

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Sequoia Parks Conservancy Awarded a \$200,000 Grant from
The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation.**

*Funds will be used to support giant sequoia conservation efforts
in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.*

SEQUOIA NATIONAL PARK, Calif. (November 9, 2021) -- Sequoia Parks Conservancy, the official nonprofit partner to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, is thrilled to announce it has received a \$200,000 grant over two years from The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation (SLFF). This is the second significant SLFF grant given to Sequoia Parks Conservancy to fund and support sequoia conservation and restoration efforts in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. This grant is critical to recovery efforts, given the damage caused by this fall's KNP Complex Fire and 2020's SQF Complex Fire, both in Sequoia National Park. Funds will be used for seed collection and propagation, a beetle survey with trapping, identification of beetle-vulnerable trees, fuel reduction around vulnerable trees, and promotional work to educate the public about how the climate crisis is affecting giant sequoias.

Josh Lehrer, Co-Founder of The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation says, *"One of the most remarkable qualities in human evolution is the cultivation of Awe. To be in the presence of a three-thousand-year-old living thing is to be instantly transported to that speechless and primordial awe-filled place. Sequoia Parks Conservancy holds this natural wonder for us. They are working around the clock to ensure that future generations can revel in the awesome presence of these ancient trees, these national treasures. Trees are by far our most efficient and effective carbon removal systems. At The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation we affirm the heroic work of Sequoia Parks Conservancy, and in doing so hope that others will join us. This is, after all, a genuine emergency."*

As of November 8, 2021, 22% of Sequoia National Park has burned in the fire. The affected elevation is prime habitat for giant sequoias and native and endangered flora and fauna.

From August through October 2020, the SQF Fire burned over 170,000 acres of state, federal, and private land including twenty-two named giant sequoia groves. A report published by the National Park Service and the United States Geological Survey found that an estimated 10-14% of ALL wild giant sequoias over 4 feet in diameter were killed in this single fire event. Preventing future catastrophes like the Castle Fire is one of the main goals of the SQF Recovery Project.

"We would like to thank The Seller-Lehrer Foundation for their generous support, which will be used to expand our sequoia research and management program," says Dr. Christy Brigham, chief of resource management and science at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. "This latest round of funding will continue to be used to understand what factors make sequoia trees vulnerable to beetle attack and fire damage and continue other high priority sequoia conservation actions as we address the climate crisis."

Dr. Brigham, an expert on giant sequoias, ranks the threats to giant sequoias in terms of urgency and scale/scope as follows: (1) loss of monarch old-growth

trees to high-severity fires such as in the Castle Fire; (2) loss of monarch old-growth giant sequoias to drought and fire-mediated cedar bark beetle attack. Trees weakened by previous fire and current drought are vulnerable as never before to attack and death by native cedar bark beetles; and (3) giant sequoias killed directly by climate change impacts such as drought. As droughts become more frequent, it may become so dry that giant sequoias are directly killed by drought and may only persist in small pockets of appropriate microclimate. Giant sequoias have survived many previous droughts and changes in climate, but we are concerned that the pace and scale of human-caused climate change may require us to take action to help them weather these changes.

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About The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation

Founded on the concept that first you learn, then you earn, and then you return, The Seller-Lehrer Family Foundation invests in organizations that pursue educational, cultural, and environmental initiatives. It also seeks to engender progress on racial and social justice. It seeks to form partnerships with not-for-profit organizations that are both innovative and productive; organizations that affect positive change to our society, our community, and our environment.

About Sequoia Parks Conservancy

Sequoia Parks Conservancy is the official nonprofit partner of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, working hand-in-hand with the National Park Service to support critical park programs including education and outreach, trails and access, wildlife management, search and rescue, and resource management and science.

About Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park

These two parks, which lie side by side in the southern Sierra Nevada in Central California, preserve prime examples of nature's size, beauty, and diversity. Nearly 2 million visitors from across the U.S. and the world visit these parks to see the world's largest trees (by volume), grand mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns, the highest point in the lower 48 states, and more. Learn more at <http://www.nps.gov/seki>.



This photo shows a hotshot from the Olympic Module looking up at a giant sequoia during the KNP Complex Fire in Sequoia National Park. Photo by Niall Goard.



This photo shows a giant sequoia grove with a monarch sequoia killed by high-severity wildfire. Photo by NPS.



This photo shows a park manager in the midst of giant sequoias killed in the SQF Complex located in the Board Camp Grove, Sequoia National Park. 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.

