

RESOLUTION NO. 3351-2010

RESOLUTION OF THE FORT BRAGG CITY COUNCIL IN SUPPORT OF THE REDWOOD FOREST FOUNDATION AND THE FOUNDATION'S SALE OF A CONSERVATION EASEMENT

WHEREAS, approximately 50% of Mendocino County is comprised of some of the most productive timberlands in the world; and

WHEREAS, the forest products and its allied industries continues to serve as an important tax base and generator of family wage jobs for the citizens of Fort Bragg and Mendocino County; and

WHEREAS, Mendocino County's private industrial forests sequester and hold significant amounts of carbon; provide important salmon, steelhead, spotted owl, marbled murrelet and other threatened and endangered species habitats; provide abundant and high quality water sources; and serve as a source for a wide array of recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, approximately 59 million acres of the nation's 70 million acres of industrial timberland have changed ownership due to macro-economic trends that make it attractive to fragment and sell forestlands, and whereas this trend is expected to continue as investors exit their timberland investments; and

WHEREAS, Fort Bragg's citizens have often held strong and differing perspectives regarding how local forests should be managed to ensure the many environmental, economic and social benefits they provide; and

WHEREAS, a group of Mendocino County citizens with backgrounds in timber industry, conservation, finance, forestry, local government, and other disciplines formed the Redwood Forest Foundation out of concern that changes in forestland ownership could undermine forest management practices that provide the environmental, economic and social benefits highlighted above; and

WHEREAS, the Redwood Forest Foundation acquired the 50,000 acre Usal Redwood Forest to assure that this property will be perpetually managed as a working forest and whose economic attributes include a substantial inventory of high quality redwood and Douglas-fir timber which will allow for a sustained yield of timber volume and generate a sustained annual cash flow and whose environmental attributes include: a diversity of natural communities representative of the redwood forest eco-region, including mixed coniferous forest, mixed evergreen forest and oak woodlands, and associated rare or sensitive species such as northern spotted owl, southern torrent salamander, tailed frog and Vaux swift; and the entirety of several important streams and tributaries to the Benbow Hydrological Subarea (HSA) of the South Fork of the Eel River and the Usal Creek HSA of the Mendocino Coast Hydrological Unit (HU), which are identified as high priorities for restoration and management in the California Coho Recovery Strategy; and

WHEREAS, conservation easements are an effective tool that landowners and local communities can use to protect important natural resources while leaving the property in private hands, on the tax rolls and in production, and

WHEREAS, the sale of a conservation easement by the Redwood Forest Foundation to The Conservation Fund will allow the Foundation to reduce debt and thereby insure its ability to implement conservation management practices in perpetuity that include, among other provisions, prohibiting development and fragmentation, increasing forest inventory; improving water quality; and maintaining sustainable timber production; and

WHEREAS, failure to sell a conservation easement threatens the Redwood Forest Foundation's ability to retain ownership of the property and increases the likelihood that property would be managed for purposes other than long-term sustainable forestry; and

WHEREAS, 2% of the Usal Redwood Forest abuts the Pacific Ocean and is best suited for acquisition by the Save the Redwood League for permanent preservation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Fort Bragg does hereby:

- 1) Support the Redwood Forest Foundation's unique governance structure that brings people with different perspectives together to determine how to best manage its forest.
- 2) Strongly support the Redwood Forest Foundation's acquisition of the Usal Forest and desires to see this model succeed for the benefit of the County and the State of California.
- 3) Encourage that Proposition 84 and other public and philanthropic sources be used to fund The Conservation Fund's and Save the Redwood League's acquisition of a conservation easement and coastal tract from the Redwood Forest Foundation so that this forest will remain in sustainable forest production.

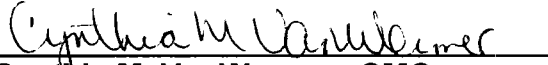
The above and foregoing Resolution was introduced by Councilmember Turner, seconded by Councilmember Courtney, and passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Fort Bragg held on the 22nd day of March, 2010, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Turner, Courtney, Gjerde, and Mayor Hammerstrom.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: None.
ABSTAIN: Councilmember Melo.



DOUG HAMMERSTROM,
Mayor

ATTEST:



Cynthia M. VanWormer, CMC
City Clerk