



NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

## Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association



### President's Report: Alan Aiken

Welcome to summer. The weather in the redwoods is spectacular and visitors from near and far are everywhere. To paraphrase the author W.P. Kinsella: If you preserve it, they will come.

The recent need to replace our Executive Director afforded HRIA the opportunity to redefine the roles of both the Executive Director and the Visitor Center Manager. The creation of new job descriptions eliminates duplication of effort, and refocuses the organization back to the mission of interpretation.

Of course this can't be accomplished without talented people. Fortunately, HRIA found such a person in our new Executive Director, Sophia Eckert. Sophia has a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and a Masters in Environmental Policy and Management. Additionally, she has experience as a Park Interpreter and previously as a presenter of the HRIA grade school classroom presentations sponsored in part with Save the Redwoods League.

Sophia's responsibilities are numerous, including: community outreach, enhancement of visitation and volunteers, accounting management, social media outreach, grant application, liaison with State Parks, curation, interpretation, public announcements, amongst others. Her efforts have already resulted in HRIA having an informational sheet that will be placed in the tourism binders found in every hotel room in Humboldt County.

Recently, board member Mike O'Hara and I attended the launch of the Discover Nature application at Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. We met the creators of the app and received instructions in its use. We left very excited. The app follows you along the wildlife refuge trail via the GPS on your phone, and interprets the scene around you. Another portion of the app is designed for children making the hike a game of discovery. Best of all there are no requirements for physical infrastructure that would be difficult to install, costly, or disturb the environment we are trying to protect. Expect more updates on this in future newsletters.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

## 2015 Photo Contest

Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association is sponsoring a Photo Contest. Submissions of images of photographer’s favorite scenes of Humboldt Redwoods, Grizzly Creek Redwoods, Richardson Grove and Sinkyone Wilderness State Parks must be received by September 30. Each park’s winning entry will receive a \$50 gift Certificate to be used in any of the Visitors Centers operated by HRIA. A Grand Prize winner will receive 2 nights free camping at the park of their choice. Photos may be submitted digitally to the Visitors Center at Burlington at [vc@humboldtreedwoods.org](mailto:vc@humboldtreedwoods.org) or digital submissions via flash drives or cds may be mailed to HRIA, P.O. Box 276, Weott, CA 95571. Submitted photographs become the property of HRIA.

**Please submit by October 1st!**



The 2014 winner was this image of Burlington in the fog.

## Excited to be a Part of HRIA

By Sophia Eckert, HRIA Executive Director

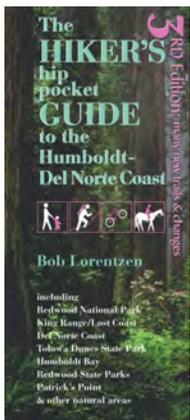


Being back in the park and amongst the redwoods has been wonderful, and it's nice to know that this time it's for good. Being a seasonal Park Interpreter at Humboldt Redwoods State Park for the last two summers taught me a lot about the region, history, local ecology, and state parks in general. It was always sad to know that as the summer wound down, so too would my time working at the park. Operating with state park staff and visitor center volunteers was always a pleasure, and little did I know, a perfect set up for my new position as Executive Director of Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association.

Having the opportunity to work for an environmentally oriented non-profit is something I have always dreamed of doing. The idea of connecting people to the redwood forest in an effort to inspire and preserve is not only exciting and fun, it is truly meaningful. Not many people can say they work under a 300 foot forest canopy every day, and it never ceases to be surreal as I drive to work amongst ancient giants.

I hope to continue to positively contribute to the visitors experience when they stop by one of our Visitor Centers. I also strive to live up to the HRIA mission in focusing on education in a fun and interactive way. It is important to preserve our past and history, and also to create new interpretive experiences while passing along the message of the HRIA mission. Becoming part of our visitors memories accomplishes this, as it spreads our name and inspires future visitors to come see what we are about.

### Upcoming Events!



Saturday, September 12th 3:00- Book Signing with Author Bob Lorentzen of *The Hiker's Hip Pocket Guide to the Humboldt-Del Norte Coast* amongst others, will be doing a 30 minute presentation with photos on hikes in the area, followed by signing books. Please spread the word to all who enjoy hiking in the area and join us at the HRSP Visitor Center for the event!

Saturday, October 3rd- First Wailaki Dance Ceremony to take place in the area in over 100 years at Cuneo Creek Campground. More details to come.



One of the photo contest submissions for 2015  
Fun in Burlington Campground

## Managers Report

By Debbie Gardner, HRIA Manager

Happy Day to all! This summer has been great, with lots of visitors coming to see our magnificent redwoods. We have several new volunteers this season, who help keep things fun and exciting. Phil and Jeni Doran came to us at the beginning of the season, taking the place of Wayne and Judy Hale. Wayne and Judy have decided to sell their RV and retire in Arizona. Phil and Jeni are real pros, and we are grateful to have them on the team! Also joining us are Mike and Ivy Barns, first time volunteers at a California State Park. They fell into it like experts and we are sad to see them go. Jorden Stoffel, one of our youngest volunteers (15) has been here through the summer, and what a help he has been. Jorden wants to continue to volunteer, and the work for State Parks in the future. Come on down and meet our volunteers, check out the Visitor Center, and take a walk through the Redwoods!

## Opening of Richardson Grove Visitor Center

By Rachel Klassen & Josie Murphy, RG Park Interpreters

After 10 months of construction the Richardson Grove State Park's Visitor Center has now reopened. It has been a long a windy road for our Visitor Center, but we are proud to say that life in the Visitor Center is on its way back to normal. The original Visitor Center was constructed in 1931 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and is the only original building left in the park. The center was open for all visitors starting or ending their journey through the redwoods. Originally the front of the Visitor Center was what now faces Highway 101. The paved area in front was once a parking lot, and the original entrance to the park, hosting a variety of visitors on many different adventures. For years the Visitor Center was the place to be, with a full burger stand, gifts shop, and camping supplies store. Families who have been camping at Richardson Grove for almost 50 years recall visiting the ice cream shop after dinner on their way over to the campfire program where they sang their favorite tunes. After many well loved years the visitor center began to show increasing signs of wear, spurring a long overdue makeover. As the center approached its 85th birthday, the park received a two million dollar grant to refurbish the interior of the building. For months visitors questioned when the beautiful building would be opened again, and on July 1st their wish came true. The front room of the Visitor Center is now open every day except Wednesday through the end of August.

While there is still debate over the fate of the unfinished half of the center, for now guest can enjoy a small gift shop, rest area, and interpretative displays as well as the friendly hospitality of our visitor center volunteers. Our amazing volunteers are taking time out of their summers to offer information to our many visitors about the redwoods and park.



Visitor Center set up crew, June 26th. Pictured from left to right Alan Aitken, Debbie Gardner, Lisa & Leo Zugner, Shelly & Bill Priddy. Not pictured Josie Murphy, Sophia Eckert.



## Garden Party

By Kathy Hawley, HRSP Visitor Center Volunteer



On July 1st, the native plant garden in front of the Visitor's Center received a much needed face-lift. Staff and volunteers donated time and energy to clean and pull weeds in the garden. With interpreter Emily's help, weeds were identified and pulled. We also transplanted some plants. Stakes were removed or relocated to identify the correct plant. After all the hard work we were rewarded with pizza and brownies. In the future, we would like to see additional plantings, so we would have a garden that is constantly blooming for the pollinators in the park.

The hard working crew consisted of Emily Moloney, Jeni and Phil Doran, Sharon and Virgil George, Harry Sharp, Sophia Eckert, and Kathy and Gary Hawley. Thanks to all for a job well done!

## MAU Report

By Cathy Mathena

The Mounted Assistance Unit, a group of 30 horse mounted park volunteers, have been hitting the trails in Humboldt Redwoods State Park. This time of year is devoted to keeping trails cleared & assisting visitors in the park. It has been a quiet & uneventful summer so far for the MAU.



Fortunately, the water is running well at Cuneo Creek Horse Camp & equestrians are doing their part to reduce water use. Instead of using a hose to wash a sweaty horse after a ride, people are using a bucket & sponge. This process can be done with a gallon of water versus several. The number of water troughs usually placed in the campground, has been downsized to only 3. These are just a couple of examples of water management during the drought.

The apple & pear trees are bearing a plentiful supply of fruit this season. This beautiful buck, pictured here, is enjoying one of the apples. Very soon the bears will be out in full force & will make fast work of eating all the remaining fruit.

If you are a horse owner & haven't camped at Cuneo Creek Horse Camp, you are missing an incredible experience!

## Campsites and Trails at the Sinkyone Getting an Upgrade

By Carla Thomas

Over 30 volunteers contributing over 1000 Volunteer hours completed the replacement of the four trail bridges between Jones Beach and Needle Rock Visitor Center. Two more trail bridges near Bear Harbor will be replaced between August 22nd and August 28th. Please let Carla Thomas know if you are interested in helping with the bridges ([carlasthomas@earthlink.net](mailto:carlasthomas@earthlink.net)). Additionally, campsites at Usal are getting more attention from our newly hired seasonal Park Aid David Murray. David is picking up litter and cleaning the Usal, Bear Harbor and Needle Rock outhouses weekly. He's been a huge asset for the park making much needed repairs and upgrades. Additionally, on behalf of HRIA, Board Officer, Carla Thomas, received a grant from the California State Park Foundation to partially fund an upgrade for an outhouse. August, September and October are wonderful months to visit the Sinkyone. Come and visit us at the park.





## Ghostly Redwood and the Scientists Who Seek to Understand Them

By Emily Moloney, HRSP Park Interpreter

Sequoia sempervirens or the coast redwood is the tallest tree in the world, growing well over 350 feet. It is also one of the older trees to exist, living to be over 2,200 years old. These are well known statements about the coast redwood, but little do people know, these towering giants have a ghost living amongst them. This ghost of the forest lives parasitically on its host redwood and is known as an albino redwood.

Albino redwoods are extremely rare trees and little is known about them, yet two researchers are making progress to advance our understanding of these elusive trees. Zane Moore is a senior botany student at Colorado State University, where he studies chlorophyll-deficient plants with his mentor Dr. David Steingraeber. Tom Stapleton is an arborist who propagates albino redwood trees to further understand how they grow and their environmental implications. Together Zane and Tom make a dynamic duo advancing our understanding of these trees.

Plants create food from the sun in a process known as photosynthesis, and the machinery for food production is aided by the pigment chlorophyll. Albino redwoods are the result of a genetic mutation in the cells that leave the redwood leaves without this food producing pigment (chlorophyll is also the pigment that gives leaves their green color). Without this pigment the leaves appear an off white, sometimes yellow, color.

There are 56 known albino redwoods in Humboldt Redwoods State Park and 280 known in the natural redwood range. These albino trees grow in one of two ways: as a root sprout shooting up from the base of its parent tree or as an aerial -- a mutated branch protruding from the trunk of a redwood. Because albino redwoods are chlorophyll deficient, they cannot produce their own food and must live parasitically on the host tree. Surprisingly the host redwood allows the parasitic albino tree to survive by allocating it a portion of its water and nutrient budget. Understanding why has been the task of Moore and Stapleton.



On June 27th and 28th Zane Moore and Tom Stapleton visited Humboldt Redwoods State Park to share with park visitors, employees and volunteers their research of these ghostly redwoods. Moore and Stapleton enthusiastically led employees and visitors into Founders Grove and the Drury-Chaney Trail to show off several albino redwoods. Visitors even got to see the tallest living albino redwood root sprout topping out at 55 feet. In the evening Moore and Stapleton delivered a docent training for park staff and volunteers about the morphology and physiology of albino redwoods, and ended their day with a campfire program for the public where they shared fun facts and stories about these ghostly gems.

Moore's research into these ghostly trees illuminates why the host redwood would share nutrients with the albino tree. He has found that white leaves absorb higher amounts of micronutrients from the soil than green leaves. In large amounts, some micronutrients become toxic to plants. The albino tree will absorb vast amounts of heavy metals such as nickel, cadmium, and cobalt and store these micronutrients in their leaves. Essentially the albino parasite is living as a toxic waste dump protecting its host tree from toxic levels of micronutrients.

Despite the interesting scientific discoveries about these trees one thing remains, the albino redwoods are an incredible sight to see in the forest. These rare trees are delicate and fragile. In order to protect the albino redwoods in Humboldt Redwoods State Park we encourage you to always stay on trail as you hike the park trails. If you wish to see an albino redwood you may ask park staff or volunteers at the visitor center and they can help you visit one of these rare oddities while simultaneously protecting the forest.

To learn more about these ghostly redwoods and the work of Tom Stapleton and Zane Moore visit <http://chimeraredwoods.com/>

## Senior Rangers?

By Rachel Klassen & Josie Murphy, RG Park Interpreters



Every day outside of the Richardson Grove’s Visitor Center, children gather on picnic benches to become Jr. Rangers. Every day these little campers learn about the wonderful world around them, and then walk back to camp with their families. It is not uncommon for parents to stay for the duration of the program and in many cases parents are also interested in participating with the program with their children. At the end of the program these patient parents often ask with a smirk, “When is Senior Rangers?” This question though jovial and rhetorical, has sparked a new thought. Could there be a Senior Rangers program?

Many adults enjoy the hands on learning available with the Jr. Rangers program that isn’t always offered through other programs. While nature walks are offered every day, not everyone has an interest in making a trek, and though they are informational and fun campfires are less interactive. Although parents can participate in Jr. Rangers by helping the youngsters out, it is not always encouraged as helicopter parenting may interfere with the child’s overall experience. So what is one to do when stuck in the limbo of giving everyone something to do and maintaining the integrity of Jr. Rangers? One approach we at Richardson Grove are attempting is to bring a collection of books on the same subject matter as the scheduled Jr. Rangers program. This gives parents a chance to distract themselves from the child’s activity while still satisfying their interest in the topic of the day. A simplified solution, perhaps, but it will do until an official Sr. Rangers program is created.

## Fun at the HRSP Visitor Center!



Smokey Bear's 71st birthday celebration, held August 8th had over 100 guests, and was joined by the Weott fire crew.



Appalachian style yarn weaving class taught by Tracy Shapiro on August 7th. Enjoyed by 10 participants per class.



Return Service Requested

**Humboldt Redwoods  
Interpretive Association**  
PO Box 276 Weott, CA 95571  
Email: [vc@humboldtreedwoods.org](mailto:vc@humboldtreedwoods.org)

Summer 2015

**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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