



Save the
Redwoods
League



MEDIA CONTACT

Beatrice Kilat, Landis Communications
Inc.

(415) 745-9109

post@landispr.com

www.landispr.com

Photos, map and drone video can be
downloaded for media use [here](#)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Conservation Partners Take Major Step Toward Bringing Prescribed Burns to San Vicente Redwoods

A \$15 million suite of grants to the partners will fund landscape-scale wildfire resilience and forest recovery work through 2029 at landmark property

PALO ALTO, Calif. (May 5, 2026) –[Peninsula Open Space Trust \(POST\)](#), [Sempervirens Fund](#), [Save the Redwoods League](#) (Save the Redwoods) and [Land Trust of Santa Cruz County](#), today announced they have received a \$15 million suite of grants that will make San Vicente Redwoods (SVR), one of the Santa Cruz Mountains' largest conservation properties, significantly more resilient to wildfire. The grants also set the stage for regular prescribed fire at strategic locations throughout the landscape. The work began in 2024 and will continue until 2029.

Prescribed burns are a type of "good fire," and are among the most powerful and time-tested tools available for building a healthy, wildfire-resilient forest. Backed by millennia of Indigenous ecological stewardship and modern science, the practice clears excess fuel that accumulates on forest floors so that when wildfires do occur, they burn at lower intensity and cause less damage. The remaining forest has an open floor with complex, variably aged trees and diverse low-growing ground cover, creating a biodiverse system that can keep fire intensity lower and thrive post-fire.

This ambitious effort is made possible by a portfolio of funding from federal, state and county sources, which are coordinated to accelerate the forest's recovery from the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire and prepare the landscape for the reintroduction of good fire—a combination of prescribed and tribal burning. Together, approximately \$15 million in funds will be spent through 2029, with roughly \$3 million in on-the-ground work scheduled for summer 2026. These funds are working to restore more natural fuel loads, or combustible materials, in the forests across this property, which burned in its entirety in 2020. That 86,509-acre wildfire left a forest with excessively high fuel loads making future burning dangerous without preliminary management first.

Grant funding to the SVR partners comes from the following sources:

- [California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#)'s (CAL FIRE) [Wildfire Prevention Grants Program](#) will fund the installation of seven miles of shaded fuel break along ridgeline roads and the creation of a compliance document to permit prescribed burns across the property;

- [Climate Resilient Monterey Bay](#), through California Marine Sanctuary Foundation's National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grant, will fund strategic fuel reduction across 462 acres of forest and grasslands;
- **USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) [EQIP](#) and [CSP](#)**, will support shaded fuel break creation and associated road work;
- [USDA Forest Service](#) will fund strategic fuel reduction across 728 acres;
- [Wildlife Conservation Board](#) will fund strategic fuel reduction over 483 acres;
- [Santa Cruz County's Safe Drinking Water, Clean Beaches, and Wildfire Protection Act \(Measure Q\)](#) will fund essential roadwork, botanical resource planning, prescribed and cultural burn implementation and other projects.

"This work is getting us so much closer to our goals for this special property: bringing back natural processes, like good fire, to help the forest thrive. A flourishing forest can better survive wildfires and help CAL FIRE protect nearby communities," said **Susan Petrie**, senior stewardship project manager at POST. "As we saw from our work before the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, fuel treatments and prescribed burns are the most effective tools we can use to help the forest be more resilient. It gets the natural gears turning again to keep the ecosystem running smoothly. We are now closer to making that a reality across San Vicente Redwoods."

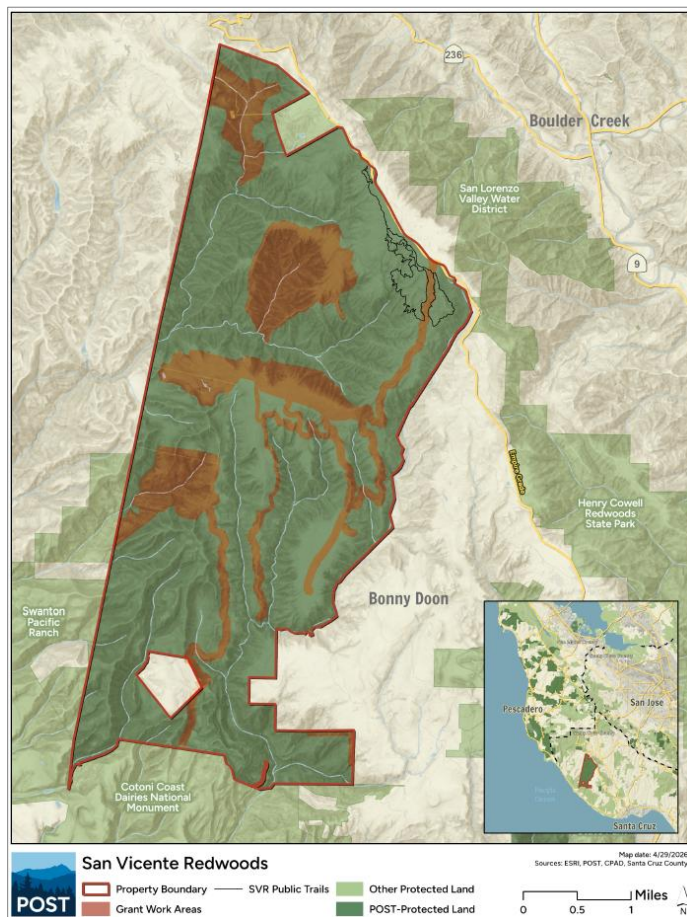
With this funding, the partners will manage the removal of dead and severely damaged trees along seven miles of ridgeline roads east of Bonny Doon, creating shaded fuel breaks that will serve as boundaries for future prescribed burns. At the same time, timber will be selectively harvested within 610 acres of the property's working forest zone to thin overly dense secondary growth stands and prepare those areas for safer prescribed fire. The remaining redwoods in those stands will have less competition for water and sunlight, so they can grow faster after this treatment. Standing dead trees, like tanoak and madrone trunks, are being removed and processed in carbonizing air curtain burners or burn piles.

Additional investments support creek habitat restoration, including replacing eight culverts to reduce sediment in creeks and adding woody debris to creeks to mimic traditional beaver dams that protect in-stream flows and improve fish habitat. Culvert replacement also provides important access for land managers and emergency services.

"CAL FIRE is helping landowners get important work done on the ground," said **Rich Sampson** of the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire. "We're funding meaningful projects that can really make a difference for our forests and the community. This property's size and positioning make it a great place to do this type of work, and we know the SVR team here can complete what they set out to do. We think what we're funding can have dramatic regional impact over time."

Since 2020, the conservation partners have been collaborating and experimenting with a variety of methods to support forest recovery and restore the landscape's resilience. This work benefits the property's ecology and enhances wildfire protection for adjacent communities. Utilizing science-centered stewardship and working with local universities and civic organizations, the SVR partners have treated nearly 1,200 forested acres since the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire, removing hazards,

planting seedlings, removing invasive plants, stabilizing creek crossings and accelerating healthy forest regrowth.



About the Property

San Vicente Redwoods was permanently protected in 2011 by POST, Sempervirens Fund, Save the Redwoods League and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County after a century of intensive commercial logging and mining in the twentieth century degraded the property’s waterways and left much of the forest in an unhealthy state. Since then, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County has developed trails and managed public access to the property. The partners have long used it as a "living laboratory" for forest stewardship. The property's existing shaded fuel breaks played a documented role in allowing CAL FIRE to contain the [2009 Lockheed Fire](#) and many treated areas showed measurably greater resilience during the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire.

The partners seek to draw on key lessons from San Vicente Redwoods to model what's possible in forest management across the region. California's wildfire

resilience plans increasingly identify land trusts as essential partners, especially in areas like the Santa Cruz Mountains, where no single public agency manages the landscape. With four nonprofit conservation organizations sharing stewardship responsibilities and a robust permitting infrastructure in place, the SVR partners have been working with CAL FIRE to experiment with comprehensive, multiyear projects aimed at increasing resilience to wildfire and post-fire forest recovery.

"Recent wildfires have shown us that when a forest like San Vicente Redwoods is well-managed, it can significantly reduce the toll of wildfire on the forest itself and give local firefighters an advantage when protecting the communities they serve," added **Petrie**. "We plan to share the results of our work broadly and make our findings accessible to both private and public forest landowners – improving the odds for California’s forests for decades to come."

* * *

About the San Vicente Redwoods Partnership

The 8,852-acre San Vicente Redwoods property near Santa Cruz, CA, is a model "living laboratory" of environmental conservation and collaboration. Most of the area was permanently protected by the nonprofit conservation partners in 2011, after intensive commercial logging at the beginning of the 20th century left much of the forest unhealthy. [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST) and [Sempervirens Fund](#) jointly own and actively manage the property. [Save the Redwoods League](#) holds a permanent conservation easement that ensures ecologically sensitive land management practices, as well as

sustainable harvesting in the working forest areas of the property. [Land Trust of Santa Cruz County](#) developed and manages the property's 7.3-mile public access trail system.

#