



THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Working Forests Work Wonders For Us All.

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Statement on 'Conserving America's Landscapes' Report

Pacific Forest Trust Joins National Coalition's Call for Lawmakers to Restore Critical Funding for Longstanding Conservation Programs

SAN FRANCISCO — The Pacific Forest Trust and other members of the Land Water Conservation Fund Coalition are calling on U.S. lawmakers to recognize the critical need for full funding of the Land Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Forest Legacy Program (FLP). Both are considered indispensable for permanently safeguarding vulnerable lands for all their public benefits.

A new report produced by the coalition, *Conserving America's Landscapes*, describes an urgent, growing need for the federal funding mechanisms, which pay for the conservation of working forests and public land acquisitions that support local economies while conserving vital ecological resources.

Established in 1965, the LWCF has a dedicated funding source — profits from offshore oil and gas leases — which last year generated \$23.4 billion in revenue. The LWCF is authorized to receive \$900 million of that money, yet historically almost all it has been diverted to other budget items. Last year the LWCF received less than 20 percent of its authorization. As economic troubles pressure more landowners to sell their property, demand for LWCF funds is growing along with the need to protect America's irreplaceable forests and other wildlands from subdivision and development.

“We depend on adequate funding of the Forest Legacy Program to help protect working forests as well as the landowners and communities who depend on them. The LWCF is just as crucial to our efforts to add private lands we've purchased from willing sellers to two of our nation's most treasured landscapes: Yosemite National Park and Oregon's Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument,” says John Bernstein, PFT Vice President for Conservation.

He added that the Pacific Forest Trust currently is holding 6,600 acres in trust that the organization purchased outright from private landowners in those regions until LWCF funds are available to pay for their transfer to public ownership.

“State and local funding to conserve these properties is drying up in this economic climate. Without Forest Legacy and LWCF funding, it will be extremely difficult – if not impossible – for conservation groups like ours to safeguard these vital lands for all their public benefits, including revenue from tourism and the timber industry, sustainably harvested wood, water, wildlife habitat and a well-balanced climate,” Bernstein says.

To learn more about the Pacific Forest Trust, visit: <http://www.PacificForest.org>.

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