



# Redwood Forest Foundation

Spring 2009

## Welcome

We are pleased to publish our first Redwood Forest Foundation Newsletter and launch our membership campaign.

Over the past year, RFFI has been exploring ways to reach out to residents of the Redwood Region and enable them to help us implement the "RFFI Model" of Community Working Forestry. While the majority of those interested in RFFI cannot be directly involved in our projects, we envision the membership campaign and its semi-annual newsletter as a vehicle for all our supporters to connect with RFFI and become involved to whatever degree they desire.

Please consider supporting our activities by joining us as RFFI members, contributing to our endowment fund, or through one of the many other opportunities available on our website. Your contribution will help sustain our innovative approach to preserving environment, jobs and rural communities. We hope you find our news and articles of interest and invite you to join us on a field trip. Enjoy!

### Don Kemp

President, Board of Directors

To join RFFI,  
return the attached envelope  
or visit our website:  
[www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org)

Hold this date:

RFFI's Annual Meeting is scheduled for  
**Saturday, July 11, 2009.**

Information available at [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).  
Invitations will be sent out shortly.

## Community Outreach

by Art Harwood, Executive Director

In response to suggestions received at a number of community meetings, RFFI has committed to forming three working groups specific to the management of the Usal Redwood Forest. These include:

- a group to address Tan Oak and herbicides
- Native American Cultural issues
- Recreational Access

Anyone interested in participating in these committees should contact RFFI at [info@RFFI.org](mailto:info@RFFI.org).

RFFI is also initiating local and regional efforts seeking to link all aspects of the community in a holistic manner that incorporates economic, environmental and social equity into all deliberations. The overriding goal is to create varied connections and conversations that result in systemic and sustainable solutions.



**Art Harwood**

*In August 2008 Art was appointed  
Executive Director of RFFI*

## USAL NEWS

Since purchasing the Usal Redwood Forest in 2007, the Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) has focused on fulfilling our mission of safeguarding economic values and ecological integrity in perpetuity. We understand that our success depends on our ability to be a patient owner of a young forest whose qualities have been seriously affected by past management. For the first few decades, projected harvest levels will be minimal (relying on RFFI's base conservation scenario). Our priorities include:

- Sale of a conservation easement to The Conservation Fund to implement our base conservation plan and keep Usal a working forest (see [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org) for details).
- Develop a strategic restoration plan that will help RFFI set priorities, better understand the environmental conditions at Usal, and design appropriate silvicultural and management strategies.
- Develop a sustained yield plan to address state-mandated sustainability requirements, which will enable RFFI to conduct timber management and restoration activities.
- Secure Forest Stewardship Council certification for Usal in the next four years.

In 2008, we initiated several restoration projects that address both economic and environmental concerns, including:

- Decommission a degraded road system, which addresses watershed erosion and sedimentation issues.
- Establish a fuel break during winter months to address timberland fire risks and seasonal employment needs.
- Initiate spawning salmon and steelhead counts on Anderson Creek, a tributary to the Eel River and an important spawning stream, adding information to the regional fisheries database.

In future newsletters, we look forward to sharing more detail on our restoration and forest management activities, as well as announcing field trips and opportunities for member-

participation in restoration projects at our first community forest at Usal.

### **Candy Skarlatos**

Chair of Usal Redwood Forest Management Committee

*On our website only:*

Stephen Levesque, Area Manager at Campbell Timberland Management in Fort Bragg, with whom RFFI has contracted to manage its 50,000 acres of Usal Redwood Forest, was interviewed by Heidi Knott and Louisa Morris in January, 2009. The interview explores some of the unique forest management challenges of this project. See the Newsletter section of [www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org).



### **IN MEMORIAM:**

**Sharon Tucker** believed the environment and the economy could both be sustained if we put our minds and hearts to work making changes. As she sustained me in hard times with her encouragement and laughter, I would like to honor her memory with a donation to the RFFI endowment fund in order to sustain RFFI's work.

Candy Skarlatos  
RFFI Board member

# What's All This About Conservation Easements?

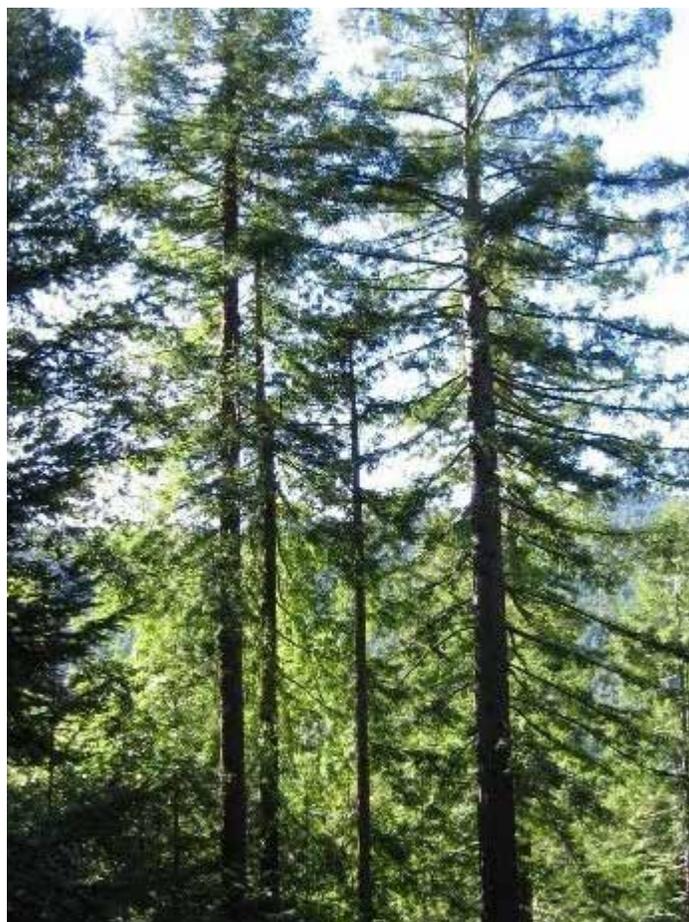
Tom Tuchmann, President, US Forest Capital

The conservation movement began in the late 1800's with a simple premise that certain areas deserved to be protected and/or managed for their natural, resource or open space values. This led to the establishment of a system of National Forests, National Parks, Fish and Wildlife Refuges and other public lands and parks which are the envy of many across the world. These select areas are considered a part of our national heritage and held in trust for our citizens and future generations.

While public ownership provides appropriate protection for some sites, its costs are substantial, especially when applied across a broad landscape. Public ownership can reduce or revoke the control of resources for those whose livelihoods are tied to the land and in some cases can deprive local communities of needed property tax revenues. Moreover, in the case of forest and agricultural lands, it is much more difficult to pay the high price tag of large working properties, especially when prices have been driven up by adjacent development values. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there are different levels of conservation, and in many cases, it just does not make sense for a public agency to buy the land outright when what environmental and industry supporters really want is to keep working lands productive and in private hands.

Over the last two decades, landowners and conservationists have begun working together to use conservation easements as a means to address some of these issues. According to the Land Trust Alliance, a conservation easement (also referred to as a conservation restriction) is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a nonprofit or government organization that permanently limits *certain* uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. Conservation easements are based on the premise that a landowner's rights of ownership consist of a bundle of individual rights — like a "bundle of sticks" — including the right to develop, farm,

cut timber, or use property in other ways as governed by local, state and federal laws and land-use regulations. A conservation easement typically separates some of the "sticks" from this bundle of rights, one of which is often the right to develop or subdivide.



While conservation easements can be donated, they are often sold on larger properties in order to compensate the landowner for giving up certain economic rights to the land. For example, a property owner may sell an easement in return for giving up the right to develop the property or sell portions of the property. In another example, a property owner may sell an easement in return for giving up the right to pursue certain otherwise permissible forestry practices on the land. In either case, the easement seller is

financially compensated for restricting his future economic activities on the land.

The price of an easement is determined by taking the commercial value of a property (assuming no restrictions) and subtracting the value of the property with a conservation easement in place. For example, let's say an appraiser estimates the commercial value of a property is \$20 million and the value of a property without development rights to be \$12.5 million. In this case, it would cost the buyer \$7.5 million to purchase the easement and prevent the possibility of future development. (A landowner can also donate the easement and take a tax deduction for a charitable contribution.) The easement buyer would have the right and responsibility to monitor the property to make sure their acquired rights were protected, and the landowner could

continue to manage and even sell the property at their own discretion, so long as the terms of the easement are not violated.

The sale of a conservation easement is an important part of RFFI's effort to protect the Usal Redwood Forest. Easement restrictions are "in perpetuity" and provide protection beyond any individual owner, even RFFI. In RFFI's case, the funds received through the sale of such an easement will be used to reduce the debt on the property; thereby permitting RFFI more latitude in its silvicultural practices. RFFI has chosen to sell the easement to The Conservation Fund, a national group that specializes in acquiring such easements, and we are currently in the process of working with the Fund and state funding agencies to determine the value of selling certain development and forestry rights.

Be sure to check the online version of articles at  
[www.RFFI.org](http://www.RFFI.org)  
for additional information, web links, maps and more!

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