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New Report Details Maxxam/PL's Wholesale Noncompliance with Environmental Protection Standards

Company Racks Up Over 300 Violations in Five Years

Garberville, CA - The Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC) today released a report analyzing Maxxam/Pacific Lumber Company's (PL's) compliance record under its controversial "Habitat Conservation Plan," documenting more 325 violations issued to the company since 1999.

EPIC's report, compiled from documents obtained from federal and state regulators, chronicles a continuing pattern of violations of conservation laws and regulations from Maxxam/PL's logging operations, which are conducted on over 200,000 acres of forest in Humboldt County, California. These violations present a stark contrast to the rhetoric Maxxam/PL has claimed in a recent media blitzkrieg, which has inundated local residents with its claims of a "new image" and "sustainable" practices.

In a staggering number of cases, Maxxam/PL has been caught illegally cutting trees in riparian management zones (RMZs) by "misclassifying" streams or simply cutting over the boundary line. And by no coincidence, several of these violations involved logging of very large, old growth redwood trees, including trees up to nearly nine feet in diameter.

These and other violations that degraded water quality are the most commonplace by far, totaling 241 of the 325 violations, or about 75%. Maxxam/PL's other violations include 26 for illegal logging operations within marbled murrelet habitat and 14 for violations that harmed the northern spotted owl. Thirteen of the violations involved damage to protected plant species, 10 involved illegal cutting outside the riparian areas, and 21 were issued for various other transgressions, including unlawful herbicide spraying and failing to meet post-logging stocking requirements.

In 1997, another investigation by EPIC revealed that CDF issued to Maxxam /PL at least 250 violations of the California Forest Practice Act between 1995 and 1997. These violations continued to accumulate in 1998, and in November of that year, it became the first logging company ever to lose its license to operate in California. Prior to this, Maxxam/PL was found guilty of violating the federal Endangered Species Act after carrying out illegal logging operations in the ancient redwood grove known as Owl Creek.

"While Maxxam/PL may claim it has changed its unlawful ways, these violations demonstrate its "extreme makeover" attempt is only cosmetic in appearance," Cynthia Elkins, Program Director for EPIC, said. "EPIC is demanding that actions be taken to ensure these egregious violations are stopped," Elkins continued.

EPIC's report and information on Maxxam/PL's history of violations can be found on EPIC's website at www.wildcalifornia.org.