



Spring/Summer 2023 Newsletter

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

President's Report: Alan Aitken

Summer is here and the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association is ready to attend to the needs of the visitors that come with the season. In addition to operating the visitor centers, HRIA hosts various events throughout the year. May 31st our dedicated staff put on a very special event to open our newest exhibit: North Coast Otters Pubic Arts Initiative with HRIA's own otter named Tce Yac (pronounced chee yash in the Wailaki language). Other events on the calendar include:

- ❖ Star Party at Albee Creek Campground, Saturday July 22
- ❖ Smokey Bearth Birthday Party at Burlington Campfire Center, Saturday August 5
- ❖ Star Party at Albee Creek Campground, Saturday August 12
- ❖ Richardson Grove Centennial Celebration at Richardson Grove Day Use Area and Visitor Center, Saturday September 30
- ❖ Haunted Halloween at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center, Saturday October 28
- ❖ Annual Holiday Party at Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center, Wednesday December 6

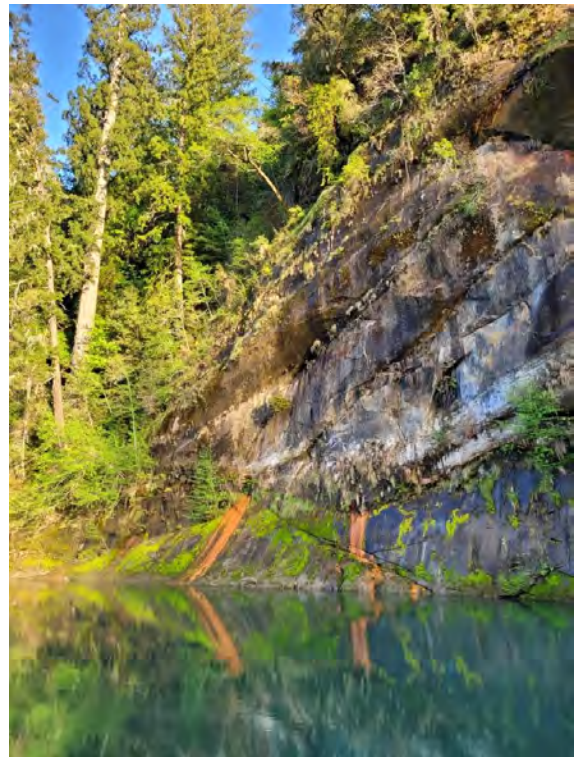


Photo of Eel River by HRIA Manager, Mary Kaufman

I would like to give a big THANK YOU to all of the volunteers that come year after year to serve the public, go above and beyond to help with these events, and make HRIA's mission come true. We hope to see you at our events or visitor centers.

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, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Standish Hickey State Recreation Area, 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.

Otter Art Piece Gifted to Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association



Photo above by Mark Larson of Artist Jennifer Amidi and Professor Jeff Black at May 31st otter celebration at Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Photo left by Jennifer Amidi, of otter, named Tce yac, enjoying the views at the Eel River.

Welcoming Tce Yac to Permanent Display at Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center

By Sophia Eckert, HRIA Executive Director

The Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center recently welcomed a very special exhibit to our permanent display. On Wednesday May 31st, Tce yac was welcomed with a party, which also celebrated World Otter Day.

Tce yac has a very special story. It began in 2019 with the North Coast Otter Art initiative. Jeff Black, wildlife professor at HSU (Humboldt State University, now CalPoly Humboldt), started a fundraising public arts initiative. Over 100 identical otter statues were made and given to different artists to transform into their own artistic creation. Once completed these otters were hosted all over the region. Brochures were available identifying the location of the otters, challenging art, otter, and treasure hunting enthusiasts to try to see each otter for themselves. The local community and tourists really enjoyed spotting the unique otters around the area. At the end of this observation or treasure hunt phase, the otters were collected to be bid on in an online silent auction. The project raised over \$300,000 for HSU internships and otter research. You can still find some of the otters on display at stores throughout the region.



The Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association was thrilled to take part in this project. An otter by the name of Alita Joy, painted by Layne Murrish, was on display at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center, sponsored by the North Coast Section of The Wildlife Society. The Richardson Grove State Park Visitor Center hosted an otter known as Old Growth Redwood Otter by Joan Carpenter and sponsored by North Coast Otters. Both otters were painted with a nature theme and fit in perfectly at our visitor centers. HRIA decided to bid on the otters for our permanent display. The bidding was quite competitive and at the end of a stressful bidding day, HRIA did not successfully obtain either otter.

When local artist Jennifer Amidi discovered that Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center hadn't gotten an otter, she decided to do something about it. Jennifer had participated in the event, mosaicking an otter named Anahita, which was hosted at a store in Garberville. Jennifer talked with Professor Jeff Black. There was one imperfect blank otter statue remaining, which he gave to Jennifer. Jennifer approached HRIA with the proposition of gifting the visitor center with a mosaicked otter; HRIA graciously accepted, eager to have an otter of our own.

On one 3-foot otter, Jennifer included over 35 different plants and animals that are found in the park. It was important for her to include the local community in the project. Jennifer and friend Traci Speelman asked the kids at the local Agnes J. Johnson Charter School, coincidentally known as the WeOtters, to vote to name this piece of art. At a school assembly, Traci gave the kids three options to choose from, all being a variation of the word otter in Wailaki. Tee yac (translating to little otter) won by a WeOtter landslide. Local craftsman John Onstine built a beautiful stand for Tee yac with wood donated by California State Parks and Almquist Lumber. World Otter Day, May 31st, was chosen as the perfect day to have an official welcoming celebration at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center. All of the students from Agnes J. Johnson Charter School attended, along with other locals and park visitors. The party included presentations by Jeff Black and Jennifer Amidi, singing by Traci Speelman and the WeOtters, otter related games and crafts, and of course, cupcakes and otter pops. Tee yac is now happily on permanent display at her new home, the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center.

New to the Crew in the Eel River Sector

By Cleo Domingo, Park Interpreter

My name is Cleo. I am the new Interpreter I for several State Parks in the Eel River - this includes Benbow, Richardson Grove, Standish-Hickey, and Sinkyone Wilderness (also Humboldt Redwoods in the off season). I will be out in these parks leading interpretive programs, such as Jr. Rangers, guided nature walks, campfire programs, and more. I will also be the lead for any other Seasonal Interpreters, providing them guidance and support. My goal is to connect more with the local community and hopefully collaborate on some projects.

A little bit about my academic and professional career... I moved up to Humboldt to attend (what was then) Humboldt State University in 2015. I graduated in 2018 with a degree in Environmental Science and Management, with a focus in Ecological Restoration. During school I also volunteered throughout Humboldt, from doing restoration work with State Parks to leading field trips with Friends of the Dunes. I started my Parks career in 2019 up at Prairie Creek as a Park Aide in the kiosks. In 2022 I made it down to Humboldt Redwoods as a Seasonal Interpreter. I'm excited to continue to explore and work in State Parks.



And, lastly, just a little bit about me... I am originally from Ventura County, so I grew up surrounded by chaparral and beaches. I'm a California Naturalist, so of course I enjoy being outside going on hikes, birdwatching, and wandering the beach/river bars. I also enjoy staying in reading, sewing, and doing other hands on crafts. This summer you'll probably find me reading by the river. See you in the Eel!

In Memory of Bruce Riley

With the recent passing of volunteer Bruce Riley, HRIA lost one of our longest and most dedicated volunteers. Bruce started volunteering at the visitor center in the 90's. His passion for redwoods, forest ecology, climate health, birding, traveling, and reading all came to the perfect coalescence at the visitor center. Bruce found many of the titles that we now carry in our bookstore, and he often wrote corresponding reviews to be included in the HRIA newsletters. Additionally, he spent many sunny summer days in the Rockefeller Forest as a docent, where he loved sharing his knowledge about redwoods with people from all around the world. Bruce was a thoughtful friend that you could always rely on for an insightful and poignant perspective. He had a way with words, and way with people. He is deeply missed, but so many of us at Humboldt Redwoods State Park feel lucky to have known and learned from him.

Thoughts and memories from some of Bruce's co-volunteers...

Volunteer Shirley Sacco: Dick and I first met Bruce Riley in 1996 as newbie volunteers at the HRIA Visitor Center. Denise Seeger, then the Assistant Manager, introduced us to Bruce as the docent at the Big Tree area in Rockefeller Forest. We went out to see Bruce at Big Trees just to see what docents do. Bruce had a table set up with information and books and was surrounded by visitors. He had a beautiful charisma as he spoke about the trees, the people were captivated by his passion. Dick and I decided now that's what we wanted to do, be outside in the forest and share how special this place is! I will always remember that passion for the Redwoods Bruce had and the beautiful way he spoke about the forest and the trees with such awe. It was inspiring, he brought the forest alive!

I contacted our mutual, long time special friend Denise for her remembrance of Bruce. She shared "Bruce lived in reverence for nature, especially trees and forests. He was honored and delighted to talk with people and share his love for Mother Earth".



Bruce at the 2022 HRIA Volunteer Appreciation Island Party

Volunteer Sophia Zandarski: Bruce and I met in September 2021 when I began volunteering at the visitor center. He did not hesitate to recommend his favorite books about trees and was eager to share with me what he knew about the Redwood forest. His passion for the Redwoods was contagious. Bruce had a talent for getting all sorts of different people from all over the world to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the forest and Charles Kellogg's travel log. At first, Bruce's adamancy that everyone walking past him get a brochure about Kellogg's travel log seemed somewhat silly to me. I quickly started to admire Bruce for this after I watched countless people I would never expect to care about the travel log be genuinely grateful Bruce had stopped them and shared what he knew. Bruce was one of the most generous people I have ever met. Whether it was lending books from his library, bringing snacks to share with us at the visitor center, or surprising people with gifts he thought they would appreciate; he was always finding ways to brighten others' days. I am grateful I had the chance to become friends with Bruce. His willingness to share his knowledge and passions has changed my life and countless others.

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park says Huge Thank You to Dave Murray, Sinkyone Maintenance Worker

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Board Member

The Camp Hosts of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, DPR Rangers and Maintenance staff, as well as the district and HRIA all thank Dave Murray as Sinkyone Maintenance Worker for his 7 years of service at our park. Dave and his wife Khaula, daughter Anya, are moving east to be closer to family. We will miss him very much, but are happy for them in this next chapter in his life. We hope he may return as a Sinkyone Camp Host at some time in the future. Dave's energy has been a great influence on our park.

Dave has been the primary boots on the ground for Sinkyone projects including replacing the trail bridges from Bear Harbor to Jones Beach, the new solar electric system and water system upgrades, the fireplace and chimney seismic upgrade, the visitor center re-shingling, and barn camp and park outhouse upgrades to name a few of the projects. He also has contributed to significant deferred maintenance repairs and storm damage clean up at Richardson Grove, Benbow and Standish Hickey. During all these projects, his coworkers Zeb Marjanovich and Justin McCarthy along with their Supervisor Mike Pogue (retiring June 2023) have made a huge difference in the quality of our host and visitor experience in the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park from Needle Rock to Usal. You've been a great team.



The past winter has been a challenge, with frequent closing of the roads from a very severe winter. The Needle Rock Road is still closed and so is Usal Road north of Usal Campground. King Range also has road closings so please check the appropriate websites before heading our direction this Summer.

Upper Photo: Dave Murray working on Needle Rock Visitor Center chimney seismic upgrade

Photo Left: Dave Murray taking a day off to help HRIA with volunteers on Earth Day clean up

The Great Redwood Trail is Coming

By Denise Stephens, HRIA Volunteer

In October 1914 a golden spike, driven into redwood ties, united Willits to Eureka as the Northwestern Pacific Railroad became a reality after 30 years of planning and work. Although it cost \$14 Million, the Northwestern Pacific more than paid its way as redwood was shipped by rail from Humboldt and Mendocino counties to the entire world.

Now this railroad corridor welcomes a new life as the Great Redwood Trail. Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA), its members and friends can be part of the planning and building of the Great Redwood Trail. All of the information is well presented at <https://greatredwoodtrailplan.org> so check it out!

“The Great Redwood Trail (GRT) is envisioned as a 316-mile rail-to-trail project connecting California’s San Francisco and Humboldt Bays. What will be the longest of its kind, this multi-use trail will travel through some of the most scenic landscapes in the United States, traversing old-growth redwood forests, running alongside oak woodlands and vineyards, and winding through the magnificent Eel River Canyon.” (copied from the website).

The Marin and Sonoma sections from Larkspur to Cloverdale are being planned by SMART, sonomamarintrain.org with 25 miles completed and 14 more miles already funded for construction.

At this point, the “action” for the Cloverdale to Humboldt Bay section is the development of the master plan. You can assist by completing an online survey and by attending in-person and virtual meetings (see the GRT website). The next in-person events are July 26 at Alderpoint and July 27 at Hopland.

In the book, *Northwestern Pacific Railroad Eureka to Willits* by O’Hara, Service and the Fortuna Depot Museum (book for sale at the Humboldt State Park Visitor Center), the authors wondered about “the unknown future of the NWP” (p. 10) after its last train run in 1984. Since that time, the route has experienced neglect, with extensive, costly repairs necessary to operate a railroad again.

In the future, the route, will be alive as the Great Redwood Trail. It will be open to walkers, hikers, and bicyclists who can experience redwood country differently, benefiting Mendocino and Humboldt counties economically, socially and culturally.





Return Service Requested

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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, 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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