

**EXECUTIVE  
DIRECTOR**

Cassie Pinnell

**BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

Sarah Balstar

Flora Brain

Kelton Chambers

Marcia Ehrlich

Erin Kelly

Loren Miller

Michele Palazzo

Tanner Speas

Claire Trower

John Williams

# Mattole Restoration Council

[www.mattole.org](http://www.mattole.org)



Main Office  
PO Box 160, Petrolia, CA 95558  
Ph: (707) 629-3514  
Fax: (707) 629-3577  
[mrc@mattole.org](mailto:mrc@mattole.org)

Upriver Office  
PO Box 223, Whitethorn, CA 95589  
Ph: (707) 986-1078  
Fax: (707) 986-7374  
[upriver@mattole.org](mailto:upriver@mattole.org)

November 3, 2013  
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
P.O. Box 944246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Prioritizing oak woodland protection rules for the Forest Practices Committee

To the Members of the Board of Forestry,

We are writing to encourage the Board to prioritize the creation of oak woodland restoration rules in 2014, and to inform the Board of our efforts within the Mattole watershed regarding oak woodland restoration.

Oak woodland stands are declining in vitality and distribution in our watershed and across the State. This is due in part to a lack of prescribed burning and wildfires that previously removed many conifers from the stands. Recognizing the importance of the oak woodlands in our region, and the encroachment of Douglas-fir into oak woodlands, the Mattole Restoration Council has initiated an Oak Woodland Restoration program. The goal of MRC's restoration program is to gain a better understanding of the current distribution and ecological status of Oak Woodland/Savanna (OW) ecosystems within the Mattole watershed, preserve existing stands, and implement OW restoration projects to re-establish historical structure and function. We intend to achieve these goals through mapping and planning, OW assessments, scientific experiments and consultation with others involved in OW restoration, and creation and implementation of a restoration plan.

MRC supports the creation of rules in the CA Forest Practice Rules removing restocking requirements after commercial harvest of conifers that have encroached upon OW ecosystems. In addition, managing these habitats by removing the conifers so as to avoid damage to the hardwoods

can be costly. Having a forest practice rule that facilitates a return on this type of thinning and restoration will encourage landowners to maintain their oak woodlands.

Landowners had previously approached us with the need for an oak woodland prescription when we were developing the Mattole PTEIR. We visited oak woodland stands that were clearly being encroached upon by merchantable conifer that was threatening the vitality of the stand. Now as before, we support the development of oak woodland rules through the expertise of the Forest Practices committee. In addition, we would like the Board to consider working with us on an oak woodland restoration pilot project in the Mattole watershed that could help promote, demonstrate, and refine the parameters of the rule.

In support of ecologically-sound forestry,

Cassie Pinnell, MRC Executive Director

Ali Freedlund, MRC Forest and Fuels Program Coordinator

Hugh McGee, MRC Program Director, Native Ecosystem Restoration

John Williams, MRC Board Member

Erin Kelly, MRC Board Member