

Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND | SPRING 2023



Policy to Grow State Parks

Sempervirens Fund and California State Parks have a rich history together. The state parks of the Santa Cruz mountains are beloved destinations for those of us living here and visitors to California. But the region's parks are incomplete despite conservation purchases in the past decade and projects in negotiation today. State Parks need help to expand parks to better support both plant and wildlife communities and the people who visit to experience the outdoors. Fortunately, thanks to your support, we are ensuring that state policy meets the moment.

New policy being pursued in California's legislature would finally streamline the process for state agencies to acquire priority conservation lands in the Santa Cruz mountains. This vital legislation, AB 566, authored and introduced by Assemblymember

Gail Pellerin (D-28), intersects with a critical time for conservation of redwood forests, watersheds, and recreation lands in the region.

Thanks to you, Sempervirens Fund manages more than 13,000 acres of land. We are grateful to have the support of our community to protect and care for these lands. And we are privileged to have built a top-notch team of natural lands stewardship managers and experts to care for redwoods, watershed, wildlife, and other ecosystems.

Adding these lands to existing public conservation and park systems maximize their natural resource value and establish their public access and recreational value. This also has the greatest impact on their long-term resiliency and support for regional ecosystems. [Continued on p. 3](#)

Tracking Wildlife



Protecting coast redwood forests in the Santa Cruz mountains ensures that a rich diversity of life thrives here. With your commitment, Sempervirens Fund is monitoring forests for wildlife, especially threatened and endangered species. Monitoring wildlife can help assess overall ecosystem health. It gives us a sense of which species are using different parts of a property, so we can plan projects as needed, coordinate with researchers, and assess areas and seasons to reduce human interference.



Wildlife monitoring equipment is strategically deployed across properties, including San Vicente Redwoods, to gather baseline data on how wildlife actually inhabits the land. Motion sensor cameras positioned in key areas to capture wildlife presence and behavior have returned a treasure trove of data—as well as pretty fantastic wildlife selfies.



San Vicente's vast size and diverse habitats support many types of plants and wildlife—including rare, threatened, and endangered species, which are important to monitor to ensure that they are supported. These species are often sensitive to changes in the habitat, like recently opened trails, so if they thrive in this ecosystem, many more plants and wildlife will also benefit.



Across selected properties, including among the old-growth redwoods at Camp Jones Gulch, we are deploying Audio Recording Units to record detections of marbled murrelets. While recordings can't tell us if the marbled murrelets are nesting or whether any marbled murrelets hatched, wing beats can indicate nesting behavior. Follow-up in-person surveys can confirm if these special seabirds are occupying the tree stands.



We invite you to learn more about all the ways we are tracking wildlife, across land, sea, and air, in the redwoods of the Santa Cruz mountains:

sempervirens.org/wildlife

Monitoring equipment lets us observe and monitor the diverse wildlife of redwood forests and nearby habitats.

Thanks to your support, Sempervirens Fund recently protected two properties—Sterrenzee Ridgetop and Saddle Mountain Vista—which together will expand our conservation of the eastern entrance to Big Basin Redwoods State Park, setting the stage for improved recreation and visitor-serving infrastructure at the park in the future.

Helping to streamline the acquisition process is a critical role for California's legislature, in their capacity overseeing and supporting agency programs and initiatives, and new legislation can

course-correct this missing and essential feature of conservation in California.

And it could not be more timely. Conservation has exponential effects in the strategies to address and buttress ecosystems in a time of extreme climate change. The state's 30x30 goals—to preserve 30% of land and water by 2030—relies on organizations like Sempervirens Fund to do the heavy lifting of land acquisition. And to be successful beyond 2030, it must include the permanent and coordinated stewardship of agencies like the California Department of Parks and Recreation in taking ownership of these lands.

Learn more and take action to support a critical new direction for State Parks' expansion: sempervirens.org/state-parks-policy

Everlasting and Sacred Redwoods

Lynda Sereno was six when she moved to California in 1962 and redwoods have been an everlasting feature in her life ever since.

"They are such a lush, ferny, forested environment—a different world," said Lynda.

Her first redwoods experience was at Calaveras Big Trees State Park, and she visited them everywhere: Muir Woods, Avenue of the Giants, Del Norte Redwoods, and of course, Big Basin Redwoods.

"I wanted to live in one of those trees," Lynda remembers. "There's plenty of room for a little kid to have a home in the hollow of a redwood."

Recently retired, Lynda volunteers at Big Basin Redwoods State Park, which is her favorite place.

"Sempervirens Fund is huge in protecting Big Basin and redwoods, and that is so important," said Lynda. "The closest thing I feel to something sacred is there in the redwoods. It is very comforting, more than any other place in nature."

Lynda gives monthly to Sempervirens Fund—"it is an easy way to make sure I'm contributing"—and



she had made tribute gifts at Big Basin before the fire as well. "When my husband passed, we had trees dedicated to him and to me," she said. "His ashes are there, and mine will be there too."

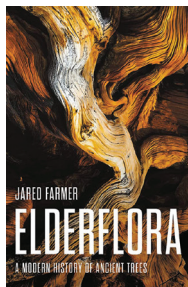
She is comforted by the recovery of the forests at Big Basin: "I miss the buildings, but they are a blip in time—they were only there because of the trees. Knowing the trees have been here this long and been through so much matters. And these are the last stands. This is what we have left. I want to protect them for the people that come later."

Join Lynda, and support Sempervirens Fund today: sempervirens.org/donate

Books for Better Conservation

Stay curious with us! Redwood trees have captured the hearts and imaginations of people for millennia. Our awe of these ancient giants grows with every season. Sempervirens Fund staff and supporters have added to our list of favorite books about redwoods, conservation, and experiences in nature.

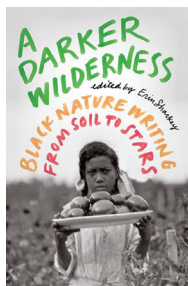
New additions to our book recommendations:



ELDERFLORA: A MODERN HISTORY OF ANCIENT TREES

by Jared Farmer

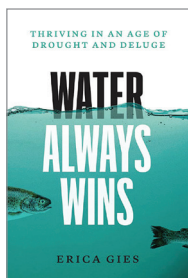
Farmer explores the complex history of the world's oldest trees. In a changing climate, a long future is still possible, Farmer shows, but only if we give care to young things that might grow old.



A DARKER WILDERNESS: BLACK NATURE WRITING FROM SOIL TO STARS

edited by Erin Sharkey

In this collection of personal essays, writers reflect on the significance of nature in their lived experience and explore stories spanning hundreds of years and thousands of miles, finding rich Blackness everywhere.



WATER ALWAYS WINS: THRIVING IN AN AGE OF DROUGHT AND DELUGE

by Erica Gies

Our world is not stable—and it is changing in ways that expose the deep dysfunction of our relationship with water. Gies reminds us that figuring out what water wants—and accommodating its desires within our human landscapes—is now a crucial survival strategy.

You can also read essays and original writing about mycology, eugenics, and climate change. For links to all the stories and recommendations, visit sempervirens.org/books



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Earth Day, Every Day

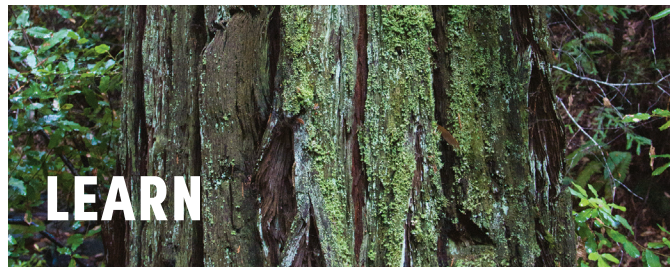
Take Action and Get Inspired

In April, we celebrated the 52nd Earth Day. Extreme weather and the effects of climate change are impacting lives, communities, and futures around the world. Here in the Santa Cruz mountains, we've experienced an overwhelming amount of extreme weather this year with historic storms and disasters that have left our communities and our forests reeling.

For the month of April, we launched an Earth Month of Action—from planting a native garden to experiencing forest bathing—and we want to share our evergreen actions with you, to protect and celebrate redwoods and the natural world.

Ready to take action? Check out these Every Day is Earth Day actions.

Actions for Redwoods and the Earth



LEARN

Redwoods as Ancient Trees in a Modern World:

sempervirens.org/glossary



NATURE

Go forest bathing, in person or virtually:

sempervirens.org/forest-bathing



PARTNER

Sign up for the Reimagining Big Basin planning process:

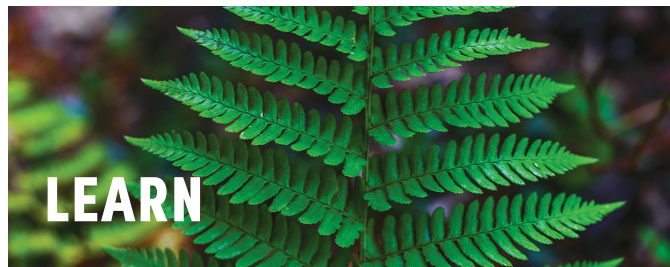
sempervirens.org/big-basin



LEARN

Read the four-part series on redwoods and climate:

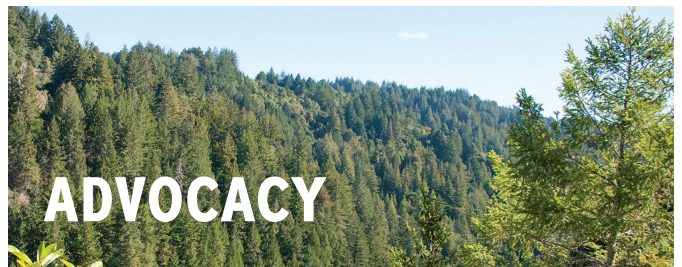
sempervirens.org/climate-series



LEARN

Register for our free webinar series, Under the Redwoods:

sempervirens.org/webinars



ADVOCACY

Sign up to receive redwood and climate action texts:

sempervirens.org/texts



NATURE

Visit a park in the Santa Cruz mountains:

sempervirens.org/visit

Check out all the actions at sempervirens.org/earth

Photos: Ian Bonarth, Michael Kahn, Allison Krauss, and Orenda Randuch.