
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Agreement Made on Usal Redwood Forest Conservation Easement CAL FIRE to Monitor the nearly 50,000 acre Working Forest

Sacramento - An agreement with the Redwood Forest Foundation Inc. (RFFI) has transferred a conservation easement to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) of nearly 50,000 acres of the Usal Redwood Forest. The agreement was reached in December, 2014 for CAL FIRE to assume responsibility for monitoring a conservation easement on the 49,576 acre Usal Redwood Forest in Mendocino and southern Humboldt counties.

“The acquisition of the Usal conservation easement will provide CAL FIRE with a great opportunity to showcase the importance of maintaining working forested landscapes,” said Duane Shintaku, CAL FIRE’s deputy director for Resource Management. “These lands will demonstrate how forests can provide for clean water, wildlife habitat, recreation, wood products and increasing carbon sequestration to offset the negative impacts of climate change.”

CAL FIRE has many years of experience with managing working forests conservation easements under its Forest Legacy Program. Working forest conservation easements encourage active forest management, which increases the forest’s resiliency and health, increases carbon sequestration, mitigates climate change, improves growth, and contributes jobs and revenue to the local economy.

In addition to becoming a site of forest restoration and improved wildlife and fish habitat, the Usal Redwood Forest is a prolific carbon storage machine. Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) stands are known to have the largest measured biomass per acre, making them a tree species that is highly desirable for long-term carbon sequestration projects. RFFI is working with the Climate Action Reserve and the California Air Resources Board to verify and register the significant amounts of carbon that will be sequestered in perpetuity as a result of their forest management. CAL FIRE will ensure that the conservation easement requirements, including the carbon sequestration goals, are met. CAL FIRE, in the role of conservation easement holder, will ensure that land subdivisions never occur on this property.

With an area almost twice the size of San Francisco, the Usal Redwood Forest is the largest working forest conservation easement in California. Recently Usal Forest managers began an ambitious “Bio-char” project, turning waste woods into a valuable soil amendment. Bio-char is a type of charcoal that helps sequester carbon and therefore has the potential to mitigate climate change. This unique project will provide economic and social benefits to the community, and significant environmental benefits such as clean air, water, and wildlife habitat.

For more information on CAL FIRE’s Forest Legacy Program visit www.fire.ca.gov.

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