



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2018

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

President's Report: Alan Aitken

As summer comes to an end the staff and volunteers take a collective sigh after a very busy season. The park continues to draw people from around the country and across the globe in numbers that continue to increase every year. Our staff and dedicated volunteers continue to meet the needs of our visitors in a most remarkable fashion.

As HRIA President, I am sad to announce the closing of a truly substantial and remarkable volunteer career in service to HRIA. Due to health issues, Susan O'Hara has resigned from the HRIA board. Few have had a life so closely associated with Humboldt Redwoods State Park and the Interpretive Association.

Upon graduation from high school Susan began working as a seasonal park aide at Humboldt Redwoods State Park which entailed Junior Ranger programs, nature hikes, building trails, and lead to her position as an Interpretive Specialist. In college, Susan researched and wrote "The History of Humboldt Redwoods State Park" and her master's thesis, "History of the Humboldt Bay Letters" was published by the Army Corps of Engineers.



Susan became an HRIA board member in 1990. She worked alongside board members Harry Pritchard, her father, and Mike O'Hara, her husband, towards the expansion of the Visitor Center and the acquisition of the Charles Kellogg Travel Log. Susan has written and published several books on Humboldt history, which are sold in the Visitor Center, and has donated proceeds to HRIA. Her accomplishments in service to HRIA are too numerous to completely list here.

Thank you, Susan. Replacing you will be a very difficult task.

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.

"Envy me! I am spending a priceless summer among ancient redwood trees. I was fortunate enough to have been chosen to work as a California State Park volunteer, stationed in Humboldt Redwoods and Richardson Grove State Parks. The redwood groves are inspirational and I never tire of exploring the forests and sharing my experience with our many visitors. It has been wonderful to work as a team with dedicated Interpretive Association staff and volunteers in the visitor centers, supported by caring and knowledgeable Rangers and Park Aides. All have been willing to lend a hand and take time out to answer my questions about this wonderful part of our planet. A highly recommended adventure."

HRIA Volunteer Mary M.



Richardson Grove State Park, photo by Yvonne Stoose,
HRIA Volunteer

Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, Manager

Happy day to all! Things here at the Visitor Center have been hopping like a frog in spring. This has been a great summer! We've had lots of visitors from around the world, as well as many local folks visiting the redwoods.



A great big thanks to our faithful volunteers, who come every summer to help out; Kathy & Gary Hawley, Susan & Robert Tierney, Virgel & Sharon George, Shirley & Dick Sacco, Harry Sharp, Yvonne Stoose, Lisa & Tommy Sassone, Annemarie Minke, and Wayne & Diane Ramsell. Of course our local volunteers, whom are here year around, also get to enjoy our busy summer season; Cheryl Stone, David Pritchard, Bruce Riley, Mary Moore, and Alan Aitken. Without them we could not provide the quality of service to our visitors that we strive for.

Pictured above is volunteer Sharon George as the Cat in the Hat reading *The Lorax* to visitors. Please stop by and check out some of our new books and hand puppets. We also are carrying lots of sweatshirts for the upcoming winter season. We have something for everyone.

Mounted Assistance Unit

By Cindy Giacomini, MAU Member

This camping season was a good one! I hope that everyone had an amazing summer and was able to hit the dusty trails!

If you have had the opportunity to visit Cuneo Creek Campground you will notice that there are three new pipe corrals in group site B. MAU members along with staff from the park worked several different weekends to add these for the convenience of the many park visitors.

Not only do the MAU members help brush the trails, keep the backcountry troughs running, and report any issues throughout the season... they also get together twice a year. Once in the spring just as the campground is opening and in the fall when the camping season is coming to a close. At each of these





camp-outs, chores are assigned and the group gets to work! This spring, along with putting in the corrals, MAU members uncovered and weeded roll pit, cleaned all the camp troughs and did some additional brush clean up in the campground.

We would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate long time MAU members Joyce and Dennis Sousa and their horse LV Integrity+/ "Ritz". Ritz is a MAU horse and also a very accomplished endurance horse. He has been chosen to be made into a Breyer horse (see left)! You can read about him and his many amazing accomplishments on the Breyer horse website. Way to go Joyce, Dennis, and Ritz!

Enjoy what's left of camping season! Explore some trails and enjoy the great outdoors.

Alone in Sinkyone

By Jordan Lager, Senior Park Aide

One of the greatest benefits of working a seasonal position in the Eel River Sector is having access to the solitude and serenity of nearby Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. As a Senior Park Aide at Richardson Grove State Park, I interact with hundreds of people on a daily basis. After busy work weeks, wilderness camping is the thing that I can rely on to help refresh my energy and maintain my connection with wild nature. The narrow, crumbling road leading to Needle Rock can be overwhelming to the average weekend camper. However, that same dirt road attracts those who seek peace and quiet away from the crowded campgrounds of Humboldt County. When I visited Sinkyone in July I found the solitude that I sought far from the nearest human. What surprised me was the discovery that I was not alone.



As I began the seven-mile hike out to Wheeler Camp, my excitement calmed and I was filled with the awareness of being a small part in an expansive landscape. The first leg of the hike from Needle Rock to Bear Harbor Camp follows the old road and warmed my legs up for the next portion. Purple foxglove flowers leaned over the trail, and I stopped several times to

sample ripe blackberries. After Bear Harbor the trail narrowed and my focus shifted to hiking as I ducked under fallen trees and tiptoed around bunches of poison oak. I made the final descent into Wheeler Camp, and remarked to myself that I hadn't seen many animals during the hike. I set up camp in the middle of an opening near Wheeler Beach and settled in for the night. Then the locals started coming out. The first visitor was an unidentified owl who silently swooped over my head as I ate my dinner. Once darkness set in I noticed a pair of unmoving, reflective eyes at the bottom of the hillside. I decided it was time to get in my tent.

The next morning I walked up Wheeler road to see the damage that had been caused by a group of wild pigs who found their way into the park. As these invasive pigs dug for roots they tore up native plants, which caused erosion along Jackass Creek. Park Rangers brain-



stormed for a way to get rid of these newcomers and set up a game camera in order to identify how many pigs they were dealing with. The camera captured photos of a large group of pigs and piglets actively digging for roots. Luckily, after a couple of weeks the pigs disappeared from the area. Careful examination of the game cam footage revealed the natural solution. A 140+ pound mountain lion was captured on

camera in the same location as the pigs. This lion was very possibly the owner of the unmoving eyes that watched me as I camped near the beach.

During my hike back to Needle Rock I observed even more locals, who were as surprised to see me as I was to see them. When I startled a young bull Roosevelt Elk who took off down the trail, he impressed me with his size and agility. On reaching Bear Harbor, I took a break at the beach and observed a large River Otter



playing and hunting in the shore break. Just like all of the other animals, it gave me a puzzled look as if to say "What are you doing here?" Finally, as I approached Needle Rock, a small herd of elk cows and their spring-born calves blocked my path. I patiently waited for these giant mammals to move aside and I sauntered back to the parking lot. It is tremendously important to continue protecting wild places like Sinkyone, not only for the humans who seek a closer connection with nature, but also for the spectacular wildlife which calls those places home.

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park Outhouses Get New Look

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Secretary & Usal Beach Project Manager

The outhouses near the Needle Rock Visitor Center got a new look this year. The outhouses at Jones Beach, Streamside, Barn and Visitor Center camps were in bad condition prior to this project. These outhouses are exposed to high winds and driving heavy rain during the winter months and sun and fog in the summer. The walls, roof, and interior were reinforced with new paneling, commode, flooring and a more weather proof roof. HRIA was able to obtain the funding for the project with a \$5,000 grant for materials from the California State Park Foundation. Pictured below, Needle Rock outhouse before and after.



Smokey Bear's 70th Birthday Bash

By Allan Wiegman, Forestry Aide



Wow, the fun of doing my favorite campfire program, Smokey Bear's Birthday. On Saturday, August 11, Smokey and his firefighting friends came together at Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park to celebrate Smokey's birthday with about 80 eager participants. 70 years is certainly something to celebrate!

The campfire started by the spirits of the north, south, east and west coming together “to light our fire tonight”. After some fun good old campfire songs, past Junior Rangers were recognized and renewed their Junior Ranger Pledge. The burning scarf confirmed that they truly were trying their best to follow the pledge.

As everyone sang the song, “Smokey the Bear”, Smokey was escorted in with lights and sirens by his firefighter friends. Carlotta, Bridgeville and Miranda Volunteer Fire Departments along with CalFire all helped in the celebration. The firefighters demonstrated their equipment and, of course, Smokey reminded us about fire prevention and that, “Only YOU Can Prevent Wildfires”.

The celebration wrapped up with pictures with Smokey, cupcakes (thanks to Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association), spraying the fire hose and checking out the fire engines.



Check out our new Discover Nature app for your next trip to Humboldt Redwoods State Park!

TO DOWNLOAD: Go to your app store to search and download "Discover Nature" app using your smart-phone or wireless device, or use the QR codes below. You can download ahead of time or can use the visitor center's free wifi (ParksWIFI) once you're here. Open the app, and allow it to access your location (so you can see where you are in the park) and to receive notifications (virtual signage around park). Select destination "Discover Humboldt Redwoods" and tap to download our location. Once downloaded, you can use the app without cell service or an internet connection. Have fun with the scavenger hunt on the Gould Nature Loop and Founders Grove, find trail information and trailhead locations, post your sightings to share with others... Explore, discover, and enjoy!

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Return Service Requested

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Summer 2018

**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
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