

KFOI Radio - Shasta Environmental Alliance Program Sep. 14, 2018

David Ledger: Good afternoon. My name is David Ledger, reporting today on KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance Program. This is a weekly program. It starts every Friday at 1:00 PM. This is the first time the show will be 30 minutes, so today we'll have time to interview Leimone Waite, Shasta College instructor and Master Gardener coordinator for the Shasta County UC Extension program.

The Shasta Environmental Alliance is a nonprofit organization which has 14 supporting groups, and you can see our website at ecoshasta.org. We also have a Facebook page at facebook.com/shastaenvironmentalalliance.

Now today, I want to talk to you a little about David "Gypsy" Chain, who was killed at the age of 24 trying to protect old-growth redwood forests during the Redwood Summer days in 1998. You might ask, why am I doing this today? And that's because the 20th Anniversary Memorial Service and benefit will be held in Eureka on Sunday, September 16th, for the David Gypsy Chain Memorial Scholarship. Noted tree-sitter Julia Butterfly Hill will be the program host, and many activists from the Redwood Summer fights of the 1980s and '90s to stop clear-cutting of old-growth redwoods will be there to speak.

For a quick, brief background: Pacific Lumber Company was a 140-year-old company. Publicly owned and founded in 1863 by the Murphy family, it consisted of 200,000 acres of redwood and Douglas fir forests. The company practiced sustainable logging for many decades, and the Murphy family still had a large but minority interest in the company. The company was debt-free.

Unfortunately, Maxxam Company of Texas saw that the company's timber holdings were worth more than the company's stock and instituted a hostile takeover financed by junk bonds in 1988. When they took over the company, they also took out \$60 million of the company's pension funds. To maximize profits and pay down the debt from junk bonds, Maxxam turned the company from one of sustainable logging to very aggressive clear-cutting of old-growth redwood trees. Maxxam began to cut down these trees and turn them into lumber as fast as they could, with the approval of the always compliant California Department of Forestry, which oversees timber harvest plans on private lands.

As environmentalists began to see what was happening, they began protests, legal court battles, and tree-sitting—made famous by Julia Butterfly Hill, as well as other protesters who would sit in the trees for a number of months sometimes and protect the tree from being cut by loggers. Some of the protests they had during these Redwood Summers had as many as 3,000 people show up.

Amid these protests, anger on both sides grew between Pacific Lumber employees and protesters. Some activists, such as David Gypsy Chain, would go out in the woods and have verbal battles with loggers. Loggers cutting the old-growth trees would generally cut them so that they would fall downhill on this particular parcel. However, in one of

these confrontations on September 17, 1998, a logger cut a 135-foot redwood tree so that it fell laterally towards a small group of protesters and crushed the head of David Gypsy Chain, who died at age 24 on the site.

The logger who cut the tree was named Arlington Earl Ammons, who claimed he didn't know protesters were nearby. However, Earth First! had videotaped the confrontation and claimed Ammons had threatened the protesters. I could not find any videos, but I did listen to the tapes, and it was difficult to discern exactly who was saying what, but you could tell that everyone knew who was present. This fatal confrontation occurred near Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park, and that's next to Highway 36 near Fortuna. Following an investigation by the Sheriff's Department, Humboldt County District Attorney Terry Farmer declined to prosecute Mr. Ammons and stated he might charge the protesters with involuntary manslaughter—those who were the witnesses to this killing.

Pacific Lumber claimed that it always used safe logging practices. However, after the death of David Chain, it turned out that Pacific Lumber had at least 250 violations of the California Forest Practices Act between 1995 and 1997, and these violations continued to accumulate in 1998. So in November of that year, Pacific Lumber became the first company ever to lose its logging license in California.

This eventually led to the sale of over 7,000 acres of Pacific Lumber old-growth forest to the federal government in 1999 for \$380 million. It is managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and this land is called the Headwaters Forest Preserve. While this deal did provide considerable money to Pacific Lumber, it did put in place strict harvest plans, stopping practices that the Board of Forestry had ignored for over a decade. The company was no longer able to practice its clear-cutting and disregard forestry regulations.

This eventually led to Pacific Lumber Company filing for bankruptcy in 2007. It was unable to pay the interest on its loans. This threatened many of the employees' jobs, their pensions, and local suppliers who were owed money by Maxxam. This finally led to a state-sanctioned financial deal whereby Mendocino Redwood Company took over Pacific Lumber from Maxxam and promised to promote sustainable timber practices.

Hostilities were still high following the death of David Chain, especially in the company-owned town of Scotia and the nearby town of Fortuna, where a former Maxxam manager of Pacific Lumber was elected mayor. I want to read to you part of a recent op-ed piece by Joan Dunning. She's an Arcata artist and author who wrote a book about the Redwood Summer battles, among other books. Excerpts from this article I'll be reading appeared in the *Eureka Times-Standard* and *EcoNews*, and this will give you an example of the extreme hatred of certain individuals who supported clear-cutting of the redwoods. Here is an excerpt from that article:

"After David died, his mother, Cindy Albrecht, asked me to create a monument to David which was to be paid for by Maxxam Corporation. I agreed, but I warned her that the

only monument which I thought could survive the vitriol of the times would have to be made of stone. Fewer and fewer of us remember the violence that this county endured after the takeover of Pacific Lumber Company by Texas-based Maxxam Corporation. It was a horrible, confusing era that divided Humboldt County in a way that is unimaginable in these more peaceful times. It was tough to have to warn Cindy that I believed her son might be the object of attack, even after his death."

Next, Joan described how a large bronze plaque she made was embedded in a large cut boulder and placed near the site of David's death, which was near Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park. They had a memorial there, and within a week after the memorial, the plaque had been vandalized. The patina was ruined with egg, and a sledgehammer had been used in an attempt to smash in the face. The image had adequately withstood the attack due to the support of the epoxy and the boulder behind it. Those who had been to visit the plaque in the first week had gathered the eggshells that were crushed and left them in a tiny pile as an offering to David, along with wildflowers, stones, and shells.

But each year, when Cindy and her family returned to visit David, there was further damage. Finally, several years after its dedication, we found that a large hole had been drilled through David's forehead and indelible red paint had been used for blood. Finally, Cindy broke down and we realized that somehow, the monument would have to find a new home. Eventually, a secret place was found in the woods for the monument that few people know about.

An update: in 2002, the District Attorney who refused to prosecute the logger was defeated in an election after having served 20 years in office. The new DA sued Pacific Lumber for its timber practices. The company then funded an unsuccessful recall campaign against the new DA. The sheriff did not run for reelection and retired.

So this memorial will be held this Sunday, September 16th, in Eureka at the historic Eagle House. For more information, go to yournec.org or just Google *EcoNews*. Admission is \$25, and students are free. Besides Julia Butterfly Hill, Darrell Cherney, Joan Dunning, and other activists will be there, and this is a great way to honor the memory of David Gypsy Chain.

Redding Trails Update

Many of the City of Redding trails and BLM trails, as I reported last week, are now open. According to information released Wednesday by Travis Menne of Redding Community Services, the North Sacramento River Trail is now open. So if you add all of these trails together—the westside trails, the Swasey Recreation Area, and the Mule Mountain trails—there are still a lot of trails for people to hike and bike on.

Made in the Shade Film Screening

Now I'd like to talk about *Made in the Shade*. *Made in the Shade* is a film—actually a documentary—that was made by a group of Sacramento citizens in cooperation with the City of Sacramento. This film will be shown at 6:30 PM at the First United Methodist Church.

This film is a documentary of how a group of Sacramento citizens, in cooperation with the City of Sacramento and the Sacramento Municipal Utility District, over a period of about 35 years, planted almost 600,000 trees in an effort to provide more shade to the city and reduce the utility's peak electric demand from summer air conditioning, as well as to create an urban forest. At the same time, these trees remove perhaps as much as 200,000 tons of CO_2 from the atmosphere—carbon which is now stored in the trees. As these trees grow, more CO_2 will be fixed in the trees.

The people who produced the film, all tree advocates, will be in Redding on September 21st to show this film and explain what they did about it. To supplement this talk and make it more relevant to Redding, Travis Menne of Redding Community Services will explain how the City of Redding already planted 1,200 trees last year, and they are doing 1,000 more this fall and 2,000 through 2019 to 2020. He will also discuss a recent grant from Cal Fire, which will allow the city to plant more street trees in downtown Redding. Time permitting, he will also discuss the city's re-oak program, which involves the planting of oak trees in areas where there was a severe burn from the Carr Fire. Questions from the audience and a panel discussion will follow the film.

This is sponsored by the Shasta Environmental Alliance, the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival, and KFOI Radio 90.9 FM. This event will be held at the First United Methodist Church, that's at East and South Street, and starts at 6:30 PM. For more information, email ecoshasta@gmail.com or go to our website, ecoshasta.org.

North State Rise for Climate

OK, I want to report on North State Rise for Climate. I announced that last week, and at the North State Rise for Climate, we had about 150 people show up for this event, and we had a great list of speakers and short videos.

One impressive video presentation was by Chris Cooter, a meteorologist at Channel 12. He showed through a series of graphs how forest fires in California and the West have been increasing in amounts of area burned over the decades, and how temperatures have also been increasing. He then showed a graph which demonstrated that it isn't related to droughts. For example, the period around 1976 to '77 was a very severe drought, but during those years, a very small amount of acreage burned.

Several groups had tables set up displaying various issues related to climate change, and between the variety of different speakers, people learned a considerable amount about climate change from different perspectives.

California Native Plant Society Fall Sale

Another event coming up is the California Native Plant Society Fall Sale. The Shasta Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will be holding their 36th Annual Fall Native Plant Sale at Shasta College, near the farms, at 9:00 AM. Prices for these native plants are \$7.00 for the one-gallon size. A member-only pre-sale with a \$1.00 discount will be held Friday from 4:00 to 6:00 PM. It is open to CNPS members, but non-members can join on the spot and get the discount. For more information, go to shastacnps.org.

Interview with Leimone Waite (Shasta College & UC Cooperative Extension)

David Ledger: Next up, we have Leimone Waite, who is the Master Gardener coordinator for the Shasta County UC Cooperative Extension. She is also an instructor at Shasta College, where she has taught classes on plant science, soil, and horticulture for the last 20 years out of a 25-year teaching career. Welcome to KFOI, Leimone.

Leimone Waite: Well, thank you.

David Ledger: Now Leimone, I have a question here. One of them is, I understand that you and the Master Gardeners are concerned about people in the Redding area who are cutting down many trees around their homes and land following the Carr Fire that might still be healthy.

Leimone Waite: Oh yes. Several of our Master Gardeners live out in the areas that were burned. Either they have lost a home, or they still have a home but others around them have lost homes. They are reporting that as cleanup crews come in and clean up the lots, they're cutting down all of the trees as well. Our biggest concern has been that a lot of the oaks may still be quite alive and just waiting to come back once we get some rains. And so, I guess we want to get the message out: don't be so hasty in cutting down those oak trees unless you know they've really been compromised. There are some things you can do to really evaluate if the tree truly is compromised and needs to be sawed down, or if it may recover.

David Ledger: And what are those things that you look for?

Leimone Waite: The things that you want to look for—now, if it's an oak tree, these aren't always going to be true for other types of trees, because some trees have much thinner bark and are not adapted to the kind of fire ecology that the oaks are. But with the oak, if it's lost foliage but you don't really see a lot of damage on the trunk, it most likely will re-leaf and be quite fine.

If it has only some spotty scorching around the base, you can examine the cambium, and if at least 30% or so of that looks good, it's a positive sign. The cambium layer is the area inside of the bark where the active growth area is, where the sugars move from the top of the tree down into the roots. It should be a pink or kind of pale white color. But if it looks more like caramel—you know, like it's been caramelized—then it's not healthy.

You can tell by peeling a little section of bark back, and you can put it back; it'll heal over again if the tree is still alive.

Also, if the tree is over 12 inches in diameter, so it's a pretty good-sized tree, even if it's scorched all the way around, if there's no reduction in the bark thickness—it doesn't look like the bark has been burnt away—it may very well recover.

The other part of that is you should look at the root system, because in some cases, the fire will go underground and it will burn the root system. You want to look around and make sure that there wasn't fire activity underground. You could use a shovel or something just to kind of poke around and make sure that there aren't hollows underground. Otherwise, the tree may very well recover, so it shouldn't be cut down right away; really wait for next spring before making that decision.

David Ledger: OK. Now, I've noticed a lot of the fire pictures I see in the newspaper and on the internet, that not only in Santa Rosa but Redding, where you look, the house is completely burned down and the trees are still green. Now, should those trees be protected, or what should you do with those trees there?

Leimone Waite: For those trees, you should keep watering them. Most likely those trees will recover, even if there is a scorched spot on one side of them. Trees are amazing in their ability to heal over, so as long as you're keeping them well-watered until the rains come and fertilizing them in the spring—don't fertilize them now as we're going into winter, but next spring—giving them a little extra love can make a big difference. They can heal over a pretty substantial wound. Sometimes you may have to cut away the dead bark if you're seeing that it's hindering their ability to grow new bark back, but a lot of times trees can heal up from pretty major wounds.

David Ledger: OK. Now, let's say some homeowners may not feel like they can really judge if a tree is going to make it or not. Should you get like a certified arborist, or could you save some money and maybe get a tree faller or someone that's experienced with cutting down trees to advise you?

Leimone Waite: I always recommend hiring an arborist just because I know the training that they've had to go through and they have to pass certifications in order to be an arborist. Hopefully, they remember everything they were trained on. That's not to say that someone that is an experienced horticulturist or tree faller might not have that knowledge, but unless you personally know that person, I would be a little hesitant to recommend that. I always say to go with an arborist.

David Ledger: OK. Now, what about because there's a lot of ash and debris on the lots, and when they scrape up that debris, are they going to damage the roots or what precautions should they take?

Leimone Waite: Well, I know that in a lot of places they're having to scrape the ash away because it may have contamination from stuff that was in the house or whatever.

So, just try to avoid scraping the roots of the trees if possible. And if some of the roots become exposed, make sure that they get covered back up with some soil or compost or something so that they're not exposed for a long period of time.

David Ledger: OK. And are there any—like I've heard that trees are quite valuable to a property's value. Are there any formulas, or what knowledge do you have of the value of trees to property, let's just say resale value?

Leimone Waite: Trees definitely can have a really large value—in fact, up to 30% of your property value. It sort of depends on the tree type and its age and, obviously, how well it was cared for. So there's no just one formula, but you can actually hire an arborist to calculate that. Trees can have tens of thousands of dollars of value depending on the type of tree. These couple-hundred-year-old oak trees are quite valuable. It takes—they're not going to replace that tree in our lifetime, and so those types of trees can have a lot of value, and you don't want to have them cut down in a hurry if there's nothing wrong with the tree and it will recover.

David Ledger: OK. And then I guess shade value—are there any estimates as to how much summer cooling costs there are, or do you have any comments on that?

Leimone Waite: So yeah, if you have a shade tree—there's been a large variety of studies, but trees definitely have a huge value to our community in a lot of ways. They store carbon, and they cool the area. In cities that have trees, they've actually estimated that the overall temperature of the city can be reduced by 15 to 20 degrees in the summertime. There are estimates that you can save up to 40% on your power costs of cooling if you have shade trees that shade your house and your air conditioning unit. So yeah, they have a huge savings and definitely have a huge value to our daily life. I mean, I could go on and on about the value of trees, but yeah, there's a big value, even to the overall fact that they produce oxygen and clean the air for us. Basically, plants and trees support all life on Earth, so they're vital to a community and to the area around your home.

David Ledger: OK. Now down in Sonoma and Napa County, there's kind of a re-oak program going on where the California Native Plant Society has a program to grow oak trees in areas that have been burned. And I know that the City of Redding has kind of an exploratory program they're starting actually this year. What is your opinion on those? Should the oaks just grow naturally, or would it help to plant them?

Leimone Waite: Yeah, I was actually just chatting with the City of Redding earlier this week, and they're doing a "Re-Oak Redding" kind of campaign and encouraging people to collect acorns and then drop them off at the library. They want people to include a leaf and make sure that the caps are still on the acorns and stuff, just so that they can kind of identify the variety of acorns.

There are a couple of things—I know they're planning to grow them in pots and then plant them out, and I don't know that that's the most successful way of growing oaks. I

think they actually do better if you directly plant them into the ground. But I also understand that they're wanting to kind of control where things get planted and plant when the time is right and so forth. And people really want to be involved, and it's hard to get people involved if you can't pot them up and then have people plant them later; there's a little bit more chance for people to volunteer and get involved with that. So I mean, I understand their approach, but I think that, on a whole, oaks do better being directly planted.

There are a few things that I would be cautious about, though. One, you don't want to collect acorns typically off the ground, because you could be spreading diseases that are in the ground. Especially if you're getting oaks from an urban area, there could be soil-borne diseases that you would be picking up that might be on the acorn, which then you're introducing into a wild environment, especially if you're trying to take those acorns out and plant them in a native space where that disease wasn't there before. And so if you are collecting acorns, it's best to collect them off the tree.

You might laugh and go, "Well, how am I going to get it off the tree?" But you can put a tarp down or a sheet or something, and then use a long pole or a piece of PVC pipe or something and knock the acorns down so they don't touch the ground.

And then, usually, the acorns that naturally fall—at least this time of year—also have had insect damage. A lot of times they've had weevils or something eating them, and you'll see the little hole in the acorn, and if you put it in water, it'll float. So you want to avoid those; you want to get the healthy acorns. Usually, picking them directly off the tree or knocking them down off the tree into something that protects them from the soil is best, and you don't let them dry out. You have to either put them in a Ziploc bag or something and actually put them in the refrigerator.

I know the Native Plant Society is recommending that you actually give them a soak in some bleach water—a 10% bleach solution—before planting them just to really make sure that you're not passing on diseases. So that's probably a good plan, especially if you're going to store them for a while; I recommend that just to keep them from molding.

David Ledger: So the best thing would be to plant the acorn direct in the ground?

Leimone Waite: I think so, but you have to wait until the rains come, because if planted now, it runs the risk of drying out. The acorn is not really viable if it dries out, so we have to have some way of keeping it from drying out. If you're watering it, then you could plant it now and then water it, that's fine. But if you don't have the ability to water, you need to wait for the winter rains to come.

The other thing is making sure that you're identifying the right kind of acorn. We have a lot of acorns that are hybridized, or some like on our campus—we have a lot of eastern oaks that aren't really native oak trees to our area. And so, do make sure that if you are trying to plant it in a native area, you should be trying to plant a native oak—one of our blue oaks or valley oaks—matching that oak up with its native habitat, which is best.

Making sure that the oak tree that you are introducing there isn't one of these eastern oaks or something, just because they don't do as well out in our native habitat and plus it could then contaminate the genetics of the other oaks, too.

David Ledger: OK. Now, so summing up, and just correct me if I'm wrong here, maybe you could sum it up better than I could—kind of a little step-by-step as to what to do if you've got trees that got singed in your yard, and then maybe just a summary of what you've just said.

Leimone Waite: Sure. Depending on the tree—if it's an oak tree, it has a much higher chance of surviving a fire than some of the other species of trees, but that's not to say that some of the other ones may not recover as well.

Inspecting the tree overall: if it's just the leaves that have been singed off and you don't see a lot of damage to the trunk or branches, then that tree may very well recover. It may just be waiting until next spring to do that, because we're going into the time of year that deciduous trees, at least, would be losing their leaves.

If it's an oak tree, really look at how much damage it has sustained. It can sustain quite a bit of damage and still re-sprout in the spring and continue to grow. I have a blue oak in my yard that obviously went through a fire many years ago, and it's quite healthy still today. A portion of the trunk is damaged, but that doesn't seem to have stopped it any from being a healthy and safe tree to have in your yard. If one or two branches have been damaged, those could be removed as long as it's not vital to the whole tree structure, and it may be that the rest of the tree is fine.

Inspecting the area around the tree to make sure the roots haven't been burned, because sometimes the fire does go underground. Making sure that that is not damaged.

And then, if there is some damage to the trunk, actually peeling the bark back and looking to see what the cambium looks like. If it looks pink or a pale white or tan color, then it's probably fine. If it looks more caramelized—so it's a darker tan or almost a brown color—then it may have received too much fire damage and got too hot. Those are the sorts of things.

If it's a really big oak, even if it's gotten some fairly bad scorching on its trunk, as long as it didn't burn the bark off—the actual overall depth of the bark hasn't been reduced—it may very well recover, because that bark is a pretty good insulating layer.

David Ledger: OK. Well now, I want to thank you, Leimone. I think you have covered just about everything we need to know about saving your trees. And once again, this is KFOI Radio and the Shasta Environmental Alliance program, and my guest has been Leimone Waite. Once again, she's an instructor at Shasta College—for the last 20 years a full-time instructor—and she is the Master Gardener coordinator for the Shasta

County UC Cooperative Extension, so she is quite knowledgeable about this subject. So, thank you very much, Leimone.

Leimone Waite: Well, thank you so much for having me. I hope the word gets out to folks, and I really don't want people to be too hasty in cutting their trees down. If they can be saved, by all means, do so.

David Ledger: OK. Me too. All right. Well, thank you very much.

Leimone Waite: All right. Thank you so much.

David Ledger: OK. All right. Bye.

Leimone Waite: All right, bye.

David Ledger: I'm David Ledger, and this has been KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance program, and we are on the air every Friday at 1:00 PM and we thank you for listening. Remember, if you go to our website at kfoiradio.org, there is a donate button. We are a nonprofit, and we can always use your support. Thank you very much.