



COURTESY OF SEMPERVIRENS FUND

This parcel near Butano Creek was acquired Monday by Los Altos-based Sempervirens Fund, and is about 1.5-miles north of Butano State Park. The Butano Creek area is habitat for California red-legged frogs and marbled murrelets, an endangered sea bird.

# Deals conserve 80 Santa Cruz Mountain acres

Conservation

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SANTA CRUZ — Further filling in the conservation blanks between three of California's grandest state parks, Sempervirens Fund on Monday acquired 80 acres of redwoods, chaparral and sensitive habitat destined for the open market.

The two 40-acre parcels are located in the Butano Creek and Waterman Creek watersheds, just above the northern rim of Santa Cruz County. They are nestled in a swath of the Santa Cruz Mountains sitting between Butano, Big Basin and Castle Rock state parks, and were acquired from the federal Bureau of Land Management.

"We are very excited to finally complete our first land-protection project with the Bureau of Land Management," said Reed Holderman, executive director of Los Altos-based Sempervirens Fund. "The two properties will be protected forever from building, paving and commercial logging."

While relatively small, the properties add to a patchwork of protected area that the Sempervirens Fund hopes to add to in coming decades, eventually forming what has been called "The Great Park." Consisting of coastal ranges that run from Wilder Ranch to Pescadero, the area already includes numerous state parks, the 8,000-acre former Cemex property above Davenport, and many open-space and conservation deals.

"We were glad to be able to sell these surplus lands to a land trust as venerable as Sempervirens Fund," said Rick Cooper, field manager of BLM's Hollister Field Office.

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## PROTECT

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"They will be excellent stewards of these properties."

The Butano Creek parcel is in an area inhabited by endangered California red-legged frogs and marbled murrelets, an endangered sea bird, and Coho salmon and steelhead are found downstream. The Waterman Creek parcel is just west of Castle Rock State Park, and

while BLM retains 40 years of mineral rights to the site, Sempervirens secured a deal preventing future mining.

A portion of the funding for the \$870,000 purchase came through the Living Landscape Initiative Challenge Grant Program, which is administered by the Resources Legacy Fund and funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

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