



HUMBOLDT REDWOODS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Spring/Summer 2025 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: ALAN AITKEN

The Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA) is gearing up for another busy summer. The campgrounds will be full, families will be enjoying their days on the Eel River or on the trails, the Visitor Centers will be full of excitement, and the air will be filled with the smell of campfires. It is such a nostalgic feeling for so many who grew up camping. Time slows down watching the next generations make their summer memories: learning to make s'mores or first encountering a banana slug.

At Humboldt Redwoods State Park, we have a new activity that is becoming part of our summer experiences. The Star Parties at Albee Creek Campground bring campers as well as local community members together for a new tradition. Hosted by HRIA and the Astronomers of Humboldt, professional telescopes are set up around the field, focusing on different components of the sky. With blankets laid out under the stars and hot chocolate in hand, participants learn about star clusters, constellations, telescopes, and so much more. This is an opportunity to experience the wonder and awe of our galaxy. Star Parties add an inspiring and unique touch to summer memories. Join us at this summer's Star Parties on July 5th, August 2nd, and August 30th.



Photo of Eel River by David Willson

Alan Aitken

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Mary Moore

HRIA Executive Director
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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, Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, Standish Hickey State Recreation Area, and 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 and 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.

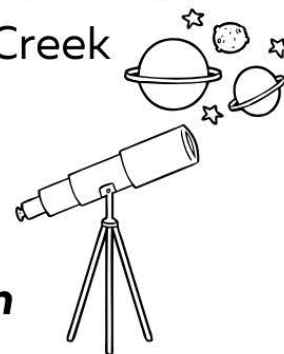
Annual HRIA Events:

Star Party with the Astronomers
of Humboldt at Albee Creek
Campground

Saturday, July 5

Saturday, August 2

Saturday, August 30th



Smokey Bear 81st Birthday Bash
at Humboldt Redwoods State
Park Visitor Center ***Saturday,***
August 9th



Haunted Halloween Candlelit
Walk at Humboldt Redwoods
State Park Visitor Center
Saturday, October 25th



Annual Holiday Party and Silent
Auction at Humboldt Redwoods
State Park Visitor Center
Wednesday, December 3rd



For more details, check
www.humboldtredwoods.org/upcoming-events

MAU MEMBERS MEET IN THE SUN

BY PAT FARMER, MAU MEMBER

On April 28, more than twenty members of the Mounted Assistance Unit met at Cuneo Creek campground for the annual spring work weekend and campout. Rainy weather created challenges but did not deter the group from preparing the campground and trails for opening to the public in May.

Water troughs were scrubbed and filled, the rolling area was uncovered and raked, overhanging branches were trimmed, and ash levels of fire pits were reduced. Ground squirrel holes are increasingly a problem and create a fall hazard for humans and equines. Holes were filled where possible, although the group noted many had been re-opened by the squirrels by the next day. Safety concerns were reported to HRSP staff. Squirrel holes around the privy toilet in campground A were filled with rock, which corrected a lean to the structure.



Trails had suffered some winter damage. Trees were cleared from orchard trail, and some repair was made to the water crossing there. Further revision of the water crossing awaits lower creek levels! A tree on Homestead leading to the Hamilton Barn campsites was too large for removal and a section was cut out and rolled to the side. The pedestrian bridge leading to Hamilton was noted to be unsafe, with holes through the planks. The leaf litter on the bridge was scraped back so holes were more noticeable and HRSP staff was notified of the needed repair.

There was discussion about donations of horse corrals, past and present. A project has been initiated to update signage on corrals donated in the past to acknowledge the groups responsible. In some instances groups donate in memory of someone, and Susan Combes

reported that the Over the Hill riders were interested in initiating that process. Mary Moore will follow up but advises that the "In memoriam" statement cannot be created until five years following a death. The group discussed optimal locations for a new corral and will recommend the southernmost campsite in Camp A, which currently has only a single corral. Mary will convey the importance of an alleyway between pens to prevent horses in separate pens having physical contact.

Karen Brooks and her horse completed the initial evaluation test for MAU membership and they now begin the probationary period before a final test in the fall. Current members tested new horses for the upcoming season. Ruby, the first MAU – certified mule and her partner Rochelle completed their 10-year retest continue to excel as a team.

The group dodged the rain long enough for a great potluck and barbeque. Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association generously donated the main course for our BBQ, and David Pritchard provided the famous cheesy potatoes, which doubled as a celebration of Donna Biteman's birthday.

CAMPGROUNDS ALONG THE EEL AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

BY SUSAN O'HARA, AUTHOR & BOARD MEMBER

Camping has long been a favorite way for many to enjoy the redwoods. Prior to the lands along Bull Creek being acquired by the Save the Redwoods League in the 1930s, local residents would receive permission from the Pacific Lumber Company to camp in their lands. After becoming part of Humboldt Redwoods State Park, there were designated areas to camp along the creek. However, floods and changing understanding of land use led to other campgrounds being built and enjoyed by visitors.



Beginning in the early 1900s camping and recreation became a part of the national landscape. Shorter working hours, and the move of many to live in cities, lead to a desire for parks and campgrounds to enjoy the outdoors that many were becoming more removed from. During this era, camping was very rustic. Campers slept outside, and cooked over an open fire, reminiscent of the early pioneers. However, wealthier visitors, such as Herbert Hoover in 1928, had a

bit more glamorous experience. The San Francisco Examiner waxed poetic about his experiences, "far away from traveled roads with towering redwood trees as a canopy, Herbert Hoover, Republican Presidential nominee slept outdoors tonight at Bull Creek Flat with a party of forty-five of his associates, his secretary, friends and newspapermen." The party was met at the county line by a motorcycle escort that guided the travelers to the campground. The dinner was cooked for the party by Edwin Freeman, operator of Richardson Grove campground, restaurant and store. The party then slept on cots outside, under the redwoods. The Examiner reported Hoover, "thoroughly enjoyed his night in the tall timbers."

The first state park campground at Humboldt Redwoods was established at Williams Grove in 1922. That year a headquarters for the park had been built. In addition to housing rangers, a campfire center and campground was established. Campground spaces "sufficient to accommodate hundreds of machines [automobiles] at one time [were] provided. Fifty tables and fifty large cooking stoves [were] installed as well as sanitary plumbing, electric lights and rest rooms." The editor of The Ferndale Enterprise was further impressed by the "bandstand and speaker's platform which are being erected on the rim of a natural amphitheater." During the next ten years campgrounds were built along Bull Creek and at Dyerville, all under the tall redwoods. Another popular campground was built at Stephen's Grove near Miranda as well as a small campground at F.K. Lane's Grove near Phillipsville. Both campgrounds also had a campfire center and was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930s.

The campground at Richardson's Grove had a different beginning. In the late 1910s the land south of Garberville had been owned by the DeVoy family and they built a private campground at the site, and it featured a campground, campfire center, dance floor, and cabins for those not wanting to "rough it." This camp was operated by Edwin Freeman, who was also a photographer, who used his skills with the camera to help advertise the site and to advocate for preserving the redwoods. In 1922 the land was acquired by the state, but Freeman continued to operate the campground, cabins, store and lodge. Travelers were much impressed by Freeman's lodge, observing, "this is one of nature's choicest beauty spots. ... there are free campgrounds, free water, free swimming, free entertainment each evening when the campers gather about a huge bon fire and a lecturer provides food for thought." Freeman was often the speaker, talking about the redwoods, or other "pertinent topics." Other amusements offered included dancing, which was also provided free of charge. The tourists also appreciated the cabins, which were rented and the "dining room where excellent meals are served." Additionally, food supplies could be purchased at the resort's store.

The floods of 1955 and 1964 proved to be devastating to the campgrounds along the Eel. Stephen's Grove was severely damaged, and never reopened as a campground. It is now the site of a popular hiking trail. William's Grove was also badly damaged, but was re-opened in 1956. After the 1964 flood, it was again closed, and became solely a day use park, with a group campground. Burlington was able to be re-opened, but the number of campsites was severely

limited. The park system decided to build a new campground, away from the river, near Myers Flat. Hidden Springs campground, as it became known, was added to following the 1964 flood, and has 155 campsites. Another campground built in the 1960s was Albee Creek Campground, located near Bull Creek following the acquisition of the Bull Creek Watershed to protect the redwoods along the creek. Albee Creek was followed by several environmental campsites, where visitors could park and walk a short distance to their campsite, trail camps for the more adventurous camper and a horse camp for equestrian riders.



The campground at Grizzly Creek opened in 1949 (pictured left), and quickly became popular with travelers and locals alike. In 1953 The Humboldt Standard described the park as "only a 'child' as far as age is concerned." However, "the Standard" felt it was a beautiful facility, as "beneath the dense groves of redwoods thirty campsites are stretched along some 150 acres of land which border the Van Duzen river." Each campsite featured a "rock camp stove complete with grill and stove pipe, a cupboard for the food and a table." Important for the increasing number of the public towing trailers "plenty of

room is provided if space is desired for a trailer or for sleeping." The campground had seen visitation rates of 20,000 people a year since it opened. In 1956 the state purchased the grove across the river from the park, the \$175,000 purchase allowing for "scenic protection and campground relocation."

We hope you can enjoy one of these campgrounds this summer, as they open to welcome visitors to enjoy the redwoods, and camping along the Van Duzen and Eel Rivers.

SINKYONE TURNS FIFTY

BY CARLA THOMAS, HRIA BOARD MEMBER

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park is turning 50 years old this year. There will be a celebration with guided walks and speakers on June 14, 11 am to 2 pm at Needle Rock Visitor Center. During the month of June, there will be special interpretive posters at the Needle Rock Visitor Center as well. The road to Needle Rock is very narrow and best for 4-wheel drive vehicles. On June 14, a shuttle service from Whale Gulch School to Needle Rock will be offered from 11 am to 2 pm. No pets please. July 26 the Friends of the Lost Coast are hosting a tansy pull event at Needle Rock.

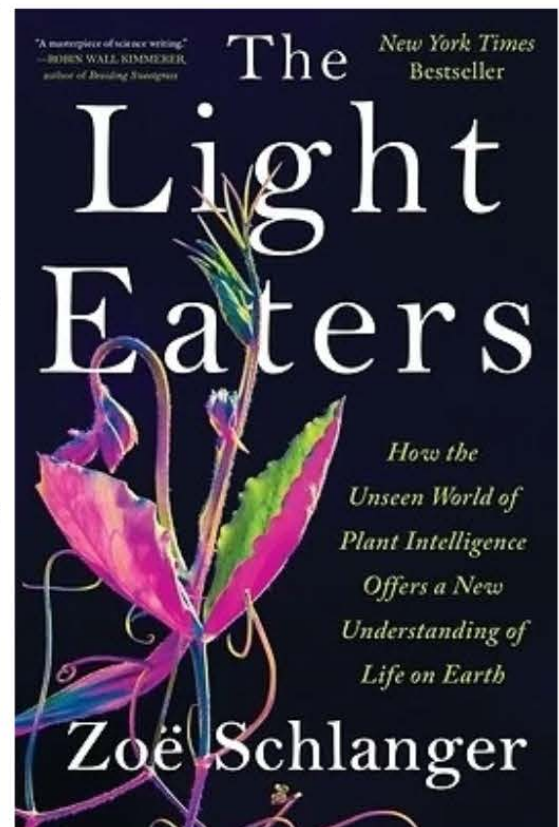
HUMBOLDT REDWOODS STATE PARK VISITOR CENTER RECOMMENDS - THE LIGHT EATERS: HOW THE UNSEEN WORLD OF PLANT INTELLIGENCE OFFERS A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE ON EARTH BY ZOE SCHLANGER BY DENISE STEPHENS, HRIA VOLUNTEER

With that rather grand title is an interesting, challenging non-fiction book that includes current research about plant life. Not at all a dry science book, the book is part memoir and part an exploration of what biologists, botanists and other scientists are studying and experimenting in the world of plant life. Because we just have not really figured plants out!

Author Schlanger began reading and concluded she knew little about plants. As she explored current scientific writing, she interviewed scientists and participated in some of their recent field trips and experiments. As what she learned challenged her understandings of plant life, the book may challenge some of your understandings about plants! Maybe we humans are not seeing, knowing, understanding all that is happening around us with plants. Maybe it's time to open our minds to some new ideas.

Scientists are asking: Are plants really in constant motion? Do plants have intelligence? What is intelligence? What forms of plant communication take place within their own species and with other species? Can plant communication be measured by measuring their use of electricity and chemicals? How do plants "sense" the outside world? What is "plant consciousness"? Do plants have "vision"? Are microbes really changing some of the DNA of some plants? What aspects of traditional (Indigenous) knowledge support current research? And vice versa?

This book is not science fiction, although it may read like sci fi! All the scientific studies and opinions are well documented in the book's NOTES for those who wish to do further reading and/or to check the research.



A final quotation from the book to consider: "Nature is not a puzzle waiting to be put together, or a codex waiting to be deciphered. Nature is chaos in motion. Biological life is a spiraling diffusion of possibilities, fractal in its profusion." (p. 21)

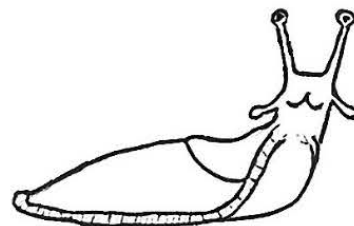


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GIVE A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE HUMBOLDT REDWOODS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

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, publish interpretive literature, and fund the expansion of our 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	Life	\$250
Individual	\$25	Patron	\$500
Supporting	\$50	Endowment	\$1,000
Sponsoring	\$100	Redwood Crown	\$2,500



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