

Citizens for

CRNP

a Redwoods National Park



Lower Redwood Creek

The special reasons—scientific and aesthetic—
that indicate a Redwoods National Park
should be on Redwood Creek.

August 1967

Citizens for a Redwoods National Park

CITIZENS on California's North Coast, who believe that redwoods as a most impressive part of America's primeval landscape need to be preserved in a Redwood National Park, have banded together to form a group called CITIZENS FOR A REDWOODS NATIONAL PARK (CRNP). CRNP feels there is a lack of objective study on the "worth" of the redwoods standing upright forever in a national park. Unfortunately, there is not time for it. To be sure, at man's accustomed pace, the last of the vertical forests would be horizontal before such a study would be completed.

No more time can be spent contemplating the protection of 1½ percent more of the forest which once covered nearly 2 million acres of California's coast. The 90th Congress must set aside a Redwood National Park which, in the national interest, will benefit untold people. The best park money can buy will, in time, more than pay its extra cost in the satisfaction of many millions of people who will experience the redwoods, either through a casual visit to these extraordinary forests, or through systematic study of them. Parks are for people—an old expression, but one of the best. And the best park for the people is in Redwood Creek.

The redwood story is a fascinating one, but there is much to be learned from questions we do not even know how to ask. Much of coastal northern California is part of the exceedingly complex core of rock known as the Klamath Range. With a known geological history dating back over 500 million years, and with an ancient flora, this land can claim its share of antiquity. The Klamath River, Smith River, and Redwood Creek cut through rocks of varied character on their journey from interior mountains to the sea. As a consequence, the scenery and biota found along the north-coast rivers are also quite varied. While California is our most populous state, most of the land in this northern region is still unsettled—but not much is unspoiled. Years of mining, grazing, and logging have sent raw materials far and wide, while the land has all but been ignored for its value as a scenic resource.

One of man's greatest challenges is to learn to understand the complex biological and physical world around him. He often acts without thinking of the world in the future, which hopefully, will be livable for someone or something. A human-ecological relationship exists between man and the redwoods. On one hand there is said to be a need to log redwoods to support a local industry; yet we realize the growing need in our culture for the values found in the little remaining primeval land on this earth, of which the redwood is a unique part, unequalled in magnificence.

A plan proposed by the Sierra Club, and introduced into the House by Representative Jeffery Cohelan and into the Senate by Senator Lee Metcalf (joined by 56 other members of Congress), would preserve the lower twenty-two miles of one of these great redwood valleys—Redwood Creek—with ten of its named tributaries. This proposed redwood national park would preserve nearly the entire ecological range of the variable redwood forests as found on this major drainage. Such a range is not represented even in part in any of the redwood state parks.

Redwoods do not occur along the entire length of the 55 mile long Redwood Creek drainage. The coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*, the name means always green) be-

gins to play a dominant role in the coniferous flora at the southern boundary of the proposed park, 22 miles upstream from the mouth of the canyon near Orick. As Redwood Creek descends through the proposed park, the character of both stream and forest changes dramatically. For the first 8 miles (miles 22-14 as measured upstream from the mouth of the canyon) the river is small, rocky, and tumbling, with a mountain stream character all its own. Flowing into Redwood Creek at mile 19 is Devils Creek—a virtually unknown tributary with superb forests owing possibly to geologic phenomena, as indicated by the canyon's distinctive shape. Following an inactive and geologically very old fault zone, Redwood Creek maintains a fairly straight and hurried course, often plunging head-on into huge rocks which fail to slow it down. Below mile 14 (upstream from the mouth of the canyon) a remarkable transition takes place. As if tired of such a pace, Redwood Creek slows and wanders lazily past redwoods which now dominate the river edge flora. For a two mile portion, known as the Emerald Mile, Redwood Creek is walled by superb forest on both sides. The Emerald Mile remains as one of the few places where ridgetop-to-ridgetop forests line a river. They are impressive and they are absolutely intact. In the Emerald Mile two small flats, periodically flooded by high water, are occupied by the first all-redwood groves. Trunk diameters range to over 10 feet with heights reaching 349 feet. Nearby a silvery cascade tumbles noisily into Redwood Creek, its miniature canyon draped with delicate ferns. In the spring, dogwood and rhododendron fill the forest with color. Deer, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, bear, and even the rare mountain lion, frequent this undisturbed land where, even on a quiet summer day, chainsaws can scarcely be heard.

Below the Emerald Mile, large redwood trees occur with increasing frequency. Near Bridge Creek (Mile 11) some redwood trees reach nearly 15 feet in diameter. Further downstream diameters greater than 17 feet have been found on the slopes over 1000 feet above the river, and diameters approaching 20 feet are found along the river's edge. Two miles below Bridge Creek, the hollowed out shell of a real titan, which died by fire, measures 22 feet through excluding the bark. All this, is to a lumberman, "non-park type" in quality—at least until it is cut, and then it doesn't really matter, becoming just another "commercial type" log in the horizontal forest primeval found at the mill. In accordance with this philosophy, the Georgia-Pacific Corporation has logged away much of the west side of Redwood Creek. Fortunately, Arcata Redwood Company's east side remains essentially intact for 15 river miles. Nowhere else is such a large area of continuous virgin redwood forest found.

Mile 8 marks the famous bend in the river known for the "tallest trees" grove. Here are found 3 of the ten tallest known trees in the world. Others are found downstream, and upstream in the Emerald Mile. The very tallest, a 385 footer, is located not far away up a small side canyon. Doubtless there are more to be discovered; but now the first, second, third, fourth, sixth, eighth, ninth and tenth tallest trees in the world can only be saved and preserved in their proper natural perspective if Redwood Creek is saved.



Spectacular views of the vast Redwood Creek valley can be obtained from many places. This one is from near the top of Rodgers Peak, looking downstream and across the river at the unspoiled east side. In the foreground is Bridge Creek; to the right (not shown) would be the Emerald Mile; and just left of center, a bend containing some of the world's tallest trees. The moody storm and river fog accentuate the many ridges and small tributaries which give Redwood Creek its unmatched character. In concept of purpose and quality, a national park here would provide what state parks cannot equal, but can only complement.

Nature of CRNP

CITIZENS FOR a Redwood National Park was organized in Arcata, California, on February 16, 1965, with these goals: 1) to be a clear local voice of citizens in favor of a Redwood National Park; 2) to develop and promote information on the park issue and to disseminate it to all interested; and 3) to influence park legislation so that our local communities will have the greatest benefit from the creation of a national park in the redwoods.

CRNP receives donations and contributions to achieve its goals, and membership (\$5) is open to anyone locally, statewide, or nationally. 2,157 signatures were collected locally by CRNP on petitions favoring a National Park and these were forwarded to Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall.

Information has been sent to all of the members of Congress by CRNP, and we will continue to keep them informed. State officials also have been (and will continue to be) informed by CRNP.

In February of 1966 CRNP initiated its *Newsletter* to keep its members and other interested persons informed

of continuing developments in the battle for a Redwood National Park. This special message is a continuation of this effort. It will not stop until all Americans have the park that can still become a reality if everyone who cares fights for it.

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TOO FEW KNOW what Redwood Creek offers. The best part of it is now virtually inaccessible. We who live close to the area have been there and know what is really at stake. This is our plea to the world at large to listen. We hope the world will heed the testimony of those who are both informed and without a financial interest in the outcome.

The lumber industry has a vested interest in confusing the issue to maintain the status quo. The dozens of outside observers who are taken on quick tours by industry spokesmen, understandably, leave confused. They never see the heart of Redwood Creek. Many top officials of government get the same treatment. It is not surprising the issue is thoroughly tangled by the time it reaches Congress.

The issue must be decided by the 90th Congress or there will be no such issue left to resolve. We need your help to untangle this issue so that Congress will know the truth—that Redwood Creek is the one and only place for the finest Redwood National Park.

Evening shadows on Redwood Creek.



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