**THE TOLOWA COAST - A WORLD BEYOND REDWOODS**

**Susan Calla, Summer Program Coordinator, Tolowa Dunes Stewards**

For the last fourteen summers Redwood Parks Conservancy (RPC) has sponsored more than a hundred educational nature and cultural programs within the Tolowa Coast—comprised of the adjoining public lands of Tolowa Dunes State Park, the Lake Earl Wildlife Area, and Point St. George Heritage Area. First developed in 2004 in collaboration with California State Parks and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, these programs and field trips provide the local community as well as Redwood National and State Parks visitors an opportunity to explore and learn about the habitats and history of other wildlands that lie beyond ancient redwood forests.

The Tolowa Coast lies in a shallow basin bordered by the Pacific Ocean, the Smith River, and the coastal mountain range. It contains thirteen miles of undeveloped shoreline and has at its heart the West Coast’s largest estuarine lagoon Lake Earl surrounded by thousands of acres of one of California’s most important dune wetland complexes. Dozens of miles of hiking and biking trails meander through grassy meadows and coastal pine forests to access beach and lagoon. As the aboriginal territory of the Tolowa Dee-ni’ Indians, this land holds great cultural significance as the tribe’s “Center of the Universe”. It also bears witness to tragedy as the site of the second largest Indian massacre in U.S. history.

The amazing natural diversity of the Tolowa Coast is reflected in the variety of programs offered. Biologists, naturalists, and experts in their fields give compelling slide shows and informative talks followed by guided walks or hikes. Topics range from wildflowers, solitary bees, dunes habitat, ecology, and restoration, migrating birds, butterflies, dragonflies, coastal geology and tsunamis, kayak trips, wetlands, lichens, and mushrooms.

Over the years, increased exposure provided by RPC sponsored programs has lent greater awareness and support for the Tolowa Coast’s fragile cultural and natural resources. Humboldt State University graduate students have conducted research on solitary bees, porcupines, and elk. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service monitors federally listed species in the lagoon and dunes. A “Friends” group of volunteers, the Tolowa Dunes Stewards has successfully received grants for interpretive and directional trail signage to enhance visitor experiences. They also hold bi-monthly restoration days to remove invasive European beach grass and Scotch broom from fragile habitat.

Tolowa coast summer programs are offered free of charge every Sunday from 1-4PM (unless advertised differently). Programs are currently scheduled through September 17th with topics including habitat restoration, wildlife, and coastal climate readiness. Programs are sponsored by RPC and Tolowa Dunes Stewards. For a full list of summer programs and dates, visit the events page on our website or call (707) 465-6191.

Biologist Sandra Hunt-Von Arb leads a dragonfly walk through the dunes.
Stand Tall & Support Your Public Lands

**Critter Corner: Humboldt’s Flying Squirrel**

The wildlife community is stirring on the north coast with the discovery of a new mammal species. The Humboldt Flying Squirrel is now the third species of flying squirrel in North America. Previously believed to be Northern Flying Squirrels, individuals in the Pacific Northwest region were notably darker and smaller than their northern neighbors. DNA tests confirmed that these gliders are indeed a new species. The researchers who made the discovery recommended that the squirrels be named after German explorer Alexander Von Humboldt and the northern California county that bears his name.

Flying Squirrels do not actually fly, but can glide through the air using a membrane that stretches from their ankles to their wrists. They are most active at night, making them particularly hard for researchers to study in the dense forests of the Pacific Northwest. The discovery of this elusive species is exciting news. Make sure to keep your eyes open for them during your next visit to our parks.

**New Items Available**

When you made your visit to the redwood coast, you may have purchased a few keepsakes from one of our park stores. RPC operates seven park stores throughout Redwood National and State Parks and neighboring locations. Thanks to our creative staff and partners, we have developed several unique new products that are now available. Concepts for new items are subject to an extensive review process with park management and RPC staff, ensuring that our park visitors have quality items to choose from during their travels.

**Featured products: New shirts!**

We’ve developed two new shirts that are now available. Our new green t-shirt is a cotton-poly blend available in unisex sizes. It features original artwork of a moonlit camping scene in the redwoods. We’ve also developed our first long-sleeve tech shirt, available in light blue and tan in unisex sizes. This shirt features original artwork generously donated by Dan Cosgrove. Stop by one of our park stores to grab your favorite style.

**New Waysides at Prairie Creek**

Thanks to the dedicated team at RNSP, your next visit through Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is going to be full of new educational opportunities. Redwood National and State Parks has designed and installed new interpretive displays along Newton B. Drury Scenic Parkway. The displays include maps and educational information at various locations along the parkway, allowing visitors to navigate their outdoor adventures and learn about the natural and cultural resources of the area.

In addition to the new displays, RNSP installed hand-cranked audio boxes with recordings of members of the Yurok Tribe, the largest tribe in California and the historical inhabitants of the Prairie Creek region. RPC provided funds for tribal members to travel to our coastal parks and record their voices to be used on the devices. Visitors can now hear a Yurok welcome and prayer as they travel along the Scenic Parkway.

**Message from the Director**

Cathy Bonser, Executive Director

I am enchanted by the night sky, clearly viewed in all our north coast public lands (with the possible exception of our misty beaches). My most memorable park experience took place along the Smith River some years ago. I was with a visitor originally from Hong Kong who had moved to San Francisco and had never been out of the city before her trip to see the redwoods. We stopped by the river at night and looked into the sky. She was so elated at the beauty of the night sky, something she’d never before experienced, that she had tears on her cheeks. Her reaction and captivation gave me a new respect for our sky.

Our public lands are safeguards of some of the last protected dark sky resources. The National Park Service strives to preserve night viewsheds and bring them to the public’s attention. If you, like me, seek night-sky exhilaration, consider joining Park Ranger Shaina for a constellation tour complete with telescopes at Dolason Prairie, up Bald Hills Road just north of Orick. For more details, call park information at 707-465-7335. I join our team to wish you, our members and public land advocates, an enchanted summer.
The Prairie Creek Visitor Center is in the midst of an extensive restoration that will revive the original luster of the historic structure. Dramatic change is already visible, including uncovered original windows and redwood flooring and new interior redwood siding. A dividing wall in the main room has been removed to allow for a more open floor plan. These changes showcase the impressive construction of the historic building, while also allowing for better flow through the visitor center and an abundance of natural lighting.

While the structural restoration is well on its way, California State Parks is also planning to revitalize the educational exhibits within the visitor center. With the help of a professional design team, the new displays will be thematic, interactive, and accessible. RPC is currently raising funds to help cover the costs of the new displays. To learn more about the project, or to offer your support, visit our website or contact us directly.

Thank you to our Rock the Redwoods sponsors and silent auction donors:
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- 6 Rivers Brewery
- Amy Rose Moore
- Seaside Fused Glass
- Dick Taylor Chocolates

**Friends of Headwaters Gains Momentum**

If you traveled through California’s north coast in search of giant redwoods, you may have missed a small grove of impressive old-growth nestled in southern Eureka. Headwaters Forest Reserve is the most recently protected grove of intact old-growth redwoods on the northern California coast. The reserve was acquired by the Bureau of Land Management after a decade-long grassroots movement, and is recognized as an important resource due to its critical habitat and unique history.

RPC partners with a collection of public land management agencies to ensure that our public parks and reserves receive the resources they need. As part of this work, RPC has been working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Conservation Lands Foundation to build a new community group, Friends of Headwaters, to encourage more local engagement and to help garner support for educational and stewardship programs at the reserve. The group hosts activities and events throughout the year, and is hoping to gain more active members to help the group develop. If you are interested in joining the group, or if you would like to be added to their mailing list, please email FOH@redwoodparks.org.

**RPC Supports Explorers Program and New K-9**

RPC has provided funds to support a new collaboration between Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) and the Del Norte Sheriff’s Explorer program. While the mission of the Explorer program focuses on law enforcement, the program is meant to help local youth develop essential skills including leadership, teamwork, and professional interaction. RPC is glad to lend support to park rangers in their efforts to teach eager Explorers about natural resource protection throughout RNSP. Law enforcement rangers work hard to ensure that our natural and cultural resources and our visitors are kept safe. The resource protection team is eager to share their experience with local community youth.

RPC is also helping to support a new canine program in our parks. “Nero” is the first canine on the RNSP team, and will help to enhance resource protection efforts in the parks. In addition to his work with law enforcement rangers, Nero is expected to accompany his handling officer to educational visits to local schools and youth programs. Nero is quickly becoming a popular dog in the community, and we’re excited to welcome him aboard.

**PCVC Update**

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- Salt Fish House
- Holly Yashi
- Savory Grill & Café
- 6 Rivers Brewery
- Amy Rose Moore
- Seaside Fused Glass
- Dick Taylor Chocolates
ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Crescent City Information Center open for season
The Crescent City Information Center (CCIC), located at Redwood National and State Parks headquarters and operated by RPC, is now open. RPC staff and volunteers are available at CCIC every day from 9:00AM – 5:00PM, with the exception of several holidays.

RPC and Tolowa Dunes Stewards present Tolowa Coast Summer Programs 2017
Tolowa coast summer programs are currently being offered free of charge every Sunday from 1-4PM (unless advertised differently) through September 17th. Topics include habitat restoration, wildlife, coastal climate readiness and more. Attendees meet at the Lake Earl Information Center, 2591 Old Mill Road, Crescent City. For a full list of summer programs and dates, visit the events page on our website or call (707) 465-6191.

Prairie Creek Run in the Redwoods - 5K Fun Run and Walk
Join us for our annual 5K through Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Walk or run the beautiful route through old growth redwood that borders Elk Prairie. Registration is $35 for adults and $25 for children ages 12 and younger. Registration includes an event t-shirt. Can’t make it to the run? Register as a virtual runner and receive a t-shirt in the mail! Visit the events page on our website to register.

For more information: www.RedwoodParksConservancy.org