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Conservation Partnership Protects 320-Acre Historic Property in the Santa Cruz Mountains

Mostly forested with redwoods, the area has superlative conservation values for native flora and fauna

Los Altos, Calif. — May 9, 2019 — [Sempervirens Fund](#) and [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST) today announced a deal to acquire and protect 320 acres of historic land north of Davenport, in a deal worth \$3.85 million.

Purchased from the Filice family, the property sits at the headwaters of Scott Creek, and includes redwoods, grassland, and oak woodlands. It boasts prime habitat for mountain lions, falls within the nesting range of the endangered marbled murrelet, and contains stands of the threatened Anderson’s manzanita. Additionally, the property contains several structures and freshwater ponds, which are being studied for restoration and potential future usage.

“The acquisition of this property is a significant milestone in our quest to permanently protect coast redwoods and hardwood forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains,” said Sara Barth, executive director at Sempervirens Fund. “We have enjoyed working with the Filice family and appreciate their decision to partner with us to ensure this incredible landscape is protected for future generations.”

Formerly known as Warrenella Ranch and Gregory Heights, the property has a colorful past as a well-known flag stop along an early train line from San Francisco to Santa Cruz. Historically, the site was used for logging and cattle ranching. It may also have been an overnight gathering place for people from as far away as San Francisco during the Prohibition Era, given the large number of 1920s jugs found by the Filice Family. Cecil B. DeMille filmed scenes from *A Romance of the Redwoods* (1917) on the property, and movie star Mary Pickford stayed with her brother John there for three days during the film shoot. Like many properties in the coastal region, the property also contains several known Native American archeological sites.

The property is adjacent to San Vicente Redwoods (previously known as the CEMEX Redwoods). In December 2011 Sempervirens Fund and POST, along with Save the Redwoods League and Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, jointly purchased the San Vicente Redwoods from Mexican concrete company, CEMEX. The initial deal protected 8,500 acres of coast redwoods and hardwood forest in the heart of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The San Vicente Redwoods is home to at least four federally endangered plant species including Ben Lomond spineflower, Santa Cruz wallflower, Ben Lomond buckwheat, and Bonny Doon silver leaf manzanita, along with hundreds of mature, second-growth redwoods and Douglas firs. The property also provides habitats for known populations of threatened and endangered animal species, including Coho salmon, steelhead trout, Californian red-legged frog, mountain lion and peregrine falcon.

“We are really pleased to collaborate on this deal with Sempervirens Fund and the Filice family, who have proudly managed this land for over 60 years and have been generous partners in helping secure the property,” said Walter T. Moore, president of POST. “The whole San Vicente Redwoods project is an example of conservation partnership at its best. It demonstrates how, working together, we can optimize each organization’s resources and expertise to have a much greater positive impact than we would working individually.”

Sempervirens and POST are each contributing \$1,425,000 to the deal, with the [Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#) providing \$1 million for the purchase and \$185,000 for initial stewardship.

“Protection of this property will fill a critical gap within the existing San Vicente Redwoods,” said Dan Winterson, program officer at the Moore Foundation. “The property’s coast redwood habitat and water resources make it important to conserve, and we are very pleased to be able to support our partners on this acquisition.”

The title on this parcel will be jointly held by Sempervirens and POST, as part of their ongoing role in the larger San Vicente Redwoods partnership.

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About Sempervirens Fund

Sempervirens Fund’s mission is to protect and permanently preserve redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) forests, wildlife habitat, watersheds, and other important natural and scenic features of California’s Santa Cruz Mountains, and to encourage public appreciation and enjoyment of this environment. They protect, connect and care for the local redwood forests between Silicon Valley and the Pacific Ocean — while opening up more ways for people to enjoy them. Since 1900, Sempervirens Fund has permanently protected more than 53 square miles of local redwood forests and watersheds for people, wildlife and future generations. Visit www.sempervirens.org for more information.

About the Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 77,000 acres since 1977. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to create a network of protected

lands so that present and future generations may benefit from the careful balance of rural and urban landscapes that makes our region extraordinary. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.

About the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation fosters path-breaking scientific discovery, environmental conservation, patient care improvements and preservation of the special character of the Bay Area. Visit moore.org and follow [@MooreFound](https://twitter.com/MooreFound).

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