



## Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

### President's Report: Alan Aitken

Let's take a journey back to 2008. The great recession had started and for many Americans the world would never be the same. The same could be said for California and the state park system. Government was scrambling for cash and/or savings. Closing some parks was a real possibility. Standish Hickey State Park, in northern Mendocino County, was clearly in the cross hairs.

However, every challenge creates opportunity. How to keep the park open and mitigate the fiscal impact to the adjacent community became the task at hand. A group of concerned citizens came together to form Mendocino Area Parks Association in 1984, in a similar fashion as HRIA. In agreement with the state park system, MAPA assumed the maintenance responsibilities for Standish Hickey State Park and kept the gates open for recreating.

Time moves on, the economy has recovered, and with renewed resources the state park system once again has resumed responsibility for Standish Hickey from MAPA. At the January board meeting, HRIA signed a memorandum of understanding with MAPA to transfer equipment purchased with grants to HRIA.



Photo by HRIA Volunteer Tommy Sassone

At the beginning of the recession, HRIA served just Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Ten years later our responsibilities include Grizzly Creek State Park, Richardson Grove State Park, Standish Hickey State Park, and Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. This evolution could not have happened without the support of our executive staff and the associations' enthusiastic members.

*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 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.

# HRIA is looking for volunteers!

**Join in on the fun and meet  
people from around the world.**



Locals always welcome, typically working one shift per week at one of our wonderful Visitor Centers.

Those traveling in RV's work up to 20 hours per week, with a beautiful spot to call home for 2-6 months (full hook-ups provided)

Contact Sophia at  
[director@humboldtredwoods.org](mailto:director@humboldtredwoods.org)  
or (707) 946-2263

# Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, Manager

Happy day to all! Things here at the Visitor Center are going great, gearing up for another wonderful summer season. Grizzly Creek will be reopening soon to welcome visitors traveling Hwy 36. Don't forget to come visit us at the Visitor Center at Richardson Grove State Park, where you can enjoy ice cream and a game of chess. Additionally, camping will be available for your summer adventures at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Benbow State Recreation Area, and Standish Hickey State Park. A great big THANK YOU to all of our volunteers that help us keep it all going!

We have a new exhibit called Tracks and Scat which is very popular. Thanks go to Mary, our interpreter from last year, who made the track molds. The scat almost looks real. We are upgrading one of our interpretive displays in the back room at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center, thanks to students at Humboldt State University and California State Park staff. It should be up for all of our summer visitors to enjoy.



A reminder to all that membership dues are now due. For convenience to all, you can renew on our website at [www.humboldtredwoods.org/become-member](http://www.humboldtredwoods.org/become-member) or give us a call at (707) 946-2263 to pay by credit card. Your membership is important to HRIA and our mission.

While it has been a cold and wet winter, remember that all this rain will go away and will leave the forest green and beautiful, with lots of wonderful spring flowers. Until next time, stay warm and dry and let's go take a hike in the Redwoods.

## Sinkyone Project Work Going Strong

By Carla Thomas

HRIA and CA Department of Parks and Recreation are working together to continue environmental education and outreach through the Needle Rock Visitor Center and at Usal Beach Campground. HRIA has conducted Earth Day Events at Usal Campground for three years. These were funded by California State Park Foundation. We have successfully completed a two-year environmental outreach and education project for families and local



school children visiting Usal Beach. It is funded by the California Whale Tail License Plate Grant (California Coastal Commission). HRIA also has successfully completed a two-year Explore the Coast Grant from California State Coastal Conservancy that provided environmental education school trips for local schools to Usal and Needle Rock. Together these two projects cleaned fire rings, picked up litter, conducted trail work, cleaned and improved sanitation facilities, and developed a local long-term team of volunteers. The two projects also provided interpretive information to visitors and conducted 8 school field trips for classes from 6 schools located in three Unified School Districts.



Additionally, a document is under development by HRIA staff to compile options for DPR to consider for enhancement of Usal Beach Campground. It will cover infrastructure, natural resource protection, and visitor experience options. The Usal Plan project is on schedule to be completed in 2019 (funded by DPR, Save the Redwoods, and California State Parks Foundation). It was conceived by the Usal Committee, which has leadership from DPR, and includes Mendocino Area Parks Association, Mendocino Land Trust, Save the Redwoods League, and HRIA.

At Needle Rock Visitor Center, California State Park Foundation funded outhouse upgrades, and an engineering plan for restoration of the Needle Rock Chimney. DPR has obtained funds to conduct the chimney restoration and re-shingle the Visitor Center. HRIA thanks the funders and the many participants

that contribute to the well-being of Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. HRIA staff are preparing additional rounds of grant proposals to continue and expand the Outdoor Education and Outreach Programs at Usal Beach and Needle Rock.

## **Jones Beach Burn**

By Allan Wiegman, Forestry Aid

Until the mid-1900's, fire was a natural part of life for our redwood park's woodlands, wetlands, and prairies. Ecosystems native to the redwood coast depend on periodic fire events to rejuvenate growth and ensure long-term survival. The human nature tendency to suppress fire allows invasive plants (weeds) to out-compete our native grasses and flowers, therefore reducing plant and animal diversity and creating higher fuel loads.

But why do we burn? Prescribed burning is used for a variety of reasons. One of the most notable contained burning benefits is to maintain the health of an existing natural area containing native plants. The fire helps manage weeds and prairie encroachment growth of firs and thus helps to reduce the risk of wildfires, but it also helps restore nutrients and helps lead to=

more desirable plant growth in the future. Woodlands, prairies, and wetlands are perfect natural communities for contained fires. Jones beach before burn pictured left, after pictured right.



## Mounted Assistance Unit

By Cindy Giacomini

Spring weather is just around the corner and the Mounted Assistant Unit (MAU) is gearing up for the riding season. The MAU held their winter meeting in February, photo below. They had several guests from Humboldt Redwoods State Parks join them this year to help the unit be more informed on the inner workings of the park system. This year five prospective members will test themselves and their horses during the spring camp out and start their training year to become a volunteer. There are also several current volunteers that are testing new equines into the unit.



Humboldt Redwoods State Park is fortunate to be able to stay open all year for visitors to enjoy. Though some campgrounds & trails close for the winter months, there are still many places to ride, hike, bike and explore. If you haven't yet stopped by the Visitor Center, take the time to check it out. It is full of unique and historical exhibits. Ask one of the volunteers about the Discover Nature App for your phone. This App is a useful tool to aid in your enjoyment and interpretation of the park.

The Mounted Assistance Unit will soon be out in greater numbers riding the beautiful trails. They are there to help and assist the park and visitors in any way that is needed. The MAU looks forward to seeing you out there.

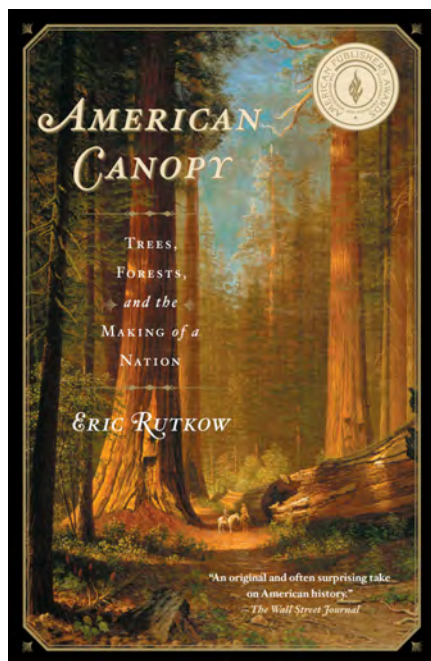
# American Canopy: Trees, Forests and the Making of a Nation

Author Eric Rutkow

By Bruce Riley, HRIA Volunteer

Professor Rutkow's award winning book is a broad historical survey of America's growth from colonial times to the present, viewed through the lens of its forests.

When the first settlers arrived in early 1600 A.D. the North America continent contained nearly 1000 species of trees. The vast virgin forests are thought to have covered one billion acres. By contrast, today about 475 million acres remain, many of them young trees. The forests of the European continent held between 200 to 500 species and they had been thoroughly logged. So the seemingly endless tracts of woods were a welcome sight to the immigrants. Wood, of course, was essential to the colonists' survival. Large tracts were harvested for building and fuel, but the highly inefficient fireplaces consumed an excessive amount of logs. Back in England, the British crown was hungry for ship building material including the tall white pine masts. New England readily met that demand, yet the monarchy's control of choice timber contributed to colonial unrest, the basics of the revolution. In the 1700's, liberty trees were the symbolic and literal rallying sites of the revolutionaries.



John Chapman, known popularly as Johnny Appleseed, created a large number of orchards for the west bound pioneers from western Pennsylvania to the Ohio territory and beyond. Providing healthy fruit, the trees also supplied material for hard cider, which was immensely popular. In the mid 1800's, Henry David Thoreau sought refuge in the woods surrounding Walden Pond. The sounds of American industry, including the railroad to Boston, were near his retreat. New York City's iconic Central Park was created through extensive tree planting on otherwise infertile land. In Middle America, in the lake states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, Frederick Weyerhaeuser created a lumber empire which ultimately included the mills and timber of the Mississippi Valley. The white pine forests were the preferred wood of settlers of the Great Plains. West bound railroads used vast tracts of trees for everything from railroad ties, cars, stations and fuel for the locomotives. Huge wildfires were endemic to the rail's

expansion. Red hot cinders from locomotive smokestacks spawned blazes annually. Wisconsin alone suffered nine devastating holocausts in a 60 year period, beginning with the 1871 inferno which destroyed Peshtigo, Wisconsin and caused 1,000 human deaths. In the wake of the westward movement, the American Chestnut and the American Elm were reduced to the brink of extinction by unstoppable insect infestation from imported Asian tree species. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and Teddy Roosevelt all actively planted trees and encouraged settlers to follow their example. Franklin is credited with compiling lists of all the tree species of the colonies. Franklin Delano Roosevelt included tree planting as part of the New Deal projects. It is estimated he oversaw the

planting of three billion trees. In response to the wholesale leveling of the nation's virgin forests, tree farms came to replace them. The U.S. government created protected forest reserves which became the national forests of today. America contained the oldest trees (Bristle-cone Pines 4,500 years old), the tallest species (Coastal Redwoods 375'), and the most massive tree on earth - the Giant Sequoia of the Sierra Nevadas. Naturalist John Muir, who was a tireless advocate of creating national parks, used a camping trip with Teddy Roosevelt as the example, which led to the formation of Yosemite National Park. Thoreau wrote of widespread deforestation and in 1864 a very influential study of environmental degradation was published by George Perkins Marsh. His focus on human impacts upon nature was entitled "Man and Nature." His thesis of man's reckless treatment of the natural world echoed, in many ways, the thoughts of Alexander von Humboldt at the dawn of the 1800's. Humboldt witnessed the long term effects of unchecked logging during his five year scientific explorations of Central and South America. What he saw was the result of Spanish colonization in the 1600's and how water resources remained damaged hundreds of years after the forest's depletion. In particular was the greatly reduced capacity of a large lake, which was clear evidence of the problem.

Widespread homesteading on the Great Plains began in earnest in 1862. Within 10 years, J. Sterling Morton, in the Nebraska Territory, promoted a national holiday of tree planting called Arbor Day. Fast forward to April 22, 1970 and witness the celebration of Earth Day. This idea of global environmental protection was trumpeted by Gaylord Nelson, a former senator, from Wisconsin. The holiday was a response to the catastrophic Santa Barbara Oil Spill of 1969. Seventy five years earlier, from the time of Weyerhaeuser Industries, establishment in the Pacific Northwest around the turn of the century increased the pace of widespread logging. Record annual timber harvests were made possible by two significant technological innovations, the steam donkey and the bulldozer. These enabled the cutting of previously remote stands of fir and spruce, which was essential to the mass production of airplanes used in WWI. Today an aerial view of northern California, Oregon and Washington reveal the immense impact this logging explosion had on the greatest forests on earth.

The San Francisco earthquake of 1906 intensified the harvest of California's redwoods. Today just four percent of the original two million acres of old growth remain. The tidal wave of suburban housing tracts after WWII began in Levittown, New York. Lumber for the mass produced homes came from California forests, purchased by Levitt & Co; just as Weyerhaeuser had done a century earlier. Each home showcased four fruit trees, evergreens and flowering shrubs. The U.S. government created the GI Bill of Rights after the war's end and this legislation enabled the returning GI's to purchase a home for no money down and a \$56.00/month mortgage. Postwar prosperity led to the environmental movement and increased conservation efforts. The effect upon the environment from this logging is now clearly understood as a major contributor to mushrooming climate changes occurring on a global scale. Trees are now understood as vital to the health of the planet and the survival of human, animal, plant and insect life. It has just been reported that almost forty percent of insect life is gone - a victim of weather extremes. Global temperature rise is directly related to an increase of carbon emissions. As trees are known to be carbon storehouses, the science of today is calling for reduced carbon emissions, global reforestation, development of green energy from wind, solar, wave action and geothermal heat pumps. The centrality of trees to life itself has never been more evident. Hopefully, readers of this review will take the time to plant some trees and help arrest the slide toward our ecosystem's collapse. Everyone has a part to play...





Return Service Requested

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Winter 2019

**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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