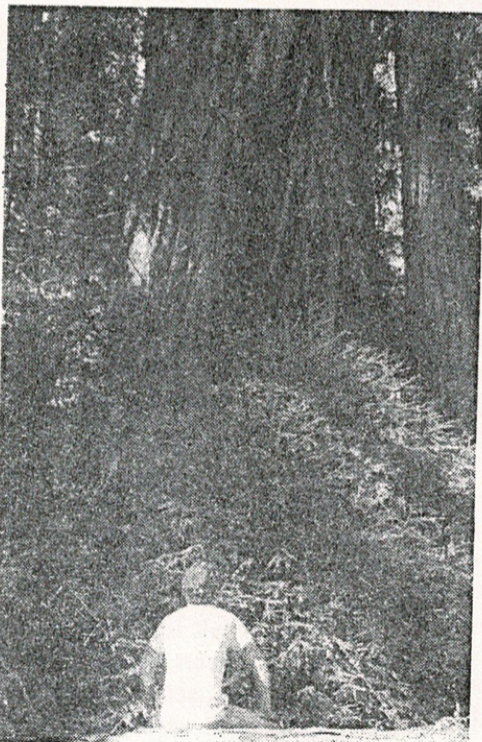


L. Pacific logs near Clar Tree

In apparent violation of an out-of-court settlement, Louisiana Pacific Corporation has cut the five largest redwood trees surrounding the Clar Tree, a reporter learned this week while touring the Silver Estate redwood grove near the end of Neeley Road in Guerneville.

Two of the felled trees stood approximately 23 feet from the Clar



ALMOST ALONE—The Clar Tree still stands but LP last week downed all large trees once standing near the historic redwood.

THE PAPER/King

Tree, two were 29 feet away, and another was within 31 feet. All of the trees had base diameters over 16 inches.

Last month lawyers for LP and Laura Rothkopf settled out of court the latter's

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LP logs

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contention that she should have been notified of the harvest, since her property was within 300 feet of an access road leading to the Silver Estate. Rothkopf said she was denied due process in not having been able to comment on the THP. As a concession to Rothkopf, LP agreed to spare the Clar Tree, its surrounding ecosystem, and some trees along The River to mitigate visual impact from Highway 116.

Rothkopf is the daughter of historian Raymond Clar, whose family name the Clar Tree bears. According to Sharon

Duggan, Rothkopf's attorney, a letter from LP attorney Jared Carter reads, "As (LP chief forester) Chris Rowney explained to you in my office, a substantial number of trees have been marked for leave around the Clar Tree so as to assure the maintenance of the ecosystem that will protect this tree."

Ukiah-based Carter did not return calls to The Paper.

Except for a small redwood that stands adjacent to the Clar Tree, the five felled trees stood closer than any others to the 336-foot virgin redwood.

Duggan says that the gist of the out-of-court agreement stipulates that LP would protect the ecosystem around the Clar Tree. "I don't know what in the hell that means," she said. "We took

them at their word." She said that if the cut trees were not marked for leave, then the company might be in compliance with the agreement, but that this would have to be determined by a tree expert.

Local tree surgeon Darrell Sukovitzen says that the trees surrounding a virgin redwood help to support its root system. The Clar Tree is leaning already, he said, and without the surrounding base support, the giant could fall prematurely.

"That's one of the dumbest things they could have done as far as preserving that tree," said Sukovitzen. "It's rare that a virgin stands alone."

Rowney said this week that he was not aware of any cutting around the Clar

Tree, but that LP "never guaranteed leaving all trees around that tree." He said the company agreed to "maintaining the ecology of the area" so that the Clar Tree would "not be subject to abnormal stresses." —GREG KING