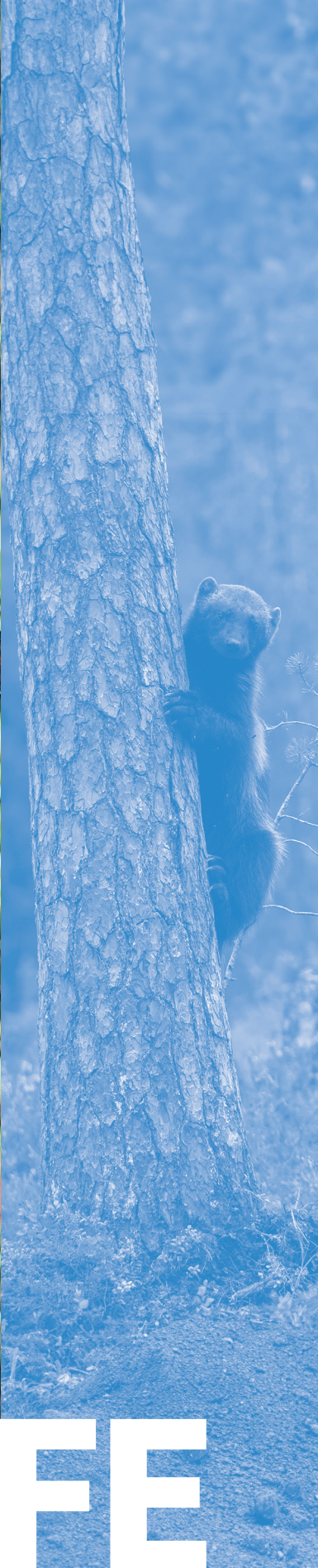




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FOREST LIFE

SPRING 2024

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A Natural Path to Safety

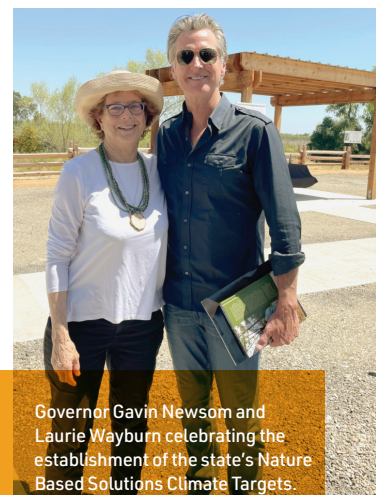
With impacts of climate change ever more apparent, the call for natural climate solutions benefitting both mitigation and adaptation has become ever more insistent. But what that means, and how we do it, has not been clear. Until now.

California Governor Newsom's Earth Day announcement about the state's Nature Based Solutions Climate Targets sets a clear path forward. This is a pioneering effort: a national, and global, model of what's needed to successfully address the climate crisis.

The policy sets significant, feasible targets for actions and emissions reductions through changing how we manage our natural and working lands for climate. Called for by AB 1757, the targets were initially recommended in November 2023 by the AB1757 Expert Advisory Committee, which I am honored to chair. PFT has been advocating for such an approach for years; this is an extraordinary step forward.

Near-term emissions reductions that can be achieved are well over 150,000,000 tons of CO₂ and CO₂ equivalent in the next 10 years, with far more in the decades that follow. Changes in how we manage and retain our forests bring the most emissions reductions the most rapidly. These actions have *immediate* benefits for CO₂ reductions, distinguishing them from many actions in other emissions sectors, such as transportation, where emissions reductions come only *after* several years.

Natural climate solutions are an immediate bridge to a safer future. They benefit our health, water, biodiversity, and economies. This new policy is a transformative step in the climate challenge.



Governor Gavin Newsom and Laurie Wayburn celebrating the establishment of the state's Nature Based Solutions Climate Targets.

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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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CONSERVATION



Heritage and Heart on the Willow-Witt Ranch

Willow-Witt Ranch is home to an organic farm, goat herd, and a green burial ground as well as its forests and wet meadows.

In 2021, Suzanne Willow and Lanita Witt began discussing how they could protect their beloved Willow-Witt Ranch, fulfilling their goal of sharing its magic and well-managed forests with future generations. Their forester suggested calling the Pacific Forest Trust.

The Willow-Witt Ranch, 450-acres of diverse conifer forest, streams, and extensive wet meadows, had been their home since 1985. It also has an organic vegetable farm, goat herds and an environmental education non-profit. Situated at the headwaters of Frog Creek and Babe Creek, Willow-Witt Ranch occupies a pivotal ecological position adjacent to the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CNSM) where PFT has done extensive forest conservation and management.

Prior owners degraded these lands through overharvesting and overgrazing. Willow and Witt had carefully restored and stewarded the forest, working

with Marty Main, a renowned forest manager in southern Oregon. With Lanita's health failing, conserving their legacy became more urgent as all three knew that the many ecological and community values of the property could be lost when the couple no longer owned it.

The ranch serves as a microcosm of the diversity that characterizes the region, a continuation and direct connection to CNSM's globally outstanding biodiversity. Lanita and Suzanne recognized this, and wanted the multiple, compatible uses of the land continued. They decided to work with PFT to conserve this working landscape.

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“Lanita and I were committed to conserving our legacy of land stewardship; protecting it through working with PFT will ensure that our goal is fulfilled.”

— Suzanne Willow

This project is a significant step in building a resilient, well-managed landscape across ownerships within the Klamath-Cascade region. The CSNM and its surrounding areas are amongst the most biodiverse and climate-significant land in the United States, making its connectivity even more imperative for wildlife, plants, and people. Those values cannot be protected solely within the boundaries of the Monument, and thus connecting with conserved private lands is a key tool to building landscape resilience, especially under climate change.

While Lanita passed away in 2022, Suzanne has continued the easement’s development. This cherished property will join a growing number of private

landowners committed to protecting the ecological integrity and amazing diversity of the region. The Willow-Witt Ranch will be another piece to the puzzle of conserving this vital landscape, alongside other PFT-conserved properties, such as the Mountcrest Working Forest and PFT’s Mt. Ashland Demonstration Forest.

The story of Willow-Witt Ranch is not just one of forest conservation and stewardship, but of human connection: to the land, to each other, and to a shared vision of a sustainable future. Through partnership with PFT, Suzanne Willow is ensuring their legacy of community engagement, care, and forest stewardship endure forever—a beacon of hope in an increasingly uncertain world.



Sustaining Conservation Gains When Forests Change Hands

Millions of acres of private forest are sold and bought every year, with subsequent changes in management that can impact conservation values such as watersheds and habitats as new owners seek a targeted financial return. How can these values be protected and does that impact the resale of those forests?

Enter Working Forest Conservation Easements (WFCEs): legal instruments that guide how forests are managed and conserved while paying landowners for those management changes that protect conservation values. This ensures both perpetual protection and financial return. These agreements are built to endure beyond individual ownerships and lifetimes and are therefore powerful tools in safeguarding the universal public benefits of private forests, as well as connecting critical habitats and watersheds across private and public ownerships.

Within the vital Mt. Shasta Headwaters region, critical for California's water supply, carbon stores and wildlife, PFT has established 50,000 acres of WFCEs. These easements, which lead to older, more natural forests that are both more fire and climate change resilient, stand as beacons for this symbiosis

between conservation and commerce, regardless of changed proprietorship. Such easements safeguard both resources *and* resource management, providing continual jobs and income as well as wood, wildlife, water, and wonder. Over 33,000 of PFT's conserved acres in the region, owned and managed by industrial or financial interests, have been sold since being conserved. All remain in production for both timber products and enhanced ecological outcomes.

Three of these PFT conserved properties serve as examples illustrating both enduring conservation gains and the practical transferability of conserved working forests. **McCloud Dogwood Butte**, almost 13,000 acres, was originally conserved with Hancock Timber Resource Group, acquired by Manulife, and is now owned by Hearst Forests. **Black Butte Working Forest**, 5,000

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acres originally conserved with Michi-Cal Timber Products, is now owned by Acer Klamath Forests, a subsidiary of New Forests. **Bear Creek Working Forest**, 8,250 acres, originally conserved with Roseburg Forests, is now also under New Forests.

Bear Creek Working Forest is at the headwaters of the Fall River, a renowned fishing area. The easement protects more than 50 miles of waterways serving people, fish and wildlife, and farms across California and complements a similar PFT easement (Bascom Pacific) completing the protection of the entire upper Bear Creek watershed.

Black Butte Working Forest lies at the western foot of Mt. Shasta, strategically located between the communities of Weed and the city of Mt. Shasta. This easement ensures the restoration of a more natural, diverse conifer forest, significantly increases its carbon stores (as do all PFT projects) and protects habitat for threatened species like the Pacific Fisher.

McCloud Dogwood Butte protects one of California's most pristine watersheds, the McCloud River. With dozens of cold-water springs flowing into the McCloud, it provides clean, cool water for both the imperiled red-band trout and millions of Californians. It also provides permanent connections between old-growth reserves in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest, benefitting old-growth dependent species, and essential wildlife corridors, as well as access for recreation.

With WFCEs, forest management is consistent over time, achieving long-term restoration and maintenance of multiple forest values and securing critical resources for future generations. By embracing these agreements, landowners can not only protect their financial interests but also play a pivotal role in preserving our natural heritage. In the delicate balance between profit and preservation, conservation easements emerge as a potent tool for sustainable land management and lasting resilience.



DONOR HIGHLIGHT: KATHY MALANEY OF THE MALANEY FAMILY FOUNDATION

Kathy Malaney has explored PFT's work with inspiring curiosity and, along with her husband, Sanjeev, is now a significant supporter of our efforts to restore and manage forests for all their values.

Why are forests important to you?

KM: Forests give us so much! Their health benefits, how they turn carbon dioxide into oxygen, how they make you feel. Being in forests is an important part of my life and I want to make sure they are protected for future generations to enjoy.

What makes PFT's work important?

KM: You do it all! You've done the research. You have had the hard discussions, with logging and industrial timber companies, foresters, ranchers, farmers...your approach is to listen and make it a win-win with everyone.

Working Forest Conservation Easements are such a great idea! PFT understands the economic benefits that forests provide, but you also integrate protections for wildlife, water, and climate—you make forests work for all.

What worries you about forests in this time of climate change?

KM: I think the big problem is people aren't taking climate change seriously, or the role forests must play in solving it. There's quite a lack of knowledge about forests; people think that they will always be there, but that's not the case.

What gives you hope?

KM: Your work, and the increasing awareness of PFT's work. Your research gives everyone a better understanding of forests' importance, and that helps build a shared vision between diverse groups of people. The film about your work, "Beyond the Trees" was a great way to explain what your priorities are all about. It makes it easy for folks to digest a complex topic and moves them to act.



Good Fire and Natural Climate Solutions

As the impacts of climate change increase, California policymakers forge bipartisan consensus and collaboration to scale up solutions.

In the Golden State, legislators have worked across party lines to support bills that would both expand and enhance a variety of nature-based solutions to combat the climate crisis. Earlier this year, Senator Monique Limon (D-19) introduced PFT-sponsored **SB1101**, which seeks to expand California's use of beneficial fire to mitigate the risk of the catastrophic wildfires. SB1101 would increase a range of beneficial fire management policies and practices. To increase the amount of "good fire" on the ground at the scale and pace required to promote public safety and restore healthy ecosystems, SB1101 aims to make it easier for both CAL FIRE and private landowners to implement large-scale prescribed burns, specifically CAL FIRE's contracting and procurement processes associated with managed and prescribed fire. The bill would also establish a more collaborative approach to planning for fire management, increasing coordination between state, federal, tribal, private, and local entities. With rare unanimous support from legislators across the spectrum of interests, SB1101 demonstrates both a

deep commitment to bringing "good fire" and a more natural fire regime back to the landscape, as well as to removing barriers to expanded use of beneficial fire.

In a complementary effort, California State Assemblymember, Diane Papan (D), recently introduced **AB3023**—sponsored by PFT—which aims to foster more efficient operations from the multiple state programs aimed at tackling the complex and interrelated effects of climate change. AB3023 would enhance coordination and efficiencies between departments, boards, and programs to fund and implement holistic solutions to the overlapping crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and water security. It specifically targets the increased coordination between the state organizations responsible for water supply, fire/fuels management, ecosystem health, conservation and climate resilience. Especially considering the state's current budget reductions, such enhanced efficiencies can increase the net impact of state investments without requiring additional funding.



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FOREST FETE 2024



ABOVE: CAL FIRE Director, Joe Tyler; PFT Board Member, Andrea Tuttle; WCB Executive Director, Dr. Jennifer Norris; PFT President, Laurie Wayburn. **CENTER:** Tisina Parker, Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation. **RIGHT:** Forest Champion Awardee, John Gilleland, CEO of Campbell Global, and Connie Best



In May, forest lovers of all stripes joined us for PFT's annual Forest Fete. This year we celebrated the myriad benefits of restoring **"good fire"** to the landscape, and honored CA State Assembly Speaker, Robert Rivas, with PFT's Outside-the-Box Award for his leadership in bold climate policy, as well as John Gilleland as Forest Champion. Harmonica virtuoso John Popper was our musical guest. Thanks to all attendees and sponsors for making the night so special!

