



FORESTLAND STEWARDSHIP

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY FORESTS

Forests have a role in climate solutions

Can forest landowners receive compensation for the benefits provided by their forests? That possibility is being explored as part of a suite of solutions to the threat of global climate change.

Among their many gifts, forests provide vital habitat for animals and plants, affect water quantity and quality, supply wood products, and lift our spirits with recreational opportunities and peaceful surroundings.

Now add another generally overlooked benefit: forests are critical storehouses of carbon. Trees have the ability to take carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas, out of the atmosphere and store it for long periods of time.

Forests play a key role in maintaining a stable climate. Worldwide, forest loss is a significant contributing factor to global climate change.

Here in California, the connection between forests and climate change is becoming widely recognized. That relationship is one of many avenues being developed to ameliorate the threat of climate change. This could provide opportunities and incentives for forest landowners who maintain and expand the forest carbon stocks (e.g., grow trees).

In this issue we'll look at the relationship between forests and global climate change, where the discussion is going, and how forest landowners can get involved.

The connection between forests and climate change is being explored as a potential way to ameliorate global climate change.

This could provide opportunities and incentives for forest landowners.

*Photo by The Pacific Forest Trust/
Jon Remuval*

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Steve Hackett: Forest Steward of the Year

Jeff Calvert

I met Steve Hackett in 2001 when he applied to the Forest Legacy Program (FLP) for state funding to purchase a conservation easement for the family ranch near Ferndale in Humboldt Co.

Four generations of Hacketts have managed and lived on Howe Creek Ranch. It was Steve's intense desire and his family's wishes that the ranch be maintained and managed for its value in timber and cattle production.

(below) Steve Hackett discusses the history and management challenges of his 3800-acre ranch during a field trip to the Howe Creek Ranch.



Steve points out others who share credit for his accomplishments: (left) Jill Hackett, and (below) Maya Conrad, Northcoast Regional Land Trust boardmember; Jeff Calvert, Forest Legacy Coordinator; and Francis Carrington, Humboldt County landowner with a FLP conservation easement.



A conservation easement would allow the family to reduce the debt and tax value of the land and preserve the ranch. But conservation easements were not common among the ranching community. Most of his neighbors were very skeptical of this approach, which they viewed as a "sell-out" to the government.

In 2002, Howe Creek Ranch conservation easement closed with Pacific Forest Trust as the grantee. Recognizing the need for a local land trust, Steve and others created the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in 2003.

Through discussions with Steve, formerly skeptical friends and neighbors were convinced that the only way to save their ranches from development and provide for future generations was through a conservation easement. Steve helped formulate the Six Rivers to the Sea Forest Legacy Project to provide a blanket strategic plan for multiple landowners. Through this project, funding was leveraged to purchase conservation easements over numerous tracts.

The success of conservation of working forest properties in Humboldt County is largely due to the vision, dedication, and hard work of Steve Hackett. He has been an effective champion of working lands conservation. We are pleased to name him the 2007 Forest Steward of the Year.

To nominate someone for the Forest Steward of the Year Award, call 1-800-738-TREE.

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