



PACIFIC  
FOREST  
TRUST



# FOREST LIFE

SUMMER 2023

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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



# Aren't we there yet?

Seven months into 2023, the message is inescapable. Heat domes. Wildfires on 20 million acres. Unbreathable air. With each fresh disaster, scientists identify climate change as a major factor increasing their intensity and scale. Our home planet is sending out distress signals that get louder every day. Will this compel us to decisive action?

Even if we cannot agree on the drivers of climate change, can we find common ground to drive solutions to these crises? Perhaps the answer is right beneath our feet, in our common ground.

We all need clean water to drink, clean air to breathe, a safe place to live where neither floods nor fires are an imminent threat. What if we could achieve those things while also enacting a major solution to climate change?

This is not wishful thinking; it is a solution right within our grasp. By managing our forests for their climate benefits, we have a triple win. Restoring more fire-resistant and resilient forests—those older forests that are naturally-adapted to our fire prone environment—is the most cost-effective, timely means of securing cleaner air, greater water security, and reducing net CO2 emissions to the atmosphere.

More than reforestation, more than saving old forests, the single biggest thing we can do in the near term is to manage our forests to become older, with fewer but larger trees across the landscape. These managed forests hold more carbon, hold and release more water more safely, and burn more safely. They are treasure-houses of biodiversity. We should grow and maintain them. It's a commonsense solution for our common ground.

PFT has championed this approach for decades, and that message is becoming heard (see *Harnessing the Power of Nature* on p.5 and *Beyond the Trees* on p.7). So, while we aren't "there" quite yet, we are getting closer.

Join us!

## STEWARDSHIP

# Managing for Climate Resilience on Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest



PFT Board member Jerry Franklin (left) is a key member of our Mt. Ashland Forest Management Advisory Committee.

This summer, leading forest ecologists, silviculturalists, wildlife biologists and indigenous cultural practitioners are joining with PFT staff to help develop the first 10-year management plan for our new 1,130-acre Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest. In bringing together the best available climate science and traditional ecological knowledge to inform our management, we are learning so much!

Located at the junction of the Klamath River and Rogue River basins, where the Cascades meet the Siskiyou, Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest has all the beauty and biodiversity of this world-famous region—a tremendous variety of plants and wildlife, abundant cold-water springs, complex soils and topography. Yet it also exemplifies the challenges forests face across the west, trying to adapt to hotter, drier conditions driven by climate change. A hundred years of industrial timber management, combined with fire exclusion and suppression, as well as the loss of indigenous fire management, has shaped this forest so that it has more young trees in more dense stands than before. This, in combination with climate change driven extreme drought and dramatically hotter summers, has led to increased death of trees and greater threats of severe wildfire than existed before.

While much of this dilemma has been created by peoples' choices, we are fortunate to be able to get expert guidance to begin making new choices that embody new hope for climate resilience for forests, wildlife, people, and communities. The forests shaped

by the native peoples of the Siskiyou shows us that forests can be managed for lower intensity, more frequent "good fire." Those healthier forests were less dense with trees, and had many more big, old trees with fire resistant bark than we see today. PFT is looking to this history as well as taking into consideration future changes that are already visible, such as the widespread loss of white fir and the shift to more ponderosa pine. We look forward to sharing the results of our planning and then the management of our Mount Ashland Demonstration Forest so that other forest owners, large and small, as well as communities and policy-makers can join us in learning new ideas for managing climate resilient forests in changing times.

Wet meadows are a key habitat on the Mt. Ashland Demonstration Forest.



## CONSERVATION

# Saving the Source: Conserving 11,000 acres of the Trinity River Headwaters



PFT's goal of conserving the core source watersheds of California has moved another key step forward. Our project to acquire and conserve 11,000 acres at the very top of the Trinity River moved closer to completion this past month with the Sierra Nevada Conservancy making a significant grant of \$1.4M to PFT to help protect this invaluable source watershed.

Building on a major \$2M federal grant secured with the help of Congressman Jared Huffman, PFT hopes to complete this project's funding by early 2024.

In an innovative partnership, PFT plans to acquire the Trinity Headwaters from Acer Klamath Forests, a willing private landowner who recently acquired it from MichiCal, the previous timberland owner with whom PFT was working. We will then conserve it with a working forest conservation easement and convey it to the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC) to be managed for the benefit of both ecological and human communities.

The property is characterized by rare biodiversity (supporting over 230 species, a number of which are endangered, highly vulnerable, and endemic) and will be a major refuge for wildlife as climate change advances. Protecting this watershed is critical for the entire state's water supply and its biodiversity—meeting two key state goals for water security and 30×30 (conserving 30% of the state's lands and coastal waters by 2030). And it forms a linchpin of PFT's strategy to create an integrated network of conserved forest watersheds that feed the Sacramento River and are critical for the state's water security.

For millennia, the Trinity River sustained the Hoopa and Yurok people, as well as a myriad of fish, plants, and wildlife. In turn, these people honored the river, deriving their identity from it, as the Trinity River was originally named the Hoopa, or Hupa, by the Yurok people. While European Americans have treated this river quite differently, mining it extensively since the 1800s, logging its watersheds, and damming it for water to grow the state's irrigated agricultural economy, this project aims to ensure the Trinity River headwaters be restored and flow for millennia to come.



The Trinity Headwaters has rare pristine streams and intact old growth habitats.



# Harnessing the Power of Nature to Address Climate Change

With massive floods and fires, droughts and hurricanes, Nature is often highlighted as the victim of climate change. But it is, in fact, perhaps our greatest champion to help remediate climate change.

Unlike other sources of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (forest loss and degradation alone is the second largest source of anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> emissions), our natural systems are also key solutions. It's the one emissions sector that has the capacity to reverse human-caused emissions, not only within the sector, but encompassing other emissions as well.

Conserving and restoring forests—especially older, more natural forests—reestablishing riparian forests and vegetation, increasing soil carbon, and restoring wetlands are amongst the most immediate, low-cost, and scalable solutions we have in the climate crisis. And these are proven sequestration technologies, unlike many proposals that will take years to develop and roll out at scale. But what might this look like? Can we set targets for transforming this whole sector to be a climate solution, not a problem, the way we do for the energy or transportation sectors?

With this question in mind, California is examining options to help meet its climate goals by taking a fresh look at what can be achieved through new approaches for our working and natural lands. This will be a first

in the nation effort to establish such targets for the natural and working lands sector. Called for by a law passed in 2022 (AB 1757, the California Global Warming Solutions Act), the state has convened a group of expert advisors to recommend how we might more effectively leverage Nature's innate capacities to heal itself to re-establish a safer climate. The goal is to identify and recommend targets and approaches in natural solutions to the climate crisis which can be implemented at scale in the near term, one with a proven track record of improving both net carbon sequestration and overall system climate resilience—targeting both mitigation and adaptation outcomes.

The Expert Advisory Council (EAC), drawn from academia, practitioners, front-line community and tribal backgrounds, among others, is due to make its initial report and recommendations in October for the target setting portion of its work. PFT's President, Laurie Wayburn, was named Chair of the EAC. In 2024, the EAC will also consider how the Air Resources Board's Scoping Plan estimates might better quantify carbon outcomes in any given year due to specific actions in specific geographies and natural systems.

## FORESTLIFE PROFILE OF BARBARA AND MARK DAUGHERTY



The very first grant PFT ever received—in 1993—was from the Weeden Foundation, a family foundation with roots in California. They saw the merit of supporting private, voluntary forest conservation, complementing their traditional focus on public lands. Thirty years later, Barbara Weeden Daugherty is continuing that tradition.

Barbara grew up enjoying the wilds of Northern California, exploring the not-yet dammed and re-routed Trinity River. It was a love of nature fostered by her family, especially her father, Dr. William Weeden. Her grandfather, John Weeden, who established the family foundation, was a conservationist. Her husband, Mark, whom she met at UC Berkeley, is also a conservationist and outdoor enthusiast. On a recent PFT field trip to the headwaters of the Trinity River (see p.4), we asked Barbara and Mark about their support for PFT and why our work is important.

“Private lands conservation is a really important part of the solutions we need to protect biodiversity and watersheds. You can’t do it all on public lands. A lot of the West is checkerboarded ownership—one piece public, and the next private—so we need private lands to be conserved too. You can really see this in the Trinity Headwaters project, where PFT is not only directly conserving 10% of the upper Trinity River watershed, but linking up with all the federal lands, creating a major wildlife conservation corridor.

I also like that PFT involves local communities in their conservation and helps landowners do more ecological management. This is essential work addressing climate change with natural solutions. The Foundation has a focus on protecting biodiversity, and PFT’s work accomplishes that.”

— Barbara Daugherty

To learn how you can support PFT’s vital work combatting climate change with forests, contact Kevin Connelly at [kconnelly@pacificforest.org](mailto:kconnelly@pacificforest.org) or at 415.561.0700 ext. 32.

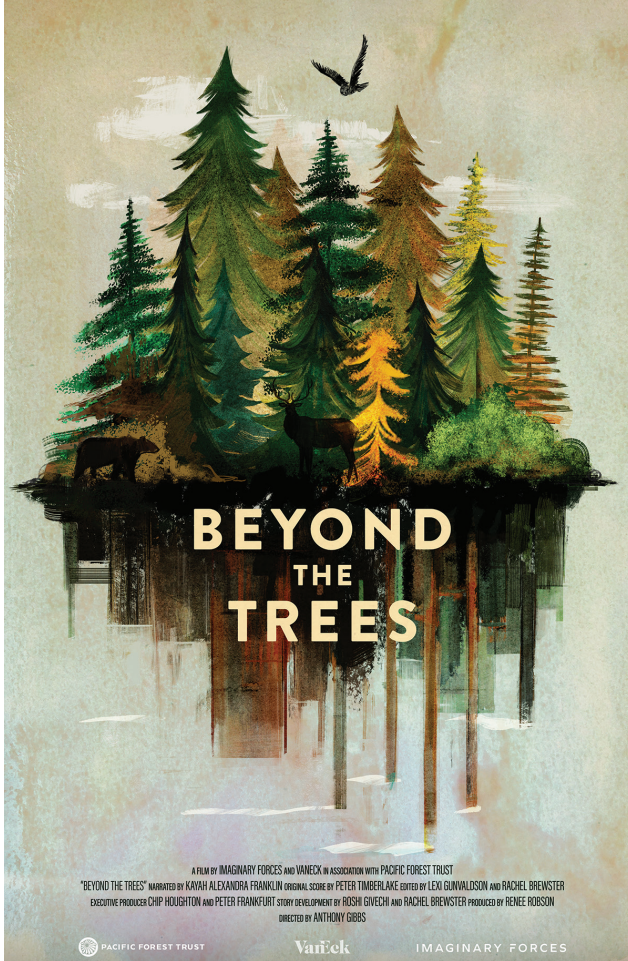
## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS AND FOREST WILDLIFE: FOREST FETE 2023



In late April, forest landowners, community leaders, policy makers, conservationists, and wildlife advocates from across the country gathered to celebrate forests as treasure troves of biodiversity at PFT's annual Forest Fete. Throughout the evening, we were inspired by a passionate tribute to beavers from our featured speaker, Leila Philip, honored John Donnelly, the recently retired Director of California's Wildlife Conservation Board, with PFT's Outside the Box award for his long-standing partnership, and presented the Forest Champion Award to Melissa & Mike Haglund for their stewardship and conservation of Alsea River Bend Working Forest. We ended the night with a special performance from the David Nelson Band Trio, as we toasted to PFT's first 30 years of conserving forests. Thank you to all our sponsors, hosts, special guests, and supporters for making Fete such a great success!

Visit [forestfete.org](https://forestfete.org) to view the livestream recording and photos of the event.

Leila Philip, author of *Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America*, our 2023 Forest Fete featured speaker.



## BEYOND THE TREES: OUR NEW AWARD-WINNING FILM

Collaboratively produced by Imaginary Forces, VanEck, and Pacific Forest Trust, the new award-winning documentary "Beyond the Trees" follows our determined team of climate champions seeking to restore our native forests through conservation-based forest management. The film highlights the unique management model pioneered by PFT, blending conservation and finance. Since its premiere late this Spring, "Beyond the Trees" has received several laurels, including selection as a Big Sur Film Festival Award Winner and Best Environmental Film at the LA Documentary Film Festival. PFT is planning screenings around the country throughout the year to share the film, engaging policy and decision-makers, forest investors, as well as celebrating forests with old and new friends and supporters.

Visit [pacificforest.org/beyond-the-trees](https://pacificforest.org/beyond-the-trees) to learn more and view the film's trailer.



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“PFT is the most effective organization that I’ve ever encountered in terms of private forest lands management. That is why I have chosen to include them in my planned giving.”

— Jerry Franklin, PFT Board member and renowned forest ecologist

## A LEGACY OF GIVING



To learn how you can leave a lasting legacy of vibrant forests by including PFT in your will or other planned giving, visit [pacifforest.org/lasting-legacy](http://pacifforest.org/lasting-legacy) or contact PFT’s Director of Development, Kevin Connelly at [give@pacificforest.org](mailto:give@pacificforest.org)