



Sempervirens
Fund

IMPACT REPORT 2022



To our coast redwoods community,

The Sempervirens Fund community has come together for many triumphant moments in the past century. In 2022, great efforts—many years in the making—came together, and thanks squarely to your support, it was a milestone year for land conservation, habitat restoration, and public parks.

From the Gateway to Big Basin to Camp Jones Gulch, we protected more than 1,000 acres of vital redwood forests, including the largest swatch of unprotected old-growth redwoods in the Santa Cruz mountains.

From Big Basin Redwoods State Park reopening to San Vicente Redwoods opening for the first time, we enjoyed new outdoor experiences across dozens of miles of trails.

Together we set a world record for hugging trees, we planted thousands of trees, and we raised \$15 million to protect and care for land in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

All of this work coming together in one year was truly special, and we could not be happier to share it with you. Thank you for everything you do to ensure that Sempervirens Fund can both take the time to develop lengthy projects to restore and protect land and be responsive in a moment's notice to react to opportunities when they arise to protect critical forests or support the recovery of ecosystems across the region.

We still have a great deal to do, especially with climate conditions continuing to falter, but we are here for this moment and cannot thank you enough for being here with us.

With gratitude,

Sara Barth, Executive Director



To the Sempervirens Fund community,

We are in a pivotal moment for redwoods and the habitats that they support. On behalf of the Sempervirens Fund board of directors, I want to share with you some of the ways in which the organization you support is making the most of the moment, accelerating the pace of conservation and restoration, responding to climate change, building more substantial partnerships, and rejuvenating our relationships with our community.

Climate change is impacting redwoods. They are stressed and growing less fully than ever before. We are responding. You will read about our climate action plan for redwoods and how we are advancing our conservation and stewardship priorities to respond to climate change and to help nature protect people.

On the heels of a momentous 2022, we are pursuing conservation of multiple properties, expanding our professional conservation and stewardship staff, and deepening our partnerships with land managers, agencies, and researchers to have a greater impact on the health of the forests in our care.

And a new emphasis on our commitment to diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice is advancing our professional development, our recruitment of new staff and board members, and our partnerships in exciting ways that we believe will only strengthen our commitment to our mission and to our incredible community of supporters.

This is a time of growth, and we are excited for the opportunity to match your commitment with our resolve to help redwoods survive and thrive.

Sincerely,

Evan Siegel, Board President

P.S. The Sempervirens Fund team would love to hear from you about our future together. Please email redwoods@sempervirens.org with your thoughts and suggestions.



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Protecting Camp Jones Gulch

CAMP JONES GULCH | FOREST FACTS

Protected Acres: **920**

Old Growth Protected: **39 acres**

Habitat Types: **7**

Connected Conservation Land:
10,000 acres

The Valley of the Giants and the Camp of Generations

For nearly 100 years, children have learned about nature among the redwoods at Camp Jones Gulch. The camp is extraordinary, from its mighty old-growth redwoods in the “Valley of the Giants” scraping the sky with their leaves, down to the roots of the grasslands. And thanks to you, its 920 acres—essential to protecting and connecting healthy habitat in the Santa Cruz mountains and providing outdoor education to the next generation—have been protected forever.

Thanks to you, and many supporters like you, by the fall of 2022 we raised all the

funds needed to purchase a conservation easement of YMCA’s Camp Jones Gulch—protecting what was the largest unprotected stand of old-growth redwoods in the Santa Cruz mountains, hundreds of acres of diverse habitats, and 9 miles of streams—and to restore and care for it into the future. Thanks to your support, the conservation easement was finalized in December, forever protecting Camp Jones Gulch’s old-growth redwoods today and empowering the conservationists of tomorrow.

Caring for Camp Jones Gulch

Camp Jones Gulch’s forests will be cared for into the future through the stewardship plan, restoration projects, mentoring, and implementation of more sophisticated forest management strategies for health and resilience. This is increasingly important in the face of climate change’s impacts, including increased drought, heat waves, and catastrophic fires. As we are confronted by the growing threats of climate change, partnerships like these will be the future of both conservation and resilient forest management.

Learn more about Camp Jones Gulch:
sempervirens.org/camp-jones-gulch

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

**Paige Rausser, Senior Project
Manager—Land Transactions**

“Together, we permanently protected some of the last remaining unprotected old-growth in the Santa Cruz mountains. While conservation easements aren’t new to Sempervirens, the deep partnership we’ve created with The Y is an emerging model where we can effectively preserve land from development, steward forest habitat for future generations, and address the ongoing climate crisis.”

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

**Jamie Bruning-Miles, President and
CEO of the YMCA of San Francisco**

“With the partnership and the conservation easement, there’s a perpetual commitment for the health of the forest, the camp, our youth, and our community, ensuring its redwoods will continue to inspire for generations to come. It’s just the beginning.”





California blackberries



Western thimbleberries



Elk clovers

Stewarding Trees and Forests



FOREST | FACTS

Trees Planted: **24,100**

Plants Planted: **235**

Hazard Trees Removed: **Thousands**

Growing the Forest

At least 1.5 million redwood trees live in protected forests currently under our care. Although the past few years have seen trees damaged by the 2020 CZU fire and further impacted by the ongoing drought and sudden unleashing of storms that began at the end of 2022 causing many damaged trees to fall, the forest has continued to recover and grow thanks to your support.

Restoring the Redwood Footprint

While more than 1,000 hazard trees were

removed to protect trees, people, and infrastructure around them, over 24,000 trees were planted to help the forest reclaim areas lost to previous logging, fire, flooding, and mud slides. New and old trees alike were supported by invasive plant removal projects like the *Clematis vitalba* multiyear project, which was successfully completed in 2022. This project removed and eliminated the invasive plant, which had taken over 90% of a critical forest area and was choking the stream.

The invasive plant was replaced by native California blackberries (*Rubus ursinus*), western thimbleberries (*Rubus parviflorus*), and elk clovers (*Aralia californica*) that were carefully grown by experts for years from seeds collected in the forest and then returned to help restore it. These native plants will help to keep the forest and its streams cool and offer berries and shelter to its wildlife inhabitants. Thanks to your support, multifaceted forest restoration strategies like these help the forests grow to their full potential—providing habitat and clean air for generations to come.

Learn more about forests:
sempervirens.org/seedlings

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Melisa Cambron Perez,
Field Operations Manager

“Redwoods are a resilient species with great potential, but like any species, they require specific care to thrive. With a multifaceted approach to stewardship, we take the whole forest into account to restore natural conditions and reset natural systems for a healthier, more resilient forest.”

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Chad Moura, Santa Cruz Mountain
Reserve Director, University of
California Santa Cruz

“Land managers like Sempervirens Fund actively sustain forest health while also protecting our own communities. Through our internships and field courses, students have the opportunity to learn how actions impact forest ecosystems and how continued stewardship and management can put us on a better trajectory.”

Preserving the Gateway



GATEWAY TO BIG BASIN | FACTS

Protected Acres: **153**

Average Age, Redwoods:
100 years, estimated

Percent Burned in CZU Fire:
100%, varying intensities

Headwaters: **Boulder Creek
watershed and the San Lorenzo River**

Milestone Redwoods Acquisition

Since 1902, Big Basin Redwoods State Park—and its prized stands of old-growth coast redwoods—has grown to encompass 18,000

acres, thanks to the everlasting support of the Sempervirens Fund community. Conservation at this scale shields the oldest trees, expands recreation and access, and bolsters a rich regional ecosystem, from ridgetops to sea.

In January 2022, Sempervirens Fund supporters made the difference for conservation of the Gateway to Big Basin: 153 acres of second-generation redwoods, Douglas fir, oaks, and madrones. This keystone property will enhance regional conservation goals and is vital to Big Basin's future.

Big Basin's Future

As California State Parks continues to shape Big Basin's future, and its own strategies for operating California's oldest state park, it is imperative that we protect land that will both support the conservation of and care for the park and its redwoods. We are fortunate to work with landowners who believe that their properties deserve to be conserved as the old-growth redwood forests of the future.

Learn more about the Gateway:
sempervirens.org/gateway

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

**Laura McLendon, Director of
Conservation**

"The Gateway is a conservation gem. Preserving the property is critical for protecting the Boulder Creek watershed and the San Lorenzo River. And it has abundant and healthy stands of redwoods and multiple groves of Douglas firs, coast live oaks, tan oaks, and madrones throughout the property."

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

**Chris Spohrer, California State
Parks Superintendent**

"We believe permanently preserving forests adjacent to Big Basin is essential to the park's future. The Gateway to Big Basin extends the park's protection of redwood forests and the Boulder Creek watershed. As we work on Reimagining Big Basin, the property aligns with our and the public's expectations for the park's future."



YOUR IMPACT

ACRES
PROTECTED

1,073

PLANTS
PLANTED

235

SALMON FRY COUNTED
AT MILL CREEK

15



**OLD-GROWTH
ACRES PROTECTED**

39

**ADVOCACY
ACTIONS**

2,499



**TREES
PLANTED**

24,100

**RESEARCH PROJECTS
INITIATED OR ONGOING**

10+



**MILES OF
PUBLIC TRAILS**

7.3

**MARBLED MURRELET
DETECTIONS**

**3 out of 5
monitoring locations**



Monitoring Wildlife

WILDLIFE | FACTS

Coho Salmon Recorded: **15**

Steelhead Trout Recorded: **12**

Marbled Murrelet Detections:
3 out of 5 locations

Documentation of Coho in Mill Creek:
First ever

Fauna in the Forest

With your dedication to protecting the forests of the Santa Cruz mountains, land in our care grew to more than 12,000 acres last year. Monitoring wildlife on these protected acres provides an indication of the health of the land and helps to inform stewardship needed to restore its vitality. Thanks to your ongoing support and the partnership of researchers across disciplines, we monitored wildlife—including endangered species—on the land, in the water, and in the air.

Sensitive Species, Significant Signs

The Santa Cruz mountains are close to the end of the range for redwood forests, and

some of the animals that call them home include endangered coho salmon and endangered marbled murrelets. This makes monitoring data here invaluable for our understanding of the species as a whole and how climate changes impact them, which makes last year's wildlife monitoring milestones all the more meaningful.

Last year, coho salmon were recorded in Mill Creek for the first time ever, just months after the dam was removed. This significant early sign of success can be attributed in part to more than a decade of restoration work in the watershed made possible by supporters like you.

And when endangered marbled murrelets were detected at 3 out of 5 monitoring locations last year—just two years after the CZU fire drastically decreased their old-growth nesting habitat—it was another encouraging signal of the continued recovery of the forest. Our monitoring data reveals that our work together is helping to restore the health of the forest and the many creatures that rely on it.

Learn more about wildlife:
sempervirens.org/wildlife-monitoring

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Beatriz Jiménez-Helsley,
Natural Resource Manager

"When monitoring for wildlife, we never know what we will find, which is why 2022 was exciting. Having an understanding of when and where wildlife are present informs our current and future stewardship practices so that we are mindful of species occupying the space."

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Daniel Nylén, Watershed
Restoration Program Manager,
Resource Conservation District of
Santa Cruz County

"The first-ever known recording of endangered coho salmon in Mill Creek is an exciting indicator of improving stream habitat conditions thanks to projects to restore the watershed. We look forward to continuing to partner on improving this critical spawning habitat for salmonids and the watershed as a whole."

Conservation and Climate Change



Redwoods at the southern end of their range have been hardest hit 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 each passing year, scientists gather more data and sharpen the picture of how climate change will affect the Santa Cruz mountains. Climate change is already taking a toll on the forests we love, and the threats will only get worse as temperatures rise. As we have for more than a century, Sempervirens Fund is taking action to ensure redwoods survive. We are centering our conservation efforts on climate resiliency, for the redwoods and the habitats they support and connect.

With your support, we are launching our Climate Action Plan for Redwoods—an urgently needed new approach to protecting and stewarding the natural communities of the Santa Cruz mountains. We invite you to learn more about how climate change is going to impact redwoods and how, together, we can help forests survive this crisis:

sempervirens.org/climate-action-plan

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

With a mission centered on trees that live for thousands of years, our commitments must stand the test of time. We are proud to have a deeply passionate community committed to the permanent protection and care of redwoods. Our community is growing, and we believe that celebrating diversity, fostering inclusion, advancing equity, and realizing justice is not only essential to our mission but vital to our humanity and our shared dedication to protecting, caring for,

and exploring redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains.

We believe redwoods should be accessible to all people and are working toward a day when all public spaces feel welcoming and safe for everyone. We acknowledge that the forced removal of the Awaswas-speaking Indigenous Peoples created conditions that both exploited and required defense of the land, and we support and work

with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band and Muwekma Ohlone Tribe to reclaim their cultural practices and relationships with their ancestral lands.

To manifest our vision for redwoods, diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice are critical facets of our work. We invite you to learn more about our philosophy, commitment, and four core focus areas: **sempervirens.org/commitment**



Left: Bob Coomber, or 4 Wheel Bob, explores the forests at Purisma Creek Redwoods Preserve. Right: Monroe and James enjoy time out on the Redwood Grove Loop Trail in Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

Thank You, Donors!

With each year comes growth, for trees and for our community. Your commitment to protecting redwood trees allows them to survive and thrive. We are grateful to each and every one of you—first-time, monthly, longtime, and legacy donors; foundations; and corporations—who supported us in 2022. Thank you!



YOUR DECADES OF GENEROSITY

5+ DECADES 35 DONORS (–1981)

4 DECADES 995 DONORS (1982–1991)

3 DECADES 1,190 DONORS (1992–2001)

2 DECADES 882 DONORS (2002–2011)

1 DECADE 3,837 DONORS (2012–2021)

NEWEST RING 2,913 DONORS (2022)



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Diane Cadei

"Redwood trees are our past, present, and future. They remind me of home, good times and bad, of family and life. I grew up with redwood trees, including being a Camp Fire Girl at Camp Wastahi and Big Basin and taking my sixth grade students to science camp in the Santa Cruz mountains. We must protect these wonderful living beings, which hold our history, and Sempervirens Fund has done that for over 100 years and continues to protect these magnificent trees."



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Pavan and Raj-Ann Rekhi-Gill

"Sharing the wonder of redwood trees with friends who visited California usually involved taking people to Big Basin Redwoods State Park. We were devastated to see the destruction from the CZU wildfire but learned about Sempervirens Fund while reading about the recovery efforts and gave our first donation. In a recent hike at the edges of the Big Basin, it was encouraging to see the trees fighting to regenerate from the charred landscape. Sempervirens Fund is leading the way to help reimagine how we'll be able to access the park in the future."



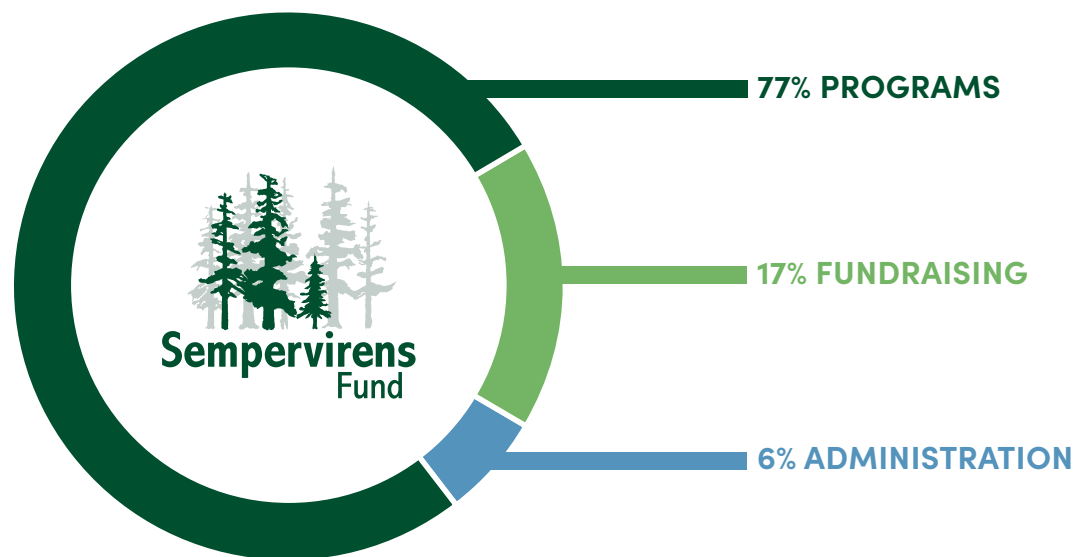
DONOR SPOTLIGHT

David Bochner

"Climate change is a global problem, but one that needs local solutions, and Sempervirens Fund does incredible work in the Santa Cruz mountains. Redwoods sequester unbelievable amounts of carbon, supporting incredibly unique ecosystems. California has already lost 95 percent of old-growth redwoods, making the work Sempervirens Fund does that much more urgent."

Financial Statement

Your support is hard at work. Seventy-seven cents of every dollar goes directly to programs designed to protect and steward redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains. Thank you!



As a land trust, it is difficult to accurately measure our program efficiency by looking at a single year. Land transactions can take more than five years to finalize, resulting in a significant difference in program expenses from year to year. We, along with many local land trusts, believe a five-year rolling average is the most meaningful way to look at our financial performance.





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Paper: Printed using Chorus Art paper, which is manufactured using 30% PCW pulp. It is ECF (elemental chlorine free) and acid free.

Photos: Glenn Bartley, Ann Blanchard, Ian Bornarth, Canopy Dynamics, Russell Ferretti-Hoyle, Mike Kahn, Amanda Krauss, Laura McLendon, Duy Nguyen, Melisa Cambron Perez, and Orenda Randuch.

Design: shirleycreative.com

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A close-up photograph of a forest floor. The ground is covered with a dense layer of green moss, small green plants, and fallen pine needles. Several pine cones are scattered throughout the scene, some partially covered by the vegetation. The lighting is soft, highlighting the textures of the forest floor.

sempervirens.org

You can fund a
thriving forest future
with a gift in your will
or other estate plan.