



## Redwood grove on California coast to become public park



Save The Redwoods League board member John Montague, left, is joined by Todd McMahon, vice president of NCRM Inc., an environmental consulting firm that helps manage League projects and writer Glen Martin as they stand among the mature redwoods of Harold Richardson Redwoods Reserve in Stewarts Point, Calif., March 28, 2018. The grove in Northern California with hundreds of ancient redwood trees, some taller than the Statue of Liberty, is being acquired by environmental group Save the Redwoods League that plans to preserve it and open a new public park, the group announced Tuesday, June 26, 2018. (Mike Shoys/Save the Redwoods League via AP)

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STEWARTS POINT, Calif. (AP) — An environmental group said Tuesday that it is acquiring a grove in Northern California with hundreds of ancient redwood trees, some taller than the Statue of Liberty, and is planning to preserve it and open a public park.

Save the Redwoods League said it is purchasing the 738-acre grove, which is a third larger than Muir Woods National Monument and has 47 percent more old-growth trees, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Known as Harold Richardson Redwoods Reserve, the sprawling forest in Sonoma County matches Muir Woods' majesty. One of its oldest trees in the grove has a diameter of 19 feet (6 meters) — wider than a two-lane road.

“The unique element of this property is that it’s an undisturbed ancient forest ecosystem,” said Sam Hodder, president of the Redwoods League. “This is a special place. We want people to see it. ... There’s a lot we can’t save, but we can save this.”

The tallest of the 1,450 trees in the grove is 313 feet (95 meters), taller than the Statue of Liberty, Hodder said. The tallest at Muir Woods is 258 feet (79 meters).

The land has been owned for a century by the Richardson family, whose patriarch, Herbert Archer Richardson, first bought the forest in 1918.

He handed it down to his grandson, Harold Richardson, who valued the old-growth trees more than he valued the money they would fetch and protected them for generations, his family said. Harold Richardson died in 2016 at age 96.

“He was a conservationist himself his whole life,” said Dan Falk, 38, Harold’s great-nephew and the president of Richardson Ranch LLC. “He’s harvested timber, but he knew he had to protect and preserve his land. It’s his legacy. That’s why we named the property after him.”

Under the deal, Save the Redwoods League is paying \$9.6 million to the Richardson family and transferring to them a nearby 870-acre parcel the league owned known as Stewarts Point Ranch.

The group hopes to open the park to the public within three years.



The McApin Tree, shown in this March 28, 2018, photo provided by Save the Redwoods League, standing in the Harold Richardson Redwoods Reserve near Stewart’s Point, Calif., is 1,640 years old. The grove in Northern California with hundreds of ancient redwood trees, some taller than the Statue of Liberty, is being acquired by environmental group Save the Redwoods League that plans to preserve it and open a new public park, the group announced Tuesday, June 26, 2018. (Mike Shoys/Save the Redwoods League via AP)

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