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2,000 Acres in Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Now Protected

Purchase Marks First Conservation Acquisition in Monument

Ashland, Oregon – The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) announced today the acquisition of almost 2,000 acres of private forestlands within the boundaries of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. Designated by the federal government in June 2002, the Monument is home to a spectacular variety of rare plants and animals several of which are found nowhere else on Earth. Forty percent of the land, however, is privately held and not protected from development. Today's announcement launches PFT's campaign to help complete the vision of conserving the Monument's globally outstanding natural resources.

"The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is in the heart of one of the most diverse, environmentally significant, yet threatened landscapes in North America," said Norm Christensen, Professor of Ecology, Duke University. "This acquisition will boost the region's prospects for ecological health and vitality."

Located just north of the Oregon-California border in Jackson County, Oregon between Ashland and Klamath Falls, the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is the first and only national monument designated specifically for its diversity of plants and animals.

"PFT's effort in the Monument is a prime example of how private initiatives can help achieve our national and state conservation goals," added Oregon Senator Ron Wyden (D). "This is a significant step forward in achieving the intent of the Monument."

Fifty-three thousand (53,000) acres of the Monument's 85,200-acre planning area is managed by the Bureau of Land Management, which is currently finalizing administrative plans for the Monument. The remaining 32,200 acres is privately owned and is without any protected status. With rapidly growing development pressures, the area is further threatened by Oregon's recently passed Measure 37 – legislation that has weakened the state's land use and development restrictions.

“Nearly half of the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument is unprotected. This undermines its integrity and purpose,” said Laurie Wayburn, President of the Pacific Forest Trust. “Every time these undeveloped lands are sold, we lose the opportunity to conserve this natural treasure-chest that protects water and other resources and that will benefit generations to come.”

“Acquiring, protecting and restoring these threatened landscapes is essential to the lasting success of the Monument,” said Dave Willis, a leading proponent of the Monument and Chair of the Soda Mountain Wilderness Council.

The newly acquired lands run along the Cascade-Siskiyou Crest just off Soda Mountain and along Jenny Creek. Here, a variety of rare species are found including redband trout, Western pond turtles and Pacific tree frogs. Both areas support more than 200 species of butterfly and provide homes for an astonishing array of plants and animals including elk and fisher.

“Jenny Creek is a jewel in the rough,” added Jack Williams, Senior Scientist of Trout Unlimited. “Lower-elevation forest streams like this provide the living homes for very rare fish species. This acquisition helps conserve a vital resource.”

Funding for the \$1.42M acquisition was provided by private sources including the Collins Foundation, several anonymous donors and the Pacific Forest Trust’s Conservation Capital Fund.

“We will continue to work with willing landowners to acquire and conserve large, privately owned properties to create a more cohesive, protected landscape,” concluded Wayburn. “Our goal is to help ensure the vast majority of land in the Monument is managed to achieve the goals of its designation.”

The Pacific Forest Trust is a pioneering advocate for the conservation of America’s private forests. PFT sustains private forests through cooperative partnerships, financial incentives, sound science and stewardship management. PFT promotes public policies that align ecological needs with economic realities. For further information about the Pacific Forest Trust, visit <http://www.PacificForest.org>.