



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association



President's Report: Alan Aiken

Spring has definitely arrived in Humboldt Redwood State Park. After years of drought with a rainfall low of 28.46 inches in 2012-2013 and 46.66 in 2014-2015, rainfall for 2015-2016 is 52.86 inches with more to come. With the change of season comes new life and the redwood forest is aglow with the fresh light green of new growth everywhere.

Spring brings the arrival of students and families to the Visitor Center during their break from school and university studies. As the number of visitors rise, the staff of the Visitor Center is gearing up to meet the challenge of another busy summer season. To start the new season, HRIA sponsored an Earth Day clean-up of Usal Beach at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. HRIA board member Carla Thomas, working with Executive Director Sophia Eckert and California State Park Rangers and staff, organized the Earth Day event and after receiving a grant from California State Parks Foundation to fund this important effort.

Recently HRIA began our local outreach effort when our Executive Director and I gave a presentation to a local Rotary Club. The presentation was well received and hopefully will lead to increased understanding of the mission of HRIA within the community. I am looking forward to presentations with other organizations in our effort to have the local community become aware that HRIA is here for everyone.



Alan Aiken

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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 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.

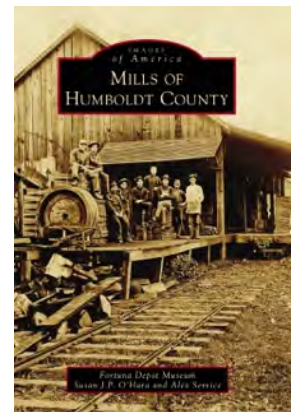
Upcoming Events!

May 14, 2016 - HRIA Membership Board Meeting

If you are an HRIA member and would like to attend the annual Membership Board Meeting, please join us at Saturday May 14th at 9:00am at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center. Meetings are 1 to 4 hours in length.

May 29, 2016 - Book Signing 12:00 - 2:00

Come by the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center over Memorial Day weekend and get your copy of *The Mills of Humboldt County, 1850-1906* signed by Authors Susan O'Hara and Alex Service. The book is being released May 23rd, and royalties are being donated to the Fortuna Depot Museum.



Fourth of July Weekend - Harp Concerts

The Multi-Cultural Music Fellowship is a non-profit group of female harpists that will be visiting Richardson Grove and Humboldt Redwoods State Park over the 4th of July holiday weekend. Join us for a weekend of beautiful music in the redwoods! Details to be announced.



Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, HRIA Manager

Spring is here! Birds are chirping and the wildflowers are blooming as we get ready to start a new season here at Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

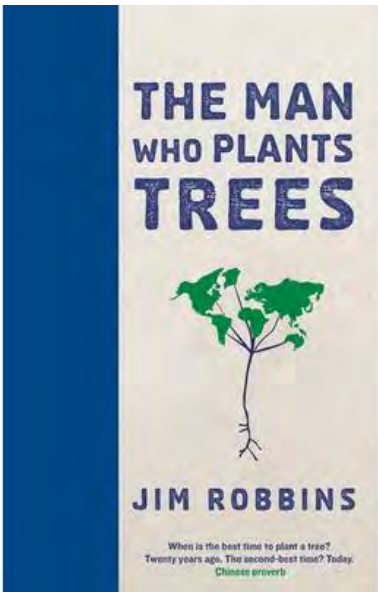
There is a new burl exhibit at the Visitor Center. The burl was poached from Humboldt Redwoods State Park, and the display shows just how beautiful the curly wood is. We hope to inform visitors about burl poaching, and how harmful it is to the tree it was growing from as well as the surrounding forest. A special thank you to David Wiesley and Dan Ash for helping make this display. Come check it out! While your here, we now have a large selection of embroidered sweatshirts, pull over hoodies, zippered hoodies, and the favorite crew necks. Our women's short and long sleeve shirts have been a hit, come get one while they last!

We have had lots of fun hosting school field trips over the winter. As always, the children love to come and check out the center and learn about the redwoods and the forest they live in. Afterwards they all enjoyed dissecting owl pellets, seen here. A special thank you to our school field trippers, our wonderful volunteers, and all of you who have sent in a donation this year. We really couldn't do it without you. Come visit us and until next time, happy trails to all!



Review of *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jim Robbins

Now available at the Humboldt Redwoods State Park Visitor Center



David Milarch is “the man who planted(s) trees.” He is an environmental visionary and founder of the Champion Tree Project which plants clones of the world’s greatest trees on every continent.

This captivating true story chronicles Milarch’s odyssey from a brawling, hard drinking gang leader of inner city Detroit to a shade tree nursery man and eco-activist tirelessly searching for and cloning one hundred species of the biggest, oldest and tallest trees on the planet. Along the way author Robbins educates the readers about the unique characteristics and function of ten species: white oaks, bristlecone pines, willows, coastal, dawn and giant sequoias, cedars, sitka spruce, yew, and the rare ulmo tree of Chile and Argentina.

The central roles trees play in maintaining the planets environmental health is highlighted in a myriad of examples – perhaps chief among them the fact that 50% of Earth’s biodiversity resides in forests, mainly in the canopy! Simply stated, “trees are ecosystem engineers that create the conditions for other forms of life to exist, on every level. And quietly they are dying in epidemic proportions across the globe.”

And so, the valuable time spent reading of David Milarch’s quest to help save the plant will ideally compel each of us to plant some trees. May they be the most important footprints we leave.

Reviewed by Bruce Riley, HRIA Volunteer

Please follow HRIA on Facebook and Instagram for HRIA and local park events, beautiful pictures, and fun facts!



Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association



Humboldt_Redwoods

Mounted Assistance Unit

By Dennis Sousa, MAU Member

Joyce (pictured right) and I have been Mounted Assistance Members for several years. One of the true joys of being in the Bull Creek area for Joyce is that it brings back memories of her childhood. She grew up in the Mattole Valley, attending both the Honeydew and Petrolia Grammar Schools. She attended the Bull Creek Rodeo's in the late 50's as well as spending time with family friends in Bull Creek. Yes, there were still some folks who continued to live there after the 55 flood swept most of the town away as well as the cemetery. These folks were lucky to have lived on high ground. Over the years there has always been a strong pull for us to spend as much time there as possible. What a wonderful opportunity for us to have a reason to be "home" at Bull Creek by being Mounted Assistance Unit Members. We have several reasons why we enjoy being MAU members. One being, we take tremendous pride in our County. The beauty we have been blessed with to be able to live in such a magnificence is over-whelming. Riding on the beautiful Humboldt Redwoods State Park trails has provided us with sincere gratitude. We have enjoyed being able to assist the Park in cleaning debris off roads and trails, keeping water troughs running, and reporting fallen larger trees and slides to the Park Rangers. Over the years we have been blessed with Rangers who have been wonderful to work with. Other ways we have enjoyed promoting the park has been putting on equestrian endurance rides to showcase our beautiful redwoods, trails and horse camp. Riders from across California, Oregon, Washington, and Nevada have attended these rides and have returned to vacation with their horses. The Cuneo Creek horse camp is one of the premier camps in the State of California.



One story I would like to share happened this past summer. While working at an endurance event at the Cuneo Creek Horse Camp. Upon finishing a 50 mile ride, a 78 year old male rider needed medical assistance. I have known this man for a number of years. He is a retired veterinarian and was the first to stage a World 100 mile endurance event in the United States (Kanas). I was aware that this man had atrial fibrillation, and was wearing a safety vest in warm weather. Having been a Peace Officer for 32 years and a MAU member, I recognized the need for additional assistance and was able to contact the on duty Ranger, Valterria via radio. Ranger Valterria evaluated the information I relayed and called for an ambulance. Upon Ranger Valterria's arrival, he took steps to verify, comfort and administer medical assistance. Without the professional, competent and compassionate attributes of Ranger Valterria the successful outcome of this incident could have had a different outcome. It was because of my training through the Mounted Assistance Unit, that this incident was dealt with in an expedient manner. Being a MAU member has given us a hands on opportunity to help maintain the Park, assist hikers, equestrians and bicyclists with providing maps and information about the Park.

Of Redwoods and Road Construction

By Susan O'Hara, HRIA Vice President

Road construction is often a complaint of those who travel; with delays and obstacles to drive around, road construction is often the bane of the tourist. However, intriguingly enough, road construction in Humboldt County lead to the awareness of the threat of logging to the beautiful stands of redwoods along the South Fork of the Eel River in Southern Humboldt County. Prior to 1915 the roads of Humboldt were dirt wagon roads that were built under the auspices of the County Board of Supervisors. The majority of roads were near Eureka, with a few roads that took residents south to Santa Rosa or east to the Sacramento Valley. These roads are still in existence today, and the intrepid driver can navigate these narrow windy, mostly still dirt roads, such as the misnamed Dyerville Loop Road, which was once the Mail Ridge Route, where stage coaches brought the mail to residents of the county. Another route, the Blocksburg road is paved, but is still narrow and windy. A third road, the Bell Springs road, continues the mail route south to north of Laytonville. These roads followed the ridge tops and avoided the seasonal rises of the rivers and the tall trees along the river.



These roads were utilized by the stages of the era, transporting passengers between Mendocino and Humboldt Counties, but were not for the faint of heart. Near the turn of the century a driver and his horses were killed when the horses slipped and fell off the road. During the summer months these roads began to be used by cars, as the roads connected two ends of the railroad. The winter roads proved to be too hazardous for the early autos, and the horse stage replaced the cars.

In 1915 the state legislature enacted a law authorizing “the acquisition construction, improvement, maintenance, and control of the uncompleted portions of the system of state highways,” reported the Santa Ana Register. In 1916 the governor proposed using convicts to build the new roads. These new roads did not follow any of the existing wagon roads, and eschewed the route selected by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad, and instead followed a route though the mountainous region north of Laytonville to Garberville, and then along the South Fork of the Eel River, the route of the current Highway 101, though more circuitous than the present day freeway.

California Governor Johnsons in 1916 declared that convicts could be used to build the new roadways for California. The inmates, with good behavior, who worked on the new highways could have their prison terms reduced. In May of 1916 four of the inmates fled the work camps, and began a man-hunt that lasted several days. The inmates were sighted near Myers Flat, and a gun battle ensued, however, no one was hurt.

Several months later a touring group reported to the San Francisco Chronicle on June 18, 1916 that the “convict road” was “working out far in advance of expectations from every standpoint.” The majority of the road built thus far was by hand labor only in Northern Mendocino. The road was expected to be open by the following spring. In Humboldt county crews also used steam shovels to help build the roadway. The Oakland Tribune on September 10, 1916 noted “they are doing some wonderful work in Humboldt County south of Eureka, the road for miles traverses deep forests of giant redwoods, and for a long distance is smooth and wide.”

With the roads opening in 1917, it allowed many tourists to travel to see the splendor of the redwoods along the South Fork, including the new Governor of California, William Stephens. He and his party stayed with the convicts who were building the road, the San Francisco Chronicle noted on August 17, 1917. The Chronicle reported “the Governor viewed for the first time the grandeur of the redwood scenery of the north coast country.” Stephens was not the only person who found the redwoods unique. That year the founding members of the Save the





Redwoods League, John C. Merriam, Madison Grant and Henry Osborne also journeyed north with Stephen Mather. The new highway allowed them to travel to see the groves along the South Fork and Bull Creek flats, the construction techniques also demonstrated the fragileness of the tall trees as the cutting away of the roadway damaged their root systems.

State newspapers excited reader's interests in the tall redwoods leading to more people becoming aware of the redwoods, and the threat they were under

to being logged for lumber as well as being split into grape-stakes and other split products. Between the efforts of the Save-the-Redwoods League, and the ability to travel to see the redwoods, the plight of the trees received nation-wide, and even world-wide attention which ultimately lead to their preservation for us to enjoy today.

When you travel along the Avenue of the Giants, a nickname the highway gained soon after opening, spare a thought for the inmates who built the foundation for today's modern highway.

Images courtesy Fortuna Depot Museum

Spring into Sinkyone

By Ranger John Hardcastle

A lot has been happening at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park lately! As always, the park has been busy with intrepid hikers willing to brave whatever nature throws at them in order to enjoy all Sinkyone has to offer. We are heading into the spring season, which usually gives us beautiful wild flowers, more wildlife to view, and milder weather. However, there are still some things to be prepared for before venturing into the wilderness.

While the weather usually becomes more predictably mild in spring, Sinkyone still often sees serious storms with high winds, heavy rain, and lightning strikes through May. As the weather can change rapidly on the coast, be sure to bring layered clothing and camping gear suitable for foul weather. Spring is also the peak time for ticks at Sinkyone, so it's a good policy to wear light colored clothing to see them before they are able to bite, and to perform regular tick checks during and after hiking in the park. Our bear population is emerging from winter and is looking for easy sources of food to build up lost fat reserves, so be sure to hang your food out of reach or place it in a bear canister while hiking in the back country!



The park is also seeing several improvement projects in the coming months. On April 16th, there was an Earth Day beach cleanup and work day at Usal Beach on the South end of Sinkyone Wilderness State Park. Thanks to all those who came and pitched in! An Americorp crew is also coming to help in mid-May and will focus on repairing parts of the Lost Coast Trail.

All of us here at Sinkyone hope that you will come out and join us at the park this spring to enjoy everything the park has to offer!

Founders Grove

By Shirley and Dick Sacco, Founders Grove Docents

“Welcome. You are entering an ancient forest. This nature trail will provide a glimpse into the past and look into one of the greatest forests on earth.”

So begins the Founders Grove brochure that HRIA provides for our visitors in response to the request for a "short easy hike but we don't have much time". We forget that for many, this will be the only walk they will take among the magnificent trees of Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Dr. John C. Merriam, one of the three founders of the Save the Redwoods League, wrote in his book published in 1943, The Garments of God: “In a redwood forest as at few places our thought turns irresistibly to look on the meaning of the past, with question as to its relation to present and future. The living forest itself carries a message significant beyond that of any work modeled by human hand. Considered in its wider setting it opens into the past a deep vista, before which no one can stand without experiencing something of the illumination of soul.”

Founders Grove is not just a “tourist attraction”, it’s a "star attraction”, beginning at the base of the 10,000 primeval acres of Rockefeller Forest, an “island in time” in our own HRSP. And now after the first normal winter in 4 years, there have been dramatic changes in Founders Grove. Several trees fell around and on the Dyersville Giant, creating a scene of spectacular proportions. Our visitors won't always be able to experience anywhere else (without going off trail) the incredible display of the power of the winter storms in Northern California, where the rain and high winds can topple the tallest trees in the world and make passage through the forest impossible. This is what early explorers, like the Gregg party, discovered in 1849 when trekking westward from the Trinity mines near Weaverville, looking for a direct route to the Pacific. Viewing the aftermath of a storm in late January, early February, our visitors can use their imagination of what the sights and sounds might have been to create such a display of the forces of nature in an old growth forest.

When was the last time you walked the trail at Founders Grove and let your mind experience the beauty and majesty of the Coast Redwoods, the most beautiful of all trees?

In Memory of.. Bill Mattheis

By Dave Stockton, HRIA Board Member

Bill Mattheis began his volunteer at Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association career after reading an article about the opportunity of volunteering in the giant redwoods. With his wife Lucille, and motorhome, they made the trip to Burlington in the summer of 1989. It was an enjoyable summer so for the next 22 years Bill made the trip to work the three months of every summer. There were bumps along the way as Bill battled cancer twice in long and grueling treatments of simultaneous chemotherapy and radiation. Each time he recovered thinner but more resolved.

As other volunteers will attest, Bill had a ready wit and a strong work ethic. His focus was on helping each visitor as an individual. His great claim to fame was taking the heat from an irate visitor who was angry at him for planting the redwoods too close to the Avenue. His favorite job was planting seedlings in the nursery on his own time. All summer long volunteers would walk by the nursery for a little chat and friendly banter with Bill. One of his projects was planting the dawn redwood in the middle garden around 1991. Every Sunday morning Bill and Lucille would be at the volunteer breakfast as this was the only time in a busy summer all the volunteers could visit in a relaxed manner and enjoy each other's company.

We lost Bill last year in his third bout of cancer just a few months before his 90th birthday. He and Lucille are pictured here receiving their 3,000 hour pins.





Return Service Requested

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Interpretive Association**
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Email: vc@humboldtreedwoods.org

Spring 2016

**Non-profit Organization
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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, 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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HRIA

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