



Preserving redwood forests since 1900

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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First National Census of Land Trusts in Five Years:

## **Big Gains in Voluntary Land Conservation Despite Recession**

Land Trusts Conserve 10 Million U.S. Acres, Outpace Major Government Land Acquisition Program

*Land Trusts See Increased Budgets and Endowments, Add Staff and Volunteers in Down Economy*

Los Altos, CA – The first census of land trusts in five years found 10 million new acres conserved nationwide since 2005, including 2,303,442 here in California.

The National Land Trust Census, released by the Land Trust Alliance, shows that voluntarily protected land increased 27 percent between 2005 and 2010. In the same time period, the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, a major federal conservation program, added just over 500,000 acres and saw a 38% funding cut. The census is online at [www.lta.org/census](http://www.lta.org/census).

A total of 47 million acres—an area over twice the size of all the national parks in the contiguous United States—are now protected by land trusts. A greater percentage of the new acreage comes through local land trusts like Sempervirens Fund. In California, land trusts conserved 2,303,442 acres between 2005 and 2010, a 34% increase in land protected. Since its formation in 1900, Sempervirens Fund has protected over 25,000 acres of redwood forestland in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

“Californians value their land, and we are conserving it at the community level,” said Reed Holderman, Executive Director of Sempervirens Fund. “Here in California, we are investing in our future with land trusts that ensure clean water, local food and places to play for our children and for generations to come.”

The work of Sempervirens Fund is proof that people in California and the Bay Area in particular, value the land and natural resources that surround them. In just the past five years, Sempervirens Fund has

purchased and added land to Castle Rock State Park, Big Basin Redwoods State Park, and Portola Redwoods State Park. “People around here realize how amazing redwood forests are and how important it is that we protect them. We could not do our work without their support,” said Mr. Holderman.

Other findings of the new National Land Trust Census include:

- California ranks first in the nation in acres conserved.
- Land trusts in California drew upon the work of 13,734 active volunteers (an increase of 94% since 2005) and the contributions of 178,512 members and financial supporters.
- California increased their full- and part-time staff and contractors 89% in five years, for a total of 986 paid positions in 2010.
- There are now 197 land trusts operating in California, including 103 staffed groups and 44 all-volunteer groups.
- **Operating budgets for land trusts are up 36% since 2005.** State and local trusts **nearly tripled operating endowments** in five years ensuring that land trust-protected land stays protected.
- **As a signal of the land trusts community’s commitment to excellence, there are now 16 accredited land trusts in California, including Sempervirens Fund.** Together these 16 groups have protected 602,428 acres as of 2010.

**Sempervirens Fund** is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to protect and permanently preserve redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of California’s Santa Cruz Mountains, and to encourage public appreciation and enjoyment of this environment. Sempervirens Fund is accredited by the Land Trust Alliance. Visit Sempervirens Fund on the web at [www.sempervirens.org](http://www.sempervirens.org).

**The Land Trust Alliance** is a national conservation organization that works to save the places people love. We increase the pace of conservation, so more land and natural resources get protected. We enhance the quality of conservation, so the most important lands get protected using the best practices in the business. And we ensure the permanence of conservation by creating the laws and resources needed to defend protected land over time. The Land Trust Alliance is based in Washington, D.C.

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