



NEWSLETTER

Fall 2016

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

President's Report: Alan Aitken

The signs of fall are everywhere in Humboldt Redwoods State Park. This morning, with coffee in hand, I stepped onto my porch to the sound of hundreds of Canadian geese flying south in formation. The leaves of the poison oak have all turned red and are falling off. And the number of visitors have decreased with the change in the weather.

As always, and despite the weather, our mission goes on. Visitors from around the world continue to arrive to see first hand the forest and to reconnect with nature. The other day, as I was volunteering at the visitor center, two couples from Germany were viewing the exhibits. As coincidence would have it, they had traveled thousands of miles only to find people that lived only a few miles from their homes.

Last July President Obama visited Yosemite National Park. In his brief remarks he stated that for every dollar spent in a national park six dollars were spent outside the park on food, lodging, gas and other items. That means HRIA has an impact of well over two million dollars to Southern Humboldt County. The efforts of HRIA are benefiting not only the visitors, but our neighbors as well.



Alan Aitken

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Mission Statement

The HRIA is an educational non-profit group working in cooperation with the California State Parks at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Richardson Grove State Park, Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park, Benbow Lake Recreation area and Sinkyone Wilderness State Park within the North Coast Redwoods District, Eel River Sector. The mission of HRIA is to provide visitors with stimulating explanatory information on the natural and cultural history; to help visitors see these parks not only with their eyes, but also with their hearts. We lead others from mere observation to inspire in them a sense of awe in which the human spirit finds meaning, wisdom and a connection with all living things.

Ode to a Redwood Nymph

Anonymous, 1996



Photo by Jonah Westrich

Chestnut haired protectress
Fearless beauty, guardian of
Natures cathedral
How charming
How gracefully do you roam
Through towering groves and sweet
Flowing waters

Hylaorean maiden, sister to to the
Spirits of mountains, rivers and grottos
How many eons have passed?
How many reincarnations cycled?
Since first you called these stream
Laced steeples home?

And so this day, in novel raiment,
Ever youthful, ever shining
Do you watch o'er this hallowed land,
Ally to all forest life.
Eternal, vigilant tutelar,
Remaining ever humble,
At the alter of nature's cathedral

Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, HRIA Manager

Happy day to all, we had a great summer here at the Visitor Center. A big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped out this summer. As a lot of you know, my husband passed away this past August and I took time off to be with him. During the six weeks I was gone, Sophia was the only one to work in the office. She did a great job taking over extra responsibilities of ordering, scheduling volunteers, etc. A big thank you to her.

As the leaves begin to fall and tourism slows, we can now focus on the holidays. Just a reminder we will be closed Thanksgiving and Christmas day. Be sure to stop by and see us, we have new merchandise and are stocked with lots of holiday gift options. Happy holidays to all!

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association: In The Beginning

By Carl Chavez, Northern Division Chief (Retired)



On May 1, 1979 I arrived as the new Park Manager of the Dyerville Area having come from Plumas-Eureka SP, one of our smallest parks, to Humboldt Redwoods SP, then second largest park in the California State Park System at that time. Though Plumas-Eureka SP was small, it did have an excellent museum so I was shocked to learn that other than a small counter at the Humboldt Redwoods SP Headquarters Office there was no place to meet the public and share the wonders of this world class resource.

At the time of my arrival there was not much interaction between park staff and the local community other than a “Them” verses “Us” attitude that I was charged to change. As I had at Plumas-Eureka I decided we must form a park association with a goal of establishing some sort of public contact facility as yet to be determined. Fortunately two park staff in Supervising Ranger Gary Fregien and Ranger Rick Johnson were both strong supporters of this idea.

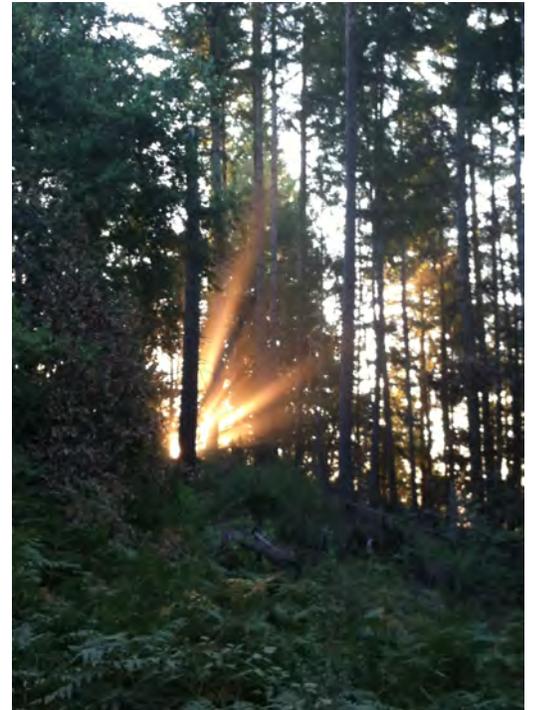
My second day on the job I began working on establishing a Board of Directors that would be necessary to oversee HRIA operations. I immediately contacted Fran Cleaver, a local Weott resident, who was a part-time reporter for the Fortuna Beacon newspaper. I did this in order to get “free” publicity. Other members included Bert & Margaret Barrow who were local residents who lived near the top of Pesula Road. Margaret had once worked as a secretary for parks, John Knight who at the time was working as a crew leader for the High Rock CCC camp. John’s father, Jack, was the Chief of Operations in Sacramento and Johns wife Dusty worked as a Park Aide. Dusty was also responsible for obtaining the initial design of the HRIA logo from John’s sister who did the graphics. Vern Green and his wife who resided in Weott also came on Board as did the last member who was the Weott postmaster.

What became the Visitor Center was Residence #7, a two bedroom house that had originally been a Cal Trans residence and later became a park residence. When a personal issue arose I moved the occupant of the house out to Pepperwood with the intent of making Residence #7 the VC. On May 29, 1979 we held our first meeting with the potential Board Members, some park staff and their spouses. We passed a hat around and collected \$5.00 from all in attendance in order to obtain the necessary filing fees with the State for non-profit status. I appointed Ranger Johnson with the task of handling the necessary paperwork to wade through the 501 (3c) processes necessary to obtain incorporation with non-profit status. It took a while but on October 19, 1979 we officially became the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association.

On February 22, 1980 we started work on the conversion of the residence into a VC. Fortunately we a source of “free” lumber from our own saw mill operation. Our labor force consisted of park maintenance staff that I pulled from other projects, CCC crews from High Rock, and four students from Humboldt State University. I was successful in obtaining \$5,000 from the Save-the-Redwoods League but probably the most significant source of funding, certainly with the later additions to the VC was assigning Chief Ranger Ted Reinhardt the task of purchasing material with Sub Purchase Orders (SPO). Ted developed a good working relationship with a fellow at the Pacific Lumber Company that understood the restrictive limits of the SPO’s and they worked around a “don’t ask, don’t tell” method of circumventing the spending limits. Among other purchases from P-L was the last of their old growth redwood paneling that adores the walls.

So it was we progressed with necessary modifications, first exhibits and access requirements. The initial wildlife exhibit (It has since been removed and upgraded) was completed largely through the efforts of my wife Margaret and Ted’s wife Jeanne Reinhardt. You must understand that all of the initial work and spending on the VC was done without the knowledge of my bosses, Allen “Tiny” Philbrook and Carl “Andy” Anderson or Sacramento Headquarter staff. I had told our park staff not to worry about that. My standard response was that once it was built and the visiting public liked it everyone would jump on board and think it was about time HRSP had a VC. When we were re-roofing the structure I finally called Andy and told him he better come down and see what we were doing. He did and he loved it!

On August 10, 1980 we officially opened the VC. Fran Clever had been hired as VC Manager. A major source of our initial income came from shirt sales with the redwood tree in the boot logo. These shirts were silk screened by park spouses up in the Recreation Hall and they worked feverishly to keep a stock in supply. One of the first additions to the VC was the adjacent storage room and a deck and BBQ constructed by Maintenance Worker Roy Allan. Two later additions expanded into additional exhibit space a theater/auditorium. With help of Regional Engineer Mike Shapiro he designed trusses with the steel gussets to ensure the roof remained where it was suppose too! Another bootleg project was the addition of the paved parking lot that Mike helped us sneak in too. Later after the Dyerville Area combined with the Piercy Area to become the Eel River District. Jim Hibbert became Chief Ranger for a while before retiring and it was through his efforts that the outdoor displays in front of the VC came in to being.



Throughout my tenure as Area Manager and Superintendent from 1979-87 I would go down to the VC almost on a daily basis to check on its attendance. I saw the milestones of 100, 200, 500, 1000 visitors per day reached and knew we had succeeded in constructing a winner. The only “heat” I received from this unauthorized project was from one Sacramento Headquarters Maintenance Chief who wanted to know who authorized the re-roofing of Residence #7. I told him we didn’t have a Residence Center. In any event Andy Anderson backed me up. After the Department re-organized into Regions with our boss in Curt Mitchell in Santa Rosa he and other just referred to the VC “as Carl’s Winchester House North” and let it go at that. He did show some concern when we went ahead and modified the entrance station at Grizzly Creek SP into mini, two-story VC without going through the CEQA process but that’s another story (Thank god I’m retired now as I presume the statue of limitations has passed!).

More stories on the formation of the HRIA and other HRSP park experiences can be found in my book “A Pathway Through Park”

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association: In The Beginning

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Secretary



We are making good progress in restoring Usal's environmental health and safety. In 2015 the Usal Committee has formed to plan and implement the restoration of Usal Beach, Campground and hiking trails. This committee is made up of representatives from the Save the Redwoods League, Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council, Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association, Mendocino Area Parks Association, Mendocino Land Trust, Team Standish and the North Coast Redwoods District, California Department of Parks and Recreation. The group meets regularly to plan and conduct restoration and improvements to Usal Beach, Campground and Trails. The District provided a seasonal park aid to work in Usal one to two days a week cleaning restrooms, removing sewage by pump truck, picking up and removing litter and trash, contacting the visitors to get feedback on the visitors experience, emphasizing the importance of respecting the fragile riparian resources. The North Coast Redwoods District is working to create a permanent maintenance position in addition to the seasonal position to expand the presence of park staff at Usal. A law enforcement joint task force has formed with membership from State Park Rangers, Mendocino County Sheriff, Highway Patrol, Fort Bragg Police, and Fish and Game Rangers. This task force conducts regular law enforcement patrols, confiscating fire arms, fireworks, and ticketing offenders. Additionally,

the Rangers were able to prevent a lawless gathering of hundreds of people that have been holding unpermitted concerts in past years from gathering at Usal. Last year, this group damaged Usal Creek and riparian land last year, contaminating it with raw sewage, fuel oil and spent bullets.

HRIA received a \$3,000 CSPF Earth Day grant to conduct a beach and campground clean up event April 16, 2016. Thirty-three people gathered at Usal Beach and Campground on Saturday, April 16th to do clean up and restoration of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. These intrepid volunteers conducted trail maintenance on over a mile of trail. They also removed the invasive English ivy from more than 170 alders and redwoods, cleaned outhouses, and dug out fire rings and collected more than 20 bags of trash. Participants included leaders from Mendocino Area Parks Association, AmeriCorps, Team Standish, Mendocino Land Trust, Coast Walk, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA) as well as local residents. Coast Walk conducted a trail work week in June and cleared additional trail and ivy. During that event, Children playing and birds singing, with waves breaking on the beach, were the only sounds heard in the camp ground... A big change from the fireworks and gunfire the night before the Earth Day event. The \$2,000 of tools acquired from a CSPF Earth Day grant were used throughout the spring and summer during 5 multi-day and 18 single day work events resulting in 215 person-days of work maintaining campsites and trails. A two-acre marijuana garden was removed and rehabilitated. Litter and trash removed from Usal in 2016 was reduced to 50 % of the 2015 levels. Vandalism was reduced 80 %, and new signage was undisturbed. HRIA has teamed up with two experienced interpretive educators, Bruce Hilbach and Shannon Mason, to submit Whale Tail and Explore the Coast grant proposals to conduct an expanded program of citizen education and restoration events in 2017 at Usal and the surrounding schools.

Rodeos and Redwoods

By Susan O'Hara

Rodeos and redwoods seem an odd mix at first glance, yet Humboldt County known for its towering redwoods also has a rich history of rodeos. Local ranchers supplied the redwood logging camps and mill towns with beef raised on the ranches primarily located on the hills with open meadows found to the east of the main redwood forestland.

But, rodeo? A sport that started in the 'Wild West' and brings to mind the ranches of Wyoming, Arizona or Texas, does not seem to blend with the realities of logging the redwoods or ranching nearby. Yet, riding demonstrations were held locally, including one by future cowboy hall of famer, Jesse Stahl, in 1912 in Fortuna. Rodeo performances were also held at the county fair beginning in the late teens. These were along the lines of the Wild West shows put on by Wild Bill Cody and other promoters.



A Cattleman's Association was formed in the mid 1910s to help improve the herds in Humboldt. This group sponsored a rodeo in 1922 in Fortuna to help celebrate their annual picnic. This event grew quickly in popularity, and recently celebrated it's 95th anniversary. Rodeos have been a part of the summer scene in Humboldt ever since.

In 1955 the community of Bull Creek, now a part of Humboldt Redwoods State Park, decided to have its own rodeo. According to an article in the Humboldt Standard on July 7, 1962, the Bull Creek rodeo started to "provide interest for the young people of Bull Creek." The rodeo association members in 1962 were Ed Lewis, president, Earl Johnson, vice-president, Ed Bean, secretary, and Bruce Lewis, Wayne Johnson and Neal Ruggles.

These men represent many of the early families who homesteaded ranches in the Bull Creek region. The event was held near present day Cuneo Creek Horse Camp. Although lasting for only 7 years, the rodeo was very popular, drawing large crowds to the one day event.

One of the secrets to the success of the local rodeos was the mixture of local riders and professional cowboys who took part in the events to gain points for the state and national championships. The other reason for its popularity was the chance for friends and relatives to gather and share stories.

One of the most popular events was the Saturday night dance held at the rodeo grounds. The cement floor of the dance pavilion can still be seen on the road to the Cuneo Creek Horse Camp. The Redwood Melody Boys provided the music in 1962 for the "Open Air Dance." Dancers could also warm themselves at a fireplace. Dances earlier in the summer had been held, with the "Bob Curless Trio" providing the music. At the dance the rodeo queen was also crowned. In 1959 the contestants for the crown were Darlene Dunlap, Karen Culbertson and Rose Peeler of Bull Creek and Roberta Curless of Holmes.

The rodeo day began with a "chuck wagon breakfast." Nell Lewis, who had lived in the Bull Creek region for most of her life, was in charge of the breakfast, that included ham, eggs, and pancakes. She was aided by Janet Lewis. The breakfast was just the beginning of the days events. A barbecue was also prepared for the attendees. Frank Adams of Mattole was in charge of the barbecue in 1962.

The Rodeo events were planned for the afternoon, and featured events such as saddle bronc riding, bareback riding and bull riding. The rodeo association contracted with Bill Hicks in 1961 to provide the rodeo stock, which encouraged participation by many cowboys. Roping events included calf roping and team roping. Bulldogging, invented by African American Cowboy Bill Pickett was also part of the afternoons events. In bulldogging, a cowboy jumps off his horse sliding down the neck of the steer grasping onto the horns and nose of the animal twisting its neck to make it flop on its side, with all four legs of the steer pointing in the same direction. The 1961 rodeo featured a breed of cows developed in Mexico, which were smaller and quick of foot. The 1959 rodeo included a sheep dog demonstration by Gus Landergen from the Mattole Valley. Landergen's dogs were prize winning animals often shown at local events.

Though very popular, the last rodeo was held in 1962, as the land that it was held on was being acquired by the state for the protection of the redwoods along the lower Bull Creek Drainage. The increased logging following WWII and the floods of 1955 and later in 1964 caused significant erosion of the banks of Bull Creek, threatening the stands of redwoods in Rockefeller Forest. The solution was the protection of the entire drainage system of Bull Creek.

However, the raucous sounds of rodeo once echoed along Cuneo Creek and Bull Creek, and redwoods and rodeos meshed in the mix of western entertainment and celebration of a community once based on the logging and ranching economy.



Pictures from the Margaret Brinzing Pritchard collection, taken at the 1961 Bull Creek Rodeo. Above, former HRIA President Harry Pritchard and his daughter Karen enjoy the 1961 Bull Creek rodeo.

In Memory of... Mac Forsell

By Dave Stockton

A tribute is due to a former board member that is deserving of our humble attempt to explain what he meant to the people around him. Warner "Mac" Forsell served on the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association board of directors, with his wife Marilyn for several years in a formative time. It was a period that recognized several board members whom were highly qualified to make significant contributions to the park.

Mac had two formative events in his life that made him especially qualified for his serving on the board. First, Mac was a long time employee of the National Park Service that gave him a deep respect for our forests and natural resources. Secondly, he married Marilyn Wright, which connected him to the culture of southern Humboldt, especially Petrolia and Salmon Creek. Both of these experiences gave Mac a wide and deep perspective and with a gift of speech and writing, he could express meanings and parallels that brought understanding and respect to the mission of the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association.

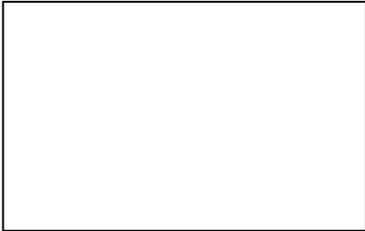
An excellent planner, Mac was always available to take goals and put them into a well formed blueprint for action. His easy going nature and sense of joy made these projects fun and conveyed the sense that all were there to share in his insights. Several are still in the archives and are as pertinent today as they were written. A highlight of his association with the park was the Canoe Fire of 2003. It was a favorite time of mine as we spent many hours roaming the back country examining the effects of the fire, as well as coming to the understanding we were dealing with many ecologies all with their own relationships in recovering from a natural event.

His gifts, among many, were to realize the forest first, politics a far distant second.



Return Service Requested

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Interpretive Association**
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Fall 2016

**GIVE A GIFT MEMBERSHIP TO THE
HUMBOLDT REDWOODS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION**

You can help support the work of the HRIA by becoming a member. Funds raised through memberships, endowments and donations, enable HRIA to develop displays, purchase equipment, sponsor research, and publish interpretive literature and also to fund the expansion of the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center and its quality exhibits. A critical element in the success of the Association is its membership and endowment program. Individuals and families throughout the country have long supported the Association. Member benefits include a 20% discount on all books, maps, posters, calendars and publications stocked for sale by the Association (Not available to Senior/Student members), the Association newsletter and tax deductible membership dues. Members also have the benefit of knowing that they are participating in an organization dedicated to expanding the awareness of one of the most unique ancient forests left on Earth.

Please enroll me in the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association at the membership level circled below:

Student/Senior	\$10	Patron	\$500
Individual	\$25	Endowment	\$1,000
Supporting	\$50	Redwood Crown	\$2,500
Sponsoring	\$100	Donation	\$_____
Life	\$250		

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