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NEWSLETTER

Summer 2017

## Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association

### President's Report: Alan Aitken

Labor Day has come and gone. As Memorial Day is the start to the summer season, in Humboldt Redwood State Park, Labor Day brings on the fall and lower numbers visiting the park. Fall may be the best time to visit. Fewer visitors, dryer weather, cooler temperatures, easier access to the camp grounds.

Between June and August this year the visitor center at Humboldt Redwoods saw 53,266 visitors come through our door. Meeting the need of so many people could not have been met without the selfless work of our volunteers. Thank you all for making our mission your passion.

HRIA's mission is interpretation of the redwoods to the public. To further our mission HRIA has signed the contract with the Discover Nature Company to create an interactive computer application to enhance the visitor's experience in the park. On July 13 and 14 two representatives from DNC came to the park and met with myself, our Executive Director, Dave Stockton and Supervising Ranger Greg Hall to begin the process of customizing the app to our park. The time line for development is to have the app up and functioning for the start of the summer season 2018.

During our September meeting the board will be approving the memorandum of understanding between the various organizations that are part of the Usal Beach Collaboration. The efforts of our executive director, board member Carla Thomas and others have raised to date over \$70,000 towards interpretation and improvements to enhance the visitor experience at Usal Beach, at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park.



*Alan Aitken*

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Officers**

Alan Aitken – President  
Susan O’Hara – Vice President  
Carla Thomas – Secretary  
Maralyn Renner – Treasurer  
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### **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.



Congratulations to local photographer **David Wilson** for winning second place in Congressman Jared Huffman's 2017 District Landscape Photo Competition! The photo was taken by Bull Creek Flats and the Womens Club Federation Grove at **Humboldt Redwoods State Park**. HRIA is working with David Wilson in order to sell postcards and other items featuring his beautiful photography. Check back with us soon!

## Managers Report

Another summer has come and gone. While the number of visitors was slightly less this summer than the last at Humboldt Redwoods State Park, it felt as busy as ever. In addition, the Richardson Grove Visitor Center was open, and will continue to stay open during the weekends well into the winter. Stop by and check it out if you haven't yet! The number of visitors that come in and tell about their memories of past summers spent in the visitor center is impressive. They tend to have a nostalgic look in their eye, and some even come to tears reminiscing about years past. The Richardson Grove maintenance crew has done a wonderful job with the renovations. As always, we try to get new books and merchandise throughout the year, so keep the HRIA Visitor Centers in mind when you start your holiday shopping. We hope to see you soon!



Richardson Grove Visitor Center, photo by Steven Hibbard

## Mounted Assistance Unit: Meet a Member

By Cindy Giacomini, MAU Member

Summer is officially over but the park is still active with wildlife and visitors. This article is dedicated to introducing you to another of our Mounted Assistant Unit's (MAU) founding members. Maralyn Renner has been volunteering since 2002. That is 15 years of dedication and commitment to Humboldt Redwood State Park MAU. Maralyn is also on the MAU advisory committee as well as one of the equine testers. As a tester, she has prospective MAU members go through a course to make sure that the horse/rider combination are able to carry out the duties of an MAU member safely and sufficiently.



Maralyn has a vast knowledge of horses because she has owned them since she was a child. Her first horse was a pony that she got when she was six years old. As many ponies do, this one taught Maralyn how to not get scrapped off on trees! She then got a mare at the age of seven. When Maralyn was eleven her

dad purchased a quarter horse stallion and she raised four foals a year sired by the stallion for about 10 years. She would train the foals and sell them. After college Maralyn became a professional horse trainer, studying under John Lyons and Pat and Linda Parelli. She eventually became certified under Richard Shrake.

Maralyn currently has four MAU certified horses. Blaze was first to be certified and is currently semi-retired. He is  $\frac{3}{4}$  Arab,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Saddlebred and very talented, not only on the trail but in the show ring. Jewel is a Missouri Foxtrotter, the second horse that she certified and her nickname is Miss Piggy. Shasta and Sunny are the most recent to be certified. Both are palomino Foxtrotters, though with very different “horse-inalities”. Shasta is a bold mover but very dependent on Maralyn to be her leader. Sunny is just plain bold, constantly telling Maralyn he’s willing to take the lead if only she would let him. He is Jewel’s son.

Aside from her life-long love of horses, she is also an avid reader and she enjoys gardening and traveling. She graduated from Humboldt State University with a Master’s Degree in Biology in 1980 and since then she has conducted rare plant surveys, taught part-time at both HSU and College of the Redwoods and published several plant research papers. Now Maralyn is retired and she and her husband are raising their granddaughter, Abby.

Maralyn does not only enjoy adventures with her equine, she also enjoys adventures in life. She has gone up in a hot-air balloon with her mom and has traveled to South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, China, Canada and Russia. She has been to more than half of the 50 states, including taking her horse as far east as Colorado. As you can see traveling is a true passion for Maralyn.

Maralyn’s favorite project with MAU is testing the new members and their equine. She enjoys this because she gets to know the new member and their animal. She also enjoys pruning the fruit trees at Cuneo Creek Horse Camp.



Ranger Emily Becker with MOU Members, Maralyn Renner right

Maralyn’s knowledge of plants, trees and equine are truly an asset to the MAU. She is always eager to give a hand and advice, from an ill-fitting saddle to helping identify native plants and trees.

Watch for Maralyn while you are out enjoying the park. She is more than willing to share her vast knowledge and experiences with anyone who asks.

## Generations of Fun-Seeking Redwood Explorers

By Iona Mahony-Moyer, Seasonal Park Interpreter

When Richardson Grove opened in the early 20th century, people quickly flocked in for lively dancing, the hot social scene, and the cold ice cream. However, it was the long days by the beautiful Eel River and walks among the mystical trees that persuaded them to return with their families for decades to come. Now on any given busy summer day, upon stopping to talk with a camper, you are likely to find that they or their family have been coming to Richardson Grove for as long as they can remember. This widespread sense of roots and community is what sets Richardson Grove State Park apart.

When the park was first opened, people would come together at the restaurant. Now people gather at campfire programs where new memories are made and stories of the past are shared. As an Interpreter here at the park, I get to witness this first-hand. A few weeks ago a man approached me before I began a campfire program. He handed me a tarnished old postcard with a picture of the Eel River on the front and childish yet neat scrawl on the back. His wife, who was then only nine years old, had sent the postcard to her grandma in 1959. With youthful innocence it told of swimming in the river and sleeping under the stars. Everyone there that night could feel the significance of the postcard and its representation of the meaning of summer days on the river and nights under the stars.

And this example of connection to Richardson Grove does not stand alone. Just today in the Visitor Center a man walked in with a large tattoo on his calf. After looking closer, I noticed that the tattoo was of a redwood tree. He told me that he had been coming to Richardson Grove his entire life and had gotten the tattoo as a reminder of the magical feeling he gets when under the redwoods. Where this hip man expressed his feelings through a tattoo, others express this feeling in a multitude of different ways. Being a short four hours from the Bay area and a quick turn off busy Highway 101, Richardson Grove provides an accessible sanctuary for good times through many generations.

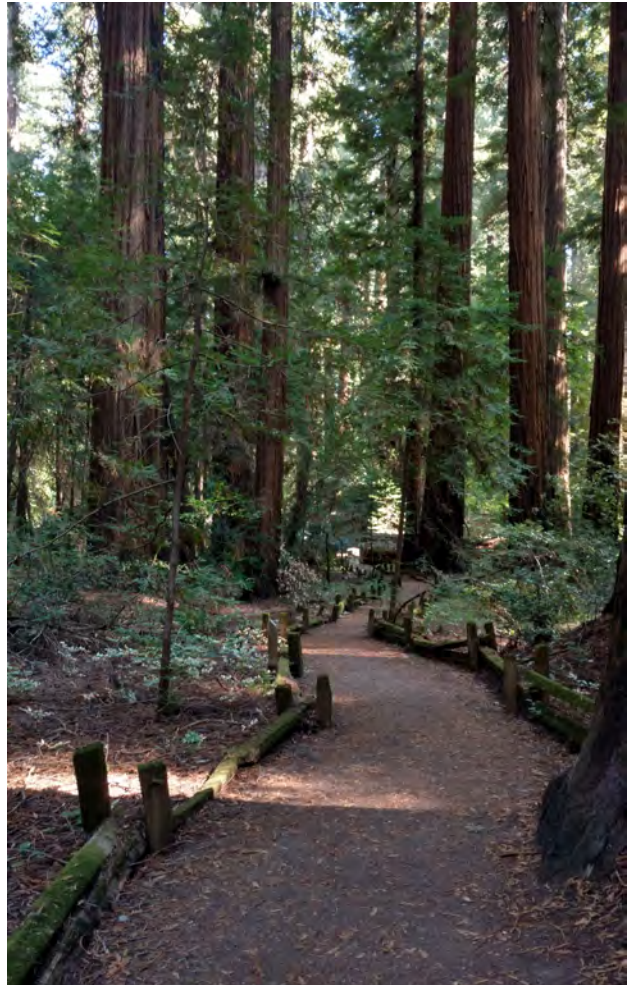


Photo by Cressant Swarts

# Eternal Redwoods

By Caitlyn Buesch, Seasonal Park Interpreter

*“The Redwoods, once seen, leave a mark or create a vision that stays with you always. No one has ever successfully painted or photographed a redwood tree. The feeling they produce is not transferable. From them comes silence and awe. It’s not only their unbelievable stature, nor the color which seems to shift and vary under your eyes, no, they are not like any trees we know, they are ambassadors from another time”.*  
-John Steinbeck

I’ve been able to gain a better understanding of Steinbeck’s sentiments while working here, especially while driving through the park in the late afternoon on the way to a campfire program or back to the Annex after roving. When the light hits the trees in just the right way and you can see the beams of light streaming through the canopy, the trunks light up an incredible shade of red that makes you think “Now THAT is why they are called redwoods”. In those times, the trees appear to be timeless, ageless, unchanged in a way that is impossible to capture in the split second of the tree’s life in videos or photos. One could easily imagine a dinosaur or a bigfoot wandering by through the trees. It’s easy in that moment to envision that the trees have existed in that state for an eternity and will continue to do so into the future, regardless of what we short-lived humans have to say about it. Having the opportunity to work as the intermediary between the park and the people this summer has been an eye-opening experience, not only on the front of understanding the human sides of the park but understanding the natural power of this place. I’ve seen many a visitor attempt to photograph these trees, having a friend stand at the base of the tree while the photographer squats or lies on the ground with the inevitable, exasperated comment of “the tree is just too tall.”



One of my favorite parts of the summer was hearing from visitors who had never seen trees of this magnitude before. It’s hard to comprehend the sheer size and age of these forests. We have the numbers: heights, weights, diameters, ages, and circumference, but there’s no number for majesty or awe-inspiring. That’s something that has to be experienced directly and something that really can change a person. It’s something that most people aren’t used to experiencing: we live in a world where we can push a button to share something with hundreds of people on the internet whereas experiencing the redwoods is a uniquely individual experience. Everyone takes something different away from standing among the age-old giants and there’s really no way to make two people experience the same forest in the same way. It’s been truly great to see people try to comprehend this fact and to have the opportunity to help them begin to understand the sheer

magnitude of the forests around us that are simultaneously timeless and bound closely to time.

The Redwoods are most commonly described as eternal, a word that has the connotation of not changing. That's simply not the case for these forests, as seen in the smallest details. The folding downward of the redwood sorrel leaves when the sun shines on them, the tree at Founders Grove that had been leaning at an incredible angle for decades only to fall sometime when I wasn't at the grove. The perpetual undoing of the roads through falling trees and intense winter storms. These trees and these forests have been here for thousands of years but by no means have they stayed the same. The conservation and preservation of these forests is the same: generations change and methods for protecting these forests are always evolving.

As we get closer to the end of summer, I can already feel a chill in the air as visitors become more and more tired from their summertime adventures and are making their way back home. One season is ending and another season is just around the corner. Thank you to all the HRIA and California State Parks staff who worked so hard this summer and made this park such a great place to work at.

## **HRIA Brings the Community and Families Together to Restore Usal Beach and Campground**

By Carla Thomas, HRIA Secretary

The Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA) has been awarded \$72,000 through several grant programs for restoration planning and work to be conducted at the Sinkyone Wilderness Usal Beach and Campground this year.

These funds have provided education-oriented restoration events for Usal with a focus on local adult and family community participation and school programs. HRIA staff Bruce Hilbach-Barger (HRIA Usal Project Coordinator), and Shannon Mason (HRIA Interpretive Specialist) Sinkyone State Park Skilled Laborer, Dave Murray, have been busy at Usal conducting these events nearly every week throughout the summer season. Over 100 individuals and families contributed volunteer time to enhance the care and maintenance of Usal Beach and Campgrounds.

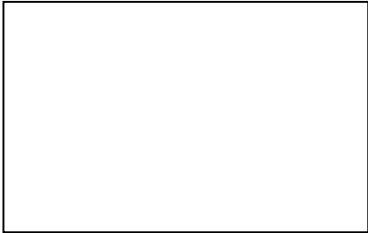
Thank you to all our volunteers! You've made an enormous difference at Usal this year. Pictured right, helping collect litter at Usal are Deb and John Fray.





Return Service Requested

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Summer 2017

**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		

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