

Letter to BOS 12/9/24

PUBLIC
Comment

Good Morning Supervisor Goss, Plumas County Supervisors and Mr. Hiskey,

I am writing to you to bring your awareness to the necessary issue of protecting the old growth trees of our County, both on County land and in PG&E easements. The event described below is an example of the sort of increasingly common behavior which needs to be stopped.

On or around December 5, 2024, 5 trees were removed at the Taylorsville Park and Campground. 2 pines were dead and needed to go. 1 Cedar was leaning heavily though otherwise healthy and thriving with no signs of weakness, sickness or injury. 2 Ponderosa Pines were alive, healthy, thriving, strong, both were large, old growth, one over 131 years old. Issue is being taken with the removal of the 2 living, thriving, healthy old growth pine trees. It is understood that dead, diseased or otherwise hazardous trees must be removed for health and safety reasons.

Nick Collin, director of Facilities Services told me over the phone on Dec. 9, 2024, that he authorized the removal of the trees. That no forester or tree professional was consulted, that the decision was his. He told me that they were hazard trees that were leaning and had a lot of dead, brown needles on them. (No brown or dead needles can be seen on the branches of the trees which are still lying on the ground – see pictures below.) According to Mr. Collin, he marked them only days before the work was done by Mike Smith Tree Service. The logs are to be used for campsite delineation on the premises.

3 other trees were seriously wounded, one potentially damaged and one killed by the removal of the 2 perfectly healthy, thriving, old growth trees. The disregard for the value of these living assets to our community and for the wellbeing of the other trees in the stand is disturbing and must be addressed. Particularly in light of the number of trees that have been lost in the Dixie Fire and years after. Steps must be taken to protect the cherished and old growth trees of our communities and within our County.

I am writing to you to begin the conversation as to how we can protect the cherished and old growth trees of our county. How can we maintain trees and the infrastructure they surround and interact with so that safety and well-being are achieved for humans, infrastructure and the trees? These trees are precious assets to all of us, they make the oxygen we need to survive, they give us shade, they provide our children with things to climb and play on, some of them are old enough to have been here when the Mountain Maidu roamed free, most of them will live for another 1,000 years at least, if we would simply let them live. The number of healthy, thriving, old growth (100 year +) trees that have been cut down since the Dixie Fire is heartbreaking. So many have been lost to the fire. Now, we are observing a trend in more and more old growth being cut down under the guise of "hazard trees". As you can see from the pictures below, and as I'm sure you have seen as you go about your lives, many trees are being cut which could very safely be spared.

Please accept my offer of support in finding a solution to this worsening issue. I would like to see some discussion/action in the near future which creates a solution that protects the trees that Plumas County Residents love and value while maintaining appropriate safety levels on County land and in PG&E easements/right of ways. I look forward to working through this issue with you all.

See photos below, taken Dec. 9, 2024.

Respectfully,

Dan Kearns
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