

PRESS RELEASE

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Save the Redwoods League Enters Agreement to Purchase 1,500+ Acres of Redwood Forest That Will Expand Adjacent Regional Park Near Russian River in Sonoma County

Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion offers connectivity for habitat conservation and future expanded public access to Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve



*The 1,517-acre Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property in Sonoma County.
Photo by Justin Lewis / The Coldwater Collective, courtesy of Save the Redwoods League.*

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (February 11, 2025) — [Save the Redwoods League](#) (League) announced today that it has agreed to purchase and conserve the 1,517-acre Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property in Sonoma County. Home to second- and third-growth coast redwood and Douglas-fir forest, the property is owned by the [Mendocino Redwood Company](#), LLC (MRC). Following the purchase later this year, the League will convey the property to [Sonoma County Regional Parks](#) for long-term stewardship and eventually to expand [Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve](#). (See map below.)

Less than two hours north of San Francisco, Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion shares 75% of its border—a total of 4.7 miles—with [Monte Rio Redwoods Regional Park and Open Space Preserve](#) to the east and [Sonoma Coast State Park](#) to the west. Conserving this property will

link a contiguous conserved area of more than 22,000 acres (more than 34 square miles) of forest, wildlife corridors and watershed, from the Bohemian Highway to the Sonoma Coast and north to Jenner Headlands. This mosaic of conserved lands was made possible through efforts of the League, [Sonoma County Ag + Open Space](#) (Ag + Open Space), [Sonoma Land Trust](#), [Sonoma County Regional Parks](#) and other conservation partners over many decades.

“A connected landscape is a resilient one,” said **Sam Hodder**, president and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. “The opportunity to secure Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property creates a landscape of contiguous, conserved forest and creek habitat from the coast to the Bohemian Highway. Expanding public open space in this extraordinary scenic corridor will benefit residents and visitors with new recreational trails through redwood forests and across open meadows with stunning views of the Russian River Valley.”

The League has negotiated an agreement to buy the multiparcel property from MRC for \$24 million. With its proximity to communities, Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion faces a significant threat of residential development. The purchase will bring the total land conserved by Save the Redwoods League in Sonoma County to 15,626 acres (24 square miles), which includes the recently acquired [Sonoma Coast Redwoods](#) property.

Partnering to Conserve Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion

To reach the \$24 million purchase price, Save the Redwoods League is pursuing \$20 million in public and private funding, including up to \$6 million from Ag + Open Space to acquire a conservation easement and recreational covenant over the property to ensure its natural and recreational resources are conserved forever. The League and conservation partner [Sonoma Land Trust](#) are together raising the remaining \$4 million to acquire the property. Individuals who would like to learn more and support the project are invited to visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org/MonteRioRedwoods](https://www.savetheredwoods.org/MonteRioRedwoods).

“Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion is a cornerstone of regional conservation efforts,” said **Eamon O’Byrne**, executive director of Sonoma Land Trust. “It connects to thousands of acres of conserved lands, unifying decades of hard work and commitments we have made to protecting natural resources, habitat for threatened species and wildlife corridors for a healthy community. We are thrilled to join Save the Redwoods League and our partners on this milestone project.”

“This project is an exciting piece of a much larger puzzle,” said **Misti Arias**, Ag + Open Space’s general manager. “We’ve spent many years working to conserve lands that connect Monte Rio to the coast, and this expansion is essential to making that a reality. Conserving these large swaths of interconnected conserved lands means habitat for plants and wildlife, healthy watersheds and exciting spaces for people to explore and connect with the natural world.”

What's at Stake

The 1,517-acre Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property contains 1,287 acres of coast redwood forest that has been in timber production for over 100 years. There are a few old-growth trees across the property, including one 14-foot-wide ancient tree with a natural tunnel through its base.

The property's coast redwoods are mixed with Douglas-fir, tanoak and California bay. Among other important environmental values, the forest at Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion is a high conservation priority for its carbon storage and climate benefits. Redwood forests store carbon in their rot-resistant wood for centuries, and research has confirmed that young redwoods grow quickly, [storing substantial amounts of carbon](#) in a relatively short period.

The property has 3.7 miles of streams, including the headwaters of Dutch Bill, Freezeout and Willow creeks—tributaries of the Russian River and spawning streams for federally listed coho salmon and steelhead trout.

History of Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion

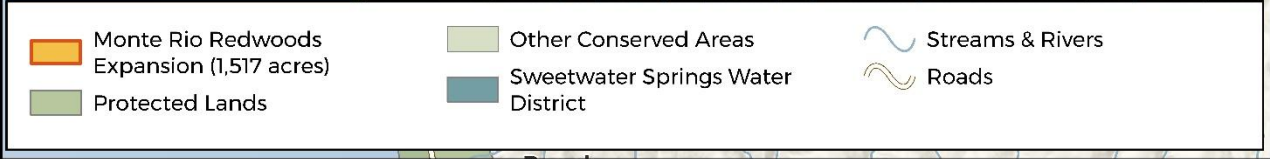
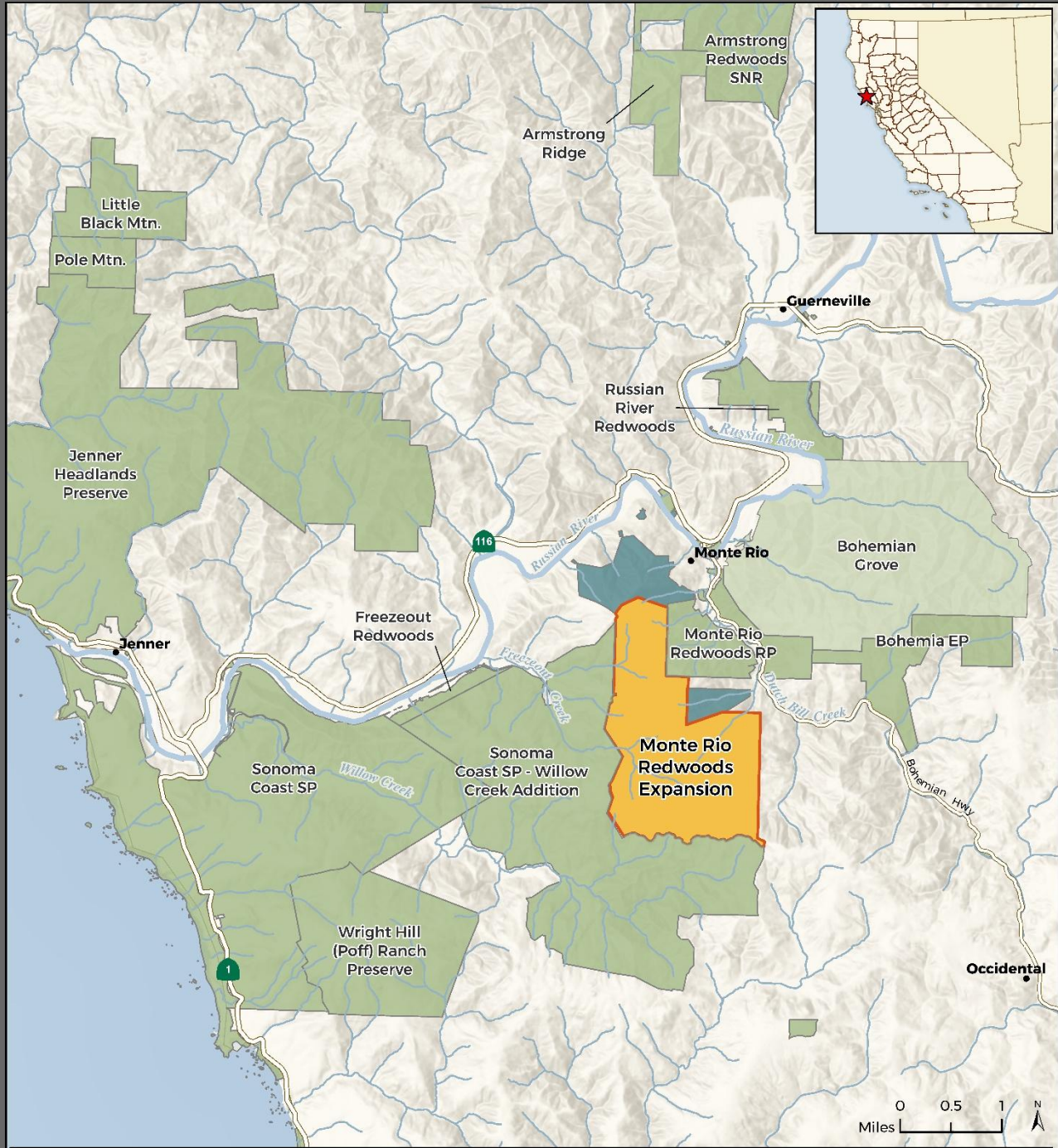
Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion is within the traditional lands of the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, as well as the Southern Pomo territory of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria.

As with most of the redwood forest that historically grew along the Russian River corridor, old-growth trees of this property were logged over a long period of time, beginning in the mid-19th century. The redwoods today are the next generation and have been managed for over 25 years by MRC. MRC previously sold nearly 3,900 acres of land that is contiguous to the Monte Rio Redwoods Expansion property for conservation in 2005.

“From its inception, MRC has sought to employ exemplary forest practices, including harvesting less than growth, the elimination of traditional clear cutting, protection of old-growth redwoods and substantial aquatic restoration on its forestlands,” said **Bob Mertz**, CEO of MRC. “MRC earned Forest Stewardship Certification (FSC) in November 2000 and is in its 25th year of operating within FSC standards. We are pleased to work with Save the Redwoods League on this transaction and look forward to further work together.”

MONTE RIO REDWOODS EXPANSION SONOMA COUNTY

Save The Redwoods
LEAGUE



Map produced by Save the Redwoods League
February 2025 using ESRI software

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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 forests. Our 600,000 supporters have enabled the League to protect more than 220,000 acres of irreplaceable forests in 66 state, national and local parks and reserves. For information, please visit SaveTheRedwoods.org.

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