



## PRESS RELEASE

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### SAVE THE REDWOODS LEAGUE PURCHASES WESTFALL RANCH TO BUFFER HEADWATERS FOREST RESERVE, RESTORE ELK RIVER, CREATE NEW TRAILS

— *Conservation nonprofit will help improve access to reserve's ancient redwoods and restore forest and salmon habitat.*

**SAN FRANCISCO** (June 14, 2016) — [Save the Redwoods League](#), the only nonprofit organization in the world dedicated to protecting the redwood forest throughout its natural range, today announced that it purchased the scenic 77-acre Westfall Ranch to buffer Headwaters Forest Reserve south of Eureka, California. The League purchased the \$1.1 million property from Andy and Sandy Westfall, preventing other potential owners from developing, subdividing or commercially logging the land. More than 3,000 League members donated to this project.

The ranch is next to Headwaters Forest Reserve, which was established after a long and contentious dispute over the logging of this ancient coast redwood forest. US Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) played a central role in negotiating the 1999 agreement that established lasting federal protection for Headwaters.

Westfall Ranch offers a remarkable opportunity for the League to advance the three core elements of its mission: to **protect, restore and connect people to California's cherished redwood ecosystem**.

First, the League's purchase **protects** the ranch's stunning second-growth redwood forest, idyllic meadows and a mile of the South Fork Elk River. The League will continue to follow best

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practices in managing the ranch to buffer Headwaters. In addition, the League will manage the ranch's second-growth redwood forest to accelerate development of old-growth forest characteristics, on which the ecosystem's plants and animals depend. Ultimately, the League plans to transfer the property to the Bureau of Land Management, depending on public funding. Given the extent of active management on the property, Westfall Ranch is not currently open to the public.

Second, the League plans to **restore the Elk River's salmon habitat** on the Westfall property. Decades of large-scale industrial clear-cut logging in the region resulted in sediment flowing into the once free-running Elk River, which originates in Headwaters. Gone are the deep, clear pools and side channels that coho salmon need to survive. Now, the river is choked with silt. A habitat assessment will be conducted to determine the best approach to restoring the watershed. Recommended actions likely will include removal of sediment to improve water quality and strategic placement of large fallen trees back into the stream system to help re-establish pools, shade and cover for coho and other imperiled fish in the salmon family.

Third, the League plans to **connect more people to the beauty of this majestic place**. Public access to Headwaters Forest Reserve is limited. Westfall Ranch offers the opportunity to create a more accessible entry point into Headwaters, along with new hiking trails to attract more visitors and greatly enhance their experience. The Bureau of Land Management will solicit the public's comments on trail construction and other management decisions in the future after the property is transferred into federal ownership.

"The purchase of Westfall Ranch builds on our work to protect, restore and connect people to one of the world's most magnificent ancient redwood forest in Headwaters Forest Reserve," said Christine Aralia, a Land Project Manager at Save the Redwoods League. "Because only 5 percent of the world's ancient redwood forest is still standing, this project is critical."

Ben Blom, manager of Headwaters Forest Reserve, said the League's acquisition of Westfall Ranch will build on the legacy of Andy Westfall's land ethic that has already improved the property in countless ways. "The project also will provide new opportunities for recreation and environmental education," Blom said. "Headwaters is an increasingly popular recreation site, and many members of the public have expressed a desire for more trails."

**EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:** For more images, please visit our [media resources page](#).

### **About Save the Redwoods League**

Walk through a redwood forest — home of the tallest, largest, and some of the oldest living beings on Earth — and you can't help but feel an overwhelming sense of awe and peace among these magnificent giants. Since 1918, Save the Redwoods League has led the effort to protect the coast redwoods and giant sequoias for all to experience and enjoy. The League has protected nearly 200,000 acres of redwood forest and associated land. For more information, please visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](http://SaveTheRedwoods.org), or to sign up for updates, please visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org/signup](http://SaveTheRedwoods.org/signup).

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