



PRESS RELEASE
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Save the Redwoods League and LandPaths Protect Old-growth Redwoods Park and Increase Public Access by Adding 15 More Acres to Existing Parklands

San Francisco, Calif. (February 12, 2018) — Save the Redwoods League and LandPaths successfully expanded the Grove of Old Trees redwood park near Occidental in Sonoma County by purchasing a 15-acre property adjacent to the park and deeding it to LandPaths. The expansion of the Grove of Old Trees will ensure the protection of the 2,000-year-old redwoods in the grove and expand access for park visitors. The park, owned and managed by LandPaths, is the only privately-owned preserve in Sonoma that is accessible to the public for free.

“California’s redwood parks are the crown of our state’s network of parks, inspiring millions of visitors every year with the beauty and power of nature. The Grove of Old Trees, a park Save the Redwoods League helped establish over a decade ago, is a critical gem on that crown, offering a globally unique redwood experience in a local park environment,” said Sam Hodder, President and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. “This addition will add more than 50 percent to the area of the park, offering a critical buffer to the protected old-growth forest and expanded public access.”



The Grove of Old Trees redwood park in Sonoma County. Photo by Save the Redwoods League.

The Grove of Old Trees is positioned on a ridgetop within the Petaluma Wind Gap, where wind carries cool, wet coastal air inland, creating the perfect climate for redwoods. The newly acquired property provides a protective buffer for the park and features old-growth coast redwoods near its southern border, which abuts the Grove of Old Trees. Moving north, the landscape transitions from redwood forest to oak woodland to grassland on its far side. Coleman Valley Creek crosses the northernmost portion. The property was identified as a priority by the League’s internal evaluation process, the Vibrant Forests Plan, a data-driven mapping tool used to evaluate the conditions of the redwood forest and identify both threats and conservation opportunities throughout the redwood range.

“We’re incredibly excited to see what the future holds,” says Craig Anderson, Executive Director of LandPaths. “As with all LandPaths Preserves, this living remnant of the once expansive coast redwood range will continue as a place for building community around land—especially for our region’s youth. The Grove is already a catalyst for bringing nature into daily life, for walks, stress relief, beauty, learning and stewardship. We’re thrilled to share this new expansion with the neighbors and community.”

Interest, funding and leadership from Grove friends and neighbors were critical to the expansion. This support attracted the League, who provided \$171,000 toward the \$240,000 purchase price. Generous LandPaths donors provided the balance of the purchase price and all closing costs. Additionally, LandPaths is actively building a stewardship fund, ensuring the future care of the expanded grove in perpetuity—a critical component of land ownership responsibility. Stewardship needs include fire fuel reduction and public access and education.

Seventeen years ago, in August 2000, Save the Redwoods League also assisted LandPaths with the protection of the original 28-acre Grove of Old Trees. While its historical owners logged nearby forests, they chose to preserve the Grove. Now vineyards and homes surround it on all sides.

“It’s imperative that we protect this property in perpetuity,” says Catherine Elliott, Senior Manager of Land Protection and the project lead. “It provides essential habitat connectivity for wildlife and it’s one of the few properties in the area left undeveloped. We want to keep it that way.”

In addition to providing a buffer for the Grove, it is expected that this addition will help reduce traffic on Fitzpatrick Lane, the only road leading to the Grove. Currently, parking is extremely limited and no overflow parking exists. The new property connects the Grove to the larger Coleman Valley Road to the north. LandPaths hopes to build a parking lot on Coleman Valley Road, allowing for additional parking while reducing traffic along Fitzpatrick Lane. When complete, the parking lot on the northern end of the Grove will connect to a trail leading through open grasslands and oak woodland, then south to the Grove’s majestic redwoods.

LandPaths also hopes to incorporate the property into its existing outdoor education programs, which focus on youth and those historically under-represented in nature programs. The property’s landscape—its transition between redwood forest, oak woodland and grassland—illustrate California’s three essential habitats and useful concepts in ecology, making it an ideal outdoor classroom.

Note: Grove neighbors and LandPaths will be hosting volunteer stewardship days the first Saturday of every month to help remove excessive underbrush and maintain the park’s trails. Contact Nicolas Whitaker (nicolas@landpaths.org), Bilingual Education Coordinator at LandPaths, or check their [calendar](#) for more information about volunteer opportunities.

Project Partners:



Save the Redwoods League

One of the nation's oldest conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918, connecting generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forest. Our supporters have enabled the League to protect more than 200,000 acres of irreplaceable forests in 66 state, national and local parks and reserves. For more information, go to SaveTheRedwoods.org.



LandPaths

LandPaths mission is to foster a love of the land in Sonoma County. Founded in 1996, LandPaths has established its role as one of Sonoma County's leading public access and environmental education organizations. LandPaths provides exceptional outdoor experiences that connect people of all backgrounds to nature and foster the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between people and the land. Visit landpaths.org for more information.

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