



THE
CONSERVATION FUND

North Coast Forest
Conservation Initiative

2018 ANNUAL REVIEW

Caspar Index

Named after our North Coast hometown, this is a customized index to share some of the measurements we track. Past North Coast Reviews are available at conservationfund.org.

	2016	2017	2018
Northern Spotted Owl Conservation			
Northern spotted owl activity centers	28	28	28
Northern spotted owl successfully fledged	2-Garcia 2-Big River	1-Garcia	1-Garcia 2-Big River
Forest acres set aside for northern spotted owl habitat	2,800	2,800	2,800
Coho Salmon and Steelhead Trout Conservation			
Approximate cubic yards of potential river sediment avoided through road improvement projects	5,240	10,019	22,394
California Department of Fish and Wildlife salmonid spawner survey reaches sampled	6	6	5
Numbers of logs added to streams to improve salmonid habitat	75 (East Branch Little North Fork Big River)	8 (Garcia River and Graphite Creek)	31 (Rockpile Creek, a tributary to Gualala River)
Water Quality			
Total number of instream remote water temperature monitoring stations on all forests (Gualala River Watershed Council provides monitoring on Gualala and Buckeye Creek)	83	83	83
Big River Forest lowest summer stream temperature (mean weekly average temperature)	52 (Lower Little North Fork Big River)	58 (Lower Two Log Creek)	57 (Lower Two Log Creek)
Big River Forest highest summer stream temperature Mean Weekly Average temperature	71 (Mainstream Big River at western property line)	68 (Mainstream Big River at western property line)	70 (Mainstream Big River at eastern property line)
Environmental Monitoring & Assessment Program reaches monitored per year on the Garcia River Forest by The Nature Conservancy and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (65 total reaches established)	6	2	4
Forest Economics			
Estimated local economic contribution (employment, contractors, purchases)	\$3 million	\$3.7 million	\$3.2 million
Volume of logs removed (net board feet)	1,879,230	3,381,430	2,698,450
Number of log trucks	434	786	654
Verified forest carbon offsets	325,383	311,361	Verification in progress
Miles driven by an average passenger car that are equal to above forest carbon offsets*	797,507,353	761,273,839	Verification in progress
Community Outreach			
Number of participants in the Pedestrian and Equestrian Stewardship Access Program on Salmon Creek, Big River	15	12	10
Public Tours	10	7	6

* The EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, used to convert the verified metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent to number of miles driven by an average car, can be found at www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator.

Project Background

At The Conservation Fund, we believe that well-managed forests can be both economically viable and ecologically sustainable. On California's North Coast, we continue to refine and demonstrate our pioneering approach to forest conservation: balancing 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 aim 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 2018. **Our success depends on the strong support of a diverse set of partners—neighbors, local businesses, government agencies and conservation groups. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for your interest and continued support!**

Habitat Restoration

Placing large wood in streams and upgrading our 500-plus miles of road infrastructure to reduce the amount of sediment that ends up in streams is a high priority for salmon habitat restoration. Maintaining roads is also critical for traveling through the forests 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 reinvested in improving roads. These projects are part of the decade-long process of improving our forest legacy roads, many of which predate modern standards.

One example of these important road projects is the Stewart Creek Sediment Reduction Project in the Gualala River Forest, which was implemented in partnership with Pacific Watershed Associates and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District using cost-share funding from the State Water Resources Control Board. Phase I of the project was completed in 2018 with the treatment of 46 stream crossings and 6.5 miles of road, preventing 7,420 cubic yards of sediment from entering Gualala River tributaries—the equivalent of 740 dump trucks of dirt!

Similarly, the Franchini Creek Sediment Reduction Project on the Buckeye Forest was implemented with cost-share funding from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The project was completed in 2018 with road upgrading and decommissioning at 19 sites totaling 1.09 miles



of roadway and preventing 3,927 cubic yards of road-related sediment from entering watercourses.

The Rockpile Creek Sediment Reduction & Instream Barrier Removal Project on the Gualala River Forest was also completed in 2018, using CDFW cost-share funding. Six stream crossings were decommissioned on 0.49 miles of near-stream road, and one stream crossing was upgraded on 0.25 miles of near-stream road, resulting in approximately 2,082 cubic yards of sediment savings. In addition, a large logjam that was impeding adult and juvenile salmonid migration in Horsethief Canyon Creek, a tributary to Middle Rockpile Creek, was removed, opening 0.83 miles of stream to anadromous fish. Part of the logjam, 31 pieces of large wood, were placed back in the channel to improve fish habitat.

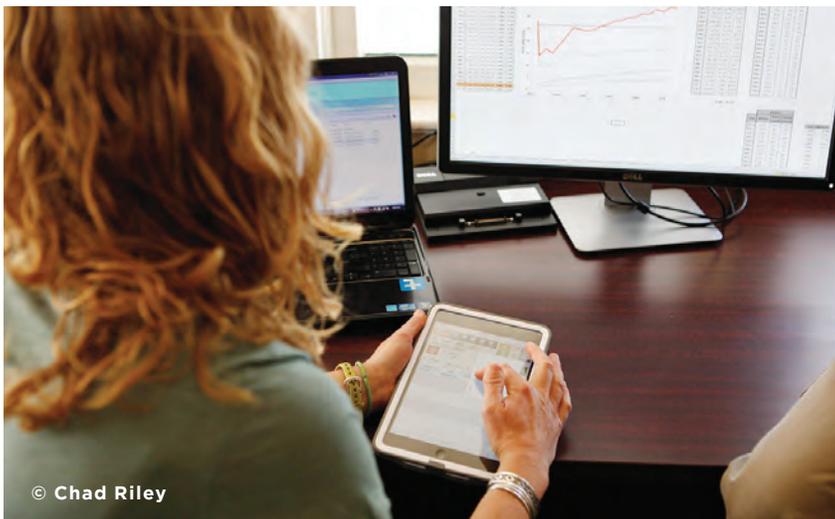
In addition, through the timber harvest plan process, the Fund upgraded approximately 12 miles of road through the Garcia River and Big River forests, preventing 9,310 cubic yards of sediment from entering waterways.

Timber Harvests

The total volume of sustainably harvested trees in 2018 was 2,698,450 net board feet from the Big River and Garcia River forests. This is slightly below our Allowable Annual Cut, as determined in our management plans and Option A Sustained Yield Plan. All redwood and Douglas fir logs were harvested by local logging companies and sold to sawmills in Mendocino and Sonoma counties. Our forest conservation would not be possible without a healthy forest industry; we thank the local sawmills, logging contractors and resource professionals who help make our program successful.



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Forest Certification

As they have every fall since 2007, third-party verifiers completed a field audit of the North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative to the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®-C001535) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) standards. This project, as well as our other forests throughout the country, were in overall conformance with the standards in 2018, receiving a perfect score. These are two of the 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/projects/north-coast-forest-conservation-initiative/north-coast-reference-documents.

Climate Action

Forest conservation is an important tool in the fight against climate change, and redwood forests store more carbon per acre than any other forest type. Our forests were among the first and largest to receive verification as a source of greenhouse gas reductions under the protocols of the Climate Action Reserve. The Fund has transitioned our projects to the California Air Resources Board (ARB) Cap-and-Trade Program—a key element of California’s climate plan that allows regulated entities to use allowances or offsets to meet a portion of their emission reduction obligations. The carbon revenue, combined with timber harvest revenue, allows us to let the trees grow while we restore water quality through sediment reduction projects and instream habitat improvement. Our carbon projects comply with state protocols and



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are certified through ARB-approved third-party verifiers to ensure that the carbon offset credits are real, verifiable, additional, enforceable and permanent. In 2018, 311,361 offset credits were issued for 2017 vintages for all four projects, and annual verifications will continue for the foreseeable future.

Public Access Program



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2018 was another successful year for our pedestrian access program in the Big River and Salmon Creek forests, as well as our equestrian program in the Salmon Creek Forest. These programs were launched in 2007 to provide access, cultivate stewardship and increase surveillance on the forests. Participants sign a pedestrian or equestrian permit to hike or ride for free on logging roads in the forests. In Big River, the Fund provides access to local community members to harvest firewood for home use. Since 2012 we have allowed limited permitted hunting for Mendocino County residents on land in the Garcia River Forest. In addition, multiple tours of all forests to review harvests and restoration projects are offered throughout the year. We are currently evaluating the potential for providing public access to Buckeye Forest. Please contact hnewberger@conservationfund.org to sign up for any of these public access opportunities.

Management Planning

The 10-year update of the Big River and Salmon Creek Forests Integrated Resource Management Plan is underway. The purpose of our forestwide plans is to ensure a consistent framework for the sustainable management of each forest. Management

plans are updated regularly and are available at www.conservationfund.org/projects/north-coast-forest-conservation-initiative/north-coast-reference-documents.



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Spotlight

Chelsea Andreozzi

Researcher Chelsea Andreozzi, a doctoral student in the environmental science, policy and management department at the University of California, Berkeley, spent time this summer in Salmon Creek Forest investigating the potential value of coastal redwood forests as climate refugia for bats, a mammal of high conservation concern. At least 12 species of bats, including seven California Species of Concern, inhabit coastal redwood ecosystems. Bats provide a valuable indicator for monitoring climate change and forest management impacts on redwood ecosystems because of their sensitivity to environmental stresses. Due to their physiology, bats have high rates of evaporative water loss, and bat reproductive success has been shown to decline dramatically when local water sources drop below a critical threshold. Consequently, recurrent drought episodes may lead to significant population declines. Forest management, including stand age, disturbance history and logging practices, likely also impacts bat species differently. **To better understand these drivers, researchers are investigating how the spatial distribution of**



Big Brown Bat
(*Eptesicus Fuscus*)
© Michael Durham/
Minden Pictures, BCI

bats is influenced by coastal marine fog-related climate patterns and forest management history. Acoustic monitors were placed in Salmon Creek Forest to survey bat populations, and researchers captured bats at individual sites by using mist nets to survey age, sex and reproductive status. This study has the potential to illustrate the value of coastal redwood forests as climate refugia and shed light on the importance of forest management practices to at-risk species.



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Farewells

Our longtime bookkeeper, Margery Hoppner, retired in January. Margery was with the North Coast program from the very beginning and helped set up a strong financial tracking system, including complicated log sales accounting, yield tax payments and carbon sales. Madison Thomson joined the Fund as his first job out of the University of California, Berkeley, and was a key part of our program for 10 years. Madison was offered his dream job, and he and his wife, Allison, have moved back to the Sierras, where they grew up. His commitment to improving the North Coast forests will be seen well into the future. We wish Madison and Margery the best on their next ventures.

Acknowledgments

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North Coast Advisory Group Members:

Larry Hanson, Forest Unlimited
 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:

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