

Remaining coast redwood forests grow naturally only in a narrow strip along the Pacific coastline from central California into southern Oregon.

Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park protects 10,000 acres of these first-growth, primeval treasures.

Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp

Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park


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Cover Photo by Stephen Corley. © Save The Redwoods League.

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Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park



Redwood National
and State Parks



Jedediah Smith Redwoods State

Park, named for an American explorer of extraordinary courage, is a feast for the eye. The park protects 10,000 acres of primeval redwood groves, a lush undergrowth of rhododendrons and azaleas, and banks of ferns against giant fallen trees.

Here at the confluence of the Smith River and Mill Creek, summer temperatures range from 45 to 85 degrees, in contrast to the cool, fog-bound coast. Winter can bring 100 inches of rain and temperatures between 30 and 65 degrees; snow is rare.

PARK HISTORY

Tolowa people have lived in and around the park since time immemorial. The redwood ecosystem provides many natural resources, which the Tolowa continue to use for food, shelter, religion, and transportation. Along the banks of the Smith River watershed, Tolowa traditionally lived in subterranean houses built with hand-split redwood planks. Fishing for salmon in the river and creeks was done in several ways, including by net, spear, or fish weir. They also hunted the magnificent Roosevelt elk by driving them into strategically placed elk pits.

During the Gold Rush, miners overwhelmed the area. State policy employed volunteer militia to hunt and kill Tolowa people. One of the largest massacres in U.S. history occurred in what is now the nearby Tolowa Dunes State Park. The Tolowa population was greatly

Photo courtesy of Jeff Bright



Scenic Smith River, largest undammed river in California

reduced, and the survivors were forced onto reservations. Despite this traumatic history, the Tolowa are a resilient people and have increased their population to more than 1,800 citizens. The Tribe is revitalizing cultural traditions and language, as well as reclaiming their role as stewards of the land.

WHO WAS JEDEDIAH SMITH?

Jedediah Strong Smith was the first non-native known to have traveled overland from the Mississippi River, across the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific coast. In 1821, at age 22, he came west and joined the fur-trapping party of General William Ashley. By late 1826, Smith and two partners had bought out General Ashley, and he and his team traveled across the desert to Mission San Jose in California. Upon arrival, Smith was arrested and sent to Governor Jose Maria Echeandia, who ordered the party out of the province. Smith and his trappers went north through the redwoods, reaching what is now called the Smith River in June 1828. Jedediah Smith's reports on the geology and geography of the western territories

appeared in newspapers of the day and proved that the Sierra Nevada could be safely crossed to reach California.

COAST REDWOOD COUNTRY

California's coast redwoods follow the fog and thrive in continuous belts at elevations below 2,000 feet, where heavy winter rains and moderate year-round temperatures occur. Trees can grow to 350 feet or more, with a base diameter of about 20 feet. Their root systems are broad and shallow, from only a few inches to 6 feet underground.

The oldest coast redwoods are about 2,000 years old and show no signs of dying out. They resist insects, fire, and rot to a remarkable degree, and their vigor in sprouting back when cut or badly burned is an important factor in their longevity. Despite that, experts fear the Earth's changing climate, due to the excessive use of fossil fuels, endangers the redwoods' survival as temperatures increase and coastal fog diminishes.

PLANT COMMUNITIES

Feathery ferns, redwood sorrel, salal, trillium, Douglas iris, and tiger lily grow in splendor beneath redwoods. Salmonberry,



thimbleberry, and huckleberry provide wildlife forage, and acres of rhododendrons and azaleas bloom from April to June. The area's warm climate encourages many other tree species—including western hemlock, Douglas-fir, big-leaf maple, red alder, California laurel, tan oak, madrone, and Port Orford cedar—to share the redwood habitat.

WILDLIFE

Deer, gray and Douglas squirrels, raccoons, and redwood chipmunks are common among park mammals, and bears and mountain lions are sometimes seen. A rare treat is the sight of an otter playing in the river or a beaver working in a deep pool. The noisy Steller's jay steals food from picnic tables. Other local birds include American dippers, varied thrushes, and several species of woodpecker, with an occasional ruffed grouse, belted kingfisher, osprey, spotted owl, or marbled murrelet.



Marbled murrelet

SAVING THE REDWOODS

California's redwood parks are monuments to those whose vision preserved their beauty. The names of several memorial groves at the park reflect the generosity of lumbermen who donated or preserved them, until Save the Redwoods League could purchase the groves and convey ownership to the State of California. When the park was established in 1929, the Frank D. Stout Memorial Grove became its first dedicated grove. The 5,000-acre National Tribute Grove, dedicated to those who fought during World War II, was purchased with League funds.

In October 1968, the National Park Service (NPS) created Redwood National Park in Del Norte and Humboldt Counties. On September 5, 1980, the United Nations designated Redwood National and State Parks as a World Heritage Site and International Biosphere Reserve. In 1994, NPS and California State Parks agreed to comanage Jedediah Smith, Del Norte Coast, and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Parks, and Redwood National Park. Both entities agreed that managing the parks together

would ensure commitment to greater protection and restoration of the more than 105,000 acres of redwood forest.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A picnic area near the Smith River offers tables and grill pits. The beach is popular, but the river can be treacherous; there is no lifeguard service. Popular redwood hiking trails are the Stout Grove Trail loop, the Simpson Reed Grove Trail, and the Boy Scout Tree Trail.

Fishing—Depending on weather, fishing is best from October to February. Salmon and steelhead have been caught during seasonal runs. Summertime brings cutthroat trout fishing. Anglers 16 and over must carry a valid California fishing license. For current information, visit the Department of Fish and Wildlife website at www.wildlife.ca.gov.

Camping—The 106 sites have a table, fire ring, and bear locker. Some sites can accommodate trailers or RVs up to 25 feet (no hookups) and 21 feet for trailers. For reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.parks.ca.gov. Hike and bike campsites may not be reserved.

Interpretive Activities—Summer interpretive programs include guided walks, hikes, and evening campfires on a range of nature and historical subjects.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Some restrooms and campsites, the campfire center and picnic areas are accessible, as are paths from the parking lot to the campfire and visitor centers. Visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov> for accessibility updates.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Tolowa Dunes State Park, 5 miles north of Crescent City on Old Mill Road
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park 7 miles south of Crescent City on Hwy. 101. For park information: Hiouchi Visitor Center, 1600 Hwy 199, Crescent City 95531 (707) 464-6101

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Stay on established trails to avoid compacting the soil near tree roots.
- All natural and cultural park features are protected by law and may not be disturbed.
- Purchase firewood at the park to avoid spreading tree diseases.
- Do not feed wildlife; secure all food items.
- Dogs must be on a leash no more than 6-feet long and must be confined to a tent or vehicle at night. Except for service animals, pets are not allowed on trails.

