



**Friends of Gualala River
Forest Unlimited
California Native Plant Society**



GualalaRiver.org



MEDIA RELEASE

“Dogwood” timber harvest plan lawsuit ends with logging permit vacated by CAL FIRE; most of 400 acres of Gualala River floodplain redwood forest left intact

Date: September 26, 2017

The lawsuit to stop logging the Gualala River floodplain redwood forest tract in the “Dogwood” timber harvest plan (THP) is over. CAL FIRE was ordered by Sonoma County Superior Court to vacate (revoke) the Gualala Redwood Timber Company timber harvest plan on April 18, 2017. CAL FIRE finally responded to the writ sending a “Notice of Director’s Decision Vacating Approval” to GRT’s forester Art Haschak on September 7, 2017, prohibiting any further logging in the Dogwood THP area. GRT must now file a new timber harvest plan if it seeks to log some or all of the floodplain redwood forest in the vacated “Dogwood” THP.

The Dogwood THP was shut down by the Court after logging on one tributary had begun. The five miles of riparian redwood forest along the main stem of the river in the Dogwood THP area has not been logged.

In March, the court also ordered CAL FIRE to “reconsider” its approval of the Dogwood THP within 150 days. The Court entered judgment against CAL FIRE on March 23, 2017, based on the agency’s failure to assess any cumulative impacts of another floodplain timber harvest plan submitted by Gualala Redwood Timber during the Dogwood timber harvest plan review period, the “German South” THP.

While environmentalist plaintiffs are celebrating their victory, and the fact that the century-old floodplain redwood forest in the Dogwood THP area will be spared for now, they remain concerned CAL FIRE has not improved or reformed its environmental reviews of floodplain forest logging. The Court

ordered CAL FIRE to “reconsider” approval of the Dogwood THP, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to wetlands, rare plants, floodplain forest, and listed fish and wildlife species. But after being ordered to revoke the logging permit, CAL FIRE and GRT made a minimal, nominal effort to meet this order. Rather than substantially reconsider or correct the many basic environmental flaws of the timber plan, CAL FIRE and GRT minimally complied with Judge René Chouteau’s order to “reconsider” its approval by submitting only a single supplemental page, three paragraphs long, with minor changes.

“CAL FIRE still isn’t taking seriously its own Forest Practice Rules to properly assess cumulative impacts to critical floodplain forests, as well as not adhering to the California Environmental Quality Act,” said Larry Hanson of Forest Unlimited.

GRT has continued to file multiple floodplain redwood logging plans on the Gualala River after Dogwood, and CAL FIRE has continued to approve them. There is no sign that the agency is reforming its environmental review practices by preparing meaningful cumulative impacts analyses of wetlands, floodplain forest, rare plants, and fish and wildlife, despite losing the Dogwood THP lawsuit.

“The real problem isn’t going to go away until the Board of Forestry and CAL FIRE follow their own rules, including CEQA. Until they do, we are not going away, either” said Charlie Ivor, president of Friends of Gualala River. “The Gualala River floodplain forest is going to be protected according to law, no exceptions.”

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For more background information on the Dogwood THP lawsuit, visit: www.gualalariver.org



Wild and Scenic reach of the lower Gualala River on the bank opposite “Dogwood” THP area, 2016