

Forest Legacy Project



Chalk Mountain Area, Bridgeville (Humboldt County), California

FUNDING HISTORY

<i>Forest Legacy Program FY 2008 Funding</i>	\$ 1,979,000
<i>FY 2008 Non-Federal Cost Share</i>	\$ 1,500,000
<i>FY 2008 Project Costs</i>	\$ 3,403,500
<i>FY 2008 Project Acres</i>	3,638
<i>Forest Legacy Funding to Date</i>	\$ 1,979,000
<i>Total Project Costs</i>	\$ 12,807,000
<i>Total Project Acres</i>	15,316



<i>Tract Name</i>	<i>Size (acres)</i>	<i>Tract Cost</i>	<i>FLP Funding</i>	<i>Non-Fed Cost Share</i>	<i>Status</i>
A-Chalk Mountain Phase I (North Half)	3,638	\$ 3,403,500	\$ 1,979,000	\$ 1,500,000	Funded 2008
B - Charles Mountain Ranch (North Half)	4,020	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,400,000	\$ 1,600,000	President's Request 2009
C-Chalk Mountain Ranch Phase II (South)	3,638	\$ 3,403,500	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 1,803,500	President's Request 2009
D - Charles Mountain Ranch Phase II (South)	4,020	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,600,000	\$ 1,600,000	Proposed 2010
Total	15,316	\$ 12,807,000	\$ 6,579,000	\$ 6,503,500	

General Description – The Chalk Mountain Area Project consists of two family-owned working ranches managed for timber, fish and wildlife habitat, grazing, open space and recreation. The proposed Chalk MTN Ranch CE is 7,276 acres and the proposed Charles MTN Ranch CE is 8,040 acres. Both ranches include very productive forest habitat and are strategically located proximate to one another and federal and state protected public lands (see map). Protecting these working ranches contributes to the landscape-level conservation strategy of providing a continuous corridor of open space and forested wildlife habitat from the 6RNF to the Pacific Ocean (6R2C Conservation Initiative, supported by local, state and federal agencies). Landowners are dedicated to sustainable land management. These ranches provide timber (175 MMBF-CE) to support the local industry infrastructure, while holding some of the largest intact areas of privately-owned forestlands in the region. These ranches contain over 12 miles of productive salmonid spawning streams and 40 miles of perennial stream habitat, all draining into two major River watersheds, which support the federally threatened Coho salmon and other spp. Substantial match funding will be provided by California’s WCB.

PROJECT FEATURES

Important:

- A. Both ranch families require public funding assistance to prevent land fragmentation brought on by intergenerational transfer of land and speculative development land values.
- B. This FLP project is a part of a de facto wildlife corridor that includes FS &BLM Late Seral Reserves, Humboldt SP and the BLM King Range CA. This public-private wildlands corridor stretches nearly 40 miles from the mountainous 6RNF to the Pacific.
- C. These ranches contain 15,316 acres of working forested landscapes and provide diverse wildlife habitat largely missing in the surrounding state and federal parks.
- D. Project goal is the permanent protection of productive forest lands, water resources, fish and wildlife habitat, and providing ecological continuity with surrounding public lands.
- E. These ranches currently contain an estimated 57 million board feet of timber. Under the pending conservation easements, they will eventually have a standing inventory of over 175 million board feet of harvestable timber.
- F. Economic viability of the area's timber industry depends heavily on these family-owned, sustainably managed properties as fragmentation, public ownership, subdivision acquisitions and industrial over-harvesting have taken much land out of production.
- G. Resource economy of the region is sustained because the ranches provide a large source of timber for sawmills, forest products, providing logs and jobs for local mills and service infrastructure, as well as products from the livestock industry.
- H. The federally listed Coho and Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout (all threatened, under jurisdiction of NMFS) spawn in watercourses on or directly adjacent to these ranches. Chalk Mtn. Area is active in restoration efforts.
- I. Containing 52 miles of tributary streams to the Eel River and Van Duzen River, 303(d)-listed impaired watercourses, Chalk Mountain Area ranches provide clean water for both wildlife and human use.
- J. Both ranches contain nesting and foraging habitat used by the Northern spotted owl (federally listed), bald eagle (CA listed; federally listed), peregrine falcon (CA and federally listed), osprey (Ca. Special Concern Species), and golden eagle.
- K. Active nests have produced peregrine falcon fledglings every year since 1994. These ranches have significant populations of special status wildlife, including mountain lion,



Charles Mountain forest and meadow.



Chalk Rock, peregrine falcon nesting site.



Typical mature second-growth Douglas-fir forest.



Riparian zone along Larabee Creek, tributary to Eel River.

red tree vole, flying squirrels, Pacific fisher, and ring-tailed cats.

- L. Old-Growth redwoods protected in riparian zones.
- M. Working closely with NRCS and CA Fish and Game, the landowners are vested in the protection of the property's wetland resources and have demonstrated a voluntary commitment to improving land management practices.
- N. Landowners support conservation planning, forest stand improvement projects and habitat restoration efforts. There is collaboration for resource education projects with the Humboldt State University Forestry Dept.
- O. Leaders in developing complementary economic uses of their forestland, the ranches provide for multiple recreational uses including guided trophy hunts for trophy Columbian Blacktail Deer (known nationally), wild turkeys, mountain quail and black bear.
- P. Other recreational activities offered on Chalk Mountain Area ranches include guided hikes, horse camps, an annual endurance mountain bike race, campgrounds and additional limited public access.
- Q. A pre-historic village site, including burial grounds and at least a dozen house pits, sit on the properties, a rare and important cultural resource. Twelve pre-historic and several historic resource sites are documented.
- R. Both Charles Mountain and Chalk Rock are prominent local landscape features that enhance the scenic resource values of these ranches, seen from nearby public lands, state Hwy 36 and county roads.
- S. The proposed CE will maintain these ranches as family-owned management units operated for sustainable timber production, low-impact grazing, and recreation as primary uses while establishing significant protections for WL habitat and H2O quality.

Threatened:

- A. Landowners must sell an easement to prevent fragmentation. Debt from loans to buy out interest of partial owners not committed to conservation may require selling portions of the ranch.
- B. Advanced ages of some landowners and the estate tax implications put pressure on the family, as parcelization will certainly occur unless these properties are protected now.
- C. These ranches are experiencing encroachment from rural residential development; many surrounding ranches have been divided into smaller 10 –160 acre tracts for homes and recreation cabins, not used for timber production.
- D. Zoning in Humboldt County generally permits 20 acre parcels. The proximity of the ranches to the cities of Fortuna, Ferndale, Arcata, and Eureka have drastically increased speculative development values, heavily outweighing resource uses.

- E. With timber zoning at 160 acre minimums, there is the potential for over 90 separate ownership parcels, not including zoning changes and further subdivision. The threat of conversion to rural residential development is high and imminent.
- F. The gentle slopes, scenic vistas, good access, moderate climate, and proximity to the corridor make this property highly desirable for rural residential parcels. The properties are well served by county roads and state highways 101 and 36.
- G. Humboldt County was recently ranked first in the nation in terms of natural resource amenity values sought after by urban, baby-boomer retirees.
- H. Development pressure largely stems from Bay Area telecommuters moving to areas such as Fortuna, Eureka and Arcata. Humboldt's population is growing at 20% over the state average, and agricultural property values have risen 40% in the last decade.
- I. 7000 acres of timbered property near the Chalk Mountain Area ranches was recently purchased for \$18,000,000. Realtors and developers have approached the landowners numerous times in recent years with offers to purchase for development.
- J. Both ranch families require public funding assistance to prevent land fragmentation brought on by intergenerational transfer of land, and to pay off loans used to conserve the ranch.

Strategic:

- A. These ranches provide unique habitat that contributes to a de facto wildlife corridor that stretches nearly 40 miles from the mountainous Six Rivers National Forest to the Pacific Coast (see map).
- B. Adjacent and proximate public lands include the 45,000 acre Black Lassic Late Seral Reserve (Six Rivers National Forest), Humboldt Redwoods State Park, BLM King Range Conservation Area, Butte Creek Reserve (BLM), and Headwaters Forest Reserve (BLM).
- C. The Chalk Mtn Project Area is within and adjacent to TNC priority eco-portfolio sites, and priority conservation areas as developed by the Save-the-Redwoods League and BLM.
- D. 15K acres of conifer forests, grasslands, oak woodlands and riparian habitat produce rich wildlife and plant diversity, productive forestry, grazing and recreation. Ranch size, diversity and location make it a strategic addition to the landscape-scale conservation initiative known as 'Six Rivers to the Sea'.
- E. This project represents a unique conservation deal when considering its strategic location in a protected lands corridor, the quality of productive land and wildlife habitat, the amount of acreage saved, and the very real threats of development and fragmentation.
- F. This project will protect ecologically and socially important private lands through partnerships and conservation easements.
- H. The ratio of contributions in the three completed FLP tracts to date in the county is 14.5% federal, 27% landowner, and 58.5% state. This successful leveraging of federal funds is a key strategy we will continue.
- I. Federal matching funds are needed to further Forest Legacy Program's success in this part of California by building on our funded and completed FLP projects.
- J. Restoration-assistance agencies explicitly favor easement-protected properties as those funds are not wasted by subsequent bad management practices. Cost share funds such as NRCS EQIP and the California Forest Improvement Program grants have recently been granted to these ranches.

Ready:

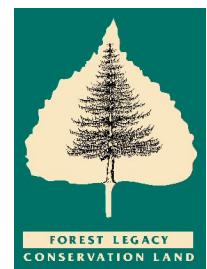
- A. Match funding partners include: CA Wildlife Conservation Board, County of Humboldt, Northcoast Regional Land Trust, Landowner bargain sale; potential funding partners include: NRCS, USFWS, CA Dept Fish and Game.
- B. Supporting partners include: 6RNF, USFWS, CA Dept Parks, CA Coastal Conservancy, BLM, TNC, Save-the-Redwoods, Humboldt County RCD, CA Dept. of Water Resources North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, our local community and timber industry.
- C. The project effectively leverages federal funds. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is working to secure at least half of the overall financing for the project from non-FLP sources.
- D. The landowners are willing to engage in a below market CE bargain sale.
- E. An option contract has been signed on one of the tracts and the second is currently being finalized.
- F. Landowners have signed commitment letters and have committed thousands of dollars already toward project development.
- G. Appraisal and timber cruise to be completed by January 2008, on one of the tracts with the other to follow.
- H. The multi-agency approved draft conservation easement has been embraced by the owners of Chalk Mountain Area Ranches.
- I. Partial funding of \$400,000 has been provided in the Six Rivers to Sea FLP grant of 2006.
- J. Federal contributions to the purchase price of three completed Phase I Six Rivers 2-C conservation easements are less than 25% of the easements' total value.
- Supporting parties include: A partial list of partners & supporters include: , Cal, Wildlife Conservation Board, Cal. Department of Fish & Game, Humboldt County Planning Department, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, Landowner Contributions, North Coast Regional Land Trust, Six Rivers National Forest and The Nature Conservancy

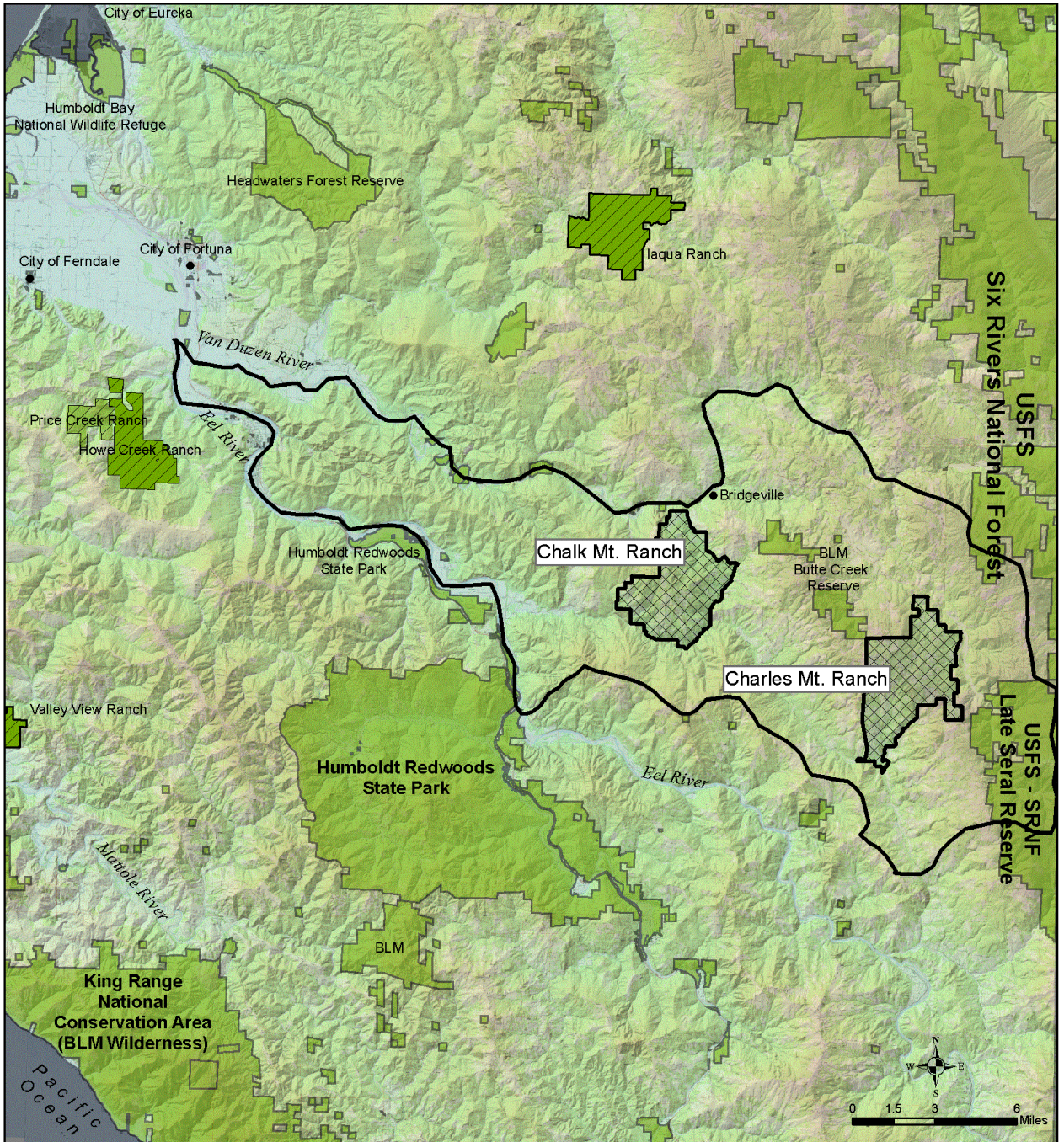
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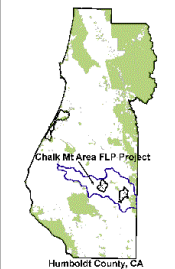
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Chalk Mountain Area FLP Project

-  Chalk Mt Area CE Projects
-  Public Conservation Lands
-  Chalk Mt Conservation Area
-  Private CE Conservation Lands



Conservation Values

- Conservation Easement (CE) Project of two fourth-generation family-owned working ranches
- Total of 15,316 acres: 57 mmbf of timber existing; 175 mmbf projected under CE
- Properties managed for timber, wildlife habitat, grazing, open space and recreation
- 12 miles of productive salmon spawning streams; 40 miles of perennial stream habitat
- Vital link in landscape conservation planning