

CONSERVING ESSENTIAL LANDS AND WATERS

The Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative



LAND TRUST PROFILE

Pacific Forest Trust

Founded in: 1993 · **Service Area:** Oregon, California · **Acres Protected:** 265,000

For more information, visit www.pacificforest.org

Project Story

In 2019 Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) learned the largest remaining forest property in the upper Rogue River basin on Oregon's Siskiyou Crest was about to be sold by its industrial owner. With its break-up, intensive logging and development were likely. PFT quickly stepped in to form the multi-partner Mt. Ashland Forest Climate Resilience Project and secured time to organize a conservation acquisition by the end of 2021. In late 2020, we conveyed 555 acres to the adjacent Mountcrest property – previously protected by PFT – subject to a conservation easement. Now, PFT is working to acquire an additional 1120 acres as a demonstration forest managed for climate resilience.

Landscape Context

The Property straddles the Siskiyou Crest just west of Interstate-5, at the headwaters of both the Rogue and Klamath river basins. Its conservation would assure enduring multi-directional connections with the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest (Late Successional Reserves and Ashland Watershed) as well as other protected lands, sustaining a cross-boundary “super wild-way” already in use by wolves, Pacific fishers, and other wide-ranging creatures.

How the project advances climate resilience

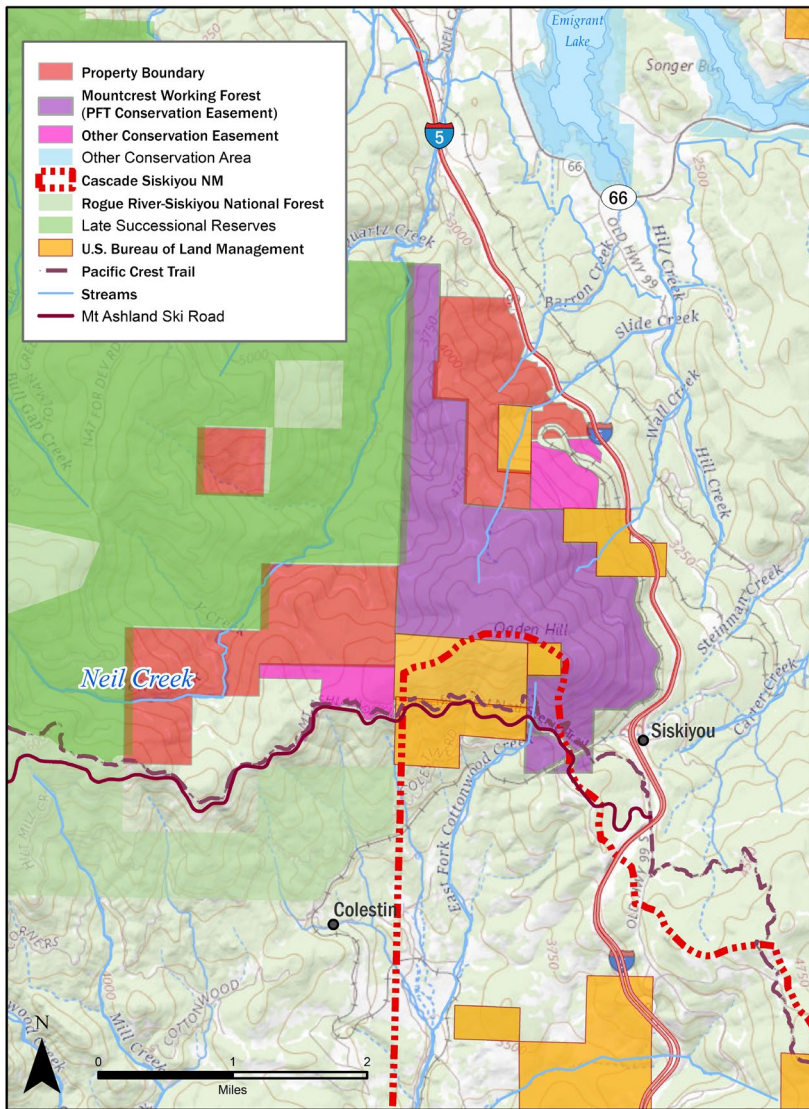
Preventing fragmentation of large, intact landscapes is key to climate resilience. The Property's strategic location connecting very large, natural landscapes provides a refuge in a hotter, drier world. The project will preserve this large property's outstanding biotic and topographic diversity and abundant water resources critical to wildlife and people. PFT's management will enhance its habitats to improve adaptation options for plants and wildlife, restore more resilient forest structure, increase lasting carbon stores, and reduce the threat of catastrophic fire.

Project Highlights

- Conserve critical cold-water source springs that are the headwaters of Neil Creek, home to imperiled coho salmon and steelhead.
- Ensure permanent conservation of east-west and north-south connections, critical to wildlife adaptation, between the Cascade Siskiyou National Monument, Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, and other protected land.
- Enhance critical habitat for threatened and endangered species including the northern spotted owl, Pacific fisher, and gray wolf.
- Restore resilient habitat conditions within the most biodiverse conifer forest type on earth.
- Promote public engagement and understanding of management strategies to create more resilient forests in the Siskiyou.

Restoration Activities Planned

- Restore old growth habitat features such as large, old trees, snags, and down wood within the mixed conifer-hardwood forest.
- Restore extent and functionality of important dry and wet meadow-wetland and riparian habitats at the Neil Creek headwaters.
- Reduce risks to habitats and watershed function from catastrophic fire.
- Remove invasive species and improve road conditions.



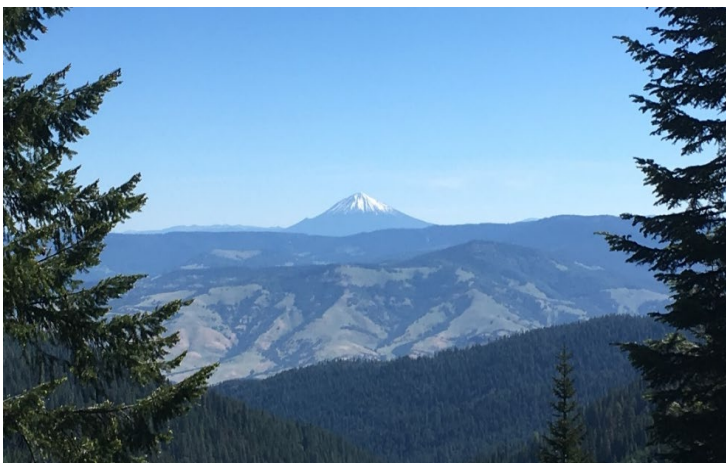
This map illustrates the strategic cross-roads position of the Mt. Ashland Forest Resilience Project on the Siskiyou Crest, with the Property shown in red, adjacent to the conserved Mountcrest Forest shown in purple, connecting areas of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and BLM-Cascade Siskiyou National Monument. The project creates an integrated landscape of properties being managed across boundaries for climate adaptation, critical habitat and watershed values.



Old growth Douglas-fir: 7.5 feet diameter, wildlife tree with blown out top at 100 feet



Rare 14-acre wetland and deciduous woodland swamp with multiple source springs for Neil Creek
(All photos: Pacific Forest Trust)



View north across Neil Creek headwaters to Mt. McLoughlin

“This is such an important opportunity to achieve large scale conservation and manage forests for greater resiliency to climate change. We are excited to be partnering again with Pacific Forest Trust to complete the conservation of the Neil Creek headwaters and expand the network of conserved lands along the Siskiyou Crest.”

- Jud Parsons, Mountcrest Forest LLC