

## **Forest Health Extravaganza Coming to Laytonville on November 4**

The Eel River Recovery Project (ERRP) and multiple co-sponsors are holding a comprehensive forest health meeting at Harwood Hall in Laytonville on Saturday November 4 from 9 AM to 5 PM. The meeting is aimed at helping the community to organize to maximize the benefits of forest health implementation, including tiered opportunities such as using wood generated for building construction or furniture. Another emphasis will be fire preparedness.

The meeting will convene at 9 AM with a welcome from the Cahto Tribe followed by brief remarks from 3<sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor John Haschak. A summary of the new CAL FIRE Tenmile Creek Watershed Forest Health grant by ERRP Managing Director Pat Higgins will follow. The project includes treatment of 950 acres comprised of private land and the Cahto Tribe Rancheria. The goal is to thin the forest and restore oak woodlands to reduce fire risk, restore biodiversity, increase stream flow, and create jobs. In the long term, the intent is to use frequent, low-intensity fire to maintain the landscape in the same way the Cahto Tribe did historically.



**Forest health meeting crowd at Harwood Hall on January 25, 2020 before covid outbreak.**

Karen Youngblood of the Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc (RFFI) will give a summary of the Red Mountain/Usal Forest CAL FIRE grant administered by the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD). Forest health consultant Tim Bailey will talk about the wealth of grant resources available that could be accessed by the community. Scot Steinbring of Torchbear, a professional burn boss who is part of the ERRP team, will make a presentation entitled “Bringing Back Good Fire.” Rounding out the morning plenary session will be Jenny Burnstad of the Forest Reciprocity Group (FRG), Emily Tecchio of the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council (MCFSC), and Will Emerson of the Northern Mendocino Ecosystem Recovery Alliance (NM ERA).

After lunch is served, there will be breakout sessions at Harwood Hall, the Laytonville Garden Club, and the ERRP office across from Geigers Market. Harwood Hall sessions will address planning for fire defense, locating shaded fuel breaks to fragment fire, and the use of controlled burns to restore and maintain forest health. At the ERRP office, there will be sessions on the use of wood generated by forest health projects for pole construction of buildings, for founding a hand-made furniture industry, and as biochar for soil amendment at a community cooperative scale. The latter session will be co-facilitated by Casey O’Neil of Happy Day Farms.

Garden Club breakout topics will include organizing more non-profit capacity to bring in additional grant resources, the use of woody material to rebuild streams and to stop gullies in forests and meadows, and why native grasslands need to be restored to reduce fire risk and to improve the ecological health of the watershed.

Co-sponsors include all groups named above, CAL FIRE, the Cahto Tribe, and the Institute for Sustainable Forestry. While community needs for fire safety and economic development are huge, the resources potentially available are substantial. The question is, will the community organize to take advantage of the multi-tiered opportunities?

Food will be provided all day, starting with bagels donated by Los Bagels with cream cheese, fresh fruit, and coffee starting at 8:30 AM. Sandwiches will be served for lunch at noon and dinner will be served at 5 PM, including 30 pounds of wild rockfish donated by Pacific Choice Seafood. There is no charge for admission or meals, although donations will be gladly accepted.

For more information or to volunteer, contact [ERRPoutreach@gmail.com](mailto:ERRPoutreach@gmail.com) or call 707 223-7200. Information is also available at [EelRiverRecovery.org](http://EelRiverRecovery.org) and the ERRP Facebook page.