

APR 20 2: April 26, 1961

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The Hon. Stewart L. Udall  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Udall:

President Kennedy has invited citizens to address to the executive department matters they feel are vital to the public interest. For this reason I ~~issue~~ issue to your office this plea for scrutiny of what local conservationists feel is wanton desecration of a stand of virgin redwoods adjacent to Big Basin State Park, the state of California's oldest.

Already being logged are 520 acres of magnificent redwood through which visitors of Big Basin have hiked for sixty years. Closed now are trails into the beautiful heart of this forest, where 300-foot trees stand guard on a fairy-like cascade of four waterfalls.

This is a state matter, it is true. But the state failed to act when it could meet the price two years ago. The Big Creek Lumber Co. into whose hands the forest has fallen, is asking several times the original price. Governor Brown, whom I had the honor of petitioning personally, together with a citizen's group from this area, was sympathetic, but unable to commit himself to immediate action.

This is more than preserving a local playground, though the burgeoning population of the San Francisco Bay Area would certainly justify increasing the boundaries of a state park from which thousands are already turned away each summer. There are but three remnants of the great primeval redwood forests which once covered much of the earth. These coastal redwoods (sequoia sempervirins) are one. Others are the great Sequoia Gigantia on the slopes of the Sierra and the almost legendary meta-sequoia in interior China.

Already one third of <sup>the</sup> original two million acres of redwood forest in California is lumbered. I have been advised by an expert that, unlike Douglas Fir, the Redwood <sup>forest</sup> does not renew itself.\* And of course trees 2000 years <sup>old</sup> are irreplaceable.

I suggest that if our state cannot safeguard these wonderful trees, they should be considered a national resource and be given federal protection. Our posterity will need every segment

\* The trees will continue to sprout from root butt under modern logging, but since the forest dies.

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of wilderness it can retain in this dwarfing planet.

If we are considering sending United States dollars to Egypt to help save the threatened treasures on the Nile-- a project which has my warm support--should we not consider federal funds to save trees "which were old when the first Egyptian conqueror penetrated to the Valley of the ~~Euphrates~~"? (President Theodore Roosevelt in a plea to save the redwood trees: 1903, Stanford University.)

That this area can ill afford to lose any more redwood forests was articulated in a recent travel article in SUNSET MAGAZINE (Oct. 1960) in which the following paragraph appeared:

"In the Santa Cruz Mountains south of San Francisco where a few protected 300-foot trees still survive, only your imagination can give you a picture of the forests of a century ago....Nowadays to find something representative of the unique climax forest that once covered nearly two million acres of Coastal California, you must head for the four biggest state parks in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties."

Those of us who have been fighting the case for the Big Basin trees found many other reasons why this particular watershed should not be sacrificed for the short-term gain of a few individual entrepreneurs. The waterfalls which nourish and are nourished by the Big Trees match those of Yosemite in charm, if not in size. The water-retention value of unutilated forest is of great importance to California which suffers long rainless summers. The character of the soil beneath the humus is hardpan and shale, given to slides with minor disturbance. All of this can be easily verified with a brief hike into the area.

It is my fervent hope, and the hope of many others, that the federal government will step in if the State fails to act with dispatch. The Sierra Club has offered to contribute over \$100,000 in funds toward acquisition of the watershed; I cherish the hope the government can also help in some way.

Sincerely,

*Barbara J. Carpenter*

May 19, 1961

L58-NPS

Mrs. K. W. Carpenter  
18531 Oak Drive  
Los Gatos, California

Dear Mrs. Carpenter:

Secretary Udall has asked us to express his thanks for your thoughtful letter of April 26 concerning the destruction of a stand of virgin redwoods adjacent to Big Basin State Park in California. We regret that we have not been able to give you an earlier reply.

The National Park Service has long been concerned about the plight of the coastal redwoods and is gratified that so many splendid groves have been acquired and protected through the efforts of the State of California and the Save-the-Redwoods League. We have always been ready to contribute advice and consultation, but we have no authority to expend Federal funds for land acquisition purposes.

We realize the urgency of the situation, particularly with regard to the Big Basin trees, and we wish we could be of more assistance.

Sincerely yours,

SIGNED

J. H. Gadsby, Acting Chief  
Division of Recreation  
Resource Planning

Copy to: Regional Director, Region Four (2) w/c inc.  
NPS Planning w/c inc.

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