

**Sierra County
Board of Supervisors'
Agenda Transmittal &
Record of Proceedings**

MEETING DATE: April 19, 2016	TYPE OF AGENDA ITEM: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Timed <input type="checkbox"/> Consent
--	---

DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors APPROVING PARTY: Paul Roen, Supervisor, District 3 PHONE NUMBER: 289-3295

AGENDA ITEM: Resolution approving an easement proposal to the California Department of Conservation's Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALCP) and United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Lands Easement Program (ALEP) for the Sierra Valley working Lands Conservation Easement Acquisition.

SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTS ATTACHED: Memo Resolution Agreement Other

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

FUNDING SOURCE:
GENERAL FUND IMPACT: No General Fund Impact
OTHER FUND:
AMOUNT: \$ N/A

ARE ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL REQUIRED?

Yes, -- --
 No

IS THIS ITEM ALLOCATED IN THE BUDGET? Yes No

IS A BUDGET TRANSFER REQUIRED? Yes No

SPACE BELOW FOR CLERK'S USE

BOARD ACTION: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Approved as amended <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted as amended <input type="checkbox"/> Denied <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> No Action Taken	<input type="checkbox"/> Set public hearing For: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Direction to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Referred to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Continued to: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Authorization given to: _____	Resolution 2016- _____ Agreement 2016- _____ Ordinance _____ Vote: Ayes: Noes: Abstain: Absent: <input type="checkbox"/> By Consensus
---	---	---

COMMENTS:

CLERK TO THE BOARD _____ DATE _____

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SIERRA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**IN THE MATTER APPROVING AN EASEMENT PROPOSAL TO
THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION'S
SUSTIANABLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS CONSERVATION
PROGRAM (SALCP) AND UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE'S AGRICULTURAL LANDS EASEMENT
PROGRAM (ALEP) FOR THE SIERRA VALLEY WORKING
LANDS CONSERVATION EASEMENT ACQUISITION**

RESOLUTION 2016-_____

WHEREAS, the California Legislature has established the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program within the Department of Conservation, and through a grant program is providing assistance to conserve important agricultural land resources that are subject to conversion pressures; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress enacted the Agricultural Act of 2014, and through a grant program is providing assistance to conserve important agricultural land resources that are subject to conversion pressure; and

WHEREAS, the Pacific Forest Trust intends to purchase a Working Lands Conservation Easement on approximately 610 acres of rangeland in the Sierra Valley for the purpose of conserving priority agricultural land resources; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra County Board of Supervisors approves the easement proposal and certifies that the easement proposal meets the eligibility criteria set forth in Public Resources Code Section 10251, to wit:

- (a) The parcel proposed for conservation is expected to continue to be used for, and is large enough to sustain, commercial agricultural production. The land is also in an area that possesses the necessary market, infrastructure, and agricultural support services, and the surrounding parcel sizes and land uses will support long-term commercial agricultural production.
- (b) Sierra County has a general plan which demonstrates a long-term commitment to agricultural land conversation. This commitment is reflected in the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures of the plan, as they relate to the area of Sierra County where the easement acquisition is proposed.
- (c) Without conservation, the land proposed for protection is likely to be converted to nonagricultural use if the foreseeable future.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Board of Supervisors hereby approves the filing of an application for funding from the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program and Agricultural Lands Easement Program.

ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sierra on the 19th day of April, 2016, by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

County of Sierra:

Lee Adams
Chairman of the Board

Attest:

Approved as to Form:

Heather Foster
Clerk of the Board

Christian Curtis
Deputy County Counsel

Project Title: Martinetti Ranch Working Lands Conservation Easement

Location:

Highway 89 between Sierraville and Sattley, Sierra Valley

Introduction:

The Martinetti family has been a productive part of the Sierra Valley's agricultural community for 100 years. As part of their commitment to the Valley, they want to conserve their working ranch, productive forest and water resources for the future by placing their 610 acres under a working lands conservation easement with the Pacific Forest Trust (PFT). PFT, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, has worked with five other landowners in the Valley to help them conserve their working lands heritage.

In 1916, Issac and Delia Martinetti relocated their family to the Sierra Valley, and the ranch they developed continues to be a part of the valley's agricultural and forestry economy. The forest, rangeland and water on the property are as important as ever. The natural springs not only supply water to the current residents, but they also form headwaters of the Middle Fork Feather River which provides about 5% of the water feeding the Oroville Reservoir, contributing to the drinking water supply for 23 million people.

The Martinetti family and PFT have agreed to place a conservation easement on the ranch to protect the economically and ecologically sustainable resource based uses of the property, including summer cattle grazing and forest management, ensuring its sustainable and productive use for future generations. The property supports a combination of conservation values, including the two most productive forms of agriculture in Sierra County in terms of dollar value – cattle and timber production. The Conservation Values of the Property that are protected by the easement include significant agricultural, scenic, water, watershed, forest, meadow, fen, and riparian resources, the preservation and restoration of which is recognized by the State of California and the people of Sierra County as providing public benefit.

Agricultural Values

Approximately 98% of the property is currently used for cattle production, and 15% of the property supports marketable timber. The conservation easement will allow both forms of agriculture to continue on the property, with limitations that ensure long-term sustainable production. A forest management zone (94.4 acres) is also identified in the conservation easement, with limits on harvest rates that are intended to maximize structural diversity within the forest. Approximately 107 acres (17.5% of the property) of the property will be in special habitat management zones (SHMZ) to restore and enhance sensitive habitats (e.g. wetlands, riparian zones). In combination with the landowner's implementation of best management practices, the easement allows the Property to remain economically productive while also providing natural resource benefits to the state.

Scenic Values

The section of Highway 89/49 that crosses through the Property is part of the Yuba-Donner Scenic Byway. Prevention of the ranch's subdivision and development will minimize degradation of the scenic values in southern Sierra Valley. Limits on development around the

existing ranch headquarters will ensure the ranch does not detract from the scenic values of the highway viewshed. Restrictions on use of the Property also assure today's scenic qualities are maintained or enhanced, and the restrictions in effect make permanent the provisions established in the current Sierra County General Plan.

Watershed Values

The Martinetti Ranch contains approximately 2.5 miles of Berry Creek (formerly known as Miller Creek), 0.5 miles of Hamlin Creek, an un-named creek commonly known as Spring Brook, and other un-named springs. All of these flow into the valley floor, ultimately entering the Middle Fork Feather River, and contribute directly to the wet meadow complex that makes Sierra Valley distinctive. The Middle Fork Feather River is a federally-designated Wild and Scenic River and a Category I priority Watershed in the California Unified Watershed Assessment. It feeds the Oroville Reservoir and the Sacramento River.

The Martinetti Ranch conservation easement prevents the commercial development of these productive springs, and the decreed water rights for more than 400 acres of pasture can not be transferred off of the ranch. The stream waters on the property are of high quality such that the ranch obtains its drinking water directly from the spring, and rainbow trout and brown trout are supported in the streams. The conservation easement is designed to ensure no degradation to the water resources occurs from unsustainable use.

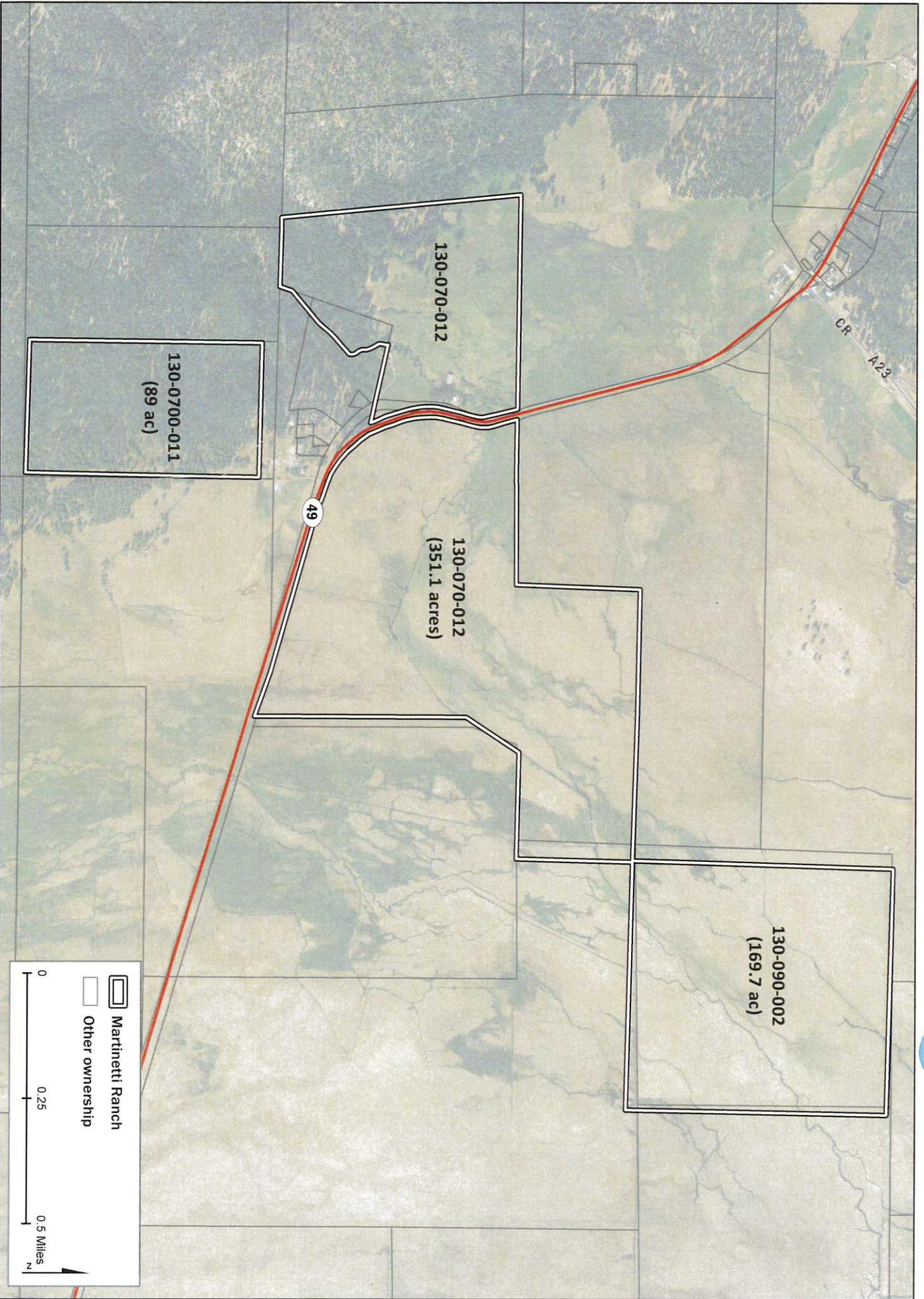
Fish and Wildlife Habitat

While providing the agricultural assurances described above, the project also benefits populations of migratory birds and other wildlife dependent on grassland, forest, riparian, and wetland habitats present on the property and in the surrounding landscape. The project also benefits trout and other fish in the Truckee River system by making permanent those provisions for watershed, wetlands, and riparian protections in the Sierra County General Plan. Through a cooperative, long-term partnership between PFT and the landowner, we hope to provide additive benefits to wildlife while maintaining or improving the economic productivity of the property.

Martinetti Ranch APN



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST



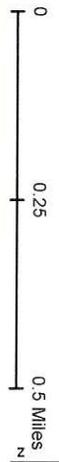
130-090-002
(169.7 ac)

130-070-012
(351.1 acres)

130-070-012

130-0700-011
(89 ac)

 Martinetti Ranch
 Other ownership

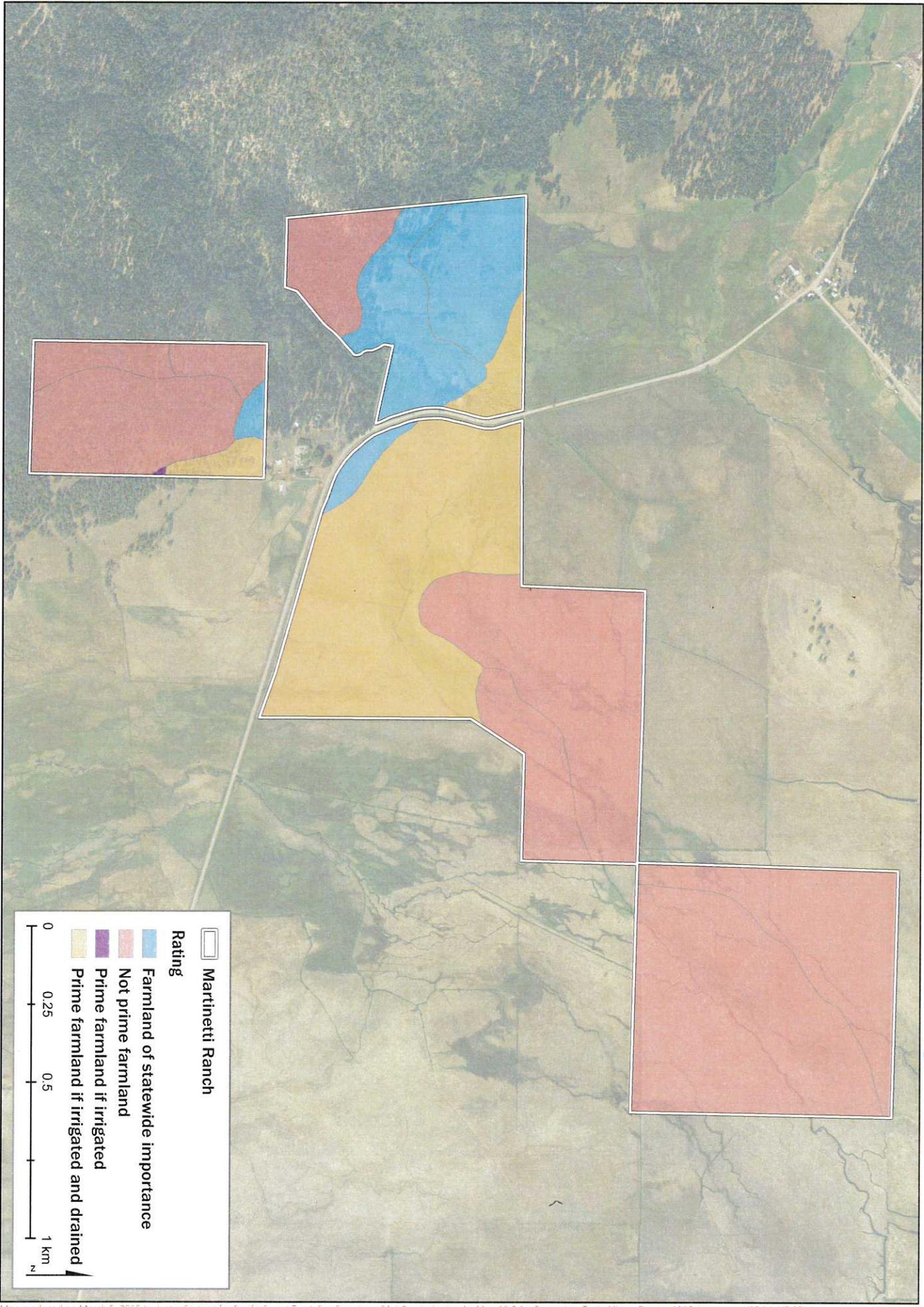


Martinetti Ranch

NRCS Soil Types



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST



Martinetti Ranch

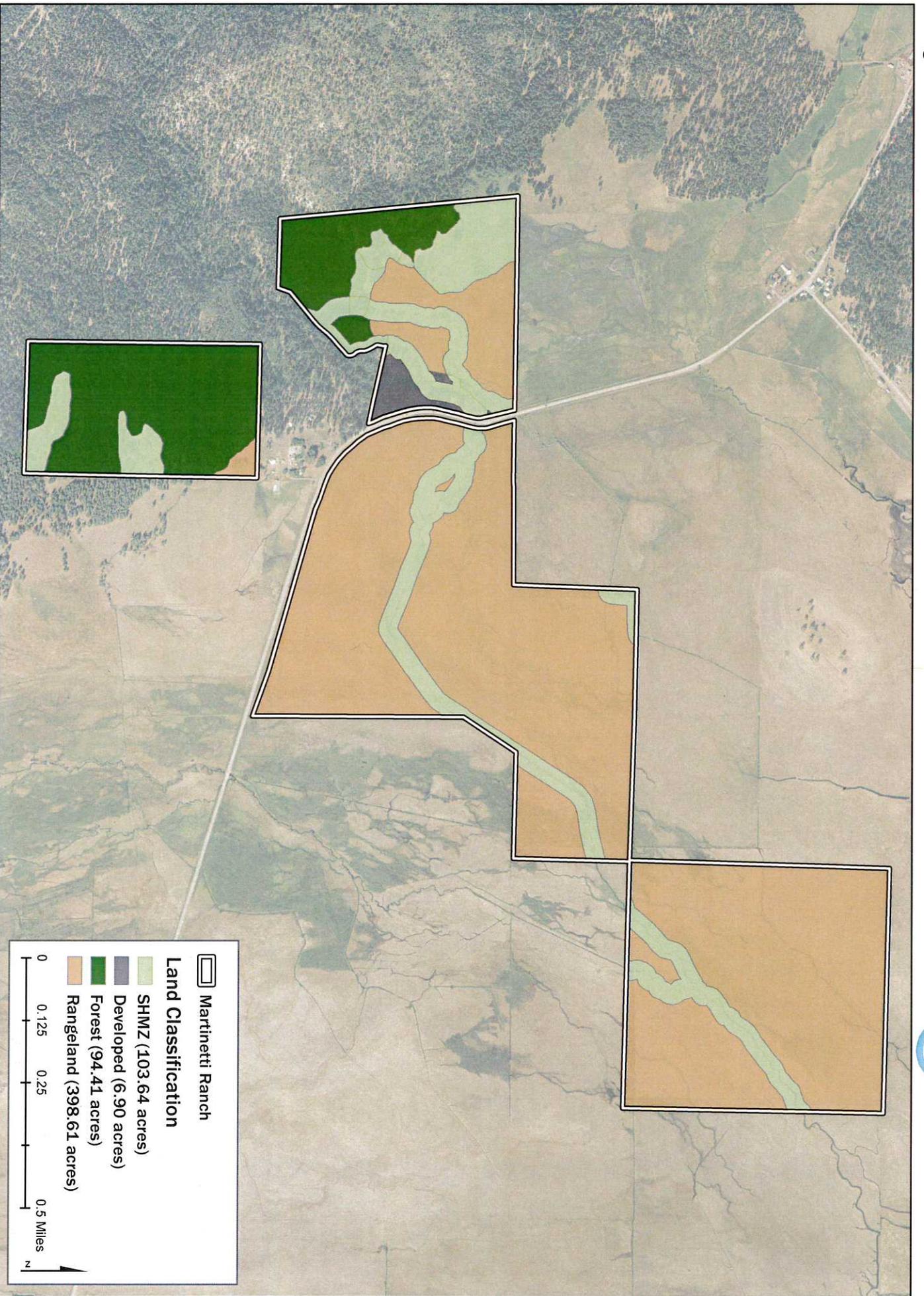
Rating

- Farmland of statewide importance
- Not prime farmland
- Prime farmland if irrigated
- Prime farmland if irrigated and drained

0 0.25 0.5 1 km

N

Map produced on: March 5, 2015 by Justin Galiano for Pacific Forest Trust, San Francisco, CA | Created using ArcMap 10.2.1 | Projection: Teale Albers, Datum: 1983 | Imagery: USDA NAIP 2014



 Martinetti Ranch

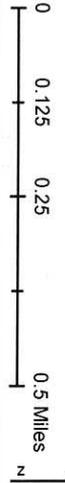
Land Classification

 SHMZ (103.64 acres)

 Developed (6.90 acres)

 Forest (94.41 acres)

 Rangeland (398.61 acres)



A FORESTLIFE PUBLICATION

LEAFLET

©JUSTIN GARLAND

SCIENCE, STORIES, AND PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

FOREST CONSERVATION + RESTORATION

Bringing a Landscape Back to Life

COLLINS PREPARES TO PLANT 3 MILLION TREES NEAR GOOSE LAKE



©USFWS

Aftermath: for the black-backed woodpecker, there's nothing more appealing. This rare bird is at home in the charred remains of pines that still stand amidst a burn scar seven miles wide and six miles long near Goose Lake. Blending in perfectly with blackened bark, a yellow blaze their only adornment, the black-backed woodpecker feasts on the wood-boring beetles who have turned the dead trees into an all-you-can-eat

buffet. And for the innovative foresters at Collins, that's just fine. After consulting with biologists from California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Collins made sure that during the process of salvaging and clearing an area the size of Washington D.C., certain burned stands were retained especially for the woodpeckers.

In 2012, lightning ignited a wildfire that burned 93,000 acres in Oregon and California, consuming 20,806 acres of FSC Certified pine forest. Today, Collins, a timber company known for its excellence in stewardship forestry, is bringing this forest back

to life. As resilient as nature can be, without help it could take centuries for this landscape to grow into its former flowing mosaic of forest habitats. PFT worked with Collins to secure a \$2.5 million habitat restoration grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board, providing the lead funding for an enormous undertaking: to restore and permanently conserve all 32,686 acres under an easement donated by Collins.

How big an undertaking? Three million seedlings will be nurtured in giant greenhouses for two years. Meanwhile, the restoration team prepares the 32-square-mile site, to keep scrub from overtaking the landscape and blocking sunlight from new trees. They have two years to figure out how to transport so many young trees and accommodate at least fifty tree-planting crew members for nearly three months on the land—one person can plant 1,000 trees a day, traversing varied terrain while laden with as many saplings as he or she can carry.

Read more about this amazing project: http://bit.ly/goose_lake

After the fire, wildlife are "homesteading" where they can. Pronghorns dine on the grasses and sagebrush growing on the burned land. Collins is resuming surveys for the Great Gray Owl, which may remain on the project's 10,000 unburned acres.



©TOM KOERNER/USFWS



©CLOCKITY

How Climate Change Influences Species Movement...or Not

USING CALIFORNIA AS A CASE STUDY, RESEARCHERS FIND CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ARE MORE COMPLEX THAN ONE MIGHT THINK.

Steve Beissinger, professor at the University of California, Berkeley, presented findings from his research at a recent Klamath-Cascade Council meeting. The following is brief digest of the research review. A link to the article and its citations is provided below.



©ISTOCKPHOTO/CHRIS BOSWELL

Areas in the Klamath Cascade region have remained cooler and wetter than other regions in California, which are warming and drying.

Climate change is predicted to greatly impact living systems in the coming decades, potentially surpassing habitat loss as the greatest driver of biodiversity change. Biogeographic responses (spatial changes in the abundance and distribution of species populations) are expected to be common. Climate change studies have principally examined effects related to widespread increases in mean temperature—the “warming fingerprint.” However, warming is not the only factor in how, or if, a species’ range will shift. This study of climate change in California found that the timing and amount of precipitation, as well as a finer grained analysis of both the physical habitat features and species’ natural history, were also important.

The researchers mapped 20th century changes in moisture and temperature: annual mean, minimum, and maximum temperature; annual total precipitation; actual evapotranspiration; and climatic water deficit.

They found that precipitation increases occurred across much of northern and central California but decreased in the south. Portions of the Cascade Ranges, Mount Shasta, and Lassen regions cooled, while the deserts, Central Valley, and urban areas warmed greatly.

Findings were compared to published evidence of elevational shifts in birds, butterflies, mammals, and plants. Species have shifted both upslope and downslope, as well as not shifting. Populations of the same species responded differently on different mountain slopes, aspects, and microclimates. Specific local land cover and terrain were significant factors as well. In other words, biogeographic responses to climate change were not solely determined by warming—nor with any other single aspect of climate change, but rather a combination of factors.

The team identified four key species-specific factors:

Exposure—climate change across a population’s range and the degree to which local microhabitat buffers change

Sensitivity—the degree to which a population depends on its physiological tolerance to various aspects of climate

Adaptive capacity—how species at a location respond by persisting in place or migrating to more suitable locations

Indirect effects—impacts on interacting species, including mutualists, predators, and competitors

The impacts of climate change are complex and diverse, affecting biological systems at multiple levels, from single organisms to entire biomes. We need to move beyond the simple concept of “global warming” to adopt a more nuanced way to diagnose and predict future climate impacts. This will be fundamental for guiding policy and conservation decisions at both local and global scales.

Research Review: Beyond a warming fingerprint: individualistic biogeographic responses to heterogeneous climate change in California, Global Change Biology (2014), doi: 10.1111/gcb.12638, Giovanni Rapacciuolo, et al. University of California, Berkeley http://bit.ly/beyond_warming

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP

Conserving & Connecting Sierra Valley, the Largest Alpine Wetland in the U.S.

The whole is better than the sum of its parts—especially when it comes to natural systems. It's why we focus on connecting conserved working lands across the landscapes that matter most for climate, water security, and wildlife. Since our first project in 1998, we've worked to conserve a key corridor in one of the last great landscapes in California, an effort that continues today.

A hidden gem, Sierra Valley sits at the southernmost edge of the Klamath-Cascade, just north of Lake Tahoe. Mountain snowmelt and rain feed the valley's extensive wetlands, where lush meadows and pastures form the headwaters of the Middle Fork of the Feather River and then the Sacramento river, key to California's water supplies. The wetlands are a major stop on the Pacific Flyway for 230 migrating bird species, and the valley provides breeding habitat for more than 17 rare or threatened species including the Sandhill Crane, White-faced Ibis, and the Black Tern.

Sierra Valley's pastures and forests have a long, proud history of cattle ranching and timber production. With Lucy Blake's advice, Artie Strang asked PFT to help him conserve the vital natural qualities of his land and keep it working, as Sierra Valley families have for generations. Our shared goal was a protected-yet-productive corridor on the valley's west side, linking the wet valley floor with its forested headwaters.

Artie Strang, heir to homesteaders from 1849, was the first landowner to complete a conservation easement in Sierra Valley: the 1,840-acre Valley View Angus Ranch. Today, this cattle ranch is owned and managed by Linda Sanford, who recalls:

"When we first got our easement done, everyone thought we were crazy, but in time other ranches saw that nothing had changed—it is still a working landscape, but now it's saved from development. Slowly they joined in, and now we are linking ranches along the valley. It is a dream come true to see the beautiful Sierra Valley remain just as it was."

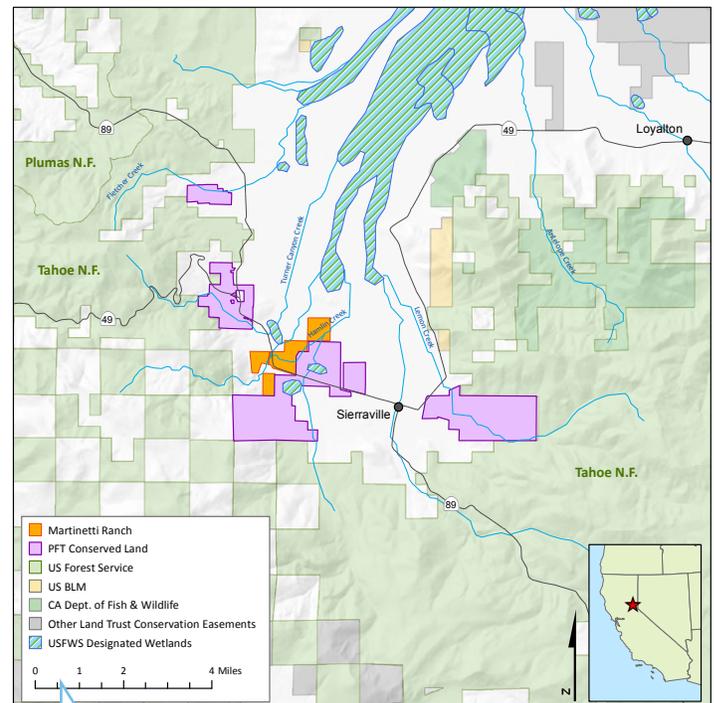
So far, PFT has protected 4,467 acres of working lands, securing five conservation easements along Sierra Valley's southern edge.

The forests, meadows and wetlands of Sierra Valley are home to brown bear, mountain lion, Sierra Nevada red fox, coyote, mule deer, beaver and badgers, as well as to Great Basin pronghorn and Rocky Mountain elk.

These lands play an important role in creating contiguous habitat and providing key linkages between two National Forests, BLM land, and the Antelope Valley Wildlife Area.

Now PFT is working the Martinetti family to conserve an additional 610 acres of forests, wet meadows, and two miles of Hamlin Creek, a key tributary of the Feather River.

A neighbor of the Martinetti Ranch, Linda Sanford looks out from Valley View Angus Ranch and sees the whole picture: "All the ranchers linking together. It's just what this valley needs."



Conserving Martinetti Ranch (in orange) is key to protecting the valley's southern corridor and the vital water resources that flow there. With your help, we can protect the heritage and abundance of Sierra Valley for future generations.

Forest Carbon Offsets: Time for A National Standard?

Forest carbon offsets have come a long way from the early “wild west” days of carbon trading that began in the late 1990’s. As regulatory and market environments matured, so have offset accounting standards. High quality, science-based offsets that fully compensate for CO₂ emissions are today’s gold standard—namely the forest carbon offset rules pioneered in California and now spreading across the U.S and Canada. These standards produce offsets that are real, additional, permanent, and third-party verified.



©USFS/TONGASS

In 2015, the transportation sector was added under California’s emissions cap. Alaska’s forests will become eligible for offset projects, giving Native Corporations a solid financial market to conserve their old growth and other forests for the first time.

California’s standardized approach to quantifying emissions reductions was adopted under the landmark AB32 climate law, and is now yielding the first regulatory quality offsets in the nation. The Forest Project Offset Protocols permit forest owners across the U.S. to register projects under California’s program. In addition, the Forest Protocols were recently

adopted for regulatory compliance by the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative across nine northeastern states, laying the groundwork for a de facto national market for forest offsets. The use of this standard is growing.

There are more than 35 forest carbon projects being developed in states all across the country for this market. Nationwide, this represents about one million acres of conserved natural forests that will reduce CO₂ emissions by an estimated 20 million tons in the near term and much more over time. When the same offset standard is applied coast-to-coast, it can stabilize the growing market and provide certainty for those wanting to reduce emissions in a way that is honest to the atmosphere and good for forests.

While forest loss and degradation is a serious problem and major source of US CO₂ emissions, forests are not included “under the cap,” nor are they regulated by AB32 or other climate laws. In the period 2000-2005, of the seven nations that contain more than a million square kilometers of forest—Russia, Brazil, the U.S., Canada, Indonesia, China, and the Democratic Republic of Congo—the United States had the greatest percentage loss. The U.S. lost 6 percent of its forest cover, totaling 46,332 square miles¹.

Prior forest loss and the resulting CO₂ emissions have already left the U.S. with a hefty carbon debt. Forest offset projects pay down this debt directly by increasing carbon gains and reducing forest loss. A standardized, nationwide carbon market is becoming a viable way to reward forest owners for conserving their forests and managing them for increased carbon stores on the ground—while sustainably harvesting climate-friendly wood products.

¹Hansen, et al: Quantification of global gross forest cover loss; PNAS: www.pnas.org/cgi/doi/10.1073/pnas.0912668107



PACIFIC FOREST TRUST

1001-A O’Reilly Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94129
pacificforest.org



California Department of Conservation
Agricultural Conservation Easement
Sample Local Government Resolution of Support

Before an application for an easement acquisition grant can be approved, the applicant must provide public notice to parties reasonably likely to be interested in the property. This includes written notice to adjacent property owners, a more generalized public notice, and a notice to the local government indicating the applicant's intent to apply for an agricultural conservation easement.

The governing body of the county or city in which the property is located must certify that the proposed easement meets the eligibility criteria set forth in Public Resources Code Section 10251, and that the easement proposal has been approved by the governing body. A sample resolution is shown on the next page of this document. Resolutions for ACEs funded under this program should substantially conform to the sample form.

If the property lies within the Sphere of Influence of an incorporated city, both the city and county must pass resolutions of support.

The required resolution(s) must be provided before grant disbursement.

The timing of public and neighboring landowner notice is important. Written notice to adjacent landowners must occur no less than 30 days prior to the expected date of the local government's consideration of the resolution of support. Notice to the county or city shall occur no less than 30 days before the applicant submits a grant application (Public Resources Code Section 10254). Because of the importance of notification timelines, applicants are encouraged to work with Department of Conservation staff to ensure that the process is completed in the correct order.