

100 YEARS IS JUST THE BEGINNING

*Save The Redwoods*  
LEAGUE®

CENTENNIAL

**Vision**  
for Redwoods

CONSERVATION









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**Vision**  
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**ONE HUNDRED YEARS IS A BRIEF, PASSING MOMENT** in the life of a redwood tree. In the life of a nonprofit organization, however, 100 years marks a major milestone. In 2018, Save the Redwoods League celebrates its Centennial and a century of extraordinary accomplishments in protecting and restoring redwood forests and connecting people to their peace and beauty.

Since its founding in 1918, Save the Redwoods League—in close collaboration with donors, landowners, public agencies, conservation organizations, and other partners—has protected more than 214,000 acres of California’s redwood forests. In that time, we have created 66 redwood parks and reserves and inspired millions of transformational experiences for generations of visitors from around the world. We have educated thousands of schoolchildren about the ecological significance and resilience of coast redwoods and giant sequoia, pioneered innovative, science-based forest restoration techniques, and advanced scientific discovery high in the forest canopy. And we have learned through this research that redwood forests store more carbon per acre than any other forest in the world, confirming that they are a critical resource in our response to climate change.

In the wake of the 1849 Gold Rush and California’s explosive demand for lumber, redwood forests that had flourished undisturbed along the North American west coast for millions of years—since dinosaurs roamed the planet—suddenly faced near-extinction. In just a few generations, the world’s only coast redwood forests were reduced to just 5 percent of their original range. In a matter of decades, we lost more than 2 million acres of continuous ancient forests that stretched 450 miles from Big Sur to just over the Oregon border. Similarly, giant sequoia on the west slopes of the Sierra Nevada—the largest and among the oldest living species in the world—also suffered huge losses, with nearly a third slashed to the ground.

**FORTUNATELY, THE LEAGUE’S VISIONARY FOUNDERS ORGANIZED** to save these ancient forests from the brink of destruction. They worked tirelessly to launch what would become—and remain—the world’s first and only conservation group devoted exclusively to the permanent protection of redwoods. Parcel by parcel and acre by

COVER: DEL NORTE COAST REDWOODS STATE PARK BY JON PARMENTIER  
THIS PAGE: GIANT SEQUOIA BY NIETNAGEL, FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS

acre, the League's founders worked to save the last of the world's ancient redwood forests, and, in so doing, effectively launched this country's land conservation movement. As they developed the tools of modern land conservation, they inspired a cultural shift in the country—a recognition that the value of these remarkable forests extends well beyond their potential commercial uses. Redwoods soon became emblematic of the American landscape, treasured for the intrinsic ecological value of their forests and the psychological, emotional, and spiritual benefits of a simple walk in the woods.

Over the past 100 years, we have learned a great deal about how redwood forests function: how roads and clearcuts jeopardize the health of our forests, how protected islands of redwoods remain vulnerable when surrounded by seas of cutover lands, and how, by contrast, sustainable practices can actually help redwood forests expand and thrive. We have also learned how redwood parks enrich our lives and make our communities stronger. At a time when we are struggling to find ways to mitigate the proliferation of carbon in the atmosphere, we have learned that California's ancient redwood forests store more carbon per acre than any other forest in the world.





Having saved much of what remains of the old-growth redwood forests, we now must turn our attention to the forests we have lost—the forests we can heal. We must devote our efforts to regenerating the broader resilience and function of the redwood ecosystem and sharing its inspirational beauty through an extraordinary network of parks. What the forests require of us now is that we accelerate our conservation efforts, that we regenerate their vitality and resilience, and that we inspire a new generation of visitors to be their stewards of the future.

That is why we, on the League's 100th birthday and the dawn of its next century of conservation work, are embarking on a new Centennial Vision for Redwoods Conservation. This ambitious effort will create vibrant, expansive old-growth redwood forests for the future. Our vision is built upon decades of land-based conservation work and deliberate, focused scientific research. It asserts that our redwood forests need a landscape-scale strategy for sustainable, resilient, and effective conservation.

In advancing this vision, we assert that protecting the 5 percent of the original coast redwood forests is not the end of our conservation effort, but the starting point for



LEFT AND RIGHT: ANCIENT COAST REDWOODS TOWER OVER A YOUNGER FOREST IN HUMBOLDT REDWOODS STATE PARK. BY MICHAEL NICHOLS / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE

the forests we will regenerate together. We contend that to truly protect redwood forests and ensure their resilience for the future, we must double the acreage of forests in reserves over the next 100 years and ensure that no additional redwood forests are lost to subdivision or development. We believe that young redwood forests currently struggling to recover from generations of clearcutting can become the old-growth forests of the future with our active help and deliberate, science-based restoration treatments. We believe that commercial forestry of high ecological standards can be a part of the solution, helping strategic areas of heavily impacted redwood forest regain their natural resilience and stature. And we believe that the people of California and beyond deserve a redwood park system that is as globally unique and inspiring as the forests themselves.

Today, more than a million acres of redwood forests remain unprotected and managed primarily for commercial timber production. Although forest practices have improved over the decades, our protected forests are often surrounded by land degraded by destructive past practices, making them isolated islands lacking critical connections to surrounding landscapes. Furthermore, the seas of young redwood forests that surround these islands are struggling in a state of perpetual recovery as the cycle of commercial harvest rotations suppresses their natural tendency to thrive, never allowing them to grow into mature, healthy forests.

In an era when we face loss of biodiversity and natural habitat at an unprecedented rate worldwide, the irrepressible resilience of the redwoods gives us hope. The redwood trees that once dominated the California coast—those ancient towers that were cut down to build our cities—are *still there*, in forests of roots and young trees growing back to fill the space left by the fallen giants of the past. We have the opportunity to reclaim these young, recovering forests that have the potential to be a tremendous resource in mitigating climate change and building resilience into our ecosystem.

**AT THE DAWN OF OUR NEXT CENTURY**, we seek to increase the scale and impact of our conservation work; our longstanding mission of saving healthy, vibrant redwood forests demands it. By collaborating with landowners, local communities, public agencies, and our members and supporters, we can make transformative landscape-scale change that will:

- Reassemble vibrant redwood forests on a transformative scale that **CONNECTS GROVES WITH THEIR SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT** through strategic land acquisitions and landowner agreements.
- **ACCELERATE THE RECOVERY OF SECOND-GROWTH FORESTS** with deliberate, science-based forest management, blurring the line between old and young stands so they eventually merge into a single, self-sustaining ancient coast redwood range for the future.
- **INCREASE THE SEQUESTRATION OF CARBON** to mitigate climate change, and provide resilient refuges for diverse plant and animal life through the restoration of the coast redwood range.







- ENHANCE RECOVERING FORESTS by thinning to encourage growth, decommissioning roads to protect streams and reconnect habitats, reducing fuel loads to enhance fire resilience, and reintroducing natural disturbance regimes to recreate natural systems and accelerate the transition to old-growth forest form and function.
- COLLABORATE WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES to develop and sustain restoration-based economies.
- LEAD THE REIMAGINING OF OUR REDWOOD PARK SYSTEM to prepare for a new generation of visitors and future park stewards.
- LEVERAGE NEW INVESTMENTS in recreational, educational, and interpretive infrastructure and programming in our protected redwood parks to connect people to the peace and beauty of redwoods through extraordinary experiences that inspire a lifetime of love and reverence for the natural world.

At its core, our Centennial Vision is about preserving these globally significant forests—and the transformative redwood moments they inspire—for generations to come. Redwood forests are among our most sacred places: where we go to renew our spirits and immerse ourselves in the giants' silent beauty, find peace and comfort in their unfathomable resilience, gain perspective and humble respect for their massive longevity, and witness firsthand the irrepressible power of nature.

To walk among these giants is to look upon the original face of nature and experience the incomparable majesty and beauty of the world's tallest and largest living things. In a world increasingly defined by the deterioration of global natural treasures—receding glaciers, dammed and dying rivers, unprecedented rates of species extinction—Save the Redwoods League has a story of hope and resilience to tell. Our first chapter, spanning the course of our first 100 years, tells how we stopped the destruction of these superlative forests, saving treasured examples of the wild and ancient groves that once dominated California's coast and mountains.

Now, during our Centennial, we begin our second chapter, wherein we will safeguard these storied groves and heal the forests that surround and sustain them. Together with our supporters and partners, we will set in motion the reclamation of the ancient redwood range and sow the seeds of new old-growth forests that will sustain and inspire future generations. Moreover, we will renew our human connection to the natural world through the treasured gateways of our dedicated redwood parks. With your help, we can continue writing this story together and take the first essential steps toward creating the ancient forests of tomorrow.

**A NEW CHAPTER FOR REDWOODS BEGINS TODAY. JOIN US!**

# CENTENNIAL VISION

Save the Redwoods League envisions vibrant redwood forests of the scale and grandeur that once graced the California coast and the Sierra Nevada, **protected forever, restored to grow old again, and connected to people through a network of magnificent parks and protected areas that inspire all of us with the beauty and power of nature.**

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## PROTECT

Protect the ancient redwoods and the vibrant forest landscapes that sustain them.

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### 100-YEAR OBJECTIVES

- **Double the size of coast redwood forests in parks and reserves to 800,000 acres.**
- **Protect the remaining old-growth forests.**
- **Secure the redwood forests' footprints and restore their ecological condition.**

### 100-YEAR STRATEGIES

#### ACCELERATE REDWOOD FOREST CONSERVATION ON A LANDSCAPE SCALE

- ◆ Our protected groves are islands, fragmented and disconnected from one another and their watersheds such that they are more like zoo exhibits of what the forest used to be rather than a healthy functioning ecosystem that delivers the full and extraordinary suite of values unique to the redwood forests. Still, the forests have a tremendous capacity to grow back, and we can help restore these vibrant, resilient landscapes by making bold investments in land conservation. We will seek to advance land acquisitions to substantially grow the parks and reserves through public and private conservation land transactions.

#### SECURE PROTECTION OF REMAINING OLD-GROWTH COAST REDWOOD AND GIANT SEQUOIA

- ◆ Although most of the ancient redwood forests have either been protected by the League and our partners, or lost to the timber rush, there remain pockets of viable old-growth forests in the coast redwood and giant sequoia ranges that can provide







COAST REDWOODS BY DANIEL HADLEY

ecological foundations for the regeneration of the forests. We will work to secure those forests and save them for future generations.

### **ADVANCE ECOLOGICAL FORESTRY CONSERVATION EASEMENTS ON WORKING FORESTS**

- ◆ Our commitment to the redwood forests goes beyond doubling the size of the reserves and accelerating their trajectory to old-growth forest form and function. We are also committed to ensuring that the rest of the redwood forest remains forest and exhibits the highest possible ecological conditions. Our strategy recognizes that for strategic areas within the coast redwood range, a sustainable commercial timber industry is a critical part of the redwood forests' future. To ensure that no more of the redwood forests are lost to development or other non-forest uses, we will work with timberland owners to acquire subdivision and development rights across large ownerships and elevate forest practices. Through conservation easements and other landowner agreements, we can help the forests regain their resilience and stature and keep the redwood forests' footprints from receding any further.

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## RESTORE

Restore young redwood forests so they become the old-growth forests for future generations.

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### **100-YEAR OBJECTIVES**

- **Put half (800,000 acres) of the coast redwood forests on a trajectory toward old-growth forest form and function.**
- **Restore giant sequoia groves through fuels management, prescribed fire, and other tools that enhance ecosystem function.**

### **100-YEAR STRATEGIES**

#### **LEVERAGE SCIENCE TO SET NEW STANDARDS FOR REDWOOD FOREST STEWARDSHIP**

- ◆ More than 160 years of aggressive timber harvesting across 2 million acres of the coast redwood forests have left deep scars on the land and suppressed its resilience and natural function. Our vision is to change that trajectory, build back that resilience and vibrancy, and grow the old-growth forests for future generations. As the standard bearer and lead convener of science and research in the redwood range, we will direct efforts to develop the most effective and appropriate techniques for healing the redwood forests.



## IDENTIFY ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION PRIORITIES ACROSS THE REDWOOD RANGE

- ◆ With support and guidance from our state-of-the-art Vibrant Forests Plan, we will lead a collaborative effort to identify opportunities for the highest ecological returns at scale, seeking priority watersheds and forest landscapes to advance the regeneration of the redwood forests.

## IMPLEMENT LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION PROJECTS TO ACCELERATE OLD-GROWTH FOREST CONDITIONS

- ◆ Of the 1.6 million acres of coast redwood forest ecosystem remaining today on public and private land, 1.5 million acres (93 percent) have been logged at least once. Through our research in restoration techniques, we have seen firsthand how old-growth conditions in young, recovering forests can be accelerated through science-based restoration management that promotes tree growth and restores habitat and natural diversity. Having set standards and priorities, we will devote unprecedented public and private resources to treat redwood forests and begin to heal the damaged landscape we inherited.

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## CONNECT

Connect people to the peace and beauty of the California redwoods through a network of world-class parks and protected areas.

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### 100-YEAR OBJECTIVES

- **Substantially increase and diversify redwood park visitation to reflect the scale and diversity of California's population.**
- **Ensure an inspirational and transformative park experience for all who visit the redwoods.**
- **Make certain that redwood forests—their parks, ecological significance, conservation, and stewardship—are understood and embraced as critical elements of California's identity.**

### 100-YEAR STRATEGIES

#### TRANSFORM PUBLIC ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION IN THE REDWOOD PARKS TO INSPIRE VISITATION AND ATTRACT NEW AUDIENCES

- ◆ Much of the visitor-serving amenities in our redwood park system were designed and built during the Great Depression, when California's population was only 5 million and much different than it is today. The visiting public of the coming decades will be more urban, more diverse, and more numerous than our parks were designed to serve. Ninety years after Frederick Law Olmsted







Jr. designed a redwood park plan that defined our park system for generations, it is time to reimagine how our redwood parks can inspire a new era of connecting the public to the beauty and inspiration of the outdoors. Now is our opportunity to open the doors of the redwood parks, draw a broader audience, and tell the story of how our redwood forests help sustain the world.

### **CREATE SIGNATURE REDWOOD DESTINATIONS IN SELECT GEOGRAPHIES**

- ◆ The redwood parks that we have helped to create bring 31 million visitors from around the world every year. The iconic allure and accessibility of California's redwood forests, combined with their extraordinary ecological value, climate resilience, and "restorability," create an unparalleled opportunity to inspire a deeper understanding of the world in which we live. We will work to provide exceptional facilities at heavily visited redwood parks, attracting diverse visitors, catalyzing a deeper understanding of redwood forests, and inspiring a new conservation ethic of forest stewardship and appreciation of the natural world.

### **STRATEGICALLY UPGRADE RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND INTERPRETIVE INFRASTRUCTURE IN EXISTING PARKS**

- ◆ We have worked for 100 years to protect redwood forests for their sake and for the value these protected landscapes convey to our communities. Because extraordinary redwood parks make our lives better and our communities stronger, it is critical that we invest in park infrastructure and programming to keep pace with the changing demographics of visitors. We will seek to increase and diversify visitation in redwood parks by lowering barriers, delivering transformational experiences, and immersing visitors in the beauty of the redwood forests.

### **RAISE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF REDWOOD FORESTS THROUGH MARKETING REDWOOD PARKS AND PARTNERING WITH SCHOOLS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTERS TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT REDWOOD-FOCUSED PROGRAMMING**

- ◆ With millions of annual visitors to the redwood parks, visitation is imbalanced. Certain parks are loved to death while others are substantially underutilized. Even as we pursue a deliberate and strategic investment in getting our parks ready for the visitors of the future, we will invest in raising awareness and lowering barriers to access. We will advance a deliberate, multifaceted awareness-building campaign to ensure that redwoods again become a central component of the California experience.



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**STAND** FOR THE  
**REDWOODS**  
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REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK BY CULTURA RM/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

