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Former Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell Speaks Out in Support of Recovery Fund To Help Protect Giant Sequoia Groves

THREE RIVERS, Calif. (October 12, 2021) – Sally Jewell, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior and past CEO of REI, has shown her support for Sequoia Parks Conservancy’s (SPC) KNP Complex Fire Recovery Fund for Sequoia National Park. In addition to donating to the fund she says, “I’ve walked quietly among the giants in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks – trees so large they took my breath away; trees that have borne witness to a millennia of change. Hundreds of generations of humans, from the indigenous brothers and sisters of these majestic beings to the throngs of visitors from around the world who now come to marvel at their size and tenacity, have been in awe of their capacity for survival. Until now.”

Giant sequoias currently face a triple threat of mortality: high-severity fire, destruction from cedar bark beetles, and the continued impacts of drought on sequoia regeneration and fire behavior. After last year’s SQF fire destroyed 10–14% of giant sequoias in the world, it’s clear that the future of giant sequoias relies on swift action.

In response, SPC has launched the [KNP Complex Fire Recovery Fund for Sequoia National Park](#) to help NPS with future recovery efforts. Jewell emphasizes, “The trees of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are crying out for help, and we can be part of the solution. Please join me in supporting the Sequoia Parks Conservancy in protecting these timeless sentinels now so they can continue to inspire wonder in future generations.”

Sequoias are a major source of stored carbon in the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California, and the world. In Sequoia and Kings Canyon alone, they store 20 teragrams (1 teragram = 10^{12} grams) of carbon and account for up to 17% of the total stored carbon in the over 800,000 acres of the parks. Current best estimates are that Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are home to roughly one-third of all naturally occurring giant sequoia groves in the world.

As the fire continues to swell to over 87,000 acres and is only 30% contained, firefighters are working to protect multiple sequoia groves, wildlife habitat, meadows, and park infrastructure, but there will be much restoration work to do once the flames are extinguished.

This is the worst fire in Sequoia’s 131-year history. Jewell stresses, “Challenges of anthropogenic climate change and years of fire suppression have placed these irreplaceable natural treasures in immediate jeopardy from wildfire and drought. We see dedicated and brave public servants do everything in their power to save them, but their resources are stretched thin, and the job is daunting.”

Sequoia Parks Conservancy has a goal of raising \$1 million. You can learn more and donate to the fund at www.sequoiaparks.org/firefund.

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About the KNP Complex Fire Recovery Fund

Donations to the KNP Complex Fire Recovery Fund for Sequoia National Park will fund efforts to rebuild trails, protect sequoia groves and meadows, safeguard cultural and historic features, reestablish access to Crystal Cave, restore wildlife habitat, and more.

About Sequoia Parks Conservancy

Sequoia Parks Conservancy is the official nonprofit partner of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Lake Kaweah, working hand-in-hand with the National Park Service to support projects including trail improvements, educational programs for the public, and the protection of wildlife and their natural habitat.

About Sally Jewell

Sally Jewell served as the CEO of REI from 2005 to 2013. As U.S. Secretary of the Interior, she signed a Secretarial Order in 2014 to expand access to parks, seeking to create opportunities for young people to play, learn, serve, and work in national parks. After leaving government, Jewell was an advisor to the College of the Environment's EarthLab at University of Washington, where she coordinated solutions to climate change and environmental issues.



This is a photo of Sally Jewell, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior.



This is a photo of a giant sequoia grove with many trees killed by high-severity wildfire. Photo by NPS/Anthony Caprio



This is a photo of a giant sequoia grove that burned with low fire severity fire – most trees still have green crowns and just some small trees and shrubs are scorched. Photo by NPS/Anthony Caprio

Sequoia Parks Conservancy is the official 501(c)(3) nonprofit partner to the National Park Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and Lake Kaweah.

