GE Trees and Forest Restoration
Unique Challenges

Global Justice Ecology Project
Campaign to STOP GE Trees

Ruddy M. Turnstone - GE Trees Campaigner
Background

- History of forest protection from development and logging through community science, public outreach, protest and litigation
- US Forest Service states that the South hosts over 32 million acres of southern pine plantations for the lumber and pulpwood industries
- Melaleuca introduced to Florida early 1900's. Now about 488,000 acres exist - eradication program ongoing
- GE Eucalyptus threatens to be a repeat of history
Disclaimer

GJEP & CSGET does not condemn nor condone all of the tactics that are about to be discussed. This presentation is merely a demonstration of the various tactics that have been used against GE trees. With that said, GJEP does believe that direct action is valuable and must be used when necessary, and that the capitalist system itself needs a total transformation if we are to survive on this planet.
We stand at the precipice of the survival of forests, our species and the earth as we know it.
The Challenge is Global

“We are currently on course for ecological Armageddon.”
Professor Dave Goulson of Sussex University, UK

- +75% of flying insects lost in the last 25 years in Germany
- # of animals living on earth have plummeted by 1/2 since 1970
- Current populations of species in an area are about 31% less than at the time of European settlement. Loss projected to reach 40% by 2050

In the Americas, more than 95% of high-grass prairies have been transformed into farms, along with 72% of dry forests and 88% of the Atlantic forests.
Does biotechnology present different risks to or concerns for forest health than nonbiotech tools?

Global Society's Acceptance

“Protests are always criticized as being at the wrong time because those who need to protest are never the people writing the agenda. That’s the value of protest.”

-Tim DeChristopher
Sociologist John Agnone discovered that over the course of almost 40 years:

- Single protest events increased pro-environmental legislation being passed by 1.2%.
- Moderate protest increases the annual rate of adoption by 9.5%.
- Public opinion on its own influences federal action but is strengthened by protest.
- Institutional advocacy has limited impact on federal environmental policy.
Country-wide bans/partial bans:

France, Germany, Switzerland, Madeira, Ireland, Austria, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Venezuela, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, India, Thailand, Russia, Mexico and 7 others.

US:
Ban - Josephine, Jackson county, OR
Superseding of state/county autonomy from federal level
283,725 petition signatures against GE Eucalyptus were submitted as public comment 2017

- Only 3 comments submitted for deregulation
- Over 25,000 submitted against arctic apple in 2015

Public comment and participation is crucial in gauging concern and opinion

When it doesn't happen the public has to act outside of the regulatory framework

266,000+ petitions pressured major fast food chains not to sell the GE apple.
Lawsuits and International Statements

- 2010 Lawsuit against ArborGen
- International letters & declarations:
  - Asunción Declaration
  - Support for Brazil
2015 Protest at ArborGen's World HQ

The action prompted public response from ArborGen: They had abandoned their GE loblolly project.
IUFRO Tree Biotech 2013 – North Carolina
GE Trees Destruction in North America and Globally

- Resistance to GE has happened since 1987
- Resistance to GE Trees since 1999
- Over 18 events in 10 yrs 99-present. ME, OR, BC, France, Brazil Aotearoa (New Zealand) and many other countries.
- Marius Mason – political prisoner sentenced 22 years for an arson at a Monsanto lab at Michigan State University
Belgium

Field Liberation Movement protest at field trial of GE poplars
UN Food and Agriculture Organization reported that between 1990 and 2010, the area of land covered by industrial tree plantations (including eucalyptus) in the Global South increased more than 50%, even though the plantations doubled the yield of wood per hectare.
Final Thoughts

Sequoia restoration success story: Giant Forest

Resistance against GE trees has been ongoing for almost 20 years.

To have a conversation without including resistance would be excluding a valid form of public opinion on the subject.