



---

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2018

## Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

### President's Report: Alan Aitken

Welcome members. Winter in the redwoods is coming to a close, but not without a fight. This morning we are having our second light snow of the season. I am not complaining. The winter weather here is mild compared to Missouri where my brother lives. No heavy snow, sleet, or freezing rain and only a few days when the temperature has dropped below freezing.



The world is being alerted to how wonderful visiting the coastal redwoods can be. The travel website, Lonely Planet, has just named the California's Redwood Coast as the number one Best in the U.S. destinations you need to see in 2018. This is not news to those that live or have visited here. Hopefully, this distinction will bring more visitors and a greater awareness of this distinct and beautiful environment to the world.

For anyone planning to visit Humboldt Redwoods State Park this summer, please be aware that the campgrounds are going to be repaved. The repaving is scheduled for August. This may interfere with making reservations, as the campgrounds will be first come first serve during repaving. Please check the Reserve California website before coming. HRIA will also be updating our website with the latest information regarding these improvements.

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of Save the Redwoods League. Events are being held by SRL throughout the year and state. Check out the SRL website for dates and locations.

*Alan Aitken*

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Officers**

Alan Aitken – President  
Susan O’Hara – Vice President  
Carla Thomas – Secretary  
Maralyn Renner – Treasurer  
Cathy Mathena –MAU

**Board Members**

Dana Johnston  
Dave Stockton  
Richard Leamon

**Co-op. Assoc. Liaison**

Greg Hall Supervising Ranger

**Visitor Center Manager**

Debbie Gardner

**HRIA Executive Director**

Sophia Eckert

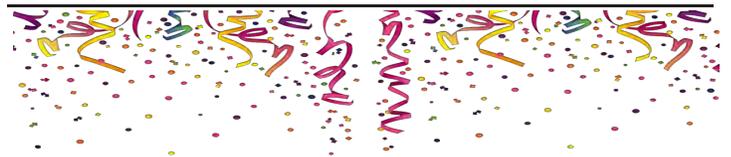
**Mission Statement**

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.

Coming soon to Humboldt  
Redwoods State Park...



**DISCOVER NATURE APP!**



**Save the Redwoods League** is celebrating their *centennial* anniversary, and they want you to join in on the fun!

Over 40 participating California State Parks are offering free admission on the second Saturday of each month in 2018. Sign up for your pass, and find out about the other ways you can celebrate at [www.savetheredwoods.org/100-years/](http://www.savetheredwoods.org/100-years/)

**#Stand4Redwoods**

## Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, Manager

Happy day to all! Things here at the Visitor Center are going great. The Christmas tree lighting and party was a great success this year. Humboldt Redwoods State Park Interpreter Caitlyn, pictured below, was super with her rendition of “Twas the Night Before Christmas.”



Sophia and myself sat down a few days before the party and had a great thought; let’s do a silent auction! In the few days we had, thanks to the wonderful local community members and businesses, we had so many great things to auction. A special thanks to, Miranda Gardens, The Avenue Cafe, Redcrest Resort, Rivers Edge, Richard Leamon and Korbly Wood Products, Ed Stone, Riverbend Cellars, and Ancient Redwoods Gift Shop. We raised over \$600.00. This year we hope to have more great local products. If you have anything you would like to contribute, please contact us.

As always we are getting new merchandise, so if you haven’t been in a while, please stop by and check us out. Also, remember to renew your membership. We can now take your dues on credit cards and online at [www.humboldtredwoods.org/become-member...](http://www.humboldtredwoods.org/become-member...) Until next time!

## Mounted Assistance Unit

By Cindy Giacomini, MAU Member

The Mounted Assistance Unit would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to Ranger Emily Becker for her dedication to our group, and to strengthening our relationship with Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Emily began with our group as a newly graduated Ranger over fifteen years ago, in 2001. She led us through the early years of developing our organization and created most of the infrastructure which we rely on now - policies and procedures for onboarding new members, a standardized entrance process, clear rules, regular spring and fall work days, and so much more. Emily had a challenging task, balancing her friendship with us and her leadership role! As “Ranger Em” she was extraordinary in wrangling a group of independent horsemen and women into a cohesive team.



Emily provided an enormous gift in bolstering our relationship with the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association, who have offered enormous support to our group. The Mounted Assistance Unit has had the pleasure of working with many of the HRSP Rangers, and Emily was a standout in many ways. She was quick to respond to questions, and commonly out of her truck, checking the trails, opening conversations with visitors, tackling any rules violations with tact and firmness. Under her guidance our group has logged nearly 10,000 volunteer hours! It's to her credit that she supported the transition to a strong leadership team in her absence. Emily has been a relentless advocate for the Mounted Assistance Unit and made a meaningful difference at our beloved Cuneo Creek campground and within Humboldt Redwoods State Park overall. We will miss her very much and honor her priorities in spending time with her young family.

Thank You Emily!

## **More to Come for Usal Beach and Campground**

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Secretary & State Park Volunteer

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association received \$72,000 in grant funding to conduct outreach, education and restoration activities at the Usal Beach and Campground at the southern trail head of the Lost Coast Trail in the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park last year. California Department of Parks and Recreation forms the Usal Committee to work together on these projects. The Usal Committee consists of members from Mendocino Area Parks Foundation (MAPA) Team Standish, Save the Redwoods League (SRL), California Department of Parks and Recreation North Coast Redwood District (NCR-DPR), Mendocino Land Trust (MLT), and HRIA.

The California State Park Foundation Park Enrichment Grant \$7,500 was the first to grant and served to leverage an additional \$32,500 in funds for implementation planning at Usal from the California Department of Parks and Recreation and Save the Redwoods League. Additionally, a combined \$37,000 was received from the California Coastal Commission Whale Tail License Plate Grant, for adult and family education and restoration activities, and from The California Coastal Conservancy Explore the Coast grant to conduct field trips for school children.



These were used to conduct Usal Beach Friends events at Usal several times a month throughout the spring, summer and fall in 2017. These events will continue through 2018 starting with Earth Day Events on April 20th and 21st. For more information you can contact [usalbeachfriends@gmail.com](mailto:usalbeachfriends@gmail.com) or call 1-707-358-0225.

# Trees for my River: Logging, Flooding, and Restoration on the Eel River

By Jordan Lager, Richardson Grove Senior Park Aide

The South Fork of the Eel River begins each winter season as a clear, slow-moving flow. Soon the rains come, and the river swells and rises to its banks. It reminds us of the potential for floods, which devastated the region several times during the 20th Century. The major factor that contributed to the unprecedented severity of these floods was the logging boom of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Early loggers had no consideration for sustainability or environmental practices, and clear-cut entire sections of the Eel River watershed. Without redwoods to hold up eroding hillsides, logging operations left behind mountains of unstable soil. During the winter seasons, runoff filled creek beds with debris until they became shallow and could no longer contain their normal flow. The growing population and increased infrastructure along the river set the stage for the dramatic floods. When the waters receded, it left behind massive amounts of sediment and debris, washed in from the regions that were logged. When reviewing the causes and aftermath of these floods it is evident that not only does the health of the redwoods rely on the Eel River watershed, but the health of the watershed relies on the redwoods.



Silt in the Richardson Grove State Park Day Use Area in the 1964 flood.

The 1964 flood is commonly referred to as the “Thousand Year Flood”. However, a fully mature redwood tree could experience multiple floods of that magnitude during its 2000+ year lifespan. Floods can be beneficial for existing trees, because they clear much of the undergrowth and deposit nutrient-rich alluvium silt through the groves. These deposits build up to create alluvial flats, small flood plains where the largest redwood groves are found. The silt prompts established trees to extend roots into the fresh soil and creates ideal conditions for redwood seedlings to take root. However, after the logging boom there was an exponential increase in sediment runoff, which created new problems for these impressive trees.

During the 1964 flood, Durphy Creek jumped its banks and spilled across Highway 101 into Richardson Grove. After the water receded, much of the area was buried in up to six feet of silt. Redwoods can tolerate a few days of oxygen-depriving flood water, but when buried under several feet of sediment the tree will begin to suffocate and could die within a year. Luckily most of the large groves were located on State Park land, where maintenance crews worked tirelessly to clear the silt and save the trees. Even more work had to be done to

restore creeks, which were clogged with tons of sediment and massive redwood logs. Before the logging era, redwood trees held up creek banks with their strong, shallow root systems, and prevented severe erosion. Less sediment buildup exposed the gravelly creek bottoms, and made ideal nurseries for anadromous fish, such as salmon. Without the redwoods, the flood-prone, silty creeks became unfit for fish reproduction, which affected many other species and the health of the Eel River itself.



Durphy Creek, in the 1986 flood and today.

More than a century after the peak of the logging industry we are still feeling the aftermath. New regulations on logging and water usage help prevent further harm to the Eel River, but much of the damage is already done. Major forest restoration and rehabilitation is an ongoing process, especially on old logging land acquired by the parks. The steps being taken to protect and reestablish redwood forests are crucial if we are to save these magnificent trees, as well as the watersheds that give them life.

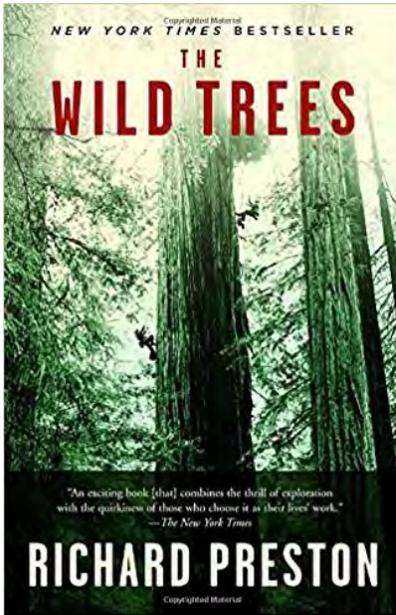
## **Review of Richard Preston's *The Wild Trees***

By Bruce Riley, HRSP Volunteer

Anyone who hikes in redwood groves knows the treetops are usually out of sight – simply too far up and blocked by other trees. And so the question remains – what IS in the canopy?

Along comes Preston's bestselling work, *The Wild Trees*, and slowly the veil shrouding this mystery is drawn aside. (Incidentally, wild trees are those unclimbed by humans) A story of passionate determination, daring and keen observation, it stars Humboldt State University professors Steve Sillett, Marie Antione and their skilled team of technical climbers.

"Skywalking" to the redwood crowns they encountered ancient hanging gardens rooted in water soaked soil mats 3'-4' thick. Dangling vines, berry bushes and bonsai forests flourished amid mosses and lichen, earthworms, voles, and redwood salamanders. The aerial ecosystems abounded with fire scarred branches – some as large as tree trunks – and deep, rotting, precipitous fire caves requiring total, constant focus – any distraction being potentially fatal.



While the arboreal acrobats recorded and measured their discoveries, other team members, led by Michael Taylor, bushwhacked the coast redwood parklands hoping to locate the world's tallest Sequoia sempervirans.

A ground-breaking redwood adventure, it chronicles personal growth and triumph, astonishing scientific discovery and even a bit of romance; it's one of those stories which end too soon. Park guests and staff are invited to pick up a copy at the Visitor Center and then settle in around their winter fires for a most enjoyable experience....

## **In Memory Of... Steve Champ**

By Dave Stockton, HRIA Board Member

A popular and favorite volunteer of the early 2000's was Steve Champ. With his wife Fran the Champs were a huge part of the success of the Visitor Center, after the expansion, for many years. Volunteering was nothing new for Steve, as he had many years of service with his children's activities, as well as years with the Fortuna police department. Steve worked his way up to assistant manager, a position he held until his health gave way.

There were many jobs that he held in that period, such as inventory, the Christmas tree lighting, photographer, and master barbeque volunteer for the many events the association put on every year. His favorite was working behind the counter and if there was ever such a thing as a natural, Steve was that person. His gift was an almost instant rapport with visitors. The Visitor Center was also a place for the staff and Rangers to keep the volunteers up to date on the status of the park. The coffee was always on and the worst kept secret in the park was a large cookie jar in the back office.

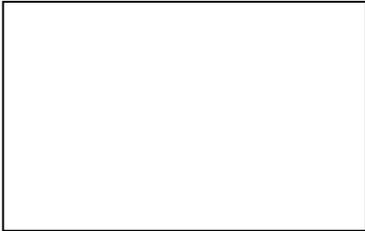
Another favorite was the staff appreciation potluck and as usual Steve was our barbeque person. One of our fondest memories was Steve cooking hamburgers and hotdogs in a rain storm with a tarp covering him. Staff came out to help just for the fun of it, as they did many times at the Visitor Center events.

Steve's enthusiasm was contagious and in his vest of many colors was a popular conversation starter. Visitors would bring him new pins and he was eager to share pins he had. His rapport was enjoyable to watch as he would answer the many questions that came from visitors with a sincere and knowledgeable background. A smile was always there.



Return Service Requested

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



Winter 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
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 # \_\_\_\_\_