

THE CONSERVATION FUND

NORTH COAST FOREST CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

2015 ANNUAL REVIEW

© THE NORTH FACE

PROJECT ORIENTATION

At The Conservation Fund, we believe that well-managed forests can be both economically viable and ecologically sustainable. On California's North Coast, we are demonstrating a new approach to forest conservation that balances environmental restoration and stewardship with the economic imperatives of large scale forest ownership and the desire to sustain the local timber economy. Since 2004, with the help of our public and private partners, we have protected more than 120,000 acres of forestland as part of our North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative. Of these protected forests, we own and manage more than 74,000 acres in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties. We seek to demonstrate that large, understocked tracts of coastal forest can be returned to ecological and economic viability through patient, adaptive management by a nonprofit organization, in partnership with private and public entities and community stakeholders. We are making conservation work for America.

We invite you to learn more about the major accomplishments, challenges and activities of our program in 2015. Our success results from the strong support of a diverse set of partners—neighbors, local businesses, government agencies and conservation groups. Thank you for your interest and continued support!



© CHAD RILEY



© CHAD RILEY

Caspar Index

Named after our North Coast hometown, this customized index details some of the measurements we track annually. North Coast Reviews from 2009-2011 are available at www.conservationfund.org

	2013	2014	2015
Northern Spotted Owl Conservation			
Northern spotted owl activity centers	23	29	28
Northern spotted owl successfully fledged	0	2-Garcia	0
Forest acres set aside for Northern spotted owl habitat	2,300	2,900	2,800
Coho Salmon & Steelhead Conservation			
Approximate cubic yards of sediment saved through road improvement projects	19,687	15,807	15,723
California Department of Fish and Wildlife spawner survey reaches sampled	6	6	6
Numbers of logs added to streams to improve salmonid habitat	168 (Two Log Creek— Big River)	65 (North Fork Gualala)	0
Water Quality			
Total number of instream remote water temperature monitoring stations on Big River and Salmon Creek Forests	38	38	38
Total number of instream remote water temperature monitoring stations on the Gualala River Forest monitored by the Gualala River Watershed Council	11	11	11
Total number of number of instream remote water temperature monitoring stations on the Buckeye Forest monitored by the Gualala River Watershed Council	17	17	17
Environmental Monitoring & Assessment Program reaches monitored per year on the Garcia River by The Nature Conservancy and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (65 total reaches established)	5	3	3
Forest Economics			
Estimated local economic contribution (employment, contractors, purchases)	\$3.4 million	\$3.9 million	\$3.6 million
Volume of logs removed (net board feet)	2,514,620	3,455,000	3,466,930
Number of log trucks	643	772	829
Carbon offsets: Climate Reserve Tonnes generated and verified	394,715	444,988	330,236
Community Outreach			
Number of participants in the Pedestrian and Equestrian Stewardship Access Program on Salmon Creek, Big River	26	20	18
Public tours	8	6	5



Redwood logs from the Big River Forest ready to be hauled to the mill.

© WHITNEY FLANAGAN

Timber Harvests

2015 was a busy and productive year for harvesting operations. For the 2015 season, we harvested 550,000 net board feet (nbf) log scale from the North Navarro Ridge THP on Salmon Creek Forest, 1,858,000 nbf feet from Little North Fork Big River & Changeling THPs on Big River Forest and 1,059,000 nbf from the Graphite & Olson Gulch THPs on Garcia River Forest. Total volume removed in 2015 was 3,466,930 net board feet. As in previous years, we were able to take advantage of the export-market to sell Douglas fir and white fir, while continuing to sell redwood to the local Mendocino and Sonoma County sawmills. None of our forest conservation would be possible without a healthy forest industry—we offer our thanks to the local sawmills, logging contractors and resource professionals who help make our program successful.



Madison Thomson, Forester and Lauren Fety, Forest Analyst gather data on the Big River Forest.

© CHAD RILEY

Forest Certification

As they have every fall since 2007, verifiers from the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC-C001535) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) programs completed a field audit of the North Coast Forest Conservation Program. The Program, and our other forest projects around the country, were found in overall conformance with the standards—the two most strict and comprehensive standards for forest management available. The Fund actively participates in the California SFI Implementation Committee and we welcome comments and suggestions regarding our forest certification. Full audit reports are available on our website: www.conservationfund.org



View of the Buckeye Forest.

© STEPHEN JOSEPH

Climate Action

The Conservation Fund has four carbon projects in the North Coast. The newest project, Buckeye Forest, was developed under the California Air Resource Board (ARB) compliance protocol/Cap-and-Trade Regulation. The project's initial reporting period was successfully verified by Environmental Services, Inc. and registered in August 2015.

The other three projects—Garcia River Forest, Gualala River Forest, and Salmon Creek/Big River Forests – were originally developed under the Climate Action Reserve (CAR). These projects have been generating carbon offsets for voluntary customers for over a decade. All three projects are currently being transitioned to ARB's compliance protocol. To prepare for the transition, forest-wide inventories were completed. Forest technicians completed over 1,300 plots for this effort. The projects were then modeled and analyzed before being submitted for verification. Each project will be verified by Environmental Services, Inc. through an in-depth data review and forest visit, and will then be registered with ARB.

The projects produced 330,236 tonnes of carbon in 2015. The money from the sale of these offsets will be used to pay off acquisition loans and to cover the cost of forest conservation. A Norwegian power company, Statkraft, purchased offsets from the Fund in 2015. You can read more about this important milestone in the international recognition of the viability of California's approach to reducing emissions in general, and the importance of forests in particular here: <http://goo.gl/HgK8n4>



Juvenile coho on the Garcia River.

© JON WARMERDAM

Habitat Restoration

The placement of large wood in streams and maintaining and upgrading our road infrastructure to reduce future sediment delivery is of high priority for salmon habitat restoration. Maintaining the road infrastructure is also critical to our ability to move through the properties for log hauling, stream restoration projects, botanical surveys and northern spotted owl surveys. A significant portion of the money we make through timber and carbon sales is re-invested in road infrastructure improvements.

An important such project was the implementation of the Mainstem Garcia Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Project on the Garcia River Forest with cost-share funding from the Department of Fish and Wildlife. An estimated sediment savings of 11,395 cu yds has been achieved to date (3,869 in 2014 and 7,524 in 2015) with a total of 4.91 miles of road treated.

An additional 4,329 cubic yards of sediment were saved through upgrading 68 sites along approximately 15 miles of haul roads associated with various timber harvest plans. These significant projects are just part of the decade-long process of improving the 500-plus miles of legacy roads on our properties.

Management Planning

A draft of the Buckeye Forest Integrated Resource Management Plan was submitted for review to the easement holder, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District in the spring and fruitful discussions happened throughout the year. The Plan will be finalized in 2016. The purpose of our property wide management plans is to ensure a consistent framework for the sustainable management of each property. All IRMPs are available at: www.conservationfund.org.



Olivia Fiori, Forest Technician stops for a break on a bridge overlooking Big River.

© CHAD RILEY



Fresh growth of needles on a Douglas fir.

© CHAD RILEY



Holly Newberger, Program Coordinator volunteers, making wooden plugs, for the Educational Tall Ship.

© WHITNEY FLANAGAN

Educational Tall Ship

In 2012, The North Coast program donated 73 Douglas fir logs or approximately 50,000 board feet of logs from our Big River Forest to the Educational Tall Ship (ETS) project. This Forest Stewardship Council-certified lumber will be the principal wood used in the 19th century-inspired tall ship's construction and will make up more than 50% of the vessel's structure. The remainder of the wood donated by the Fund will be used for hull planking, inside planking, deck cabins, masts and spars. Construction began on the Matthew Turner in 2013, a two-masted brigantine designed by tall ship specialist Tri-Coastal Marine with a deck length of 100ft and berths for 38 passengers. The \$6.2m ship, which is expected to launch in the latter half of 2016 and start operations in 2017, will be used to take groups of young students out on to the water to learn traditional sailing skills, as well as getting better acquainted with the Bay Area's rich maritime history and marine ecology. You can stop by and watch the progress or volunteer to help build the ship. See their website for more details: www.educationaltallship.org



© CHAD RILEY

Enjoying a walk on the Big River Forest.

Public Access Program

2015 was another successful year for our permit-based pedestrian access program in the Big River and Salmon Creek Forests, as well as our equestrian program on the Salmon Creek Forest. These programs were launched seven years ago to provide access, cultivate stewardship and increase surveillance on the property. On Big River, the Fund provided access to local community members to harvest firewood for home use. Since 2012 we have allowed limited, permitted hunting for Mendocino County residents on the Garcia River Forest. In addition, multiple tours of all properties to review harvests and restoration projects are offered throughout the year. Public access to Buckeye Forest will be delayed until legal access issues are resolved.

Community Member Spotlight

Our approach to forest conservation includes a desire to sustain the local timber economy and local community. Our success stems from our consistent, dedicated team of employees and contract consultants. Important members of the team are botanists Geri Hulse Stephens and Kerry Heise. Geri and Kerry have spent countless hours crouched in our North Coast forests, cataloging tiny plants—and making big discoveries. So far they have turned up a number of rare species including the Monterey clover on the Big River and Garcia River Forests, and the Santa Cruz clover on Garcia River, Gualala River and Buckeye Forests and white rein orchid on the Garcia River Forest. Geri and Kerry help the Fund’s sustainable forestry team harvest trees carefully by conducting botanical surveys that show where rare plants live on the Fund’s forest properties. That way, impacts to these plant communities can be avoided. Over the years they have walked the gulches, slopes and mountaintops of the North Coast forests and come upon many surprises: waterfalls, tiny pristine ponds deep in the redwoods, lush marshes. They have also met bear cubs, mountain lions, turtles and toads. Who knows what else is waiting to be found? The Fund thanks Geri and Kerry and all of our contractors for their commitment and enthusiasm for our projects.



Gerri Hulse Stephens (left) and Kerry Heise.

Acknowledgments

PRIMARY CONTRACTORS:

Bob Baker Trucking, Roadwork
 Christopher Blencowe, Stream restoration and monitoring
 Kerry Heise, Botanical surveys
 Geri Hulse Stephens, Botanical surveys
 Jacobszoon Forestry Consulting, Timber inventory
 Lynsey Kelly, GIS services
 McFarland Trucking
 Don Miller, Security & patrols
 Pacific Watershed Associates, Assessments & restoration
 Robert Piper, Logging & road restoration
 William Piper, Road restoration
 Redwood Resources, Tree planting & thinning
 Ken Smith, Stream restoration
 Elias Steinbuck, Geologic assessments
 Mike Stephens, Northern spotted owl biological surveys
 Lee Susan, Big River forestry
 Mark Taylor, Security & patrols
 Wylatti Resource Management, Road restoration

PROJECT PARTNERS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 California State Coastal Conservancy
 David and Lucile Packard Foundation
 Dell
 Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
 Mendocino Land Trust
 North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
 Richard King Mellon Foundation
 S. D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation
 Salmon Creek Project Team
 Sonoma Land Trust
 Sonoma Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
 The Nature Conservancy
 The North Face
 The Walt Disney Company
 U-Haul
 UPS
 Wildlife Conservation Board

ADVISORY GROUP:

Leslie Dahlhoff, Moat Creek Managing Agency Board Member
 Bill Heil, Salmon Creek Project Team
 John Hooper, Oz Farm
 Alan Levine, Coast Action Group
 Darcie Mahoney, Registered Professional Forester
 Linda Perkins, Salmon Creek Project Team
 Chris Poehlmann, Friends of the Gualala River

Contact Us

Please see our website for more information on the North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative:
www.conservationfund.org

Detailed monitoring reports are also available by topic from our office in Caspar, CA:
Attention: Holly Newberger, North Coast Program Coordinator
14951A Caspar Road | Box 50 | Caspar, CA 95420
707-962-0712 | hnewberger@conservationfund.org

THE CONSERVATION FUND

Thank you from The Conservation Fund's North Coast Staff:

Lauren Fety, Forest Analyst
Olivia Fiori, Forest Technician
Margery Hoppner, Accounting
Chris Kelly, California Program Director
Scott Kelly, Timberlands Manager
Holly Newberger, Program Coordinator
Evan Smith, Senior Vice President, Conservation Ventures
Madison Thomson, Registered Professional Forester

Printed on 100% recycled paper.