



MUIR WOODS

NATIONAL MONUMENT

California

Muir Woods National Monument

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, J. A. Krug, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Newton B. Drury, *Director*

General Information

Muir Woods National Monument was established on January 9, 1908, by proclamation of the late President Theodore Roosevelt to preserve a virgin stand of redwoods just north of the city of San Francisco. It is the only area in the National Park System which contains trees of this species, though extensive stands of virgin forest of other types are preserved in a number of the national parks.

The monument lies at the south foot of Mount Tamalpais, a noted landmark in this region, and contains 424.56 acres. The area was donated to the United States Government by the late Congressman

William Kent and his wife, Elizabeth Thacher Kent, and at their request was named in honor of John Muir, noted traveler, naturalist, and writer.

Visitors to the West Coast often confuse the redwood of the coast with the giant sequoia of the Sierra. Both belong to the same genus, *Sequoia*, but are separate and distinct species of that genus. The species growing in Muir Woods is the *Sequoia sempervirens*, commonly called redwood, or coast redwood. It is found growing in the coast region from Monterey County, about 125 miles south of San Francisco, north as far as the southwest corner of the State of Oregon. A representative of this species is the tallest living thing in the world,

Redwood and bay trees in the monument {Grant photo}



reaching the extreme height of 364 feet. The largest diameter is about 20 feet, and the maximum age is probably not much more than 2,000 years. The species growing in the Sierra is the *Sequoia gigantea*, commonly known as the giant sequoia, and is found in the Sierra Nevada at altitudes varying from 4,000 to 8,000 feet. It does not reach the height of the coast type, but has a maximum diameter of over 35 feet and attains an age of 3,000 years or more. Magnificent groves of these trees are to be found in Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks.

Between 150 and 200 years ago, fire ran through Muir Woods and left in its wake charred stumps and deep scars in the living trees. Circles of large trees which grew from the roots of the fire-killed or fire-scarred trees now surround these old veterans.

The tall stately grandeur of the redwood is always impressive, and the Muir Woods

trees are no exception, although they represent average specimens rather than the very largest. There are many other species of trees here, among which the more important are the Douglas-fir, California-laurel (bay-tree), tanoak, alder, and buckeye.

In addition to its natural beauty, the Woods is noted for various odd growths, such as burls, albino shoots, and fasciated formations on the redwoods, while natural grafts and other peculiarities are found on other trees. Burls range in size from very small to huge ones several feet in diameter. Large root burls look like boulders at the foot of trees, while smaller burls are seen in a variety of shapes and sizes on the trunks, generally near the base. In addition to the trees already named, there is an abundance of other plant growth both large and small. Of these, the most interesting are the ferns, the type growing most profusely being the sword fern.

Other beautiful ferns are the lady fern, bracken, and woodwardia.

The Woods is too shady to encourage flowers in such quantities as are found on the more open surrounding hillsides. Nevertheless, there is a good variety found in Muir Woods although in limited numbers, the season beginning as early as February. The more plentiful are the adder's tongue, the trillium, and the clintonia. The azalea, a tall shrub along the creek, blossoms beautifully through June and July and fills the air with its fine fragrance. The blooming of this plant signals the end of the flower season. Oxalis is found in numbers at the base of many redwoods, but only a limited percentage of them bear flowers.

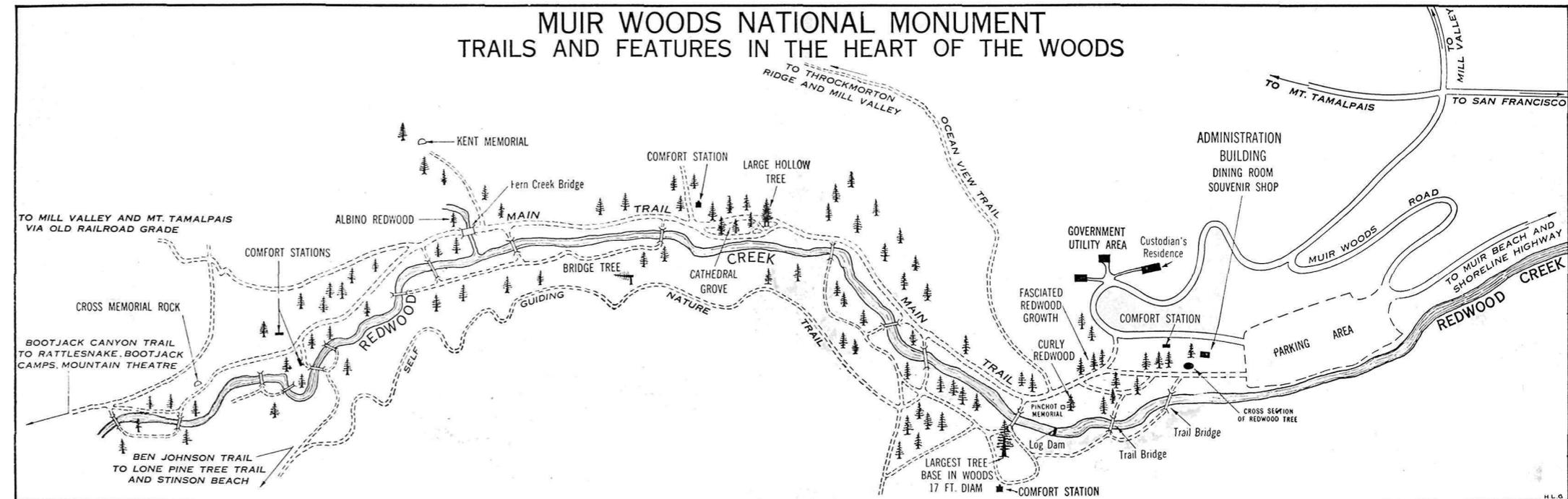
Deer are quite common in the monument, but limit their appearance to early morning or late evening, except in the fall of the year when there is better feed in the valley than on the hillsides. Raccoons are

plentiful, while bobcats and skunks are occasionally seen. Birds are numerous and varied, but the majority of them spend their time in the tall tree tops or in the smaller trees on the higher hillsides and are not generally seen by the visitor. Fry and fingerlings of salmon and steelhead trout are numerous, moving about in the pools during summer and fall. When the winter rains have raised the water level in Redwood Creek, visitors may see, but are not allowed to catch, mature salmon and steelhead trout fighting their way up the rapids to the spawning beds within the monument.

A Few Facts About Muir Woods

The tallest tree is 246 feet; the largest diameter 17 feet; thickness of bark 3 inches to 1 foot.

Large log foot bridges which cross Redwood Creek at intervals were not cut in



Muir Woods but were hauled in from other points in northern California.

There is a Hillside Nature Trail about 3/4 mile long, with labels describing the various trees, shrubs, and flowers.

Douglas-firs are plentiful; the largest are 8 feet in diameter and about 190 feet in height.

Monument Regulations in Brief

Fires and games which tend to injure or destroy vegetation are not allowed.

No camping is permitted, and no hikers or visitors may enter or remain in the monument between one-half hour after sunset and one-half hour before sunrise.

Dogs are allowed only when on leash or

otherwise under physical restrictive control at all times.

Picnicking or the eating of lunches is prohibited in designated restricted areas.

The picking or mutilating of flowers, ferns, or foliage, and defacing or damaging of property, trees, or plants are prohibited.

Fishing, hunting, or possession of firearms is prohibited.

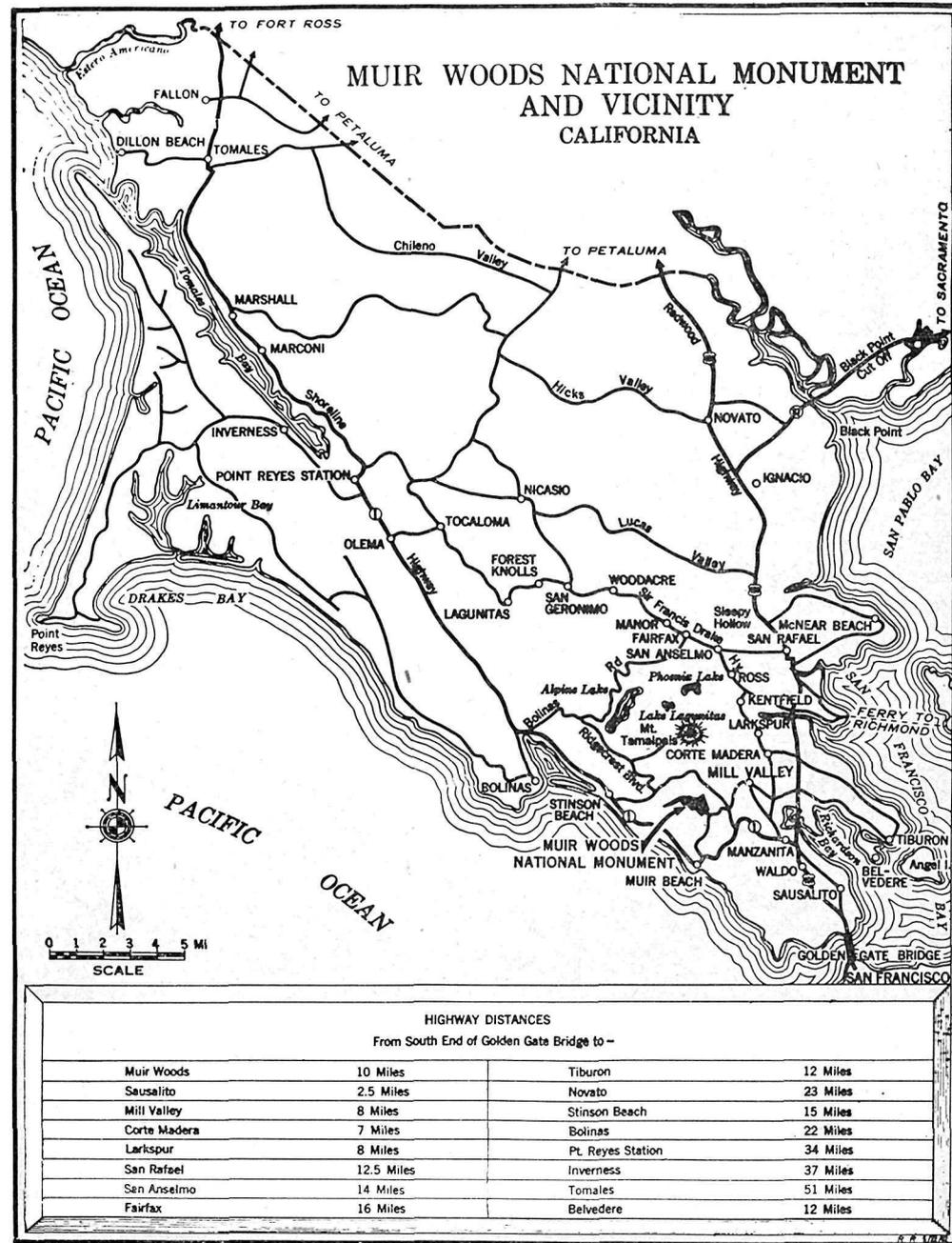
A lunchroom and gift shop are located in the Woods, with prices regulated by the National Park Service.

A ranger guide is available, on request, several hours a day to guide visitors through the main area and explain the points of interest.

Additional information may be secured from the Custodian, Muir Woods National Monument, Mill Valley, Calif.

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Monument headquarters



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