

REDWOOD FOREST FOUNDATION, INC

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MEDIA RELEASE

Redwood Forest Foundation

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Redwood Forest Foundation Finalizes Conservation of 50,000-Acre Usal Redwood Forest Protects California's Largest Non-Profit-Owned Working Community Forest.

Summary: The Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI), a non-profit organization that acquires and restores depleted forestlands for the purpose of establishing sustainable working community forests, announced that they closed a landmark conservation transaction on their 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest in California on October 27, 2011. RFFI and their conservation partners are protecting one of the largest non-profit owned 'working forests' in America- a forest landscape that covers a land area almost twice the size of the city of San Francisco.

Dateline and Lead: Mendocino, CA Nov 5, 2011 The Redwood Forest Foundation, a conservation organization that acquires and restores depleted forestlands for the purpose of establishing sustainable community forests, announced that they closed a landmark conservation transaction that permanently protects the 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest.

Release: The Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI), a non-profit organization that acquires and restores depleted forestlands for the purpose of establishing sustainable working community forests, announced that they closed a landmark conservation transaction on their 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest on October 27, 2011. The Foundation sold a conservation easement on the 49,576-acre Usal Redwood Forest to The Conservation Fund and 957-acre coastal parcel, known as Shade Dell, to Save the Redwoods League. RFFI and their conservation partners are protecting one of the largest non-profit owned 'working forests' in America- a forest landscape, that covers a land area almost twice the size of the city of San Francisco. The ambitious and complex transaction was completed with the support of a strong coalition of national and local elected officials, conservation organizations, industry leaders and committed regional residents.

The Redwood Forest Foundation (RFFI) will continue to own and manage the Usal Redwood Forest for the economic and ecological benefit of the region. This easement sets standards in place that protect the forest in perpetuity, regardless of its ownership. The easement establishes a fundamental conservation scenario that prohibits subdivision and development. The terms of the easement impose a 2.9% inventory harvest limitation; they require forest stewardship certification and transitioning to uneven-aged management over a 50-year period. These permanent standards will be monitored by The Conservation Fund as the easement holder. Over

time RFFI hopes to grow both the conservation practices and economic benefits of the Usal Redwood Forest, located on the Mendocino-Humboldt county line, as it makes good on its financial obligations.

The Conservation Fund acquired the easement with a \$19,500,000 grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board and an additional \$500,000 grant. This transaction along with the previously approved \$5.5 million Shady Dell parcel sale to Save the Redwoods League insures that Usal Redwood Forest will remain a working community forest. The sale of the Shady Dell parcel assures permanent protection of a 957 acre coastal parcel that contains windswept, medieval 'candelabra' redwoods and public access to the Lost Coast, the longest roadless area in the lower 48 states. This momentous transaction assures that Usal Redwood Forest will remain, in perpetuity, a working community forest for the economic and environmental benefit of the fish, wildlife and humans that reside there. RFFI's mission includes their commitment to investing the excess revenue that will eventually be generated from the ongoing sustainable harvest back into the community.

RFFI applauds California's Wildlife Conservation Board and California Coastal Conservancy strong support for this project. Their support for this innovative model of forest financing and management conserves a large working redwood forest that holds promise for regional and global impact due to the climate change implications of large landscape conservation, economic impact and replicability of the model. The transaction benefited enormously from the skill, leadership and diligence of staff at The Conservation Fund and the Save the Redwoods League.

RFFI relied on US Forest Capital for expert guidance throughout the transaction; they served as lead advisor on these complex conservation transactions. The Walker Foundation of Pittsburg, PA who provided funding for this expert consultation. The Campbell Group, the local timberland manager, has been integrally involved in the transaction from its outset. RFFI is grateful to all of the supporters, who worked hard and tirelessly in support of the easement.

RFFI has just passed another major milestone in carrying out their mission to acquire and manage redwood forest land for the ecological, economic and social benefit of the region. RFFI, as an organization, will receive no funding from this transaction. The funding received from this transaction will be used to reduce the debt on the property. It is allowing RFFI to carry-out an innovative financial strategy that utilizes private capital to leverages public dollars for landscape-level conservation investments that benefit the common good. RFFI is a grass-roots conservation organization that works to assure the regional benefit, relying exclusively on volunteer labor and private grants and donations. For more information about this landmark transaction and the Redwood Forest Foundation, please visit www.rffi.org.

Photo links: Visit this page for high resolution photos: all photos by Barrett Walker

<http://walker-foundation.org/net/org/project.aspx?s=92963.0.0.5316&projectid=92963>

- (1) Roosevelt Elk at Usal Creek, coastal redwood forest in the background.
- (2) Checking out the map at a Usal Forest Overlook on the WRP Road in Usal Redwood Forest- Pacific Ocean in the background

(3) Redwoods that date back to Medieval Age in the Enchanted Forest-part of the 975 acre parcel purchased by Save the Redwoods League