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To: Michael Colvin (mc3@cpuc.ca.gov) (mc3@cpuc.ca.gov)
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: FW: SFC, LAT - UC Researchers Get Forest Land from PG&E
FYI

From: News Flash
Sent: Friday, November 18, 2011 7:06 AM
Subject: SFC, LAT - UC Researchers Get Forest Land from PG&E

A land donation approved Wednesday by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council would expand the University of California research forests. PG&E was mentioned.

UC Researchers Get Forest Land from PG&E

By Debra Levi Holtz (Special to the Chronicle)

San Francisco Chronicle, November 18, 2011

University of California research on the effects of climate change on trees and wildlife is getting a big boost by the donation of more than 4,500 acres of Northern California woodlands that will double the size of the university's research forests.

The donation to UC was approved Wednesday by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, a private foundation created in 2004 as part of a **Pacific Gas and Electric Co.** bankruptcy settlement to permanently protect more than 140,000 acres of California's pristine watershed lands from development.

The donated land includes 3,100 acres near the Pit River in Shasta County and 1,484 acres in the Lake Spaulding area of Nevada County that are owned by PG&E, and is the largest single acquisition of forestland in the university's history. The land will be transferred to the UC Center for Forestry in about a year, after final approval by the California Public Utilities Commission.

"I'm just so excited I could bust," said J. Keith Gillies, dean of the UC Berkeley College of Natural Resources, which houses the UC Center for Forestry.

"For us, this is a dream come true to have a network of research sites on a north-south transection through the Sierra Nevada and Cascade ranges that will dramatically improve our capacity to do work on forest ecosystems that is responsive to the questions we all have about

the impacts of climate change on those regions," Gilless said.

The UC Center for Forestry operates four research sites on 5,131 acres in Contra Costa, Plumas, Tulare and El Dorado counties. The new lands, which are farther north, will enable UC researchers to study a more geographically diverse range of forests.

Gilless said the goal of the center's research is to provide scientific knowledge that California needs to make policy decisions about how to best manage forestlands and to ensure that future generations have better information than is currently available.

"As a society we've done very badly, because we have profoundly underinvested in monitoring the function of these ecosystems," he said.

John Battles, a professor of forest ecology at UC Berkeley, said research is needed to find ways to minimize the risks of fire, invasive species and insect attacks on trees expected to be brought on by climate changes such as higher temperatures and longer dry seasons.

"We want to learn how to manage these forests to be resilient to these kinds of challenges," said Battles.

In addition to conducting research over the next few decades, the university also plans to teach California schoolchildren and other members of the public about the ecosystems of the forests by inviting groups to its research sites.

The Stewardship Council also approved the transfer of 7,016 acres of forest to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection for demonstration projects on forest management and watershed protection. The land is adjacent to the new UC forest parcel in Shasta County.

The UC Center for Forestry will work closely with Cal Fire, as well as with environmental organizations, American Indian tribes and local governments, to learn how to manage and protect the state's forests.

"Our goal is to harvest knowledge, not trees," said Gilless.

UC is Given 4,584 Acres of Forestland

By Rick Rojas

Los Angeles Times, November 18, 2011

A land donation announced Thursday will allow the University of California to nearly double its research forests, conserving a swath of the Northern California watershed and offering academics an expanded laboratory to explore forest ecosystems.

The university will acquire 4,584 acres of mixed-conifer forests in two locations: 3,100 acres near the Pit River in Shasta County and 1,484 acres in the Lake Spaulding area of Nevada County.

Before the donation, the single largest acquisition of forestland in UC history, the university held 5,131 acres in several locations across the state.

The donation was approved Wednesday by the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, a private group established to conserve 140,000 acres of watershed lands in California as part of **Pacific Gas and Electric's** 2004 bankruptcy settlement. But Bill Stewart, director of the UC Center for Forestry, said it would be more than a year before researchers begin working on the land; the California Public Utilities Commission must approve the hand-over, and boundaries must still be drawn and other administrative matters handled.

The university said the land would be used by researchers to investigate how forest ecosystems respond to climate change, increased fire risk and invasive species, as well as to allow students and the public access to the areas.

Although the acreage may seem relatively modest, university officials said the donation will allow researchers to study patches of forest across the state, giving their work greater breadth.

"It's far more than doubling our capacity," said J. Keith Gillies, dean of UC Berkeley's College of Natural Resources. "Where these sites are located is more important than the acreage.... It's a tremendous laboratory for us."