

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND | WINTER 2023



How Redwoods Survive Climate Change

Your dedication to thriving redwoods will be the difference as we pursue solutions to help redwoods thrive extreme and volatile climate change. And we need your support now more than ever before. Here's what we know:

Extreme global climate change is risking the survival of redwood forests in California's Santa Cruz mountains. Temperature rise, intense drought, and uncertain precipitation are no longer trends. Rather, scientists predict they will be features of the regional climate.

Redwoods at the southern end of their range have been hit hardest by severe weather, climate changes, and wildfire. Impacts on forests, watersheds, and wildlife communities have the potential to be irreversible unless we act now.

With your support, and as we have for more than a century, Sempervirens Fund is taking action for redwoods to survive.

THE RISK IS REAL

Here's what the experts predict for the next century:

Temperatures will rise from anywhere between 2.7°F to 5.6°F by 2050. More frequent and severe heat waves will break existing records by as much as 7.4°F by 2050.

Precipitation will become shorter and more variable. Some models show up to an 8.8-inch decrease in annual rainfall by 2050, and others indicate a 6.6-inch increase.

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A Dedication to Redwoods



Cynthia McLaughlin moved to the Bay Area 50 years ago from Corpus Christi, Texas, to attend Mills College. “My family was outdoors, always,” says Cynthia. “We did a lot of hunting and fishing most weekends each month. My parents loved being out in nature.”

Soon Cynthia began exploring nearby outdoor destinations with a group of women hikers. “We went to a park in the East Bay in the rain and we were wading through mud, and I didn’t care—I felt euphoria,” said Cynthia. “And I still feel that way when I go to Skyline Ridge Preserve or Edgewood Park and Natural Preserve, where I’m a docent.”

As a docent, she has learned a lot about plants and animals, and she finds it exhilarating to share that with the community. “I love redwoods, but really find

chapparral so amazing and diverse”, added Cynthia. “They also live hundreds of years—that’s resilient.”

Cynthia got to know Sempervirens Fund through her late husband, Richard. They joined us for community dinners and annual picnics. “He and I met in our 40s and were soon married,” said Cynthia. “His last visit to redwoods was at Bear Creek—you could see the joy in his face. He wasn’t well, but he kept walking. He wanted to see that old-growth redwood.”

She dedicated a tree for Richard in an old-growth grove at Lagomarsino, a property protected by Sempervirens Fund west of El Corte de Madera Open Space Preserve. In September, Cynthia visited the tree to scatter Richard’s ashes the day before their anniversary. “It was a beautiful day. He would have been so happy,” said Cynthia.

In addition to her work as a docent, Cynthia is also an advocate for climate change solutions. “I hope that we will slow down climate change. I think it’s a threat to the redwoods,” said Cynthia. “I know species migrate, but I’m worried about how redwoods will survive.”

“I like that Sempervirens Fund is buying and saving the land, and partnering with agencies to plan for the forests’ future,” she added.

Join Cynthia in supporting Sempervirens Fund:
sempervirens.org/donate

GROW YOUR LEGACY

Plan the gift that lives on to protect the redwoods you cherish. **sempervirens.org/legacy-giving**



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Drought will double and become more intense. “Once in a century” droughts could happen as often as every 20 years by 2100, and “20-year” droughts will happen every 10.

Wildfire risk could rise by 16% throughout the Santa Cruz mountains, and risks to upslope forests are likely to tick up sharply.

A CLIMATE ACTION PLAN FOR REDWOODS

Sempervirens Fund is centering our conservation strategy on climate resiliency and the survival of redwoods. Our advanced research, data, modeling, and partnerships are giving us a comprehensive view into the lands most important to protect today for redwoods to endure climate change and thrive.

It’s time to take bold action to ensure a future for redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains. Backed by decades of research and more than a

century of experience protecting and stewarding these forests, the Sempervirens Fund Climate Action Plan is an urgently needed approach to stewarding the natural communities of the Santa Cruz mountains. For redwoods to survive:

- Protecting land must feature properties where they will thrive, now and in the future, prioritizing connectivity to other protected lands, elevation, and sources of water.
- Stewardship must be comprehensive across ecosystems, merging data, research, expertise, and traditional Indigenous knowledge.
- People need to remain actively connected to the land, through stewardship, volunteering, recreation, and education.

The alarms have rung, and we are responding. This moment deserves the best of all of us. Join us. Learn more: sempervirens.org/climate-action

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Justice

Thanks to you and your steadfast support, Sempervirens Fund is part of a community dedicated to protecting, caring for, and exploring redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains. We believe that redwoods and their interconnected ecosystems should be accessible to all people. We envision a day when public spaces feel welcoming and safe for everyone. To manifest our vision, we feature diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice in our work.

The story we have shared countless times over the last century is one of citizen advocacy, steadfast principles, pioneering spirit, and dedication to nature. The heroes in this story sought to save coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), and like many organizations, we are reconciling our founding story with the future we most want, for redwoods, for communities, and for our organization.

At Sempervirens Fund, we support the people and communities often undermined and excluded

from systems of power and privilege. We believe that celebrating diversity, fostering inclusion, advancing equity, and realizing justice is not only essential to our mission, but vital to our humanity, as people working for and serving on the board for Sempervirens Fund and as part of a community dedicated to protecting, caring for, and exploring redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains.

Learn more about our philosophy, and our commitment: sempervirens.org/our-commitment



Return of Salmon

Your support for forest health also ensures watersheds are restored and wildlife thrive. For a decade, we sought to restore habitats in the San Vicente Creek watershed to support a healthy wildlife community. That dedication and patience paid off—in the best possible way.

Although years of restoration efforts went into preparing for the Mill Creek dam to be removed, taking the dam face itself down and reshaping the creek happened in nearly the blink of an eye. On October 4, 2021, the dam came down. Suddenly, the water was free to flow through the watershed, join with San Vicente Creek, and improve crucial habitat for the redwood forest's aquatic inhabitants and visitors again.

And the exciting results of the dam's removal are proving to be equally paced with nature on our side. Significant winter storms, and welcome-back ceremonies performed by the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, both invited fish to return. Within a year of the dam's removal, wildlife—including endangered coho salmon—are returning. During a field survey in September last year, 15 salmon fry were counted just below the dam site. This is the first recorded sighting of salmon in the watershed—ever!

With your support, we witnessed an unprecedented return of salmon to the San Vicente watershed at a critical time in the species' quest for survival. At the southern end of its range, Mill Creek may well be a stronghold for the species.

Learn more about the amazing return of salmon:
sempervirens.org/salmon



Sempervirens
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Your Real Estate Helps Protect the Redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains—Forever

Thank you for loving the redwoods and all you do to support Sempervirens Fund.

Did you know that Sempervirens Fund welcomes donations of real estate? These generous gifts have an outsized impact on the acquisition and protection of the redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains for all, forever to enjoy.

The threat of development is increasing, and the impact of climate change makes protecting larger connected areas more urgent than ever. When land becomes available to purchase and protect, our biggest hurdle can be having enough funding available to complete critical and urgent land protection deals. Your support can make the difference.

To acquire, protect, and steward these redwood habitats in the face of these increasing challenges, we must expand our funding. Your support has never mattered more.

Read on to learn about ways in which a gift of real estate can have an everlasting impact on the redwoods of the Santa Cruz mountains.

For additional information, please visit sempervirens.org/giving-property

Or contact Julie Seelen, Chief of Philanthropy

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Some reasons to consider a gift of real estate

- You would like to make a truly transformational gift to protect the redwoods forever.
- You no longer want the responsibilities of being a landlord or the burdens of property management.
- Perhaps you need to replace rental or investment income from the property.
- You would like to access some of the appreciated value of your property but need to offset the tax burden.

Your gift options

- Donate your property outright to Sempervirens Fund—now or through your will—and receive a charitable income tax deduction and avoid capital gains taxes.
- Create a charitable remainder trust to receive or replace income for yourself and/or other beneficiaries as well as receive substantial tax benefits.

A few things to know

- Sempervirens Fund will generally sell gifted property rather than maintaining and managing it.
- We may not be able to accept all potential real estate gifts. Please contact us to discuss your options.
- Always consult with your own tax, legal, or financial advisors to ascertain whether this or other gift plans are in keeping with your own tax and financial needs.

Types of properties you can donate

- A primary residence
- A vacation home
- An investment property, such as a multi-unit apartment building
- Commercial property
- Undeveloped property
- Farmland

If you would like to explore ways to support redwood forest protection in the Santa Cruz mountains by donating real estate, please visit: sempervirens.org/giving-property

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