



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST
Private Forests. Public Treasures.



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Black Butte Working Forest Permanently Conserved

Wildfire Risks Reduced for Cities of Mt. Shasta and Weed through Partnership Among Pacific Forest Trust, Michigan-California Timber Company, and CAL FIRE

San Francisco – Situated at the foot of Mount Shasta, the ancient cinder cones of Black Butte rise above the cities of Mt. Shasta and Weed in northern California. Now this iconic landscape known to millions is fully protected from development, thanks to a permanent conservation easement granted just before New Year's Day to the Pacific Forest Trust by the Michigan-California Timber Company. The easement conserves 5,006 acres of productive timberland on the north and east sides of Black Butte. This project also includes strategic investments in fire prevention benefiting the local communities and national forestlands.

The gently rolling working forest is minutes from Interstate 5 and forms the eastern boundary to the City of Weed, but is otherwise surrounded by the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, just below the Mount Shasta Wilderness Area. Once considered prime for resort development, the Black Butte Working Forest instead will forever be part of Mount Shasta's forested flanks, sustainably managed by family-owned Michigan-California Timber Co. for wood products as well as for enhanced wildlife habitat and watershed values.

Black Butte Working Forest was successfully conserved thanks to a \$5,410,000 grant from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to Pacific Forest Trust through their Forest Health and Forest Legacy Programs for the Mt. Shasta Headwaters Forest Health and Resilience Project (Phase 1 Black Butte). In addition to funding the conservation easement, the grant also funds the expansion of the Weed fuel-break system and thinning of 450 acres of young pine plantations to reduce fuel loads. The terms of the conservation easement guide active management of this sweeping property to maintain the ecological integrity of Mount Shasta, create a more diverse, resilient forest, and provide sustainable log supply for local mills. Reducing tree densities, adjusting spacing between trees, and growing more large trees that can better withstand wildfire impacts will enhance fire safety of both the communities and the publicly-owned wildlands that the property lies between. Management will also enhance forest health and growth, taking more carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and storing it for the long term.

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“We are very pleased that Black Butte Working Forest is now assured to continue as a well-managed forest providing wood products and quality jobs along with important habitat conservation,” said Joe Gonyea III, Co-Chair of the family partnership that owns the property. “Our partnership with Pacific Forest Trust and CAL FIRE ensures that this unique property is sustained for future generations.”

“The Black Butte Working Forest project is exactly the kind of investment that the State of California will be making more of, preventing the expansion of the urban-wildland interface and helping landowners manage forests for fire resiliency. These are priorities for CAL FIRE, especially in communities like Weed and Mt. Shasta that depend on forests economically but which are also at risk of extreme wildfire,” said Stewart McMorrow, CAL FIRE Deputy Chief of Forestry Assistance.

“We can’t solve our climate crisis without the aid of healthy forests that can absorb more dangerous greenhouse gas emissions. We need to keep forests like Black Butte as forests, and manage them to be more resilient to the growing threat of wildfire,” said Connie Best, Co-CEO of Pacific Forest Trust, who led this project. “We are honored to be partners with Michigan-California Timber Co. and CAL FIRE in achieving these goals.”

More Quotes

“In 2018, 1.8 million acres burned in California, destroying 23,000 structures and tragically taking 100 lives. Proper forest management can lessen the risk and impact of wildfire. The Black Butte project will ensure that this property will continue to be a model of exemplary stewardship in perpetuity. We are proud of our stewardship and are committed to protecting the cities of Weed and Mount Shasta along with the vital infrastructure and world-class natural resources of this region,” said Chris Chase, Timberland Manager for Michigan-California Timber Company.

“I applaud this partnership to protect a great scenic, recreational, and economic resource like Black Butte Working Forest. Private forestland owners are the stewards we depend on for well-managed forests that provide the public with so many benefits,” said California Assemblyman Brian Dahle (R-Bieber).

“I and the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors support the conservation of Black Butte Working Forest, keeping it in private ownership and sustainable forest management while preventing development and enhancing its resilience to fire. This is the kind of strategic public-private partnership we need more of to keep our forests healthy and better protect public safety,” said Siskiyou County Supervisor Ed Valenzuela, 2nd District.

More Facts

- The property’s celebrated Black Butte Spring is protected by the easement. This is a network of seeps pouring out of the volcanic soils, providing cold clear water that originates high on Mount Shasta. Black Butte Spring is one of the sources of the Shasta River and its cold water helps support threatened salmonids downstream.

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- The conservation of Black Butte Working Forest protects habitat for an estimated 235 species of wildlife, including federally-listed and state-listed species such as Cascade frog (*Rana cascadae*), Sierra Nevada red fox (*Vulpes necator*), northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*), gray-headed pika (*Ochotona princeps schisticeps*), and the Pacific fisher (*Martes pennant*).
- Scenic views from the trailhead for the very popular Black Butte Summit Trail, located on the property, are also conserved for hikers on a challenging 5-mile trek to the cinder cone's summit.

Links

- Photos (Lightroom gallery): <https://www.pacificforest.org/black-butte-photos>
- Maps (PDF): <https://www.pacificforest.org/black-butte-map>
- Fact sheet (PDF): <https://www.pacificforest.org/black-butte-fact-sheet>

The Mt. Shasta Headwaters Forest Health and Resilience Project (Phase 1 Black Butte) is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of cap-and-trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment—particularly in disadvantaged communities. The cap-and-trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investment projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero-emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are made in disadvantaged and low-income communities. For more information, visit California Climate Investments. (<https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/california-climate-investments>)

About Pacific Forest Trust (PFT)

Since 1993, the Pacific Forest Trust has been dedicated to conserving and sustaining America's vital, productive forest landscapes. Working with forest owners, communities and an array of partners, we advance innovative, incentive-based strategies to safeguard our nation's diverse forests. In so doing, we're ensuring forests continue to provide people everywhere — from rural communities to urban centers — with a wealth of benefits, including clean water, sustainably harvested wood, green jobs, wildlife habitat and a livable climate. <http://pacificforest.org/>

About Michigan-California Timber Company (MCTC)

Black Butte Working Forest is part of the larger 115,000 acre Michigan-California Timber Company ownership. MCTC is an affiliate of Timber Products Company, a diversified wood products manufacturer headquartered in Oregon that owns a softwood veneer mill in Yreka. This private, family-owned business is a major employer in Siskiyou County and sustainable management of the Property contributes logs to the TP Yreka veneer mill.

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