

# Mountain Echo

THE NEWSLETTER OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND | FALL 2025



## Monumental Milestone for Cotoni-Coast Dairies

Cheers echoed across the coast bluffs on August 15 as community members, conservationists, and leaders gathered to celebrate a milestone decades in the making: the public opening of Cotoni-Coast Dairies, a unit of the California Coastal National Monument. For the first time, nearly nine miles of trails wind across this extraordinary stretch of the Santa Cruz coast, connecting people directly to the beauty and history of a landscape once almost lost to development.

This moment is the culmination of persistence, foresight, and vision from countless people. “People did this,” as one speaker reminded the crowd. From the neighbors who spoke up when development loomed in the 1990s, to elected officials who moved quickly to safeguard the land,

to conservation groups that carried the torch, to the community volunteers who carved trails with aching muscles and blistered hands—this victory belongs to all.

Cotoni-Coast Dairies is far more than a scenic landscape. Its rolling terraces, redwood-lined canyons, and salmon-bearing streams make it an ecological gem. The property’s history as a dairy farm is layered with the deeper cultural legacy of the Cotoni (*Cho-tow-knee*) people, who cared for this land for millennia. Beneath its natural beauty rests a wealth of ecological and cultural treasures that make this place more than deserving of the highest conservation honor: designation as a national monument.





### **Monumental Milestone for Cotoni-Coast Dairies *Continued***

That designation was no small feat. After the land was spared from development and transferred to the Bureau of Land Management, Sempervirens Fund stepped in to lead a two-year campaign urging President Obama to recognize Cotoni-Coast Dairies as part of the California Coastal National Monument. The presidential proclamation in 2017 marked the pinnacle of protection, ensuring the property would be forever safeguarded within the National Conservation Lands system—a network of America’s most treasured public landscapes.

National Monument status is transformative. It secures not only the recognition this landscape deserves, but also the resources and attention required to care for it properly. National monuments are protected from the threat of sell-offs, affirming that these lands belong to all people, forever.

Yet protection is never the end of the story. It is the beginning of the responsibility to care for the land and steward it into the future. As we celebrate 125 years of protecting redwoods, we are also looking ahead. Today, Sempervirens Fund, the Bureau of Land Management, and community partners are working to ensure Cotoni-Coast Dairies thrives for generations to come.

At the heart of this work is San Vicente Creek, one of the region’s most unique waterways. Flowing unimpeded to the Pacific Ocean, it provides Coho salmon with direct access to high-quality spawning grounds. In the coming weeks, restoration efforts will focus on improving habitat conditions to help revive this threatened species. At the same time, fire management projects will stretch across the boundaries of Cotoni-Coast Dairies and San Vicente Redwoods to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfire. Trail signage and interpretation will bring the history and ecology of this place to life for visitors.



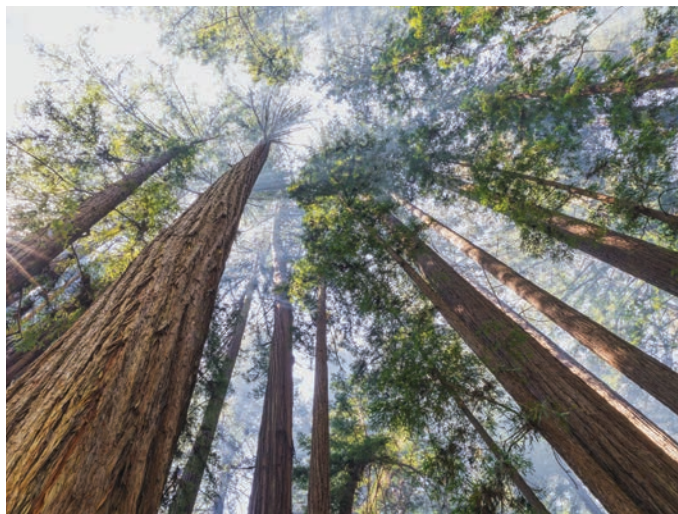


Each of these efforts underscores that Cotoni-Coast Dairies is not an isolated landscape. It is part of a larger mosaic that includes Wilder Ranch, Cal Poly Swanton Ranch, and San Vicente Redwoods. Together, these lands form a living, resilient landscape that benefits wildlife, neighboring communities, and future generations alike.

The opening of Cotoni-Coast Dairies is more than the unveiling of trails. It is the unveiling of possibility—the chance for people to experience awe and wonder, to feel part of a story larger than themselves, and to carry forward the spirit of conservation.

This moment is a celebration of perseverance and partnership. It is proof that when people come together to protect what they love, they can achieve the extraordinary. Cotoni-Coast Dairies now stands, permanently, as a national treasure: a gift from one generation to the next.

Visit: [sempervirens.org/cotoni-coast-dairies](https://sempervirens.org/cotoni-coast-dairies)



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*"I've loved trees my whole life, and coast redwoods are some of the most extraordinary. From their lifespan and magnitude to all their invisible secrets of survival, coast redwoods hold eons of wisdom." –JANE KIM*





## Reflections from Our Forest Fellow

Your support for protecting redwoods fosters not only thriving forests, but also lasting connections between people and nature. This summer artist Jane Kim recently completed her tenure as Sempervirens Fund's inaugural Forest Fellow, yet our work together continues to grow.

During her fellowship, Jane brought the magic of the redwoods to thousands through art and storytelling. She joined us for an in-depth interview and said, "I've loved trees my whole life, and coast redwoods are some of the most extraordinary. From their lifespan and magnitude to all their invisible secrets of survival, coast redwoods hold eons of wisdom."

Jane partnered with Sempervirens' David Cowman to create the third episode of her *Curiosity Stories* film series, exploring how people shape the future of redwoods. She also appeared as a guest in our *Under the Redwoods* webinars, sharing her insights with supporters directly. Her work was also celebrated at a February art gallery exhibit

featuring *Sempervirens in Elementis*, a four-part series of redwood tree ring prints set against fire, water, air, and earth.

Jane's newest monumental artwork, *Since 1931*, is now on view at the Santa Cruz Museum of Natural History's *Treasured Trees* exhibit through November, sponsored by Sempervirens Fund. Later this year, two final works from her fellowship will be released and made available for purchase, offering supporters another way to connect with her art and the redwoods that inspire it.

Because of your support, these creative collaborations inspire deeper connections to redwoods, ensuring their beauty and importance resonate far beyond the forest. Together, we are helping people see, feel, and protect these ancient giants in new and lasting ways.

Explore Jane's ongoing collaborations with Sempervirens Fund at

**[sempervirens.org/forest-fellow](https://sempervirens.org/forest-fellow)**



# The Plant Life of the Redwoods



Your dedicated support makes the difference in nurturing resilient redwood forests and the vibrant ecosystems they sustain. In 2021, thanks to contributors like you, Sempervirens Fund acquired Castle Rock Hollow, one of the final forested inholdings bordering Castle Rock State Park that had been zoned for timber harvest. Instead of development, we envisioned protection and restoration for this 51-acre parcel, and your generosity helped make that vision a reality.

Recently, we initiated a botanical survey of Castle Rock Hollow's diverse landscape, including its striking meadow. The survey assessed and documents plant life, wildlife activity, and the site's ecological character—essential steps in guiding thoughtful stewardship and preparing the land for eventual transfer to California State Parks, ensuring it will be protected for generations.

Already, transformation is underway. Invasive plants like bamboo and French broom have already been carefully and manually removed, making space for native wildflowers and grasses to return. Visitors to the meadow might spot deer grazing among blossoms, or even glimpse a mountain lion crossing the hollow. Each sighting is a reminder of the habitat resilience you helped restore.

This progress underscores how your support enables deep-rooted lasting stewardship, healing habitats and strengthening redwood forests. Together, we are ensuring that places like Castle Rock Hollow continue to flourish, sustaining both people and wildlife far into the future.

Learn more about the botanical bounty at Castle Rock Hollow: [sempervirens.org/plant-survey](https://sempervirens.org/plant-survey)



## Shop for Redwoods

Check out our logo-wear and more:  
[sempervirens.org/store](https://sempervirens.org/store)



# Donors' Delight



When Faan-Hoan Liu arrived in Santa Cruz from the flatland suburbs of Chicago in the 1980s he discovered an entirely new world filled with towering redwoods. His first walk along the Redwood Loop Trail at Henry Cowell State Park was unforgettable. "It was love at first sight, first smell, first sound," he recalls. "The silence drowned out my thoughts. It is still my favorite place on the planet."

In 1988 Faan planted a redwood sapling in his yard. Faan often visits the now-towering tree. "It feels like a member of my family. I love to watch it grow and get a sense of the scale of my own life."

In recent years, growing concern about climate change has deepened his commitment to protecting redwoods. He became a monthly donor to Sempervirens Fund, affirming his belief that redwoods are part of the solution. "Maintaining forests is vital. They sequester carbon, produce

oxygen. And this unique and special species grows nowhere else and it is a solution to this danger."

As he prepares to retire from a career in software engineering for DNA sequencing, Faan reflects on his decades long-relationship with redwoods: "I felt like I was home among redwoods. That they were in my DNA and I had finally found an environment that matched my genes."

Faan is also volunteering among the redwoods. "I began volunteering this year, in Sempervirens' 125th anniversary year. I like contributing with my hands and meeting other donors. Everyone needs a tribe, and this is mine."

***"Maintaining forests is vital. They sequester carbon, produce oxygen. And this unique and special species grows nowhere else and it is a solution to this danger."***

**–FAAN-HOAN LIU**

Join Faan and support Sempervirens Fund:  
**[sempervirens.org/support](https://sempervirens.org/support)**







## Five Years Since the CZU Fire

Five years ago this August, the CZU Lightning Complex Fire swept through Big Basin Redwoods State Park—California’s oldest state park—devastating over 97% of its iconic forest and destroying nearly all of its infrastructure. The scars of that day remain. Yet, thanks to the determination of stewards like you, a hopeful future is unfolding.

Today, Big Basin is in the midst of transformation through *Reimagining Big Basin*, a visionary initiative rooted in community input, ecological resilience, and inclusive access. This effort has culminated in a newly released Facilities Management Plan—a guide for rebuilding campgrounds, visitor centers, parking, shuttle systems, and more—all while prioritizing forest health and dramatically reducing human footprint in the park’s old-growth core.

As the CZU fire’s five-year mark prompts reflection (commemorated by local gatherings and community remembrance), your enduring commitment continues to be pivotal. Through support of land protection to expand the park, forest and trail restoration, collaborative planning, and visitor-serving facilities, you are helping Big Basin return stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient than ever.

Your enduring commitment to the ongoing recovery of redwoods is making the difference in the future resilience of redwoods at Big Basin and beyond.

Stay connected with Big Basin’s future:  
[sempervirens.org/big-basin](https://sempervirens.org/big-basin)



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