



THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Working Forests Work Wonders For Us All.

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Media Contact:
Chris Harrison, PFT Communications Director
415-561-0700 ex. 17, charrison@pacificforest.org

Pacific Forest Trust Co-Founders Awarded EPA's 'Highest Honor in Climate Protection'

International Award Recognizes Key Climate Benefits of U.S. Forests

WASHINGTON, D.C. – **Laurie A. Wayburn** and **Connie Best**, co-founders of the Pacific Forest Trust, have been selected as 2009 winners of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Protection Award for teamwork. They will accept the agency's "highest honor in climate protection" April 21 at a special Earth Day ceremony held at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., after participating in a climate leader roundtable with other EPA climate award winners past and present.

The EPA recognized the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) as one of the "best of the best" organizations working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for its successful *Working Forests, Winning Climate* campaign (http://bit.ly/WFWC_overview) that has galvanized efforts around the country to harness the climate benefits of U.S. forests. Policymakers increasingly are heeding PFT's call to include domestic forestlands in their climate strategies as federal lawmakers craft legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

"I am pleased to commend Wayburn and Best for their leadership and tremendous contributions to the national dialogue on forests and climate by providing a strategy for achieving real, verifiable carbon reductions while also contributing to the development of programs and policies that will enhance legislative and regulatory climate change reduction goals," wrote California Air Resources Board Chair Mary Nichols, who nominated Wayburn and Best for the award.

"We are so encouraged by this honor and what it says about the incredibly important role America's vast and vital forests must play in solving our climate crisis," said Best, PFT Managing Director. "There's a growing recognition that forests need to be conserved and managed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and absorb more of the excess CO₂ in the atmosphere. It's an honor to be commended for our efforts."

"The EPA award validates our work to include forests in California's ambitious plan for reducing emissions," added Wayburn, PFT President. "Now federal policymakers who are shaping plans to fight global warming are drawing from this proven approach to achieving real, net climate gains from forests."

Forests function as carbon "sinks," which cool the climate by safely absorbing and storing the greenhouse gas emissions that trap heat in the atmosphere. However, nearly two-thirds of U.S. forests

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are privately owned and threatened by degradation, development or conversion to land uses that would actually create emissions, rather than contain them.

Forest loss and degradation accounts for one fifth of the world's greenhouse gas pollution, and is the second largest source of global carbon emissions after the burning of fossil fuels. It's estimated that 40 percent of the excess CO₂ in the atmosphere has come from deforestation since the Industrial Age.

“We're gratified the EPA has recognized our call for ‘no net loss’ of U.S. forests' climate benefits,” Wayburn said. “This is achievable now, if we measure the greenhouse gas emissions forests store, mitigate for what is lost and use the market to reward landowners for doing the right thing – conserving and restoring our forests.”

Today, Wayburn and Best are leading PFT work at the state, regional and national level to ensure forests are included in policies designed to combat global warming. The Pacific Forest Trust, which Best and Wayburn co-founded 15 years ago, is the leading U.S. non-profit dedicated exclusively to promoting the conservation and stewardship of America's working forestlands, with a focus on climate stabilization. PFT manages *The Van Eck Forest Project*, California's first registered emissions reduction project, and is a pioneer of market incentives for landowners to conserve and steward their forests for sustainably harvested wood, water, wildlife habitat and a well-balanced climate.

PFT's forest and climate work has received broad recognition; in the past year Wayburn has received an Irvine Foundation Leadership Award and Land Trust Alliance's Kingsbury Browne Leadership Award.

Established in 1998, the Climate Protection Awards are given by the EPA Climate Protection Division to reward exceptional leadership, outstanding innovation, personal dedication and technical achievements in protecting the climate. Winning individuals, companies and NGOs from around the world are nominated, then recommended by an international panel of judges; final selections are made by the EPA. Learn more about the award at: <http://www.epa.gov/cppd/climateawards>.

About The Pacific Forest Trust

The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) is the nation's leading non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining America's vital working forests for all their public benefits – wood, water, wildlife and a well-balanced climate. In California, PFT has been instrumental in advancing the role of forests in the state's climate change programs including the development of the Forest Protocols. Nationally, PFT has published two landmark reports: “America's Private Forests: Status and Stewardship” (Island Press 2001) and “Forest Carbon in the United States.” Through its *Working Forests, Winning Climate* initiative, PFT is advising state governments and federal leaders about the inclusion of forest conservation and sustainable management in climate policies, markets and best-practices. To learn more about PFT, please visit: <http://www.PacificForest.org>.

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