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Save the Redwoods League launches Montgomery Woods Initiative with purchase of 453 acres of redwood forest and groundbreaking on vital park improvements

Nonprofit seeks to raise an additional \$1 million at annual Take Me to the Trees fundraising event to fund new trails, bridge and other visitor amenities at Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve.



Save the Redwoods League has purchased and protected 453-acre Atkins Place in Mendocino County. Photo by Max Forster for Save the Redwoods League.

San Francisco, Calif. (September 27, 2022) — As part of a new initiative to protect redwood forests and enhance recreational opportunities at Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve in Mendocino County, [Save the Redwoods League](https://www.savetheredwoods.org/) has purchased Atkins Place, a 453-acre

coast redwood forest adjacent to the reserve, and partnered with California State Parks on significant improvements to the park.

The Atkins Place purchase builds on a legacy of investment in the protection of Mendocino County redwoods dating back to 1947 that has protected more than 37,500 acres. Save the Redwoods League has protected nearly all of Montgomery Woods' 2,743 acres and has consistently supported the park's enhancement over the years. The League envisions that Atkins Place will eventually be added to the adjacent Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve. Improvements to the park began in September and will include new and upgraded trails, a new bridge and other visitor amenities.

"Montgomery Woods and the forests around it comprise a strikingly beautiful and ecologically important corner of the coast redwood range, for both recreational visitors and conservation," said **Sam Hodder**, president and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. "Coming northwest from the city of Ukiah, when you descend into the valley and reach the park, it's like you've arrived in another world of ancient, towering trees, blankets of ferns and welcoming streams. It is a unique and special place."

Adding protected lands around Montgomery Woods

The Atkins Place property is a critical habitat corridor that connects Montgomery Woods and Bureau of Land Management protected lands. Its coast redwood and Douglas-fir forest includes 1.25 miles of steelhead and coho salmon-bearing streams, plus grassland and ridgelines.

Save the Redwoods League finalized the Atkins Place purchase for \$1.18 million in late August. In addition to the purchase price, the League raised \$120,000 for stewardship and transaction costs.

"Given its location right in the middle of an incredibly important region of Mendocino County's coast redwood forest, Atkins Place absolutely needed to be protected," said **Adrianna Andreucci**, land protection manager for Save the Redwoods League. "Atkins Place shares a three-quarter-mile boundary with Montgomery Woods State Natural Reserve. Saving it from future subdivision and development preserves the wildlife corridor and provides a buffer for the old-growth redwoods in the park."

The League will own and manage Atkins Place before transferring it to California State Parks in the future. Protecting Atkins Place advances the League's [Centennial Vision](#) to double the size of coast redwood forests in parks and reserves and secure the redwood forests' footprints and ecology.

Located in the South Fork Big River watershed, Atkins Place provides critical spawning habitat for steelhead trout and coho salmon, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Atkins Place also provides important habitat for the endangered foothill yellow-legged frogs and northern spotted owls, as well as northern goshawks, white-tailed kites and other raptors.

The mixed conifer forest on Atkins Place ranges from 50 to 90 years old. It has been privately owned and managed for timber production for decades.

Breathing new life into a treasured redwood park

“After several years of planning with Save the Redwoods League, we are thrilled to be partnering on a multimillion-dollar project in the Montgomery Woods grove of old-growth redwoods,” said **Terry Bertels**, superintendent, Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District of California State Parks. “Our goal is twofold: to improve the visitor experience while protecting the precious old-growth trees.”

The first phase of work is underway. It will reconstruct and expand the 2-mile perimeter loop trail to protect damaged redwood roots and water crossings. The second phase will create an immersive grove path to bring visitors onto the valley floor. New features will include gathering areas, a bridge overlooking Montgomery Creek and inclusive interpretive exhibits. Teams will also work to restore areas where extensive existing social trails have damaged the ecosystem. The work is expected to be completed in stages through 2025.

Save the Redwoods League and California State Parks, with the help of the Mendocino Area Parks Association, are engaging local Indigenous groups and historically underrepresented communities in the project development and to support visits.

“This project will allow more visitors from near and far to experience the reserve in ways that are most meaningful to them. The improvements will create short and long loops, places to gather as a group or have a picnic and opportunities to learn and reflect,” said **Jessica Carter**, director of parks and public engagement for the League.

The total cost for the [Montgomery Woods Initiative](#), including the purchase and stewardship of Atkins Place, is \$5.3 million. Save the Redwoods is seeking to raise \$3 million in public funding and \$2.3 million in private philanthropy to complete this project. To date, individual donors have contributed \$1.3 million to purchase and care for Atkins Place.

Proceeds from the League’s annual fundraising event *Take Me to the Trees*, scheduled for October 22, 2022 in San Francisco, will close the \$1 million gap to realize the vision for this beloved old growth redwood reserve. Those interested in learning more about the Montgomery Woods Initiative and how they can support it can find more information [online](#).

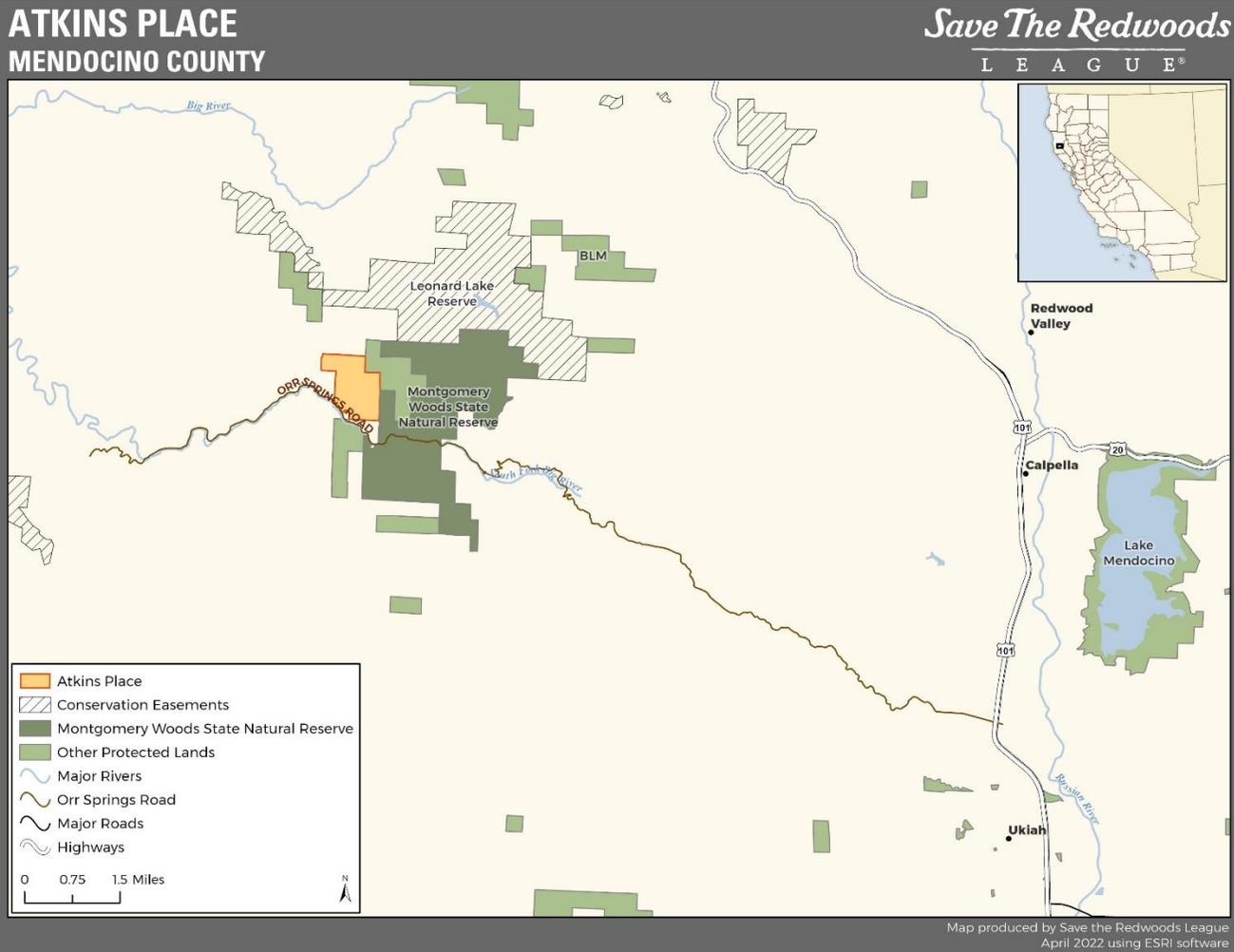
Saving Mendocino County’s Iconic Redwood Forests

Save the Redwoods League has protected more than 37,500 acres in Mendocino County to date, many in some of the county’s most beloved parks and reserves, including Mendocino Headlands State Park, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Navarro River Redwoods State Park and Hendy Woods State Park. The League recently [purchased](#) the 3,181-acre Lost Coast Redwoods property and [donated](#) a 523-acre redwood forest known as Tc’ih-Léh-Dûñ to the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, returning Indigenous guardianship of the land.

Funding the Protection of Atkins Place

The California Natural Resources Agency awarded the League \$550,000 in acquisition funding for the purchase of Atkins Place through its Environmental Enhancement &

Mitigation Program. Google made a \$188,000 gift through its partnership with the International Living Future Institute and its Living Building Challenge, a certification program that requires new projects to meet certain environmental metrics. Nearly 3,000 individual donors gave to the campaign, and the League particularly acknowledges generous contributions from the Clark Family Fund, the Pitzer Family Foundation, and the Daniel Ross Gallie Trust.



[Learn more](#) about Atkins Place on the Save the Redwoods League website.

To access hi-res images and b-roll, please [visit the League's online newsroom](#).



Save the Redwoods League

One of the nation's longest-running conservation organizations, Save the Redwoods League has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forest. The nonprofit's 29,000 members have enabled the organization to protect more than 216,000 acres of irreplaceable forests in 66 state, national and local parks and reserves. For information, please visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](https://www.savetheredwoods.org).

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