

Because of CATs, 13,000 pounds of pollutants will be eliminated from our air every month!

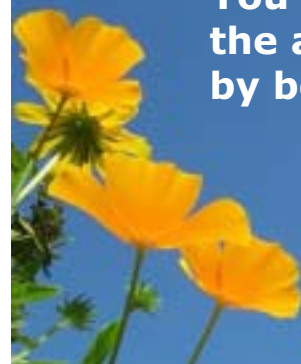
Why? Because our legal action helped convince Evergreen Pulp, Inc. to install a scrubber on its pulp mill stacks.



You can help CATs in its mission to clear the air and safeguard our environment by becoming a member.

Log on to our website and follow the link to JOIN CATs.

www.alternatives2toxics.org



the drift

The Drift is a publication of Californians for Alternatives to Toxics.

Permission is granted to reproduce this newsletter if Californians for Alternatives to Toxics is fully credited. No part may be copied to websites; links to the CATs website are encouraged.

Founded in 1982, Californians for Alternatives to Toxics is a clearinghouse for information and action regarding pesticides and other toxic chemicals and to promote alternatives to their use.

CATs works to bring solutions to toxic conditions occurring in northern California, with actions that benefit people here and around the world.

CATs is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Printed on 100% recycled, 100% post-consumer waste paper with soy ink.

Summer
2007

THE drift

Newsletter of Californians for Alternatives to Toxics

Since 1982

Strife Over Loosestrife: Eel River Targeted

As we go to press, CATs has learned of a state and federal plan to spray toxic chemicals on banks and sand bars along several miles of the Eel River. The target is an invasive weed, purple loosestrife, that's

spread to 200 sites. The herbicide, which its maker admits poses a risk to fish and wildlife, could be applied annually for up to ten years.

Even though agencies had been planning

this assault for three years, California State Parks suddenly announced there was an emergency and gave the public scant days to comment before spraying started in July.

Herbicides are the only option under consideration despite evidence that integrated management of problem plants is more successful over the long run.

"Herbicides will add a disturbance factor and toxicity to what the government has declared an impaired watershed," said Patty Clary of CATs. "Locking the public out of the debate eliminated the chance for valuable input from the community."

Readers are urged to send their comments right away to Jay Harris, California State Parks PO Box 2006, Eureka CA 95502 707.445.6547 ext. 19 • jharris@parks.ca.gov

Big changes are afloat at CATs! See inside for more details.

Pictured: CATs' Administrative Director Georgianna Wood and Board Member Perry Gray-Reneberg on Humboldt Bay.



CELEBRATING A NATURAL & NON-TOXIC WORLD

ORGANIC PLANET FESTIVAL

SUNDAY, AUGUST 26, 11 AM - 7 PM

HALVORSEN PARK, FOOT OF L STREET, EUREKA, CA

Join the Organic Revolution!

Volunteer and help create our annual celebration of the natural world. Get a free t-shirt and admission to CATs' Organic Planet Festival.

Go to www.organicplanetfestival.org
or call 707-445-5100!

The Organic Planet Festival has a new feature in 2007!

Organic Planet Garden Tour Sunday, August 19

Tour a variety of gardens around Humboldt Bay, all grown without harsh chemicals and in tune with nature.

Call 707-445-5100 for tickets and information.



NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN LEANDRO, CA
PERMIT NO. 311



315 P Street Eureka, CA 95501

Return Service Requested

**Inside:
Free Organic
Planet Festival
Poster!**

Penta May Be Gone, But Dioxin Lingers On

Dioxin, the lethal legacy of timber milling on the North Coast, is persisting in local soils even though the harmful pesticide that spawned it may have disappeared.

That's the message that came down recently from water quality officials, buttressing the contention of CATs and Humboldt Baykeeper that dioxin contamination at former mill sites around Humboldt Bay may rank among the worst in the nation.

Confirmation of the latent danger came in a letter from the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding a former Schmidbauer Lumber Company mill site in Arcata. The owner claimed that, because there had been no "finds" of the toxic wood preservative pentachlorophenol (PCP, also known as penta) in the soil, the site did not require further investigation.

Not so, replied the agency. "The extent of dioxin contamination in soils has not been determined, and there is no data to indicate a reduction of dioxin contamination in soils," the letter declared.

As a result, CATs is now renewing its call for testing of soil and water for dioxin

contamination at all former sawmill sites -- and cleanup where it's found -- before any development can proceed.

CATs also has teamed up with Humboldt Baykeeper to file suit under the Clean Water Act seeking to compel the Simpson Timber Company to clean up the site of its old plywood mill at the foot of Del Norte Street on the Eureka waterfront.

Simpson, which stopped using penta at the Eureka mill almost 40 years ago, ran tests hoping to disprove evidence of dioxin contamination -- and instead found toxic levels twice those discovered in sampling done by CATs and Baykeeper.

Not only is the chemical present beneath the mill, it also has migrated to nearby drainage ditches and to Humboldt Bay sediments, despite a Simpson "clean-up" of contaminated soil in 2003.

This is of special concern to CATs because dioxin can have impacts on generations to come due to its persistence and extreme toxicity.

See page 3 for more details about pentachlorophenol and dioxin.

Clearing the Air – Courtesy of CATs

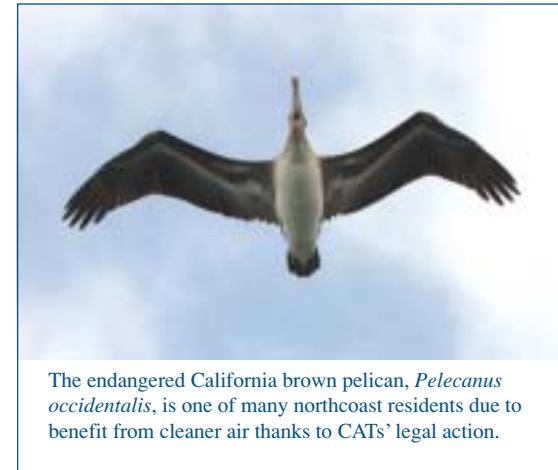
A much-needed improvement to the air quality of Eureka and the Humboldt Bay area is due to take place by the end of 2008, thanks to legal action brought by CATs and the Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) against Evergreen Pulp, Inc.

Reaching an 11th hour agreement as CATs was set to take the case before a federal judge, California's last remaining pulp mill agreed to install equipment that will remove more

than 80 tons of toxics-infused miniparticles from the air each year.

Evergreen capitulated 18 months after CATs and EPIC initiated an enforcement action aiming to stop emissions of a tide of toxic specks from the company's mill on the Samoa Peninsula across the bay from Eureka.

Noting that Evergreen's 43-year-old mill regularly discharged dangerous air pollutants beyond the limits of its federal permit, the suit sought to make



The endangered California brown pelican, *Pelecanus occidentalis*, is one of many northcoast residents due to benefit from cleaner air thanks to CATs' legal action.

the company comply with the federal Clean Air Act.

The mill was the first in the nation to be converted to Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) bleached kraft processing a

decade ago when then-owner Louisiana-Pacific bowed to community pressure to reduce air and water pollution.

The mill then passed through a series of owners who deferred needed upkeep. Evergreen's parent company, Lee & Man, bought the mill

in 2005 to ship pulp to its paperboard mills in Asia.

But Eureka residents opposed efforts by Lee & Man to avoid regional air quality permit requirements intended to limit the discharge of dangerous particles from its smokestacks.

"It's a step in the right direction," said Elizabeth Eytchison of the community-based Citizens Pulp Mill Committee. "And we'll keep an eye on Evergreen's future performance."

Two Forests Spared from Sprays, For Now

By Julia Olson, Staff Attorney

The U.S. Forest Service has withdrawn herbicide spray plans on 25,000 acres on two national forests during the course of lawsuits that had been filed by CATs.

In a separate legal action brought by citizen groups based in the Sierra Nevada, the agency had been forced to admit that it had failed to conduct monitoring for certain indicator species in California national forests.

The Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, otherwise known as the Framework, requires the Forest Service to monitor for species which act as

"canaries in the coal mine" for forest ecosystem health.

The agency did no monitoring before deciding to spray toxic herbicides in the Stanislaus and Tahoe national forests. After adverse decisions about the indicator species in the Sierra Nevada, the agency decided to withdraw its proposals to spray, thus terminating CATs' lawsuits.

It remains to be seen whether the agency will renew its efforts to use herbicides as its medicine for forest health. But for now, the forests are protected.

One Headache Becomes Two Jobs

by Patty Clary, Programs Director

CATs is lucky to welcome aboard the highly efficient and experienced Georgianna Wood, who will take up some of the burdens and joys I have experienced in my 19 years (gasp) as executive director.

I now have moved into a new position as Programs Director. Georgianna will fill the other half of the co-director model, running the business side of CATs as Administrative Director.

Working together, we aim to make CATs smarter and better equipped to meet the needs of our members and supporters throughout northern California.

Georgianna is a professional administrator. After an HSU career that allowed her to be a work-study employee at the Northcoast Environmental Center throughout college and landed her a B.S. in natural resource planning, she has held a variety of critical administrative jobs in the non-profit world. She did land-use planning for the city of Eureka, administered grants at the Redwood Region Economic Development Commission and most recently was co-director of the Arcata Economic Development Corporation.

Though she has a variety of interests ranging from renovating old homes to kayaking the open sea, she said CATs was her first choice for a challenging job because "I strongly embrace CATs' mission of protecting all of us—folks and frogs alike—from toxic exposure."

She adds, "I'm very drawn to the professional, science-based way that CATs goes about its critical work. CATs has integrity. What's not to love?"

Georgianna will ensure that CATs is financially sound (please get out your checkbooks), has the staff and resources needed to achieve our goals and engages our membership on a higher level. And because she is freeing me up to focus attention on programs, I plan to further my dream of helping members gain control over the lethal chemicals that affect their lives.

I hope to achieve this goal by promoting our annual Organic Planet Festival, spending more time studying and analyzing the toxic issues that affect us all in our region and helping stop unnecessary pesticide use. And tend to my organic fruit farm and two beautiful granddaughters!

Our thanks also go out to beloved board member Perry Gray-Reneberg, who did incredible work in his five months as interim administrative director.

The CATs Team (from L-R, back): Organic Planet assistants Kim Rollins & Amanda Jasso, Library Coordinator Cindy Turnbull, Administrative Assistant Serena Stockdale, I.T. & Organic Planet Coordinator Matt Lang; (L-R, front): Programs Director Patty Clary and Administrative Director Georgianna Wood.



Pentachlorophenol: A History Of Neglect

Post-war liquidation of the last of northern California's old-growth forests created an intensely competitive market for forest products in the 1950s. To add value to their wood products, hundreds of lumber mills throughout the region turned to the wood preservative pentachlorophenol, known as penta or PCP.

For two decades, government oversight of penta use did not exist. Left to their own devices, lumber companies applied the chemical with reckless abandon and little regard for health and environmental consequences.

California finally awoke to the problem in 1967, when rain washed penta from a sawmill yard into the Mad River, killing 30,000 fish overnight.

Penta was being kept in an open basin at the mill, a common practice in mills throughout the region. Workers would submerge fresh-cut lumber into the tub, then haul it out—dripping penta—to stack in the mill yard.

Further investigation by the state and regional water quality and health agencies failed to produce a comprehensive inventory of which mills used the chemical or about effects on workers' lives. After the premature deaths of several penta workers at the Simpson Timber Company mill in Arcata in the 1980s, the deadly chemical finally was banned for most uses in 1987.

But despite its extreme toxicity, few old sawmill sites have been sampled for contamination by penta or for dioxin, penta's deadly and lingering companion chemical.

The Dioxin Connection

Dioxin, particularly 2,3,7,8-TCDD, its most toxic form, is one of the most notorious chemicals in the world. It is created unintentionally as a byproduct of the manufacturing process in the case of pentachlorophenol.

Dioxin was recently acknowledged by state water quality regulators to be the toxic legacy of pentachlorophenol use at sawmills (see story on page 1).

By doing its dirty work within DNA, where it mimics hormones, dioxin profoundly disrupts critical bodily functions. It is internationally recognized as a cause of cancer in humans.

At very low doses, dioxin causes irreversible effects in the development of mammals, particularly fetuses. The immune system and reproductive

function are targets of dioxin's toxicity. It accumulates in fatty tissue where it can be stored for years until being released during pregnancy or other times of physical stress.

Though dioxin has been the focus of international study and debate for close to four decades, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has never revealed the full extent of the chemical's

deadly nature to the public. Nor has the agency completed its health assessment of dioxin, despite a huge investment in research.

In the most recent development, a committee convened by the National Academy of Sciences reported last year that the EPA's methods of assessing the toxicity of dioxin are flawed and need a complete reworking.

Nevertheless, we know now that this deadly chemical lurks in Humboldt Bay, which has been officially declared impaired by dioxin. It lingers in and around sites where logs were made into lumber during the heyday of pentachlorophenol use. It's up to people who care about these places to see that something is done about it.

That's why CATs has lobbied, filed suit and continues to lead a citizens' probe of this hazard to public health and our environment, with the aim of securing it away from where, otherwise, it will continue to wreak its havoc.

