

# REDWOOD FOREST FOUNDATION, INC

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## JOB OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR PRESIDENT/CEO OF REDWOOD FOREST FOUNDATION, INC AND USAL REDWOOD FOREST COMPANY LLC, its wholly owned subsidiary

The Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc. (RFFI) was conceived out of the “timber wars” of the 1990’s. Brought together by a common goal, a diverse group of activists, timber interests and community leaders set about creating a new model - a community working forest for the long term benefit of the communities reliant on those assets. Working together in deep appreciation of the intrinsic and economic value of redwood forests, they developed a vision and a new nonprofit framework that would own and manage forests for timber production while returning them to a healthier state and retaining high quality jobs in the process. Honoring the diverse voices of the community, they committed to sustainable principles that carefully balance social and ecological considerations with the long-term economic health of the region. Utilizing commercial sector funding, RFFI was able to acquire a 50,000 acre forest and retain local management committed to stewarding the land sustainably. RFFI’s mission is recognized as a unique and powerful idea for community-based resource management. Now RFFI is actively working to ensure the success of this idea.

### Position Overview

The President, reporting to the Board of Directors through the Chair of the Board, is responsible for managing and leading RFFI. RFFI is looking for an experienced leader who can synthesize the long-term mission and vision of RFFI into an operating strategy and execute a plan that will build financial support and strengthen the organization on all levels. In partnership with our experienced forestry staff and the committed and active working board, the President will lead the development and execution of strategic objectives. Acting upon the policies and goals set forth by the board, the President will be the primary agent for building the organization including growing strategic relationships, developing and directing resources and managing operations.

Key to the success is the ability to operate as a trusted partner to a diverse set of stakeholders and partners. In particular, the President will need to understand and honor the unique configuration of conservation, timber and community interests that brought about the formation of RFFI in order to successfully negotiate the deeply felt commitment to the values of each voice.

RFFI currently operates with a forestry staff of five and 3.5 additional FTE supporting programs, partnerships, fundraising, communication and finances. It will take a well-rounded leader equally capable of managing complex finances and operations, building financial support, and connecting community strategy to daily work. The successful candidate will have exceptional communications skills, strong operational skills and a deep respect and passion for developing RFFI’s vision.

### Background

It took ten years of perseverance, but in 2007, RFFI entered a bid to purchase the 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest (Usal), which was on the market and was threatened by forest fragmentation. Seizing this opportunity to create a community forest, the Foundation purchased the property through an

innovative financing structure. The original \$65 million purchase was structured in three loans with the expectation that the sale of a conservation easement would both ensure its future as a working forest and pay down a portion of the debt. After some delay, in 2011, RFFI was able to conclude a conservation sale that sold 957 acres to the Save the Redwoods League and received funding for a conservation easement now held by CalFire on the balance of 49,000 acres.

The property is typical of coastal forests that have suffered the impact of intensive industrial logging for over 100 years. The historical removal of overstory trees has left hardwoods dominant on much of the land. The long-term vision for the property is a redwood-dominated forest, however converting from the current hardwood dominated structure will require decades of careful management. Usal began hauling logs in 2012 and maintains a consistent, albeit low harvest volume annually allowing the forest inventory to recover from decades of even-aged management and neglect. In 2015 RFFI received certification for Usal under the conservation protocols of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)® and in 2020, RFFI and URFC received the Forest Stewardship Council ® Leadership award.

RFFI is also doing its part to address climate change. In 2015, Usal Redwood Forest became the largest carbon sequestration project registered with the California Air Resources Board as part of the CA Cap and Trade program. Revenue from the sale of forest carbon offsets has generated more than \$46 million, used to fund operations, retire bank debt and restore watersheds.

The Usal Redwood Forest has tremendous potential as a community asset. The property is rich in fishbearing streams, diverse wildlife and plant species, and archeological sites. Since 2007, RFFI has been actively restoring the property. In partnership with many other organizations, nearly 26 miles of streamside roads have been decommissioned while others have been upgraded to reduce erosion; 12 miles of salmon habitat has been restored and surveys to assess fish populations are being conducted. Shaded fuel breaks have been established along ridgelines to reduce the risk of wildfire and RFFI in partnerships with local tribal representatives have worked together to form the Chinquapin Springs Acorn Grove which will be used for acorn gathering by local Native Americans.

While many long-term benefits of RFFI's management are decades away, the successful placement of the conservation easement, the impact of restoration projects, the revenue generated by carbon offset sales and the continuation of timber harvests which provide local employment have tangible benefits today.

RFFI has been working diligently to assess and determine ways to manage the forest in a manner consistent with our principles and retain the positive working relationships they have with the community and their financial partners. Balancing the needs of the financial model while honoring the various community voices, will require a careful listener, an expert communicator and an entrepreneurial spirit undaunted by complex issues. While technically almost 25 years old, RFFI is still working to realize it's vision. Continuing to build its programmatic work, community partnerships and outreach as well as financial support is critical. The current strategic priorities include:

- ❖ Integrating community, scientific and indigenous knowledge into our forest management with specific objectives on fire resiliency, carbon capture, climate mitigation and habitat restoration in addition to improved forest productivity.

- ❖ Redefining the relationship between communities dependent on forests and the ownership and management of the timberlands that surround them by deepening connections, strengthening partnerships and expanding roles.
- ❖ Strengthening of RFFI/URFC financial position to allow for sustain management of the Usal Forest as an outstanding example of community driven forestry and a model for other forested lands.

The current operations for RFFI are funded through a combination revenue generated through the sale of carbon offsets and philanthropic support. Programmatic development has been hindered by the need to develop additional philanthropic investment and, if practical, market-based funding streams. The current budget is approximately \$450,000, not including the forestry operation, and staff includes the CEO, Business Manager and administrative support as well as part time contractors supporting fundraising and communication. While key relationships are dispersed throughout the Redwood Region, we prefer this position to be located in Mendocino or Humboldt Counties. A regular and routine presence is likely needed in Fort Bragg, California, where Usal Forest and the forestry staff are located. This past year the board has convened via zoom, however building strong cohesive board relationships necessitates meeting face to face periodically and at the moment, Fort Bragg is centrally located for convening board members.