

## Help Wanted: Tree Sitters!

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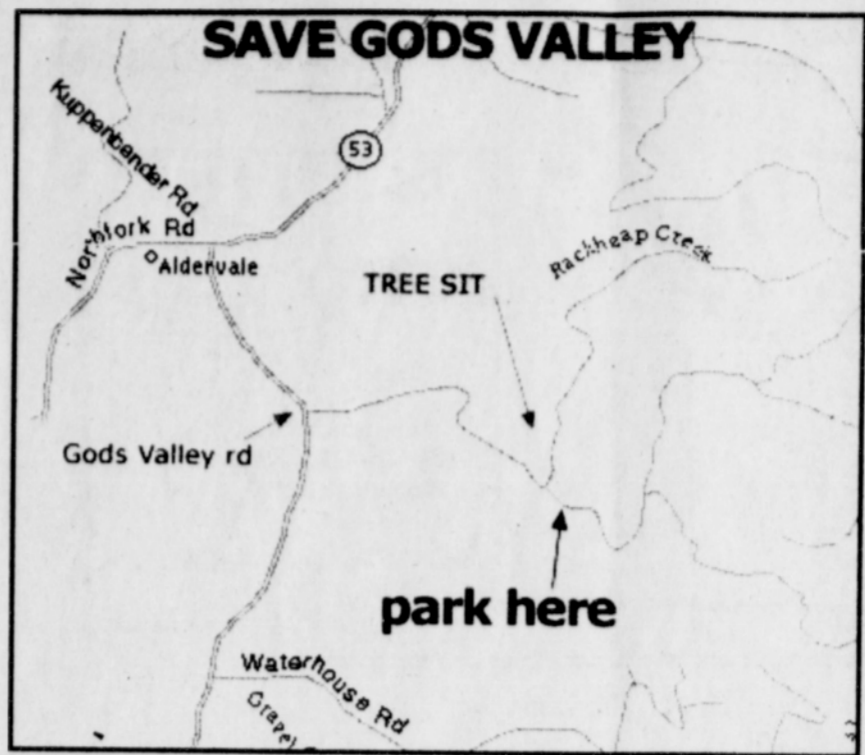
A once in a life time opportunity to make new contacts in the environmental, media and law enforcement communities!

Get a Marbled Murrelet's eye view of what's really happening in Oregon's State Forests!

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### "Science commits suicide when it adopts a creed." Thomas Henry Huxley

Eventually our caravan started up the logging road only to come to a sudden halt when we found a young woman had chained herself in the middle of the road. Marci Dennison held a sign saying "God is Dead" and as the TV boys gathered around asking why she was doing this, the sheriffs appeared. The TV boys asked the sheriff if Marci was breaking the law and subject to arrest? They were told no; "we don't want any trouble". We asked one sheriff how many officers were involved in guarding the site. He said four. When we asked the other sheriff he said five or six. A local had told us there had been a small army up there. We asked if they had seen anyone in the area? Not a soul they said. We smiled. We turned the rigs around and headed up 53 to milepost 11 and the newly built road into the site without further incidents.

Once there ODF started the same dog and pony show we had seen on the first 'public' tour. One ODF expert explained that trees need sunlight to grow just like a garden. Gee, Mr. Wizard, really? "You can't grow plants in a closet," he said. This started some giggling from the TV boys and one even inquired if ODF might be considering using Gro-lights in the future, and it went down hill from there. Basically every serious question was answered with "I'll have to check on that." or "We will take appropriate measures." When we asked how much the new road to the site cost, the answer was a long drawn out story about how this was a state of the art logging road that could be used in the future for recreational purposes and there were new culverts build to prevent erosion and on and on until we finally asked for a number. Yep, they spent \$200,000 to provide access to a \$400,000 sale. Your tax dollars at work. At one point we heard people yelling and saw a huge banner hanging in the trees that said "Save God's Valley". So much for security on the site. The only people the sheriffs stopped were people in cars. Finally the TV boys had to get back to the city to meet their deadlines and we were all pretty tired of hearing these guys "stay on message". Oh, and yes, it should be noted that they were all guys, Cheryl was the only woman on the tour.

So, where do we stand now? The trees are down, and by the time you read this they will be at the mill. The ground has been torn up by the machinery and the water in people's faucets down stream is probably running brown. The ODF has put their spin on it and that's that? Well, no. Like we said before there are some mighty cranky folks in this neighborhood who will never sit down at the table with ODF again. They will be in the woods doing whatever they can to stop this arrogance. There will be folks calling their representatives and their Governor demanding that some heads roll at ODF. How do you create an Eco-terrorist? You lie to honest concerned people. You treat good hard working people with disrespect. You treat the people who pay the bills with contempt. You surround their land with armed guards.

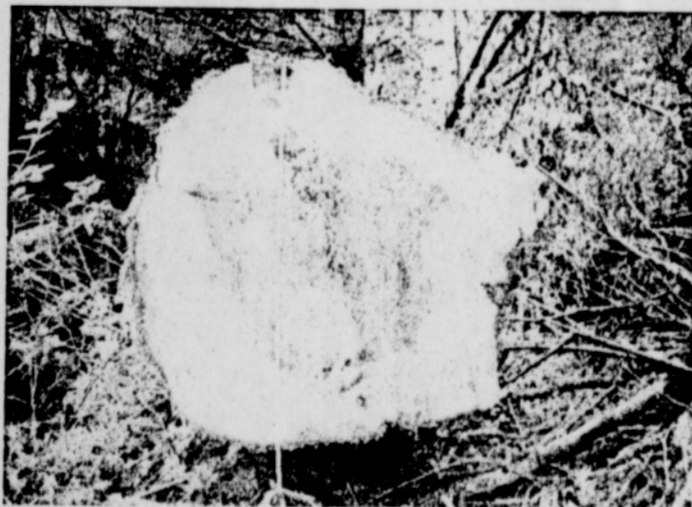


We abhor violence of any kind, be it physical, economic or environmental. Thus, non-violent civil disobedience is the only option left to people who have been treated the way these people have been treated. Funny words "civil disobedience" they seem to mean, "disobeying" in a "civil" manner. These people sat down in good faith and awoke one morning to find armed men surrounding their forest. We are told this is because ODF is afraid of what some people might do. We are told ODF is afraid of young Cheryl, a schoolteacher. We are told they are afraid of the young men who sit in the trees, these men who can't abide violence toward a plant, let alone a human being. We are told that the ODF is afraid of what your beloved editor might say or do. We chuckle. We don't believe that the ODF is afraid, we believe ODF wants us to be afraid of them, and that is why they called in the men with guns. They think that is the way best to stop the talking, they are tired of pretending to listen.

This country is supposed to be self-governing. But as we know over the years laws have been made by a small minority and often need to be changed for the good of all. The right way to change a law is challenge it and to vote against it. But sometimes that can't be done in time, and the law must be disobeyed. It was by disobeying the Jim Crow laws in the south that we finally passed the Civil Rights laws. And by disobeying the no trespassing laws we will get a new law that protects the last old trees in Oregon.

Later this month and for as long as it takes there will be workshops, benefits, direct actions and civil disobedience in these parts. Saturday, September 22 from 4PM until 9PM there will be a benefit concert at the Nehalem Bay Winery. There will be many great musicians, pot luck dinner, adult beverages and information on how to get involved in saving our trees. Families are welcome but people under 21 must be accompanied by a parent. The proceeds will go to the Hard Rain Alliance the local organization that was formed to stop the cutting of old trees in this area. There will be posters and announcements in the media, so stay tuned. And don't forget that each person can help in their own way. David Horowitz at a recent party put out a jar to collect money for Friends of Trees in the memory of Terrance O'Donnell and collected \$330.

So, yes, by the time you read this there will be people in the trees in God's Valley, and this community will be supporting them because after all, who's valley is it?



"Tree sitting is a last resort. When you see someone sitting in a tree trying to protect it, you know that every level of our society has failed."

Julia Butterfly Hill

### Why ODF should leave Acey Creek area alone

By Gary Braasch  
Co-author of "Secrets of the Old Growth Forest"

Tillamook District Forester Mark Labhart characterized the Acey Creek area after logging as "...beautiful now. It looks like a park," as quoted in your article. I have been to Acey Creek Area 3 before the cutting took place, and I wonder what to Mr. Labhart was ugly, unproductive, and lacking in habitat in that area before? My photos confirm my impression of an actively growing, mixed stand with many older and larger trees but also a healthy growth of seedlings and youthful hemlock coming up. There were already a lot of openings and many trees with developing old growth characteristics that are so lacking in the Tillamook Forest. In other words, this stand appeared to be moving toward the habitat of the future that Labhart wants the public to think was not present, and that he apparently believes he alone has the power to create.

I know a little about old growth, having co-written and photographed a book on the subject, and I also have learned from many forest ecologists over the past 20 years. One thing that most Coast Range old growth was not, is open and park-like. Old growth is messy, precisely because as the trees age to 200 years and beyond they die and remain as snags and down logs. These tangled and not-always-so-attractive parts of a real forest become the habitat, filter the water, create the deep soils that gave us the salmon and allowed owls and murrelets to thrive here. Human intervention that continually clears roads, drags the logs away, and tries to play God by choosing which trees should survive, can only delay this process which we need to allow back on much more of the Tillamook. The Acey sales are among the first that follow the unproven idea of structure-based management. This plan is a sort of wishful thinking on the part of clear-cut engineers that they can log a few less trees in some areas and get by with old-growth features they select in a few areas until they get to clear-cut them again in about 100 years. On every acre of the forest, they think they know more than nature. No real old-growth will be allowed to develop; no permanent habitat reserves will be protected (other than narrow buffer zones). Federal endangered species managers have not approved this plan. Structure based management has been criticized by many scientists, including Dr. Jerry Franklin, the dean of NW forest ecologists. He and other scientists, in a recent review of forest research, wrote that the assumptions underpinning this simplified structure-based management "are not supported by the published scientific literature on structural development of natural forests, disturbance ecology, landscape ecology and conservation biology, or by the relationships between ecosystem structures and processes." In other words, the basic idea behind Acey Line Thin and other coming Tillamook Forest cuts is not scientific and doesn't create natural forest eco-systems. Labhart and ODF leaders admit more old forest habitat is needed. They boasted exclusively of habitat creation in selling the idea of the Acey Line thin. But since their whole plan does not follow from forest habitat science, and they just cut down half of the older trees in a recovering forest (destroying the forest to "save" it), what's the idea? I suggest you follow the money.

The studies that Dr. Franklin and his peers cite show that the best way to gain natural habitat is, first, do not harm to the best and oldest forest types you have left. Second, close the roads, because roads do huge harm through erosion, human intrusion, and as corridors for drying winds, storms, and disease. Third, if you must clear some trees or thin younger stands, leave the down trees where they fall to naturally decompose. Fourth, increase diversity if you must by planting cedars and other missing species within the forest. Fifth, stay away for a long, long time. Closing the entire Gods Valley complex of older forests to any entry (or severely limiting access on the mainline road only) is the best way to gain the habitat that Mark Labhart says he wants. But that would not make any money from logging. Timber sale money at any cost is still the bottom line for ODF and our county leaders. On the other hand, when you compare the measly \$400,000 that the entire Acey thin is supposed to net, to the huge cost of forest police, extra sale planning, public relations, and time in meetings over just the first part of the sale, perhaps leaving the rest alone could end up being a financial gain for Tillamook County. The rest of Acey Line sale includes 60- to 80-year-old trees, but logging contracts can be changed due to wildlife concerns or in trades to other areas. To cut so many old trees in one of the oldest remnants of the forest, amid recognized murrelet and owl habitat, in a plan of questionable science value, with much citizen opposition and questioning, with so much work to be done on roads and young plantations, is an unconscionable loss to us all.

Gary Braasch is a Nehalem resident. This article first appeared in the Tillamook Headlight Herald. Used by permission of the author.



**MARIE MARSHALL HOUSE**

ADULT FAMILY HOME  
1479 S. HEMLOCK, PO Box 671 ~ CANNON BEACH OR 97110  
PHONE 436-2550 PAGER 738-4616  
JENNIFER STIENS, CNA ~ PROVIDER ~ LICENSED & INSURED