



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LandPaths and land partners Jim and Betty Doerksen and dozens of volunteers will plant thousands of Redwood saplings at Rancho Mark West to support forest and watershed health and climate change adaptation post-Glass Fire.

SANTA ROSA, CA. — Rancho Mark West, a 120-acre community hub, outdoor classroom and protected open space preserve in the Mayacamas mountains, has been stewarded by LandPaths, alongside land partners Jim and Betty Doerksen, since 2011.

In October 2020, Rancho Mark West was severely damaged by the Glass Fire. A significant number of dead trees had to be logged and removed by way of chipping and burning to reduce fuels that would push the spread of future wildfires. Without the trees, the one-mile stretch of Mark West Creek has suffered from the erosion of hillsides as sediment fills the water, impacting the downstream habitat.

On December 3, 4, and 5, 2021, LandPaths staff, the Doerksens, and a crew of dedicated volunteers will plant 4500 redwood tree saplings from Mendocino Redwood Company. We invite anyone who is interested to sign up and join us!

“Everything is interconnected,” says Jim Doerksen, who has lived at Rancho Mark West for more than 50 years and stewards it in a land partnership with LandPaths. “The forest helps to provide clean water for creek and the spring. With everything bare now, there is a lot more mud in the water and the banks of the creek are eroding. It’s important to get the trees back in.”

Jim originally planted many trees in the late 60s and early 70s. During that time, he saw the health of the land thrive. Now, with many of those original trees lost in the Glass fire, this is his second go-round at planting trees on the property.

“We must keep productive forests healthy,” says Craig Anderson, Executive Director of LandPaths. “At Rancho Mark West, there was near complete incineration of and many acres were burned, in particular, in the area where we’re planting.”

The planting of thousands of redwood saplings holds multiple benefits:

- As they grow, the trees will retain water in their canopies, slowing the water’s path down during the dramatic rains that have already grown more common due to climate change.

- The slowing of the rain significantly reduces erosion and the flow of damaging sediment into the creek.
- Redwood trees have remarkable carbon sequestering capabilities, a nature-based solution that's essential if we are going to limit global warming to less than 1.5° over the next decades.

Community-wise, Rancho Mark West has long been a much-loved landscape for learning, joy and refuge in nature for thousands of children and adults. This includes many in the community who might not otherwise have had access to nature like this.

Regenerating the forest will support LandPaths to continue to host community gatherings, school visits, and Owl Campers into perpetuity, while helping to heal and protect the watershed, the creek, and the overall health of the land.

About Rancho Mark West: Rancho Mark West is located on the ancestral territory of the Southern Pomo people and the Wappo people since time immemorial. Just 20 minutes from downtown Santa Rosa, Rancho Mark West is LandPaths' outdoor classroom, community hub, and place of refuge in the Mayacamas Mountains. LandPaths, with generous assistance from the California Coastal Conservancy, purchased Rancho Mark West in 2011. Under the purchase terms, Jim and Betty Doerkson, have a reserved life estate on the property. LandPaths and the Doerksens participate in this land ownership partnership as a way to love the land and engage the public forever, especially local children, through outings and outdoor education. Rancho Mark West is located at 7125 St. Helena Road, Santa Rosa.

To schedule interviews and photographs for this story, please contact Leilani Clark, LandPaths Communications Lead at leilani@landpaths.org or (707) 332-4736.

About [LandPaths](#)

Celebrating 25 years in 2021, LandPaths is a nonprofit organization with the mission of fostering a love of the land in Sonoma County. Diverse by design, LandPaths achieves our mission through three initiatives: rooting youth in nature, branching out conservation for everyone, and growing community with nature. We inspire people to experience the beauty of Sonoma County, understand the value of local open spaces, and participate in stewarding the land. www.landpaths.org.

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