
CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



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CAL FIRE Completes Conservation Easement in Sonoma County *Over 4,000 acres preserved from future development*

Sacramento – After six years of working to conserve over 4,000 acres on the Baxter Ranch in Sonoma County, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and Baxter family have completed a “working forest” conservation easement.

The 4,036 acre easement, located east of and adjacent to the Lake Sonoma Recreation Area, allows for sustainable commercial timber harvesting, grazing and hunting, but restricts future development, subdivision and conversion to other uses such as vineyards. Additionally, the Baxter family wished to protect 38 acres known as the “Otis Grove” from commercial harvest. The grove includes redwoods over 600 years old and over 11 feet in diameter. Permanent conservation measures will be taken to the portions of the Wheatfield fork of the Gualala River, Strawberry Creek and Rancheria Creek within the easement.

“We are pleased that our goal of permanently protecting our ranch has finally been accomplished,” said Barbara Baxter, who has lived on this ranch since 1947, “The outcome is certainly worth the time and effort the process took”

Jeff Calvert, Forest Legacy Program (FLP) Coordinator for CAL FIRE said, “The Baxter family should be extremely proud of this accomplishment. The family can to continue manage their ranch in the manner they desire while providing tremendous, permanent resource protection values to the public.”

Federal USDA Forest Service FLP funding, Proposition 12 grant funding through the California Wildlife Conservation Board, and a substantial landowner donation made purchase of the easement possible. Also important was the considerable effort by attorney Ellen Fred of the law firm of Conservation Partners who partnered with the San Francisco law firm of Coblentz, Patch, Duffy & Bass in representing the Baxter family.

CAL FIRE will hold the conservation easement and monitor compliance with it over time. For more information on CAL FIRE’s Forest Legacy Program:

http://www.fire.ca.gov/resource_mgt/resource_mgt_forestryassistance_legacy.php

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