

Sempervirens Fund strives to complete Big Basin State Park

Last in a series
By JOAN RAYMOND
Sentinel Staff Writer

It will take 6,000 more acres, 15 years and \$15 million to acquire enough land to complete Big Basin Redwoods State Park to its natural watershed borders.

That is the opinion of Tony Look, executive director of the Sempervirens Fund, a group dedicated to the protection of Big Basin.

A half million campers, hikers and picnickers visit Big Basin each year, according to Sempervirens statistics.

The park now includes 16,000 acres, however it is still overcrowded each year, said Suzanne Reed, a Sempervirens spokeswoman.

Last year one million visitors were turned away, said Reed.

Why does the state need more park lands? According to Reed, even though the increase in park land has matched the increase in population over the last 30 years, the use of state parks has increased twentyfold.

About 60 million persons visit the state parks each year, said Reed.

The Sempervirens Fund expects to meet its 1982 goal of raising \$300,000 to buy more land for Big Basin park, said Reed. "We're just waiting for the figures to be tallied by our bookkeeper," she added.

The state is expected to match that money, said Reed.

The Sempervirens campaign today focuses on securing land in the watershed where Waddell Creek runs to the Pacific Ocean from the Big Basin highlands.

The Fund also seeks to acquire land by Pine Mountain and the park entrance, where a new campground is planned.

In addition the fund seeks trail easements within the park's interior and to Ano Nuevo state reserve in Santa Cruz County and to Portola Park in San Mateo County, said Reed.

In 1977 the fund successfully lobbied for state purchase of 1,700 acres of Rancho del Oso — a series of narrow valleys along Waddell Creek stretching from Mount

McAbee in the interior of Big Basin to the Pacific Ocean.

Hikers now can follow a "skyline to the sea" trail from the park's headquarters to the ocean.

The first segment of this trail was built in one weekend by more than 2,500 volunteers.

Rancho del Osos is owned by the family of Hulda Hoover McLean, whose family has lived there since 1914.

The ranch was bought in 1913 by Theodore J. Hoover from William Waddell, a Kentucky lumberman who established a mill at the forks of the creek in 1862.

According to Sempervirens literature, remnants of the tramway built from his mill to the beach are sometimes found in the woods. Cabrillo Highway, built in 1945, covered the last remnants of the tramway along the beach to his wharf near Ano Nuevo point.

History says Waddell was attacked by a bear and died from infected wounds in 1875.

The Hoover family still owns most of the ranch land on the Santa Cruz side of Waddell Creek, said Reed.

The Sempervirens Fund, with its 8,000 supporters, "sells" trees and groves to "buyers" whose names are placed on plaques at the base of the trees.

A redwood stake with engraved nametag at the base of a single tree costs \$100 or more, depending on the size of the tree.

Trees can be personally selected for a fee of \$25.

Memorial groves from five to ten acres apiece cost \$10,000 or more.

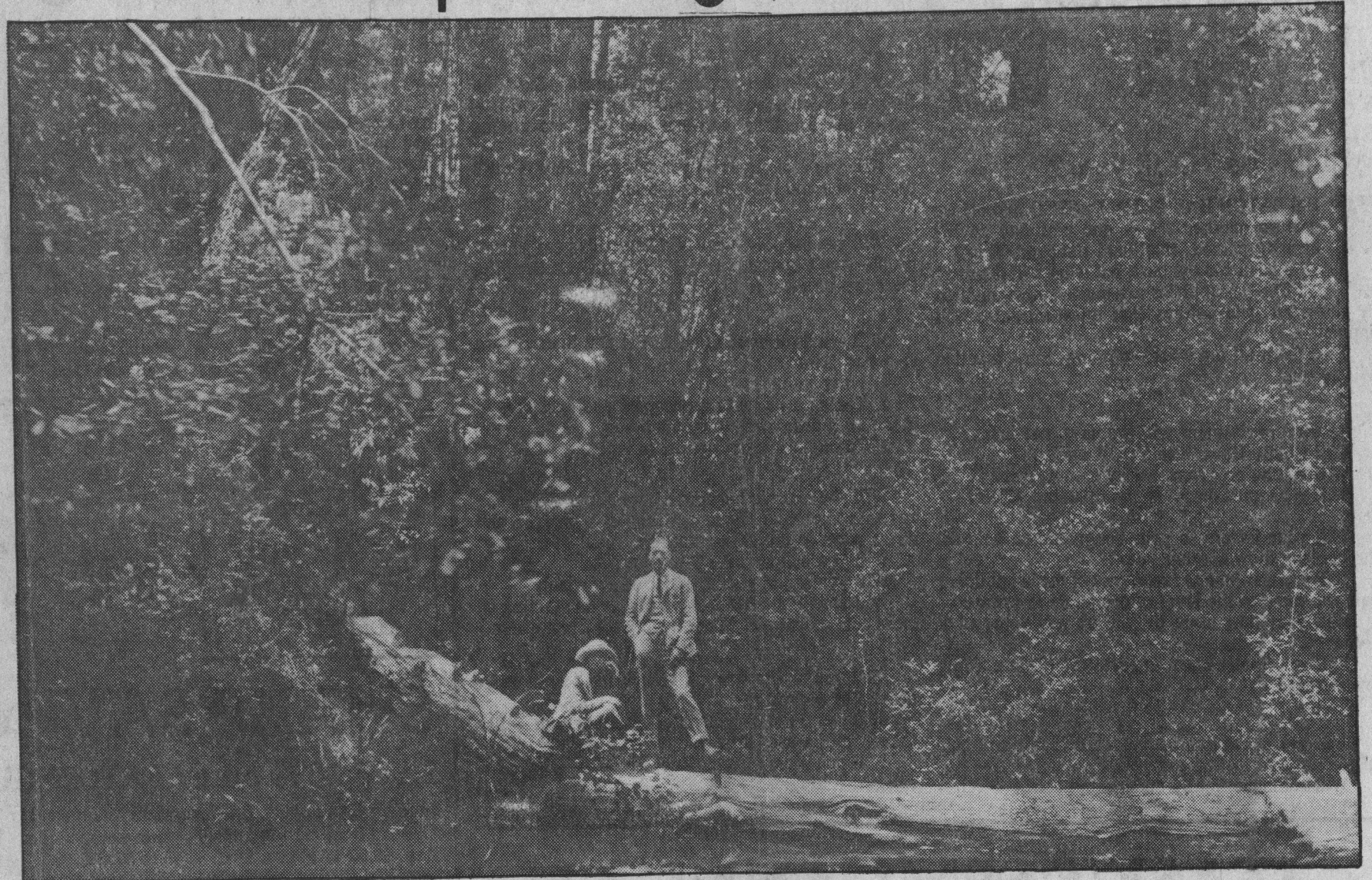
Supporters of the tree and grove programs can pay on an installment basis.

Reed said the Fund commonly purchases land after the death of a propertyowner when heirs are seeking buyers.

Original owners are usually concerned about preserving the land, said Reed.

Also, Reed said those who sell to the state parks system receive tax benefits.

The fund not only raises money for parks, but sponsors reforestation, trail



Big Basin State Park in the olden days

Photo by Roy F. Fulmer

building and cleanup projects.

Hundreds of volunteers, including

scout groups, participate in the projects each year.

In heavily used campgrounds, Reed said the ground is so compacted new trees won't reproduce oneir own. In these areas, volunteers plant seedlings.

Riverside Lighting