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**Sierra Forest Activist Marily Woodhouse Receives Earth Day Award for
Exceptional Advocacy in Defense of Forests and Watersheds**

Oakland, CA, 4/20/2021: Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment announced **Battle Creek Alliance Director Marily Woodhouse as the winner of the 2021 Anthony Grassroots Prize**, an annual \$1,000 Earth Day award recognizing an outstanding example of grassroots environmental activism.

Since launching Battle Creek Alliance nearly 15 years ago, Marily has held the State of California, Sierra Pacific Industries, and other large timber companies accountable to environmental laws which protect people and planet. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is required by state regulations to fully investigate the potential environmental impacts of each logging plan submitted by industrial timber companies. However, since 1997 CAL FIRE has allowed clearcutting of over 61,000 acres in the Battle Creek watershed, leaving large swaths of the forest more susceptible to fire and fragmenting the habitat for many species. The clearcuts have left the soils on the forest floor loose, and subject to erosion which washes these valuable soils into rivers and streams. The increased sediment then degrades water quality throughout the entire downstream watershed during the rainy season when the loose dirt is swept into the streams. Increased sediments in the water destroys the spawning habitat for native Chinook salmon, and the lack of shade increases the water temperature which adds additional environmental stress on the fish. But CAL FIRE routinely approves numerous clearcut logging plans in the same watershed, and fails to assess the environmental impacts that multiple clearcuts will have downstream and throughout the watershed.

Beyond the immediate damage, clearcutting our older trees has a snowball effect on numerous aspects of climate change. It removes all trees from a designated area and clears the flora of the forest floor with toxic herbicides which then erode into the watershed during the rainy season, polluting the water and aquatic habitats. When large areas of older trees are clearcut, significant amounts of carbon dioxide are released into the air, and the clearcut area will take many years to regain the carbon-neutral air quality. Marily sums it up, *“Every living creature's existence is dependent on having a place that keeps them alive. No private company owns the climate, air, water, or wildlife of the state. The public agencies are tasked with protecting all of those for the common good. Yet CAL FIRE, the state funded agency with the power to regulate logging, has*

continuously approved logging plans and the ruinous practices the private companies assault the watersheds of California with, instead of enforcing the environmental protection laws.”

Even if a plantation of new trees is later planted in the clearcut, the young trees ignite easily, and burn fast and hot, leaving huge areas of our forests extremely vulnerable to wildfire. In addition, replacing a diverse forest with a single species of same-size, same species pines leaves the area less resistant to disease and insect infestation, diminishes the diversity of food for wildlife, and destroys the complex ecosystem links between different plants and animals that are crucial for healthy forests. *“Mowing down grown forest during climate change and drought,”* Marily asks. *“Seriously?”*

With painstaking care and extreme scientific rigor, Marily has developed and led a citizen science initiative which has collected over 14,000 water and habitat quality samples to document the damage of industrial clearcut logging throughout the Battle Creek Watershed – with headwaters in the Lassen National Forest, it is one of the largest tributaries of the Sacramento River and one of the few remaining places which supports wild run salmon. In fact, Battle Creek is the site of one of the largest salmon restoration projects in the country, due to it being one of the most important fish spawning streams in the Sacramento Valley. *“On what planet does it make sense to invest in restoring salmon habitat, and then allow the discharge of sediments and herbicides which kill the fish,”* asks Marily.

Marily’s scientific efforts have led her to Superior Court, where on Earth Day she will formally open the arguments for a sweeping public challenge of the State of California’s pattern and practice of routinely ignoring the requirements of CEQA and the Forest Practice Act. And Marily is quick to point out that the overall impacts extend well beyond her remote corner of California: *“The problems in my homeland in the Battle Creek watershed are not confined to just one area. Rather, they are a systemic failure of the publicly funded state regulatory agencies who have a close, collaborative relationship with extractive industries in every watershed.”*

But she also understands that permanently protecting fragile ecosystems and achieving forest resiliency must grow out of increased public stewardship. As Marily explains, *“I began my work to protect the natural wild world out of both love and a sense of responsibility for the amazing and intricately balanced ecosphere that we have been gifted with.”* Her outreach and education to broaden community knowledge and evidence to promote resource conservation and to protect the water supply from degradation for the local low-income rural community, as well as the larger downstream communities in the Sacramento River watershed, includes the production of a feature-length film, ***Clearcut Nation***. To see Marily’s film, please visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dde1dv86M7Q>

To learn more about Marily Woodhouse, Battle Creek Alliance, and Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue, and see pictures of her work, please visit:

<http://www.thebattlecreekalliance.org/home.html>

ABOUT the Anthony Grassroots Prize

The **Anthony Grassroots Prize** – this year celebrating 20 years of uplifting grassroots environmental leadership through an award, cash prize, and public recognition – was endowed by Juliette Anthony, a lifelong environmental activist who has been recognized for her work in protecting the Santa Monica Mountains, banning the toxic gasoline additive MTBE, promoting solar power, and publicizing the negative environmental impacts of ethanol. To learn more about the Anthony Grassroots Prize, please visit <http://rosefdn.org/anthony-grassroots-prize>. Anthony

Prize founder, Juliette Anthony, explains this year's award, "*As we enter another year of exceptional drought, we all know how important water is. Healthy forests are like sponges; their soils hold water and release it slowly all summer long for people, agriculture, and fish. Marily's tireless advocacy helps us all.*"

ABOUT Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment

Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment supports community-based advocacy to promote conservation, equity, and justice through grant-making and direct service programs. Rose Foundation's focus includes grassroots activism, watershed protection, environmental justice, and consumer rights. Rose also administers *New Voices Are Rising*, a youth leadership development and environmental justice advocacy training program. To learn more about the Rose Foundation, please visit <http://rosefdn.org>.