



**Media Contacts:**

Craig MacLellan  
Landis Communications Inc. for POST  
(415) 359-2306  
[post@landispr.com](mailto:post@landispr.com)  
[www.landispr.com](http://www.landispr.com)

Janet Webb  
Big Creek Lumber  
(831) 457-5023  
[janetw@big-creek.com](mailto:janetw@big-creek.com)

## Peninsula Open Space Trust and Big Creek Lumber Conserve 937 Acres of Santa Cruz Mountains Redwoods

*Innovative project bolsters viability of sustainable local timber industry and  
protects pristine habitats for endangered species*

**PALO ALTO, Calif. (March 26, 2019)** – [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST) and the McCrary Family, owners of [Big Creek Lumber](#), today announced their agreement to permanently conserve 937 acres of redwood forest in the Santa Cruz Mountains. This two-property, multi-party deal establishes a working forest conservation easement – the first to be implemented collaboratively with a timber company in the Santa Cruz Mountains – on 617 acres of second-growth redwood forest. It also permanently protects 320 acres of critical watershed, mature redwoods and wildlife habitat adjacent to Butano State Park.

“We are honored to partner with the McCrary family to protect significant areas of redwood forest from development and support responsible, sustainable timber production. It’s a win-win arrangement that benefits the forest and shows just how far conservationists and timber companies have come,” said **Walter T. Moore** president of POST. “Together we envision a future where the communities of people and wildlife that surround and depend upon these forests all benefit from the very positive environmental and economic outcomes that this collaboration will produce.”

“For more than 70 years, these forests have been integral to our family’s identity and livelihood,” said **Janet McCrary Webb**, president of Big Creek Lumber. “The innovative deal we’re announcing makes good environmental sense, as we continue to apply our progressive forestry practices that deliver the many benefits of active forest management to the surrounding community. It also makes good economic sense: In gaining a sustainable timber supply, we can create jobs and continue to generate local revenue from locally sourced lumber.”

### The Deal

This arrangement involves two separate but interdependent land deals. POST and the McCrary family have agreed to conserve both properties, totaling 937 acres, for a project valued at \$11.7M. Through this deal, Big Creek secures access to a reliable, sustainable, and ecologically appropriate supply of timber for its nearby sawmill in Davenport, and POST protects almost 1,000 acres of iconic redwood forest.

POST is acquiring a 617-acre property known as Valencia Creek from Cal Poly Corporation and is permanently protecting it from development. The property sits within the upper watershed of Aptos Creek in Corralitos. Recognizing a unique conservation opportunity, the McCrary family is selling POST 320 acres of mature, unharvested second-growth redwoods in the Gazos Creek watershed as part of the transaction.

This unique partnership between POST and the McCrary family will result in Big Creek owning and managing the Valencia Creek property, with POST holding the working forest conservation easement. The Gazos Creek parcel has not been harvested by the McCrary family, who have cared for the property for over 50 years. It falls within one of only seven critical habitat areas in the region for the endangered marbled murrelet and is home to many other species. They are selling this parcel to POST at a very favorable price in exchange for the conserved Valencia Creek property.

[Sempervirens Fund](#), the Bay Area land trust dedicated to conserving redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains, is contributing to the acquisition by assuming management of the Gazos Creek parcel from POST and caring for it until it can be transferred and incorporated into Butano State Park. Sempervirens Fund has worked to expand and connect state park lands, including Butano, Big Basin, Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Parks.

The deal is made possible through a variety of funding sources including the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, POST and the McCrary family, with additional support from Sempervirens Fund.

“This landmark arrangement could establish a model for similar protections and partnerships in the Santa Cruz Mountains and elsewhere,” said **Sam Schuchat**, executive officer of the California State Coastal Conservancy. “It provides for optimal land uses: preserving endangered species habitat and working forest, along with watershed protections and permitting public access to the Gazos property.”

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#### **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 over the last 42 years. 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](https://www.openspacetrust.org) for more information.

#### **About the McCrary family and Big Creek Lumber**

The McCrary family settled on a small farm near Big Creek in Santa Cruz County in the 1860's. The family started a sawmill, Big Creek Lumber, in 1946. The family-owned company now operates five retail lumber yards, a sawmill, wholesale division, forestry department, and logging operation. They also own timberland and manage timber for private landowners throughout the Santa Cruz Mountains. Big Creek Lumber has a long history of superior forest stewardship and utilizes a framework of progressive

and conservative forest management practices, like selective harvesting, to manage redwood forests that will remain productive and environmentally viable for future generations. Big Creek Lumber is the first wood-products company operating within a redwood forest to have been awarded the “Well Managed Forest” Certification by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)<sup>®</sup>. Visit [bigcreeklumber.com](http://bigcreeklumber.com) for more information.

### **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 [sempervirens.org](http://sempervirens.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](http://moore.org) and follow [@MooreFound](https://twitter.com/MooreFound).

### **About the California State Coastal Conservancy**

The State Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy the outdoors, and sustains local economies along the length of California’s coast and around San Francisco Bay. The State Coastal Conservancy is one of ten State conservancies within the California Natural Resources Agency. Visit [scc.ca.gov](http://scc.ca.gov) for more information.

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