



CALIFORNIA  
CHAPARRAL  
INSTITUTE

*...the voice of the chaparral*

Forest Supervisor Peggy Hernandez  
Los Padres National Forest  
6755 Hollister Ave. Suite 150  
Goleta, CA 93117

April 29, 2013

Dear Supervisor Hernandez,

We wanted to call your attention to some false and negative commentary about the Los Padres National Forest and request your help in correcting it.

This past week, we were alerted by a press release from the Lindsay Corporation in Nebraska that indicated they would be planting 1,200 trees on the Los Padres “in order to restore the forest’s natural state” to reverse the “damage” caused by the 2006 Day Fire “before more land is lost to invasive fire-prone brush.”

We find this pejorative characterization of the Los Padres’ characteristic chaparral ecosystem not only grossly inaccurate, but contrary and counterproductive to the US Forest Service’s educational efforts to help the public understand and appreciate the public land it protects.

The press release also pointed to the Arbor Day Foundation website for additional information. Unfortunately, we found that the Arbor Day Foundation totally ignored the Los Padres’ dominant ecosystem and mischaracterized the Forest as being only “comprised of redwood, mixed conifer, and oak woodlands.” Needless to say, the redwoods are 150 miles north of where the Day Fire burned.

They further offered that after the Day Fire,

The U.S. Forest Service immediately put together a management plan to replant more than 17,000 acres of land that was considered high severity. The forest has approximately eight percent of its land base as conifer forest. This number has declined considerably due to major wildfires that have burned in the last decade and needs to be reversed to restore its natural state. Together, we can help restore critical areas in southern California that could be lost to invasive fire-prone brush without our support.

Although we understand the desire to restore forested areas, many of such efforts have

actually compromised native ecosystems with hybrid, non-native trees, soil disturbance, and inappropriate tree placement in plant communities where trees do not belong. We have written to the Arbor Day Foundation and asked them to correct their mischaracterization of Los Padres and remove their pejorative reference to the Forest's predominate ecosystem. We have yet to hear back from them and the errors remain.

We respectfully request that you encourage the Arbor Day Foundation to reframe their description of the Los Padres National Forest in a way that celebrates, rather than demonizes, the chaparral. In addition, we would like to request information regarding the plan to replant 17,000 acres as referenced by the Arbor Day Foundation. We were unaware of this project.

Thank you for all your efforts to protect one of California's most pristine natural environments.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Halsey  
Director

cc  
Los Padres Forest Watch  
Ventana Wilderness Alliance