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For Immediate Release

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1,000 Acres of Critical Forestland Bordering Yosemite National Park Now Protected

*Acquisitions by The Pacific Forest Trust Conserve Forest Resources,
Prevent Development and Integrate Protected Lands*

San Francisco, CA – The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT), a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to preserving private forestlands for all their public benefits, has teamed up with two family landowners to conserve another 250 acres of forestlands on the western perimeter of Yosemite National Park.

In December, PFT announced the acquisition of two key private in-holdings bordering the National Park – the 170-acre Donahoe property and the 80-acre Sparling property. Coupled with the 730-acre Ransome Ranch that PFT acquired in 2004, nearly 1,000 acres have now been protected under the group’s *Yosemite Conservation Project*.

The acquired lands are part of the original park boundaries proposed by John Muir and connect the Sierra National Forest with the National Park. The forestlands provide a much-needed buffer from increasing development, such as that which has occurred with the neighboring Yosemite West development.

“It’s tremendously important to conserve these undeveloped lands adjacent to Yosemite National Park,” states Park Superintendent Michael Tollefson. “The cooperation between the Pacific Forest Trust and these landowners forms a unique collaboration that helps preserve sensitive Park resources and increase connections between protected lands.”

Both the Donahoe and Sparling properties are rich in ecological and historic resources that demonstrate the consonant evolution of forests and people in this landscape. Originally part of the 3,800 acres owned by the Yosemite Timber Company, the property was sold to the O’Conner family in 1925 and the ranch was eventually split up. Today, the Pacific Forest Trust has reassembled nearly 1,000 acres of this historic ranch, including the homestead located on the Sparling property.

“My family Nancy, Vanessa, Bradley and I are delighted the Pacific Forest Trust is helping to fulfill our goal of permanently protecting our forestland from the escalating development we see happening all around Yosemite,” says Steve Sparling. “We’ve treasured this land for generations and it brings us great peace of mind to know it will be conserved for future generations to enjoy.”

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In addition to buffering Yosemite National Park, these forestlands provide diverse and important habitat for a number of threatened species – including the Pacific Fisher, Great Gray Owl and Congdon’s Lewisia – and protect the vital watersheds of the main stem and south fork of the Wild and Scenic Merced River.

“We are pleased to have been able to help the Sparling and Donahoe families realize their goals of protecting their land and heritage and seize this extraordinary opportunity to help fulfill John Muir’s vision by protecting the National Park’s vulnerable border,” says Pacific Forest Trust President Laurie Wayburn.

Funding for these acquisitions came from the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation’s *Preserving Wild California* program. Mary Donahoe helped make the purchase of her property more feasible by charitably donating a portion of the purchase price of her land back to PFT.

Founded in 1993, the Pacific Forest Trust is the only national organization dedicated to protecting American’s productive, private forestlands in order to preserve their myriad public values. As in the *Yosemite Conservation Project*, one of PFT’s specific focuses is protecting private lands that connect into or lie within ecologically important public lands.

To learn more about the Pacific Forest Trust and our conservation programs, please visit us online at www.PacificForest.org.