



# Redwood Forest Foundation

Spring 2014

## Welcome

**Kathy Moxon**, *Chairman, RFFI Board of Directors*



For many of us who were looking forward to winter hibernation, it just didn't happen this year. RFFI has been busy. Spring is now bursting forth and life is speeding up again. Last winter, RFFI made great strides in developing a

Stewardship plan and committed to a three-year moratorium on herbicide use, as described in Mark Welther's column beginning on this page. The herbicide issue epitomizes the challenges RFFI faces, in this case in meeting Forest Practice Rules for restocking after a timber harvest. It is not the first time that rules designed to keep people from doing the "wrong" thing (e.g., excessive harvest without appropriate steps to ensure regeneration) have made it more difficult to do the "right" thing (e.g., manage without herbicides.) But RFFI continues to work on balancing our desired forestry practices with meeting our financial obligations while pursuing our vision of sustainable forest management. This year, after consulting several experts, we look forward to experimenting with forest structure by planting redwoods under a thinned tanoak over-story.

In addition to thinking about timber management and financial obligations, we are reaching out to develop meaningful opportunities for community engagement

beyond the Usal forest. For details see "Community Engagement" in this newsletter. RFFI is fortunate to have enthusiastic supporters who see the potential that the RFFI vision offers. It is this support that fuels our steady forward progress.

I hope the RFFI annual meeting is already on your calendars—July 26, 2014. It is a great opportunity to catch up with RFFI progress and players while enjoying great food and good company. Looking forward to seeing you there!

## RFFI on the Move

**Mark Welther**, *RFFI President and CEO*

Have you ever taken a long trip without a road map or GPS—something to serve as a guide when heading toward a new destination? If I didn't use my Rand McNally atlas when I headed west for the first time after graduating college in Wisconsin, I might have stalled in South Dakota instead of landing in California.



During my first year as President & CEO, one of my priorities is to develop RFFI's roadmap: a strategic plan. In March, the RFFI Board of Directors and staff held a strategic planning retreat to outline the goals and actions for achieving our mission and vision. By agreeing on several critical elements described below, the Redwood Forest Foundation is now on the road towards fulfilling our long-range vision of "community-based forests that provide both critical habitat for increased biodiversity and improved regional economic vitality."

- **Three-year Herbicide Moratorium:** Last July, the RFFI Board declared a three-year moratorium on the use of herbicides in Usal. Herbicides are the conventional and economical

*Save The Date!*

## RFFI Annual Meeting and Barbecue

**Saturday, July 26, 2014**

This year we will be offering tours early Sunday morning!  
Stay tuned for location and directions!

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way to kill hardwoods, but for the next three years, RFFI will explore non-chemical methods of vegetation management. We are also experimenting with creating a forest structure that provides the space and light advantages that redwoods need in order to “over-top” hardwoods. Because alternatives to chemical herbicides are more expensive, we are diligently seeking funding to support these important experiments.

- **FSC Certification:** RFFI’s 2011 conservation easement requires “third-party” certification of Usal as a “well-managed forest” by May 2015. Toward this goal, RFFI is being reviewed by one of the world’s leading certification agencies, the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). As part of our application, we are completing a “Stewardship Plan” that outlines how we will manage Usal.

- **Timber Harvests:** RFFI’s Usal Forest is a working community forest which must service its debt while creating wood products and community jobs. 2014 will be our third year of harvesting and we are now developing eleven timber harvest plans. We are committed to use the lightest possible touch on the land during these operations, while also addressing our financial responsibilities. Current plans include selection and variable retention harvesting methods.

- **Restoration:** RFFI continues to protect and restore habitat for threatened salmon and owls, as well as other species that rely on Usal. I’m excited to announce that in March we received grant funding for Standley Creek restoration Phase Five (of six), which we will complete along with our partners at Campbell Global, Trout Unlimited and Pacific Watershed Associates. RFFI also received funding for large woody debris projects on Anderson Creek and the South Fork of Usal Creek.

- **Carbon Registration:** RFFI’s easement also directs us to seek registration by the state to sell carbon credits. California leads the world in the development of carbon markets and RFFI hopes to be registered by early 2015. Carbon sales make it possible for us to protect trees and generate income at the same time.

- **The Biochar Pilot Project:** Much of the rugged landscape where old-growth redwoods once thrived is now overgrown with low-value hardwoods, predominantly tanoak. In an effort to find uses for hardwoods while clearing space for redwoods and Douglas fir, RFFI has secured a grant to produce biochar, a product for use in gardens that sequesters carbon in the soil. Recently, this project has also taken important steps forward, as detailed in the Biochar Update in this newsletter.

- **Promoting Community Forests Elsewhere:** Our mission includes not only Usal but other forests throughout the Redwood Region. This year, RFFI worked with Humboldt County, the Trust for Public Land and Green Diamond Resource Company to arrange funding for Humboldt County to purchase the 1,200-acre Ryan Creek property near Eureka for a working community forest.

- **A Tribal Acorn Grove:** Since 2010, RFFI and local tribal leaders have cooperated in establishing the eight acre Chinquapin Springs Acorn Grove in the Usal Forest. This grove will be used in 2014 for traditional acorn gathering by local Native Americans, and is an example of the kinds of cooperative community projects RFFI envisions.

With our new road map in hand, RFFI is growing towards our vision every day. You can follow our progress by regularly checking our website, [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org). The journey to change how community forestry is practiced in California is a long one and requires input from all stakeholders. You are a part of that redwood community, so please get involved. You can start by joining us at our Annual Meeting on July 26. See you there!

Donate online at [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org)

Or mail your check to:

RFFI, PO Box 12  
Mendocino, CA 95460

## Biochar Update

Judy Harwood, *Project Coordinator*

After three years of research, planning and design, the RFFI biochar project was launched last November. The project will thin low-value hardwoods, primarily tanoaks, from the Usal Forest and create a marketable gardening product.



Approximately 500 tanoaks were carefully selected and removed from a 2.5 acre portion of our ten acre demonstration plot—a heavily overcrowded stand—according to specifications developed by Greg Giusti, UC Cooperative Extension Advisor. The tanoak logs are now stacked and drying in the woods where they will be chipped and transported to the Biochar Conversion Unit once the equipment is operational this fall. Greg will be returning to the demonstration plot this spring for a post-thinning assessment.

The Biochar equipment is currently under construction in Boulder, Colorado, and expected to be completed this June. After completion, a team from the Schatz Energy Research Center (SERC) at Humboldt State University will assess the unit's productivity with tanoak before the unit is delivered to Mendocino County.

In the meantime, RFFI is working hard on the project's marketing and educational components. RFFI has hired Raymond Baltar, co-founder of the Sonoma Biochar Initiative (SBI), to complete a regional market and distribution study for Usal biochar sales. This new partnership with SBI opens the door for regional collaboration between nonprofit entities interested in producing and selling biochar for ecological, economic and social equity purposes.

Once the conversion unit is in place, RFFI will be offering community demonstration tours. Our updated website at ([www.RFFI.org/Biochar.html](http://www.RFFI.org/Biochar.html)) is the best way to stay tuned on progress, sign up for tours and periodic eBlasts and take advantage of our extensive biochar resources.

## Community Engagement: RFFI Reaches Out

RFFI has expanded and deepened its community engagement efforts throughout the redwood region. Below are just a few of the recent activities in which RFFI's president, Mark Welther, and RFFI staff and volunteers were delighted to be involved:

- **March 29, 2014**, Jeff Hedin, Judy Harwood and Art Harwood hosted a Usal Tour and Community Meeting for Forests International representatives from New Brunswick, Canada. Forests International is an environmental start-up, working to connect people and their communities to the forests that sustain them.
- **April 11, 2014**, along with the Sonoma Biochar Initiative & Sonoma Ecology Center RFFI co-sponsored a Biochar and Conservation Burn Workshop in Ukiah, CA.
- **April 12, 2014**, was Earth Day in Redwood Regional Park, Oakland, CA, and RFFI planted 75 of its redwoods in the park.
- **April 19, 2014**, was Earth Day at Parducci's Organic Gardens and Tasting Room in Ukiah, CA, where RFFI joined a "Party for the Planet" and distributed 135 redwood seedlings to the public.
- **April 23, 2014**, Richard Gienger coordinated a RFFI Restoration Workshop in Leggett, CA, along with other public and private organizations. The workshop – the first in a series – focused on restoration practices currently or potentially applicable to Usal Redwood Forest.
- **April 28, 2014**, there was an Acorn Orchard Meeting at Harwood Hall with representatives of Native American groups to discuss harvesting and RFFI's ongoing partnership with Native Americans.

Watch for Mendocino Eco Artists Summer Art Show to be held from June through August at the Stanford Inn. Some of the proceeds will go to support RFFI. Details will soon be on our website: [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).

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## Plant a Redwood Now!

*A Green Gift for any Occasion*

This is a great way to combine support for RFFI's redwood restoration program with your search for the perfect gift for a friend or loved one: have RFFI plant one or more young redwood trees in their honor in a redwood forest in Northern California. The honoree will receive an attractive 8" x 11" certificate (suitable for framing) with a customized message acknowledging you as the donor. These enduring gifts are suitable for any occasion imaginable.

So far, donors have supported the 2013-14 planting of almost 3,000 redwoods in sites as diverse as Redwood Regional Park in Oakland, CA, an Indian Creek riparian zone in the Usal Redwood Forest, and a private preserve in Occidental, CA. These and all the other trees planted through this program are in locations where they will never be cut! Visit Plant a Redwood Now at [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).

## Create the Brand for RFFI's Biochar

All Entries Welcome!

RFFI is planning a creative design contest for the Name, Logo and Tagline for RFFI's Biochar. The winning artwork will be used to market the first RFFI Biochar product to be sold in the Redwood Region! Details will be appearing soon at [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).

## Help Sustain RFFI

Please Make a Recurring Donation

Following the lead of past Board President Don Kemp, RFFI has initiated a recurring donation program to make it easier for you to provide sustaining support. This program allows donors to choose an amount to be contributed monthly by credit card or check. These regular contributions benefit RFFI because expenditures can be based on a predictable income level. Use the enclosed envelope or visit the Donate page on our website at [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).

RFFI thanks you for your ongoing support!