

Muir Woods plan doesn't protect the park - Marin IJ Readers Forum June 17, 2015 by Joyce Britt

In the book "Blood Diamond," a villager seeing his community in Sierra Leone destroyed in the most brutal ways, says that the worst thing that can happen is when others find that you have something of value.

Here in our county, we have our open lands, preserved decades ago by people who understood "something of value."

We always have believed that to preserve the land, you must love it. To love it, you must know it. And, we have welcomed all to enjoy, to learn, and to protect.

But, the beauty can be loved to death.

If Muir Woods were an isolated federal monument, that would be one thing; but it is not. It is part of a very sensitive riparian and ocean preserve of public lands.

The designation of national monument certifies its existence as a national treasure. It isn't just the redwood trees which draw interest. It is the forest with the Redwood Creek habitat, to which coho salmon return to spawn.

The creek runs through the woods, down Muir Woods Road, on to the Pacific Ocean.

Over the past decade, the federal and state governments have funded, with our taxpayer money, \$1.5 billion on saving California central coast salmon and \$15 million on restoring Big Lagoon at Muir Beach. This effort was for these fish, an icon of the Coast Miwok, a commercial fishing investment, and for us, a protection against destroying what is valued most, our environment.

This is what we taxpayers have invested in, saving this creek and the salmon within it. The presence of these iconic fish of legend and lore signals to us what lies in our future.

The Memorandum of Understanding is a traffic plan. It is not a rescue of our ecology. It is not an answer to the overwhelming intrusion of the human factor which destroys the thing that visitors come to see.

The Board of Supervisors has had decades to enact a stream conservation ordinance, decades to monitor traffic on Muir Woods Road, decades to make decisions which would address the real problems here.

And those problems are not cured by the MOU. They are problems which are beyond traffic inconvenience.

The far larger issue is what we are killing.

Let the board know that you are watching its actions, in not preserving the ecology, in failing to contribute to the federal and state investment made in our community. They are passing the buck to the Park Service, to deny their duties and responsibilities.

Tell them that a moratorium on parking on Redwood Creek is a mandate, that reduction of footprints in Muir Woods is an absolute, and that the county of Marin must pass, under exigent circumstances, an immediate moratorium on building monster houses and swimming pools in Muir Beach which take the waters from Redwood Creek.

Tell them you know that the coho, which were there this past winter, had to be removed and sent north, to survive.

Tell them to act now.