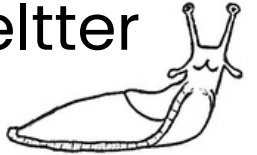




HUMBOLDT REDWOODS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

Fall/Winter 2025 Newseltter



PRESIDENT'S REPORT: ALAN AITKEN

June 1995. My wife, Christine, and I relocated to Redcrest on the Avenue of the Giants. During the next three years I continued to work in Oakland while Christine established our home in the redwoods. Christine quickly became involved with the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association (HRIA), becoming a volunteer in the visitor center, and a docent at Founders Grove and Big Trees Day Use Area. Eventually, she became the board secretary until her passing in May 2004.

Following her death, I became a volunteer in the visitor center. Eventually I was asked to be a board member and in May 2015, I was elected president of HRIA. Time flies by so fast when you are doing something so interesting and important. All this tis to say that my tenure as president will end with board elections this upcoming January.

My ten years serving as president have been a privilege and a labor of love. HRIA remains focused on our mission statement of providing service to the visitors that come from the four corners of the world to see and experience this unique environment. The success of HRIA, in large part, is due to our Executive Director and Manager and I want to take this time to express my appreciation for making my tenure so easy and enjoyable.

Alan Aitken

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Alan Aitken - President
Susan O'Hara - Vice President
Justin Crellin - Secretary
Carla Thomas
Mary Moore
Pat Farmer

HRIA Executive Director
Sophia Eckert

HRIA Manager
Mary Kaufman

Cooperating Association Liaison
Alyssa Barry

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.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND RESERVE YOUR CAMPSITE FOR THE 2026 STAR PARTIES AT ALBEE CREEK CAMPGROUND!



JULY 18TH AUGUST 15TH HUMBOLDT REDWOODS STATE PARK

Thank you!

The Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association received over 50 donations towards our silent auction for our annual

Holiday Party. We greatly appreciate the support of our community businesses and artists. Thank you to the following donors:

AVENUE CAFE
REDWOOD PALACE
DAILY GRIND
BENBOW HISTORIC INN
LEGEND OF BIGFOOT
PEG HOUSE
SCOTIA LODGE
MY HUMBOLDT ABODE
REDCREST RESORT & GIFT SHOP
CHAPMAN'S GEM & MINERAL SHOP
PAUL'S LIVE FROM NEW YORK
REDWOOD CAPITAL BANK
US BANK
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COAST CENTRAL CREDIT UNION
WILD CACTUS
COLUMBIA BANK
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HOPPY'S FROYO
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CORY JOHNSTON
NILSON CO.
BLACKSMITH SHOP
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TUYAS MEXICAN RESTAURANT & CANTINA
THE MILK HOUSE
VICTORIAN INN
FRANZ BAKERY OUTLET

FERNDALE PIZZA CO.
SHAW HOUSE
FERNDALE ART GALLERY
HUMBOLDT BAY HARBOR CRUISES
PIERSON BUILDING CENTER
PICKY PICKY PICKY
LOST COAST BREWERY
LIVING THE DREAM ICE CREAM
OLD TOWN COFFEE & CHOCOLATES
TOY BOX
SEQUOIA PARK ZOO
HUMBOLDT BOTANICAL GARDENS
COSTCO
HARPER FORD
CALIFORNIA WELCOME CENTER
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HOLLY YASHI JEWELRY & ART
BELL & HOOK OUTDOOR STORE
LOS BAGELS
NORTHTOWN BOOKS
ARCATA PIZZA & DELI
ZEN
HENSEL'S ACE HARDWARE
REVOLUTION BIKES
HUMBOLDT PIE
HEART BEAD
HUMBOLDT CRABS
THE MINOR THEATER
JEN A'MIDI
CAL POLY HUMBOLDT BOOK STORE



MOUNTED ASSISTANCE UNIT: SERVICE & REFLECTIONS

BY PAT FARMER, HRIA BOARD & MAU MEMBER

The summer of 2025 seemed to fly by, with Mounted Assistance Unit members spending time in the park to patrol trail, report concerns, and help maintain Cuneo Creek Horse Camp. On October 4, twenty-five members met for our annual fall work weekend. Trail water troughs were repaired and downed trees were removed or reported. In camp, a wooden enclosure around the propane tank was repaired after storm damage, and the campground was 'put to bed' for the winter.

MAU members also spent time in reflection, as we mourned the death of Emily Peterson Becker, who was the first HRSP Ranger assigned to lead our group. "Ranger Em" was guided to us by then Chief District Ranger Ken Wilbur, who recognized a good fit with her abilities in horsemanship, communication and service. Those skills were each important as she worked to corral the independent local equestrians into an organized group, and the HRSP Mounted Assistance Unit officially began in 2002.



Emily Peterson Becker and MAU member Ruth Hoke, 2005

Emily researched other equestrian units, created the needed infrastructure, and worked to strengthen relationships between local equestrians and State Parks leadership. She partnered with early members of the group to create our bylaws, develop policies for membership, and upgrade the Cuneo Creek horse campground. She also strengthened ties with the Humboldt Redwoods Interpretive Association to support funding for MAU needs. We have Emily to thank for the shade trees around the corrals, for the shed which houses our tools, for shoulder season camping, and for the privilege to advance our roles in service to the park. She had a few occasions to chastise us in private but she always advocated for us in public. She taught us



and she learned from us. When the time came for her to move on to other responsibilities she guided us in establishing an internal leadership structure. She handed us off to future rangers as a cohesive group, devoted to stewardship of our beautiful park.

Our small corner of the world is a better place for the work of Ranger Emily Peterson Becker. We are grateful for her service to the Mounted Assistance Unit, to our broader community, and to California State Parks.

SINKYONE WILDERNESS STATE PARK HOLDS TWO THANKFULNESS GATHERINGS THIS YEAR

BY CARLA THOMAS, HRIA BOARD MEMBER

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park is 50 years old this year. The District Interpretive Specialists held an event with funding from the California State Park Association to celebrate with guided walks and speakers on June 14 11-2 pm at Needle Rock. Beautiful new interpretive posters were made for the Needle Rock Visitor Center. Lost Coast Adventures provided shuttles to Needle Rock from Whale Gulch School for those vehicles without 4-wheel drive. A special talk by John and Susie Jennings covered building the Lost Coast Trail, setting up the visitor center, and a ghost story about benevolent spirits highlighted the talk.

The Interpretive Specialists also generated several living documentary products. New posters and a booklet of stories from the public, staff, and volunteers of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park were created and are continuing to be expanded into the future with help from HRIA.



Thank you to Friends of the Lost Coast, DPR Interpretive and Ranger staff, Needle Rock Camp Hosts, and HRIA staff for refreshments and additional informational materials. A special thank you also to North Coast Redwoods District DPR Superintendent Victor Bjelajac for supporting the event.

On September 14, Needle Rock Camp Hosts came to Needle Rock for in-service training held by Ranger Andrea Mapes, our Ranger who coordinates volunteers in Sinkyone. It is the first meeting since 2019 due to COVID shutdowns or road closures. We usually meet in person annually. Ranger Mapes prepared an incredible lunch meal, added to with pot luck dishes from hosts.

It was a fun day, with updates on DPR policies and protocols, new initiatives coming to the park, and brain storming on ways to do our jobs and support the park in some new ways. We also were able to meet our new hosts that started hosting in the past few years. Some of our hosts are returning anew having hosted as young hosts and then returning decades later as retired people who worked a full career.

THE PIONEER CEMETERY THAT ISN'T!

BY DENISE STEPHENS, HRIA VOLUNTEER

On some of the older maps of Humboldt Redwoods State Park, you will find a "Pioneer Cemetery" on the western end of Bull Creek Flats, once a community of homesteads and orchards, two mills, stores, Bull Creek Assembly of God Church. The Bull Creek Cemetery, used from 1883 to December 1955, did include many of the pioneers of southern Humboldt County, last names including Millsap, Shively, Lewis, Johnson, Dyer, Look.



A careful look at a good map will show the Bull Creek Memorial Cemetery on Mattole Road, near Cuneo Creek Campground, just beyond what was Bee River Mill. The December 1955 flood of Bull Creek, with the flood of the Eel River, washed away the Bull Creek Cemetery, its headstones, its caskets and its inhabitants.

Community spirit prevailed as Abner Bruce Lewis, Sr. donated property from his ranch as a new cemetery. The remains that were recovered as floodwaters receded were placed in a mass grave in 1956. Grace Baxter and other community women raised funds for the memorial stone you see there today, dedicated on Memorial Day, 1957.

Now, when you visit the Bull Creek area, you do not find the community as most of that portion of Bull Creek was bought through the eminent domain process by the State and Save the Redwoods League and later incorporated into Humboldt Redwoods State Park. But the Bull Creek Memorial Cemetery is there. You will find the 1956 to 2024 graves of descendants of the pioneer families who settled the surrounding areas of Bull Creek, Dyerville, Holmes, Shively, Pepperwood and Fortuna. On the memorial stone are the names of those believed to have been buried at Bull Creek Cemetery. Notably, Addie Johnson, who died in 1878, was not buried at Bull Creek Cemetery (it didn't exist yet); her single grave can be found at the end of the Addie Johnson Trail on land she homesteaded with husband Tosaldo Johnson, in a location reportedly chosen by her.

(Information sourced from Bull Creek Memorial Cemetery: A Record of Burials in Bull Creek Cemetery Before it was Destroyed in the Flood of 1955. Compiled by Karen Campbell Hendricks 2013. Probably self-published. Resource from the HRIA Archives.)

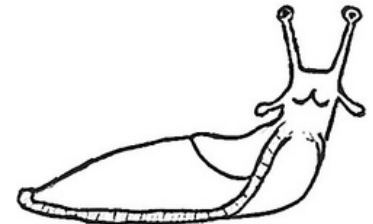


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Interpretive Association
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**GIVE A GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE HUMBOLDT
REDWOODS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION**

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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