



CITY OF FORT BRAGG

Incorporated August 5, 1889

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March 28, 2022

Ms. Karen Mouritsen, Director
Bureau of Land Management
California State Office
2800 Cottage Way Suite W1623
Sacramento, CA 95825
Via email - kmourits@blm.gov

Dear State Director Mouritsen:

The City of Fort Bragg strongly supports the Land and Water Conservation Fund requests submitted by BLM's Arcata Field Office for FY 2023 Recreation Access and FY 2024 Core Program funding, which together total \$14,700,000. These appropriations will protect the first two phases of the 4,539-acre Lost Coast Redwoods project, a once-in-a-generation conservation opportunity to permanently protect thousands of acres of coast redwoods and other important lands for multiple benefits, including climate change resilience, collaboration with Tribes and enhanced outdoor recreation.

Lost Coast Redwoods is adjacent to portions of the California Coastal National Monument and if permanently protected by the BLM would significantly enhance the natural resource protection purposes set forth in the Presidential proclamation creating the monument. Using other public funds and private dollars to leverage LWCF funds, the BLM can acquire Lost Coast Redwoods at a discount – further enhancing the project's public benefits. The project has broad support from local elected officials, California state agencies, nonprofits, and private/individual donors.

As you know, Save the Redwoods League acquired the 3,181-acre DeVilbiss Ranch property in December 2021—seizing a rare opportunity to protect five miles of wild, spectacular California coastline and over 2,250 acres of mature second growth redwood forest. When combined with property the League already owns at Shady Dell to the north and Cape Vizcaino to the south, these lands create a nearly contiguous eight miles of protected coastline and 4,539 acres in the heart of the redwood range. They offer existing and enhanced recreation access opportunities as well as, wildfire, watershed, and wildlife species management efficiencies.

Lost Coast Redwoods is the longest privately-owned stretch of California coastline in the coast redwood range, composed of a stunning landscape of contiguous redwood forest, as well as Douglas-fir and grand fir forest. Since the 1840s, 95% of California's original old-growth redwood forests have been logged. Lost Coast Redwoods' mature, second-growth redwood forest provides high-quality habitat, significant carbon storage, and is well on the path to becoming the old-growth redwood forest that once dominated the rugged Lost Coast. The property also contains grassland meadows, coastal bluffs, extensive beaches, and abundant wildlife habitat for Northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, coho salmon, steelhead trout, Roosevelt elk, and much more.

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The Lost Coast Redwoods project will extend a 45-mile stretch of protected Lost Coast coastline by eight miles and is adjacent to Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, the California Coastal National Monument and the Double Cone Rock State Marine Reserve Conservation Area. Permanent protection of the Lost Coast Redwoods properties will help buffer this sensitive rocky reef coastline, rich with marine wildlife, and protect this ocean ecosystem's resilience, biodiversity, and cultural resources. Further, the permanent protection of Lost Coast Redwoods offers the potential to extend the famed Lost Coast Trail and the California Coastal Trail—potentially opening five miles of scenic trail along a once privately-held coast.

Located at a convergence of the traditional territories of the Sinkyone, Cahto, and Coast Yuki peoples, Lost Coast Redwoods is a landscape of great cultural, ecological, and recreational significance. A substantial allocation of LWCF funding for Phases I and II of Lost Coast Redwoods is critically important to begin its permanent public protection. Thank you for considering the request from BLM's Arcata Field Office for FY 2023 Recreation Access and FY 2024 Core Program funding from the Land & Water Conservation Fund for this important conservation and recreation land acquisition opportunity.

Sincerely,

Bernie Norvell
Mayor

Jessica Morsell-Haye
Vice Mayor

Teresa K. Albin-Smith
Councilmember

Lindy Peters
Councilmember

Marcia Rafanan
Councilmember

cc: Dan Ryan, BLM, dryan@blm.gov
Becky Bremser, Save the Redwoods League, bbremser@savetheredwoods.org