RPC receives grant to support our Junior Lifeguards

California’s far north coast is renowned for its scenic sandy beaches and rocky shores. But if you’ve visited our area, you were probably encouraged to admire certain sections of the coastline from afar. That’s because our local beaches are also well-known for their dangerously frigid waters and strong currents. In an effort to educate local communities about safe recreation along our coast, California State Parks has developed a fun and effective program for youth to learn important ocean safety skills while also gaining confidence and a strong respect for our coastal environment. The North Coast Junior Lifeguard program emphasizes teamwork, leadership, and aquatic safety while introducing local youth to safe marine recreational opportunities.

The Junior Lifeguard program is offered to youth ages 8-17 during two two-week sessions each summer. This unique program focuses on beach/ocean safety, first aid, CPR, physical fitness, and exposure to ocean-oriented sports and activities with the supervision of professional lifeguards. The program launched in July of 2016 and is now entering its third consecutive summer. Fifty Junior Lifeguards completed the program in 2016, then 101 in 2017, and higher participation rates are expected this year. Although the program has been successful and has seen high enrollment, the ongoing success of the North Coast Junior Lifeguards depends completely on the availability of funding. The goals of the Junior Lifeguard program strongly align with our mission, so we are now working in partnership with California State Parks to apply for grant funding to support this program into the future. This June we were awarded a $10,000 grant to purchase essential equipment for program activities and pay wages to an additional lifeguard. We are celebrating this good news, but we will continue to seek funding to ensure that our local youth can continue to participate in this valuable program. If you are interested in the North Coast Junior Lifeguards, or if you would like to offer support to keep the program running, send us an email at rpc@redwoodparks.org or call (707) 465-7329.

Coming up Saturday, September 15th:

FIFTH ANNUAL PRAIRIE CREEK RUN IN THE REDWOODS 5K

Join us at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park for our annual 5k run in the redwoods! This year our 5th annual run coincides with the 50th anniversary of Redwood National Park, so come out and celebrate with a run through the old-growth. Each runner will receive a custom run shirt and will be entered into our prize drawings. Proceeds from the run benefit educational and stewardship projects in our public lands. Detailed information and registration available on our website: www.redwoodparksconservancy.org.
Stand Tall & Support Your Public Lands

Donor Profile: Jessie F.
Last November, we announced our first ever fundraiser for the Mill Creek native plant nursery in Redwood National and State Parks. The nursery is a hidden resource here in our parks, raising tree seedlings, native grasses, and shrubs to be planted in nearby areas that need to be restored. Nursery Manager Dan Burgess oversees the nursery and leads educational programs that highlight forest and stream restoration efforts in the Mill Creek watershed. When we sent out a call for support from our members, one woman took a special interest in the nursery. She reached out to us to find out how she could help, and a few days later we received a generous donation in the mail. Meet our featured donor, Jessie F.:

“Northern California has always had a special place in my soul. It was the area where my parents lived when I was born (they lived in Ferndale but I was born in San Francisco in 1979).

My Dad and I always talked about going back and seeing where he and my Mom lived...and of course showing me the redwoods. I remember going to Muir Woods and seeing the cathedral grove for the first time...I just wanted to stand and look up at the tall trees forever...later we made our way north toward Eureka and Orick...to Redwood National and State Parks. The experience of driving through Avenue of the Giants and later walking through Lady Bird Johnson grove has been unparalleled in terms of places that stir my heart and mind. The redwood forests of northern California are the last of their kind. And, therefore, all the more precious to preserve.

In 2016, my Mom unexpectedly passed away...I continue to grieve her loss and adjust to life without her (she was my best friend). With her passing, I continue to ponder and be grateful for the legacy that my Mom left behind (the example and words of wisdom that she shared with me and my siblings especially). As I think of my own mortality, and knowing that I do not plan on having children, I decided recently that I would want part of my legacy to be in helping to preserve our redwood forests. When I heard about the nursery there at the conservancy, I thought what a great way to get involved financially—by helping to plant redwood seedlings and to help provide with other nursery needs.

Redwood National and State Parks have held a special and magical place in my heart. I donated to the Redwood Parks Conservancy to help preserve these special trees and habitat. This is what I want to leave behind: magical places for future generations.

—Jessie”

Park Heritage at Local Museums and Galleries
We mentioned in our last newsletter that we’ve been working with local museums and galleries to organize a collective arts & culture celebration of the 50th anniversary of Redwood National Park. You can now officially visit three open exhibits! Visit the Phillips House Museum in Arcata on Sundays from 2-4pm to view two exhibits highlighting the history of redwood parks on the north coast. Morris Graves Museum of Arts in Eureka has opened their juried art exhibition Towering: Art Inspired by the Redwoods. The Clarke Museum in Eureka has also opened their historic exhibit The Redwoods Provide(d): The Story of Redwood National and State Parks. Honor the 50th anniversary of Redwood National Park by visiting these great exhibits and showing your support.

Donor Profile: Jessie F.

Provide(d): The Story of Redwood National and State Parks
Meet our featured donor, Jessie F.:
GRANT STRENGTHENS NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH DEL NORTE TRAIL ALLIANCE

You probably know us as the official non-profit partner of Redwood National and State Parks, but you might not know that we partner with a total of four public land management agencies: The National Park Service, California State Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, and the US Forest Service. Recently, our partners at the US Forest Service (USFS) asked us to help a new community group get on their feet. The Del Norte Trail Alliance is a newly formed group of environmental stewards dedicated to maintaining trails in Del Norte County, including areas within the Smith River National Recreation Area (SRNRA) and Redwood National and State Parks. The Alliance, under the fiscal sponsorship of Redwood Parks Conservancy, has been awarded a grant from the National Forest System Trail Stewardship Program to restore and maintain nearly 20 miles on three popular trails in the SRNRA. The $4,700 award will allow the group to buy essential tools and supplies, enroll in training programs, pay for travel to work sites, buy food for volunteers, and cover the cost of a Field Coordinator. The group currently relies entirely on volunteers, and this grant will help them begin to build capacity. The Alliance was one of 42 grant winners out of 114 applicants nationwide.

We hope you’ll join us in celebrating this grant award and our new association with the Alliance. The group has already completed a significant amount of local trail work, and we’re happy to be able to support ongoing efforts. Del Norte Trail Alliance founder Joe Gillespie is looking forward to increasing the group’s capacity and visibility: “This is huge for us, as it helps establish our organization as a trail stewardship group, which meets a primary goal. We will continue to reach out to the community to engage new volunteers to assist us in this important work.”

If you are interested in volunteering for the Alliance, or if you are interested in finding out other ways to support the group, email Joe at delnortetrailalliance@gmail.com or search for the group’s Facebook page.

FORT HUMBOLDT STATE HISTORIC PARK’S DONKEY DAYS 2018

Guest author: Susan Doniger, District Interpretive Specialist, California State Parks

On a rainy Saturday in April volunteers gathered at Fort Humboldt State Historic Park to participate in a living history event that has been held annually for the past 30 years. The event, named for the mechanical steam donkeys that helped haul redwood timber in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the event features free train rides on vintage steam locomotives, forestry demonstrations and historical reenactments. RPC and state park staff portrayed historic characters that once lived at Fort Humboldt, for folks who braved the stormy weather. Highlighting the day was the Ulysses S. Grant impersonation by Dana Utman (a maintenance worker and part-time interpreter at Patrick’s Point State Park). Few people remember that Grant was actually stationed at Fort Humboldt for about four months in 1853 before resigning his commission in frustration at the weather, slow mail service and the high-handed behavior of his commanding officer. Even fewer folks know that Grant later turned the tables on his ex-boss, when he was General of all the Union forces and put his old nemesis in a remote location for the duration of the Civil War! A big thank you to costumed RPC staff and volunteers who engaged the public on that soggy day!

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Cathy Bonser, Executive Director

Redwood Parks Conservancy (RPC) provides our visitors with educational books and games as well as specially-selected souvenirs in seven park stores every summer. Each and every item is individually selected and reviewed first by RPC staff, and if it meets our criteria of connecting with developed park themes, we move the item along to be reviewed by our park partner staff. If we have a book on tsunami, a geologist will review it; a specially-created-for-us glass ornament will be reviewed by interpretive specialists to assure the information that goes along with it is accurate. For instance, Seaside Glass in Smith River makes glass coho salmon ornaments and each package contains information about the salmon, and that information is interesting and accurate. Once an item has passed all documented review we order the item. This whole process can take up to six months, particularly if the item, after review, must be specially produced for us. We strive to offer locally-made and designed products, but ultimately each thing we sell must tie to our public lands and allow our visitors to take away a reminder of our special wealth of life. The income we receive from sales of these items goes right back to our parks, and allows us to continue to assure visitors to our world-heritage parks are educated, entertained and always remember their trip to our public lands.
the making of a JunioR RangeR PLus Redwood edventuRe Quests
Guest author: Sondra Pickett, RPC seasonal employee

Jasmin, an 8 year old came into the Visitors Center to show me her finished Junior Ranger booklet with hopes that she had earned her Junior Ranger badge. She had also completed the Trillium Falls Edventure Quest. I came out from behind the desk to have her stand in front of the fireplace (to make this a special moment) and asked her to repeat the Redwood Ranger Pledge after me. With pink cheeks and a shy voice she did just that, and then everyone around clapped. I shook her hand and told her how proud I was of her.

Knowing they were camping at our campground, I asked if the family was going on another hike. I explained there was another Edventure Quest nearby if she was interested. Jasmin said with her head down, “maybe later”.

Jasmin’s dad let me know that they heard a tree go down somewhere around them while on the last part of the Trillium Falls Trail. Crack, crack, BABOOM, and they felt the ground shake. Jasmin told her mom and dad that she didn’t want to go on anymore hikes, and that she was too scared to walk through the forest of big trees. I asked her dad if I could show her the cool Prairie Creek Edventure Quest patch and try to encourage her to go out again. He thanked me for that idea and wished me good luck.

I went to Jasmin and showed her and her mom the patch she could earn. I told her that I felt the woods were very safe and that her parents would make sure she was safe just as they had done on the last trail. I asked if she would think about going on the next Quest and she said “well ok”.

A couple hours later in walked Jasmine. With a big grin Jasmin placed her completed Quest on the desk in front of me. I looked at her with a smile and told her she was a very brave young lady and I was so happy to award her the Prairie Creek patch.

Taking the time to come out from behind the desk and down to a child’s level is necessary to make them feel special and important. I feel this is what helped Jasmin overcome her fear and made her a very proud and happy young lady.

The Junior Ranger program at Redwood National and State Parks allows children (of all ages) to earn “badge points” in an activity booklet while they explore their parks. When they complete their booklet, they are sworn in as Redwood Rangers and receive a gold badge. Edventure Quest is a similar program that rewards youth with a park-specific patch after they hike designated trails. Both of these programs are supported in part by Redwood Parks Conservancy.