

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE ANNOUNCES PROJECTS FUNDED TO PERMANENTLY PROTECT WORKING FOREST LANDSCAPES

Over \$10 million in grants awarded to support conservation easement acquisition and project development

Sacramento - The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has selected projects to receive over \$10 million in state funding for the acquisition of conservation easements for working forestlands. Conservation easements are voluntary legal agreements that permanently limits uses of the land to protect conservation values.

The California Forest Legacy Grants protect environmentally important forest land threatened with conversion to non-forest uses. Protection of California's forests through these grants ensures they will continue to provide such benefits as sustainable timber production, wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, watershed protection, carbon sequestration and storage, and open space.

“The awarding of the 2023 Forest Legacy grants demonstrates CAL FIRE’s commitment to sustainably protecting crucial California forest landscapes for generations to come,” said CAL FIRE Deputy Director of Resource Management, Matthew Reischman. “Working Forest Conservation Easements protect forest values by concentrating on sustainable forest practices that provide economic value from the land and encourage long-term land stewardship, including wildfire resilience.”

CAL FIRE grants fund the purchase of conservation easements and where appropriate, fee title of productive forest lands to encourage their long-term conservation. The primary tool CAL FIRE uses to conserve forest lands in perpetuity is the permanent Working Forest Conservation Easement (WFCE). A WFCE is an effective, cooperative legal agreement that permanently protects the important natural values of a forest property—fisheries, water supplies, wildlife habitat, and open space—while ensuring good forest management and sustainable flows of the wood products we need.

Eight conservation easement acquisition projects were submitted. In addition, approximately \$200,000 is being awarded to land trust organizations to help build capacity for future conservation projects. The \$200,000 is part of the 2022 Federal Inflation Reduction Act granted to CAL FIRE through the Federal Forest Legacy Program, a conservation program administered by the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with State agencies to encourage the protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases.

The Lost Coast Redwoods & Salmon Initiative is one example of a project that is permanently protecting California's forest landscape. This project will permanently protect the headwaters of three sub watersheds in coastal Humboldt County. All tributaries have been identified as key strongholds for federally threatened salmonid species in state and federal recovery plans. Protecting these lands will provide a conservation bridge linking over 140,000 acres of protected lands.

This project ensures 2,300 acres remain in long-term sustainable timber production under easement terms that align forest practices with key watershed and salmonid recovery goals.

Forest Legacy grants were funded through the legislature's Wildfire Resilience enhancements to the Governors budget in fiscal years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024.

CAL FIRE's Forest Legacy Program plans to release another solicitation in 2024.

To view the full list of grant recipients, click [HERE](#).

For more information on Forest Legacy Grants, visit [Fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/forest-legacy](https://fire.ca.gov/what-we-do/grants/forest-legacy).

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