

Case Study - Trinity Headwaters

About

The Trinity Headwaters Forest is an almost 11,000-acre property situated in northern California, and forms part of New Forests' 265,000-acre Klamath Forest estate portfolio.

Nestled between the iconic landmarks of Mount Shasta, Castle Crags and Mount Eddy, the property consists of mixed conifers, white and red fir, pine, riparian woodlands and is considered a hot spot for botanical diversity due to the presence of uncommon serpentine soils making it a home to rare plants.

Additionally, the property supports an estimated 233 wildlife species and 9 aquatic fish species, including 44 that are rare or threatened such as Pacific marten, fisher, California wolverine, Cascade frog, and the Sierra Nevada red fox.

The Trinity River is noted for its salmon and steelhead fishery resources, recreational opportunities, and water source for hydroelectricity and irrigation to California's Central Valley, which produces about a quarter of the country's food. The Trinity River is also the principal tributary of the Klamath River, which has been home to indigenous people for thousands of years and once contained the third-largest salmon run in the country. In recent months, the last of four dams along the lower Klamath River in California have been removed in one of the largest efforts of its kind to restore river flows, improve water quality and revitalize salmon populations.

Key Initiative

In July 2024, New Forests transferred ownership of the Trinity Headwaters property to Pacific Forest Trust (PFT). PFT secured a permanent conservation easement to protect the property for the benefit of the environment and communities, while transferring long-term ownership to the Watershed Training and Research Center (Watershed Center), a local non-profit organization.

The Watershed Center, in coordination with the PFT, will manage the property guided by the conservation easement to enhance biodiversity, habitat, and watershed benefits, as well as climate and wildfire resiliency, carbon storage, and public access for recreation. Additionally, the Watershed Center intends to use the property as a core landscape for its local workforce training and delivery of youth programs for local communities and tribes, including cultural and ancestral ecological practices.

Impact

The transfer of Trinity Headwaters to the Pacific Forest Trust and the Watershed Center ensures the permanent protection of the biodiversity, native fish and wildlife habitats, and water resources for the State of California, while providing enhanced access to this property for recreational and learning purposes.

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