

# Blue Forest & Pheasants Forever Launch Inaugural Watershed Resilience Bond Supporting Working Lands in OR & CA

*Partners unlock capital for private landowners, supporting conservation efforts that increase watershed resilience on a landscape scale.*

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Blue Forest and Pheasants Forever are excited to announce the launch of the [Southern Oregon-Northeastern California I Watershed Resilience Bond](#) (SONEC I WRB). The SONEC I WRB will finance landscape-scale conservation across privately owned working lands, marking the first financial product from non-profit conservation finance organization Blue Forest that focuses on improving watershed resilience across property boundaries.

The WRB, co-developed by Blue Forest and Pheasants Forever, is an innovative financing mechanism that taps into private capital to finance restoration projects that increase the watershed's resilience to fire and other

disturbances, improve wildlife habitat, and bolster the community and local economy. While the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to private landowners to implement conservation projects, these programs require landowners to pay upfront costs with a portion to be reimbursed by NRCS after the completion of work. Through the WRB, Pheasants Forever can manage contracts and finance the upfront project costs on behalf of landowners while awaiting NRCS reimbursement. This increased cash flow capacity enables landowners to immediately deploy habitat investments while repaying their portion of cost share over time.



## Blue Forest



Wetland meadows and forests in the SONEC region

Additionally, Pheasants Forever provides essential technical support, assisting with funding applications, project planning, and implementation, thereby removing key barriers and increasing landowner access to and participation in these programs.

“We are thrilled to partner with Pheasants Forever to provide an innovative solution that unlocks funding for conservation projects on private working lands. This partnership will enable a more cohesive and scalable approach to conservation that provides a broad array of environmental benefits while keeping working lands working and boosting rural economies,” says Blue Forest Chief Conservation Officer, Nick Wobbrock.

Over the last 10 years, producers have signed up for and implemented \$1 billion dollars a year in NRCS projects (<https://www.farmers.gov/data/financial-assistance-overview>). However, even with the interest, effort, and investment by private individuals, the NRCS was unable to obligate an additional \$1 billion in conservation funding in FY22, meaning only half of the conservation that could have been accomplished was implemented. The SONEC I WRB, financed by mission-driven investors through Blue Forest’s FRB Catalyst Facility, will enable further utilization of NRCS funding, expanding conservation practices across the landscape.

“We are thankful to partner with Blue Forest and its innovative model of deploying private capital in support of dynamic conservation projects,” said Ron Leathers, Chief Conservation Officer for Pheasants Forever. “This new approach allows landowners to exercise their conservation ethic without the fear of drowning in up-front costs for natural resources management — it’s the future of conservation finance and we’re both proud and excited to take part in it.”

Pheasants Forever will act as an implementation partner, contracting with owners and managers of private working lands to oversee conservation plans over the next two years. Projects are expected to improve wildlife habitat for species such as pheasants and quail, enhance water resources through streamflow stabilization and raising the water table, and increase fire resilience by increasing the amount of wet meadows on the landscape.

The launch of this pilot WRB exemplifies Blue Forest and Pheasants Forever’s shared commitment to supporting landscape resilience in the western U.S.

#### [About Blue Forest:](#)

Blue Forest is a conservation finance non-profit founded in 2015 that advances ecosystem restoration through scientific research, financial innovation, and collaborative partnerships. Since 2018, Blue Forest has managed investor capital through its flagship financial product, the Forest Resilience Bond (FRB), which deploys private capital to finance forest restoration projects to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

#### [About Pheasants Forever:](#)

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever make up the nation’s largest nonprofit organization dedicated to upland habitat conservation. This community of more than 477,000 members,

supporters and partners is dedicated to the protection of our uplands through habitat improvement, public access, education and advocacy. A network of 754 local chapters spread across North America determine how 100 percent of their locally raised funds are spent — the only national conservation organization that operates through this grassroots structure. Since its creation in 1982, the organization has dedicated more than \$1 billion to 580,000 habitat projects benefiting 28.8 million acres.

For more information, go to [blueforest.org](https://blueforest.org).

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