

THE CONSERVATION FUND

America's Partner in Conservation

BIG RIVER AND SALMON CREEK FORESTS

**PROJECT LOCATION:
MENDOCINO COUNTY, CA**

Project size: 16,363 acres

Project cost: \$49 million

Species: Behren's silverspot butterfly, coho salmon, golden eagle, northern spotted owl, northwestern pond turtle, osprey, peregrine falcon, Point Arena mountain beaver, red tree vole, steelhead trout, yellow-legged frog

"These successful partnerships can save California's natural treasures and help the state's economic recovery - while leaving a legacy of land and water for generations to come."

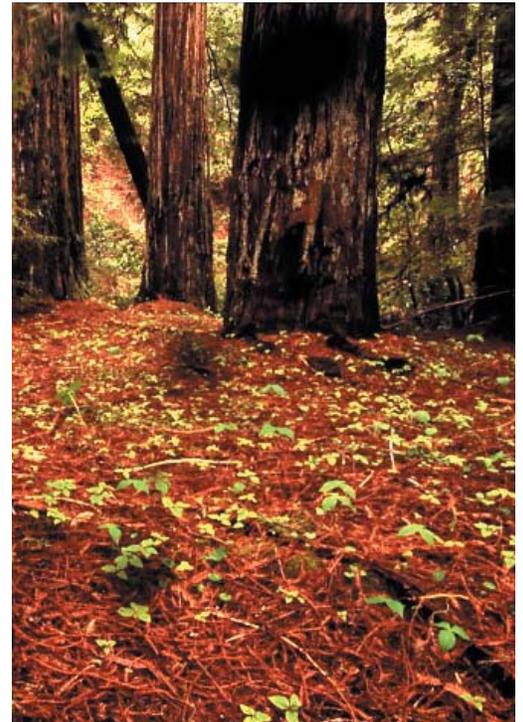
*Mike Chrisman,
Secretary of the
California Resources
Agency*

As part of its innovative North Coast Forestland Conservation Initiative, The Conservation Fund is strengthening its efforts in California's Redwood Region - in particular, the Big River and Salmon Creek Forests of Mendocino County. Indispensable habitat for fish such as coho salmon and steelhead trout, Big River and Salmon Creek flow through the vibrant green hills of Mendocino, framing a magnificent wilderness that harbors rare yellow-legged frogs and supports species such as the spotted owl, red tree vole and northwestern pond turtle. Located in the middle of California's coastal redwood region, the forests surrounding Big River and Salmon Creek consist primarily of redwoods, but visitors will also find Douglas fir, hemlock and bay myrtle. With nearly half of California's annual timber revenue coming from Mendocino and Humboldt counties, this region's forests are as essential to the timber industry as they are to wildlife. The forest products industry is vital to local economies, generating about 13 percent of personal income and 16 percent of jobs.

Although northern California's coastal forests have long supported abundant wildlife and a thriving economy, this region now finds itself at a crossroads. After decades of stability, forest ownership patterns are suddenly changing. With large timber companies divesting thousands of acres of forestland, the future of the region is at stake. A new vision for the Mendocino Coast must focus on the long-term preservation and enhancement of the region's economic, cultural and ecological health.

A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

The face of California's North Coast is changing dramatically - presenting communities and conservationists alike with a unique opportunity. Thousands of acres of key forestland that for decades have provided an economic base for communities, protected rivers and streams, and safeguarded habitat for wildlife are now for sale to the highest bidder. Real estate investment trusts and other financial investors are anxious to convert the magnificent natural areas of the North Coast into rural subdivisions and profitable vineyards - making





the threat to the ecological and economic integrity of Northern California's vast coastal forest tracts imminent. The California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection predicts that more than 800,000 acres of private forestland will be developed by 2050. Once fragmented, these magnificent forests will never again be reassembled. The race to purchase this land presages a showdown between real estate developers and sophisticated conservationists who have become formidable players by developing strategic alliances.

A SOLUTION

To permanently protect the North Coast's natural resources, The Conservation Fund, in collaboration with the Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc., has acquired more than 16,000 acres of the most vulnerable forestland in Mendocino County, known as the Salmon Creek and Big River tracts. The properties include high-priority aquatic habitat essential for the recovery of coho salmon and connect to existing public lands, including three state parks, a state forest and a state recreation area, to create a 97,000-acre wildlife corridor along California's North Coast. This land will be managed as a working forest, subject to sustainable forestry guidelines.

Beside preventing forest subdivision, enhancing water quality, fisheries and wildlife habitat, and preserving local jobs in two high-priority watersheds in one of the most vulnerable parts of the North Coast, this

project will also establish a model for innovative and cost-effective forest conservation throughout the region and beyond, at a scale never before seen in the western United States. By focusing on collaboration rather than confrontation, The Fund is working together with timber owners to protect a vast array of benefits for generations to come.

