President’s Report: Alan Aitken

As President of HRIA, I am proud to say that our organization has been and continues to be on solid financial footing. As a self-sustaining non-profit that statement is a testament to our board, Executive Director, visitor center Manager, and our numerous volunteers. Year after year after year we have successfully upheld and honored our mission statement.

Since the recession of 2008, HRIA has assumed additional responsibilities and challenges in expanding from Humboldt Redwoods State Park to include Grizzly Creek State Park, Richardson Grove State Park and Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. Of course increased responsibilities require funding sources to meet the new challenges. In this issue, board member Carla Thomas writes about HRIA's successful grant writing efforts that will significantly improve Usal Beach for the enjoyment of visitors and local residents.

Recently, another source of funding arrived as a bequest from the estate of Mr. and Mrs. Burton. HRIA received sixty-one thousand dollars that will assist us in continuing our mission. Decisions by the board as to how these funds will be used will be announced in the next newsletters.

Hoping your summer is sunny and special.

Alan Aitken
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Carla Thomas – Secretary
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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.

UPCOMING EVENTS!

Please join us for the second annual Earth Day Restoration event at Usal Beach and Campground at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park!

Saturday April 22
10:00 - 4:00

Volunteers will be removing litter, cutting invasive ivy, campsite and bathroom restoration work, and trail maintenance. Come in work clothes, supplies and lunch provided. Call for questions 707-946-2263

Please pre-register at: www.calparks.org/help/earth-day/
Managers Report  
By Debbie Gardner, HRIA Manager  

Happy Day to all, where did the time go!? It’s been a wet and wild winter this year. Soon, however, the clouds will break and the sunshine will return to the Redwoods. As always, the visitors from around the world will follow.  

This year we are going to be opening the Richardson Grove Visitor Center. It’s been a long time coming. The center has been redone to its original 1920’s lodge look. We are very excited for the opening planned for May.  

If you can, also visit Grizzly Creek Visitor Center. Ranger Emily and the camp host have been hard at work with the displays, revamping and cleaning all the critters, and making a hands on table for all ages.  

Thank you to all the volunteers for being here, we couldn’t do it without you, even if some grew webbing between their toes.  

Mounted Assistance Unit: Meet a Member  
By Cindy Giacomini, MAU Member  

This quarter the Mounted Assistance Unit (MAU) would like to introduce you to one of our members, Uri Driscoll. If you see Uri out on the trail with his horse Riley feel free to stop and say “Hi”.  

Uri was one of the founding members of the MAU. In fact, he started his volunteer efforts on the Cuneo Creek trail system around 5 years prior to the official start date of the MAU, which was in 2002. Uri was part of the committee that helped develop the MAU. Ranger Emily Becker (Peterson) was the Ranger that also assisted in getting the MAU up and running. There are currently two other founding members, Pat Farmer and Maralyn Renner, who are still active volunteers with MAU.  

Uri has been involved in the horse industry for many years. He started by riding with his grandparents, which began a lifelong love for horses and the preservation of public land for all uses. In 1983 Uri moved to Humboldt County and continued his passion for horses. He has been involved in breeding, endurance riding, ride and ties, shoeing, trail riding, and horse camping. Uri has also ridden the 100 mile Tevis Cup endurance ride. He has a long list of accomplishments in his life that involve the horse industry. Some of these accomplishments are, helping host farrier clinics to improve the level of farriers in Humboldt county, Certified Equine Assisted Learning that helped provide team
building work with the HSU men’s soccer team, President of Redwood Empire Endurance Riders for 7 years, Current president of Northern California Horsemen Association for four years and longtime member of Back Country Horseman of California. He is currently the chairperson for Arcata Open Space and Agriculture Committee. As you can see Uri is passionate about helping raise up the equine community as well as the preservation of public lands.

Uri currently has two MAU certified equines. Soul Seeker is his 25 year old Arab/Morgan cross that Uri raised from a baby. Soul Seeker is semi-retired but, in his younger days he competed in Endurance rides as well as being his mount for the MAU.

His current mount is, The Life of Riley. Uri’s friend contacted him to let him know that Riley’s owner was going to have him put down because of behavior issues. Uri had previously met Riley and could not stand by and allow this to happen. He bought Riley for five hundred dollars & spent the next few years training him for the MAU. Riley has also competed and won endurance competitions. Riley, now 18, is still going strong. Uri later learned that Riley has an amazing Morgan pedigree.

When asked, what his hobby is Uri replied,” Helping preserve the public lands for all uses. Having public lands and horses to be able to explore those lands is a supreme gift. Not only do we need to keep the camps and trials up, we also need to help the decision makers make the right decisions for all land use. We need to foster and maintain effective relationships with decisions makers to preserve the land for all public use.”

Uri’s favorite project that he has worked on with MAU, is the development and maintenance of the water system troughs to the back country trails of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. This allows for water access to the equines that utilize the trails. He also enjoyed helping with the development and installation of the water systems. Through the hard work of Uri and other MAU members, the water system continues to be in good shape & expands as new trails are created. Each year MAU members go out and clean and maintain the water systems and make any repairs that are needed.

Uri has always appreciated the diversity of all the volunteers in MAU. “There is a terrific display of the horsemanship in our group. We all have something to offer and something to gain in our experience with everyone that we work with.” Uri also wanted to take this opportunity to welcome Ranger Emily Becker (Peterson) back as the MAU Ranger. She was on leave for a little while and Uri stated that he feels we are fortunate to have her back.

Check back next quarter for a report on the projects the MAU have completed during our annual spring camp out. Hope to see you out on the trails!
Back at the Helm
By Emily Becker, State Parks Peace Officer

After being out for a year on maternity leave, I’m finally back. My first official day back was September 2nd, 2016 but I’d been coming in on Wednesdays volunteering for several hours since the beginning of April. Just couldn’t stay away!

A quick update on the family: our newest addition, Isaac, is now 18 months old and is happy and healthy. Our daughter Tabitha is now five years old and enjoying preschool and torturing her new little brother. That’s what big sisters are for, right? After 8 ½ years of being together and two beautiful children, my partner (Kristofer) and I finally decided to get married. I mention this because my last name has changed (or more realistically, is in the process of changing) to Becker and I was trying to minimize future confusion. Good luck with that!

Now an update on Grizzly Creek; there’s so much to talk about! I’m happy to report that a winter closure of the park was narrowly avoided this year (last year in my absence, it was closed for two months). Most of you will remember that back in 2011 Grizzly, along with many other State Parks, was on the dreaded ‘closure’ list. Ranger Robert Leiterman and Worker I Adam Farland were involuntarily transferred to Humboldt Redwoods due to the closure and sadly, those permanent positions and all funding for Grizzly were eliminated. Neither the positions nor the funding have even been reinstated, which is why the park is now always being considered for ‘temporary’ closures. All of Grizzly’s funding comes out of Humboldt Redwood’s budget; a precarious existence to say the least. After doing some research I’ve found that none of the parks on the 2011 closure list have had their funding reinstated and many of them (ie: Benbow Recreation Area) remain closed. Only political pressure from advocates and park visitors on State Park officials and legislators will change this situation. So if you’re willing and able, please write letters in support of Grizzly!

On a lighter note, there are many projects in the works at Grizzly, despite the political woes. Humboldt State University interp students are working on an outside display. As far as I can tell from old pictures, the last time it was updated was just after the 1964 flood! The hand-painted panels that have been serving us for so many years are now certainly antiques and I feel a bit sentimental towards them. But, new panels will better serve the public and will fit in well with the slow and steady work towards improving the park overall.

Right now I’m very lucky to have a wonderful camphost named Kathleen Galizzio (pictured left) who’s been working hard to clean and brighten up our main taxidermy display in the visitor center. In doing so, she’s inspired me to get going on having the animals in my deep freeze taxidermed. I’m so happy to have found a young lady right down the road who is excited to work on our animals; a mountain lion, porcupine, bobcat and ring-tailed cat. Marina of Heritage Taxidermy does beautiful work! As money allows, we’ll work on the birds in the freezer as well.

At the last meeting, the H.R.I.A. board was kind enough to allocate $3000 to getting the heater installed at the Grizzly Creek maintenance shop. Within the next week or two, this project will be finished and the shop will be warm and dry once again. Without a constant source of heat, the shop was damp and moldy. Not a good environment for tools and equipment!
I’ve also been working with Fortuna High School students from the welding class to refurbish the dilapidated ‘Diablo Stoves’ in the day-use area. This is part of their ‘Change the World’ project and will make these beautiful old stoves useful once again.

And last, my long-time park aide Ashley Disney has returned for her fourth and final season. She’s been busy working hard, assisting maintenance with saving the seasonal cabins from rot and destruction. A continuous fight when you’re trying to survive under redwood trees! Ashley will also be taking on a few interpretive projects during these slower, winter months.

As is the custom, winter time is when we all prepare for the busy summer months ahead. It’s looking like Grizzly is going to have a great seasonal staff once again and more hosts are scheduled through to the end of the year. It’s good to be back and (hopefully) making a difference at Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park!

**Review of Andrea Wulf’s The Founding Gardeners**

Now available at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center

This extensively researched historical account concerns the first four American presidents and the passion they shared for nature, plants, agriculture and gardening.

Prior to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Federalist Papers, Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1769 his thoughts on nation building and what was the wisest source of its wealth. He considered going to war as a form of robbery; Commerce was essentially a kind of institutionalized cheating and agriculture was the only honest approach.

Andrea Wulf’s lively and very readable history focuses on Franklin’s third method – Agriculture. In her work she examines how each of these Revolutionary heroes considered agriculture and gardening to be the backbone of the republic’s virtue. They all agreed that the secure future of the new nation lay with the independent, land holding farmer. As Washington wrote, “our welfare and prosperity depend upon the proper cultivation of our lands.”

The horticultural passion was evident in numerous activities, both while in office and in retirement. When the statesmen travelled abroad they eagerly toured gardens in both England and the continent. They read widely on crop rotation, soil health and the role manures played in the revitalizing of farmland, and they actively shared and traded seeds – including new species discovered in the explorations of Lewis and Clark. Seed exchange had been occurring since the early 1700’s; the practice was so widespread that when Jefferson and Adams toured English estates in the late 1780’s they found, to their surprise, that many of the trees and food crops were actually American in origin.

The plantations of Jefferson, Washington and Madison were created and cared for by generations of slaves. Jefferson’s Monticello boasted an immense garden terrace which served as an experimental laboratory to discover and create the hardiest and most productive food crops of the period.

For each of the presidents, ploughing, planting and gardening were elemental passions. Ms. Wulf’s focus on these agricultural pursuits is a timely reminder, now in the early 21st century, of the importance of growing much of our food at the local level. Along with reducing the carbon footprint of transnational food transportation, this historical account is a must read for all those concerned with organic foods and their contribution to the health of our nation and its farms. Happy planting…

Review compiled from articles in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Amazon, and Barnes and Nobel by Bruce Riley
HRIA Receives $72,662 for Usal Beach, Campground and Trail Restoration  
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 Sinkynoe Wilderness Usal Beach, Campground and Trails this year.

The HRIA grant writing team is growing and worked diligently together this fall and winter to submit numerous grants to help restore Usal Beach, Campground and Trails.

**Earth Day Grant:** $2,500 from the California State Parks Foundation  
April 22nd is the Earth Day Event 3-5 pm.  
http://www.calparks.org/help/earth-day/  
You can call Sophia at HRIA for more information vc@humboldtredwoods.org  
1-707-489-3640

**Explore the Coast Grant:** $13,662.04 from the Coastal Conservancy  
Title: Usal Beach Educational Field Trip Program.

**Whale Tail License Plate Grant:** $24,000 from California Coastal Commission  
Title: Usal Beach Environmental Restoration Education Program for Elementary Students and Families.

**Park Enrichment Grant Implementation Plan Development:** $7,500 from the California State Parks Foundation  
Title: Usal Beach Implementation Plan.

**Usal Implementation Plan Matching funds:** $15,000 Department of Parks and Recreation Eel River Sector, North Coast Redwoods District.

**Save the Redwoods League Matching funds:** $10,000 Implementation Planning and Work event support.

California State Parks Eel River Sector of the North Coast Redwoods District has formed the Usal Committee made up of representatives of Mendocino Area Parks Association, Team Standish, Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Associations, Save the Redwoods League, North Coast Redwoods District California State Parks to create an implementation plan to mitigate these risks and restore Usal to its pristine condition, making it a safe and enjoyable destination for visitors. The Usal Committee will provide input and guidance on the restoration of Usal.

We are excited to have Bruce Hilbach-Barger and Shannon Mason join our grant writing team. These funds will provide education-oriented restoration events for Usal with a focus on local adult and family community participation and school programs.
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:**

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Mail Check to: HRIA PO Box 276 Weott, CA 95571

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