

RFFI Press Release

On August 1, 2008, the Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) held its 11th Annual Meeting in Fort Bragg. Board members, community partners, volunteers and friends convened at the Hawthorne Timber picnic grounds to review Foundation progress on forest management principles and the working community forest model.

Former CEO of Harwood Products, Art Harwood, was named Executive Director of RFFI. As past President of Harwood Products, Art is uniquely qualified to help oversee the management of the 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest (URL) and lead the “community outreach” efforts that are central to RFFI’s mission of creating “working community forests” for the long-term benefit of the communities located in the Redwood Region. Harwood was an original founder of RFFI twelve years ago and has led the organization as President for the past eight years until stepping down to take the ED post this year.

Three new board members were added to the RFFI team:

Supervisor Kendall Smith, a 30 year resident of Mendocino County and just re-elected to another term on the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. A long time friend and supporter of RFFI, she holds a number of seats on state and federal land and conservation committees.

Joe Euphrat, a long time advisor to RFFI, was instrumental in getting the organization started and in helping putting together the deal to purchase the Usal Redwood Forest. Joe is director of real estate for Kaufman Hall & Associates, the nations’s leading financial advisory firm to non profit hospitals and healthcare systems.

Richard Gienger, a watershed restoration practitioner and forest & fisheries activist, recalls campfire discussions in 1979 about establishing community-based stewardship forestry in the Usal/South Fork Eel River area – while engaged in stream surveys and modifying log jams in the northwest area of what is now the Usal Redwood Forest. Richard is a long time RFFI supporter.

They have joined existing board members Don Kemp, Greg Giusti, John Rogers, Kathy Moxon, Pete Mattson, Steve Smith and Candy Skarlatos.

In the past year since the purchase of the Usal Redwood Forest, significant progress has been made working with RFFI’s property manager, The Campbell Group, in developing a management plan and undertaking restoration projects. In addition, RFFI is working to secure a conservation easement that would protect the property permanently from development and at the same time insure a sustainable flow of forest products that will benefit the local community in perpetuity – a “working” community forest.

RFFI founding member and retiring board member Henry Gundling was honored by having a tree named after him. The Redwood Forest Foundation would like to thank all of its past board members, advisory group members and supporters for making the purchase of the Usal Redwood Forest possible, and look forward to expanding our network of friends as we take the next step in making the URF a community working forest and in looking for new acquisitions that will benefit the communities of the Redwood Region. To learn more about RFFI, please visit our website, www.rffi.org.