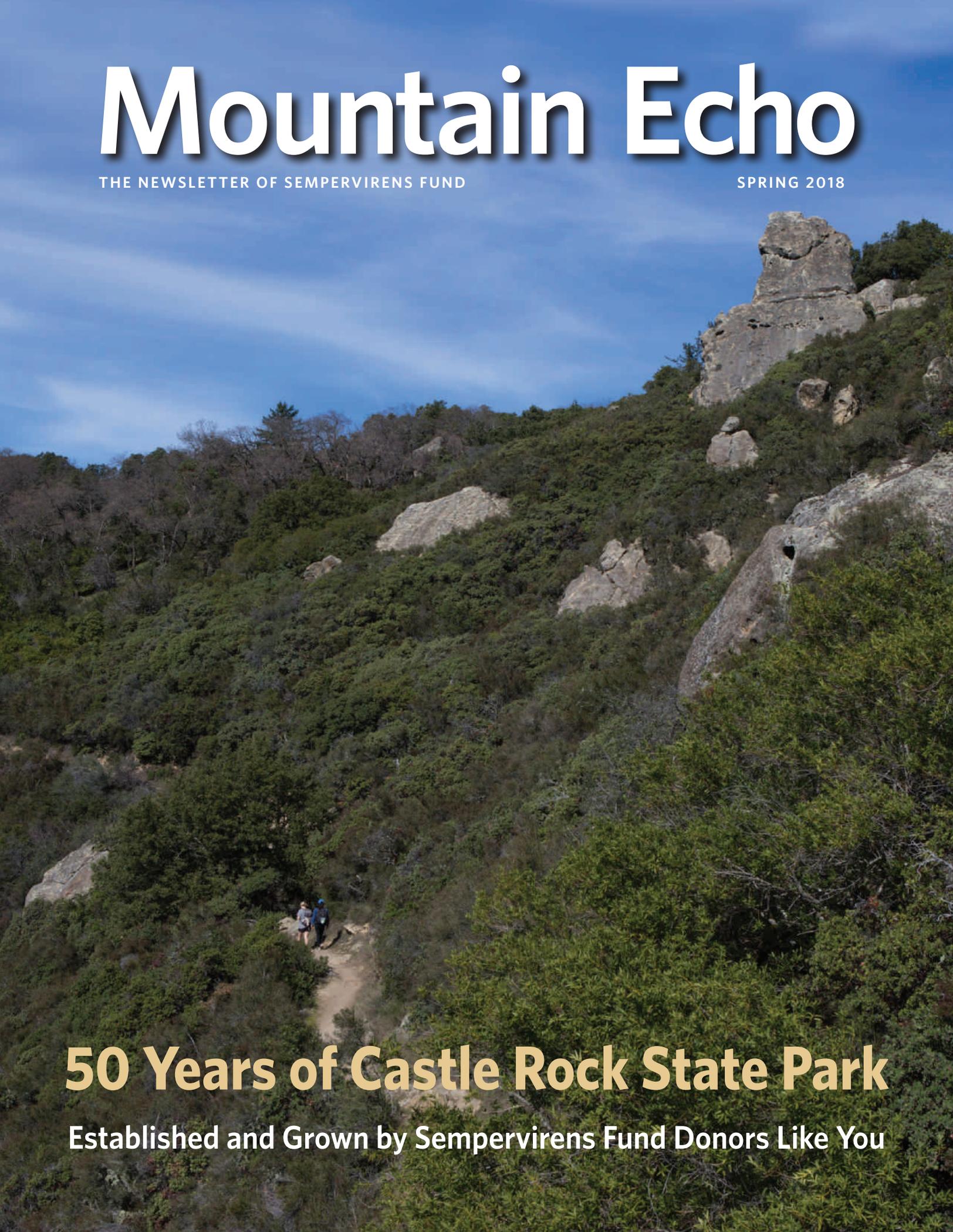


Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

SPRING 2018



50 Years of Castle Rock State Park

Established and Grown by Sempervirens Fund Donors Like You



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Past, Present and Future of Conservation at Castle Rock State Park

It's been 50 years since Dorothy Varian helped convert the Sempervirens Club into Sempervirens Fund and worked with the organization to found Castle Rock State Park. This year we will celebrate that important milestone with another — the grand opening of the Robert C. Kirkwood entrance to Castle Rock State Park (a gift to the public from the Kirkwood family, you and other Sempervirens Fund supporters) — which will provide desperately needed facilities and an exciting interpretive experience for park visitors.



The new park entrance, which will be unveiled at a special celebration Sempervirens Fund will host on September 29 for the park's 50th Anniversary, includes old school facilities like bathrooms and parking spots, but also wireless technology and a set of rich, interactive digital materials that can help visitors learn more about the ecological, cultural, historical and recreational richness of the Castle Rock area. This technology is intended to help visitors more fully explore the park and understand their own role in protecting and stewarding its amazing natural resources.

In this issue of Mountain Echo, we also discuss Proposition 68, which is key to the future of Castle Rock and the entire California state park system. Also known as the Clean Water and Safe Parks Act, Proposition 68 places a park bond on the statewide ballot for voters to decide on in June 2018. It is a general obligation bond that invests \$4 billion in the coming years to address some of California's most important water, park, and natural resource needs, including roughly \$218 million for state park purposes.

Sempervirens Fund is now developing a five-year Strategic Plan for the organization. That process involves identifying the new threats and challenges to redwoods in Castle Rock, as well as the rest of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

One of the most concerning is the threat of devastating forest fires. In this issue, we discuss how fire management experts, including Sempervirens Fund's new science advisory panelist Dr. Scott Stephens of UC Berkeley, view this complicated issue. He and other scientists are helping us understand the new ways we will need to care for redwood forests into the future.

We are working to realize your vision of healthy, thriving redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains. As always, thank you for your passion and your support for these remarkable trees.

Sincerely,

Sara Barth, Executive Director

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Originally 513 acres, Castle Rock State Park now encompasses 5,242 acres.

Photo © David Royal

You made it happen!

Another cause for celebration at Castle Rock State Park

Since Sempervirens Fund established it 50 years ago, Castle Rock State Park has been Silicon Valley's gateway to the Santa Cruz Mountains. Now, thanks to your generous support, the park entrance is getting a 21st century upgrade.

When it opens on September 29, the new Robert C. Kirkwood entrance will feature interpretive exhibits, WiFi connectivity, and new online engagement opportunities for park visitors. It will include a 90-car parking lot with permeable paving and a 60-seat amphitheater. It will feature six restrooms with flush toilets. It will have a drinking water station and accessible pathways and picnic areas. It will also feature native landscaping and a

demonstration garden, planted by the Amah Mutsun tribe, that will illustrate how Native Americans used these local plants for medicinal and other purposes.

This new entrance is made possible by your support.

Remember when Governor Jerry Brown proposed closing 70 state parks to balance the state budget in 2011? Sempervirens Fund donors like you helped keep Castle Rock State Park open. You also supported Sempervirens Fund's purchase of the 33-acre parcel that will serve as the new entrance to the park. Over the next seven years, Sempervirens Fund donors provided a total of \$8 million to design, plan, permit and build this important milestone in the history of Castle Rock State Park. Thank you!



The new Robert C. Kirkwood Entrance will feature 90 parking spaces with permeable paving.

Photos © David Royal

This new entrance is made possible by your support.

You belong to a rich tradition of Sempervirens Fund supporters who helped create, expand and enhance Castle Rock State Park. Like many of you, famed tech-entrepreneur Russell Varian developed a love of the Santa Cruz Mountains while hiking in Castle Rock. In fact, Castle Rock State Park was originally his vision. He wanted to create a place for future generations to visit and enjoy.

In 1959, Russell Varian obtained an option to buy the land surrounding Castle Rock for the purposes of creating a new state park. Sadly, he died before he could complete the purchase. Yet, thanks to Russell's wife Dorothy, who shared his vision, and Sempervirens Fund, Castle Rock State Park was born in 1968. Together, they launched the legacy you and other Sempervirens Fund donors carry on to this day.

Today, Castle Rock spans 5,242 acres. It boasts 34 miles of trail and continues to attract rock climbers, hikers and day trippers. This tremendous public resource would not have been possible without forward-looking thinkers like you and the Varians. That is why we want you to be one of the first park visitors to experience the new Robert C. Kirkwood entrance.

Please join us for the Castle Rock State Park 50th Anniversary celebration September 29. It will be a day to celebrate the past, present and future of Castle Rock...and generous donors like you. 🌲

For more information, visit CastleRock50.com.







Photo © Mike Kahn

FIRE!

You are helping the forests prepare for the next wildfire

It is not a question of if there will be wildfire in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but when. Wildfire has always been an important part of this ecosystem.

Historically, regular low-severity fires were vital for protecting large, old redwood trees by thinning out weaker competitors from the understory. Archaeological records show native peoples in this region actively set fires as a means of tending the forest. As a result, redwood forests were far more open than they are today.

In the early 1900s, land managers suppressed fire to promote tree growth for the timber industry. Fire suppression largely continues today because of concern for properties and communities that are at risk from wildfire. As a result, the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains are denser, less healthy, and full of flammable underbrush that accelerates fires when the forests eventually do burn — leading (ironically) to catastrophic, high-severity fires.

Dr. Scott Stephens of UC Berkeley is a renowned expert in Wildlife Fire Science and recently joined the Sempervirens Fund Science Advisory Panel (see

page 7). He explains that a regular cycle of fire has kept plants and animals healthy in the Santa Cruz Mountains for thousands of years. “Continued fire suppression costs us,” said Stephens. “More and more areas are being lost, structures lost. So, the equivalent is we continue to do this forever or look for different means, a different trajectory.”

Sempervirens Fund is working to find ways to help change that trajectory to improve the management of redwood forests and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Your support is allowing us to partner with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, Cal Fire and Fire Safe Santa Cruz County to study best practices of fire management. For example, we are examining the Bear Fire of 2017 (which occurred in the Santa Cruz Mountains very near to Castle Rock State Park) to develop new strategies based on lessons learned. We are also working to carefully, and responsibly, bring controlled burns to our own properties to help restore their forest health.

Thanks to your continued support, we will learn how to not just live with fire, but have our forests thrive because of it. For more information, visit sempervirens.org. 🌲

Welcome to the Science Advisory Panel!

Sempervirens Fund is thrilled to announce new additions to our Science Advisory Panel for 2018. These world-class scientists, researchers and academics bring invaluable insights to our work in the redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains. In each issue of Mountain Echo, we will profile a new panelist. To read more about the panelists now, visit sempervirens.org/scienceadvisory.

Scott Stephens, Ph.D.

is interested in the interactions of wildland fire and ecosystems. This includes how prehistoric fires once interacted with ecosystems, how current wildland fires are affecting ecosystems, and how future fires, changing

climates, and management may change this interaction. He is also interested in fire policy and how it can be improved to meet the challenges of the next decades, both in the U.S. and internationally. 🌲



Anthony Ambrose, Ph.D.
Postdoctoral Researcher,
Dawson Lab, UC Berkeley



Nona Chiariello, Ph.D.
Staff Scientist, Jasper Ridge
Biological Preserve,
Stanford University



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Chris Wilmers
Professor of Wildlife Ecology and
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OUTREACH

Vote for Proposition 68 June 5

Our state parks need your help

Sempervirens Fund supporters like you, and California voters overall, have demonstrated at the ballot box that they do not want California's natural resources neglected or degraded. You have proven it time and again. The public approved Proposition 1 in 2014 to help enhance water quality and promote water conservation in response to the prolonged drought. They said no to plastic bags and the environmental destruction they wreak in 2016 with the passage of Proposition 67.

Now the time has come again for you and other Californians to raise your voice on behalf of conservation.

Fifteen years have passed since California voters approved a park bond that provided a major infusion of funding into the state park system. Today, the state park infrastructure is aging and crumbling. Time is running out. Why? Because years of decreased and unpredictable annual operating funding have resulted in a state park system that has a more than \$1 billion backlog in deferred



maintenance needs. To ensure our parks remain safe and accessible, we must invest in critical maintenance and repairs. Funds are also needed to ensure park managers can responsibly steward the natural, cultural and historical resources within our parks.

Voters like you will have a chance to make a difference in the next election. Proposition 68, the Clean Water and Safe Parks Act, is a \$4 billion general obligation bond that will be on the June 5, 2018 statewide ballot. This bond measure will fund important conservation projects across urban, suburban and rural California. It will help maintain drinking water supplies, conserve wildlife, and protect natural resources. It also includes roughly \$218 million to help revitalize state parks. Sempervirens Fund supporters will be particularly pleased to note it includes funding specifically for the protection and restoration of California's Coast Redwood forests.

"Californians from all walks of life love, and need parks," said Sempervirens Fund Executive Director Sara Barth. "After 15 years of neglect, it is time to again infuse some funding into our parks to ensure they are safe, accessible to all and able to properly manage the incredible resources we entrust to their care."

On June 5, please make a point to visit the polls and vote Yes on Proposition 68. For more information, visit www.sempervirens.org/proposition-68. 🌲



Sempervirens Fund joined a rally at the State Capitol for Prop. 68 in August 2017.



You're saving my life!

How your support is helping a struggling ecosystem along the banks of San Vicente Creek

I stand on the banks of San Vicente Creek. I can see hundreds of my kin around me. Some of their trunks stretch all the way to the sky. I bet they can see the Pacific Ocean out in the distance. When I look down, I see Coho salmon and other fish swimming in the creek. This really is a good place to be.

It is because of you that I stand here today in the protected San Vicente Redwoods, and I'm so grateful.

I must tell you, though—lately, I am a little weary. Something is growing up my trunk, twisting around my branches, and constraining my reach. It's hard for me to gather water and even harder for me to see the sun. It feels as though I am being choked. My limbs droop and my trunk is bending. My needles are falling. I worry about the fish in the creek below. My branches can no longer provide the shade that cools the water to their liking. I also worry about my cousins—the other young redwoods around me—and about the alder, willow, maple, and dogwoods that stand in the forest with us. They too seem to be struggling.

The scientific name of the vine causing this trouble is *Clematis vitalba*. Sometimes it's called "old man's beard" or "traveller's joy." I'm calling it "clematis" for short.

Clematis is pretty enough. It looks a bit like an ivy, and in the springtime it grows little white flowers. Someone probably brought it to this area as an ornamental plant for their garden many years ago. (There used to be a small factory town just up the creek from here.) But clematis is deadly—at least for

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife awarded Sempervirens Fund a \$1,141,555 grant to try to rid clematis from the San Vicente Redwoods. Sempervirens Fund and its partners will track and share what they learn with others who are also dealing with rogue clematis.

Clematis vitalba

Photo © Ian Bonarh

Clematis vitalba

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

me. And it is a problem for young redwoods and other, smaller trees across 30 acres of the San Vicente Redwoods (and on 40 acres downstream).

It is because of you that *Clematis vitalba*—this noxious weed— will be controlled and then, I hope, eliminated from this watershed. Again, I am so grateful.

You (with the help of experts from Sempervirens Fund, Peninsula Open Space Trust, and Save the Redwoods League) are saving my life.

And I'm not being dramatic.

I know that getting rid of clematis is no easy task. I know that it will take at least three years of persistent

treatment to clear it from the San Vicente Redwoods. I've seen your restoration teams hard at work in the forest already this spring. I've seen them cutting the clematis vines from my branches and from the branches of my neighbors. I've seen them dig clematis from the ground and from the banks of San Vicente Creek. They are creating big piles of cuttings on top of tarps, leaving them there so that the clematis dries out and becomes unable to re-sprout. Soon they will be planting native seedlings into the ground to populate the area where the clematis once was.

It is because of you that this hard, but vital, work is happening. Soon I will be free of clematis and able to stand tall once again. Thank you! I really can't wait. 🌲

Cotoni-Coast Ridge You Protected It and Connected It

Congratulations, the Cotoni-Coast Ridge deal is officially signed, sealed and delivered! As of January 17, this ecologically important 106-acre redwood property was purchased and preserved thanks to your support. What makes this slice of heaven so special? It has connections! While small in comparison to other properties we have protected, Cotoni-Coast Ridge enjoys a strategic position at the nexus of three much larger tracts of protected land.

In other words, you did not just protect these 106 acres. You filled in a missing puzzle piece that helps connect a 17,500-acre region. By permanently protecting Cotoni-Coast Ridge, you also helped protect the adjacent San Vicente Redwoods (8,500 acres), Cotoni-Coast Dairies (5,800 acres) and Swanton Pacific Ranch (3,200 acres).

Cotoni-Coast Ridge is an incredibly rich place. At the bottom of a deep, lush canyon, Quesaria Creek runs through the heart of the property. Redwood and hardwood trees grow up the slopes to the coastal terrace, which is dominated by scrub. From here, a spectacular view of the coast from Davenport to Waddell is visible from the crown of the ridge.

Rest assured that your diligence and passion have left a lasting legacy. Now THAT is worth celebrating. 🌲

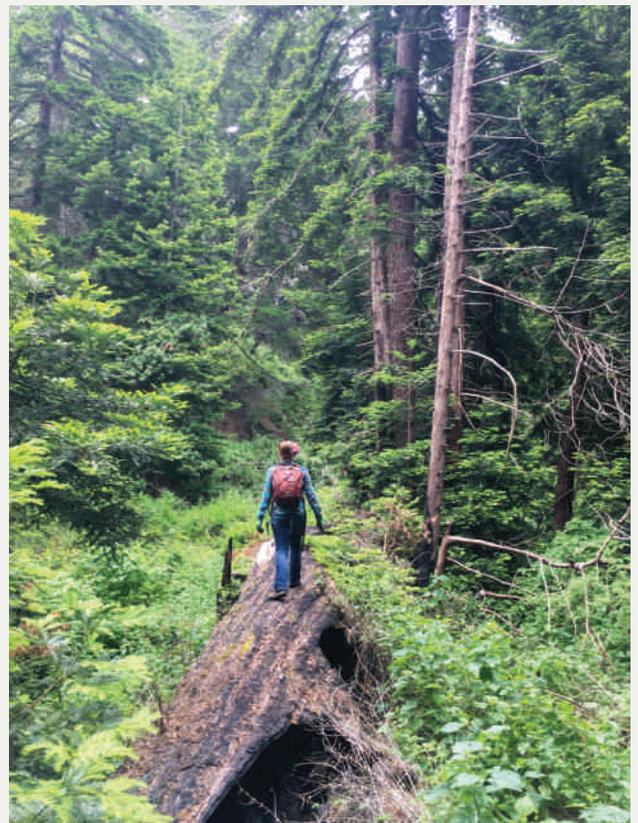


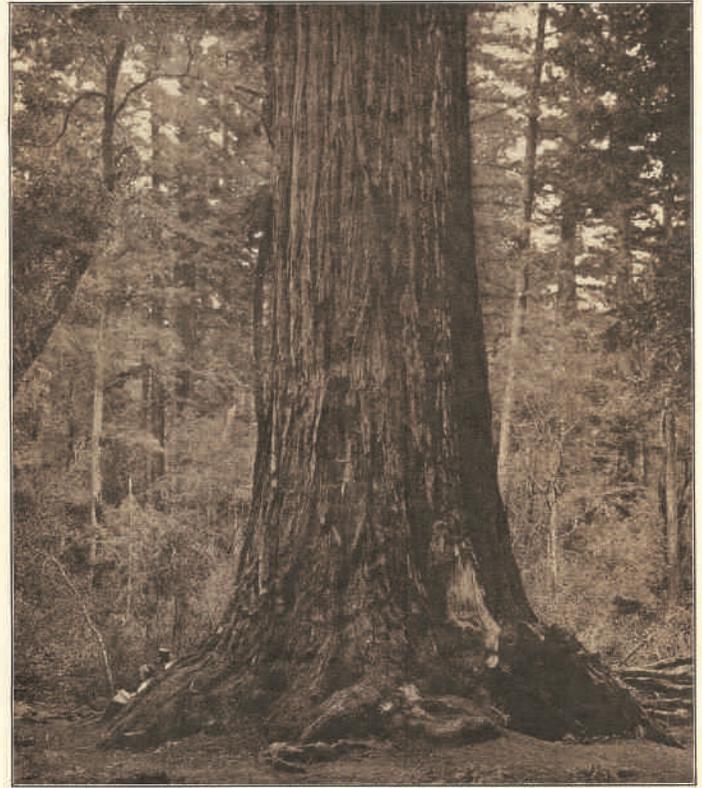
Photo © Ian Rowbotham

As of January 17, 2018, Cotoni-Coast Ridge is protected.

Partnering to Preserve the Past

Sempervirens Fund is 118 years old this year. It has been a long and successful journey thus far, because of supporters like you. Without you, protecting and connecting the mighty redwood forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains would be impossible.

We also rely on key partners like Stanford University. From the very beginning, Stanford University has shared and supported Sempervirens Fund's conservation goals. In 1899, the president of Stanford invited scientists and influencers to campus. They gathered in the library to discuss the protection of nearby redwood forests that were being logged at a devastating rate. The group appointed a committee to survey the old-growth redwoods that are now at the core of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. Andrew P. Hill and Carrie Stevens Walter, from the San Jose Woman's Club, were selected to head that effort. That meeting at Stanford resulted in the establishment of the Sempervirens Club — which then led to the creation of Big Basin State Park and so many other safe havens for the redwoods forests of the Santa Cruz Mountains.



Father of the Forest

Priceless images of old growth trees from the turn of the century now reside in the Stanford Archive.



Sempervirens Fund Founding Director Howard King contributed hundreds of photos to the Stanford Archive.

Flash forward to today and our close relationship with Stanford University continues. This year, Sempervirens Fund is donating thousands of images and papers documenting this historic time to Stanford University's Archive. The Sempervirens Fund Collection will be professionally cataloged and permanently preserved at Stanford so it can be utilized by historians and researchers interested in the early days of the conservation movement and the origin of the California State Park System. Stanford will also digitize the images and documents so they will be available online to the public as well. That means anyone with a computer will have access to our shared history.

For more information, visit www.sempervirens.org/stanford_archive. 🌲



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The Kirkwood Family Legacy at Castle Rock State Park

Sempervirens Fund is deeply grateful to Bob and Edie Kirkwood and The Kirkwood Family Fund. They have generously supported our organization for more than four decades. Most recently, they provided a transformative gift to support the creation of a new entrance for Castle Rock State Park. The Robert C. Kirkwood entrance will officially open during the 50th Anniversary celebration on September 29th. The new entrance is named in honor of Bob Kirkwood's father — the patriarch of the family. A monument and redwood sculpture honoring both of Bob Kirkwood's parents will also be at the new entrance to Castle Rock State Park.

The Kirkwood family has long had ties to Castle Rock and to conservation efforts in California. Bob's love of the outdoors grew from his early years spent hiking, exploring, and climbing the unusual tafoni rock formations in Castle Rock. His parents, Robert C. Kirkwood and Jean Gerlinger Kirkwood, owned Partridge Ranch, which the State acquired from the Kirkwoods and added to Castle Rock State Park in 1981. The generous spirit of Bob's parents inspired his own philanthropy and civic engagement.

Bob was a board contributor to many civic and environmental organizations, including: SPUR; Peninsula Open Space Trust; the Trust for Public Land and the Northern Sierra Partnership. In the 1990s, Bob was on the board of the State Coastal Conservancy. In 2005, he was Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's appointee to the newly created Sierra Nevada Conservancy.



Bob and Edie Kirkwood

On December 10, 2017, Bob Kirkwood passed away peacefully in Palo Alto with his wife Edie and sons at his side. We are saddened by his passing and forever grateful for his generosity. His legacy and that of his family will live on at Castle Rock State Park and throughout California. 🌲