



MEDIA STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Giant Sequoias of McKinley Grove Threatened by Garnet Fire in Sierra National Forest

Continued Giant Sequoia Emergency Highlights Need for Renewed Federal and State Resources

San Francisco, Calif. (September 5, 2025)— The [Garnet Fire](#), which began on August 24 after lightning struck a remote area of California’s Sierra Nevada Mountains, has burned approximately 33,000 acres of forestland. Firefighters are currently holding this fire less than one mile from McKinley Grove, an isolated 100-acre grove containing more than 200 giant sequoias. McKinley Grove is part of the Sierra National Forest and managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service.

The California Interagency Incident Management Team 10 has taken extraordinary measures to protect these vital giant sequoias, setting up water lines, deploying sprinkler systems and reducing fuels around individual large trees within the grove. Crews are working along McKinley Grove Road to keep the fire from reaching the grove.

McKinley Grove has been identified by the [Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition](#) (GSLC) as one of the most vulnerable of the 80+ giant sequoia groves in the world. Some of the grove’s sequoias are estimated to be 2,000 years old, and the tallest among them rises more than 230 feet.

McKinley Grove has been a priority for fuels-reduction treatment by the GSLC, but governmental resources to achieve the work are lagging. Sustained federal and state support, including disbursing funds from [California’s Prop 4](#) for wildfire resiliency projects, is essential to protect invaluable natural spaces like McKinley Grove. Without these resources, critical work to reduce the risk of extreme wildfire cannot move forward, leaving forests vulnerable.

Since 2015, nearly 20% of mature giant sequoias have perished in wildfires that are burning hotter and more intensely than ever before. Unprecedented giant sequoia mortality threatens this fire-tolerant species that is essential to ecosystems and watersheds—iconic trees that live for millennia and stand as the world’s largest.

Statement from Ben Blom, director of stewardship and restoration for Save the Redwoods League and co-chair of the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition restoration working group:

“Save the Redwoods League applauds the efforts of the Sierra National Forest and California Interagency Incident Management Team 10 for their work to protect communities, infrastructure and giant sequoias in the response to the Garnet Fire.

“Even with the team’s heroic efforts, this grove remains highly at risk. The Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition recently assessed McKinley Grove and identified it as one of the top five most vulnerable to devastating wildfire impacts. McKinley Grove has not experienced fire in nearly 100 years, and recent severe drought has left the grove and surrounding forest filled with the dead trees and highly flammable debris now fueling the Garnet Fire.

“The science is clear: Proactive fuels-reduction treatment is indisputably the most necessary and effective method to restore wildfire resiliency to giant sequoia groves across the Sierra.

“Save the Redwoods League calls upon the California legislature to prioritize disbursing funds that voters approved with the passage of last year’s Prop 4 climate bond. The League also urges Congress to fund the Forest Service and other federal agencies so they can proactively manage giant sequoia groves in national parks and forests.

“While we’ve made substantial progress in reducing threats to giant sequoias, we have an opportunity to prevent further loss of these vital forests. There is no time to lose.”

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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 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, visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](https://www.savetheredwoods.org).