

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

SUMMER 2012

Making New Friends and Protecting Old Trees

Across the United States, Girl Scout Councils and other outdoor education providers are struggling to keep their camps open. Reduced enrollment, coupled with rising costs to maintain and upgrade facilities, threatens the continued operation of many camps. For some organizations, selling camp properties is the only viable way to cut costs and enhance diminishing cash flows.

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**Castle Rock State Park
to Remain Open**

SEE STORY PAGE 3



Preserving redwood forests
since 1900

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Stepping in to Protect Castle Rock

Seventy of California's state parks will close on July 1, 2012, to reduce the state's \$10 billion budget deficit, unless somebody steps in to save them. Sempervirens Fund and several other groups throughout the state are doing just that.

We cannot risk losing our state parks. They protect our history, culture, and the state's natural beauty. But after decades of divestment and cuts, the State Park system has more than \$1 billion in deferred maintenance costs. Our parks are literally falling apart, despite the efforts of State Parks staff to maintain them.

We should not be in this situation. Our parks are our natural assets and the reasons why many people come to our state in the first place. What would California be without our beaches and bays, our mountains, rivers, and deserts, and, of course, our redwoods?

Two years ago the conservation community launched Proposition 21 to establish a permanent funding source for State Parks through additional vehicle license fees, but the ballot measure failed. Today, with no alternative in sight, we stand very close to losing public access to some of our most precious places.

And, so, Sempervirens Fund is stepping in. We are offering State Parks funding to keep Castle Rock from closing. This is a temporary safety net to allow the state to recover from the current financial crisis, establish a plan for long-term sustainable management of all state parks, and make our park system great again.

We recently signed a legally enforceable agreement with the state that ensures every dollar we raise for Castle Rock will remain at Castle Rock. We have also developed plans for a new entrance that will encourage additional visitors and help capture revenue for the park. And we are working with the state to explore innovative ways to operate, manage, and sustain Castle Rock and other state parks on the closure list.

Keeping Castle Rock open is not something we planned on doing, but it is something we *must* do. The alternative is unacceptable. Castle Rock is a part of Sempervirens Fund's history and future. We helped establish and expand the park—now, with the help of our friends and partners, we will keep it open and create a more sustainable future.



Reed Holderman
Executive Director



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Protecting Castle Rock State Park

Sempervirens Fund is working to keep Castle Rock State Park open, despite the park's inclusion on the state park closure list, by committing \$250,000 to keep the park staffed for one more year. If you have ever been to Castle Rock State Park, you probably understand why.

Castle Rock State Park is a truly unique local treasure atop the ridgeline of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Castle Rock—the dramatic outcropping of sandstone that sits high above the park—and other overlooks feature breathtaking vistas of the entire San Lorenzo River watershed and the Pacific Ocean. The park's 32 miles of hiking trails lead visitors through lush redwood forests, expansive oak woodlands, and wide open grasslands alongside free flowing creeks and a powerful 80-foot waterfall. The park's bold sandstone outcroppings, many of them displaying the unusual tafoni weathering pattern, draw rock-climbing enthusiasts from around the world.

And this rugged 5,400-acre park, with all of its varied wonders, is right in our backyard! Over 70,000 people visit Castle Rock each year; we cannot afford to surrender our access to this amazing resource.

Sempervirens Fund played a significant role in creating and expanding Castle Rock State Park. Since the park's establishment in 1968, we have completed 36 land transactions, which have added over 4,000 acres to the park. Castle Rock is an important piece to our Great Park landscape connectivity. We are making sure it stays open for everyone to use and enjoy.

We recently signed an agreement with State Parks that spells out how our \$250,000 donation will be used to keep Castle Rock open for one year. California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman says, "We're thrilled when partners like Sempervirens demonstrate such a strong commitment to the protection of our valuable resources. We now look forward to completing the final negotiations that will keep this park open."

This agreement will also open up San Lorenzo River Redwoods, a large section of the park that has never been open to the public. The addition of this 1,340-acre area, which contains stunning redwood forests and the headwaters of the San Lorenzo Rivers, will increase the accessible area of Castle Rock by over 35% and enhance the park's trail system.

With generous support from the Kirkwood Family we have developed plans for a new entrance to the park, which will include improved parking, flush toilets, and other visitor amenities. We have contracted with Callander Associates, a preeminent design firm, to complete the plans and permitting process that will lay the groundwork for this new entrance.

When completed, we will transfer the new entrance property and enhanced visitor amenities to the state, along with a stewardship fund to support the park's upkeep.

If you would like to support Sempervirens Fund's efforts to protect and enhance Castle Rock State Park visit www.sempervirens.org or call (650) 949-1453. 🌲

In a new spin on the time honored Girl Scouts tradition, Sempervirens Fund has gone to camp and made new friends.

In March 2012 Sempervirens Fund acquired conservation easements on two camp properties in the Santa Cruz Mountains—Camp Butano Creek and Skylark Ranch—owned by the Girl Scouts of Northern California. The sale of the conservation easements allows the Girl Scouts to retain ownership of their land, repair and improve camp facilities, and continue to operate both camps. At the same time the easements protect the properties' beautiful redwood forests, including more than 1,420 old-growth redwoods, from subdivision, development, and commercial logging.

Camp Butano Creek (142 acres) near Pescadero and Skylark Ranch (270 acres) near Año Nuevo are nestled among redwoods and used year round by girls and young women from across the Bay Area and beyond. The camps include cabins, fire circles, dining halls, and miles of hiking trails that weave through stunning coast redwood forests. The forests on the properties provide habitat for the marbled murrelet, an endangered seabird that nests in old-growth trees. Both properties also include critical habitat for the endangered central coast Steelhead trout. Bordered by its namesake, Camp Butano Creek is located within a marbled murrelet flyway, and Skylark Ranch contains part of the headwaters of Whitehouse Creek.

Each year more than 10,000 Girl Scouts visit the camps where they make new friends, sing songs, create arts and crafts, learn outdoor skills, and stargaze through the canopy of the towering redwoods—many of them for the first time. But the camps, which have been in use since the 1950s, are showing their age. In fact, the Girl Scouts were considering shutting down and selling the two camps when Sempervirens Fund first met with them in early 2011. Continued maintenance of the camps had become prohibitively expensive.

Sempervirens Fund provided the Girl Scouts with a better option: conservation easements.



Conservation easements are legal agreements between a landowner and a land trust that permanently limit uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. The land trust pays the landowner for the value of these use restrictions and then regularly monitors the easement to ensure that the terms of the agreement are upheld. Ownership and management of the land stays with the landowner. The easements remain in place even if ownership changes hands, ensuring that the resources on the land are protected in perpetuity.

Together with the Girl Scouts, we designed conservation easements to protect the natural resources on each property while allowing for the continuation of camp activities. A key part of drafting the easements was working with a camp architect to develop a long-term master plan for each camp. The conservation easements define a 'camp activity area' and, within this area, Girl Scouts have flexibility to improve the camps according to their master plans. Beyond the camp activity areas, the easements prohibit any future development, subdivision, or commercial logging.

The purchase of the easements cost \$2.86 million and was funded in part with a \$750,000 grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation provided through Resource Legacy Fund's Living Landscape Initiative Challenge Grant Program. The Girl Scouts



© Dan Quinn

are investing the proceeds from the sale in a “property reserve” fund and will use the income generated by the fund to pay for upgrades and maintenance of camp facilities.

Sempervirens Fund board member Diane Talbert says, “These transactions with the Girl Scouts represent the full circle for me. My early experiences on the land and away from the city were summers spent at Girl Scout camp. I can still remember the feel and smell of the tall trees that towered above our camp. If I close my eyes, I can see a ring of faces singing and laughing around a blazing campfire.

To know that these conservation easements will allow future generations to experience those deep and lasting early bonds with the outdoors and their fellow scouts is immensely satisfying.”

Protection of the redwood forests on these properties also helps further Sempervirens Fund’s efforts to connect protected landscapes to create a Great Park in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Camp Butano Creek borders Butano State Park and Skylark Ranch borders Año Nuevo State Reserve and is only one parcel (500 feet) away from Big Basin Redwoods State Park. 🌲

Marina Parks

CEO of Girl Scouts of Northern California

Girl Scouts celebrated the 100th Anniversary of its founding on March 12, 2012, making this an especially fitting and wonderful time to launch our collaboration with Sempervirens Fund. The conservation easements completed on two of our most used camp properties—Skylark Ranch and Camp Butano Creek—not only protect 412 acres of redwood forest and habitat in the Santa Cruz Mountains, including 1,420 old-growth redwoods, but also improve the long-term sustainability of our camp programs and help ensure that many generations of girls will experience the majesty of these beautiful spaces.

Each year over 9,250 individuals enjoy over 36,000 camper days at Skylark Ranch and Camp Butano Creek. That is a lot of time away from computers and in the woods. At camp girls try new things, meet new people, gain independence, learn new skills and develop an appreciation for nature—and these experiences, in turn, help Girl Scouts

build girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place.

We have used the proceeds from the conservation easements to establish a “property reserve” that will generate funds to support camp maintenance and repair costs. We also are launching a 100th Anniversary capital campaign to improve Camp Butano Creek and Skylark Ranch within a “camp activity area” and according to master plans defined in the conservation easements—all with the goal of improving the program experience, reducing the operating costs and making the camps work better for weekday rentals to other non-profits.

We look forward to working with Sempervirens Fund to protect these beautiful properties and continue to operate them as much beloved and well-used camps for many years to come. 🌲



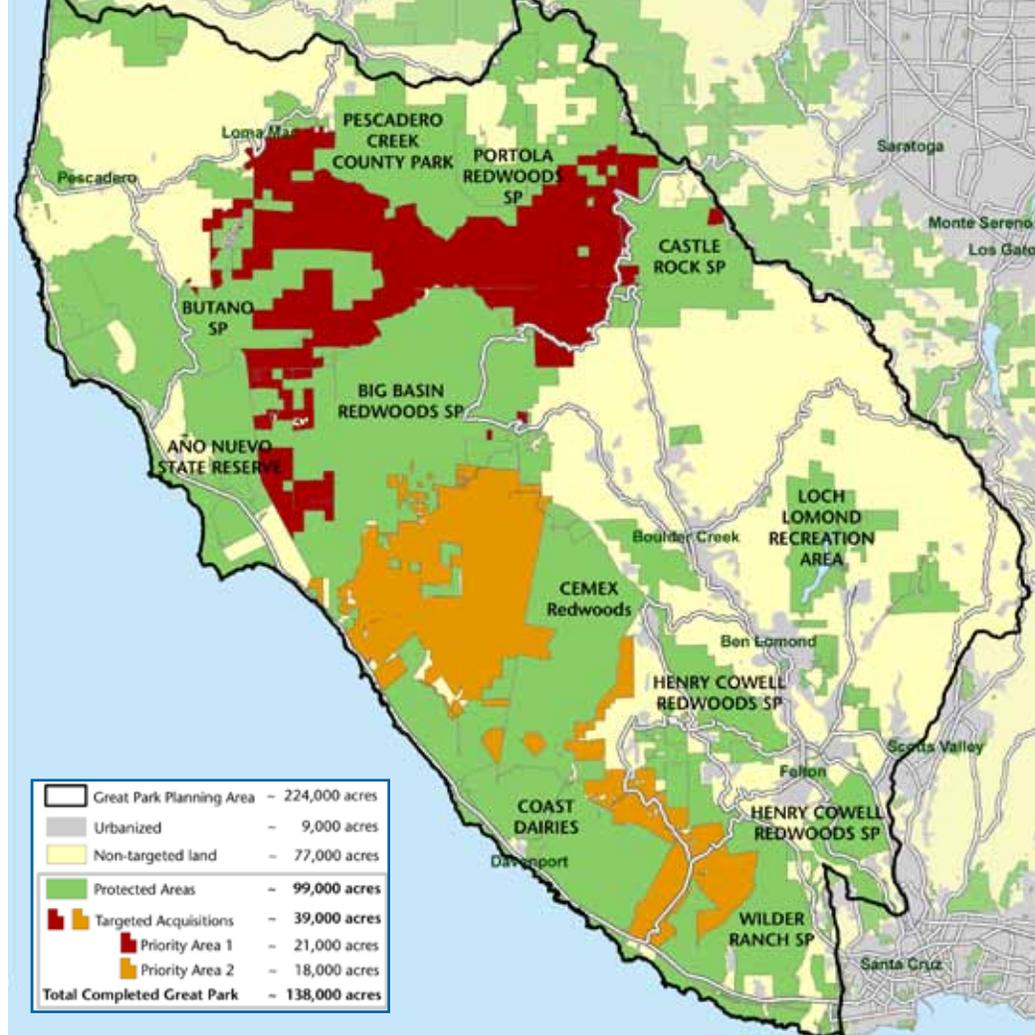
UPDATE:

Creating the Great Park

It's happening. One property at a time, we are creating the Great Park of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

Our goal is to link all the state parks Sempervirens Fund helped establish — Big Basin Redwoods, Castle Rock, Portola Redwoods, and Butano State Parks — with other parks and protected lands in the Santa Cruz Mountains to form a 138,000-acre Great Park that will extend from Pescadero Creek to Wilder Ranch State Park. And we're making great progress, protecting almost 10,000 acres in the last year alone.

The CEMEX property acquisition, which we completed in December 2011 in partnership with four other local land conservation organizations, protects 8,532 acres in the Great Park. This represents 20% of the Great Park area we have targeted to protect. The conservation easements that we acquired in March 2012 from the Girl Scouts of Northern California protected an additional 412 acres and



establish important landscape linkages between protected lands in the Butano Creek and Whitehouse Creek watersheds. And our current efforts in Castle Rock State Park will preserve and enhance public access to a central 5,400 piece of the Great Park.

Sempervirens Fund's founders first put forth the vision of a

“great park” more than 112 years ago. With 39,500 acres identified as priority acquisitions within the Great Park, we still have a long way to go. But through partnerships with other conservation groups and public agencies, and with your continued support, the Great Park is becoming a reality — one property at a time. 🌲



BOARD NEWS:

Sempervirens Fund Welcomes New Board Member

We are pleased to welcome Kent Putnam to Sempervirens Fund's Board of Directors. Kent is President of Putnam Automotive, Inc., a well-respected local car dealership, and is former President of the Burlingame Chamber of Commerce. Kent, who has been supporting Sempervirens Fund since 1998, grew up riding throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains on horseback; today he likes to explore their beautiful redwood forests on foot. We're so glad that he found his way to Sempervirens Fund. Welcome Kent! 🌲

Tributes

Dedicated Redwood Trees and Legacy Grove gifts were established in honor or memory of the following people between January 1, 2012 and April 2, 2012:

Dedicated Redwoods

Banes & Christine Anderson
Given by Paul Anderson

Col. and Mrs. John F. Batjer
Given by Frederick and Martha Davis

Dorothy Cahill
Given by Friends and Family

Phil Clervi
Given by William Sexton

Ginnie Davison
Given by Robert L. Katz

Louise Delfino Jacimo
Given by Frank Delfino

Mack Jason
Given by Robert L. Katz

Edwin George Jokie
Given by Patty and Ester Jokie

Mary B. and Richard R. Kennedy
Given by Meredith Durant

Ronald I. Lyons
Given by Gerald Ambinder and Audrey Ferber

Miss Red Cat
Given by Frank Delfino

Rose and Fred Oppenheimer
Given by David Oppenheimer and Elaine Sultzberger

Verlene Perry and Patricia Van Horn
Given by Paul and Jacqueline Wender

Bob & Mary Lou Rader
Given by Michael Sayward and Debra Rader

Gene Toy
Given by Friends and Family

Antonio and Cipriana Vela
Given by Herbert and Margarita Rosenthal

Legacy Grove

Stacey Andrews
Given by Richard and Barbara Andrews

Mark Bryan Headley
Given by Molly Headley

Miriam L. Hohl
Given by David Hohl

Helen Whitaker Pinnell Perich
Given by Richard and Pamela Montgomery

George William Lewis Pinnell
Given by Richard and Pamela Montgomery

Bob and Mary Lou Rader
Given by Michael Sayward and Debra Rader

Char Stafford
Given by Elaine Winer



PLANNED GIVING:

An Enduring Gift

Nancy Weston loved the outdoors. She grew up in the rural Santa Clara Valley where her family owned a pear farm. Athletic and active by nature, she was an avid hiker, camper, and explorer. She loved open space, trees, coastal views, and fresh

air. And she valued organizations that worked to protect the places she cared about. Nancy was a loyal and generous donor to Sempervirens Fund since 1978 when she gave her first gift of \$50.

In June 2011 Nancy passed away leaving a very generous gift to Sempervirens Fund in her will. She made her donation unrestricted, which allowed us to put it toward the acquisition of the 8,532-acre CEMEX Redwoods, the largest conservation project in our organization's 112-year history.

"That seems fitting," says Nancy's niece Barbara White. "My aunt grew up watching the wide open spaces of Santa Clara Valley transform into Silicon Valley right before her eyes. I think she valued groups like Sempervirens Fund because they have the vision to protect our region's natural lands today, for the future."

Nancy Weston's gift will have an enduring impact on the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains, and we are deeply grateful.

If you would like to discuss a planned gift to Sempervirens Fund, please contact Kerry Bresnahan, Director of Advancement, at (650) 949-1453 or kbresnahan@sempervirens.org. 🌲

SAN FRANCISCO FOUNDATION:

Thank you for your help!

Many thanks to all who helped us match a \$50,000 grant from the Evelyn T. Mohrhardt Fund at The San Francisco Foundation. With your generous donations, we raised over \$146,000 to match the foundation's grant. All of these gifts will help us continue our efforts to protect and steward our local redwoods.

To read about various planned giving options, please visit our website at www.sempervirens.org/plannedgifts.



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TRIBUTE GIFTS:

Give the Gift That Grows

Are you looking for that special gift for graduation, a birthday, or perhaps a summer wedding?

Sempervirens Fund has an arrangement with California State Parks that allows its donors to make a gift to Sempervirens Fund and create a personalized tribute in the state parks of the Santa Cruz Mountains. You can plant a tree, dedicate a mature redwood, or dedicate a grove of redwoods. Each tribute gift supports our efforts to protect, connect, and steward our local redwood forests. Plus, your gift is 100% tax deductible.

We will acknowledge your contribution and send a gift card to the person or people you are honoring (or other designated individual). If you would like to make a tribute gift, please complete and mail the enclosed envelope. Or if you would like to learn more about our tribute program, call (650) 949-1543 or visit www.sempervirens.org/tribute. 🌲



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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 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.