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NEWSLETTER

Spring 2017

## Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

### Vice President's Report: Alan Aitken

Welcome to summer. The Visitor Center is open and visitors have arrived. Sunday, June 19th was a record day for people from across the country and around the world coming through our door at Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Our most dedicated volunteer, June Patton, with more than 19,000 hours serving HRIA for over 30 years, has entered retirement at the age of 96. She has transitioned to an assisted care facility where by all accounts she is having a great time. Everyone at HRIA will miss her. Thank you, June, seems so inadequate.

At the May board meeting HRIA decided to enter into an agreement with the Discover Nature Co. to create an application that our visitors can download to receive trail maps, information on the park, an interactive children's challenge, and once downloaded will be able to tell you your location within the park using our phones GPS function.

Life member of HRIA, Jarl DeBoer, will be donating his postcard collection of the Redwood Highway to the HRIA library. Jarl has been collecting postcards for over 45 years and there are over 1,600 postcards in this collection. There will be a reception and presentation of the collection on Saturday, July 15th at 2pm at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center.

Hoping your summer is relaxing. The Visitor Centers will be very busy. Time to relax will come in the fall.

*Alan Aitken*



Photo by Allan Weigman

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Officers**

Alan Aitken – Vice President

Carla Thomas – Secretary

Maralyn Renner – Treasurer

Cathy Mathena –MAU

### **Board Members**

Dana Johnston

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David Pritchard

### **Co-op. Assoc. Liaison**

Greg Hall Supervising Ranger

### **Visitor Center Manager**

Debbie Gardner

### **HRIA Executive Director**

Sophia Eckert

### **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.

## **ONGOING EVENTS!**



### **Join Usal Beach Friends**

**for trail work events**

**mid August, September, and early  
October**

**Please visit**

**[www.humboldtredwoods.org](http://www.humboldtredwoods.org)**

**for details to come**

**If you are visiting Usal Beach at  
Sinkyone Wilderness State Park  
and/or are interested in attending a  
beach clean up or interpretive walk,  
please contact  
[usalbeachfriends@gmail.com](mailto:usalbeachfriends@gmail.com)**

## **Managers Report**

By Debbie Gardner, HRIA Manager

Happy day to all, the rain has stopped and now the sun is shining and the visitors are here. The Visitor Center has been getting busier and busier, but thanks to our wonderful volunteers, everything is running smoothly. We also appreciate all the hard work from our winter volunteers. The days were slower but we couldn't do it without relying on your presence and patience.

As always, we are getting new merchandise in, so stop by and check it out. Also, a friendly reminder that memberships are due. We are so grateful for all of the support we receive from HRIA members like yourselves.

Have a great summer, and we hope to see you soon!

## **Richardson Grove Visitors Center**

By Shanti Pockell, Park Interpreter

Walking into the recently reopened and remodeled Richardson Grove State Park Visitor Center, one is instantly taken back to what this park might have been like when it was first built. The beautiful wooden floors and walls, shingled roof, and wonderful informative posters, photographs, and interpretive displays remind us of the architecture, history, and style of when the building was originally constructed in 1931 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. Back then, the Center was a focal destination point for any traveler on their way to explore the redwoods. The Visitors Center had all one needed, from camping supplies, to a gift shop, to a restaurant serving hamburgers and ice cream!

While the entirety of the Center is not yet finished, and film theatre are being put in place. For now, there is a multitude of entertainment for visitors including animal pelt touch tables, historical picture books, informative displays, and plenty of merchandise. Furthermore, the Visitors Center is now the hotspot to find out and participate in the Richardson Grove State Park's interpretive programs which include nature walks, Junior Ranger Programs, and campfires.

The remodeled Visitor's Center is a spectacular addition to the already beautiful park. We are all looking forward to an excellent summer here at Richardson Grove State Park, and hope to have many visitors to enjoy it with!



Photo by Allan Weigman

## Mounted Assistance Unit: Meet a Member

By Cindy Giacomini, MAU Member

Spring has sprung and now summer is here! The park is alive with new blooms and is ready for visitors. The Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU), has two camp-out work weekends per year. The spring camp-out is held right after the park opens for the season. This work weekend was focused on getting Cuneo Creek Campground and trails ready for horse enthusiasts to enjoy! It was also the time that prospective members start the process of becoming a MAU volunteer. The process requires, testing in the Spring and Fall & riding 12 hours in the park with an MAU sponsor to learn the trails, policies & procedures. Introducing the rider & their equine to the park, insure that they will be safe and effective representatives of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. The prospective volunteer is also required to do a final test at the fall camp-out to complete their apprenticeship.



Mounted Assistance Unit members assembling to begin work day.



Mounted Assistance Unit member Cathy Mathena clearing fallen branches.

The projects that the MAU completed during the spring work party weekend were:

- Getting the rolling pit raked out and all the weeds pulled
- Working on a crossing at the bottom of Baxter trail
- Cleaning water troughs
- Painting the beam that was replaced in the bathroom last year
- Replacing a toilet in the bathroom
- Weed whacking around the fire pits
- Cleaning and organizing the tool shed
- Two prospective members were tested and will be starting their apprenticeship
- One new member finished up his apprenticeship and passed his final test

We hope that everyone has an opportunity to enjoy the park this season. See you on the trail!

## 2017 Earth Day at Usal Beach

By Bruce Hilbach-Barger, HRIA Usal Project Coordinator



Weather and road closures couldn't keep Usal Beach enthusiasts away this Saturday, April 22 for Earth Day restoration and clean up! Despite road closures on Highway 101 and Highway 1 at Leggett, intrepid volunteers navigated the many obstacles to make it to Usal Beach Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. Usal

Beach is the southern trailhead of the 63 mile Lost Coast Trail. Energetic volunteers were happy to find Saturday morning that the road to Usal was still passable after prior rains. Fourteen volunteers, whom either traveled out for the event or were recruited on site, removed seven cubic yards of invasive English Ivy from trees. In addition, they collected and removed bags of trash and recycling, and cleaned campsites and fire rings to get ready for a summer full of events and campers.

The event was made possible by an Earth Day grant from California State Parks Foundation obtained by the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA) for the second year in a row. Regional sponsors included PG&E, The Nature Conservancy, Oracle, Microsoft, and Intel. Lunch was generously provided by Pacific Seafood in Eureka, Safeway of Fortuna, Shop Smart of Redway, and Rays Food Place of Garberville. California State Park Foundation funded many successful Earth Day restoration and clean up days across the state, making this the 19th annual event.

With the help of many individuals as well as organizations such as Save the Redwoods League and California State Parks, HRIA has obtained \$62,662.04 in grants to use towards Usal Beach at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park this year. This Earth Day event was an exciting launch for the field trips, volunteer clean up days, interpretive programs, and community fun to be had this summer at Usal. Please stay tuned for upcoming events and become part of Usal's volunteer task force as we work with locals, communities, schools, and organizations to revitalize the beautiful Usal Beach. Follow HRIA on Facebook to find out about events, or call 707-946-2263. Thanks to all of those who made the event possible, especially the volunteers.



## No Small Potatoes

By Madeline Holmes & Carl Chavez, Park Superintendent 1979-1987

When I first arrived at Humboldt Redwoods State Park in May, 1979 I learned of a 40 acre clearing in-holding right smack in the middle of Pepperwood surrounded by magnificent redwoods. I was told that the property was owned by a cantankerous old lady named Madeline Holmes and she would have nothing to do with State Parks.

Apparently many years previous a deal to purchase her property was nixed when the road to her land was blocked by State Park and Save the Redwoods (SRL) folks who were to meet with her to seal the deal. Vehicles had inadvertently blocked her access road and prevented a veterinarian from getting in to treat a sick cow that eventually died. After that she would have nothing to do with park personnel or SRL.

When I decided to see if I could meet with her park staff tried to dissuade me saying it would be a futile endeavor. Nevertheless I drove up the road to her home. As I approached I her home I heard some banging and muttering coming from a tiny little women trying to hang a heavy wooden corral gate to the support post. Ms. Holmes was probably between 70-80 years old and only weighed about 90 lbs. Without a word I grabbed a hold of one end of the gate so she could attach it to the post. She was a bit startled to see me in uniform and was at once wary as I introduced myself to her so to speak as the new kid on the block. Her first words to me were “I won’t sell it”.

My park residence was the former Chapman home across the creek from the Burlington Campground. It had a wonderful pear, apple, and cherry orchard on the property. I had dried some of the fruit and took it as a peace offering for Madeline. We talked for a while and she told me of the past SRL efforts to acquire her land after the 1964 flood. Over the next couple of years I continued to visit with her and bring dried fruit. She then began to exchange some of the wonderful potatoes she grew in her garden for the fruit I brought her. Soon I was invited into her home and she told me her life story that was so very interesting. Madeline was an independent woman who lived alone. On one visit I found her sitting at her kitchen table putting grease all over a severe burn on her hand. I stopped that and immediately drove her into the Fortuna hospital for treatment for which she thanked me.



You can imagine my surprise when she telephoned me one day at park headquarters and said she was getting to old to manage her property and “wanted to see the property to me” (meaning the park) but wanted nothing to do with SRL. Land acquisitions for State Park properties are handled out of Sacramento Headquarters and those dealing with funding, partial

or whole with other organization such as SRL can be complicated. Madeline would not deal with Headquarters or SRL, only with me. So it was I received a quick lesson from the Acquisition Section and brokered the deal with the stipulation that no mention of SRL would be in the transaction even though much of the funding would be provided by them.

Well everything went well up to a point after the sale. Madeline had insisted that she get two separate checks, one from a bank in Loleta and the other from the Bank of America in Fortuna. When she received the checks she called me asking me to take her to the banks. We went to Lotela first and deposited that check. Next we went to Fortuna. There was a long line at the teller's windows and Madeline didn't want to wait and just leave. I asked her to give me the check and I walked over to a customer service representative and said Madeline Holmes wanted to deposit a check. She point to the lines and I then held the check in front of her. She immediately called the bank president over and the check was immediately deposited – money talks!

Madeline was very happy with the sale that gave her a Life Estate to remain living on the property until she passed away. While I basked in the glory of accomplishing what State Park Director Mott and SRL Executive Secretary John DeWitt of SRL had been unable to do I received a call from an irate Madeline Holmes several months later. Her tax accountant when preparing her taxes asked her about the two checks that had been issued to her from SRL. Just the thought of mention of SRL set her off. To make a long story short I was able to get the two original checks handed over to me so that new checks could be re-issued showing the State of California on them instead of SRL. The new checks were mailed to me so that I could hand deliver them to Madeline and she was once again a satisfied customer. Just goes to show you what a little dried fruit, potatoes and perseverance can do in re-establishing a good neighbor policy.

(You can read the full story in my Pathways Through Parks book, pages 212-217)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS!**

### **Avenue of the Giants Marathon**



**October 15th**

<http://www.redwoodsmarathon.org/>

### **Smokey Bear's 73rd Birthday Bash**



Please join us at the  
Humboldt Redwoods  
State Park Visitor  
Center for cake and fun!

**Saturday, August 5**

**Time to be announced**

**Please call 707-845-6168 for questions**



Return Service Requested

**Humboldt Redwoods**  
**Interpretive Association**  
PO Box 276 Weott, CA 95571  
Email: [vc@humboldtreduwoods.org](mailto:vc@humboldtreduwoods.org)

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## 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		

Mail Check to:  
HRIA  
PO Box 276  
Weott, CA 95571

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_