

## Wayburn and Pacific Forest Trust Win Leadership Award

It's been quite a year for Laurie Wayburn, president and cofounder of the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT). She has testified before a subcommittee of the US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, been profiled in *People* (along with PFT cofounder Constance Best), and appeared on the *News Hour with Jim Lehrer*. Far more important was the inclusion of forests in California's sweeping plan to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions throughout the state's economy (see "State of California Includes Forests in Carbon Dioxide Reduction Plan," August 2008). Wayburn and others at PFT have worked for years to ensure that carbon sequestration in forests was recognized as a key element of the plan.

For this and other notable work, Wayburn and the PFT were recently named one of six recipients of the 2008 James Irvine Foundation Leadership Award. PFT received \$125,000—one-sixth of the \$1 million awarded.

"We believe Laurie Wayburn's innovative, cooperative approach to conservation and climate change action will make a real difference in Californians' lives, while setting an example for other leaders and organizations to follow," said Jim Canales, the foundation's president.

PFT, a San Francisco-based nonprofit, is "dedicated to conserving America's working forests for all their public benefits." It has worked to establish conservation easements on more than 50,000 acres of forest. PFT also manages the 2,200-acre Van Eck Forest in Humboldt County and sells offsets from the carbon sequestered there via [www.begreen-now.com](http://www.begreen-now.com) for \$19.95 per metric ton.

Wayburn, an SAF member, is coauthor, with Best, of *America's Private Forests: Status and Stewardship* (Island Press, 2001). She spoke with *The Forestry Source* in August.

### ***The Forestry Source:* Was the Irvine Award a surprise?**

Wayburn: It was. It was recognition of PFT's work. It was recognition, too, of the role that land, and in particular, forests, need to play to successfully address climate change.

**It's interesting that PFT's work was recently described in "Investors Jump into Forest Carbon Credits," an article in the *San Francisco Business Times*.**

This is the realization that, in the real world, the day-to-day world where we all need to make money, that ecosystem services are not just a theory or an academic idea. They are reality.

**On the Van Eck Forest, you've shown that you can cut tim-**

**ber, but also manage for other ecosystem services, including carbon. Can this model work elsewhere?**



Laurie Wayburn, president and cofounder of the Pacific Forest Trust, has worked for years to ensure that carbon sequestration in forests was recognized as a key element of California's plan to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

In the United States we don't have a lot of untouched old-growth forest, but we don't have the option of saying, let's simply leave all of our forests alone. If we walk away from them, we'll have even more significant problems for society at large. A succession of scientific studies shows that older, undisturbed forests have a host of public values, but this is not an either-or discussion, it's a both-and discussion about how we manage our forests. We can manage our forests so that we have more of the characteristics that are found in primary, undisturbed forests and get more timber out of them as well as the carbon benefits, the water benefits, the biodiversity benefits, and so on.

**So far, the income US forest landowners can realize from carbon markets is insignificant, compared to timber harvest income. Why should they work to increase carbon sequestration in their forests?**

Carbon markets across the United States are nascent. California is an exception—the money that can be earned from climate benefits here is not negligible because we now have a regulatory framework. In the rest of the country, the value is low because without a regulatory framework in place, there isn't a demand.

How these markets will look in the future is most clearly indicated in the European market, because it is fully regulated. It gives us a better sense of the likely values. At one end of the spectrum, you have the Chicago Climate Exchange, a fully voluntary market. At the other end, you have a fully regulated market in Europe. So as a landowner, you know you're going to get somewhere between \$3 and \$40 a ton, depending on the regulatory or voluntary framework in place.

When the United States enters that market more fully, we will be a big player and will have an effect on price—it may bring it down. What you can expect between here and there is a lot of volatility, because there will be discontinuities of supply and demand.

**You've said that, on the Van Eck Forest, sales of emissions reductions have increased the net asset value of the property by more than \$2,000 per acre. How do you account for that increase?**

We looked at the projected carbon emissions reduction sales going forward and discounted back to the present. We calculate

that the value is *at least* \$2,000 per acre. And that is complementary to timber income.

I want to return to the notion that this is an either-or discussion—cut or no cut—that has plagued the forestry industry. That’s a false dichotomy. It is both-and. It has also been a false dichotomy that you can only have old-growth or only young plantations. I want to emphasize the power of the many scientific, peer-reviewed studies that have come out over the past 25–30 years underscoring that management for older forests yields many of the same benefits—not precisely the same, but many of the same benefits—of old-growth forests, and is completely compatible with having a wide variety of timber products.

### **How should foresters react to climate change?**

One of the most profound take-home lessons of climate change is that *we need to change*. There’s the old Chinese proverb that, if you keep doing what you’re doing, then you’re going to get where you’re going. Climate is an enormous opportunity for people who own or manage forestland to play a significant role in mitigating climate change. But just as in the use of fossil fuels, it does mean

that we need to change. We need to change how we value forests. We need to value them for more than development, for more than their value in the shortest term as timber alone. Those two values have driven much of the problem.

We also need to change our cultural and emotional perceptions about forestry so that we can embrace the knowledge provided by this whole series of studies about the values of older forests and not view that as a criticism of young plantation forestry, but as an augmentation of that. We must recognize that, if you want access to the climate market, then you need to manage for what we know to be true and not take it as a criticism of past practices. We need to move on and move toward a more diversified management approach. As good economic managers, diversification should be welcome.

The good and the bad news about climate change is that it is real and it is hard to address. If we are to be successful in addressing it, we will be working at it for a long time. So the opportunity to restore our forests for a greater capacity in addressing climate change, for a greater long-term supply of forest products, and for providing more stable water supplies and habitat is a great long-term business to be in.