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## Spring/Summer 2021 Newsletter

# Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

### President's Report: Alan Aitken

Welcome to summer and great news from Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association. As you are aware the past 15 months of COVID have been a tumultuous time for the country and HRIA. The situation has improved significantly in Humboldt County and the visitor center is now open seven days a week. Our Executive Director, Sophia, has met every challenge and had the visitor center ready to return to our mission of serving the public. Thank you, Sophia.

Any organization goes through times of change. Several HRIA board members, that have served the organization for decades, have moved on requiring a search for new members. I am pleased to announce that we have two new board members with skills that will enhance the organization. Porscha has a Bachelor degree in accounting and a background in bookkeeping, QuickBooks, payroll/taxes, and financial reporting. Jenny is president of the Southern Humboldt Chamber of Commerce board, and also sits on the board of the Humboldt Visitor Bureau and the Southern Humboldt Housing/Lodging Alliance. Her background in social media marketing will be useful in the new digital world.

With the reopening of the visitor center, HRIA has approved the hiring of Mary Kaufman as the new visitor center Manager. Mary has 4 years of experience as an Interpreter at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, so she is very knowledgeable about the park and will be valuable in training volunteers in the new visitor center docent program.



*Alan Aitken*

# NEW NEW NEW!

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

Alan Aitken - President  
Justin Creelin - Secretary  
Porscha Farfan - Treasurer  
Cathy Mathena - MAU

### Board Members

Richard Leamon  
Jenny Early

### Co-op. Assoc. Liaison

Marnin Robbins,  
Interpretation and Education  
Program Manager

### HRIA Executive Director

Sophia Eckert

### HRIA Manager

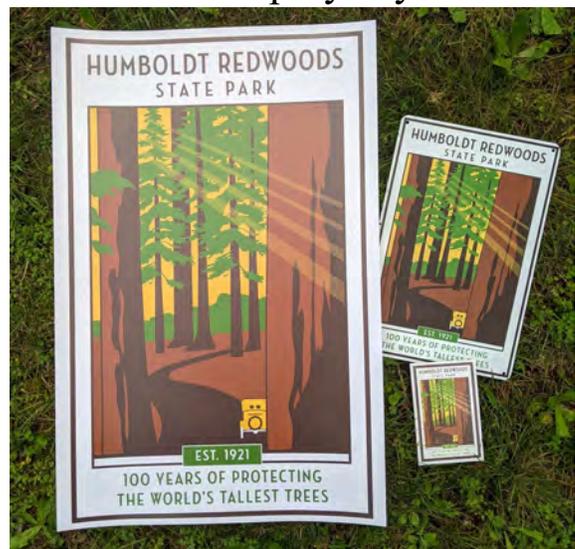
Mary Kaufman

### 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, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Standish Hickey State Park, and 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 and 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.



For a limited time, the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center is carrying lots of new centennial swag: t-shirts, posters, magnets, stickers, tin signs, and canvas bags! If you are not able to visit us in person this year, email [director@humboldtreduwoods.org](mailto:director@humboldtreduwoods.org) to find out how you can get your centennial gear for a donation, mailed to your doorstep! In addition, the visitor centers are carrying lots of great new books for kids, adults, and everything in between... stop by if you can!



## A Living Legend Passes On

By Sophia Eckert, Executive Director

It was with a heavy heart that we received news that Dave passed away on November 24th of 2020. Those who had the honor of knowing Dave Stockton know that there was no one else as knowledgeable about anything and everything Humboldt County related as Dave. He was truly an invaluable asset to this area, to the parks, and to Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association. He was also a remarkable friend.

Dave was born in Scotia in 1942, and was raised on his family farm in Holms Flat. The farm went through the flood of 1955 and 1964, which Dave remembered so vividly. He loved not only sharing stories about the farm, but also sharing the apples that it produced. Dave's father planted dozens and dozens of apple trees, and in the fall if you ran into Dave, you were greeted with the day's finest apple. Dave still enjoyed working on the farm, pruning the trees, and planting vegetables there, even though he was residing in Fortuna.



Dave lived a very interesting life, and had the stories to prove it. After graduating high school in Fortuna, he attended Shasta Junior College, until he volunteered to serve in the Army. He served two tours in the Vietnam war, receiving many awards including a bronze star. After the Army, Dave married Sharon Vanderpool, and resettled in Humboldt County. He attended Humboldt State University, receiving his BA and MA in English. Dave worked at Humboldt Redwoods State Park with maintenance, then became a foreman at Eel River Sawmills. Upon retiring from the mill, he became the Executive Director of the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association. Dave ran the visitor center at Humboldt Redwoods State Park and is responsible for the majority of the displays and exhibits. We are so often told by guests, "This is one of the best visitor centers I've ever been to" and that is all thanks to Dave.



With Dave's family history in Humboldt County, his endless interest in history and reading, his passion for exploring the park, and his incredible ability to remember it all, he became the go-to resource for any question that arose. From flora and fauna, to names and dates, just ask Dave! He became an iconic figure at the visitor center, drinking coffee on the porch, sharing stories with friends, old and new. He had a laid back and genuine demeanor, and a great sense of humor. Although he retired from working at the visitor center, Dave remained a board member of HRIA for many years. We looked forward to his weekly visits. His stories, his wisdom, and his friendship are missed by many.

## Meet a Mounted Assistance Unit Volunteer

By Susan Combes, MAU Member



Things sure have changed at our wonderful Cuneo Creek Horse Camp since I started riding there. In the mid-1980s the corrals were redwood and it was widely known that an ambitious horse could chew through most of a board overnight. Indian Orchard was known as Seven Ditches, there was a now washed-out trail out across the road from the cemetery, few, if any, bridges on the old Homestead Trail, and I don't remember that there even was a Baxter Trail.

But then, as now, the rides were spectacular, through rolling meadows, under stately redwoods, along hardwood forests and across clear creeks. And the changes in camp: enough pipe corrals to house many horses; campsites with fire pits, bear boxes and picnic tables; troughs and running water to most sites; flush toilets as well as conveniently located pit privies; and, joy of joys, showers that don't run out of hot water.

One of the biggest changes is the creation of our Mounted Assistant Unit, a group of dedicated volunteers who spend many hours both horseback and on the ground maintaining trails and camp, assisting visitors, and reporting potential problems. Should there be an emergency, we are available to help as needed.

I was six months old when I was first rode horseback. A group of infants somehow had the opportunity to sit on this black and white Shetland pony while our pictures were taken. According to reports, everybody cried while they were on the pony. I cried when they took me off. And so it began. I've been riding seriously since I was six, have a minor in light horse husbandry from University of Kentucky, had Salmon Creek Riding School when I lived over the hill and across the creek from Grasshopper, and managed the horse barn at Humboldt County Fairgrounds for 16 years until my retirement five years ago.

I became a Mounted Assistance Unit Volunteer in 2004. Over the years, I've had four MAU qualified horses. My current ride is Pocket, a short, stocky 12-year-old pinto mare I bought myself last year as a 77th birthday present. She's super sweet, very solid on the trail and we're working on a better side pass.

I was honored to have been accepted into MAU and continue to be proud of helping maintain our park for equines. The MAU hours I've accumulated assisting confused hikers, clearing trails, spending time horseback in the redwoods, and enjoying the friendships I've developed have enriched my life.

## Happy Centennial Anniversary, Humboldt Redwoods State Park

By John Griffith, Eel River Sector Park Interpreter I

Last year, when I first started as an interpreter at Humboldt Redwoods State Park (HRSP), I discovered that the park's stories were just as mysterious as its fog-scraping giants. Dave Stockton, the sage-like former director of the Humboldt Redwood Interpretive Association, acted as a guide to help me sort out the many tales. I was just understanding how uniquely important the history of this park is, and how relevant the lessons learned here are when Dave passed away. We will celebrate the 100th birthday of this park and honor those who fought so hard to preserve this global gem, including Dave Stockton.

Due to Covid, our celebrations will be small and numerous. Please join us at 10 AM on the last Saturday of each month on the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Facebook page for an interview with someone who helps us understand and appreciate these magnificent 53,000 acres. Past interviews included our director Armando Quintero, Sam Hodder the president

and CEO of Save the Redwoods League, Laura and James Wasserman, authors of "Who Saved the Redwoods" and Amber Transou, North Coast Redwoods District biologist. Upcoming interviews will feature Gerry Rhodes, author of the book "Humboldt Redwoods State Park," and Reed Noss, the father of Deep Ecology and author of the book "The Redwoods" and more!

Starting in early June, we will be offering guided Centennial Anniversary tours through Founders' and the Mahan Plaque groves. This summer, we will have many other types of programming to celebrate our 100th birthday, including frequent posts on our Facebook page, campfire events, guided walks, centennial-flavored Biodiversity Day, Halloween, and Christmas events, as well as interviews with those who are connected to the park, the land, and/or the visitors.

Please reach out to me to reserve a time for your walk. Otherwise, we will be posting our program calendar around the district and on our social media platforms soon. Happy Centennial Anniversary, Humboldt Redwoods State Park!



# Going Together

By Marnin Robbins, Interpretive Program Manager

## Going Together

If you want to go quickly, go alone.

If you want to go far, go together. -African Proverb

The NCRD Interpretation Program is doing important work to make our parks relevant to a new generation of visitors. This includes using new thinking and new technology to bring the untold stories of North Coast people and landscapes to audiences across the globe. The transformational conversations taking place in our district could not happen without the support and leadership of many people and organizations, working together towards the common goal of “providing for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California” (first half of the State Parks’ mission statement). Here are a few examples:

We are working with HRIA to plan for the 100-year anniversary of Humboldt Redwoods SP. This includes developing a “centennial logo” which now finds itself on bags, t-shirts, posters and stickers sold in the visitor center, an ongoing series of interviews broadcast on the main California State Parks Facebook page with notable scientists, policy makers, historians and other visionaries, and several in-person special events which will take place later this fall.

We are working with Save the Redwoods League on many fronts: signage, brochures, videos, websites, social media, etc. to increase visibility and access to our parks for underserved communities. Something new: League-funded interpretive apprentices who will assist us this summer with outreach to visitors (including within parks served by HRIA) and to the wider community through programming in both Spanish and English.

We are working with the Blue Lake Rancheria to offer the “Kindling the Flame” cultural revitalization program at Sumeg Village (Patrick’s Point). The Rancheria is assisting with funding support, as well as logistical and marketing help. For the second time since last September, we are hosting groups of Native youth who are learning from our Indigenous staff about their own cultural heritage

We are working with the Yurok Tribe to prepare for the reopening of the Stone Lagoon Visitor Center (Humboldt Lagoons SP). This partnership marks the first time in California State Parks’ history that the Department has co-managed a facility like this with a federally-recognized Tribe. Once opened, the Stone Lagoon Visitor Center will be a place for visitors from across the world to learn first-hand about Yurok culture, from Yurok Tribal staff and from NCRD Indigenous interpretive staff.

We are working with the National Park Service to help convey the story of Redwood National and State Parks to an international audience. For the first time ever, we have two permanent interpretive staff working within RNSP. Those staff are already assisting our

National Park counterparts on social media, visitor center staffing, planning for the summer, and a host of other projects. Concurrently, NPS staff are assisting us with many projects including the development of a new AR/VR “North Coast Redwoods app” set to launch this summer.

The partnerships above are just a few of the many relationships we are building towards the betterment of local citizens and out-of-the-area visitors. By working together and inspiring an ethic of conservation and care, we can also help to accomplish the other half of the California State Parks mission: “... to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protect its most valued natural and cultural resources, and create high-quality outdoor recreation.”

### Sinkyone Spring Update

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Usal Project Staff



Throughout the winter at Needle Rock, we were able to staff the park with our intrepid team of volunteer camp hosts who hosted day use visitors and campers from the porch, parking area and trails. Additionally, several invasive weed species removal events were held at Jones Beach by our California Department of Parks (DPR) and Recreation District Invasive Weeds Program staff, led by Michelle Foyes from Fort Humboldt or by the Lost Coast Interpretive Association from Whitethorn. The road into the park remained passable all winter although heavy rains and large waves resulted in more cliff erosion than usual.

At Usal Beach, our Department of Natural Resources is designing improvements to the support of Usal Beach. The road has had its spring maintenance from the Mendocino County Department of Transportation into the Camp Grounds after tremendous damage during the winter. HRIA’s Usal Beach Friends



Sampling of student artwork from Spy Rock Elementary School, using materials inspired by Usal Beach Friends Program.

Program is working with local schools as they reopen, now that Mendocino and Humboldt Counties are out of Stage Red. On campus, as well as local hikes are beginning in the program. Trips to the Sinkyone are planned in the future, when protocols allow.

We look forward to greeting you back to park during the coming warm weather months ahead. Thank you all for your dedication to the care of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park and your care for your selves and neighbors.



Return Service Requested

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Spring/Summer 2021

**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, publish interpretive literature, and 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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