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**SALE ENDS 8-3-03**



## news BY CELENE CARILLO

Heavy equipment moves dirt and logs at Straw Devil.

'The Forest Service decided that this old-growth needed to be cut down for a few bucks. It's the last remaining habitat of the red tree voles.'

-Straw Devil tree-sitter

## Straw Devil Showdown

Confrontation marks logging of old growth.

Sparks flew in more ways than one when felling began at the Straw Devil timber sale just off Highway 58 southeast of McCredie Hot Springs the morning of July 23. Contention over the old-growth sale, brewing since 1999, came to a head when loggers, tree-sitters, activists and Forest Service staff convened upon Unit 1 of the sale.

Amidst the sounds of saws and falling trees at the site were shouts from above of "Fire the Forest Service, the perpetrators of destruction in the National Forest," "This forest works as one big ecosystem — people should come out here and help try and stop them [(loggers)]" and "The Forest Service decided that this old-growth needed to be cut down for a few bucks. It's the last remaining habitat of the red tree voles."

Straw Devil's trees were sold to Engel Investments in 1999; however, the USFS did no extensive survey of wildlife habitat at the 129-acre sale. Public pressure, a court case

and a judge's ruling forced the agency to refine their Survey and Manage strategy, which, under Clinton's Northwest Forest Plan, requires the USFS to ensure that certain species' habitats will not be destroyed.

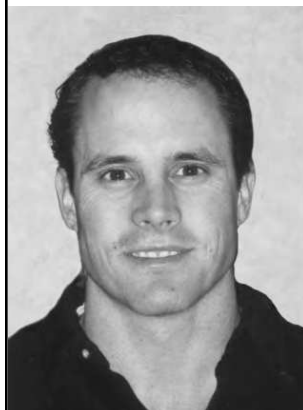
The red tree vole, a 5-inch long rodent that is a primary food for the northern spotted owl, nests high in old-growth Douglas firs. Post-ruling USFS surveys yielded no sightings of vole nests at Straw Devil. Subsequent citizens' surveys, organized by the Cascadia Wildlands Project (CWP), found many which were confirmed by the USFS, and 72 of the 129 acres were buffered from logging.

But advocates at the CWP and Cascadia Forest Defenders (CFD), several of whose members are currently tree-sitting at Straw Devil, say this is not enough. Reed Wilson, a tree-sitter supporter from Corvallis, says that the USFS "waited so long to come verify them (the nests) that the voles moved their habitat," and that "Unit 1 is a very reliable habitat for voles," thus making its sanctioned

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