

# Outcomes from August 20, 2014 Outreach Meeting and Actions Taken by Green Diamond Resource Company

## Summary of the FSC outreach group “SUGGESTIONS”

### **Community**

More transparent and demonstrative FSC certification changes:

*Action Taken: We have worked closely with our foresters and logging personnel to find the best method of “in unit” tree retention to break up the visual continuity of even-aged units. The retention of these trees requires consideration of not only the visual impacts, but also operational limitations and safety concerns. After trying several different approaches, we believe that the retention of small groups of trees is the best approach. These small tree groups may include both hardwoods and conifers, and are often centered around a wildlife tree or snag. Our annual FSC surveillance audit was conducted in September and we received very positive comments regarding our retention. Through our FSC certification we have also implanted additional measures for wildlife that include expanding the number of conifer and hardwood trees retained and protecting unique habitats. These areas include: the “short brush” serpentine area on Red Mountain/Rattlesnake Ridge; protection of all true oak stands > 20 acres; protection of all prairies > 20 acres; protection of all older hardwood stands >20 acres; and, the protection of all old-growth stands.*

More opportunity for public comment and more communication with the public:

*Action taken: While there are many “procedural” ways to comment on proposed projects such as timber harvesting plans and other permits, we are continuing to seek ways to inform the public about management practices. In the past year we have conducted our “Day in the Forest” and a HSU “Osher Lifelong Learning Institute” class tour. We continue to present at local Rotary and other service clubs and provide guest lectures and class tours for HSU. We make an effort to provide the local media notices of important events that involve Green Diamond, and provide responses to all media inquiries. We also have constant interaction with our neighbors and try to be responsive to their concerns. We will continue to seek ways to keep the interested public informed and provide avenues for public input.*

### **Business Practices**

Community forest in McKinleyville:

*Action taken: While there have been discussions in the local community for several years about a forest park or community forest in the McKinleyville area, there are no current plans for such facilities on Green Diamond lands. We are actively engaged in several conservation projects including: completing stages 2 and 3 of the McKay Tract community forest; working with potential funders for a Conservation Easement on and trail to Strawberry Rock near Trinidad; and a Conservation Easement on Green Diamond lands south of Redwood National Park that would exclude any future subdivision or development. These current projects have our Land Management Division at capacity. In the future, we plan to have a discussion with the MCSD regarding their thoughts on the concept of a forest park or community forest.*

Develop clear process for recreational access:

*Action Taken: Green Diamond has had a comprehensive program to allow access for hunting for several years. We currently provide access for other recreation uses on a case-by-case basis. We are in the process of discussing more formal program for consideration of non-hunting recreational access for activities such as mountain bike riding. This is complicated by the need to insure there are not conflicts with active operations and the constant threat of trespass marijuana grows.*

Improve markets for bi-products such as biomass and biofuels:

*Action Taken: In 2014 we completed the upgrades on our chip dock and shipped two cargos of conifer wood chips to China. We have four ships planned for this year, but have experienced shoaling problems with the Humboldt Bay entrance channel. We are working closely with the Harbor Commission and the Army Corps of Engineers to rectify this problem for both the near-term and long-term basis. There is also the opportunity to ship hardwood chips, but the presence of the "sudden oak death" pathogen has limited some overseas markets. We are continuously looking for opportunities to promote the development of bio-fuels and bioenergy. Our area has an untapped wealth of renewable feedstock to generate bioenergy from both sawmill residues and logging and thinning slash. Unfortunately we continue to see pressure on the local biomass power plants due to rate structures and other factors. In fact, last year we saw the closure of the biomass power plant at Scotia. Low oil prices also continue to place pressure on biomass-based power generation. On a positive note, we continue to interface with potential biomass customers in Asia.*

For areas considered to be sold -- look for more opportunities for CEs or be more selective with buyer:

*Action Taken: Green Diamond is actively engaged in several projects involving conservation easements including: Phase 3 of the McKay Tract community forest that will preclude any future subdivision or development; a conservation easement and trail to Strawberry Rock near Trinidad; and a conservation easement on the Green Diamond lands that are to south of Redwood National Park that would exclude any future subdivision or development. Our most recent lands sales have been to the Yurok Tribe/Western Rivers Conservancy and to private buyers that have actively engaged in the carbon markets. Recently we worked closely with the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust to secure a tract of Green Diamond land near Moonstone Beach. The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust acquired the property with funds from the California Coastal Conservancy and will integrate the property into the design of the California Coastal Trail. A portion of the selling price included a donation from Green Diamond that will be applied to the McKay Tract or another conservation project in the future.*

Don't be naïve about pending litigation:

*Action Taken: We take any potential litigation as a very serious matter. We try to dissuade potential plaintiffs by following not only the letter of the law, but the spirit of the regulation. We try to instill strong ethical standards in our employees, and encourage interactions that seek solutions rather than result in stalemates. Our forest management practices go well beyond the minimums of the Forest Practice Rules, but instead are based on sound science that has resulted in long-term, property-wide permits that are partnerships with state and federal agencies.*

## **On the Ground Practices**

More heterogeneity "fuzzy" edges:

*Action Taken: These small tree groups may include both hardwoods and conifers, and are often centered around a wildlife tree or snag. As part of our FSC certification we have developed a very comprehensive tree retention program that includes: the retention of all "wildlife trees" (usually larger diameter trees with wildlife features); two of the largest hardwood trees per acre; and at least one stand representative tree every 1½ to 2½ acres within an even-aged opening.*

More cross-boundary landscape scale management (climate change and bears):

*Actions Taken: We are currently working with Redwood National and State Parks to maintain key habitats that occur on both sides of our respective property lines. This includes the removal of Douglas-fir saplings that are encroaching into true oak stands. We are also working together to maintain and enhance populations of bear grass that is culturally significant to the local Tribes. The Yurok Tribe has also proposed the reintroduction of California condors to the lower Redwood Creek/Klamath River area that is adjacent to our lands. We are working with the Tribe and agencies to evaluate potential management impacts.*

Opportunity to extend rotation and increase wood quality/Manage for late seral:

*Actions Taken: In 2012, we initiated a comprehensive commercial thinning program. Last year, we thinned 1,000 acres. We plan to thin 2,800 acres in 2015. The small diameter trees that are harvested during these thinning operations are typically sold into the fencing market. We initially control tree spacing with pre-commercial thinning that occurs between 10 and 20 years, and plan to accomplish 5,000 acres this year. We then commercially thin stands that are between 30 and 40 years of age. In a few areas we have thinned 50 year old stands for a second time. We are monitoring their growth response to determine what makes the most sense for rotation age. The time-value of money is still a key consideration for rotation age. However, thinning produces larger diameter trees at younger ages which results in a greater percentage of heartwood. Heartwood is a key factor in the value of redwood lumber. A pure heartwood board may have 3 to 4 times the value of a board that contains sapwood. This analysis is ongoing and will help us determine the right balance of rotation age based on a combination of biological and economic factors. Regarding rotation age, 27% of our ownership is in a protected status that is either un-harvested or very lightly harvested. Our Aquatic Habitat Conservation Plan limits harvest entry into the riparian zones to once per rotation. The outer bands of these zones are very lightly harvested, then allowed to grow for another 50 to 60 years. The average age of the timber we are currently harvesting is 55 to 60 years. This means that these zones will be allowed to grow for an additional 50 years resulting in riparian zones that are over 100 years old by the next entry. We are also working on a long-term experiment with agencies and scientists from several universities to determine the potential benefits resulting from thinning these riparian zones. The experiment will monitor if there is an increase in insect and fish productivity and the growth response of the retained trees.*

Move to selective logging:

*Action Taken: At this time we do not plan to use selection harvesting as the primary silvicultural system on our property. We have compared the growth associated with selection with even-aged management and concluded that selection results in reduced productivity. With the implementation of the FSC in-unit retention many of our even-aged harvest units look more like a*

*“variable retention” harvest than a clearcut. However, under the Forest Practice Rules definition we are still required to classify the units as clearcuts. While we use even-aged harvesting for the majority of our harvests, we also use selection and thinning silvicultural prescriptions. We are also working with HSU and UCB professors to implement silvicultural experiments to test variable density harvesting. This method would retain more overstory trees and promote a two-aged stand structure. We recently toured some of these test plots on Jackson Demonstration State Forest in Mendocino County.*

More slash management in urban interface:

*Action Taken: We reviewed this issue with our operations staff and they believe that slash is removed and treated within the urban interface zones as required by the regulations. We are required to remove or lop slash within 100 feet of any public road. Within 100 feet of any habitable structure, all slash must be removed, and between 100 and 200 feet, all slash must be lopped. Whenever we operate next to public roads, rural properties or a structure, we take precautions to fall trees away from these features to minimize the buildup of slash. The slash that is created is either removed for biomass production, or piled and burned. These piles are created away from any homes and we provide the neighbors notice before we burn. In some cases when the piles do not pose a fire hazard, they are left as wildlife habitat.*

Develop a coordinated bear management program:

*Action Taken: Black bears are a natural part of the North Coast environment. However, bears in Del Norte, Humboldt and Northern Mendocino Counties engage in stripping the bark from trees not seen in other parts of California. In our area, bears do a great deal of damage to young forest stands. In some areas of concentrated damage we have quantified 30% or more of the trees damaged or killed. We also have a very high density of bears with an estimated 3 to 4 bears per square mile. Since the use of hounds in the hunting of bears was banned, the number of bears harvested by hunters was initially greatly reduced. We currently allow recreational bear hunting opportunities to the public after completion of a safety orientation conducted by our Game Management Administrator. We have discussed bear management with the neighboring state and federal parks but have not developed any coordinated plans.*

Better PR and communication about what is going on:

*Action Taken: One of the key outcomes of this public outreach event was the realization that we need to find better ways to communicate what we are doing to the interested public. Many of the issues raised by the participants are either already incorporated in our management, or in the process of being implemented. Unfortunately what the public sees in the media is our response to criticisms. We conducted a public information meeting near the end of our FSC certification process. Unfortunately that meeting was dominated by one single issue (Strawberry Rock) that precluded many attendees from speaking. We need to find better opportunities to “tell our story” in a setting with open dialogue. We continue to present at local Rotary and other service clubs and provide guest lectures and class tours for HSU. We make an effort to provide the local media notices of important events that involve Green Diamond, provide responses to all media inquiries, and have participated in feature articles and “My Word” newspaper columns. We also have constant interaction with our neighbors and try to be responsive to their concerns. We will continue to seek ways to keep the interested public better informed and provide avenues for public input.*

Better collaboration with new culture of marijuana:

*Action Taken: We are assuming the “new culture” is referring to the legalization effort and the “greening” of marijuana cultivation to address environmental concerns. We have reviewed drafts of proposed marijuana ordinances but have not actively engaged any of the proponents. Our primary concern is with trespass grows on our timberlands that endanger the safety of our employees, result in damage to our trees, and result in environmental damage. We support any effort that seeks to prevent and control trespass grows. We will also be watching with interest for any process that creates a “greener” marijuana culture that results in compliance with all applicable environmental standards.*

Better coordination with adjacent landowners for trespass and water quality (illegal grows):

*Action Taken: We work closely with the Sheriff’s Department and California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens to locate and remove all trespass grows on our timberlands. This includes conducting overflights of the property in late summer. We also coordinate with our neighbors to control trespass and report suspicious activity. We participate in workshops and forums that are targeted at trespass grows and illegal water removals. We will continue to work with adjacent landowners, agencies and law enforcement to prevent illegal activities.*