



THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

Our Private Forests are Our Public Treasures.

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Working Forest Bordering Big Trees State Park Conserved *Family Landowners and Leading Forest Stewards Consider Managing for Climate Benefits to Supplement Timber Income*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Love Creek Forest – a 413-acre family-owned, mixed-conifer working forest outside Arnold in Calaveras County, CA – has been conserved through a partnership with the Pacific Forest Trust, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Smith family. Love Creek Forest shares its boundaries with two Sierran treasures – Big Trees State Park and Stanislaus National Forest – and has been managed sustainably under the American Tree Farm System for the last 40 years.

Private forests adjacent to publicly protected parks are at high risk of being converted to non-forest, residential use due to their desirable location. The Smith family, in fact, had witnessed an ever-increasing number of subdivisions rising up around their property when in 2007 they decided it was time to act.

After several months of meetings and planning discussions, the Smiths entered into a working forest conservation easement (WFCE) agreement with the Pacific Forest Trust this past December. The voluntary, yet binding, arrangement guarantees Love Creek Forest will forever remain a working forest that delivers wood products, water quality benefits and critical wildlife habitat.

Now, in April 2008, the Smiths are considering beginning to manage their forest to deliver yet another key benefit: forest-derived carbon. The Smiths are exploring the possibility of sequestering increased levels of carbon and registering their net CO₂ emissions reductions with the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR).

“With the conservation agreement we’ve entered into with PFT, not only are we protecting our land from development, we have the opportunity to manage our forest to store more carbon and reduce greenhouse gas emissions,” explains Larry Smith, the youngest Smith son and current Love Creek Forest manager. “We may be able to generate additional revenue by practicing a method of sustainable forestry that yields both timber products and climate benefits and we are just now starting to investigate this option.”

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If the Smiths do decide to manage for carbon, the additional emissions reductions their forest would produce could be traded in the growing, multi-billion dollar carbon market.

The Smith family, who have owned Love Creek Forest for more than 65 years, have long been involved in conservation efforts to protect Calaveras County’s natural resources and public lands. In 1974 for example, Dr. Ben Smith and his wife Dutton – the original Smith owners and Larry’s parents – were active in creating the Calaveras Big Trees Association, a volunteer organization dedicated to preserving and promoting Big Trees State Park.

But it is the responsible stewardship of their own property and their decision to protect their land in perpetuity that may most help preserve the adjacent Big Trees State Park and Stanislaus National Forest.

“Love Creek Forest serves as an important wildlife migration corridor between public lands, contains creeks and streams that feed into the public water supplies and provides scenic buffers and firebreaks that help protect neighboring public resources,” notes PFT Conservation Manager Megan Wargo. “As such, this project will have significant landscape-level conservation impacts.”

The Smith family generously donated the land value cost of the easement to the Pacific Forest Trust. In doing so, the family was able to take advantage of the expanded federal income tax benefits that were available through the end of 2007 and that are currently being considered for renewal by Congress. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, an agency of the State of California, funded the project’s transactional costs.

“The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is pleased to have partnered with the Pacific Forest Trust and the Smith family to complete the Love Creek conservation easement,” says Jim Branham, executive officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. “This voluntary agreement that sustains working forestlands, maintains wildlife habitats and preserves clean water supplies meets many of our program goals.”

The Smith WFCE is the first conservation agreement completed as part of PFT’s *Love Creek Working Forests Project* – an ongoing initiative aimed at conserving threatened working forests throughout this vitally important region.

About The Pacific Forest Trust

The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) is the leading non-profit organization dedicated to protecting America’s private working forests for all their public benefits – wood, water, wildlife and a well-balanced climate. Since its founding in 1993, PFT has directly conserved 45,000 acres of forestlands in California, Oregon and Washington valued at more than \$150 million. Through its *Working Forests, Winning Climate* initiative, PFT is advising landowners, 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 the Pacific Forest Trust, please visit www.PacificForest.org