

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

FALL 2010



Turning Protected Land into Parks

Protecting redwood forests is a complicated job. And making these forests available for the public to enjoy can be even more complicated. Both take know-how, solid relationships, money, and time. Fortunately, over the years Sempervirens Fund has had plenty of all four to purchase more than 25,000 acres of redwood forest land in the Santa Cruz Mountains and help create and expand Big Basin Redwoods, Castle Rock, Portola Redwoods, and Butano State Parks. This fall we expect to add even more land to our state parks with the transfer of two properties: Island Forest and Little Basin.

Sempervirens purchased the 160-acre Island Forest property in 1999 to protect its forests and other natural resources and to expand Portola Redwoods State Park. The property is a natural wildlife corridor and straddles the ridgetop connecting the headwaters of two vital tributaries of Pescadero Creek. It also connects trails through Portola Redwoods State Park and into the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Long Range Preserve and beyond. State Parks wanted to add the Island

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Preserving redwood forests
since 1900

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Price of Parks

I am well aware of the daily struggles our parks face, but I am convinced that we can tackle these challenges and make things better.

So here's the deal: if the California State Parks Initiative is approved by voters this November, we will pay an additional \$18.00 a year in vehicle registration fees, keep our state parks open, and get free access to 278 state parks. Considering that the current single day fee at most state parks is \$10.00, this is a great deal—for everyone.

If the initiative is defeated, almost \$2 billion in deferred state park maintenance will get worse, much worse; most of our state parks will be permanently closed due to lack of operating funds; and the businesses and towns that depend on our parks for their livelihood will suffer even more.

As Californians, we have a special connection to the land. Our culture was forged by the frontier and polished by the towering peaks, golden hills, and picturesque coastline we call home. We are children of the land, of the West, and our state parks enshrine and protect the very best examples of California's landscape for us to use and enjoy.

There are many problems facing our state, and we can't fix them all. But we can fix this one. Please join me and Sempervirens Fund's board and staff in voting "YES" on Proposition 21 this November and encouraging others to do the same.



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Thank you!

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 to carefully screened organizations with goals similar to those of Sempervirens Fund. If you would prefer that your name not be shared, please contact us — 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.

Parks

(continued from cover)

Forest property to Portola Redwoods back in 1999, but did not have adequate funding to purchase and steward the land. We are very excited that the transfer of this beautiful property is finally going to happen!

Little Basin is a similar story. In 2007, together with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), Sempervirens Fund purchased the Little Basin property from the Hewlett-Packard Company. The property's 534 acres of majestic coast redwoods, madrone, and tanoak trees and fully developed camping and day use facility together make a natural addition to the adjacent Big Basin Redwoods State Park. With POST, Sempervirens Fund has been caring for the property's natural resources and operating the campground knowing that one day this magnificent area would be added to the state park.



© Markus Niebarck

Island Forest

State Parks has approved the acquisition of Island Forest and Little Basin and has identified the funds needed to purchase both properties—at highly discounted prices—from us. The properties are two of a small handful of projects statewide that State Parks has money to purchase this year using funds generated by the prior sale of state resource bonds. We expect the State Public Works Board to give final approval for the acquisitions this fall. 🌲



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Little Basin

Land Trust Accreditation...We Need Your Help

Sempervirens Fund recently applied for Land Trust Alliance (LTA) accreditation. LTA is a nonprofit organization that represents 1,600 land trusts nationwide and accredits land trusts that meet their standards and practices for protecting important natural places, working lands, and parks.

As part of the process, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission invites public input regarding our application. We encourage you to comment

on our work. To submit comments, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org or mail comments to Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Public Comments, 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. You can also fax them to (518) 587-3183.



Thank you!

The legacy of oil...



Photo © Glenn Bartley

Sempervirens Fund recently received a generous grant to fund the purchase of a remote forest property and to monitor an endangered seabird that makes its nests in old-growth redwoods and Douglas firs. The story behind this grant dates back to 1953, but is very relevant to current events in a number of ways.

On a foggy summer day in July, the SS Jacob Luckenbach set sail for Korea from the Port of San Francisco. About 17 miles west of the Golden Gate Bridge, the Luckenbach collided with another ship and sank in about 180 feet of water. She was laden with Jeep parts, railroad equipment, and more than 450,000 gallons of bunker fuel, a crude and highly polluting oil.

Resting in the waters that now are a part of the Gulf of the Farrallones National Marine Sanctuary, the Luckenbach was all but forgotten except by local scuba divers and the various marine species that made the wreck their home. But in 2002 after a series of “mystery spills,” the sunken Luckenbach began to receive attention again. Scientists realized that it had been leaking oil for decades, especially during winter

storms, and resulted in the oiling of thousands of seabirds along northern California beaches from Bodega Bay to Monterey Bay. The U.S. Coast Guard oversaw a \$19 million effort to remove oil from the wreck and to prevent further releases. Unfortunately, a great deal of damage had already been done.

One species impacted by the Luckenbach spill was the marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), a small federally threatened seabird that feeds in the shallow waters along the seashore and nests up to 50 miles inland in the tops of old-growth redwood and Douglas fir trees. To help reverse the damage to marbled murrelets and other species affected by this spill, federal and state agencies have tapped the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, which collects fees from the oil industry to pay for oil spill cleanup and restoration.

In June 2010, federal and state agencies were awarded \$2.5 million to address impacts to the marbled murrelets. Of this amount, \$760,000 was designated to support Sempervirens Fund's acquisition of a 160-acre property located along Butano Creek (purchased in January 2010) and \$50,000 to support five years of murrelet monitoring. The property lies within one of the four major murrelet flight corridors in the Santa Cruz Mountains and includes critical habitat that supports the most isolated and vulnerable population of marbled murrelets anywhere.

Local biologist and murrelet expert Steve Singer is leading this monitoring project. Singer feels that, though murrelet populations extend far north of the Santa Cruz Mountains, the protection of populations in this area is particularly important. Surveys show that a significant number of murrelets migrate from the extreme northern part of the state to nest in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Since there are redwoods in that part of the state as well, this pattern indicates that many murrelets prefer our local redwoods to those further north. According to Singer, “If we can keep the forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains intact, there is potential for building and sustaining our murrelet population.” With the protection of wildlife corridors and the remaining stands of old growth redwood forests, Singer is very hopeful that these little birds will be around for a long time. 🌲





Steve Singer searching for marbled murrelets.



A Beautifully Wrapped Gift

In 2003 Ben and Helene Brenchley donated their home, a beautiful Eichler house in San Jose, to Sempervirens Fund while retaining a life estate in it. The Brenchley's daughter Joan said of her parents, "They loved wild places where they found respite from their busy Bay Area lives. They took my brother and me out at every chance, and the redwoods were one of our favorite places. So when they decided to leave their home to Sempervirens Fund, my brother and I were delighted."

When Ben Brenchley passed away in October 2009, Sempervirens Fund received the Brenchley home. But before we took possession, Joan Brenchley and her brother Bill insisted on painting the house to increase its value. Bill said, "The painting of the house was purely the gift wrapping on my parents' dream to give back to the redwoods that they so enjoyed throughout their lives."

We thank the entire Brenchley family for their tremendous generosity. The proceeds from the sale will be used to support Sempervirens Fund's ongoing work to buy more redwood forests. If you would like to make a planned gift to Sempervirens Fund, please contact Kerry Bresnahan at (650) 949-1453. 🌲



We Made The Dean Witter Foundation Challenge!

Through your generous donations we raised and exceeded the \$40,000 needed to generate a \$20,000 matching grant from The Dean Witter Foundation. Your generosity put us over the top and we are truly grateful. The grant will be used to support our continued efforts to buy, restore, and steward redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Sempervirens Fund Annual Picnic

Many thanks to those of you who joined us for Sempervirens Fund's annual picnic in the forest!

On May 22nd—a foggy morning typical in the redwoods—170 of our friends and supporters gathered at Little Basin for a delicious lunch, great music, games, raffle prizes, and ice cream scooped by Sempervirens Fund staff and volunteers. We loved seeing and visiting with so many of you. Thanks to everyone who helped out that day and to the following businesses who donated raffle prizes: Boulder Creek Brewing Company, Boulder Creek Golf and Country Club, Byington Vineyard, REI, Scopazzi's Restaurant, Trader Joe's, and The Wooden Horse. Stay tuned to our website, sempervirens.org, for future opportunities to join us in the forest. 🌲



Angie Ngo, 2010 Tony Look Memorial Scholarship winner.

Tony Look Memorial Scholarship Awarded

Angie Ngo is the first winner of the Tony Look Memorial Scholarship. This annual \$1,000 scholarship goes to a high school senior, nominated by the faculty at Andrew P. Hill High School in San Jose, who has distinguished themselves scholastically and has a keen interest in the natural world.

Ms. Ngo graduated in June 2010 and is beginning studies at the University of California at Berkeley this fall.

Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation Matching Grant

If you help us match the \$15,000 grant from the Mervyn L. Brenner Foundation, your charitable contribution will go twice as far to protect the beautiful redwood forests, expand parks, enhance wildlife habitats, and protect critical watersheds and other precious natural and scenic resources of the Santa Cruz Mountains. A multi-purpose envelope is enclosed so you can send in your donation today to help us make the Foundation's generous match.



Photo: Sempervirens Fund

Board & Staff Updates

We are excited to introduce you to the newest members of the Sempervirens Fund team!

Thank you, **Robert Katz**, for your tremendous leadership as president of the Board of Directors for the last two years. During Bob's tenure an entirely new staff leadership team was hired, we launched the Great Park initiative, began collaborating with other land trusts on a regional plan, moved into a new office space, and launched a new website. And this is only half the list of the Board's accomplishments under his leadership.

Welcome Dan Martin as Board President! Dan has been on the Board since 2006 and has served as vice-president for the past two years. He brings expertise in business and real estate to the Board, as well as a deep knowledge of land conservation. Dan will be joined by Diane Talbert as vice-president, Richard Conniff as treasurer and CFO, and Betsy Herbert as secretary. We are very pleased to welcome Dan and look forward to continuing our work under his leadership.



Robert Katz and Dan Martin

Barbara Woodbury is our new Director of Finance. Barbara has 20 years of nonprofit financial experience. She has worked for Brighter Beginnings in Oakland, Opportunity Fund in San Jose, Samaritan House in San Mateo, and the Catholic Diocese of Utah. At Sempervirens Fund, Barbara is responsible for all financial and accounting functions, human resources, information technology, and office management.



Scott Nichols and Barbara Woodbury

Scott Nichols is our new Senior Development Associate. For the past 10 years Scott worked as a designer and production manager at DiVittorio & Associates, a graphic design studio which develops visual communications for many local land trusts and created our new website. At Sempervirens Fund, Scott is responsible for managing our donor database and website. 🌲

Tributes

Dedicated Redwood Trees and Legacy Grove gifts were established in honor or memory of the following people between March 16, 2010 and July 26, 2010:

Dedicated Redwoods

Manuel Angeja

Given by Joy Angeja

Marcia Baer

Given by Robert and Jean Baer

Flora Margaret Devaney

Given by Michael and Diane Culbert

Alexander Dow

Given by Mary Hufty

Jean M.F. Dubois

Given by friends and family

John C. Fischer

Given by Jane Rogers and Michael Fischer Fund

Furyu Floral Designers

Given by Furyu Floral Designers

Doug and Peg Harter

Given by Doug and Peg Harter

Ti Ho

Given by his friends and family

Madelyn Jason

Given by Resource Renewal Institute

Nancee C. Knutson

Given by her friends and family

Donald F. Lundgren

Given by E. Joan Lundgren

Vicki Lundgren

Given by Vicki Lundgren

Tom and Mariela Martin

Given by James and Emily Thurber

Mrs. Marie Prolo

Given by Robert and Jean Baer

Sue and Henry Ralston

Given by their friends and family

Dorothy Ann "Dot" Schafer

Given by Stanley Barnes

Jean Scott

Given by her friends and family

Sid and Cookie Sogolow

Given by Dick and Ellie Mansfield

Susan Leigh Star

Given by her friends and family

John E. Wahl

Given by Jonathan Williams

Jack, Sr. (PA) and Jane White

Given by Jonathan Williams

Legacy Grove Gifts

Jeri Bravenec, R.N.

Given by Her O'Connor Operating Friends

Martin Paul Cohan

Given by Gerald Ambinder and Audrey Ferber

Jeremy Collins

Given by Kristi Nadeau

Frances and Richard Galli

Given by Margaret Galli

Ryan Hess

Given by Elizabeth Tahamtanzadeh

Phil Vernon Holmes

Given by Microsoft Web TV Networks

Ernestine Sickbert

Given by Estelle Crawford



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Planting Trees in the Santa Cruz Mountains

In 2006 Sempervirens Fund purchased the beautiful 425-acre Lompico forest property. This property is the upper watershed of the Lompico Creek. It is covered in dense, healthy redwoods—except for one acre which had been graded and leveled prior to our purchase, causing severe damage to the soil and leading to the proliferation of invasive species.

This fall, we will be working to revive this part of the property and bring it back to its natural state. This work will involve both rejuvenating the soil and planting tree seedlings. Tree planting will be led by a team of local biologists, with the help of a number of volunteers. Thanks to everyone who is coming out to help us!



Lompico Creek © Kevin Collins

Thanks also to the many donors who made this project possible. The planting of each of these seedlings will be funded by the generous memorial and honorary gifts given to Sempervirens through our Planted Tree Program. To learn more about this program or to have a tree planted, visit us online at www.sempervirens.org, or call (650) 949-1453.