

Good morning members of the Board, staff and guests.

First of all, I would like to thank the Forest Landowners of California, particularly Nan Deniston and Bob Berlage, for nominating me for this honor, and Matt Waverly of the Amador-El Dorado Forest Forum for the introduction.

It is a great honor to stand here today as the recipient of the Francis H. Raymond Award. When I first got wind of the fact that my name had been brought up, I was a little worried. You see, I thought the award was some kind of lifetime achievement award. I wondered if someone had a contract out on me, or if it simply seemed like I was at the end. But after researching the award I learned that it is this: The award is given to the individual, organization, agency or company that has contributed the most to the management and increased awareness of California's forested resources over the past five years. Since I am not an active forest manager, I must then fit in to the "increased awareness" category.

I also learned a few things about Francis H. Raymond. He was a former State Forester and leading advocate of the passage of Assembly Bill 469 in 1972, which resulted in the Professional Foresters Licensing Law. He helped bring legitimacy to the profession in California, just as the receipt of this award helps bring legitimacy to my passion and claim to fame, the California Forestry Challenge.

I ran across a quote recently that struck a chord with me: "Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much." Well, my journey started with a dream in 2001, at the California Envirothon, a similar event for high school students that I had been involved with since 1992. Teachers at the event that year from El Dorado County were not entirely satisfied, and came to me asking me to do something different, something better, and something more suited to the environment and issues at home. From that came the Forest Education Summit in the

spring of 2002, which quickly evolved into the first Forestry Challenge event in the fall of 2003. The continued evolution and success of the Challenge is due in part to the constant feedback from teachers, volunteers, and students, and the resulting changes. After all, if I'm not meeting the participants' needs, they will stop participating. And now, in its ninth year, the program is stronger than ever, with approximately 800 students having been to a Challenge event, and several pursuing college degrees in forestry and related fields as a result of their experience.

But now I'd like to come back to the Francis H. Raymond Award. As I read through the list of past recipients, there were some I knew, and some I didn't. But what also struck me is how many of these recipients are involved with the Forestry Challenge as volunteers. Maybe I shouldn't be surprised, since it is just these kinds of award winners who do step up and volunteer on behalf of the advancement of forestry education. Take John Nicoles for example. He has been a dedicated volunteer for many years at the El Dorado event and, more recently, at the Santa Cruz event. Frank Barron is another faithful volunteer, and quite possibly achieved Rock Star status at last year's Siskiyou event. Kay Antunez has also supported the Challenge, and one year we were able to integrate a Project Learning Tree teacher training session into the schedule. Bud McCrary's and Bill Beaty's companies are Challenge sponsors, and Gary Nakamura's generous loan of cruiser vests on behalf of the Northern California Society of American Foresters is critical to the program's success. And lastly, there's Bill Dennison, which is part of the reason I thought this was a lifetime achievement award. Actually Bill has been a part of my whole life and, for those of you who know Bill, his quick wit provided great entertainment at get togethers with the Dennison and Dealey families, mostly at the expense of my Mom. I feel privileged to be in the company of this group of high

achievers, and I will try to live up to this standard.

I want to tell you about my dreams and goals, but in order to understand where I am going, you need to know where I've been. I've never summarized my life like this, and it was an interesting exercise. Don't worry, I'll do my best to press the fast forward button as often as possible, and we'll get through this in just a few hours, I promise.

I was born in Red Bluff in 1964. Dad worked for Diamond Match, his first employer out of college. To spare you the mental calculations, I am 47 years old. When my Mom delivered me into the world, the first thing she heard was the doctor, saying "Don't worry Mrs. Dealey, the next one is going to be a boy", to which she replied, with daggers in her eyes, "There isn't going to be a next one!" So from that moment on, I was my dad's last hope for a forester and, for that matter, a son. So as I grew, I realized I had shoes to fill, and set out to do that the best I could. Besides my parents, I was most influenced by my Dad's Mom Gladyce. She loved trees, and was a great school teacher. She gave to the point of significant sacrifice, and taught me a few things about selflessness.

In many ways I was not a typical girl. Monday Night Football was a weekly ritual with my dad in the fall months. I didn't play with dolls, but preferred to roam around outside, and my idea of a clever Halloween costume was a parody on the Avon Lady. I know that my dad was a forester, and that was good.

Fast forward to fifth grade, and an event that began to shape my understanding of bias towards responsible forest management. My teacher showed us *The Lorax*. I watched with horror, knowing it was a lie, but not knowing how to stand up and advocate for what I knew was correct. As soon as the movie ended, I tucked my lunch pail under my arm and beelined it home in a hysterical fit. Thank goodness Mom happened to be

home. Dad asked to talk to the class, and the teacher refused. This was my first exposure to the axiom “Don’t confuse me with the facts, my mind is made up.”

My interests narrowed as I advanced in school. Seventh grade – biology. Ninth grade – agriculture. In high school I considered studying forestry, and spent many a summer day with Dad riding around the woods with him as he visited logging jobs, but Dad discouraged me, considering the condition of the industry in the early 1980’s. And we thought it was bad then!

College and early career were all about Plant Science and Pest Management, but I remained interested in the forest and developed my skills educating kids about soil and water conservation and invasive species.

My current path, as I described a few moments ago, began in 2002. I feel like this is where I belong, and I intend to stay on this path as long as I am able. My progress seems slow at times, and is juggled with caring for the family. I often cram a little work into the daytime hours, then go back to resume work when the family goes to bed, which explains why many of you receive e-mails at midnight or later.

There have been setbacks, some small, and some big. With the dissolution of the Forest Products Commission in late 2008, I found myself starting my own organization, with \$200 in the bank and no idea how I was going to pull off an event in 2009. But with some energy and stubbornness, I am proud to say that my corporation, Forestry Educators Incorporated, is now a non-profit entity. I have a website, a board of directors, and three full length events coming up in the next few weeks. I would like to recognize the generous support of the forest products companies and foresters, working and retired, and also the teachers and students who believed in

me and found the Forestry Challenge worth their time. I would also like to thank my husband, Todd, for never once suggesting that I let my dream go and get a paying job. My parents, children, friends, and neighbors have also been by my side. And lastly, the students, many of whom call and e-mail me on a regular basis, remind me constantly that it truly is worth every ounce of myself I invest in this endeavor.

But as you have bestowed this honor upon me, I know that this is not the end of the road. Actually, this journey is just beginning. I have a strong sense of where I want to go with this, and I want to share this vision with you. When you develop a strong future vision, you don't have to force yourself to set goals, your mind just compels you to set them. And every time you accomplish an objective, it's not the end of anything; it's the beginning, the starting point for another stage of an ongoing journey of progress, development, growth, and adventure.

In five years I plan to be conducting five events throughout California each year, each serving 90 to 100 students. I plan to earn a wage consistent with others of similar capabilities. I plan to grow my corporation, jumping at opportunities to diversify and reach as many young people as I can. And I hope to pass it along to the next generation so they can continue to educate Californians about the complexities and wonders of California's forests.