

# MUIR WOODS

NATIONAL MONUMENT

*California*

# Muir Woods

## NATIONAL MONUMENT

**M**UIR WOODS National Monument preserves a virgin stand of redwoods just north 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 485 acres of Federal lands. The area was donated to the United States by Congressman William Kent and his wife, Elizabeth Thacher Kent. At their request it was named in honor of John Muir, noted traveler, naturalist, and writer. It was established in 1908 by Presidential proclamation.

### The Trees

Visitors to the West Coast often confuse the redwood of the coast with the giant sequoia of the Sierra. Both belong to the genus *Sequoia*, but are separate species of that genus. The species growing in Muir Woods is the *Sequoia sempervirens*, commonly called redwood.

Redwoods grow in this coastal region, which extends from about 125 miles south of San Francisco to the southwest corner of Oregon. A representative of this species, The Founders Tree, in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, California, is 364 feet high, the tallest living thing on earth.

Its largest diameter is about 20 feet. The coast redwood is known to exceed 2,000 years in age.

The species growing in the Sierra is the *Sequoia gigantea*, commonly known as the giant sequoia. Trees of this species are found in the Sierra Nevada at altitudes between 4,000 and 8,000 feet. They attain diameters of nearly 35 feet, but average considerably less in height than the coast redwood. Many of the giant sequoias exceed 3,000 years in age. Magnificent groves of giant sequoias are to be found in Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and Yosemite National Parks.

In Muir Woods the charred stumps and deep scars in the living trees resulted from periodic fires, the last of which occurred between 150 and 200 years ago. Circles of large trees which sprouted 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 tremendously impressive. Other important tree species represented in the monument include Douglas fir, California laurel, tanoak, alder, and buckeye.

### Other Plant Life

In addition to its beauty, Muir Woods is noted for various odd growths, such as burls and albino shoots on some redwoods, while peculiarities such as natural grafts are found on other trees. Burls on red-

woods are lumpy growths that range in size from very small to huge ones several feet in diameter. Large root burls look like boulders at the bases 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. The most interesting are the ferns—the profuse swordfern, the ladyfern, the bracken, the woodwardia, and other beautiful species.

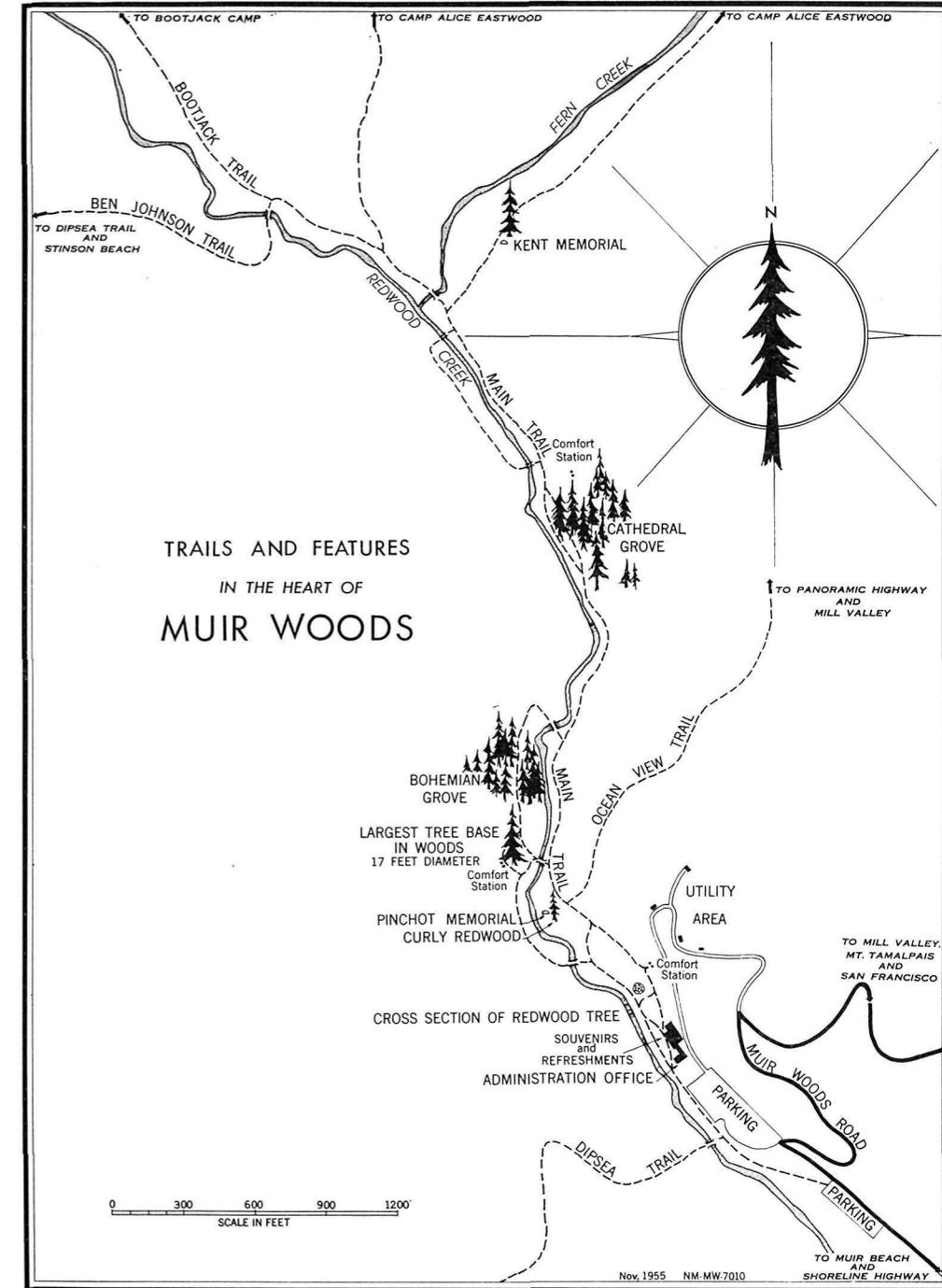
Muir Woods is too shady to encourage wildflowers in such quantities as are found on the more open surrounding hillsides. However, a large variety is found here in limited numbers. The flowering season begins as early as February. Most plentiful are the adder's tongue, the trillium, and the clintonia. 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 abundant at the base of many redwoods

but only a limited percentage of these plants bear flowers.

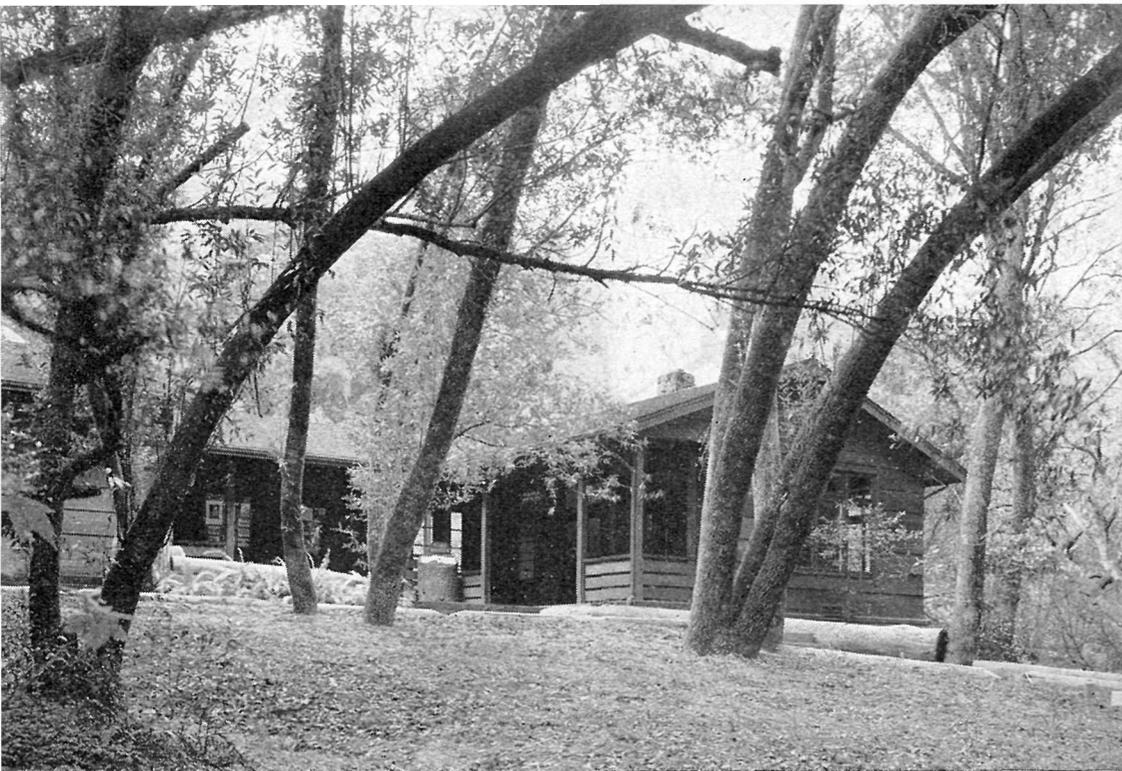
### Animal Life

There are numerous deer in the monument. However, you are likely to see them only in 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, and bobcats and skunks are occasionally seen. Birds are numerous and varied, but the majority of them spend their time in the tall treetops or in the smaller trees on the higher hillsides so that it is not easy to distinguish them. 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, you may see, but are not permitted to catch, mature salmon and steelhead trout fighting their way up the rapids to the spawning beds within the monument.

Redwood and California-laurel in the monument



The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and enjoyment of its people.



Monument headquarters

### About Your Visit

You may visit the monument from sunrise to sunset. During this period a ranger is available on request to guide you through the main area and explain points of interest.

Souvenirs and refreshments are available at the Muir Woods Shop adjacent to the administration building.

There are no facilities for camping or other overnight accommodation in the monument, but you will find all types of facilities in nearby cities.

Please note the following requirements which are necessary for the protection of the natural beauties of the monument, as well as for your comfort and convenience:

Visitors must stay on trails.

Dogs are permitted only on leash or otherwise under physical restrictive control.

Picnicking or eating lunches is permitted only in the picnic area, and no fires may be built.

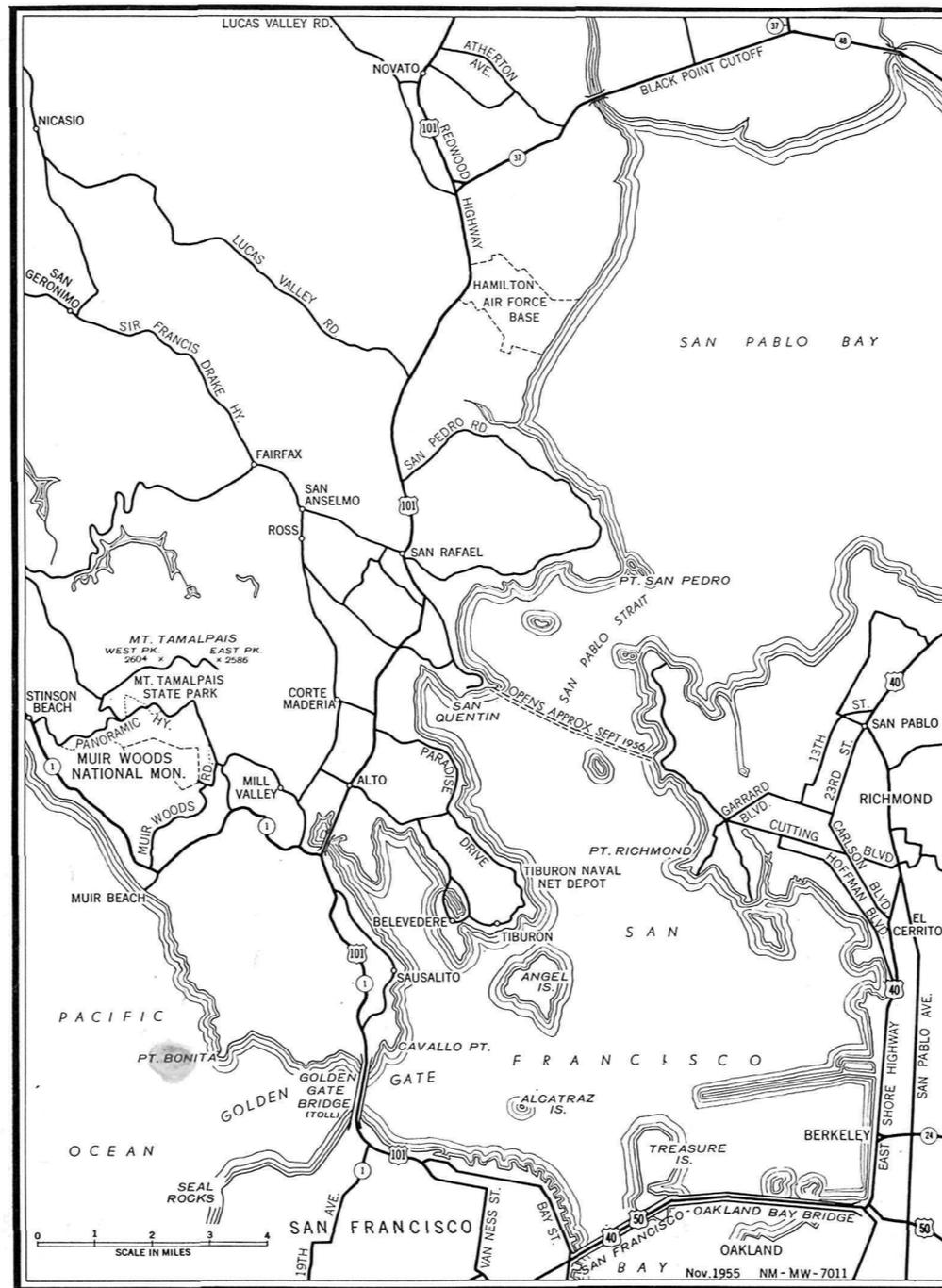
Flowers, ferns, or foliage may not be picked or mutilated, and property, trees, or plants must not be damaged, defaced, or removed.

Games which tend to destroy vegetation are not allowed.

Fishing, hunting, or possession of firearms is not permitted.

### Administration

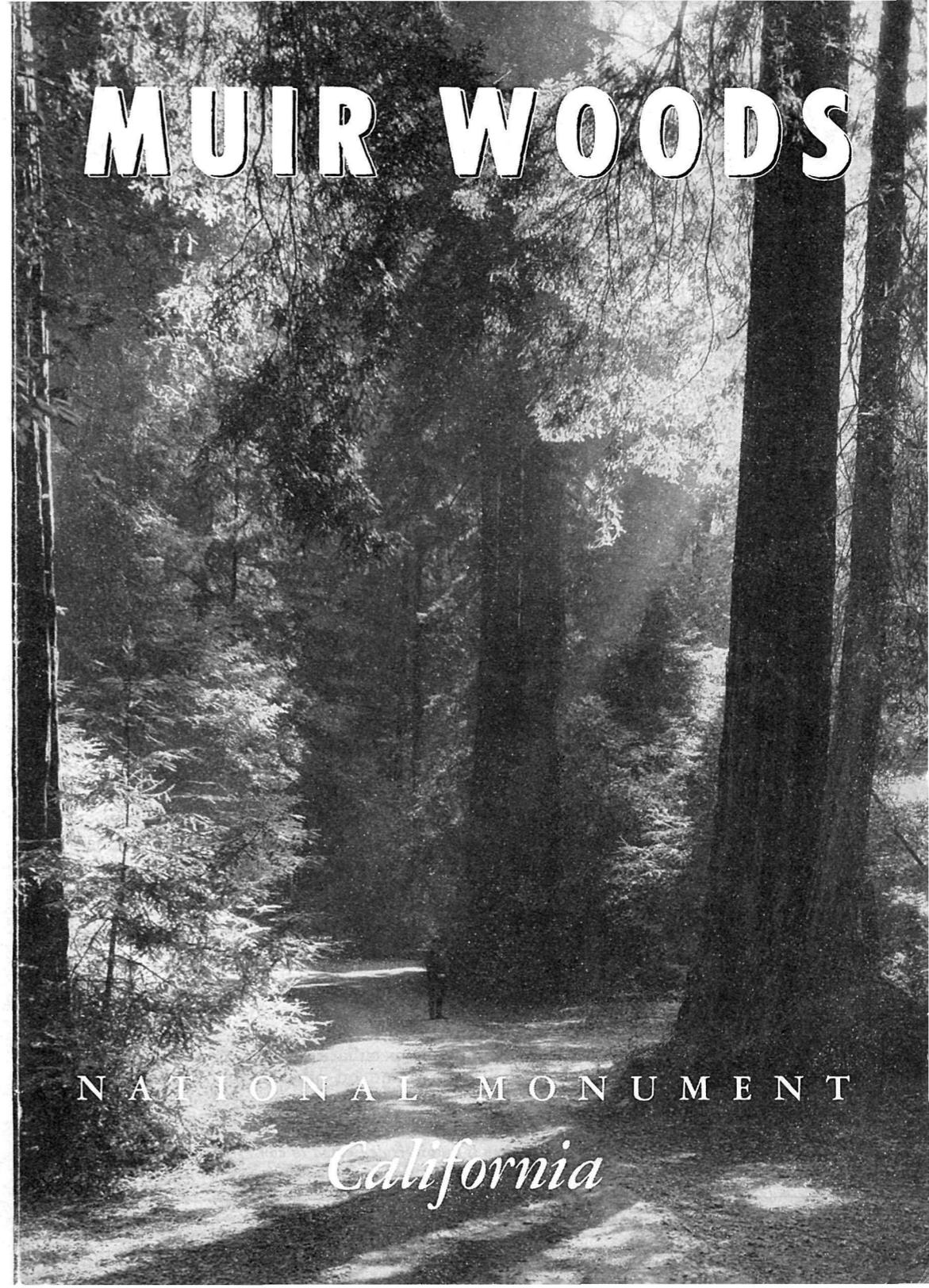
Muir Woods National Monument is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Mill Valley, Calif., is in immediate charge.



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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Douglas McKay, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, Conrad L. Wirth, Director

