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Rest In Peace Rural America

Because he has been up close and personal with forestry regulation in California for the last forty years, Charles L. Ciancio has acquired knowledge that he is pressed to share with others. Mr. Ciancio has witnessed firsthand how irresponsible decisions of those in power have affected the lives of others and many species in a very negative way. These decisions have usually been made with honorable intent, but lack of research and common sense has made many laws and decrees destructive to those living under them. Mr. Ciancio's new book, Rest In Peace Rural America, is the result of efforts to publicize the wrongs that are being done in the name of justice and environmental conscience.

From his home in the redwood forests of Eureka, California, the author shares his life, thoughts, and revelations in his new book Rest In Peace Rural America.

I stumbled into my current career by chance and an interest in the outdoors. While I was growing up, my dad and family friends spent a lot of time hunting and fishing with me. The outdoors became my playground and I readily chose fishing over afternoon matinees. It wasn't long before I knew every creek in the Willits Little Lake Valley and beyond. Years later when the draft wouldn't take me because of bad eyes, I worked my way through college and earned a degree in Forest Management. Earning a living by managing the outdoors of northern California was a dream come true.

Seeing the plight of many rural Americans who make their living from the land I knew that I had to speak up about regulatory systems that are jeopardizing their lifestyles. That is why I decided to write *Rest In Peace Rural America*. People living in cities would not put up with the burdens that face many living in rural areas.

The courts and public servants of our land are suppose to serve and protect; however, in a quiet and unnoticed manner, they are collectively working together like a Fourth Branch of Government to intrusively control our lives. In school we're taught about three Branches: the Executive, Judicial, and Legislative. As the real world teaches us, there is a Fourth Branch which exists that oversees such things as permits, land use zoning, what we eat, what species kids can play with, and many other everyday things. As we have all learned, questionable actions by this Fourth Branch are routinely ignored.

Environmental laws and sciences are in their infancy. Information allowed into the courts is usually not site specific, time tested, or peer reviewed, and the short history of environmental law has not allowed enough judicial scrutiny to occur. The inability of lawyers and judges to determine which information is right or wrong lets all kinds of information be thrown into the pot. Judicial decisions based on this kind of information results in judicial rubbish, to put it in a nice way. This judicial and regulatory resistance to change, combined with no practical or inexpensive way to rebut incorrect and biased judicial decisions, limits the ability to correct erroneous information and decisions utilizing old law.

Growing up the way I did, in a rural setting and as a forester, the environment became a large part of my everyday life – both on and off the job. I witnessed how keeping our hands off of nature often caused more harm than good. Too many

environmentalist voices have been heard by the courts and acted on without due process and thought.

To give an example of erroneous judicial action, I can recall when the courts forced protection of the Northern Spotted Owl (NSO) before a full review of field conditions. It was mandated that old-growth forests were best for the owl. Continuing fieldwork found thousands of NSOs outside old-growth areas. This field work found owl food levels to be higher in timber harvested areas and other disturbed areas, and more food means more owls. Later fieldwork also found, NSO survival against predator Barred Owls to be higher in younger, denser forests.

As the Northern Spotted Owl fades into the sunset, I expect environmentalists, involved biologists, involved regulators, and the media to remain in denial of the site-specific facts. This is a true example of how to love a species to death.

Ask yourself what you can do when a regulator tells you to do something that makes no sense, or is not authorized by law. Firemen and peace officers have to be obeyed for obvious reasons, but what about other regulatory folks that are out of line? Honestly, there is little that you can do.

Questionably, endangered flies are stopping the building of patios, impacts to mud puddles can stop horse grazing, bird feeders may be outlawed, lawn mower use may be banded because it may contribute to global warming, fence colors do not fit local ordinances, house plants may need to be replaced because they are not fire resistant enough, and on and on and on.

In July of 2001, a fire was sparked in the Okanogan National Forest in central Washington State. A helicopter was dispatched to drop water from the Chewuch River

onto the fire, but the fire crew was informed that the river contained endangered fish, and it was against imposed regulations to use the water. The fire manager and a biologist had to schedule a meeting with the District to get approval to use the protected water. The exemption was not approved for six hours. By that time, the fire was out of control, overwhelming firefighters and taking four firefighters' lives. On account of an idiotic regulation drummed up by a Fourth Branch of Government, firefighters were put at risk and human lives were made no more important than the smallest species.

Another time, a landowner wanted to remove old downed logs from his property for fire protection. County regulators sent him a listing of fees and forms that needed to be completed. Without obtaining a permit and having the county review the site, the owner would be in violation of county codes. Fulfilling these codes required use of professional contractors, as well as a knowledge of contract fees, building and service facility locations, survey information, watercourse and biological information, etc. Over 50 potentially applicable fees and a total \$750 fee to remove just a few logs was in play. The landowner came to me for help. A little forceful dialogue using reason and common sense resulted in convincing the county they were out-of-line. In the end for a \$55 dollar fee, the county said they would go away, and the landowner could remove his own logs from his own property.

Various members of the Fourth Branch and the environmental community have decided that fish spawned and raised by humans are inferior to wild fish. Despite the fact 80% of Pacific salmon populations are already a mix of wild and hatchery fish populations, we are told fish reared by humans should be eliminated from wild rivers. We are also told to ignore how hatchery programs have proven to produce fish

genetically equal and superior to wild fish. This erroneous thinking has been used to shutdown successful properly run rearing programs, and has been used to justify electrocuting and physically clubbing to death perfectly healthy and viable hatchery fish raised at taxpayers expense.

Not long ago a helicopter pilot was ordered to appear before a U.S. Magistrate in San Jose because his helicopter flushed a bevy of murre, a protected species of bird. At the time, he was watching for possible injured runners at a Big Sur Marathon where cell phone reception is spotty and emergencies can go unreported. The helicopter pilot was accused of “harassing birds”.

Rest In Peace Rural America is my effort to make others aware of the Fourth Branch of Government and how every person is within its grasp. Actual situations are used to show how we are all affected, and just what needs to be done to make the system better. I give many examples of situations that I have witnessed in *Rest In Peace Rural America* including some occurrences that have taken people’s and species’ lives.

Charles L. Ciancio’s , *Rest In Peace Rural America*, retails for \$18.95 and can be ordered by calling 888-808-5440.