



May 10, 2016

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown, Legislators, and Staff:

We have recently been asked to join a "broad spectrum of forest land owners and conservation organizations writing to urge you to support increased funding for forest conservation as well as forest health investments". We would like to take the opportunity to provide you with information regarding conservation efforts on our own forest lands as well as reiterate positions we have consistently held and expressed regarding public funding for forest conservation goals.

Mendocino Redwood Company recently celebrated our 15th anniversary of Forest Stewardship Council certification. Humboldt Redwood Company (the former Pacific Lumber Company) also recently completed its 5 year FSC recertification. Measurable conservation achievements beyond the scope of our FSC certification also include:

- Increasing conifer inventory more than 1.5 billion board feet while harvesting more than 900 million board feet.
- Planting more than 10 million seedlings.
- Removing or stabilizing more than 1.5 million cubic yards of sediment (the equivalent of more than 150,000 dump trucks of dirt) at risk of discharging into watercourses.
- Abandoning or upgrading over 600 miles of forest roads including upgrading 3,400 stream crossings and removing fish barriers allowing access to over 20 miles of streams.
- Restoring conifer stocking on more than 65,000 acres of forest land resulting in more than 5 million additional redwood and Douglas fir trees.
- Conducting long term monitoring of watersheds, wildlife, fisheries and vegetation.

We have conducted this work in part with the benefit of partners and with match-grant public funding. We have a long history of supporting forest conservation, both symbolically and financially, and continue to foster a conservation ethic in all our business operations. It is from this context we wish to provide input on the direction of additional public funding of forest conservation.

As California contemplates a path forward in support of additional funding for forest conservation it is helpful to consider the effectiveness of past efforts. Since 2007, we have voiced concerns over the lack of ecological accomplishment for state money used primarily to buy up development rights in remote locations, and also especially for the lack of transparency associated with such transactions. Our views have come out of close observation of more than \$100 million of conservation investment (paid for largely with state funds) in Mendocino County and Sonoma County - the back yard of our own forests –



where we have a lot of first hand local knowledge. Our observations include high prices, an intentionally opaque funding process, and questionable ecological accomplishment.

In addition, when the state has made substantial investments to mostly buy development rights for remote properties, ecological progress then depends on more money being allocated to support actual on the ground restoration.

We have and will continue to support public investment for the conservation of pristine forestlands, or forestlands with unique habitat that are otherwise threatened or likely to be lost. Arresting legitimate development threats also make sense. **In all cases, however, transparency should be increased by making appraisals for significant conservation deals public BEFORE money has left the state coffers, rather than the day after as is current practice. It is imperative to note that for the most part various agencies of the State of California are the sole ultimate source of funds for many conservation instruments.**

Beyond fee and conservation easement acquisitions, we urge consideration be given to on-the-ground tangible restoration activities for deployment of conservation dollars as well. The measurable ecological benefits for improving habitat in the woods today is often available for pennies on the dollar compared to fee and conservation easement acquisitions. Watershed restoration activities, road restoration, fuels reduction and the reintroduction of fire all can add substantial habitat value with immediate ecological dividends. Finally, we encourage the Administration and legislators to consider funding of restoration activities on privately held lands (in addition to public lands)... perhaps in the form of match grant funding so that landowners and the state can each have a vested interest in ecological improvements being made in the here-and-now.

We applaud the consideration of continued and increased funding for forest conservation in California, and urge that consideration be given to greater transparency for acquisition investments, and also that on-the-ground tangible restoration activities also be weighed as another way to make substantial improvements to forest habitat starting today.

Sincerely,

John Andersen
Director, Forest Policy
Mendocino Redwood Company, LLC
Humboldt Redwood Company, LLC