Our new President, Alan Aiken has been a board member for the past six years. Alan explains how he came to be a part of HRIA, “in 1990, after two years on the island of Guam, the Navy transferred me to Oakland, California. Our first trip upon returning to the States was to Oregon to visit my wife’s daughters. We decided to take Highway 101 back to the bay area. Although living most of our lives in California, neither of us had seen a redwood. Upon leaving the freeway at the northern end of the Avenue of the Giants, little did we know that our futures would lie within the confines of Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Four years later, after numerous trips to the park, we were fortunate to find an opportunity to move to Redcrest, which we referred to as our Brigadoon. Christine, being ever curious, went to the park visitor center where she met Fran Clever. Fran immediately enlisted her as a volunteer. Christine worked in the visitor center and was a summer docent at both Founders Grove and Big Trees. She became a board member and served as board secretary for several years.

Upon Christine’s passing I continued her service by being a volunteer in the visitor center. The HRIA board asked me to be a member and for the past five years I have served as vice president. At the recent board meeting I was nominated and then elected as president of the association. For me this is an honor I can’t put into words.

In the visitor center garden is a memorial to the past volunteers and board members. I look forward to continuing their mission, honoring their legacy and serving the ever curious visitors that come to see the world’s tallest trees.”

Alan can regularly be found around the Visitor Center, and is working on creating a lending library, using the books and resources that he and Christine donated to the center. He has many ideas and we look forward to working with him as he implements his ideas for the future of HRIA.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers
Alan Aitken – President,
Susan O’Hara – Vice President Newsletter Editor
Carla Thomas – Secretary
Maralyn Renner – Treasurer
Mike O’Hara – Membership
Cathy Mathena – MAU

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Dana Johnston
Dave Stockton
Cheryl Stone
Ed Stone
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Co-op. Assoc. Liaison
Thomas Valterria
Supervising Ranger

Visitor Center Manager
Debbie Gardner

HRIA Executive Director

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.

2015 Photo Contest

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association is sponsoring a Photo Contest. Submissions of images of photographer’s favorite scenes of Humboldt Redwoods, Grizzly Creek Redwoods, Richardson Grove and Sinkyone Wilderness State Parks must be received by September 30. Each park’s winning entry will receive a $50 gift Certificate to be used in any of the Visitors Centers operated by HRIA. A Grand Prize winner will receive 2 nights free camping at the park of their choice. Photos may be submitted digitally to the Visitors Center at Burlington at vc@humboldtredwoods.org or digital submissions via flash drives or cds may be mailed to HRIA, P.O. Box 276, Weott, CA 95571. Submitted photographs become the property of HRIA.

The 2014 winner was this image of Burlington in the fog.
New Executive Director Hired
The HRIA board accepted David Pritchard’s resignation at their May meeting, and moved to hire his replacement quickly, as the summer season is rapidly approaching. They selected Sophia Eckert to take the position. Sophia has worked for Humboldt Redwoods State Park for the past two years as an Interpreter, and brings expertise in Interpretation to the position. She has many ideas for creating rotating exhibits and working to extend the visibility of the association. Eckert has a Masters degree from the University of Denver in Environmental Policy and Management. The board looks forward to working with both her and Debbie Gardner as we move forward with managing the Visitor Centers for Grizzly Creek, Humboldt Redwoods, Richardsons Grove and the Sinkyone Wilderness. Please stop by and become acquainted with our new Executive Director.

Richardsons Grove Visitor Center nears completion:
A new roof now graces the Visitor Center at Richardon’s Grove, and soon new exhibits will be installed. State Interpreter Susan Donniger is working with a firm from Seattle in designing the interior of the Center. This summer, a portion of the building will be open for visitors to find information about the regions’ parks. The center will open in mid June and be open throughout the summer months. Make plans to stop and see this newly remodeled center and check out the displays.

New Signs on Avenue of the Giants
Emily Moloney Park Aide Interpreter HRSP

The Humboldt Redwood Interpretive Association (HRIA) partnered with North Coast Redwood District State Park interpreter I Anica Williams to develop and install new visitor orientation maps along Hwy 101 and the Avenue of the Giants. Two signs were installed at the southern end of the park and one located at the northern end of the park along the Avenue of the Giants. A fourth sign will be installed at the north end of the park at the vista point along Hwy 101. The new orientation maps replace signs that had been displayed for over 20 years. We hope that you find the new park maps helpful as you look for your next hiking destination or picnic stop in the park.

New At the Center:
Debbie Gardner, Manager

We are gearing up for the summer at all of our Visitors Centers. Tee shirts, always a popular item, have been ordered for all or our parks. We have some new colors and designs to choose from, including a new embroidered sweatshirt. Pink is a popular color, and we have tee shirts, sweatshirts, and hats in bright pink. I am always on the lookout for new books, and a recent released book is A Scottish Syndicate in the Redwoods by Marvin Dale Shepherd. Shepherd also wrote about Hans Henry Buhne, and in this book examines the land grab of the late 1880s that occurred in Humboldt County. We hope to see you soon at one of our centers!
Sinkyne Communities Team Up to Honor Community Members
By Carla Thomas, Volunteer SWSP, HRSA Board Member

Newcastle Boy Scout Troop 13 and Sinkyne Volunteer Camp Hosts were back at the Sinkyne Wilderness State Park in April replacing two more trail bridges. This time they were joined by members of the Whale Gulch Volunteer Fire Department, the Southern Humboldt Technical Rescue Team, and California State Parks Interpretive Staff. The locations of the bridges created special challenges with the need to move more than 2 tons of lumber and 1.5 cubic yards of gravel to the remote locations without machinery due to recent rains.

“It was really great to see all the groups come together to get the job done. We couldn’t have done it without them. Everyone pitched in their special talents and equipment that they brought to the project. We made new friends and had fun, too” said Joseph Hass (14 years old), who is managing this project to earn Eagle Scout status. The Southern Humboldt County Technical Rescue Team and the Whale Gulch Volunteer Fire Department used special ATV’s and a rescue sled turned to a cart to move the wood. Gravel was brought up from the beach using ropes and tripods.

Support for the bridges comes from Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund, and the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association Mike Rydjord Memorial Fund. The bridges will be dedicated in memory of Mike Rydjord, Volunteer Camp Host; Archie Umina, Chief of Whale Gulch Volunteer Fire Department; and Tim Olsen, Chief of Briceland Volunteer Fire Department at a ceremony later this year. The teams are planning to return May 27-30th to complete the 4th and final trail bridge between Needle Rock Visitor Center and Jones Beach.
MAU Report
By Cathy Mathena

The Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU), a group of 30 horse back volunteers in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, had their annual Spring Campout/Work Weekend May 1-3. There were many chores accomplished to get Cuneo Creek Campground & surrounding trails ready for the season.

The largest task was the removal of a damaged corral & the installation of a new one. It took several volunteers to dig out concrete posts, square up & set new posts and slide the panels in place. Many hands make light work as shown in this picture. MAU members are picking up tree limbs that blew down over winter.

One of the MAU founding members, Pat Farmer, is all gussied up in her safety gear, ready to tackle grass & weeds.

It took 8 hours of work to clean water troughs, remove limbs, weed around the picnic tables & fire rings, install the corral and trim brush in camp. In addition 2 members used a large hand saw to clear a big tree that had fallen on Johnson Camp Trail. They also cleaned & repaired several spring boxes that supply water to the troughs that are out on the trails. Two other members saddled up & rode Thornton Multi-Use Trail to inspect possible sites for a much needed water trough.

The Spring Campout is also the time when prospective members & their horses are tested to begin their five month process of becoming an MAU member. Two people & their horses passed their safety pre-test and will be riding in the park with senior MAU members until the Fall Campout in October. At that time they go through further testing to become a member.

The Mounted Assistance Unit was created to be the eyes & ears for the rangers out on the trails. Humboldt Redwoods in the third largest park in the state with many miles of hiking, biking & equestrian trails. The unit assists visitors with trail directions & helps to keep those trails open & cleared.
Signs for Bridges
By David Pritchard

Over a year ago, while walking the South Bull Creek Flat Trail with our volunteers, I asked Jim Fithian, “what is the name of this creek?” We were walking over a wooden bridge, and since he has hiked almost every trail in the park, there are over 100 miles of trials at Humboldt Redwoods, and this trail is his favorite. Jim named off several creeks along the trail, but without a map he wasn’t really sure. So one of our newest board members, Ed Stone went to work making signs. From the original idea it took a while. However, recently Jim Fithian and Cheryl Stone, Board member and volunteer, set out to install the signs on all the bridges along the South Trail of the Rockefeller Forest Lower Bull Creek. Good job, Thanks to everyone who made it possible!

Grizzly’s Gearing Up for Summer
By Ranger Emily Peterson

It’s hard to believe it, but the summer of 2015 will already be my third summer at Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park. It’s been a great (almost) three years, full of progress, learning and wonderful staff helping me along the way.

This spring I struck gold and have hosts that all of us rangers dream of. Jim and Carol Cotcher arrived April 1st and will be here through the end of June. Jim is never to be found relaxing; he’s always fixing, building or improving something somewhere, and his projects are not limited to the visitor center. Carol is always dutifully at the kiosk or selling items in the visitor center. She’s learned the ropes very quickly and keeps the operation running smoothly. I appreciate them both so much and only wish they could stay longer. I’m already looking forward to next summer when they’ll be hosting for me again. I’ll cross my fingers that it will be for the whole summer this time!

Along with wonderful hosts, I also have a great staff of park aides this summer; Ashley Disney (returning), William Evan, Dwight Hall and Gustavo Plascencia in visitor services and Jim Davis (returning) and Kyle Hawkins in maintenance. I was given permission this summer to hire a fourth visitor services park aide and with that ‘extra’ employee I hope to accomplish interpretive projects that are badly needed throughout the park. The only downside is that all of my visitor services park aides are H.S.U. students and won’t start until just before Memorial Day Weekend. But we will persevere!

In addition to a few new faces on staff this summer, the Grizzly Creek visitor center/kiosk/office has its own new face. Johnny’s Flooring out of Fortuna spent four days installing new flooring, both
upstairs and downstairs. As far as I can tell, the old flooring had been there since 1986 and the layer under that since 1947. It was definitely time for a change! The ‘1970’s style’ yellow swirl linoleum has been replaced with a beautifully textured sage green tile flooring that changes the whole feel of the place. I encourage everyone to stop by and have a look. They did a wonderful job! And a special thanks to Maintenance Supervisor Mike Pogue and his staff and to H.R.I.A. for making it all possible.

There have been a great many changes out here at Grizzly Creek, but much still stays the same. What I love most about this park is the old fashioned feel and character. From the many comments received from visitors, that’s their favorite part too. We all work hard to maintain Grizzly’s charm, and even though we’re off the beaten path, please make time to visit this summer. I think you will be pleasantly surprised!

Have a great summer,

Ranger Emily Peterson

Preserving the Redwoods

Susan O’Hara

New Board President Alan Aiken is always searching for redwood related books and memorabilia on ebay, and recently struck gold when he was able to purchase an original copy of Harper’s Weekly from October 30, 1886 that features a double spread of images of redwood logging in Sonoma County as well as an article on the redwoods. The article ends with the observation “in ten years, if this destruction is not checked, big trees will exist in California only as curiosities.” Though perhaps a lone voice at the time, this article was certainly prophetic of the need to preserve the redwoods.

When this article was written, there were 13 lumber mills in Humboldt County, and 26 shingle mills. These mills were consuming redwood trees at a very rapid rate. In 1897 the redwood lumber exported from Humboldt Bay averaged 150,000,000 board feet annually, according to the Redwood Lumber Manufacturers. Ten years later, 1500 ships arrived and departed Humboldt Bay, loaded with redwood.

All of us who enjoy the parks today are grateful to the founders of the Save the Redwoods League who made the decision to actively work for the preservation of the redwood forests, especially those along the Eel River and its tributaries. In 1917 John C. Merriam, Madison Grant and Henry Fairfield Osborn traveled to Humboldt County and observed the massive cutting of the redwoods. One of the images that shocked them were the number of shingle mills. Many of the trees were being cut for shingles, not only for roofs, but also for siding houses, a style made popular by the craftsman bungalows of the era. Their efforts soon resulted in the purchase and dedication of Bolling Grove, south of Myers Flat, the first grove in what became Humboldt Redwoods State Park in 1921.
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:

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