

SIERRA

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CLUB BULLETIN



“Leave it as it is . . .

The ages have been at work on it,
and man can only mar it.”

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

President Johnson Orders Redwood Park Study

In an historic meeting in the Cabinet Room of the White House on June 25, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson directed the Department of the Interior to prepare a study and plans for a redwoods national park in northern California. The occasion, as reported in the *New York Times*, was the presentation of a plan by the National Geographic Society for acquiring a slice of redwood forest land along Redwood Creek near Orick as nucleus for such a park. Eventually, it is hoped that 30,000 acres or more may be set aside to preserve the virgin forest there. Conservationists hope that the park can be blocked out in a seven-mile-long valley near the Pacific Coast by purchase of some land and by trading national forest or other public land for land now in the hands of private owners.

The text of President Johnson's statement follows:

I HAVE MET TODAY with Secretary Udall and conservation leaders from both Congress and private life, with our distinguished and beloved Chief Justice to express my own personal concern over the future of the great redwood forests in California.

The redwoods are one of nature's masterpieces in North America—and in the world. Yet, at the present rate of logging and with destruction resulting from inadequate conservation practices, the future of the redwoods is in doubt.

Once there were two million acres of virgin coast redwoods reaching from Point Sur to southern Oregon. Today only about 15 per cent remains uncut. Only about 2½ per cent has some degree of permanent protection. The current rate of logging will cut nearly all the old growth within the next five decades.

Here is a picture taken by National Geographic which shows the beauty of that countryside there where the redwoods still remain far removed from any noise and transportation or highways, and it is hoped that some of that area can be acquired for national park purposes.

Many of the standing redwood forests are in jeopardy from flooding and fire and plans for highway construction. More than 500 redwoods were lost in one year. Last year, the National Geographic Society discovered in a secluded grove of coast redwoods the world's three tallest trees—the tallest standing 367 feet. . . .

Now a preliminary report from the National Park Service and the National Geographic Society indicates there remains a last chance opportunity for the United States. This nation can protect these redwoods by creating a great and unique national park in one area of northern California. I have directed Secretary Udall to prepare a plan for a redwoods national park and to have it ready for presentation to the Congress next January.

I have expressed my concern and determination to save our countrysides. I know of no better place to begin than in

this work of saving the majestic redwood forests of the American West.

I would especially like to commend the National Geographic Society and the Sierra Club, the Save-the-Redwoods League and other such fine organizations for the unselfish efforts they have made in this work. Secretary Udall will direct the Park Service to proceed with their study and will report back to the President at the beginning of the year and, assuming that report is a favorable one, we will give serious consideration to making the appropriation recommendations to Congress in the next session.



On June 25, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson told Congressional leaders and conservationists of his order to study a proposed redwoods national park in northern California. Seated (left to right): Will Siri, President, Sierra Club; Paul L. Phillips, National Park Advisory Board; Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall; the President; Chief Justice Earl Warren; Senator Clinton P. Anderson; Mrs. Marian S. Dryfoos, National Park Advisory Board. Standing (left to right): David Brower, Executive Director, Sierra Club; Irvine Sprague, representing California Governor Edmund G. Brown; Senator Thomas H. Kuchel; Undersecretary of the Interior James Carr; Congressman Wayne N. Aspinwall; Anthony Wayne Smith, President, National Parks Association; Dr. Melvin M. Payne (hidden), Vice-President, National Geographic Society; Dr. Meville Bell Grosvenor, President, National Geographic Society; Dr. Stanley A. Cain, Chairman of the National Park Advisory Board; Congressman Donald Clausen, representing the district containing the redwood area; Thomas L. Kimball, Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation; Senator Alan Bible; Conrad Wirth (partly hidden), former Director, National Park Service; Oscar Chapman, former Secretary of the Interior; George B. Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service; and Chester C. Brown, Chief, Coast Redwoods Study Team.