

## **Media Release**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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Coastal Forest Alliance

### **“CHAINSAW WINE” PROTEST APPEALS TO PINOT NOIR PRODUCERS TO REIGN IN THEIR “BAD APPLES”**

**WHAT: Street Theater Protest with Chainsaw-carrying 8’ Wine Bottle**

**WHEN: 9:45 AM**

**WHERE: 14711 ARMSTRONG WOODS RD., GUERNEVILLE, CA.**

Coastal forest activists from Sonoma County will unveil their own vintage product today in front of the “PINOT ON THE RIVER” gathering in Guerneville. They will call attention to the continued pressure for conversion of coastal redwood forests to vineyards by some “bad actors” in the wine industry. An eight-foot high wine bottle bearing the label “*Pinot Egregio: Chainsaw Wine*” wielding an over-sized chainsaw will threaten eight-foot tall redwood trees in its quest to convert the fragile forest ecosystem to the highly cherished grape varieties.

Certain private and corporate interests from outside the county are targeting coastal forestlands for clear cutting to make way for extensive wine vineyard projects. The California Department of Forestry (CDF) is currently approving these forestland to vineyard conversions in the coastal forests of Sonoma County. The recent CDF approval of Negative Declarations for the “Roessler”, “Hansen Whistler”, and “Martin” conversions in Annapolis represents the opening door on a far reaching, serious threat to maintaining water quality, water quantity and biodiversity in north coast watersheds and rivers such as the Gualala River.

“The deforestation in these approved plans and those pending is being done without any thorough study of the cumulative effects from all of the existing, pending, and potential future conversions”, says Chris Poehlmann of the Coastal Forest Alliance (CFA). CFA is an environmental citizens group from the Annapolis area concerned about widespread forestland conversion. “Vineyard installation permanently strips the thick forest vegetation that provides habitat for many animal species. Exposing bare soil to direct sun alters the surrounding area’s microclimate. In addition, the liming of the soil, miles of six foot high fencing, pesticide use, housing and traffic impacts, etc., all contribute to negative environmental and social consequences.”

Environmental groups are concerned about dangers these conversions pose to the surrounding areas. The complex forest ecosystem acts as a sponge that

absorbs winter rainfall and releases it slowly over the year to maintain fish, riparian habitat and clean, safe water for domestic use. In addition, long lists of toxic pesticides and herbicides used by commercial vineyards have been shown to disrupt soil and nutrient cycles, causing irreversible damage. No studies exist looking into the effects of this potential chemical cocktail on salmonids and other downstream fauna and aquatic life.

The Pinot on the River features tastings, workshops and winemakers from over 30 wineries. Although The Pinot on the River Festival is aimed at celebrating the quality, variety and expertise in this agricultural niche, the continued deforestation of the coastal forests by zealous newcomers is noticeably absent from any of the discussions during the four day event. Private and corporate entrepreneurs who view this forestland as a newly discovered and affordable “terroir” have targeted the cool coastal forests of northern California. The Artesa Winery from Napa has an application to clearcut 169 acres of forest in Annapolis in the northwest corner of Sonoma County. This would be the largest forestland conversion in the history of Sonoma County. Participants in the Guerneville event such as the Roessler Cellars also have applications on file to clear redwood forest above the already impaired Gualala River.

See: <http://www.gualalariver.org/vineyards/annapolis.html>

In 2002, The Wine Institute released its Code of Sustainability in response to drawing fire from environmental groups over their development practices. Although both groups acknowledge the progress the Wine Industry has made in making improvements on existing vineyards, the loss of irreplaceable redwood forests still continues. These plans for permanent deforestation are being pushed by a handful in the industry whose “Passion for Pinot” and profits threaten the survival of the coastal forests and also threaten to give the industry a serious black eye with their consumers.

**For more background information, contact:**

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