

DON MCKENZIE/NORTH FORK GARCIA

First spent time in Garcia Watershed in 1953, working for Hollow Tree Lumber Co. (1954-58). Continued to work consulting for them off and on from 1958-72.

Coastal Plywood Co-op owned the land before Hollow Tree bought it in 1954. They had a road in from Fish Rock Road to current R & J property. They cut a little timber on the East edge near the road.

The road had been pioneered to the Garcia River and there was a jeep road to the saddle between the North Fork and the Main Stem Garcia. Except for jeep trails into old homestead areas, the upper watershed was mostly roadless in 1953.

In 1953 the cabin at Jacks Opening was still in good shape, although no one was living there at that time.

In 1954 Hollow Tree bought the land. The Campbell Ranch was the only in-holding at that time. Then it became the Bueler Ranch, and then it was sold to LP.

In 1954 there were steelhead up the North Fork almost to Jack's Opening. The streams were full of organic debris and there were on-going slides on side tributaries even before any logging or roads. One slide on the south side of the North Fork went all the way from the river to where the mid-slope road was originally laid out. The road was re-routed to stay above this slide, which was the biggest one Don remembers. The slide eventually migrated upslope to the road. Normally they just built roads right across slides in those days, but this slide was so big that they decided to avoid it.

Not much wildlife that Don remembers seeing when he walked in the woods during the '50's: Quail -- about the same as today; Raccoons -- more than today; not many deer or birds. There were no otter then, but lots of otter today, which Don believes have had a big effect on the fish along with sport and commercial fishing.

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The trout fishing was excellent in the 1950's -- "half pounder's" and "egg suckers." He just fished wherever there were holes and it didn't take long to catch all the fish he wanted. March and April were the best months for "half pounders" -- trout you could catch all year.

By 1954 the pig population had already built up. The first pig he encountered was at Jack's Opening. At that time pigs were found only around openings.

Don thinks lots of things have affected the fish population: sport fishing at the mouth, maybe commercial fishing, otters. He feels that the streams are rehabilitating and are in much better shape now than in the late '50's and '60's, but the fish population is still going down.

1955 brought the worst storm Don can remember. Fish Rock Road by the Y Ranch was totally gone. It took 28 days to just open the road. They just pushed all the waste material down into the creek. The 1955 flood flushed a lot of the debris from early logging out of the upper tributaries.

Don feels that large scale erosion occurs as a result of the previous saturation level of the soil in an area even more than the total amount of rainfall of a specific storm.

Don was not in the area during the 1964 flood.

From Don's field experience and talking to old time in the 50's, and from historical records, he gave a brief outline of the logging history of the Garcia: 1890's -- went up Main Stem and up the North Fork to current THP #105. Cat logging started in 1950, but not much real activity until 1954. All the logs at that time were hauled east to Ukiah and Cloverdale. The land use was still the same at that time with mostly large blocks of land managed by timber companies and ranchers. In the 1950's they cut high graded Redwood, Douglas Fir and Sugar Pine -- there was no market for low quality timber. They tried to utilize every thing they cut but they tried to take only the higher grade trees.

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The only mill he can remember in the drainage in 1955 was Alder Mill just above Eureka Hill Bridge on the Garcia. Mill D was built in the early 1960's strictly for 2 x 4's (small diameter trees, mostly Doug Fir). This was located just upstream from the confluence of Signal Creek and the Garcia.

In 1955 Glacey's Mill was built on the south side across from Graphite Creek, and it handled lower quality logs. These are the only mills he remembers on the Garcia.

Don has slides/pictures of Mill D being constructed.

Hollow Tree sold to Longview in the late 1960's. Hollow Tree retained cutting rights for 10 years, and finally relinquished cutting rights in 1975. Mill D was dismantled in 1975. Lots of people lived at the mill in bunk houses and trailers.

Don was not actively involved with Longview, but he looked at almost every timber sale they put up -- he actually was involved, but in looking at the land for other clients who were interested in buying.

The Longview program: when the market was right for sales, they made sales to cover road improvement and taxes. They cut pretty much like R & J is cutting -- residual and thinning, except for those times when the market was not up for specific trees and then they did not cut. They cut a higher percentage of redwood because the market was higher and more stable for redwood. Tractor logging really abused streams and smaller watercourses during the 1950's. The trees were top large to longline out of steep canyons, so they were skidded down into the creeks and pulled out.

Don feels the worst overall years for logging practices were 1956 and 1957, and that things have been improving since then.

During the 1950's they first logged in the upper ends of the drainage, and then moved down the drainage (from east to west). Logs were hauled into Cloverdale.

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Coastal Plywood Co-op broke the land into 4 units for sale:

- 1) North Fork Garcia -- bought by Hollow Tree
- 2) Upper Main Garcia (below Inman) -- bought by Cloverdale Redwood, which was  
connected to Hollow Tree.
- 3) Inman Creek -- bought later by Hollow Tree
- 4) Current LP holdings -- bought by Dick Holmes, an early proponent of second  
growth redwood.

Because logs came east to Ukiah and Cloverdale, they cut the upper reaches first and moved towards the coast. The first cut of modern logging on the Garcia ran from 1950 to 1963, with most cut from 1954 to 1961.

There were some large tan oak, but few stems per acre before logging. There was lots of huckleberry brush away from the creeks and alder near the creeks and other wet areas. There was lots of brush on the north side of the North Fork. What was a brushfield in the 1950's is timber today. There are lots more stems per acre now.

Around the turn of the century L.A. White had a mill on the Garcia River about 1 mile above the North Fork, and cruised the timber in the N. Fork & on some of the main stem.

Hammond, Jensen, Wallan cruised in 1952-53.

Don has the first topo from 1950 and will let us copy if we need it. He has no old aerials. He has some old photos from the 1920's.

Don thinks Hammond, Jensen, Wallan should have old aerials.

Don knows the old Hollow Tree owner who lives near him and is sure he would sign a release for us to see the photos.

Q: "If you could do anything, what.....?"

A: Don feels good about R & J's stewardship, but cost factors limit the amount of restoration work the company can afford. He also feels they could do more

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restoration work if it wasn't such a hassle to deal with the agencies. He would like to see more restoration work done.

He doesn't like to see CDF push mid-slope roads for cable logging and thinks they are disastrous for the steep slopes around here. He feels that mid-slope roads will fail and cause more problems than re-opening old roads along streams.

Further Questions for Don:

Q: What do you know about the history of Pardaloe Creek? Logging, ranching, land ownership, fishing, etc?

Q: Can you draw on the North Fork Map the extent of the North Fork that was originally logged in the late 1800's and early 1900's?

Q: Can you remember and roughly draw the way the North Fork was logged in the 1950's?

*Any old THP's that you know of?  
(or records)*