



PRESS STATEMENT

August 1, 2023

GUERNEVILLE FOREST COALITION SUPPORTS PURCHASE OF REDWOOD FOREST THREATENED BY LOGGING

We are delighted that Save The Redwoods League has reached an agreement with timberland owner Roger Burch and his RMB Revocable Family Trust to acquire nearly 400 acres of redwood forest along the Russian River near Guerneville. We fully support the purchase of the property and plans to create a conservation easement to protect the forest and its ecosystem. This is good news for Guerneville, the Russian River, and our beloved coastal redwoods.

The Guerneville Forest Coalition has been fighting for three years to stop the 224-acre Silver Estates logging plan, which was approved by CalFire last year and had threatened to destroy a delicate ecosystem supporting numerous at-risk species. It also put at risk the health of the 2,000 year old Clar Tree, one of the tallest trees in Sonoma County.

With the purchase of the property, Save the Redwoods League will be able to work with the Open Space District and Sonoma County to ensure that the forest on Neeley Hill and along one mile of the Russian River is safeguarded for generations. Long term stewardship and restoration of the forest will allow for improved wildfire resilience, conservation efforts, and increased recreational opportunities.

We are tremendously grateful to Save the Redwoods League, and to our GFC volunteers and hundreds of supporters who fought so hard over the past three years to protect the forest.

- ENDS -

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The GFC was created by a small group of concerned Guerneville residents and neighbors in June 2020 to protect the forest from a logging plan, called the Silver Estates Timber Harvest Plan (THP). It quickly grew to include nearly 300 supporters from all over the country, including many visitors who vacationed at the Russian River. With financial help from hundreds of supporters, the GFC launched a legal challenge to the logging plan in April 2023. More than 400 public comments opposing the logging plan were received by CalFire, including one from Sonoma County, which claimed that the plan was in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A 2022 viewshed study, funded by a Tourism Impact Fund Grant, found that the THP 'would noticeably and detrimentally impact the visual and recreational experience for people on and near the Russian River.'

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