Help Restore the Grove of Titans

Redwood Parks Conservancy has been continuing to raise funds to address the growing impacts of increased visitation at the Grove of Titans. When the grove was discovered by scientists in the late ’90s, it was surrounded by thick under-story with no direct trail access. As knowledge of the grove began to spread, visitors began to venture off-trail in search of the Titans. What began as a few enthusiasts has increased to unmanageable visitation levels, with as many as 50 people a day wandering freely through the grove. This constant stream of visitation has created a large network of “social trails” throughout the grove. Social trails are created when visitors repeatedly venture off of park trails and create unofficial spur trails. As a result, negative impacts to the grove have been observed, including the absence of healthy vegetation on the forest floor; stripping of the outer bark layers on tree bases; damage to the fragile and shallow root system; and compacted soil. These trails are not regularly maintained or monitored, so the increasing number of off-trail hikers has also led to concerns regarding visitor safety.

California State Parks is dedicated to the protection of this grove and its many visitors, and has set out to build an elevated walkway and viewing platforms that will alleviate visitation pressures on the forest floor. The proposed project is a simple and effective solution to an issue that needs immediate attention. The development of an elevated walkway with viewing platforms will accomplish three main goals:

- Prevent further damage to the forest floor caused by off-trail hiking.
- Promote regeneration of forest understory over time.
- Provide safe access to a destination growing in popularity.

With only 4% of ancient old-growth redwoods remaining, restoration and maintenance projects will help to preserve old-growth groves for future generations. Alas, California State Parks has very limited funding for these types of projects, so Redwood Parks Conservancy is leading a fundraising effort to raise the $1.4 million required to get this project off the ground. As of October, donors have provided over $14,000 to support the Grove of Titans project. We are confident that the many people who support the preservation of ancient redwoods will stand up to help restore these towering giants.

We need your help to reach this goal. Please consider offering a philanthropic gift to help protect the Grove of Titans. If you have any questions about donating, or about ways we can acknowledge you as a donor, don’t hesitate to email us at rpc@redwoodparks.org.

A sign posted on the main trail warns visitors of the negative impacts of their footsteps when hiking off-trail.
CRITTER CORNER: MOUNTAIN LION (PUMA CONCOLOR)
Information provided by Kristin Schmidt, Wildlife Biologist, and Kyle Max, Biological Science Technician, National Park Service.

The redwood coast is mountain lion country. While it’s unlikely that visitors will encounter one of these elusive solitary cats, they do occur throughout the various habitats of Redwood National and State Parks. Wildlife biologists have been tracking mountain lion activity within park boundaries since 2000, and 2017 has been an active year for lion reports. As of October 3rd of this year, there have been 29 lion reports including 23 visual sightings, 4 vocalizations, and 2 sets of tracks. In comparison, there were 14 reports through September 9th of 2016. Since Redwood National and State Parks began recording lion reports in 2000, visual observations have ranged from 24 in 2001 to 7 in 2012, with a 16-year average of 17.

Encounters like these might make you nervous, but don’t go canceling your plans to visit the redwoods just yet. Mountain lion attacks are extremely rare, and most animals want nothing to do with humans. In all of the 23 visual reports of mountain lions this year, the animals either ran away or sauntered off. But every once in a while, they’re nice enough to pose for a photo before disappearing. For more information on mountain lions and mountain lion safety, visit www.nps.gov/redw/learn/nature/mountain-lion.htm.

A mountain lion stops to pose for visitors on Redwood Creek.

PRAIRIE CREEK VISITOR CENTER RESTORATION

Over a year ago, we launched a campaign to raise funds for the restoration of the historic Prairie Creek Visitor Center and new interpretive exhibits. The structural restoration and new exhibits will highlight the historic value of the building while also allowing visitors to have a stimulating and thematic educational experience. California State Parks has made progress on the structural restoration of the visitor center, uncovering the original redwood flooring and placing new redwood interior wall panels stained to match the original wood. Since last summer, we’ve received over $60,000 in donations to fund improvements to the visitor center. The Humboldt Lodging Alliance awarded $20,000 to RPC to produce design plans and sketches for the new exhibits, which will help our fundraising efforts. An additional $40,000 was donated by a generous donor to support the structural restoration of the historic building. Look for a complete profile of our Prairie Creek donor in our winter issue.

We want to hear from you!
rpc@redwoodparks.org
707.464.9150
redwoodparksconservancy.org

SUPERINTENDENTS VISIT THE REDWOOD COAST

RPC was invited to join a group of visiting California State Parks Superintendents as they explored the North Coast Redwoods District and learned about projects and programs throughout our local state parks. The group spent a day at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park listening to presentations by Redwood National and State Parks and Redwood Parks Conservancy staff highlighting the strong partnerships that exist between our public land agencies and RPC. Our Executive Director, Cathy Bonser, and Development Director, Joanna Di Tommaso, shared examples of the many ways RPC provides funding and staffing support to California State Parks. We are proud of the work we do, and we were glad to share that work with public land managers from across the state.

California State Parks Forester, Lathrop Leonard, and National Park Service Forester, Jason Teraoka, gave a joint presentation describing collaborative forest management techniques throughout Redwood National and State Parks.
RPC hosted its annual Crescent City/Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce mixer in September to share updates from our non-profit with the community. Representatives from the National Park Service and California State Parks were present to highlight our successful partnership. RPC strives to be a strong and positive presence in the communities surrounding our redwood parks. Engaging with local businesses is one of the many ways that RPC keeps the community involved in ongoing discussions about the future of our parks and public lands.

**Hiouchi Mural Update**
During your next visit to Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, stop by the Hiouchi Visitor Center to view four completed murals showcasing the diverse landscapes of our redwood parks. The finished works are the result of a collaborative effort between the National Park Service, the Redwood Mural Society, the Tolowa Dee’ni Nation, and Elk River Rancheria. Thanks to the ongoing support of our members, Redwood Parks Conservancy (RPC) was able to provide the initial funds required to purchase supplies for the muralists. The Redwood Mural Society donated their time and talent to create the incredible works of art, valued at $12,000. The finished murals include scenes of the Little Bald Hills, the Smith River, a redwood grove, and the coast. This is the first project of its kind at Redwood National and State Parks.

**Message from the Director**
**Cathy Bonser, Executive Director**

Our mission to support our public lands is increasingly successful. In 2012, Redwood Parks Conservancy provided over $200,000 in program services; with your help in the last five years we have increased program services to over $678,000. Thank you for being a member and supporting our parks and other public lands. Our job, however, is not done. Every year there are shortfalls in public funding that make our contributions imperative. For example, compared to 2017, the 2018 President’s budget request for the National Park Service reflects funding reductions totaling $322.2 million.

You are essential to providing support to our partners. Your donations, membership and purchases in our park stores enable Redwood Parks Conservancy to sponsor the Junior Ranger program, visitor guides, grants, summer weekend education programs, special events like the Candlelight Walk, and many more programs our partners consider vital and necessary to people who value our parks and reserves – you, your family, neighbors and friends. This is a great time of the year for you to think about how important public lands are to you. Consider the majesty of our redwood groves and then consider the reduced budget of the National Park Service, one of our important partners. Your donations will help us fill funding gaps and continue important programs. We acknowledge every donation with a letter, but in addition, you can give a tax-deductible donation in the name of a special person in your life and we will also send them a card to let them know you honor them during these winter holidays with a gift to the parks. If you have any questions about making a gift, you can contact us at rpc@redwoodparks.org, or visit our website at www.redwoodparksconservancy.org/donate-rpc.

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PRAIRIE CREEK 5K FUN RUN/WALK: ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Families flocked to the 4th annual Prairie Creek Run in the Redwoods in September for a 5k fun run/walk through old-growth redwoods surrounding Elk Prairie. The Prairie Creek Run offers visitors an opportunity to experience Prairie Creek in a whole new way. Runners who arrived early to stretch caught a glimpse of a large bull elk in the morning sun. Those who stayed late were able to rent a bike from local adventure outfitter, Redwood Rides, and ride along the Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway, which was closed to vehicle traffic. The run is hosted annually by Redwood Parks Conservancy and Redwood National and State Parks. Participants receive an event t-shirt and are entered into prize drawings when the run is completed. Come join us at Prairie Creek in September 2018, and have your running shoes ready!

CELEBRATION OF ART: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

RPC is working alongside the National Park Service to coordinate a community-based celebration of art for the 50th anniversary of Redwood National Park. The diverse landscapes within Redwood National and State Parks are a national treasure, attracting and inspiring over a million visitors every year. Redwood Parks Conservancy hopes to harness this inspiration and foster local creativity. RPC will partner with galleries, museums, and cultural organizations in Humboldt and Del Norte counties to host exhibitions, plein-air workshops, and other activities highlighting the magnificent resources of the national park. As of October, numerous community organizations have pledged to host activities, including two art galleries in Del Norte County and four member organizations of the North Coast Museum Alliance in Humboldt County. The celebration will kick off in spring of 2018, so keep an eye on our website for more information.