

## **Travis Ranch Conservation Easement** **Forest Legacy Project**

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The conservation easement (CE) will permanently conserve a 12,029-acre working forest and rangeland property. The purposes of the conservation easement are to (i) maintain or enhance the generative potential of the Property including its capacity for productive timber harvesting and livestock grazing; (ii) maintain or enhance the Property's wildlife habitats, watersheds, and primary ecological functions; and (iii) maintain or enhance the Property's relatively natural, scenic, and open-space characteristics.

The property is comprised of Douglas-fir, mixed conifer-hardwood forest, riparian areas, true oak stands, and grasslands. There are over 30 miles of Class I and II watercourses on the property. During development of the project, the property was impacted by the 2020 August Complex Wildfire. Approximately 80% of the property burned during the wildfire with varied intensities. Approximately 1,175 acres of timberland were substantially damaged by the wildfire. Reforestation efforts began in 2023 under the Travis Ranch Fire Recovery and Forest Health Improvement Project.

The property provides potential habitat for a number of species listed as California Species of Special Concern by the CDFW, or as rare, threatened or endangered species under state or federal law, including northern spotted owl, bald eagle, peregrine falcon, fisher, costal tailed frog, foothill-yellow legged frog, Chinook salmon, steelhead trout, western pond turtle, northern goshawk, long-eared owl, burrowing owl, and American badger.

### LOCATION

Located in Trinity County, the property is in the North Fork Eel River watershed, approximately 10 miles south of the community of Ruth. The property is surrounded by public lands held by the US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, including the Yolla-Bolly Middle Eel and North Fork Wilderness Areas.

### MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

A Forest Management Plan (FMP) is being prepared for the conservation easement area which will guide forest management. The management goals are to improve timberland productivity, re-establish forest cover where necessary, maintain, enhance, and restore native oak woodlands and late successional habitats, reduce fire risk and increase fire resiliency, improve wildlife habitat, improve the road network, enhance recreation and aesthetics, and sequester and store carbon. The property is also a working cattle ranch with managed seasonal grazing. A Grazing Management Plan

(GMP) is being prepared which will guide the grazing operations. The management goals for the GMP are to provide favorable conditions and habitat for livestock and wildlife, maintain or improve the vegetation community, forage health and composition.

The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Northcoast Regional Land Trust to monitor the property for compliance with the terms of the conservation easement. The conservation easement allows access by CAL FIRE or their agents annually and once every three years by the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the USFS for monitoring purposes.

## TERMS

The property owner has agreed to sell a conservation easement to CAL FIRE to remove subdivision and development rights at the appraised fair market value. The valuation of the easement is equal to the appraised fair market value as approved by the Department of General Services (DGS). DGS has reviewed and confirmed the appraisal of the property, and the appraisal was also reviewed by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) to verify the timber valuation. The DGS approved fair market value is \$5,830,000.

WCB will enter into a grant agreement with CAL FIRE to grant CAL FIRE funds for the conservation easement acquisition. CAL FIRE will have certain continuing obligations under the WCB grant agreement tied with the funding for this project. Through the Federal Forest Legacy Program, the USFS granted CAL FIRE federal funding for the conservation easement acquisition.

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust has an Option Agreement with the property owner for the CE acquisition. The Option Agreement will be assigned to CAL FIRE through an Assignment and Assumption of Option Agreement. Acting by and through the WCB, CAL FIRE will purchase the CE with the grant funds.

## COMBINED PROJECT FUNDING

Wildlife Conservation Board \$2,979,990  
USFS Forest Legacy Grant \$2,850,000  
Northcoast Regional Land Trust \$10

TOTAL Purchase Price \$5,830,000

Travis Forest Conservation Easement Project

Located in Trinity County

CE Size: 12,029 acres

APNs: 022-130-008, 022-140-002, 022-140-004, 022-140-013, 022-140-014, 022-140-015, 022-140-016, 022-140-017, 022-140-018, 022-150-017, 022-150-018, 022-150-019, 022-150-020, 022-150-021, 022-150-022, 022-150-023, 022-150-024, 022-280-014, 022-280-017, 022-280-018, 022-280-019, 022-280-020, 022-280-021, 022-280-022, 022-280-023, 022-280-024, 022-280-025, 022-280-026, 022-280-027, 022-280-028, 022-280-029, 022-280-030, 022-280-031, 022-290-004, 022-290-026, 022-300-016, 022-300-017, 022-300-018, 022-300-019, 022-300-020, 022-300-021, 022-300-022, 022-300-023, 022-300-024, 022-300-025, 022-300-026, 022-300-027, 022-300-028, 022-300-029, 022-300-030, 022-300-031, 022-300-032, 022-300-033, 022-300-034, 022-300-035, 022-300-036, 022-300-037, 022-300-038, 022-300-039, 022-300-040, 022-300-041, 022-310-018, 022-310-019, 022-310-020, 022-320-003, 023-060-001, 023-060-004, 023-190-001, 023-190-014, 023-190-015, 023-190-016, 023-190-017, 023-200-001, 023-200-020, 023-200-021, 023-200-022, 023-200-023, 023-200-024, 023-200-025, 023-200-026, 023-200-027, 023-230-002, 023-230-019, 023-230-020, 023-230-021.

WCB Grant Number: WC-2538BG

Project ID 2020103

WCB Grant Amount: \$2,979,990