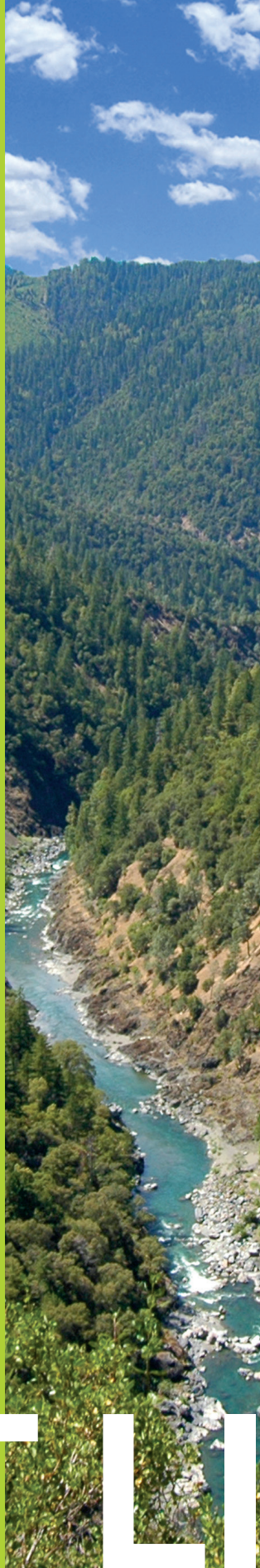




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TRUST



FOREST LIFE

FALL 2022

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Pacific Forest Trust's mission is to sustain America's forests for all their public benefits of wood, water, wildlife, and people's well being, in cooperation with private landowners and communities.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Looking Back, Looking Forward

In 2023, PFT will celebrate its 30th year. A lot has happened in these years, with many of our initiatives moving from concept to pilot to implementation. Now, we must move to the broad adoption and landscape scale. Much remains to be done!

When we first introduced the concept of conserving US forests, especially older forests, as valuable carbon sinks in 1993, we worked with leading scientists from Jerry Franklin to E.O. Wilson, Mark Harmon, Steve Running and many more. But few landowners or even advocates working to address climate change took notice. The advocacy was focused on tropical forests, and landowners had no way to be compensated for forest carbon sequestration. When we introduced the concept of forest carbon offsets as a voluntary means to help meet California's goals of reducing emissions, I distinctly remember one landowner asking, "Are you kidding? What planet are you from?" Conserving older forests is now front and center for federal forests, and the forest carbon market helps to conserve millions of acres across the country. It is a good beginning.

Thankfully, in August, the federal government enacted the Inflation Reduction Act, which includes sweeping climate investments. However, for their broad climate benefits, forest restoration and conservation investments lag far behind the same assets in the energy and transportation sectors. To win the climate battle, stemming the loss of forests and restoring their full carbon potential must become a "Tier 1" solution, with investments commensurate with the benefits forests bring. We must do more!

When PFT first developed the Working Forest Conservation Easement (WFCE), which guides forest management to achieve specific restoration management goals as an alternative to "forever wild" and "no development only" conservation easements, the response was often "Great idea, but no one will do that." We've conserved over 300,000 acres, linking millions more in conservation corridors

across critical forest landscapes, and the WFCE concept is now in use across the country. At the same time, it is quite feasible to apply this concept to ensure the function of a crucial, vast, and vital 12-million-acre watershed region which houses globally renowned biodiversity at home in Oregon and California. This area is unique in the world for its diversity of forests, other plants, and wildlife, and it holds the heart of California's water supply. It is critically threatened by fragmentation and degradation. We must do more!

As we get ready to celebrate 30 years of achievements for forests in 2023, I want to thank you all for your support, collaboration, and partnership in getting us this far. And yet, there is so more that must be done to address climate change, to create a safer future and to ensure the richness of life that we see is there for future generations of all species. With your help, we will now take PFT to the next level of impact.

In gratitude,



FORESTLIFE PROFILE OF BEN HAMMETT



Ben Hammett is a lifelong conservationist deeply committed to fighting climate change. He, and his late wife Ruth, began supporting PFT in 2012. Ben recently shared why he feels PFT's work is so important.

Why are forests important to you?

My family has been involved in forests for several generations. We own a sawmill now in Washington state, and healthy, diverse forests are essential to running a paper mill! Also, I grew up hiking all over California and its amazing forests and loved it. My wife Ruth and I loved the diversity of plants in forests (and out), which is one reason I loved hiking in the Trinity Alps. Amazing diversity there.

What makes PFT's work important?

Pacific Forest Trust takes an innovative, unanticipated, but very effective approach to conservation that stands out. PFT integrates direct conservation with policy, and I like the outcomes because they benefit so many stakeholders and other conservation groups, too. PFT's work on climate has really helped me see the importance of conserving and managing forests to address climate change. Not just for sequestration but also for water, wildlife, and improving fire behavior. PFT emphasizes the whole forest, not just the timber or the tree planting. As a family mill owner, I see the need to grow and cut trees, but I also see that forests are more than that. PFT recognizes that middle ground.

What worries you about forests in this time of climate change?

We aren't acting fast enough, and we're being too simple. Forest loss is a big problem for climate change, and planting trees is not enough to solve the problem. We need a more comprehensive approach. Not enough people know about forests and climate change, so they don't necessarily think about them as a solution. While forests may seem far away to many people who live in cities, how we manage and conserve those forests impacts their daily lives—providing water, preventing bad fires...PFT's work is essential to helping people understand and support a new approach.

What gives you hope?

I have grandchildren, so I also have optimism. PFT's work shows how we can manage our forests differently, leveraging them for more carbon stores, water, and timber. It's convincing.

CONSERVATION

Going to Scale with Shasta Timberlands Working Forest Conservation Project



Straddling the crest that divides the Sacramento and Klamath River basins, PFT's *Shasta Timberlands Working Forest* protects the headwaters of these mighty rivers as they flow off Mount Shasta.

Pacific Forest Trust, landowner TC&I Shasta, LLC, and its forest manager Campbell Global, LLC are making great progress together in securing public funds to permanently conserve this +/- 7,500-acre working forest for climate resiliency and watershed health.

Protecting this keystone property is a rare opportunity to establish a vast conserved, managed habitat in a strategic location integrating public and private working lands. In the heart of PFT's Mount Shasta Headwaters conservation focal area, Shasta Timberlands knits together the checkerboarded ownerships of the adjacent Shasta-Trinity and Klamath National Forests with 42,000 acres of other forestland permanently conserved by PFT. This connectivity is exceptionally valuable for wildlife adapting to climate change because of the abundant water, opportunities for migration in all directions, and varied safe havens in an area that shows slower rates of change than other parts of the state.

The conservation easement assures the property's active management will focus on sustaining a more climate-resilient forest, enhancing wildlife habitats, increasing carbon stores, reducing wildfire risks, and protecting water security for fish, farms, and people—all while helping to

250

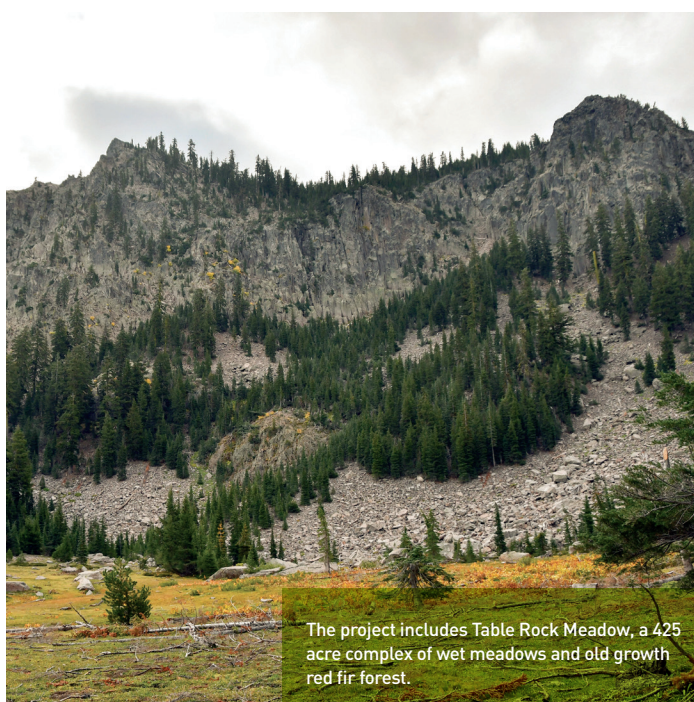
Conservation of the property's outstanding biodiversity will help the state to meet its 30x30 goals, supporting an estimated 250 wildlife species, including 25 that are imperiled.



sustain the resource-based economy of Siskiyou County. The project will also guarantee public access to Mount Shasta's world-class outdoor recreation.

Conservation of the property's outstanding biodiversity will help the state to meet its 30x30 goals, supporting an estimated 250 wildlife species, including 25 that are imperiled. A few notable inhabitants are the Pacific fisher, Pacific marten, Cascade frog, McCloud River redband trout, and gray wolf. The proposed conservation easement designates one-third of the property—almost 2,700 acres—to be managed solely for special habitat values.

This exemplary partnership will keep this spectacular property—10 times the size of Golden Gate Park—in private ownership, with its management guided by the conservation easement. This protection on behalf of the public comes at a fraction of the cost of public ownership while ensuring continued private investment in its long-term stewardship.



The project includes Table Rock Meadow, a 425 acre complex of wet meadows and old growth red fir forest.



7,500

Approximately 7,500 acres of biodiverse forests on Mount Shasta are permanently protected at the headwaters of the Sacramento River basin.

“We are proud to partner with PFT on this working forest conservation easement, which has lasting public benefits for wildlife, water flows for people and fish, and climate change mitigation—all while maintaining jobs in the woods and enhancing recreational opportunities.”

— John Gilleland, Chief Executive Officer, Campbell Global

Restoring Fire and Climate Resilience



Re-establishing “good” fire through prescribed burns is key to restoring forest resilience.

Five years ago, California only spent a token amount of money restoring fire resilience to its forests and other landscapes. PFT was a lonely voice in 2017 (and for many years before that!) when we advocated for \$20 million to increase the use of prescribed fire to reduce unnatural fuel buildup and get more “good” fire on the ground safely.

Then late that year, catastrophic fires in Santa Rosa and Ventura caused the state Legislature to pass a sweeping new law designating \$200 million annually for pre-fire mitigation, including a major grant program for forest health, dedicated prescribed fire and fuel reduction crews at CAL FIRE, as well as programs to reduce fuels around communities. The massive and deadly 2018–2021 fires underscored just how necessary and urgent it was to implement this preventative and proactive approach.

To better address the multiple impacts of fire on all Californians (smoke from these fires has major impacts across the state), PFT has been leading a broad coalition of stakeholders to develop more solutions. With broad support and encouragement from PFT and our diverse coalition partners, the state responded in 2021 with an enormous \$1.5 billion funding package to accelerate forest health projects, community protection efforts, workforce, and infrastructure development, and regional planning and capacity building (see Forest Life Fall 2021). Many of these efforts are well underway, and grant-funded forest health projects are starting this fall. The state expects to spend at least \$600 million each

of the coming two years to continue working on this challenge. Billions of dollars from the state—plus hundreds of millions in new funding coming from the federal government—certainly help accelerate actions.

A critical area that remains behind in implementation is the roll-out of a larger prescribed burning program. To date, the state has conducted prescribed burns on a few tens of thousands of acres, with a target of increasing to 50,000 acres/year. This is a fraction of what the Governor has called for—1,000,000 acres to be “treated” annually for fire prevention. The prescribed burn target needs to be at least 100,000 acres/year. This is an essential move to working with “green” resilience, rather than treating the “blackened” landscape that uncharacteristic fires often create. PFT is focused on advancing towards larger projects, planned and implemented across landscapes to restore fire and climate resilience, also improving both habitat and watershed function, at scale. Major increases in the use of “good” fire is also essential as there is no other feasible way to reach large portions of the landscape to reduce unnatural fuel build-up. A greatly accelerated, proactive approach is essential to restoring a safer, more resilient forest.

Offsetting Fiery Rumors

It is widely recognized that forests are our most powerful, rapidly expandable, and extensive natural carbon sink.

And while governments around the world call on each other to conserve their forests, the only way landowners are compensated for their direct carbon benefits is through the carbon offset market. While there are numerous criticisms of the variable offset standards used in the voluntary market (lack of transparency, short duration, lack of 3rd party verification, lack of buffer pools, etc.), the compliance market standards are transparent, fully meet global definitions for permanence, and have an ample buffer pool to cover the risk of loss across all offset types, including forests.

The accounting in the compliance Protocol is also highly conservative in its design. It deliberately does not credit many tons of carbon that are actually sequestered by requiring low-risk assumptions throughout the calculations. There is also a mandatory, significant buffer pool requirement which is not credited—until it has to be used. The adequacy of the buffer pool, however, was recently called into question as fires have increased across California and the West writ large. The concern is that there would not be enough tons in the California Air Resources Board (CARB) buffer pool (an insurance program) to cover potential losses from fires or other unintended “reversals” (carbon losses) in forests under compliance projects. In fact, CARB, the entity charged with the compliance offset program, has again been quite deliberately conservative in how they account for fire impacts on carbon stores.

Under CARB’s accounting, all fire impacts are counted as immediate emissions. However, we now know from a recent Oregon State University study that only 2–8% of a forest’s carbon is actually lost (emitted)

from fire. The remaining carbon—the vast majority—remains on site and is released slowly over time. That is a hugely conservative approach and one which the public benefits from. Further, like any good insurance program, the buffer pool itself is diversified—it pulls together contributions from projects all over the country, many of which have very rare instances of fire. This way, the overall risk is mitigated and diluted for any specific offset project site. The buffer pool is thus more than adequate and continues to grow with new projects.

From some points of view, the accounting would be more correct if the fire-based emissions were discounted over time as those dead trees decay, similar to how wood products are handled. CARB has a planned workshop this October to address ways to improve the Forest Carbon Offset protocols, building on the recommendations developed by an ARB Task Force, whose work was completed in 2021, and other assessments. The Protocols can no doubt be continually improved as we learn more from practice and research. In this case, the science shows that CARB’s approach is quite conservative, careful in ensuring a reliable buffer pool that is robust and durable.



Only 2-8% of a forest's carbon is emitted in fires, far less than typical estimates.

STEWARDSHIP

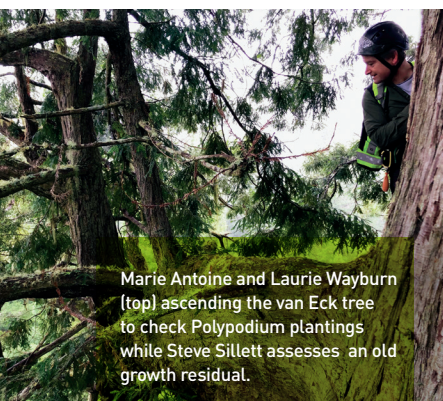
Reaching for the Sky on California van Eck



Twenty years ago, Fred van Eck entrusted the conservation and stewardship of some 9,400 acres of extraordinary forestland in Oregon and California to the Pacific Forest Trust. With a mandate to restore older, more natural forest conditions and due consideration for economic return, we've been steadily demonstrating a number of new approaches to forest management, illustrating how to manage for the benefit of the whole forest, as well as the trees.



The forests serve as living laboratories to pioneer forest restoration from the ground up. The California forest has been our testing ground for the development of forest carbon offsets under the state's system (it was the first to be registered) and illustrates how such working forest conservation easements serve as the foundation for restoring wildlife habitat to support state and federal Endangered Species Act implementation (see *Forest Life* Summer 2019). And all while we've undertaken on-going timber harvest. This past year, we began focusing on two new aspects of restoration that bring back the diversity and resilience of the redwood forest: establishing key anchor points for biodiversity to endure hundreds of years and beyond and re-establishing the forest canopy layer.



Marie Antoine and Laurie Wayburn (top) ascending the van Eck tree to check *Polypodium* plantings while Steve Sillett assesses an old growth residual.

The first is based on the recognition that in an old, natural forest, a single tree in any given acre is likely to be the locus of most of the biodiversity, as well as the carbon stocks—up to half the carbon, in fact. There is a clear synergy between age, carbon stocks, and biodiversity. The second is the recognition that the forests exist not only in its trees—the primary commercial output—but also in the understory, soils, and canopy, which all play key roles in keeping the forest healthy, diverse, and resilient.

Working with Steve Sillett, Ph.D., and Marie Antoine, MS, of Humboldt Polytechnic University, we are identifying key trees throughout the forests (not just in the stream zones) that will be allowed to grow for as long as they can—hundreds to thousands of years, in the case of redwoods. Selected for their promise of quickly developing the

height and structure of the old growth that provide the backbone of the diversity of the original redwood forests, these trees will evolve to be individual old growth champions across a forest landscape that is managed overall to become older, more natural, and complex. And in these trees, we are also seeding the development of the canopy reestablishment.

Key to restoring the canopy is getting back the “system engineer” of the old redwood forests, *Polypodium scolieri*. These ferns, commonly known as leather leaf ferns, form huge mats in the top of trees in old growth forests—as large as 8 feet or more. Fern mats collect and hold massive amounts of water and some soil. This water is key to keeping redwood forests cool and moist in the summer. The soil is the basis for other flowering plants to take root and form arboreal gardens, feeding birds, insects, amphibians, and mammals that like to climb.

Typically, these fern mats appear in older forests, taking over one-hundred years to emerge and develop. They are not found in younger, more simplified,

intensively managed forests. Working with Sillett, Antoine, and Giacomo Renzullo of BWA, we’ve pioneered the transplantation of *Polypodium* fern mats (carefully collected with licenses and cultivated by Giacomo) into some of our champion redwoods. Now, we will monitor their success, learn, and build on that learning to restore this essential and vibrant component of the old redwood forests. In addition to supporting unique wildlife, this canopy layer, with its ability to collect and hold water, is likely key to redwood success and survival in a warming and drying climate.

Integrating ecological outputs enables these forests—and their inhabitants—to better withstand the stress that climate change is increasingly bringing, from intense heat waves to massive downpours. And it is good business for communities and mills as well. With this careful management, we’ve harvested over 46 million board feet while quadrupling stocking in Oregon and more than doubling stocking in California, increasing both ecologic and economic returns.



Called “the eighth continent” by former PFT Board member Meg Lowman for its vast biodiversity, the forest canopy is one which relatively few people visit.

MEET OUT-OF-THE-BOX AWARDEE MERV GEORGE, JR.

Recipient of this year's *Outside-the-Box Award*, Merv George Jr. is the Supervisor of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, working out of Medford, OR, when he isn't at his grandmother's home in the Hoopa Valley Reservation.

PFT is honored to work with Merv in both Oregon, where PFT's conservation of private working forests adjacent to the Rogue Siskiyou extends conserved corridors, and in California, where we have benefitted greatly from his guidance on cultural fire management. A graduate of Humboldt State University with a degree in Native American Studies, Merv was elected to the Hoopa Tribal Council at the age of 22. He became its youngest Tribal Chair at 24, leading a government of 500 employees and testifying to Congress on fisheries issues. Merv is the first native American to be named Forest Supervisor in the Pacific Southwest and Pacific Northwest Regions.

We recently had a conversation with Merv—here are some highlights:



Merv was honored with PFT's Outside-the-Box award at Forest Fete 2022 in April.

Merv, you've spent your life building bridges between communities. What's your secret?

When I was little, my dad was laid off by the mill in Hoopa and we all moved to Eureka, where he began a career with the Public Works Department. I had an unusual dual upbringing, going to school in Eureka and weekends surrounded by family and friends in Hoopa. I learned early on to be an ambassador from Indian country and a convenor of my friends, native and non-native, together. It's so amazing how much those skill sets come in to play even today as a Forest Supervisor, as I'm very comfortable in so many communities.

How did you come to work at the Forest Service?

As tribal chair doing federal consultations, I saw there were no native cultural practitioners working within these agencies that had all this trust and responsibility to help tribal people with their ancestral territories and resources, like fisheries and water. Try to remember the last time you went in a room and didn't see anyone who looked like you or thought like you. That is an everyday occurrence for those of us from Indian country. I made it a goal to find a place within the US Forest Service since it had so much influence on the ancestral territories of indigenous people. There was clearly a gap to fill. I became the first tribal relations program manager for the PSW Region, with Randy Moore as my boss.



A key challenge is managing fire to achieve both people's safety and ecological outcomes.

I believe the Creator has a path for all of us, but sometimes we need to be outside our comfort zone to find that path. When I accepted that first job working in Vallejo, it was the first time I ever lived more than 60 miles from Hoopa. I was totally out of my element. I was terrified, but I walked in the door. I hope I am paving the way for other indigenous people.

What direction should USFS be taking in forest management?

USFS's job for its first 80 years was timber extraction, which led to wholesale fire suppression, and, for tribal people, that was very frustrating. Everything you need as a human being is in the woods: It's where your water comes from. It's where your food sources come from. It's where your prayer sites are. It's where your medicinals and herbs are. It's where your travel corridors are and your recreation. To a tribal person, the forest is everything.

USFS went from being focused on single resource extraction and then, in one leap, shifted to single resource protection. I wholeheartedly believe that the wildfires we are seeing right now are not only the result of fire suppression. Another contributor to the fuel loading we have now is the single focus of protection over the last 30 years. To the tribal community, both approaches are extremes. The path you want is in the middle. That's where I feel I can be of service.

Let me say that not all fires are good, and not all fires are bad. In order to get where we need to be, we need to find the middle ground. What I'm bringing to the table is working with different communities and finding that ground. If we want to reduce catastrophic fires and protect threatened species, we need to protect the resources for all life forms.

What can non-natives learn from indigenous forest management?

Traditional ecological knowledge is about preserving those things you need to survive—water, food, travel corridors. If the forest burns up so badly that when rain comes, it erodes badly, that's not good for the fish or the people. You'll starve. There are many things in traditional ecological knowledge that are just common sense if you live in a forest and have been managing it for millennia.

The problem is that most people don't live in and depend on forests anymore. They see it as a luxury rather than survival, which creates a lot of challenges and conflicts because people value different things. But in the last decade I really sense a sincere effort from people to learn some truths regardless of how inconvenient they may be. It's a cultural re-awakening. I am impressed, humbled, and excited to see the number of non-native people wanting to learn from tribes and help. So, we're moving in the right direction—toward achieving both social and environmental justice.

PROGRESS ON MT ASHLAND DEMONSTRATION FOREST



Deanna Williams, U.S. Forest Service

Key to our conservation of the Mt. Ashland Demonstration forest (see ForestLife 2021) is understanding the vast diversity of natural resources it is home to. This year we have been focused on multiple surveys to help determine that. We found many plants used by indigenous peoples (such as the Golden Chinquapin), rare animals dependent on older forests (such as the Pileated Woodpecker) and are now looking for endangered species with the help of the dogs and people of the Rogue Detection Teams, amongst others.



MEET OUR SUMMER INTERNS

Michelle Chen, Photo Archives

Michelle Chen came to Pacific Forest Trust seeking to explore the intersection of art and environmental advocacy. A rising junior at UC Berkeley's Department of Art Practice, Michelle wanted to learn more about the current issues surrounding forest conservation and climate change. Her summer internship assisted PFT in gathering content for an upcoming documentary film project on the impact of PFT's stewardship on the van Eck Forests (pacificforest.org/van-eck-forests).

She tenaciously sorted through PFT's digital archives to find, identify, and organize photo and video files that would visually tell the story of natural forest management and its benefits to climate, wildlife, and communities, based on the van Eck experience.

Michelle found it particularly rewarding “to help PFT expand its visual communication tools and bring more awareness to these critical conservation issues.”





Julia Chen, Policy

Policy intern Julia Chen put her research skills to the test this summer updating and expanding the data behind PFT's 2018 Risk Assessment of California's Key Source Watershed Infrastructure. A recent graduate of UC Berkeley's Ecosystem Management and Forestry Program and an incoming first-year graduate student at Yale's School of the Environment, Julia was a perfect fit for the project.

She searched diligently through state and federal databases, academic papers, literature reviews, and media to update PFT's analysis of the costs and benefits of proactive watershed restoration and conservation to better understand how these compare with other water security approaches, like dams or desalinization plants.

Julia was grateful for the opportunity to “gain real-world experience using data to effectively convey restoration ideas and influence public policy.”

Katherine Dillon, Policy

A chance meeting at a Boonville beer festival introduced Katherine Dillon to PFT's work, where she met Paul Mason, VP of Policy & Incentives. As a graduate student at the University of Texas' LBJ School of Public Affairs, Katherine was eager to get hands-on experience in the policy-making world and inquired about opportunities to get involved.

She worked on a California budget proposal to enhance investments in wildfire resilience programs to better address the health impacts of wildfire smoke. She also analyzed the impacts of California's Timber Production Zone classification on the retention of prime timberlands.



As a California native, Katherine connected personally with this work, sharing “I'm excited to have contributed to such a pressing issue for vulnerable populations here and statewide. It's truly meaningful policy work that will impact lives.”

2021 in Brief



1 ACCREDITED **Accreditation.** PFT was honored to receive its third accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Amongst the first applicants for accreditation, PFT is recognized for its quality implementation in all three accreditation areas: fee title acquisition, conservation easement acquisition, and stewardship.

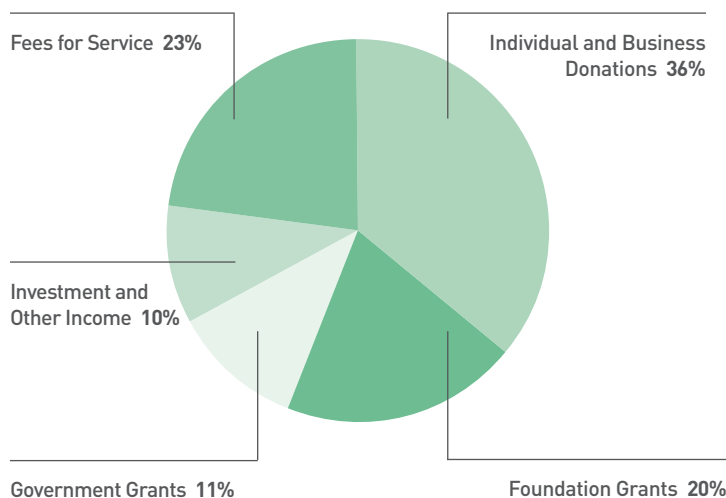
2 Mt. Ashland Demonstration Forest. PFT made major strides in acquiring the 1100-acre Mt. Ashland Demonstration Forest from Chinook Partners, the landowner. Grants were made by the Land Trust Alliance and Oregon Community Foundation, as well as a conditional approval for the remainder of funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

3 Beavers. Virtually every conserved property stewarded by PFT is historic habitat for beavers, the system engineers for watersheds and nature's fire control force. We launched an assessment of our cooperating landowners to identify where re-

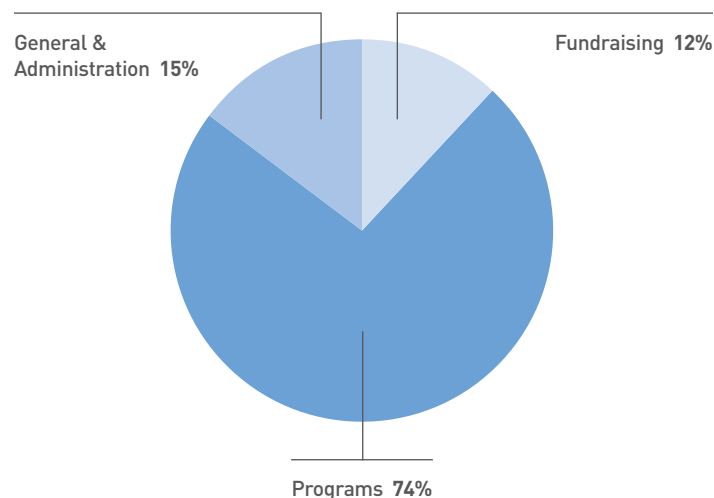
introduction was both feasible and desired, and also backed a new program to be developed at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to accelerate beavers' return.

4 Lightning Canyon Ranch. Working with landowner partners Bob and Cassie Hixon, we completed the conservation of the 2,098-acre Lightning Canyon Ranch, which contains a major tributary to Lake Shasta, Salt Creek. Despite a fire which burned through much of the property the very day after easement recording, the land is recovering well and continues to provide critical habitat for over 248 species.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

“Everything you need as a human being is in the woods: it’s where your water comes from, where your food sources are...to a tribal person, the forest is everything.”

— Merv George Jr., Supervisor of the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

(read our interview with Merv on page 10)



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