

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA
SIERRA NEVADA CONSERVANCY**

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program Safe Drinking Water,
Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and
Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

Applicant: Pacific Forest Trust

Project Title: Campstool Ranch and Working Forest

Subregion: South Central

County: Calaveras

SNC Funding: \$ 350,000

Total Project Cost: \$4,063,005

Application Number: 489

Final Score: 90

PROJECT SCOPE

Pacific Forest Trust will acquire a conservation easement on the 2,168 acre Campstool Ranch and Working Forest located in Calaveras County, in the Upper Calaveras Watershed. The easement will permanently protect and enhance the property's working timberlands and oak woodlands, well-managed cattle ranching, historic sites and important watershed resources. These goals will be accomplished through easement terms that specifically meet the goals and mission of Proposition 84 and SNC. The SNC grant funds would be used solely towards the purchase price of the conservation easement under option with the landowner.

The easement will limit development and subdivision of this property. Subdivision often results in landscape and habitat fragmentation, if planned development occurs. Over the last 20 years, Calaveras County has experienced significant parcel fragmentation and a loss of its large ranches. As mentioned above, the Campstool Ranch is one of the largest private forests left in Calaveras County. The Ranch sits next to a subdivision and has 37 different adjacent landowners. On the other side, the Ranch is adjacent to a 643-acre reserve owned by the BLM. This easement would have landscape level benefits by permanently protecting the connectivity of wildlife habitat between the property and the BLM reserve and providing a buffer against encroaching residential development.

The easement will also limit road building and other land uses that can increase impermeable surfaces, concentrate flows and generate sediment in riparian areas. The landowners will dedicate the property's water rights to approved uses on the ranch and in-stream flows. These terms will provide protection to the eight springs and 5.8 miles of streams on the property, including 3 miles of the North Fork of the Calaveras River,

which flows into the New Hogan Reservoir and San Joaquin River Delta, providing drinking and irrigation water to Valley farmers. Public benefits from the project include improved water quality and preservation of habitat connectivity.

In terms of allowable development, one additional home may be constructed under the easement, with the remaining two residential envelopes being null and void. This will result in no more than four homes on the property; the three existing residences in addition to the one allowed on one-of-three prospective homesites. A small sawmill is authorized for use under the easement terms as well, which is consistent with the management planning that has been put in place in partnership with the landowner, NRCS, and the Trust..

The majority of the land covered by the terms of the easement is currently under a Williamson Act Contract, with only 18.8 acres not being encumbered under the Williamson Act. The Williamson Act has, in recent years, come under threat as a result of fiscal challenges at the State and County level, and therefore future protection is less than certain. The zoning of the subject property is identified as a mix of “Ag Preserve – Mineral Extraction,” “General Ag – Mineral Extraction,” and “Residential – Ag,” all of which are consistent with the Williamson Act Contracts which encumber the property.

The grantee intends to acquire matching funds from the Wildlife Conservation Board to cover the remaining cost of the conservation easement.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES	TIMELINE
Sign Grant Agreement with SNC	December 2012
Submit Project Documentation (Easement, Baseline Report, Monitoring Plan, Preliminary Title Report) to SNC and Wildlife Conservation Board for Review/Approval	December 2012 – May 2012
Submit progress report to SNC	June 2013
Complete Escrow Instructions for Closing w/ SNC and WCB review and approval	December 2013
Submit progress report to SNC	December 2013
Close and Record Conservation Easement	March 2013
Submit Final Report to SNC	April 2013
FINAL PAYMENT/FINAL PAYMENT REQUEST	June 1, 2014

PROJECT COSTS

PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES	TOTAL SNC FUNDING
Direct*	\$350,000
Indirect**	0
Administrative***	0
GRAND TOTAL	\$350,000

- * Direct: Direct costs are expenses necessary to acquire, construct, or to adapt property to a new or different use, or to improve property including land, buildings and equipment. The property/expense must have a useful life longer than one year.
- ** Indirect: Expenses involve ongoing operations, repair or maintenance costs, regardless of whether the repair or maintenance may last more than one year.
- *** Administrative: Expenses associated with the administration of a project and may not exceed 15 percent of the total SNC grant request for direct and indirect costs.

PROJECT LETTERS SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

- Support
 - Senator Ted Gaines
 - Assemblywoman Kristin Olsen
 - Calaveras County Supervisor Steve Wilensky
 - Thomas Tinsley, CalFire
 - Randy Metzger Jr., County Assessor (retired)
 - Matt McNicol, NRCS
 - Will Dorrell, Registered Professional Forester

PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

There are four Performance Measures common to all grants. In addition, grantees are required to include between one and three project-specific measures. Performance Measures listed here represent those proposed by applicants and may be modified through further discussion with SNC staff.

- Acres of land conserved (projected at 2,168 acres)
- Linear Feet of Stream Bank Protected (projected at 30,624 linear feet)