

THE
CONSERVATION FUND

**North Coast Forest
Conservation Initiative**

2019 Annual Review



Caspar Index

Named after our North Coast hometown, this is a customized index to share some of the measurements we track. Past North Coast Reviews are available at conservationfund.org.

	2017	2018	2019
Water Quality			
Total number of instream remote water temperature monitoring stations on all forests (Gualala River Watershed Council provides monitoring on Gualala River and Buckeye Creek)	83	83	83
Big River Forest lowest summer stream temperature (mean weekly average temperature)	58 (Lower Two Log Creek)	57 (Lower Two Log Creek)	59 (Lower Two Log Creek)
Big River Forest highest summer stream temperature (mean weekly average temperature)	68 (Mainstream Big River at western property line)	70 (Mainstream Big River at eastern property line)	69 (Mainstream Big River at eastern property line)
Environmental Monitoring & Assessment Program reaches monitored per year on the Garcia River by The Nature Conservancy and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (65 total reaches established)	2	4	5
Forest Economics			
Estimated local economic contribution (employment, contractors, purchases)	\$3.7 million	\$3.2 million	\$3.5 million
Volume of logs removed (gross board feet)	3,381,430	2,698,450	2,947,360
Number of log truckloads to mill	786	654	618
Verified forest carbon offsets	311,361	379,774	Verification in progress
Miles driven by an average passenger car* that are equal to above forest carbon offsets	761,273,839	942,367,246	Verification in progress
Community Outreach			
Number of participants in the Pedestrian and Equestrian Stewardship Access Program on Salmon Creek, Big River	12	10	10
Public tours	7	6	5
Northern Spotted Owl Conservation			
Northern spotted owl activity centers	28	28	28
Northern spotted owls successfully fledged	1-Garcia	1- Garcia 2- Big River	1- Garcia 1- Big River
Forest acres set aside for northern spotted owl habitat	2,800	2,800	2,800
Coho Salmon & Steelhead Trout Conservation			
Approximate cubic yards of sediment saved through road improvement projects	10,019	22,394	1,082
California Department of Fish and Wildlife salmonid spawner survey reaches sampled	6	5	6
Numbers of logs added to streams to improve salmonid habitat	8 -Garcia River and Graphite Creek)	31 - Rockpile Creek 127 - Signal Creek 78 - Olsen Gulch	0 (but we have plans for future projects!)

*The EPA's Greenhouse Gas Equivalencies Calculator, used to convert the verified metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent to number of miles driven by an average car, can be found at www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator.

Project Background

At The Conservation Fund, we believe that well-managed forests can be both economically viable and ecologically sustainable. On California's North Coast, we continue to refine and demonstrate our pioneering approach to forest conservation: balancing environmental restoration and stewardship with the economic imperatives of large-scale forest ownership and the desire to sustain the local timber economy.

Since 2004, with the help of our public and private partners, we have protected more than 120,000 acres of forestland as part of our North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative. Of these protected forests, we own and manage more than 74,000 acres in Mendocino and Sonoma counties. We aim to demonstrate that large, understocked tracts of coastal forest can be returned to ecological and economic viability through patient, adaptive management by a nonprofit organization, in partnership with private and public entities and community stakeholders. We are making conservation work for America.

We invite you to learn more about the major accomplishments, challenges and activities of our program in 2019. **Our success depends on the strong support of a diverse set of partners—donors, neighbors, local businesses, government agencies and conservation groups. None of this would be possible without you. Thank you for your interest and continued support!**



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Habitat Restoration

Placing large wood in streams and upgrading our 500-plus miles of road infrastructure to reduce the amount of sediment that ends up in streams is a high priority for salmon habitat restoration. Maintaining roads is also critical for traveling through the forests for log hauling, stream restoration projects, botanical surveys and northern spotted owl surveys. A significant portion of the money we make through timber and carbon sales is reinvested in improving roads. These projects are part of the decadelong process of improving our forest legacy roads, many of which predate modern standards.

One example of these important road projects is the Stewart Creek Sediment Reduction Project in the Gualala River Forest, which was implemented in partnership with Pacific Watershed Associates and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District using cost-share funding from the State Water Resources Control Board. Phase I of the project was completed in 2019 with a project total of 23 stream crossings upgraded, 23 stream crossings decommissioned, and 6.5 miles of road treated, preventing 7,480 cubic yards of sediment from entering Gualala River tributaries—the equivalent of 780 dump trucks of dirt! Phase II of the project began in 2019 with road drainage treatment of 2.4 miles of road and 800 cubic yards of sediment savings.

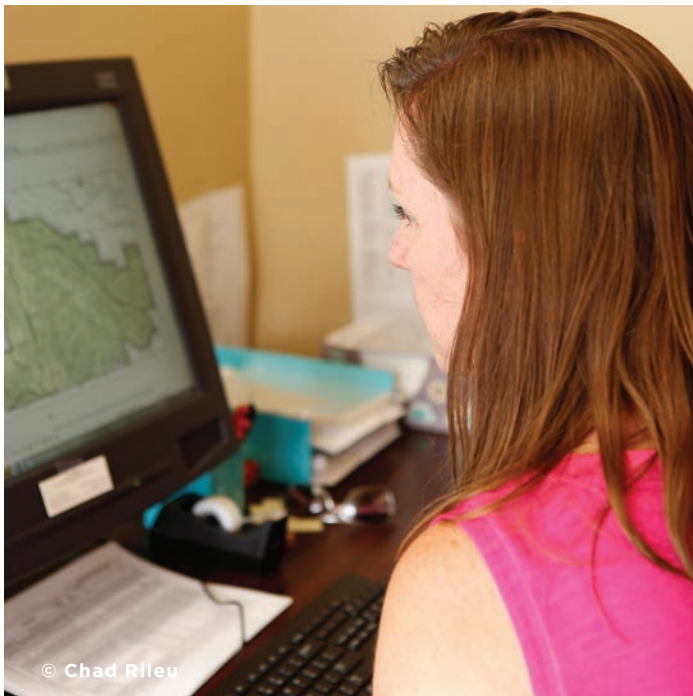
In addition, through the timber harvest plan process, the Fund upgraded approximately 7 miles of road through the forests, preventing 222 cubic yards of sediment from entering waterways.

Timber Harvests

The total volume of sustainably harvested trees in 2019 was 2,947,360 gross board feet from the Salmon Creek, Gualala River and Garcia River forests. This is slightly below our Allowable Annual Cut, as determined in our management plans and Option A Sustained Yield Plan. All redwood and Douglas fir logs were harvested by local logging companies and sold to sawmills in Mendocino and Sonoma counties. Our forest conservation would not be possible without a healthy forest industry; we thank the local sawmills, logging contractors and resource professionals who help make our program successful.



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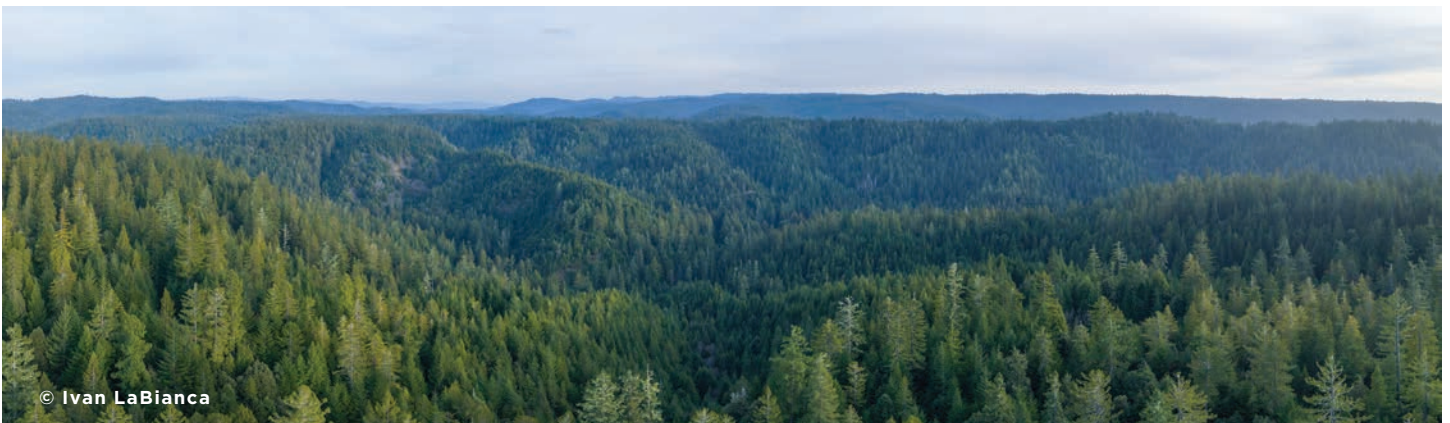


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Forest Certification

As they have every fall since 2007, third-party verifiers completed a field audit of the North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative to the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®-C001535) and Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI®) standards. This project, as well as our other forests throughout the country, were in overall conformance with the standards in 2019, receiving no corrective action requests. These are two of the most strict and comprehensive standards for forest management. The Fund actively participates in the California SFI Implementation Committee, and we welcome comments and suggestions regarding our forest certification.

Full audit reports are available on our website: www.conservationfund.org/projects/north-coast-forest-conservation-initiative/north-coast-reference-documents.



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Climate Action

Forest conservation is an important tool in the fight against climate change, and redwood forests store more carbon per acre than any other forest type. Our forests were among the first and largest to receive verification as a source of greenhouse gas reductions under the protocols of the Climate Action Reserve. The Fund has transitioned our projects to the California Air Resources Board (CARB) Cap-and-Trade Program—a key element of California's climate plan that allows regulated entities to use allowances or offsets to meet a portion of their emission reduction obligations. The carbon revenue, combined with timber harvest revenue, allows us to let the trees grow while we restore water quality through sediment reduction projects and instream habitat improvement. Our four carbon projects comply with state protocols and are certified through CARB-approved third-party verifiers to ensure that the carbon offset credits are real, verifiable, additional, enforceable and permanent. In 2019, 379,774 offset credits were issued for 2018 vintages for all four projects, and annual verifications will continue for the foreseeable future.



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Public Access Program

The Fund provides pedestrian and bicycle access in the Big River and Salmon Creek Forests, as well as equestrian access in the Salmon Creek Forest. These programs were launched in 2007 to provide outdoor recreation, cultivate stewardship and increase surveillance on the forests. Participants sign a permit to hike or ride for free on logging roads in the forests. In Big River, the Fund provides access to local community members to harvest firewood for home use. Since 2012 we have allowed limited permit-based hunting in the Garcia River Forest for local residents. In addition, multiple tours of all forests to review harvests and restoration projects are offered throughout the year. We are currently evaluating the potential for providing expanded public access to Buckeye Forest. Please contact hnewberger@conservationfund.org to sign up for any of these public access opportunities.

Management Planning

The 10-year update of the Big River and Salmon Creek Forests Integrated Resource Management Plan was finalized in 2019. The purpose of our forestwide plans is to ensure a consistent framework for the sustainable management of each forest. Management plans are updated regularly and are available at www.conservationfund.org/projects/north-coast-forest-conservation-initiative/north-coast-reference-documents.



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Spotlight

The Soundscapes to Landscapes research project is currently active on the Fund's Buckeye Forest.

With funding from the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA), the goal of the project is to monitor bird diversity in Sonoma County using automated sound recorders placed across the landscape. Sound recordings are then analyzed to identify birds, and these field data are then used to model bird diversity in conjunction with images from state-of-the-art sensors in airplanes and satellites. The project tests the accuracy of models that include several cutting-edge NASA sensors. One sensor being tested is called Global Ecosystems Dynamics Investigation (GEDI), recently docked on the International Space Station. The GEDI sensor uses Light Detection And Ranging (LiDAR) technology, which uses pulses of light to measure the physical structure of vegetation, such as heights of trees and understory plants. The study locations span a wide range of public and private land throughout Sonoma County, including habitats across the urban-wildland gradient. At each of the study sites, citizen scientists (volunteers) place automated audio recording devices on trees, fences or stakes and leave them recording 3 to 4 days, with automated programming that turns on at 1-minute intervals every 10 minutes. The



soundscapes data are then processed in an online platform to identify bird species, and these data will be used to assess the factors that determine bird distributions over a variety of landscapes. All aspects of biodiversity are intimately linked to the functioning of ecosystems, where species interact with their physical environment. Biodiversity plays a vital role in many ecosystem functions, such as clean water, clean air, nutrient cycling, food production, and responses to disturbances, such as fires.

Welcome

Ryan Klausch, Forester, joined the Fund in July 2019 (on the right in photo). He most recently worked with the Bureau of Land Management in Ridgecrest, CA as a Natural Resource Specialist. His introduction to the North Coast stems from a one-month-long wildland fire assignment on the Mendocino Complex fires in autumn 2018. He served as a Fireline Resource Advisor, where he went ahead of fire suppression efforts, in order to protect natural and cultural resources from impacts incidental to the firefighting operation. During Ryan's R&R days, he spent time off enjoying what the North Coast had to offer and now can explore even further.

Blake Tallman, Forest Technician, joined the Fund in May 2019 (on the left in photo). He is a native to the Mendocino Coast, who grew up exploring the local trails via mountain bike and hiking, and the ocean via scuba diving and snorkeling.



From 2006-2019 he owned and managed all aspects of Sub-Surface Progression Dive Shop. He has been involved in efforts to remove purple sea urchins from the intertidal waters; an invasive species that is exponentially taking over marine habitat and damaging the local abalone population. Blake is utilizing his local outdoor experience in his new career with the Fund.

Acknowledgments

Project Partners and Financial Supporters:

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 Christopher Blencowe, stream restoration and monitoring
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 Wylatti Resource Management, roadwork

Advisory Group:

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 Alan Levine, Coast Action Group
 Darcie Mahoney, Registered Professional Forester
 Linda Perkins, Salmon Creek Project Team
 Chris Poehlmann, Friends of the Gualala River

Contact Us

Please see our website for more information on the North Coast Forest Conservation Initiative:

www.conservationfund.org

Detailed monitoring reports are also available by topic from our office in Caspar, CA:

Attention, Holly Newberger, North Coast Program Coordinator

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