

CITIZENS FOR A REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK
Box 713, Arcata, Calif.

April 2, 1965

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT A REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

Note: Unless so indicated, the following does not refer specifically to Plan I. Figures are based on best (sometimes only) available estimates, but much further study in terms of various park proposals is needed.

WHY DO WE NEED A NATIONAL PARK? AREN'T PRESENT STATE PARKS ENOUGH?

(1) All projections show a tremendous increase in demand for outdoor recreation areas in the near future. By the year 2000, use of national parks is expected to increase 5.6 times, and use of wilderness areas 10 times. By 1980, in the North Coast area of California, demand for camping areas is expected to increase by 12.1 times what it was in 1958. In 1963-64, 21% of those desiring to camp at 6 major redwood parks were turned away.

(2) Travel generally in Humboldt County is increasing about 6% per year, a rate which if continued will result in an increase of 3.2 times by 1985 and 7.7 times by 2000. If visits to individual state parks grow at the same rate, by 2000 Prairie Creek would have more than 1,500,000 visitors and Humboldt Redwoods more than 3,000,000 (not including those who merely drive through).

(3) Preservation of first rate scenic areas in present state parks is not guaranteed, despite devoted efforts by the state park personnel, the Save-the-Redwoods League and others, since some proposed freeway routings and ecological modifications, due to outside influences, may seriously impair their park value. Thus 296 mature redwoods were lost in the Bull Creek area in the recent floods, and despite control measures we may anticipate further losses in future floods.

WHY NOT DEVELOP PRESENT STATE PARKS MORE?

(1) More development of present parks is planned (766 new camp and picnic sites in North Coast redwood parks in the next five years), but since the scenic and recreational values of redwood parks are based on relatively unaltered surroundings, there is a limit; they must not be overcrowded, with either people, roads, or structures.

(2) Dr. John C. Merriam has stated: "It is evident that even with the most reverential attitude on the part of the public, the finest areas if opened for unguided or uncontrolled use may soon have such heavy wear as to mean destruction."

(3) As stated by the Redwood Region Logging Conference, February 12, 1965: "Facilities for visitors should be limited within the redwood groves to trails, posted nature walks, and simple sanitary structures. To establish camping facilities inside a grove impairs inspirational qualities and subjects the public to unnecessary danger."

WHY NOT POSTPONE A NATIONAL PARK UNTIL STATE PARKS ARE FULLY DEVELOPED?

All virgin redwood groves not protected will be gone in 20 years, and substantial groves of park quality much sooner. There is no alternative. Immediate action is necessary because of increasing demands for park facilities.

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WOULDN'T A NATIONAL PARK SERIOUSLY IMPAIR OUR ABILITY TO PRODUCE TIMBER?

- (1) A park of 50,000 acres would comprise a small part of Humboldt County's 1,946,000 acres of forest land.
- (2) 325,000 acres of redwood land which could grow timber is not now producing; full utilization of this area would compensate for such a park several times over.
- (3) Park Service Plan I would leave the following percentages of individual company lands unaffected: Arcata Redwood, 16%; Georgia Pacific, 90%; Simpson, 92%; Pacific Lumber, 96%.

WHAT WOULD A NATIONAL PARK DO TO OUR TAX BASE?

- (1) Timber on depleted forest land is tax free for at least 40 years, and thereafter until judged mature. It is estimated that because of this, there will be a decrease in Humboldt County of assessed value on lands and improvements of the lumber industry of some 15% by 1980. If cut as soon as mature, timber may yield a tax in only one or two years a century.
- (2) Possible tax loss would depend on precise acreage and area. But past experience in an area with a comparable amount of park land may afford a criterion. In Southern Humboldt Unified School District, 38,954.5 acres of redwood parks have a total assessed valuation of \$5,255,790. But during the period 1947-64, when these parks were being acquired and developed, actual assessed valuation of the district increased from \$4,081,175 to \$14,370,000, or from \$4,525 to \$10,748 per elementary school pupil. Thus, in spite of an estimated tax base loss of 15% due to timber depletion, the total tax base rose 300%, a rise for which the tourist industry must be largely responsible.
- (3) If revenue from tourists increases at the same rate as travel, assessed values of retail and service establishments should rise from about \$10 million in 1960 to about \$30 million in 1982.
- (4) The Citizens For a Redwood National Park recommends that payments from the Federal treasury be made in lieu of taxes to compensate for possible deficiencies in tax revenue in certain areas during the years when values involved in the proposed park are developing.

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