

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

FALL 2009

Why State Parks are Important

"A group of conservationists led by Andrew P. Hill camped at the base of Slippery Rock on May 16, 1900, and formed the Sempervirens Club to preserve the redwoods of Big Basin. Their efforts resulted in deeding 3,500 acres of primeval forest to the State of California on September 20, 1902. This marked the beginning of the California State Park System."

— Engraving on a plaque placed by the State Department of Parks & Recreation, September 22, 1968, at the site of California's first State Park.

As the organization that helped to establish California's State Park system, Sempervirens Fund has more than a passing interest in, or knowledge of, the importance of California's State Parks.

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Preserving redwood forests
since 1900

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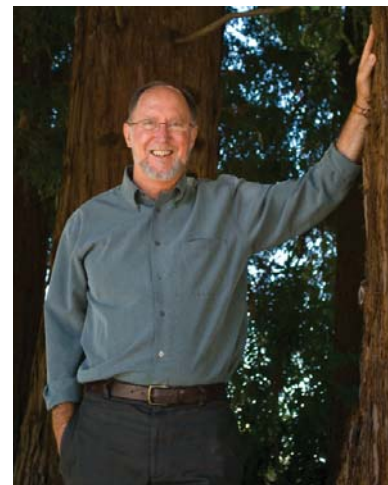
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Parks Matter

Parks come in all shapes and sizes and contain some of our most beautiful landscapes. They remind us that the natural world sustains life, provides refuge, and makes us better and more reflective human beings. This year, people are flocking to them in record numbers to reconnect with family and friends, to relax, and to enjoy the outdoors. Where else can you be inspired by great beauty, feel renewed, restored, and connected to something larger than yourself for less than \$10 a day? Our parks, especially our California State Parks, provide great value that cannot be measured.



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Public parks reinforce our core values as Americans. We have always had a special affinity for the land. Our ancestors believed it was this connection that made us a "beacon of hope" for the rest of the world. They reasoned that if nature was divinely inspired, then by embracing it we would be inspired as well. Parks remind us of our powerful connection to nature, the impact it has on us and our democratic ideas. Our connection to the land is at the core of our national identity.

It is for these reasons that I have great difficulty understanding why anyone would propose closing parks. Our parks are not just amenities, but essential components to human existence. They make us healthier and happier. They sustain us through good times and bad, giving us hope for a better tomorrow. They affirm who we are and who we hope to become and should never be taken for granted. Parks matter!

Reed Holderman
Executive Director

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Please remember to notify Sempervirens Fund when you change your address. (A note to our friends: occasionally we make our mailing list available on a one-time-only basis to carefully screened organizations with goals similar to those of Sempervirens Fund. If you would prefer that your name not be shared, please drop us a note — we will be happy to honor your request.)

Sempervirens Fund is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

State Parks

Continued from cover

With the closure of some of our local and state parks now a certainty, it is important to remember the many benefits that parks provide. Parks protect precious natural and wildlife resources. They are beautiful and provide a certain sanctuary and peace of mind that cannot be found in our increasingly crowded cities. But the benefits of parks go far beyond such immediate pleasures. In fact, they offer solutions to some of the most pressing issues of the day: public health and the economy.

Public Health

In this country, there has been a decline in the overall level of health, and the cost of taking care of our health problems is growing. Perhaps the most distressing element of this health crisis is the increase in obesity. The prevalence of obesity has increased 37% in the last twenty years. A new report published in *Health Affairs* shows that the cost of treating obesity-related health problems has doubled in the past decade, from \$78 billion a year in 1998 to \$147 billion in 2008.

“Ron and I have camped in many other parks, but Big Basin Redwoods State Park is our favorite — it’s smaller and feels more comfortable. I attended Girl Scout Camp in Sky Meadow as a teenager. This began my love of the outdoors: cooking, camping and being in the redwood trees.

We have a dedicated redwood tree in memory of our daughter in Sky Meadow, a very special spot in the redwood forest.”

Thelma and Ron Tuttle, Sempervirens Fund Donors

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), only 25% of Americans engage in the recommended amount of exercise. As one solution to this problem, the CDC recommends the creation of more parks. Multiple studies confirm that when people have access to parks, they are far more likely to exercise. These studies are as true for children as they are for adults. As the number of overweight children increases, so does the number of children with diabetes and other diseases. Many consider this to be a crisis. But it is a crisis with a fairly simple solution: provide kids with parks and places to play outside.



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Economy

Parks cost money to create and maintain. But so do all investments, which is exactly what parks are. Parks attract tourists, bringing money to state and local economies. They create jobs. Parks also increase property values and generate more property tax revenue. These benefits are

especially true in the Bay Area, which draws businesses and people from all over the world. In fact, for every dollar spent by the state of California on its parks, \$2.35 is returned to the state’s general fund from money spent in local communities by those visiting the parks.

Enhancing public health and local economies are compelling reasons to create, maintain, and support local and state parks. As the founder of the California State Parks system, Sempervirens Fund knows that parks are not just amenities—they are critical to our quality of life and the quality of life we will leave to our children. 🌲



Big Basin's Historic Campfire Circle Saved

This past spring, Sempervirens Fund's Board of Directors approved a \$175,000 grant to California State Parks to restore the historic Campfire Circle in Big Basin Redwoods State Park, a natural amphitheatre located near the park's headquarters. Since the 1930's, when the Circle was built by the California Conservation Corps, park staff and volunteers have been entertaining campers and visitors with free, unforgettable nighttime talks on nature and history, presented on a large covered stage illuminated by a giant campfire. The audience lounges on comfortable benches milled from downed redwood trees underneath the towering canopy of the surrounding redwoods, some reaching over 300 feet high.

Unfortunately, time has taken its toll on the benches and stage. In 2007, when it became clear that the redwood benches, some of them

over 50 years old, would not last another summer, State Parks requested our help. At that time, with the partnership of Mountain Parks Association, we provided funding to begin restoring this essential feature of the park. However, the cost of finding downed redwoods trees of suitable diameter and quality, hauling them to a portable mill set up on-site, cutting the trees into benches, and re-installing them at the Campfire Circle was more than anticipated. In February 2009, Karl Tallman, Mountain Sector Superintendent for State Parks' Santa Cruz District, wrote to Sempervirens Fund asking for assistance in finishing the project, noting that "time and time again, Sempervirens Fund's support has enabled the Santa Cruz District to continue to acquire vital land to be added to our park system and to help preserve, protect, and interpret these

wonderful resources that are found in Big Basin Redwoods State Park."

While beautiful redwood trees may be the park's main attraction, features like the Campfire Circle are also an important part of the park experience. Thanks to our members' support, Sempervirens Fund was able to provide funding to complete the restoration of this historic outdoor amphitheater at a time when Californians are looking for inexpensive outdoor recreational opportunities close to home. Construction is scheduled to begin this fall and to be completed by summer, 2010. By the time you receive this newsletter, the Circle's programs will be concluded for this year, but will start up again next summer. For more information, please call 831-338-8883 or visit www.parks.ca.gov. 🌲

40 More Acres Added to Gazos Wildlife Corridor!

We are pleased to announce our recent purchase of a 40-acre parcel in the Gazos Creek watershed north of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. The land was purchased from private owners and is a key piece in establishing the Gazos Wildlife Corridor. With this purchase, we have acquired a total of 158 acres for the corridor and are very close to linking Big Basin Redwoods and Butano State Parks. Sempervirens Fund is in the process of establishing a wildlife corridor that will allow for the movement of animals between parks, the promotion of species biodiversity, and the protection of threatened species.

One species for whom this protected corridor is essential is the threatened marbled murrelet. The Gazos Creek watershed is one of only four nesting habitats for this sea bird in the Santa Cruz Mountains. The rare murrelet makes its nests in old growth redwood canopies. According to wildlife biologist and Sempervirens Fund Advisor Steve Singer, Gazos Creek watershed “appears to be the stronghold for the marbled murrelet. Studies in other areas show their numbers are declining, but here they have remained remarkably stable.”

But this land is a special place not just for plants and animals, but for humans as well. This parcel, and



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the whole Gazos Creek area in general, is quite beautiful. It embodies what is so amazing about the Santa Cruz Mountains: hikes through majestic redwood forests and canyons that lead to amazing views of the Pacific. 🌲

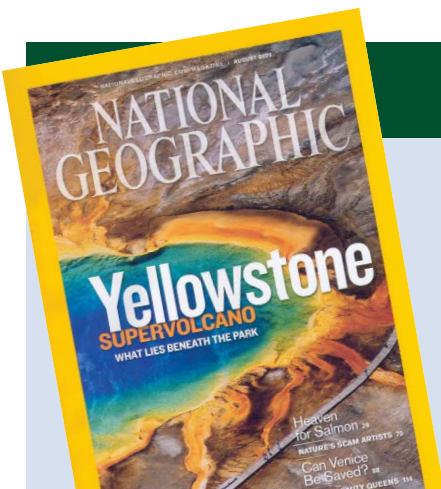
109th Anniversary Picnic a Great Success

This past May, we celebrated our 109th Anniversary with more than 250 members at Little Basin. This was our biggest anniversary picnic yet, and we were thrilled to see so many of our supporters enjoying the park. The weather was great, as were the BBQ lunch, Marianne’s ice cream,

and the music by local bluegrass favorite, Harmony Grits. Of course, it was the people that really made the day so special. We hope that even more of you can make it to our 110th Anniversary picnic next year. Thanks again to our volunteers and sponsors who helped make the day possible! 🌲



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Redwoods in *National Geographic*

Keep your eye out for the October issue of *National Geographic*, which will be devoted solely to coastal redwoods! The magazine has decided to resurrect its old style—and with a single focus and pull out map—and its first issue will be on redwoods. The heart of the magazine will cover adventurer Mike Fay’s one-year Redwood Transect, in which he walked from the southernmost redwood forest in Big Sur to the northernmost redwood forest in Oregon. 🌲



Double your Gift!

With a Matching Grant from The San Francisco Foundation

We recently received the second \$50,000 payment of a three-year challenge grant from the Evelyn T. Mohrhardt Fund at The San Francisco Foundation. The Mohrhardt Fund's grant will match your donation of any amount to support Sempervirens Fund's efforts to purchase and protect redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Please take advantage of this opportunity to double your gift to Sempervirens Fund and help protect our beautiful world-renowned redwoods. A multi-purpose envelope is enclosed so you can send your donation today. 🌲



For more information...

Please contact Kerry Bresnahan at (650) 968-4509 or email kbresnahan@sempervirens.org.



Staff notes

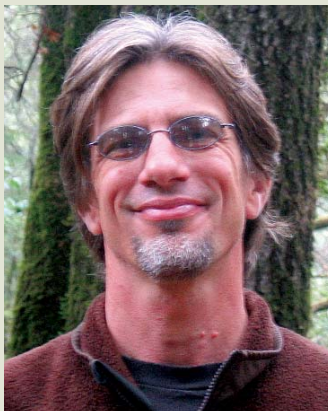
After more than two years at Sempervirens Fund, Elliott Wright has resigned to pursue new opportunities. We want to thank Elliott for his many contributions to our work and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

ASK THE REDWOOD DOCTOR

If a tree falls in the forest...

A

I know that trees tend to uproot during storms when the winds are high and the ground is wet, but what I really want to know is how many degrees the base of a redwood tree has to tilt for it to uproot?



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Will Russell, Ph.D.:

The angle of repose for a redwood tree is dependent on a variety of factors, each of which varies significantly across the landscape. Slope and soil conditions are obvious variables, but equally (if not more important) is the health and size of a tree's root system. Coast redwood trees often grow in clonal groups with interconnected root systems that impede the process of windthrow. It is not

unusual to find a partially uprooted tree, leaning at an acute angle, which is still alive and flourishing. Root disease, however, can result in a predisposition to windthrow. Trees that have root systems that are severely compromised can blow down quiet easily with very little wind. 🌲

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Love Blossoms in the Redwoods

Elizabeth Massie chose to remember her mother and to honor her family and friends by establishing the “Elizabeth Love Massie Family Redwood Grove”. As she hoped, it has become a splendid part of her family life. In fact, Elizabeth’s family from “back east” comes frequently to enjoy her beautiful grove at Big Basin Redwoods State Park. And Elizabeth’s gift to our Dedicated Grove Program insures that Sempervirens Fund can continue to preserve the redwood land that she loves.

Though she envisioned a special family gathering place, little did Elizabeth know that her grove would inspire others to acknowledge their love of one another. Bess Huddle, Elizabeth’s niece, along with her



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boyfriend Nick Malson visited the grove that is named for her Great Grandmother and namesake. While Elizabeth looked on, Nick got down on his knees and proposed to Bess. At that moment the “Love” in the Elizabeth Love Massie Grove took on a new dimension.

At the spot where Bess accepted Nick’s ring they connected with a very special redwood tree that symbolized their marriage and long future together. Through Sempervirens Fund’s Dedicated Tree Program, Bess and Nick included “their tree” in their wedding gift registry. Friends and family embraced the lasting tribute and made donations to fund the dedication of the tree. A year later, Nick and Bess returned to place a personalized name stake at the base of their tree in the Massie Family Grove.

To find out how you can establish a named redwood grove or dedicated redwood tree, please contact Linda Yule at (831) 338-3236 or lyfe@comcast.net. 🌲

Tributes

Dedicated redwood groves, redwood trees, and Legacy Grove gifts were established in honor or memory of the following people between April 13, 2009 and August 10, 2009:

Dedicated Redwood Grove, Butano State Park

James O’Neil
given by Daniel O’Neil and Theresa Hayden

Dedicated Redwoods, Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Dr. Clarence “Ike” Carpenter
given by family and friends

Jackie Ferguson
given by William Ferguson

Hartley and Dorothy Gross
given by Robert Gross

Vladimir Koudelka
given by Dave and Deborah Grover

Neil Krauss
given by Richard Stover and Debbie Bulger

Vicki Lundgren
given by Vicki Lundgren

Patricia Silliman Martinelli
given by Trisha and Brandon Kett

Meyers Circle of Trees
given by John R. and Emily Meyers

Jillian Bailey Naber
given by Pam Peugh

The Reed Family
given by Christi A. Savoy

Ron and Thelma Tuttle
given by Bob and Barbara Walton

Teller Weinmann
given by Shirlee M. Weinmann

Legacy Grove, San Lorenzo River Redwoods

Dorothy Ann Schafer
given by Stanley Barnes

Legacy Grove, Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Michael Eddie Arvizu
given by Ms. Anita Meneses

Stanley Barnes
given by Arent and Jean Schuyler

John Dunmire, Jr.
given by John R. Dunmire

John William Jalonen
given by Bruce and Adrienne Mitchell

Jeffrey C. Leigh
given by Philip and Janet Leigh

Pat and Al Lisin and
Jan and John Nicoara
given by Alexander and Patricia Lisin

Tia Lodewijks (van der Wal)
given by Nan Tunison Ogawa

James Joseph O’Connor
given by Bruce Knoth and Maeve Visser Knoth

Eleanor O’Connor Olsen
given by Bruce Knoth and Maeve Visser Knoth

Aurelia Bensing Pinnell
given by Richard and Pamela Montgomery

Larry Speer
given by Lawrence Leonard

David C. Yorimoto
given by Richard and Pamela Montgomery



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Give a Gift that Grows

Plant a tree, or dedicate a redwood tree or grove to honor someone special or a special occasion. Your thoughtful gift will help restore our forests and reduce global warming.

An attractive gift card will be sent to the person(s) you are honoring or the person(s) you specify for a memorial gift.

You can choose from the following gift amounts:

- **\$50** Tree planted in a state redwood park in Northern California and not individually identified
- **\$300** Nameplate placed in Big Basin Legacy Grove
- **\$1,000** Nameplate placed in San Lorenzo River Redwoods Legacy Grove
- **\$2,500** Nameplate placed in Gazos Creek Waterfall Legacy Grove
- **\$500** Dedicated redwood tree in Big Basin Redwoods, Butano, or Castle Rock State Park chosen by Sempervirens Fund and nameplate placed at base of tree
- **\$1,000+** Dedicated redwood tree in Big Basin Redwoods, Butano, or Castle Rock State Park chosen by whomever you designate and nameplate placed at base of tree
- **\$25,000+** Dedicated redwood grove in Big Basin Redwoods, Butano, or Castle Rock State Park chosen by whomever you designate and sign placed in grove

To make your gift, please call (650) 968-4509 or visit our website at www.sempervirens.org. 🌲



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