



# PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Private Forests. Public Treasures.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### News Release

**Ashland, Oregon (January 17, 2023)** – Showing that forests can be effectively managed to reduce the threats of wildfires and habitat loss caused by climate change, [Pacific Forest Trust](#) has acquired 1,120 acres of privately owned forest along Oregon’s Siskiyou Crest, which will serve as the [Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest](#). The purchase of this property was made possible thanks to the collaboration of its owner Siskiyou Timberlands and its manager [Chinook Forest Partners](#).

The initiative is southern Oregon’s first demonstration forest dedicated to developing replicable forest management practices that foster climate resilience. Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to threats related to climate change. The forest is located on the slopes of Mount Ashland and sits right above the Rogue Valley, a region at high risk of extreme wildfire. In 2020, the nearby Almeda Fire burned 3,000 acres and destroyed more than 2,600 homes, making it the most destructive fire in Oregon history.

“We are going to put the best knowledge and science to work to help prevent catastrophic wildfires and reduce the impact of the hotter, drier climate on plants and wildlife,” said Pacific Forest Trust Co-Founder Connie Best. “The project will show that it’s possible to conserve and restore lands at scale to mitigate climate change while protecting biodiversity and promoting watershed health.”

Among other restoration goals, Pacific Forest Trust will manage the forest for “good fire” – low intensity, more natural fires that are more characteristic of the region than out-of-control fires like the Almeda. Strategies will include managed burning based on indigenous fire management practices, restoring more natural forest composition with fire-resilient species such as cedar, pine, and Douglas fir, reducing the density of small shade-tolerant species, increasing the dominance of older and larger trees, and enhancing the property’s significant spring-fed wetlands.

Home to more species of conifers than anywhere else in the world, the Cascade-Siskiyou region is designated an Area of Global Botanical Significance by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Pacific Forest Trust Co-Founder and President Laurie Wayburn calls the Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest an essential part of the region’s “super-wildway” that Pacific Forest Trust has been focused on rebuilding. This super-wildway connects critical landscapes that provide habitat for threatened species such as the northern spotted owl, gray wolf, coastal marten, and Pacific fisher.

Dr. Jerry Franklin, professor emeritus at the University of Washington’s School of Environmental and Forest Sciences and a world-renowned forest ecologist, said of the project: “The climate crisis simply won’t be solved without fostering more resilient forests. And the fastest, surest way to pull more CO2 from the atmosphere is to conserve existing Pacific Northwest forests like this one and restore the big,

old trees that used to characterize them. Pacific Forest Trust shows us how this can be accomplished by private forest owners.”

“Conserving the property helps link protected public and private lands and reverse habitat fragmentation – the breaking up of habitats into smaller and isolated patches – which threatens the survival of many species, limiting their movement and making it harder for them to adapt as the climate changes,” said Wayburn.

Under a previous owner the Mount Ashland Forest faced the threats of intensive logging, subdivision, and residential development before it was purchased by Chinook, who reached out to PFT to develop a conservation strategy for this ecologically significant property. Kelly Droege, Managing Partner and Co-Founder of Chinook Forest Partners, commented: “We are grateful for our working relationship with Pacific Forest Trust, and pleased to see these lands become part of PFT’s regional conservation initiative. We look forward to future projects together as we identify other areas of high conservation value in our ownership.”

The purchase was funded by a \$1.1 million grant from the [Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board](#) (OWEB), and a \$413,125 grant from the [Pacific Northwest Resilient Landscapes Initiative](#) of the [Oregon Community Foundation](#) and the [Land Trust Alliance](#).

Eric Williams, OWEB’s Grant Program Manager, said: “OWEB is proud to partner with Pacific Forest Trust to permanently conserve this ecologically significant property and its outstanding biodiversity. We look forward to working with them to accomplish forest restoration and increased climate resilience.”

Pacific Forest Trust has conserved more than 350,000 acres of privately owned forest in Oregon and California. Wayburn pointed to other Pacific Forest Trust success stories as models, such as the [van Eck Forests](#) in Oregon and California which have helped mitigate climate change through sustainable, conservation-based management. The van Eck Forests have stood as positive models of the synergy of conservation and commerce.

#### About Pacific Forest Trust

Since 1993, Pacific Forest Trust has created economic incentives that reward private forest owners for conserving their lands and practicing sustainable forestry. Pacific Forest Trust has helped shape state and national forest conservation and climate policies, all in an effort to create effective climate change solutions, save wildlife and their habitats, conserve intact forested landscapes, and protect natural water sources. For more information, visit <https://www.pacificforest.org/>