



Sempervirens
Fund

IMPACT REPORT 2025



To our coast redwoods community,

Over the past decade, I have had the honor of leading Sempervirens Fund alongside a community deeply committed to protecting redwood forests. During this time, I have been astounded by the increase in the scope and scale of the challenges, and opportunities, for protecting, restoring, and connecting people to redwoods.

The impacts of climate change—including rising temperatures, extreme wildfires, droughts, and flooding—are accelerating and intensifying, leaving an indelible mark on the redwoods and associated habitats in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Sempervirens Fund has adapted by fundamentally shifting our response to the threats of the moment and redesigning our plans to meet the future needs of the forests.

In 2025, we launched Redwoods Forward, our strategic plan to move faster, achieve greater impact, and work smarter through deep partnerships. Our goals are to protect more land more quickly, restore forests at greater scale, connect more people to the outdoors, and strengthen advocacy in the public policy arena to advance our vision. I am very pleased to report we have made critical strides in 2025, and I am confident that we will achieve the substantial gains needed to ensure redwoods in our region thrive for generations to come.

Our success is contingent on your continued engagement as redwood champions. Time after time, you have lifted your voices to advocate for redwoods. Year after year, you have shown your generosity and commitment. Your enduring partnership has been essential. Together, we will help safeguard these incredible redwood forests so they can be celebrated 125 years from now and well beyond.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sara Barth". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sara Barth, Executive Director



Dear Sempervirens Fund community,

2025 marked a milestone year for Sempervirens Fund—an inflection point in our 125-year history. Thanks to your commitment to protecting the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains, we are entering a new era of protection, restoration, and connection that will benefit these forests, and all of us, for generations.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I want to share our deep gratitude and pride. You and our exceptional staff have come together to help us meet both the extraordinary opportunities and the urgent challenges facing our redwood forests.

As you will see in this report, the past decade has been transformative. Whether you’ve supported our mission for a day or for decades, you are part of a community working to accelerate our impact through 2030 and beyond.

In the coming years, thanks to your support, we will pursue the protection of thousands of additional acres, the care for thousands of groves and trees, and the dedication of thousands of volunteer and public engagement hours in the redwoods.

In uncertain times, we remain committed to ensuring the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains are protected for the future. The Board stands ready to help guide this organization, inspired by our shared commitment to ensure a thriving forest landscape.

Sincerely,

Peter Staple, Board President

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Protecting Redwoods Before they Fragment

Adrian Frediani provides a comprehensive look into how Sempervirens is pursuing protection of the remaining large, intact redwood landscapes in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



In 2025, Sempervirens laid down ground-work to ensure that coast redwoods, icons of California's landscape, continue to thrive in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Among those efforts, our organization adopted *Redwoods Forward*, a five-year strategic plan that sets a clear course through 2030.

The plan focuses on safeguarding vulnerable old-growth, protecting key watersheds, and prioritizing landscapes where scale and connection determine

long-term resilience. Priorities are informed by data, field experience, and the knowledge of staff who care for these forests.

For our Director of Land Transactions, Adrian Frediani, the work entails building relationships with landowners and our conservation partners, and employing diverse funding strategies so Sempervirens can act when the right opportunity appears. Her role sits at the junction where conservation goals are forged into agreements that hold up financially and legally, and endure the test of time.

Real estate, in this context, is a tool utilized by our organization to keep redwood forests intact. "The moment a forest is subdivided and developed," Adrian warns, "you've altered that landscape in a way you can't undo." That is why *Redwoods Forward* aims to prevent fragmentation before natural systems are eliminated altogether.

A Rare and Historic Opportunity

In much of the Santa Cruz Mountains,

forests once held in larger blocks have been divided over time. But in the Gazos Creek watershed, north of Big Basin, Adrian describes a landscape where ownership ranges widely from small family properties to large tracts spanning significant portions of the forest. As long as those larger properties do not split into groups with widely different intentions, it is possible to protect the forest as a meaningful whole.

Much of our Stewardship team's work in 2025 within places like the Gazos focused on being a good neighbor and land manager, while continuing to strengthen community ties. Adrian's team joins when those relationships evolve into conversations about land protection. Her work is to help landowners navigate the major decision to sell their land, balancing care for their changing circumstances with Sempervirens' responsibility to advance our mission sustainably.

Building Capacity in 2025

Adrian sees the impact of 2025 in the long-term projects that continued moving

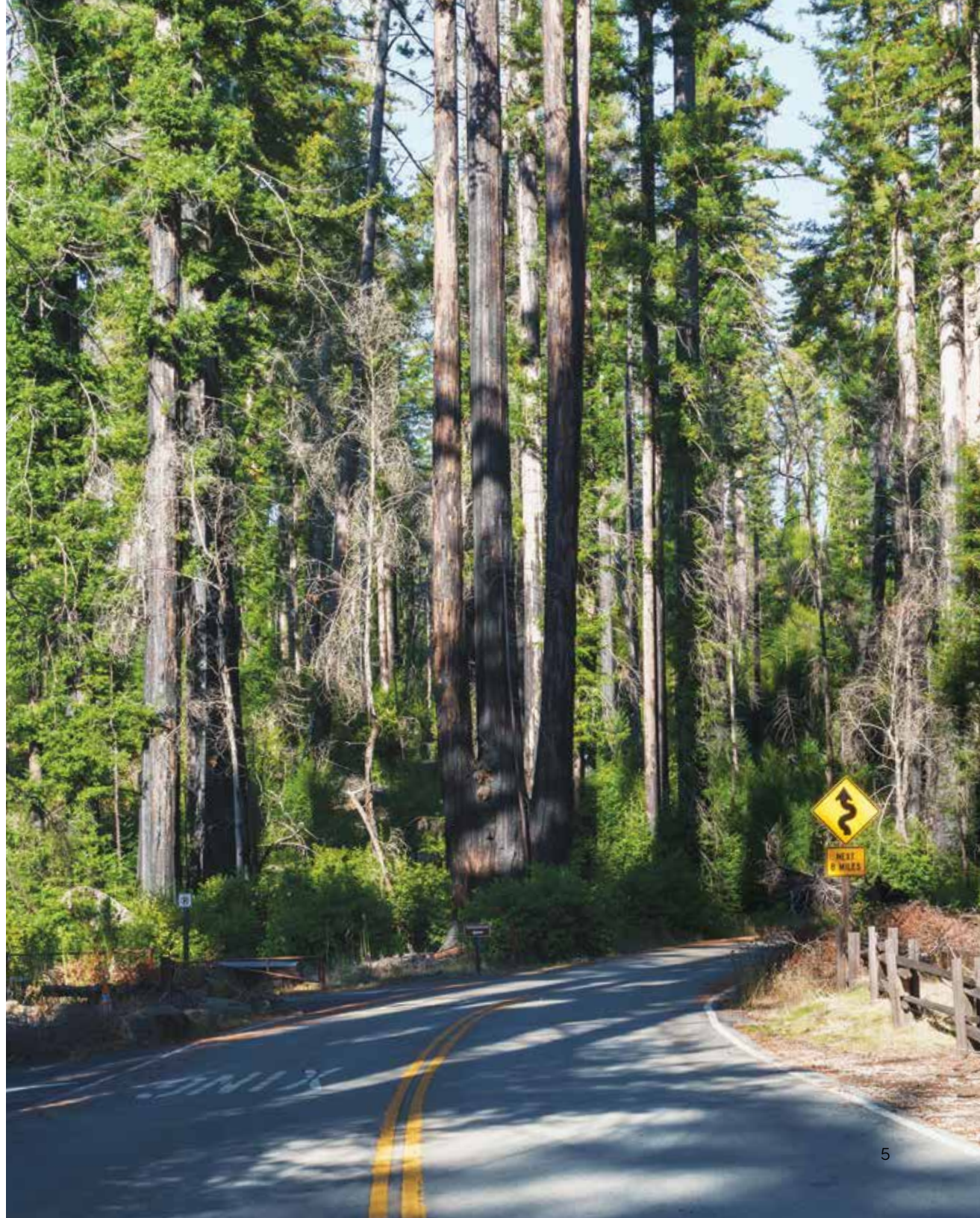
forward while staff roles evolved across the organization. Significant properties went under contract, including one shaped by a decade of relationship-building, and another will advance protection for an outdoor education camp. This year also laid the groundwork for the transfer of the Gateway to Big Basin to State Parks in early 2026, advancing our strategy to permanently expand public lands.

Adrian highlights how our diverse projects have paved the way to success for broader outcomes. Some areas may become parkland, while others remain working forests carefully managed so forests, wildlife, and people can thrive for the long term. Across them all, our consistent presence in the areas we serve will be critical to ensure these landscapes stay forested over time.

To read more on how these deals come together, and why 2025 set the pace for 2030, visit sempervirens.org/adrian-frediani

“A small stand of redwoods surrounded by subdivision may still matter, but it cannot do the same work as a larger block that connects to parks, working timberlands, and waterways.”

– Adrian Frediani



Restoring Old-Growth Forests from High-Intensity Fire

David Cowman on working with State Parks to set up the region's precedent-setting old-growth wildfire resilience project and the decade-long arc that San Vicente's restoration has reshaped



Following the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire at Big Basin Redwoods State Park, early media coverage focused on the impact on coast redwoods—would they survive? Within a year, green shoots sprouting from charred trunks suggested the forest was rebounding. Five years later, David Cowman, Director of our Land Stewardship team, offers a more complete perspective: “Some old-growth trees that flushed with new growth in 2021 are now showing decline under the combined stress of heavy burn

damage, years of drought, and a warming climate.” While redwoods can resprout, the old-growth structure and complex habitat they support can be lost.

Drawing from five years of research post-CZU, David has a clear goal: science-backed stewardship that lowers the threat to old-growth redwoods as high-intensity fires become more frequent. He also led a partnership that began immediately after the fire, when we stepped in to support California State Parks in rebuilding Big Basin. In 2025, that led to Sempervirens helping implement the forest management plan developed by State Parks and Save the Redwoods League elsewhere for Big Basin's recovery.

Big Basin's Old-Growth Strategy

Having secured a \$3 million grant, we will begin directly addressing wildfire resiliency in the park's oldest redwood stands. Projects like these remain rare, in part, because of the coordination it requires. Before any equipment arrives, foresters, biologists, botanists, archaeologists,

planners, and interpretive staff all help determine what work is feasible and how it can be done responsibly.

This project also marks the first time Sempervirens will manage a large restoration effort on land it does not own. This work was made possible by our community's unwavering support and our partners' trust in our ability to help steward one of California's most visible state parks. In fall 2026, we will scale up removal of dead and downed vegetation for State Parks Natural Resource Management across 215 acres of forest.

Looking Back a Decade at San Vicente

David refers to San Vicente Redwoods as proof of what a decade of relearning can accomplish. When we purchased this land with Peninsula Open Space Trust in 2011, its recovery depended on work spanning many years with partners including Save the Redwoods League.

Crews have removed invasive species, repaired culverts, reduced erosion from

roads, and rebuilt stream function across the watershed. Following CZU, the pace of post-fire cleanup accelerated. In 2025, with the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, that investment came to Mill Creek, a crucial tributary in the San Vicente watershed. Three redwood trees were guided into a bend of the creek and wedged into place to create habitat for species such as coho salmon.

Looking ahead, David is cautiously optimistic. Shaded fuel breaks and prescribed fire are planned at San Vicente as part of a longer transition to help forests recover in a warmer, drier climate.

To learn more about the history and research that has informed a more active approach to stewarding redwoods, visit sempervirens.org/david-cowman

“There’s a groundswell toward thinking about stewardship as a long-term relationship. You don’t go in, do a project, and leave. As long as you’re responsible for managing a landscape, you have to keep managing it.”

– David Cowman





Advancing Conservation from the Capitol to the Coastline

How Rachel Dann helped clear the path for faster State Parks acquisitions, unlock conservation funding, and build a coalition ready for what comes next.

The work to protect coast redwoods and restore forests unfolds over many years. Rachel Dann, our Director of Government Relations, sees that reality most clearly in Sacramento, where she works to shape the policies governing land transfers that determine whether protection becomes durable—or stalls in limbo. As she puts it, “We deeply value State Parks as the permanent owner of conserved lands. That’s why we take every opportunity we can to work with the state to strengthen the process for California to acquire land for parks.”

Cutting the “Green Tape”

In 2024, Rachel worked closely with Assemblymember Gail Pellerin on a bill

for our organization that sought to streamline land transfers to state parks. Sponsoring this bill allowed our organization and supporters to have a genuine voice in influencing the pathway for conservation. The bill reimaged a cumbersome process for transferring private conservation land to state parks. Despite earning broad support from many partners, it was vetoed in the eleventh hour by the Governor.

Undeterred, Rachel worked with Assembly-member Pellerin and our partners to reintroduce the legislation in 2025. On October 13, 2025, those efforts finally became law. The Governor signed AB 679, and its companion bill, SB 630 authored by Senator Ben Allen, to expedite the process for State Parks to expand and keep conserved lands protected long term.

People-Powered Policy

Alongside legislation, public demand for advocacy and outreach has risen for climate action. Rachel describes Sempervirens' role as "understanding the evolving repercussions of policy" and "mobilizing supporters when it matters most." In 2025, our community pushed over twenty-two thousand digital advocacy actions to support ambitious goals like protecting 30% of America's land and waters by 2030.

Building coalitions has been a core Sempervirens role from the beginning, when grassroots neighbors fought against the

loss of old-growth redwoods and helped establish California's first state park in 1902. Alongside our board, staff, and supporters, Rachel leads that work today—building trust with legislators and turning public support into long-term forest protection—with that same resolve.

A Visible Payoff

The Cotoni-Coast Dairies Unit of the California Coastal National Monument opened to the public in the summer of 2025, offering access to nearly 9 miles of new trails. Rachel Dann partnered with the Bureau of Land Management to host the opening ceremony, closely tracking the decades-long arc that led up to this moment.

Now, the property belongs to a distinct class of federally protected landscapes managed with conservation as its priority. Restoration work will focus on improving habitat quality and coordinating wildfire risk reduction. For Rachel, Cotoni Coast Dairies is a tangible result of persistent work over many years, and a marker for what becomes possible when policy, partnerships, and funding align. Our task moving forward is to continue advancing enduring policies that protect ancient redwoods now and into the future.

To hear more from Rachel about how we ensure redwoods will continue to stand for another 125 years, visit sempervirens.org/rachel-dann

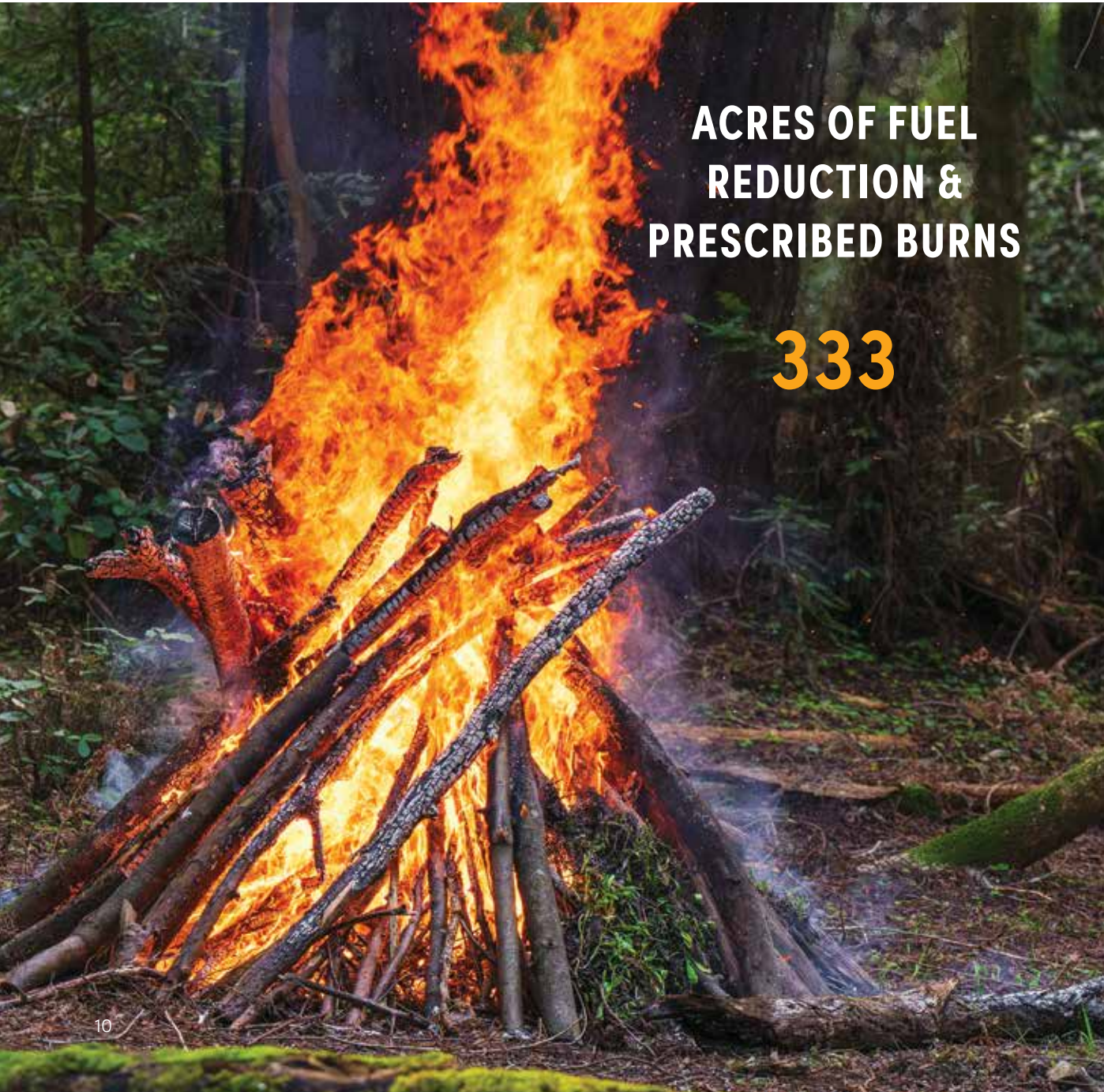


"In uncertain times, we are concentrating the collective power of building coalitions and wielding policy to protect against volatility."

- Rachel Dann

YOUR IMPACT

Because of you, forests are healthier and more resilient to wildfire.

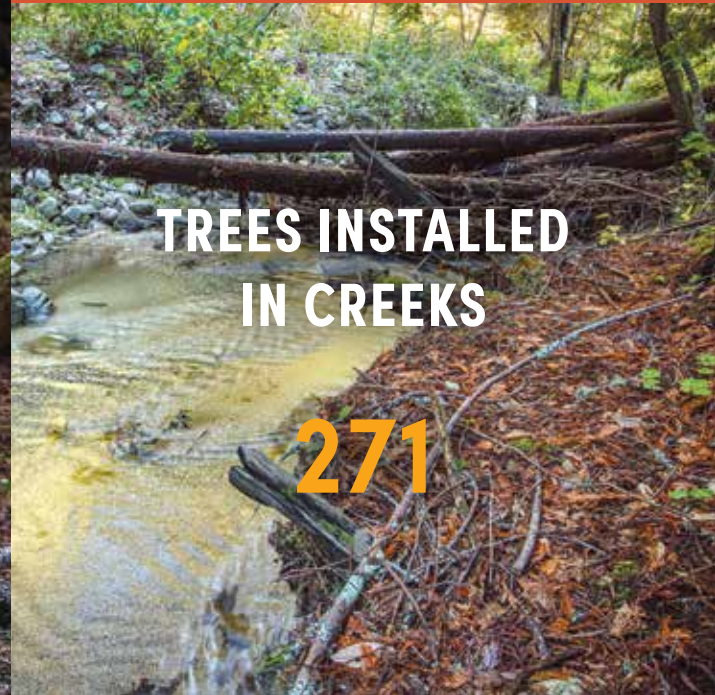


**ACRES OF FUEL
REDUCTION &
PRESCRIBED BURNS**

333

BURN PILES

394



**TREES INSTALLED
IN CREEKS**

271

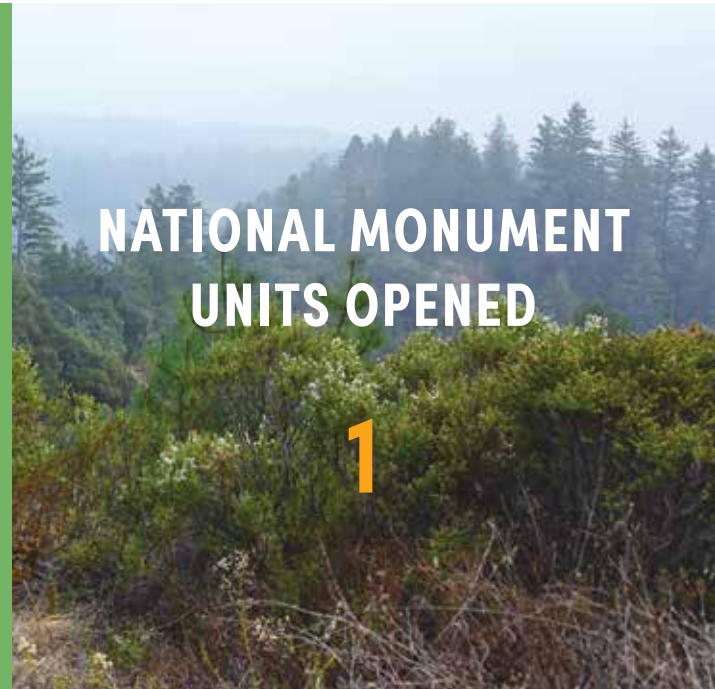


**RESEARCH
PROJECTS**

14

**LEGISLATIVE
ACTIONS SUPPORTED**

14



**NATIONAL MONUMENT
UNITS OPENED**

1



**ADVOCACY
ACTIONS**

22,000+



VOLUNTEERS

79



**MARBLED MURRELET
DETECTIONS**

27

Connecting Land and People Together

Laura McLendon reflects how conservation work over the past decade is guiding the organization from mere land acquisition to comprehensive tending of the land and the people.



To understand the progress of 2025, our Director of Conservation Planning looks back at how differently Sempervirens operated just over a decade ago. Laura McLendon recalls when our work focused on acquiring land, including smaller properties, holding them, then “flipping them to parks.” We were protecting more acres and adding more green on the map, but the work was still shaped by a prevailing idea Laura names directly: nature as a pristine, frozen “museum.”

Removing Boundaries in Conservation

Laura points to the acquisition of San Vicente Redwoods in 2011 as the moment that changed that trajectory. The degree of recovery work required at this 8,532-acre property challenged us to understand stewardship at a landscape scale. It became evident that our “buy and set aside” model falsely assumed forests could self-stabilize once protected.

We also recognized partnerships as essential to managing landscapes. Ecosystems do not follow property lines, and resilience cannot be built one parcel at a time. As we began thinking beyond individual transactions toward the health of an entire bioregion, the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network was created to bring land managers together to exchange knowledge, align stewardship approaches, and strengthen collective capacity.

That approach remains central to our work in 2025. Laura now sees stewardship as recognition that land is a living system requiring care, attention, and long-term

commitment. Our work, particularly in the aftermath of the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, has deepened this shift toward accepting responsibility for restoration after protection.

Reimagining Big Basin

As climate pressures intensify and Big Basin Redwoods State Park recovers from the 2020 CZU wildfire, Sempervirens is putting this learning into practice. Laura asserts, “Redwoods are not museum pieces. They are living systems shaped by disturbance, culture, and care.”

Since 2020, Sempervirens has stepped up to support California State Parks’ recovery plan, *Reimagining Big Basin*. The plan redefines what a park is by braiding together the experience of researchers, foresters, conservationists, and the public. It has offered a second chance to plan differently, asking what is best for the land first, reducing the impacts of infrastructure, and building climate resilience into decisions from the start.



Laura points to the reality that State Parks does not have the capacity or resources to carry this plan alone at the scale Big Basin requires. Sempervirens will step up, alongside partners, to fill the gaps. In 2025, Sempervirens advanced park expansion, policy, restoration forestry, volunteering, and more in lockstep with *Reimagining Big Basin's* goals and strategies.

Looking ahead, climate change is raising the stakes. Sempervirens, like the living forests

it serves, is an evolving organization. Laura is tasked with helping build the connective tissue between land, people, and institutions that ensure nature is cared for far beyond our lifetimes.

To learn more from Laura about how we continue to deepen our diverse communities' relationship with redwood forests, visit sempervirens.org/laura-mclendon

I come back to an Indigenous idea, even as we describe it in Western terms, of 'tending the land.' It's a reciprocal relationship where people give back and don't take more than we need.

– Laura McLendon

Showing Up for Redwoods and Each Other

Photographer and naturalist Orenda Randuch (right) reflects on the power of a community's commitment to protecting and caring for redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains.



Since Andrew P. Hill and a handful of citizen activists formed Sempervirens Club in 1900, our organization has brought people together, from the Santa Cruz Mountains and around the world, to care for redwoods.

In the mid-twentieth century, Sempervirens helped establish the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail and coordinated trail building with California State Parks at Big Basin and many other destinations. Volunteering among

the redwoods and exploring the forests have long been part of the Sempervirens community experience.

In 2025 we launched a new era of volunteering with a new program centered on building leadership, harnessing dedicated supporters, and advancing organizational needs with specialized roles. One of our emerging leaders, photographer, naturalist, and frequent Sempervirens collaborator, Orenda Randuch, reflects,

“Being part of that process has deepened my sense of purpose and connection to my community. Volunteering has strengthened my sense of responsibility to the place I live.”

Professionally, Orenda is an observer, and volunteering has shifted how she experiences the natural world she documents through photography, “Volunteering turns observation into something collaborative. In the field, everyone brings different lenses. One



person identifies plants, another spots wildlife activity, someone else understands the geology. Together, those perspectives create a fuller picture of the ecosystem.”

It also shifts how we experience each other. Orenda says, “We’re not just outdoors together; we’re working toward a shared goal. That shared purpose leads to stronger connections and more meaningful conversations. It also has shown me stewardship is something we do together.”

You don’t have to be an expert to make a difference. Showing up, learning, and contributing consistently matters.”

Many of Sempervirens’ volunteer experiences are hands-on at regional state parks or with partners. Orenda shares her experience joining a French broom pull in the Olympia Watershed, which directly affects her community’s drinking water: “During the event, a student shared how much she was learning as we identified

native plants and discussed habitat restoration. The impact wasn’t just the number of plants removed; it was seeing knowledge shared in real time and watching people connect their effort to watershed health. That made the experience especially meaningful.”

Learn more about Sempervirens’ growing volunteer community: sempervirens.org/volunteer

You Power Our Progress

Our 125th year was shaped by the strength and commitment of this community. Your support advanced our mission, strengthened our organization, and positioned us for the work ahead. Whether you are new to Sempervirens or have been supporting us for years, because of you, we move into 2026 ready to build on this momentum to protect, restore, and connect people to these extraordinary forests. Thank you so much.



YOUR DECADES OF GENEROSITY

DONORS SINCE 1974 7

DONORS SINCE 1984 21

DONORS SINCE 1994 990

DONORS SINCE 2004 969

DONORS SINCE 2014 680

DONORS SINCE 2024 4,354

DONORS SINCE 2025 3,375

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



SELENE KUMIN VEGA

When I arrived in California in my early 20s, my uncle took me through the Santa Cruz Mountains to the ocean. Redwoods spoke to me from that first encounter, and I am grateful to live in the daily presence of their ancient, quiet, slow-paced way of being. Their interwoven roots, these communities of trees, sustaining a complex ecosystem extending far beyond their visual beauty, remind me of how to live on Earth. Thank you for working to protect these forests so essential to the preservation of biodiversity and the environment.



RICHARD CONNIFF

My wife, two young sons, and I moved to Northern California in 1977. We were thrilled to visit Big Basin, where we spent many days camping and exploring the gorgeous forest. I introduced my sons to backpacking on overnight trips from park headquarters to the beach, experiences that deepened our love of the outdoors. Years later, I served on the Sempervirens Fund Board and grew my appreciation for redwoods. Though now retired, we still gladly continue our support through sustaining and legacy giving today.

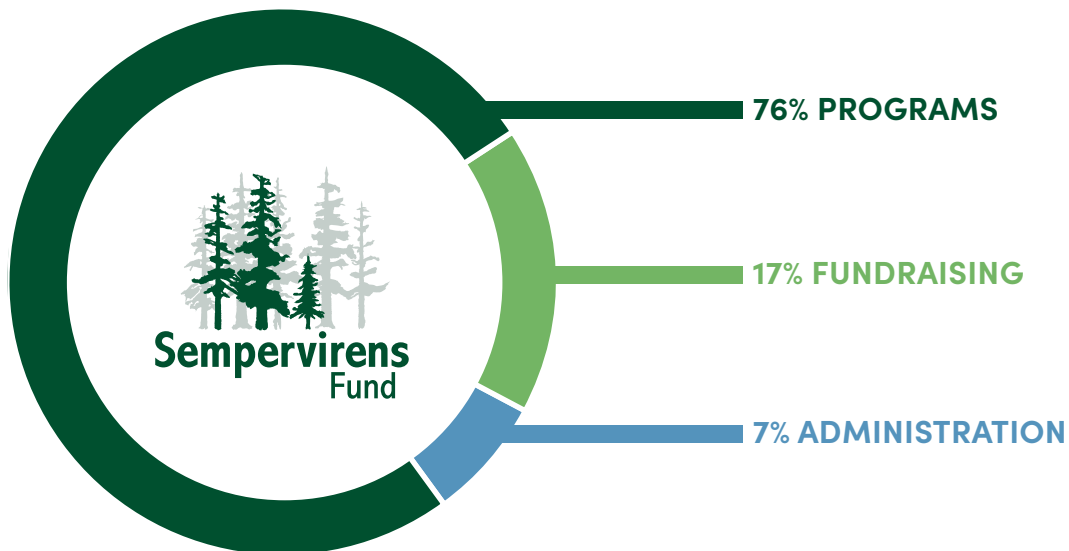


CLAIRE SCHNEEBERGER

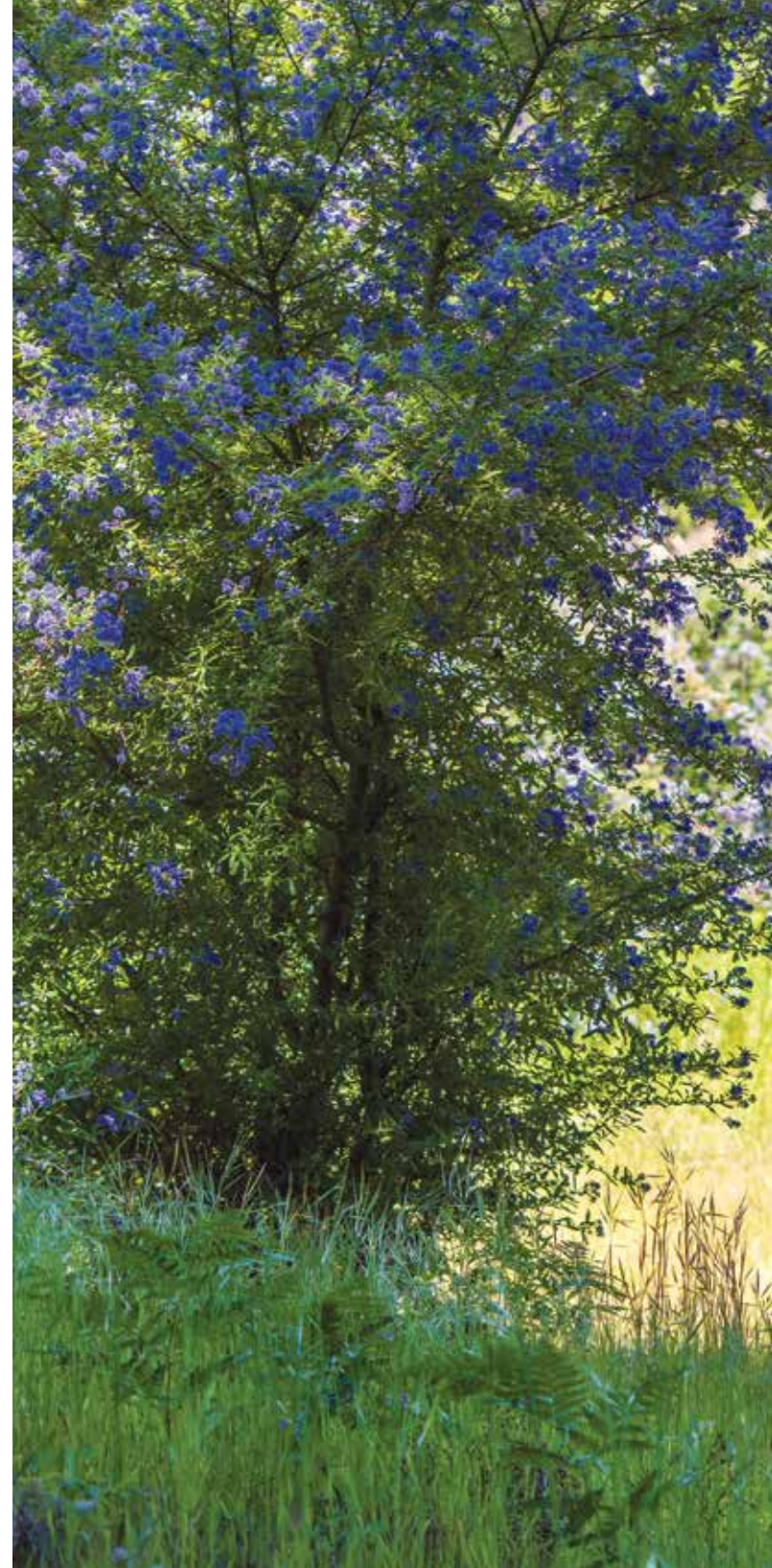
It's important to me to give back locally, in my own community, in a meaningful way. With Sempervirens Fund, I'm joining an organization that has made a profound impact in the Santa Cruz Mountains for over 100 years and I can see they are continuing work that will carry forward for centuries to come. As a volunteer and legacy giver, I'm continually impressed by the vision and passion of this organization.

Financial Statement

Your support is hard at work. Seventy-six 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. sempervirens.org/financial-statement





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Diane Talbert

Emily Thurber

Cole Wilbur

* retired 2025

** joined 2025



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

Photos: Ian Bornarth, Orenda Randuch, and Richard Rymer.

Design: shirleycreative.com

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