

**June 25, 2018**

Humboldt County Board of Supervisors: Rex Bohn, Estelle Fennell, Mike Wilson, Virginia Bass, and Ryan Sundberg  
825 5th Street, Room 111  
Eureka, CA 95501

Hank Seemann, Deputy-Director  
Humboldt County Public Works  
1106 2nd St.  
Eureka, CA 95501

**Subject: Comments regarding Humboldt Bay Trail Segment 7, "North Eucalyptus Area"**

Dear Supervisors and Mr. Seemann:

I'm writing you as a citizen of Humboldt County to offer my support of the Humboldt County Public Work's plans to remove a 0.5 mile stretch of approximately 219 eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus globulus*) to make way for a portion of the Humboldt Bay Trail<sup>1</sup>. I have a master's degree in biology and I am also an avid bicycle rider.

As a bike rider, I am familiar with the safety hazards of trails underneath eucalyptus trees. Eucalyptus continually slough off leaves, bark, capsules, and small branches. Their larger branches are also brittle. This safety issue is exacerbated in areas of high wind, such as the Humboldt Bay Trail. For safety reasons alone, I would be in support of eucalyptus removal along the bay trail. However, there are also other reasons why I support the removal of these trees.

The eucalyptus trees (also known as Blue gum or Tasmanian bluegum) within Humboldt Bay Trail Segment 7 are native to southeastern Australia. This species was widely planted throughout California in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries following marketing campaigns that advertised this species as merchantable timber that could compete with the international mahogany market, among other uses. People's fascination at the time with growing exotic plants, coupled with mass deforestation of trees native to our state, ensured the establishment of this species within our state and local region. Additionally, to discourage cutting of trees on private land or public streets, the Tree Culture Act of 1868 encouraged the planting of trees along California roads, in some cases paying \$1 per planted tree.

Today, eucalyptus trees are considered an invasive species in California. While other non-native plant species pose little threat to California's natural communities, invasive species have the capacity to reproduce and alter ecosystems in ways that threaten natural balance. For example, eucalyptus has been studied for its ability to produce chemical compounds that limit the establishment of other plant species (allelopathy). In the Point Reyes National Seashore and Golden Gate National Recreation Area, eucalyptus is now the dominant species in the over-story for thousands of acres. A former stable ecological baseline that existed for thousands of years (prior to eucalyptus introduction) was transformed in less than 150 years, quite fast on an ecological time scale.

---

<sup>1</sup> Humboldt Bay Trail South Initial Study & Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration. February 16, 2018. Accessed at <https://humboldtgov.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/1251>

With an eye towards the future, the Humboldt Bay Trail should showcase and highlight our local natural heritage rather than our (well-intended) follies of the past. The natural communities in the Humboldt Bay Trail area are represented by beach pine, Sitka spruce, wax myrtle scrub, coastal willow thickets, coastal brambles, tufted hair grass meadows, salt marsh, mud flats and eelgrass meadows. This is our natural heritage, much of which is declining throughout the state. This trail provides an opportunity to educate the public (and tourists) on the functions and values of our natural communities and could show-case the aesthetic values of our natural heritage. This is a goal that I support.

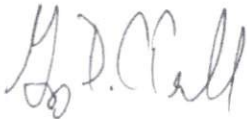
In summary, I favor the County's plan to remove eucalyptus from Humboldt Bay Trail Segment 7 for reasons of safety and ecological awareness. I am also in favor of replanting portions of this area with native species in configurations that do not pose safety risks, provide habitat, and enhance the view shed of the region's unique natural heritage.

For further information on the history and ecology of eucalyptus in California:

California Invasive Plant Council's species profile for *Eucalyptus globulus*. Accessed at <https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/profile/eucalyptus-globulus-profile/>

The Eucalyptus of California: Seeds of Good or Seeds of Evil? Robert L. Santos. Accessed at [http://library.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/Bob\\_Santos-The\\_Eucalyptus\\_of\\_California.pdf](http://library.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/Bob_Santos-The_Eucalyptus_of_California.pdf)

Thank you,



Greg O'Connell  
P.O. Box 122  
Arcata, CA 95518  
[gregoconnell7@gmail.com](mailto:gregoconnell7@gmail.com)

ec:

[efennell@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:efennell@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[vbass@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:vbass@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[rsundberg@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:rsundberg@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:hseemann@co.humboldt.ca.us)  
[khayes@co.humboldt.ca.us](mailto:khayes@co.humboldt.ca.us) (Clerk of the Board)

## Sharp, Ryan

---

**From:** Sundberg, Ryan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 25, 2018 11:20 AM  
**To:** Blanck, Jeffrey; Nilsen, Amy; Sharp, Ryan  
**Subject:** Fwd: Dangerous trees along new Coastal Trail - and beyond

FYI

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** randygar@suddenlink.net <randygar@suddenlink.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 23, 2018 10:07:36 PM  
**To:** Seemann, Hank; Mattson, Tom  
**Cc:** Wilson, Mike; Bass, Virginia; Bohn, Rex; Fennell, Estelle; Sundberg, Ryan  
**Subject:** Dangerous trees along new Coastal Trail - and beyond

I have finished reading the latest memo about removing the Eucalyptus trees along highway 101, and am happy to say that I now agree entirely with everything you've said. However, it raises a much larger issue - there are dangerous trees near trails throughout Humboldt County. And I'm not talking about a small problem - the towering Sequoia Sempervirens, better known as the Coast Redwood, can hardly be described as small.

The Coast Redwood undergoes a similar self-pruning process, whereby the trees drop lower branches or branches that are not receiving significant sunlight. They drop branches frequently and without warning. In addition, the entire tree often uproots due to heavy winds, blocking roads or destroying houses and lives. They drop branches all year round, in any weather. Drought, such as caused by global warming, causes them to drop even more branches. And, worst of all, there's a lot of them around here. A whole lot of them. Each one of them just waiting to drop a branch on a passing cyclist, or worse, on a contributing member of society.

Since your memo has adequately demonstrated that dangerous trees are incompatible with trails, and that no alternative to tree removal is feasible, we need to act immediately to remove all trees, especially Coast Redwood trees, capable of dropping branches or falling across any trail, lest we be forced to decommission hundreds of miles of local trails or be inundated with lawsuits.

Humboldt contains over a thousand miles of trails, many of which are through forests composed almost entirely of the life-destroying Coast Redwood. If the average height of one of these horrific trees is 100ft, we need to clear, on average, 100ft on either side of the trail, or a 200ft wide swath along all trails.

Fortunately, as a side benefit, if we clear this 200ft swath for 200 miles of trail, the County can sell the resulting 4800 acres of timber for approximately \$500,000,000, using the figures from a GAO report on the Headwaters forest - a nice boon for the general fund. It might even be enough to cover the resulting lawsuits.

In addition, this will greatly improve the aesthetics of all local trails. It is obvious that people value clear views over views of trees, and we should carry out any actions that improve the visibility from local trails. If we want to provide tourists with the full Los Angeles experience, where they can be not exposed to any natural environment, we could even install concrete structures around trails, preventing them from ever being forced to see the unsightly trees that remain. Clearly everyone decided to visit or live in Humboldt because they wanted to be surrounded by concrete and shielded from trees, and we should make sure this is provided on all trails.

I am very glad that you fully realize the dangers of trees, and how their complete removal is needed to stem the thousands of tree-related fatalities that Humboldt could experience every year. It is clear that trees alongside trails present an unacceptable risk, and that any possible risk from any source must be mitigated from all activities that constitute outdoor

recreation, as trail users are unable to accept any risk from their activities. I am also glad your memo clearly shows that the actual desires of the populace are irrelevant, and how we need to make decisions for their own good.

I believe we should start by improving the safety of trails in the Arcata Community Forest, the Headwaters Reserve, and Redwood National Park, as these areas provide the lethal combination of a large number of Coast Redwoods and a large number of visitors. We may wish to clear more than 100ft on either side of every trail, as some of these areas contain trees of greater height that will still pose a risk to people innocently enjoying outdoor recreation. The statistics don't lie - trees are the number one hazard to anyone outdoors, and are capable of killing millions of people every year - and there is no alternative to removing them, nor can trail users accept any risk. Plus, with the improved aesthetics, these areas should immediately see a huge surge in visitors after removal of the unsightly trees.

We'll just have to hope that no misguided citizen starts collecting signatures on a measure to ban tree removal, and that the federal government doesn't try to block our critical control of these assault trees, capable of dropping many large branches at once. It is clear that this tiny section of trees poses a huge danger to the populace, far more than all the other trees along trails, and we have to act on it.

I would show up at the BOS meeting to heap praise upon this memo and talk about how critical county-wide tree removal is, but unfortunately I made the mistake of being gainfully employed, so instead I am CCing this to several relevant people in hopes that they will see the light and take action to eliminate any possible risk to anyone anywhere from any source no matter how statistically improbable or how contrary to past events or common sense. And now, I'm off to bed - There's a slim chance I'll live through the night, as there's at least two trees in the local area - so I need to make sure to get this out while I still have time.

Thank you for your support in improving Humboldt's trail safety and aesthetics!

## Sharp, Ryan

---

**From:** Sundberg, Ryan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 25, 2018 11:19 AM  
**To:** Nilsen, Amy; Blanck, Jeffrey; Sharp, Ryan  
**Subject:** Fwd: Proposed cutting of 101 corridor eucalyptus trees

FYI

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

---

**From:** Barry Evans <barryevans9@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 24, 2018 2:50:07 PM  
**To:** Bohn, Rex; Fennell, Estelle; mikewilson@co.humboldt.ca.us; Bass, Virginia; Sundberg, Ryan  
**Cc:** Louisa Rogers  
**Subject:** Proposed cutting of 101 corridor eucalyptus trees

Dear Supervisors Bohn, Fennell, Wilson, Bass and Sundberg

We understand you will be asked to support a staff recommendation at your July 29 meeting to eliminate the long row of 85-year-old Eucalyptus globulus trees along the 101 corridor between Eureka and Arcata as a "safety measure."

We strongly oppose this ill-considered proposal. These beautiful trees relieve an otherwise dull stretch of highway and provide a welcoming entrance for locals and visitors alike into Eureka. California's coastal highways are rife with stands of these trees, which cause negligible problems to road users and land owners.

I refer you to my column in the North Coast Journal:  
<https://www.northcoastjournal.com/humboldt/best-smelling-plant-on-earth/Content?oid=2130039>

Please reject this short-sighted and harmful proposal.

Respectfully,  
Barry Evans (P. Eng., retired) and Louisa Rogers

[North Coast Journal science column](#)  
[Growing Old Ungracefully \(weekly rant\)](#)  
[Jail meditation](#) [TEDx talk](#) [Bangladesh blog](#) [Little Free Library](#)