

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

SUMMER 2010

Help Solve California's State Parks Crisis

Since the creation of the first state park at Big Basin in 1902, California has established 278 state parks, totaling 1.4 million acres spread across the state. These park lands provide the public with access to a diversity of our state's natural resources from the shady redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains to vast expanses of fragile desert; from the lofty Sierra Nevada to the broad sandy beaches of California's southern coast. The parks also protect and interpret for the public California's many archaeological, historic, and cultural resources at Spanish missions, Native American settlements, battlegrounds, gold mines, lighthouses, the residences of prominent Californians, and at many other important sites throughout the state.

California's state parks belong to us Californians. They offer connections to our state's past and promises for our future. And yet, California's state parks are in peril and have been for many years.

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Preserving redwood forests
since 1900

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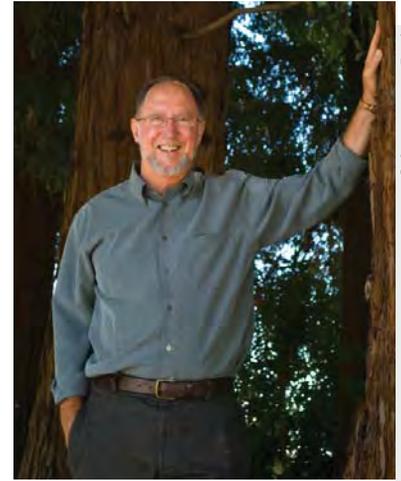
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Collaboration is Key to Greater Success

While it's true that one person can make a difference, it's also true that several people working together can change the world. This is one of the reasons why we are reaching out to our nonprofit friends to collaborate on conservation projects and on large scale planning activities. Together we can leverage our combined resources to do more and make sure our efforts and activities are aligned and focused for maximum impact.

When I first arrived at Sempervirens Fund a year and a half ago I was gratified to see that we had acquired and were managing the Little Basin property with Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). Since then we have done more with POST, The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, Save the Redwoods League, and The Nature Conservancy all in an effort to make sure we are helping each other to effectively protect and manage the critical natural, recreational, and scenic resources in the Santa Cruz Mountains and beyond.

During my short tenure here I am delighted to report that we are all working well together. We are all focused on different parts of the geography south of San Francisco to Gilroy, but collaborate when our efforts overlap. And, for the first time, we are jointly planning conservation activities in the bioregion so that as separate organizations and as a team we can accomplish more. We share a common future. Why not embrace it together?



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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 Initiative

Continued from cover

Twice in the past two years, California's state parks were on the brink of being shut down because of state budget cuts. In 2008, 48 parks were proposed for closure, and in 2009, 220 parks (80% of the entire system) were proposed for closure. In each case, a last-minute budget reprieve kept the parks open. But nearly 150 state parks were shut down part-time or suffered deep service reductions because of budget cuts. There is no doubt about it: we are losing access to our state parks.

What's more, state park facilities across California are falling apart and the resources that the parks are charged with protecting are at serious risk of irreversible damage. At many parks, buildings are deteriorating as roofs and sewage systems leak, restrooms aren't cleaned regularly, trails are washed out, and destruction and vandalism of park resources is on the rise. The repair backlog in California state parks tops \$1 billion, and it continues to grow.

That's why Sempervirens Fund and many other environmental organizations are endorsing the California State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010, a measure which will be on the upcoming November statewide ballot. This measure calls for the creation of a Trust Fund in the state treasury that would provide a stable, reliable, and adequate source of funding for the state park system, for wildlife conservation, and for increased and equitable access to those resources for all Californians.



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Funding for the Trust Fund would come from an \$18 annual State Park Access Pass surcharge on all California cars, motorcycles, and recreational vehicles that would be collected by the Department of Motor Vehicles as part of the annual vehicle license fee. Vehicles subject to the surcharge would receive free, year-round admission to all state parks. (In comparison, park visitors currently pay up to \$125 for an annual pass or \$10–\$15 per day at most parks.) The license fee would generate approximately \$500 million each year in revenues; 85% of the revenues would be allocated to state parks and 15% to other state wildlife and ocean protection agencies.

Now is the time to act to ensure Californians have the high quality, well maintained state park system they deserve. Please show your support for this important initiative at the ballot box this November. 🌲

Celebration in the Redwoods

On March 13 we celebrated the protection of 107 acres of redwood forest land at the gateway to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. More than 250 of our donors and

supporters joined us in the forest for this special event. The sun shone through the redwoods, the lunch was delicious, and the company of friends was delightful.

We are very grateful to many of you for helping to make this event such a success. Thanks to the members of the Big Basin and Castle Rock volunteer trail crews who worked in heavy rain and cold on the day before the event to build a temporary boardwalk and prepare the forest clearing for the event. Thanks also to our volunteer docents who guided hikes on the property.



Reed Holderman, Ruth Coleman, Doug Ley, and Robert Katz.



And of course, thanks to all who braved the mud to attend—we were thrilled to celebrate with so many of you. 🌲



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Cultivating the Next Generation of Land Stewards

Chances are if you are reading this article, you already love redwoods. You know the feel of their bark; you have grown dizzy looking up into their towering branches; you have heard the vast quiet of their forests; and you appreciate the great contribution that these magnificent trees make to our earth and its atmosphere.

Sempervirens Fund wants to be sure that more people—especially more children—are given the opportunity to know and love redwood forests like we do. It is through experiencing the wonders of the forest that the next generation of land stewards is cultivated and grown. And yet many Bay Area children, particularly those living in lower income urban communities, have never had a chance to visit the redwood forests here in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

This past fall, with financial support from Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund brought a group

of approximately 60 students and their science teachers from Andrew P. Hill High School in East San Jose (named after Sempervirens Fund's founder) to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Our goal was to bring underserved youth to the Santa Cruz Mountains to educate them about the coast redwoods and to give them a chance to experience and explore a redwood forest.

Sempervirens Fund's volunteer docents led small groups of students on hikes through the forest, generously sharing their knowledge and love of the forest along the way. Each group came back with a unique experience of the forest, depending in part on their forest guide. For instance, one docent was particularly interested in letting his students experience the depth of the forest



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Staff Update

This spring we promoted two Sempervirens Fund staff members, Katie Buelterman and Aaron Hébert. Katie has been promoted to Annual Giving Manager. In this new role she will manage our annual fund program, including the direct mail program, donor events, and publications.

Aaron was promoted to Senior Project Associate and will be assisting with our Land Trust Alliance accreditation, land stewardship, and our Tribute Program. Both Katie and Aaron have been with Sempervirens Fund for over two years. We are delighted to reward them for all of their hard work. 🌲



Aaron Hébert and Katie Buelterman

A Thoughtful Gift and a Lasting Legacy



One of our devoted donors, James O'Neil passed away in late 2008. James fell in love with the forest during the Boy Scout camping trips of his youth. As an adult, he found the Santa Cruz Mountains to be the perfect host for his hobbies of photography, astronomy, hiking, and biking. The fresh mountain air calmed his soul after busy days in the fast-paced computer industry where he worked. His brother Dan says of James' relationship with the forest, "I think Jimo really liked the peacefulness of the forest. He was always thoughtful about his environment and never took it for granted."

In Sempervirens Fund, James found friends who shared a love of the forest and a desire to protect it. When James passed away, he left Sempervirens Fund a substantial portion of his estate—a truly lasting legacy. We are deeply grateful to him for his gift which will help us to continue to protect the redwood forests that he loved. Donors like James who include Sempervirens Fund in their estate plans can make a vital difference in our ability to purchase, protect, and steward redwood forest lands for future generations.

Through a planned gift, you can:

- Help ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the magnificent coast redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains.
- Leave a lasting charitable legacy.
- Secure significant tax benefits.

To learn more about making a planned gift, please contact Kerry Bresnahan at (650) 949-1453 or via email at kbresnahan@sempervirens.org, or visit our website at www.sempervirens.org.

Tributes

Dedicated Redwood Trees and Legacy Grove gifts were established in honor or memory of the following people between January 1, 2010 and March 15, 2010:

Dedicated Redwoods

Frieda Bamattre

Given by Dick and Ellie Mansfield

J. Burke Knapp

Given by Andrew Lockert, Friends, and Family

Thomas Lincoln Culhane

Given by Ann Quinlan

Ed McCauley

Given by Kevin and Kat McCauley

Mary Schlueter

Given by Noreen Doyle

Hazel Yee

Given by Ernest and Carole Ann Chow

Legacy Grove Gifts

Richard and Gertrude Grover

Given by Dave and Deborah Grover

Al and Maria Haas

Given by Rita Perry

Marie H. Soldo

Given by Shelley Cranley

Steve Stein

Given by P-Town Pushrods

Ruth Winning

Given by Jeff and Kersti Rose

Emma Wolffhardt

Given by Konrad Herman



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As of February 1, 2010 our post office box address is:

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Julie's Island © Robert Buelteman



We're Having an **OPEN HOUSE**

Join us on Wednesday, June 16, 2010 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. for a reception in our new offices featuring photographs by Robert Buelteman. Robert will give a short talk about his photography at 6:00 p.m.

To RSVP, please contact Lilian Ventocilla at (650) 949-1453 or lventocilla@sempervirens.org.