

PURCHASE OF FOREST LAND ALONG THE LOWER KLAMATH RIVER

STATE PROGRAM: California Water Resources Control Board

ASSISTANCE RECIPIENT: Yurok Tribe

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT: \$18.8M

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

In 2011, the Yurok Tribe received an \$18.8 million, zero interest CWSRF loan from the California State Water Resources Control Board (CSWRCB) with a 25-year repayment period to purchase 22,237 acres of forest land along the Lower Klamath River, consistent with the Board's "Plan for California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program." The purpose of the project was to enable the Tribe to manage the acquired forest land in a sustainable manner, including no pesticide application, increased stream buffering, longer timber harvest rotations, no clear cutting, road decommissioning, and the setting aside of carbon reserves. The Tribe had long sought the return of ancestral land to create a salmon sanctuary and restore tribal cultural practices, including subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering.

The Tribe pledged both timber harvest revenues and carbon credit revenues for repayment of the CWSRF loan. The initial plan had been to use revenues from timber harvest as repayment, but once it was determined that those revenues would not be available while the Tribe developed and implemented its Forest Management Plan, carbon offset revenues filled that gap. The Tribe entered into a five-year purchase agreement with CE2 California I LCC to sell carbon offsets. Revenues from the sale of carbon credits under the Climate Action Reserve Forest Project Protocol were used for the first couple of years of repayment.

The Yurok Tribe acquired the acreage and, as a condition of the CWSRF loan, developed a set of documents that include implementation measures to correct and prevent the deterioration of the watershed due to timber harvest practices within the acquired property. The Tribe completed a Forest Management Plan, a Nonpoint Source Program Plan, and a Final Project Assessment and Evaluation Plan that will be used as guidelines for implementing the Project for over 20 years.

To read more about this case study, please visit https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-10/documents/cwsrf_land_conservation.pdf.

