

Large privately owned redwood forest is preserved in \$24.7 million deal

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A vast redwood forest located 80 miles north of San Francisco and sprawling nearly as large as Big Basin Redwoods State Park in the Santa Cruz Mountains has received permanent protection under a deal between

a Bay Area environmental group and the property's longtime owners.

Under the agreement, Save the Redwoods League, based in San Francisco, paid \$24.7 million to buy a conservation easement over the sweeping Mailliard Ranch, located in southern Mendocino County near the Sonoma County line.

The 14,838-acre property, roughly half the size of the city of San Francisco, is believed to be the largest family-owned coast redwood forest remaining in California.

The Mailliard family, which has owned it since 1925, includes Charlotte Mailliard Shultz, the wife of former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, who died Feb. 6 at age 100 at their home in Palo Alto.

The family will continue to own the property and it will not be open to public access. The easement guarantees conservation in perpetuity, however. The family still will be allowed to conduct commercial logging—at half the rate currently permitted under state laws—on second-growth redwoods there, as it has done for generations. But more than 1,000 acres of land along streams and groves of old-growth giant redwoods will be preserved forever, while 69 legal parcels that could have been divided into ranchettes and vineyards will be retired.

"This deal illustrates how redwood forests—which grow nowhere else in the world naturally—can be preserved," said Sam Hodder, president and CEO of Save the Redwoods League.

"We're going to need to use every tool in the toolbox. Our vision isn't to make a park out of every acre of redwood forest. We want to make sure we don't lose any more of it. To do that we want to partner with private landowners, and manage land sustainably and support the financial needs of the owners."

The ranch is located in Anderson Valley, west of Highway 128 between Yorkville and Boonville. It is about 10 miles inland from the coastal town of Gualala, which sits on the border of Sonoma and Mendocino counties. The property is home to golden eagles, black-tailed deer, northern spotted owls, coho salmon and steelhead trout, along with at least 159 native species of plants.

It also includes 28 miles of streams, and the headwaters of the Garcia and Navarro rivers.

The ranch was in an area of California that was being heavily logged when Jack Ward Mailliard Jr. and his wife, Kate, purchased it in 1925. They began to acquire neighboring lots over decades, and ran a timber, cattle and food business. A friend of former Gov. Earl Warren, Jack also served as president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce and chairman of the board of the California Academy of Sciences. Kate revered the trees, particularly an area known as Cathedral Grove, her grandson remembers.

"The old growth built San Francisco twice, so there isn't a lot of redwood, true old growth, left in the area," said Larry Mailliard, general partner of Mailliard Ranch. "Cathedral Grove was my grandmother's favorite. Grandmother's philosophy was, 'Why go sit in a 100-year-old church when I could go talk to a 2,500-year-old tree?'"

Charlotte Mailliard Shultz, 87, came to California from Texas in the early 1960s. She met Jack Mailliard III and they were married. She became a prominent philanthropist and worked decades in San Francisco politics for 10 San Francisco mayors, mostly as chief of protocol, organizing events. After her husband died in 1986, she married hotel magnate Melvin Swig. Four years after he died in 1993, she married Shultz, who served as secretary of state under President Ronald Reagan and secretary of labor and of the treasury under President Richard

Nixon. Shultz also was a professor emeritus at Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Funding for the Mailliard Ranch deal came from a variety of sources. They include \$8.15 million from Save the Redwoods League donors, \$4.75 million in state parks and water bonds from Proposition 84, and \$4.3 million from the U.S. Forest Service. The family donated \$6.5 million in land value.

The deal, which closed earlier this month, links to roughly 67,000 acres of other preserved redwood lands between Anderson Valley and Gualala, many which also have sustainable logging plans and conservation easements.

Meanwhile, another land trust in the area also recently completed a significant land conservation deal. The Redwood Coast Land Conservancy, based in Gualala, last month purchased the Mill Bend property, a prominent 113-acre site at the mouth of the Gualala River near where it meets the Pacific Ocean. A century ago, the property was the site of a large sawmill. The land trust plans to build riverfront trails and better river access for fishing and boating.

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