



## Fact Sheet: Paths to Progress

Complex and powerful forces are reshaping California's forest landscape. The surge of forest development calls for a counter-force of conservation. The California Forest Futures 2005 conference is highlighting a suite of tools and initiatives that form the elements of a strategy to stop loss and spur progress. The central goal is to ensure the financial and ecological viability of California's forests in the face of both global economic competition and rising real estate values. The organizers of this conference would like to kick-off a wider debate and public process that we hope will yield a new commitment to California's forests and support for new models of sustainable development in forest communities. This fact sheet briefly introduces key approaches being highlighted by our expert panels:

### **Connecting Californians and Forests**

Eighty percent of the state's increasingly diverse population lives in urban and suburban areas and is increasingly disconnected with the experience of forests. These are the voters and consumers who will determine the fate of our forests, directly and indirectly. New coalitions of those who already know and love forests – environmentalists and industry – are beginning to undertake public education campaigns, promote more recreational opportunities, organize youth-in-the wood stewardship projects and otherwise seek ways to better engage people and forests.

### **Smart Growth Strategies for Forest Counties:**

It's not a question of growing or not. It is a question of how to grow while protecting the integrity of forests and watersheds, a resource-based economy, and communities' quality of life. Promoting livable and affordable cities, clustering rural development, organizing sensible transportation and other public services, and diversifying economic opportunities all play key roles. Sustainable communities and sustainable forests enrich each other.

### **Working Forest Conservation Easements:**

Conservation doesn't have to mean unmanaged preserves. Working forest conservation easements are being embraced by governments and commercial forest owners across the U.S. as a means to protect the timberland base from conversion and reward landowners for their management commitment to high standards of environmental stewardship and sustainable wood production. Increasing returns from conservation can play a critical role in supporting the economic viability of our productive forestlands.

### **Markets for Forest Ecosystem Services:**

The non-timber values of California's forests make extraordinary contributions to our lives and economy — carbon storage for stable climates, water quality and flow management, reservoirs for biodiversity. The degradation and loss of forests — and these ecosystem services — has enormous costs for the public. New markets are developing to generate revenue for forest landowners who willingly conserve and enhance the capacity of their forests to provide these services. The financial returns from ecosystem services could give

California forests managed for these values the competitive edge — and help ensure the forests remain intact and ecologically productive.

### **Sources of Conservation Capital:**

By paying for the cost of not developing and for forest management that enhances ecosystem functions, investments of public and philanthropic conservation capital in private forests can enhance the profitability of forest ownership and prevent conversions to other uses. There are growing sources of funding at the state and federal level for the conservation of forests and woodlands, and related ecological resources. In addition, new partnerships are developing that mix public and private investment dollars in pursuit of profitable long-term forest stewardship.

### **More Cost -Efficient Environmental Protection:**

California forest practices are the most highly regulated in the nation. Permitting from multiple state and federal agencies has become expensive and cumbersome, making California the highest cost wood producers in the nation, too. For some operations this makes the difference between profit and loss, creating an incentive for forest conversion. Environmentalists, agencies and forest owners are working on ways to make the permitting process more efficient and cost-effective without reducing environmental protection.

### **Promoting “California Grown” Wood Products:**

Wood is extremely energy efficient in its production and can be reused and recycled, making it the natural choice for “green building” vs. cement or metal based materials. California’s bountiful and diverse forests set the bar for wood grown to environmentally-sensitive standards. At the same time, California is the country’s leading market for wood products. Any Californian concerned with the future of our forests — whether for wood, wildlife or water — should give preference to “California Grown” wood in their buying.

### **Forest Certification and the Green Building Movement:**

“Green certification” systems can provide market recognition and incentives to reward excellent forest managers for environmental stewardship by letting consumers know they are buying “good wood”. The “green building movement” is seeking to expand the use of environmentally sensitive materials. By building the markets for wood from well-managed forests, these initiatives can help enhance the competitiveness of California’s forests – and help keep them producing all the benefits on which we depend.

### **Multi-Partner Forest Stewardship:**

Many parts of the forest landscape are already split up into small parcels, with multiple owners of different sizes and kinds. Community and watershed-based groups are seeking to pull the pieces of the fragmented forest back together through joint stewardship efforts to restore habitats, reduce fire risks and collaborate in good forest management. The result can be more productive forest ecosystems that cross ownership boundaries.

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