties on the northern California coast. Primarily at issue is the plan's proposed logging of 18 acres of old-growth forest. These ancient trees, which are up to 9 feet in diameter, represent the last nesting habitat in the area for a rare and threatened species of coastal bird, the marbled murrelet. Loss of old-growth forest is the main cause of decline in the murrelet's populations, and the vast majority of old-growth redwood forest stands are now gone from California.

"There is no good reason to log these redwoods, some of which are centuries old," said Justin Augustine with the Center for Biological Diversity. "California, and especially Mendocino County, are in a huge deficit when it comes to old-growth redwood, and every California agency should be working to save these trees, not authorizing their destruction."

Over two hundred letters of protest were submitted by concerned citizens during the public comment period on the plan. Comment letters, plan documents, photographs and the text of the lawsuit petition are available at www.gualalariver.org.

"This old growth stand is irreplaceable because, although centuries old redwood trees could regenerate, by the time they do, the many species dependent on old growth will likely become locally extinct," said John Holland with Friends of the Gualala River.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a non-profit, national public interest organization with over 40,000 members and offices in San Francisco, California and elsewhere in the United States.

Friends of the Gualala River is a non-profit grassroots watershed protection organization formed to share common environmental concerns and research regarding the Gualala River. FOGR's goal is to protect the Gualala River watershed and the species that rely on it.

Coast Action Group is an organization dedicated to the protection of fishery and water quality resources on the north coast of California with a history of actions dating back to 1990. Coast Action Group exists in order to protect fish and wildlife through application of state and federal laws and comments on issues of concern statewide.