For centuries, the coast redwood tree has functioned as the primary sentinel and gateway to this region. The oldest living California Historical Landmark No. 2 has been central to the City of Palo Alto since its incorporation in 1894 and Stanford University for over a century. In 1955, an increment boring of the tree rings was taken and the tree's age was accurately determined to be 1,015 years, and in 2004 was 1,064 years old. The tree stands anchored to the San Francisquito Creek bank with a trunk size of over eight feet in diameter. In 1951 its height was 134.6-feet, in 1977 its height was reduced to 126-feet to remove the dead top, and again in 1999 where it still stands at nearly 110-feet in height.

From 1865-1955, the tree was in serious decline with alarmingly sparse branching and foliage. Implicating factors of decline were (1) the foliage was coated with coal-burning train soot which passed beneath the tree's canopy on a daily basis and, (2) the increasing reduction of the aquifer (available water table) from wells in the thriving orchards of the 'blossom valley', including the 1912 Tower Well only two blocks away. It is surmised that by 1955, the disappearing orchards and county water district program to cap wells helped to recharge the aquifer in the region back to a level that the El Palo Alto redwood had historically grown accustomed. In spite of an eroding top, aerial termites and an associated decay column on the west side of the top (left side), the tree today has a much greater volume of foliage and biomass and is healthier today than nearly a century ago.

Excepting a catastrophic disaster, the life expectancy and prognosis for the El Palo Alto redwood is that it will continue to overlook the region for at least 300 more years.
Palo Alto's namesake honored

Aspiring to be a namesake, located to an extent, the splashings of Palo Alto's most famous tree, the Palo Alto Live Oak, has come to fruition. The tree, a large and sturdy oak, is placed in the heart of the city, symbolizing its strength and resilience. The tree is a reminder of the city's rich history, as seen in the namesake ceremony. The tree, now named after the city, will remain an icon for generations to come.

Location

The tree is located at 4370 El Camino, near El Camino and Almaden Street. The tree is visible from any direction.

Other trees in the American Forests Historical Tree Nursery

El Palo Alto has made it onto the list. Palo Alto's efforts have not been in vain as the nursery dedicates itself to preserving the legacy of the live oak. The nursery houses a variety of trees, from small saplings to mature trees, all contributing to the city's greenery. The nursery is open to the public, allowing visitors to learn more about the history of the trees and the importance of preserving them.

Japanese cherry, Washington Oak

These trees are some of the most scenic in the nursery. They offer a beautiful contrast to the surrounding landscape, providing a sense of tranquility and beauty.

Lindsey Live Oak

The Lindsey Live Oak is a rare find in the nursery. It is one of the only trees of its kind in the region, making it a valuable addition to the collection.

Mayfield Live Oak

This tree is known for its resilience and strong roots, making it a perfect addition to any landscape.