

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

FALL 2017

COTONI-COAST RIDGE

Connected and Soon to be Protected





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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thanks to your commitment and generosity, Sempervirens Fund continues to speak for the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The cover story of this edition of Mountain Echo highlights our latest effort to acquire and permanently protect a 106-acre property we refer to as "Cotoni-Coast Ridge." I love this property not only for its great beauty and ecological richness, but also because it is adjacent to Cotoni-Coast Dairies, one of the nation's newest national monuments and one of Sempervirens Fund's most recent successes. Our engagement in this portion of the California coast illustrates perfectly how our work in the Santa Cruz Mountains is done in steady, ongoing increments, through which we are continually building and expanding upon our past conservation achievements while also looking ahead to the next goal.

While you can count on Sempervirens Fund to be an ever-present, fearless protector of the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains, our efforts are constantly being buffeted by larger forces, some of which are hard for us to control. The recent push by President Trump to roll back protections for numerous national monuments is a good example of those forces. While the Cotoni-Coast Dairies portion of the California Coastal National Monument is not currently in jeopardy, it may be in the future. We will remain vigilant in its defense.

The inadequate funding that the California legislature has allocated to the California State Parks system in recent years is another factor undermining conservation in this landscape. State Parks is so impoverished that the natural, historic and cultural resources it stewards are increasingly at risk. The lack of funding has prevented the agency from creating new parks or expanding existing parks because they cannot afford the additional costs of maintaining these lands. The backlog of deferred maintenance projects in our State Park system now tops \$1 billion. Sempervirens Fund is working with a number of partners to support placement of a park bond on the ballot in November 2018 that would help provide an infusion of much-needed funding to our state parks. Success on this front will require engagement from all of you, so please stay tuned for how you can lend your voice to this worthy cause.

I am glad you are by my side as, together, we speak up for the redwoods.
Thank you!

Sincerely,

Sara Barth, Executive Director



COTONI-COAST RIDGE



The views from Cotoni-Coast Ridge reveal just how connected this ecosystem is, from the redwood forests on the mountain ridges down to the sea.

Imagine...

a warm fall day. The sky is bright blue and there is a gentle breeze in the air. You are sitting on your picnic blanket at the top of an open coastal hillside. To the west you look out over Swanton Pacific Ranch toward the Pacific Ocean and the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. A white-tailed kite hovers overhead. You adjust your hat and turn your head to look south and see Cotoni-Coast Dairies, a 5,800-acre property added by President Barack Obama to the California Coastal National Monument less than a year ago. You helped to make that happen.

A branch snaps and you turn to see the tail of a critter—perhaps a San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat—as it scampers away. Dang, you missed it! But that’s okay because instead you see a glorious view. You look up and out over oak woodlands, across the canyon and into a cool redwood forest. A bit further to the east you see a ridgeline of the San Vicente Redwoods. You breathe in deeply and feel at peace. You are on Cotoni-Coast Ridge.

This pie-shaped property is 106 acres and sits at the nexus of three large protected areas: San Vicente Redwoods (8,500 acres), Cotoni-Coast Dairies (5,800 acres) and Swanton Pacific Ranch (3,200 acres). Despite its relatively small size, Cotoni-Coast Ridge is a key connector property that facilitates the movement of wildlife across this 17,500-acre protected landscape. For species like mountain lions and badgers that need large areas to roam, this connection is particularly important.

Cotoni-Coast Ridge is exceptional in that it includes a range of elevations, several microclimates and many different habitats. Redwoods cover approx-



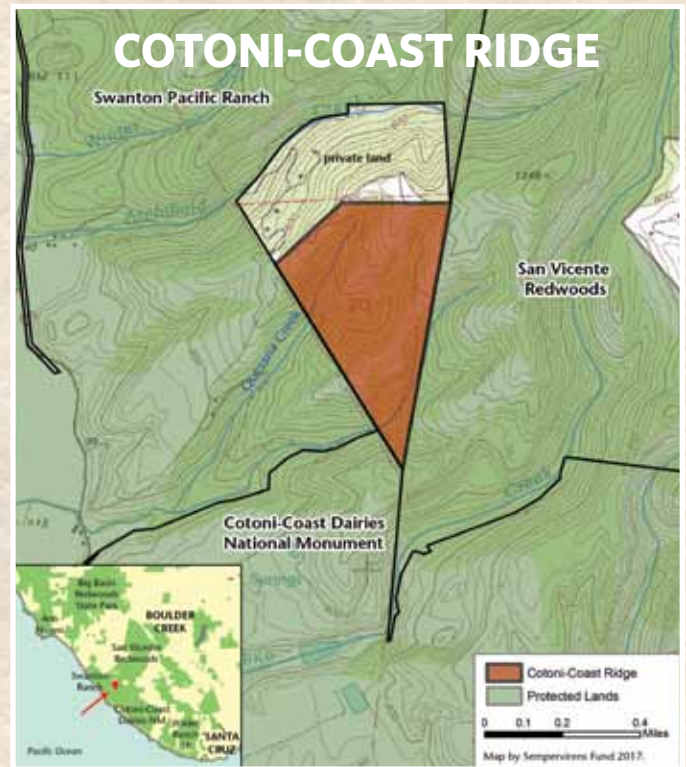
Cindy Roesler/SCMBC

imately one half of the property and the remainder is a mix of hardwoods (e.g., oak, madrone, bay), coastal terrace prairie (a sensitive habitat that has been impacted locally by development and the invasion of exotic weeds), and coastal scrub. The property also includes the headwaters of Quesaria Creek, which feeds into lower Scotts Creek, an essential creek for the endangered Coho and steelhead salmon. This diversity of habitats supports native wildlife like the Ohlone tiger beetle, Santa Cruz black salamander, northern harrier and pileated woodpecker.

For all of these reasons, we are protecting this special place.

By helping us to acquire Cotoni-Coast Ridge (and other properties like it), you are protecting its open prairies, shrubs, and trees from the threat of subdivision and development, the landscape it connects from fragmentation, and the ecological processes it supports from degradation. You are protecting breeding, resting, and foraging habitat for wildlife and fresh running water for fish and other aquatic species. And you are protecting 360-degree views that will take your breath away.

The landowner has agreed to sell the property to Sempervirens Fund for \$1,225,000 and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation has committed \$600,000 to support the acquisition. We are trying to raise the remaining \$625,000 to complete this purchase. Many of you have already made donations to this



project. Thank you! With your help, we will acquire this spectacular property in January 2018, together ensuring that its natural resources, diverse habitats, exceptional connectivity and irreplaceable redwoods remain healthy and unthreatened for all time.

If you would like to help protect and steward the Cotoni-Coast Ridge property and others like it, please make a donation today using the envelope found in the center of this publication or make your gift online at www.sempervirens.org. 🌲

A Fledgling in the Forest

What a treat it is to spot a great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) on the forest floor, especially a young one who has recently acquired its feathers! This fledgling may appear to be helpless, but in fact it is well equipped to spend up to two weeks on the ground as it, quite literally, finds its wings. Great horned owls are at the top of their food chain and can prey upon animals as large as skunks.

Spotting a great horned owl is a good indication that there is a healthy abundance of prey in the forest, so we were thrilled when we found this young owl on the Cotoni-Coast Ridge property (see page 1). Strong, diverse populations of wildlife are part of the makeup of a healthy forest ecosystem—the kind of healthy forest that you are helping to protect and connect in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



A great horned owl fledgling at the Cotoni-Coast Ridge property.

To watch a video of the great horned owl sighting at Cotoni-Coast Ridge, visit www.sempervirens.org/gho/.

Steve Autten



Protecting Redwoods and our Climate in a Post-Paris World

When President Trump announced the U.S. would withdraw from the Paris climate accord on June 1, Sempervirens Fund doubled down on its commitment to help the U.S. reach its stated climate goals — despite the lack of leadership at the federal level.

While recent research indicates some redwoods may grow at a faster pace as a result of environmental conditions associated with a warming climate, the effects of climate change pose great threats to redwood forests. Wildfires resulting from drier conditions and higher temperatures threaten forests and the wildlife that live within them, and extended periods of drought can put stress on trees, making them more susceptible to pests.

At the same time, healthy redwood forests play a particularly important role in protecting our local climate. As they grow, redwoods take carbon dioxide out of the air and sequester and retain it in their wood; redwoods, in fact, capture more carbon that has been emitted from our cars, trucks and power plants than any other tree on Earth. When the carbon is captured and stored within living redwoods rather than remaining in the atmosphere, it no longer affects our climate.

Because of you, protection of these mighty redwoods continues with vim, vigor, and for the vitality of us all.

Protecting the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains has been Sempervirens Fund's core mission for over 117 years, and that work, which you make possible, is ever-more important today.

Your support helps to protect key properties like Cotoni-Coast Ridge (see page 1), which fosters climate

resiliency in the Santa Cruz Mountains; you are saving second-growth redwoods from harvest, allowing them to continue to grow and sequester carbon from the atmosphere; you are protecting forests that harbor native wildlife and habitat linkages that are critical for larger animals that need room to roam; and you are creating a protected, connected landscape, thus facilitating the coordinated land management that is key to enhancing forest health and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

You are also helping to create a new financing tool for redwood conservation. The Santa Cruz Carbon Cooperative, which we have been designing for the past two years, uses carbon credit aggregation as an incentive to protect the trees on small, forested properties. If this method proves feasible, enrolled landowners who agree to leave their trees standing will be paid for the carbon their redwoods sequester. The Carbon Cooperative will sell the aggregated "carbon credits," valued by an independent third party, to companies that want to offset the carbon they are producing.

The Santa Cruz Mountains redwoods have already witnessed a lot of history; with your help we are ensuring that they continue to thrive regardless of the climate in Washington D.C. or Paris. 🌲

Amah Mutsun Land Trust Takes Flight

As a young bird looks to its mother for guidance when it learns to fly, new organizations often seek mentors while they grow the needed skills, expertise and staff to achieve their goals. Since late 2012, Sempervirens Fund has been serving as the fiscal sponsor of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT), providing financial and accounting services, project management, and fundraising support for this young organization.

Now, just under five years later, the AMLT is a stand-alone nonprofit organization with an executive director, a committed board of directors, and a growing base of public and private funders. The AMLT owns a conservation easement protecting 96 acres of culturally significant land located just south of the Costanoa Lodge in Pescadero. The AMLT's



well-regarded Native Stewardship Corps program is reconnecting young members of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band with the sacred lands, cultural practices, and ecological knowledge of their ancestors while providing much-needed land stewardship services for Santa Cruz area public agencies and nonprofit landowners.

We are proud to have helped this important new land trust to grow its wings and look forward to working in continued partnership as we protect and care for the landscapes and the forests we call home. **For more information about the AMLT visit www.amahmutsun.org/land-trust.** 🌲

Castle Rock: Get Ready to Celebrate!

Sempervirens Fund has envisioned a grand entrance welcoming local residents and visitors to the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains for many years.

In 2011, you supported the purchase of a 33-acre parcel from the Whalen Family. State Parks identified this site as the ideal entrance for Castle Rock State Park, the “gateway” to the Santa Cruz Mountain redwoods. After community meetings, design revisions, and traffic and environmental assessments, Santa Cruz County approved our two-phase conceptual plan (which includes a new visitor center in Phase 2) in September 2014. Since that time, the property’s zoning has been changed from agricultural to open space and recreation, additional assessments and plans were produced, and the necessary permits for Phase I were finally secured in March 2017.

Thanks to your ongoing support, Sempervirens Fund was able to approve a \$5 million contract with

the well-respected local builder Robert A. Bothman, Inc. Construction of the new Robert C. Kirkwood entrance, 90-car parking lot with permeable paving, six restrooms with flush toilets, drinking water station, 60-seat amphitheater, interpretive exhibits, landscaping with native plants, and accessible pathways and picnic areas is now underway! Construction will continue, weather permitting, throughout the next few months.

Creating this new entrance is a fitting way to mark the anniversary of Castle Rock State Park, which turns 50 years old in 2018. We look forward to celebrating this beloved park and walking with you through its new entrance in the spring. For construction updates, visit sempervirens.org/news-events.

Some exciting naming opportunities are still available. Contact Barbara Lamb Hall at (650) 949-1453 x 203 or Blambhall@sempervirens.org if you would like to add your support, or honor someone, at this new park entrance. 🌲

FIELD NOTES: *Thank you for helping us care for the forests!*

Large Woody Debris in San Vicente Redwoods

While many undeveloped landscapes appear vibrant and untouched from a distance, a closer look reveals ecosystems that are still suffering the impacts of past human disturbances. Part of being a good steward of the forests we protect is recognizing when and how these systems are impaired and proactively restoring them to benefit the plants, animals, and humans that rely on the complex interactions of a healthy ecosystem. A perfect example of this stewardship work can be found at San Vicente Redwoods, where we have enhanced stream habitat by placing large tree sections in the creek. Due to past logging along San Vicente and Mill Creeks, the gradual accumulation of large woody debris in the stream channels was greatly reduced. By strategically felling trees across the creek, our stewardship work will help mimic the natural development of in-stream wood, providing a more complex habitat with in-stream and off-channel refuges ideal for steelhead and Coho salmon

populations. The large woody debris also traps and stores sediment, which can act as a natural filter during large storm events like those we experienced this past winter. With your support and through careful, active management, we are helping to revitalize the forest and protect rare fish species. 🌲



Location of the large woody debris project in San Vicente Creek

An Unforgiving Winter Brings Unexpected Challenges



A metal gate and a culvert pipe slip down an eroded stream bank at Lompico Headwaters

Preparing for heavy rain in years of drought is a difficult and necessary task, and sometimes even careful planning isn't enough. More than 92 inches of rain produced an estimated \$114 million in storm damage to roads in Santa Cruz County this winter. Our properties did not escape the torrent either; the rain had extensive impacts to the land you've helped protect - from collapsed gates to slumping roads and landslides carrying boulders the size of water trucks. To help address some of the immediate problems, we took part in collaborative efforts to identify damage and reopen roads critical to fire safety and emergency access. Streams and watercourses took a serious blow from the heavy erosion, so we have begun repairing and upgrading culverts to lower the potential for catastrophic failures in the future. We are even looking into creative solutions to reuse washed-out material to help strengthen sensitive stream banks. Your support helps us to respond to unexpected challenges like these, which will cost Sempervirens Fund well over \$1 million. 🌲

NEW FACES IN THE FOREST

Lauren Chavez joined the staff in June 2017 as Project Manager for the Robert C. Kirkwood Entrance to Castle Rock State Park. She holds a BA in Urban Studies and an MS in Civil & Environmental Engineering from Stanford University, with a focus on sustainable communities, green buildings, and construction management. Lauren previously worked in residential construction and served as inaugural managing director for We Players, launching and establishing the Bay Area site-integrated theatre troupe as an arts and education nonprofit.



Lauren Chavez

Barbara Lamb Hall joined Sempervirens Fund in March 2017 as Associate Director of Development, bringing extensive fundraising experience with a wide range of nonprofits, including KCSM public radio, a division of the College of San Mateo, and the Village Enterprise Fund, which supports microbusinesses in rural Africa. She has also served as a Board Member for Each One Reach One and the Association of Fundraising Professionals Silicon Valley Chapter. Barbara is a proud mother of three young adults and a dedicated runner who loves to explore the trails in our local parks.



Barbara Lamb Hall

Ryan Masters joined Sempervirens Fund as Communications Director in July 2017. Born and raised in the Santa Cruz Mountains, Ryan grew up tromping through the chaparral and redwoods and surfing the Central Coast from Big Sur to San Francisco. He is a communications/marketing professional and writer with decades of experience contributing to regional and national newspapers, magazines and online publications, including the Monterey County Herald, the Monterey County Weekly, Santa Cruz Sentinel, and Hilltromper. He has taught an environmental writing course at CSU Monterey Bay and held the position of poet-in-residence for the city of Pacific Grove.



Ryan Masters



The Redwood Circle

Sempervirens Fund's Board of Directors recently established The Redwood Circle to recognize individuals who have been of extraordinary service to our organization. We are proud to welcome Robert L. Katz, Ellie & Dick Mansfield and Emily Thurber to this honorary board. It is in great part because of their legacy of leadership and dedication that Sempervirens Fund thrives today. They will forever remain an important part of the Sempervirens Fund family.



Sempervirens Fund Contributors

Sempervirens Fund gratefully acknowledges the 376 donors who made substantial contributions to the organization between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017. In addition to the supporters listed here, we appreciate the more than 6,603 contributors whose gifts cannot be included here due to space limitations. Every gift matters. Thank you!

For a list of donors who have dedicated a tree or grove to honor a loved one or mark an important event, please visit sempervirens.org/tribute-donors-2017.

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Antony Nispel
Lynn Noble
John and Martha O'Malley
Jocelyn J. Orr
Robert Orrizzi
Otter B Books
Hunter Owens
Jacqueline Patterson
Larry Persson
Lauritz Petersen
Elizabeth Pfluger
Regina Phelps
David Philleo
Susan Pierce
Julie Pifer
Karl Pingle
Robin M. Poppoff
Dan and Helen Quinn
Robert C. and Janie Pace
 Rempel Family
Robert and Marjorie Rice
John Richtarek and
 Laura Ness
Elizabeth Robinson
Bob Rodert and Bev Kiltz
LeRoy and Jennifer Rodriguez
Paula Roloff
Betsy Boardman Ross
Joan Rost
Ruth Rouse
Allen and Pamela Rozelle
Jean Salmon
Richard Schechter
Ann Scott
Scottology Foundation Trust
Lee Sendelbeck
Jeanette Shortley
Doreen Smith
Cherrill Spencer
Karl and Heidemarie Sprick
John Stanton
Harrison and Sandra Starr
Judith and Hans Steiner
Georgia Stigall

Fred Stoffel
Cecile Stowe
William and Barbara Straka
Nelson Stubbins
Stacey Sutton
Emily and James Thurber
Ron Tisinger
Leslie Train
Wendy Turner
Denzil and Jennie Verardo
Kat Von Rhau
Linda Wagner
William K. Warburton
Lawrence Wedeen
Richard Wheat
Lornie and Petrina White
The Harold Widom Fund at
 Community Foundation
 Santa Cruz County
Kenneth Wilcox
Clyde and Elizabeth Wilson
Jane Wyckoff

Bequests

The Estate of Jobst Brandt
Leigh and Brenda Chisholm
 Charitable Remainder
 Trust
Eackles Family Trust
The Trust Estate of Frances
 Escherich
Estate of Andrew J. Geiser
Alfred D. Gianelli Trust
Tom McEachern Trust
Judith Moore 1950 Trust
Estate of James Morton Morley
The Grace Jones Richardson
 Trust
Odette Cecile Rockert Estate
Harold A. Schessler, Jr. Trust
The Frederic and Carolyn
 Silverman Revocable Trust
Skillin Trust
Trust of Marguerite Louise
 Szekely
David Bruce Tyack Trust
Estate of Denyse M. Wear
Estate of W. Earl Wear
The Estate of Nancy P. Weston
Estate of Margaret C. Winston

We want your ideas!

We are engaged in a strategic planning process and want your help as we plan for the future. We are also taking a moment to reassess the format of the Mountain Echo. Please visit www.sempervirens.org/strategicplanning to participate in our online survey so we can make sure that your input and insights are part of our shared future.



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Dan and Helen Quinn – Giving Back

Dan and I met as graduate students at Stanford in the early 60's and bonded over our shared love of the outdoors. We married while students in 1966, did postdocs in Germany, but returned in 1977 to make Portola Valley our home.

Naturally we passed on our love of the outdoors to our children and explored all over the Santa Cruz Mountains. We started to donate annually to Sempervirens Fund (SVF) in 1978 to preserve these landscapes. We memorialized my parents with dedicated trees in Big Basin, which really cemented our connection, and are excited to watch the network of protected lands grow.

Now we want to ensure that a part of our estate will support Sempervirens Fund's future work. We feel blessed to live surrounded by public land and love to visit these areas with our grandkids. Our hope is that families for generations to come will be able to enjoy the peace and beauty of these hills and trees just as we do.

Dan Quinn contributes professional photos to SVF, including Little Basin images taken in 2007. See more of Dan's photos at capturethelight.zenfolio.com. To learn more about Legacy Giving, contact Barbara Lamb Hall at (650) 949-1453 x 203 or Blambhall@sempervirens.org.

Photo provided by Dan and Helen Quinn



At the dedication of a Big Basin redwood to Helen's mother, 1987. Helen's father stands, then left to right: Dan, Bethica, Helen and Jameson Quinn.