



For Immediate Release

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Traditional Adversaries Unite to Stop Forest Loss

**Republicans & Democrats, Timber Companies & Tree Huggers
to Address the Escalating Crisis of Forest Loss at
California Forest Futures 2005 May 23 and 24 in Sacramento**

Sacramento, CA – California’s forestlands are disappearing at an alarming rate. Recent estimates by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection indicate nearly 35,000 acres of oaks and conifers are being lost to development every year. This is the equivalent losing a forest larger than the City of San Francisco to residential sprawl annually, and with it, critical wildlife habitat, water flows and wood production.

To address this growing crisis, the Pacific Forest Trust and the University of California Berkeley Center for Forestry are convening *California Forest Futures 2005* – a two-day conference May 23 & 24 at the Sacramento Convention Center – to examine the forces re-shaping California’s forest landscape. The conference will bring together elected officials, policy makers, forest owners, foresters, land use planners, natural resource managers, environmentalists, conservationists, scientists, media and other concerned citizens from across the state to explore strategic solutions to *Stop Loss* and *Spur Progress*.

“The urgency of the problem is uniting people who have historically been at odds over forestry issues,” says Pacific Forest Trust Managing Director and conference co-chair Constance Best. “The accelerating rate of loss is persuading a diverse group of voices to join together to secure an ecological and economically sound forest future for California.”

“We can no longer assume California’s great forest expanses are going to be here 10 to 20 years from now,” says fellow co-chair and University of California Associate Vice President Richard B. Standiford. “This ever-escalating crisis must be addressed now while there are still functioning ecosystems and a viable forestland base to conserve.”

Among the outstanding speakers scheduled are State Senator Wesley Chesbro (Chair Senate Budget Committee), Assembly Members Rick Keene (Vice Chair Assembly Budget Committee), Loni Hancock (Chair Assembly Natural Resources Committee) and Tim Leslie (author of AB 1788 creating the Sierra Nevada Conservancy); current California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Director Dale Geldert and former Director Andrea Tuttle; San Jose *Mercury News* environmental writer Paul Rogers; Sierra Club forestry expert Paul Mason; California Forestry Association president David Bischel; renowned ecologist Michael Barbour of UC Davis; and John Landis, Chair of the UC Berkeley City and Regional Planning Department.

Several national figures are also on the agenda including the recently departed Chief Investment Officer of the Hancock Timber Resource Group, Clark Binkley; economist and forest policy expert Norman Johnson of Oregon State University; leading “green developer” Dennis Wilde of Gerding/Edlin; and USDA Forest Service Regional Forester Jack Blackwell.

“Retaining and sustaining our essential forestlands is a challenge we must all rise to meet. It’s neither a Democratic nor Republican issue. It’s not solely a problem for the government, the forest product industry nor conservationists,” notes Mike Chrisman, California Secretary of Resources and conference honorary chair. “It’s a statewide crisis that needs the help and support of all our parties, all our institutions and all our citizens to solve. Working together we can and will find new solutions to assure California’s great forestlands remain forever vast and vital.”

Specific *California Forest Futures 2005* conference topics will include:

- Examining the causes of forest loss from increased competition, rising management costs, growing population and booming real estate values
- Studying the impacts of loss and fragmentation on biodiversity, water quality, fire threats, timber production and quality of life
- Making California's forest industry more competitive in a global market while simultaneously protecting forests
- Adapting “smart growth” principles to lessen the impact of rural development
- Developing new revenue streams from carbon sequestration, water flows and habitat
- Expanding the use of working conservation easements to preserve the private forest infrastructure
- Implementing financial, regulatory and other incentives to promote conservation
- Exploring new strategies to engage more Californians with our forests

David Bischel, president of the California Forestry Association and steering committee member comments, “Californians support home-grown wood and want their wood products to come from forests managed by the highest environmental standards. But the high-cost of doing business in this state is killing our industry. As such, we must work together to find new ways to ensure the health of both California’s working forests and forest industry. Otherwise more and more forestland owners will be forced to convert their lands to development instead of continuing to growing trees.”

“We disagree with the timber industry on many things, but we all agree that it’s bad when you convert a forest into a Wal-Mart or a sub-division,” says Paul Mason, Sierra Club California’s forestry representative and conference steering committee member.

The Pacific Forest Trust is a leading advocate for the conservation of America’s private forests for the many public benefits they provide. PFT addresses the challenge of sustaining private forests through a strategy based on cooperation, financial incentives and sound science. The organization pioneers initiatives and partnerships to conserve working forests through conservation easements, develops ecosystem services markets, disseminates critical forest and forestry information and promotes public policies that align ecological needs with economic realities. For further information about the Pacific Forest Trust, visit <http://www.pacificforest.org>.

The Center for Forestry at UC Berkeley’s College of Natural Resources is committed to sustaining forested ecosystems through scientific inquiry. The center develops research projects, outreach and public education activities and policy analysis on issues affecting the state’s forestlands. Located in the College of Natural Resources and part of the system-wide Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources – the center functions as a dynamic hub for multidisciplinary research, financial support, and science-based outreach. For further information on the Center for Forestry, visit <http://nature.berkeley.edu/forestry>.

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