

*In Fern Canyon,  
earth-fragrant morning  
mists mingle with the lush  
greenery, while distant  
bird songs blend with the  
rippling sounds of nearby  
Home Creek.*



### 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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[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)



[SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp](http://SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp)

**Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park**  
127011 Newton B. Drury Parkway  
Orick, CA 95555  
(707) 464-6101

Cover photo courtesy of Save The Redwoods Photo Archives

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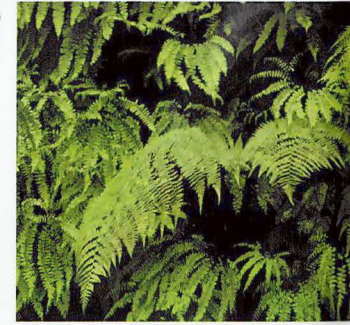
# Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park



Redwood National  
and State Parks



*A* long California's  
rocky North Coast,  
Prairie Creek  
Redwoods State  
Park offers sandy  
beaches and open  
meadows grazed by  
herds of Roosevelt  
elk. Ferns appear to  
flow like a green waterfall down steep canyon  
walls, and old-growth redwoods stand in  
primeval majesty.



Summer brings morning fog, which usually  
burns off by midday. Winter rains bring  
needed water to the redwoods and ferns.

### PARK HISTORY

#### Native California Indians

Yurok people have lived in and around  
today's Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park  
for generations. The temperate climate  
and abundant wildlife of the North Coast  
promoted a culturally rich way of life that  
continues today. Yurok people built villages  
of redwood planks along major waterways.  
Traveling by dugout canoe, they fished for  
salmon. They also hunted elk, deer, and  
other small game, and gathered plants.

In 1850, when gold was found near today's  
Fern Canyon, the Yurok people were  
overwhelmed by an influx of settlers. Conflict  
over the land took many forms. The Native  
People were hunted down; any who survived  
the attacks were forced onto reservations.  
Newly introduced diseases further  
decimated their numbers.

Today, the Yurok have made a remarkable  
recovery. As the most populous tribe  
in California, nearly 6,000 Yurok live in  
Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Tribal  
members are building a future by revitalizing  
their ancestral language and traditions based  
on customs of the past.

#### Exploring the North Coast

The first non-native visitors to the Humboldt-  
Del Norte coast were Spaniard Bartolome  
Ferrelo in 1543, Englishman Sir Francis Drake  
in 1579, and Spaniard Sebastian Vizcaíno in  
1602. The first shore landing, near Trinidad  
Head, was made by Bruno Hezeta and Juan  
Bodega in 1775.

In May 1850, miners crossing today's Gold  
Bluffs Beach saw bits of gold in the sand.  
Removing the gold proved too laborious, so  
the prospectors moved on to sources inland.

*Yurok plank houses near Trinidad*  
Illustration by J. Goldsborough Bruff,  
ca. 1851



Those who stayed needed raw materials  
to build their homes and towns. By the  
1890s, several short-line railroads and  
steam donkeys had helped create a boom  
in commercial logging. Lumber quickly  
became the West's top industry—Eureka  
alone had nine sawmills.

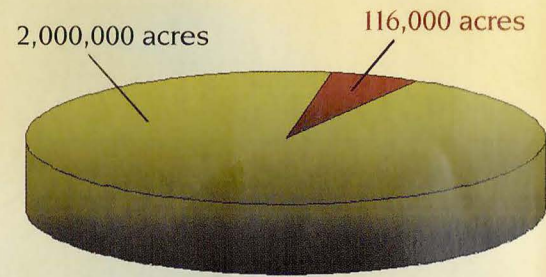
By the end of the 19th century, farms,  
ranches, and dairies had been developed  
along the North Coast. Today, several of  
these historical dairies remain a vital part  
of the region's economy.

#### Conservation and State Parks

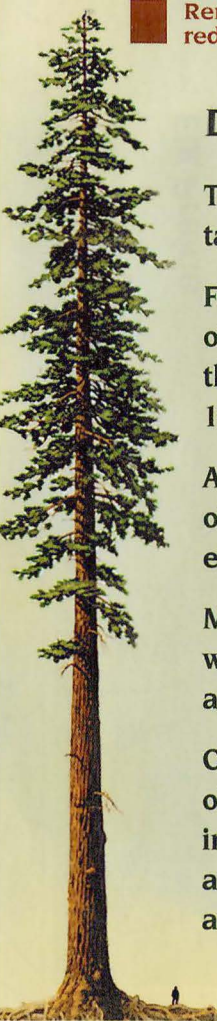
Between 1880 and the early 1900s,  
thousands of acres of old-growth redwoods  
had disappeared; in many areas, the trees  
had been cut to the bare ground.

Alarmed, conservationists established  
the Save the Redwoods League in 1918 to

# The Coast Redwood



■ Original coast redwood habitat  
 ■ Remaining older and old-growth redwoods



## DID YOU KNOW?

The coast redwood is the tallest living thing on Earth.

Fossils show that relatives of today's coast redwoods thrived in the Jurassic Era 160 million years ago.

About 5% of the world's old-growth redwoods exist today.

More than 95% of the world's old-growth redwoods are in California.

Of those older and old-growth redwoods still in existence, about 80% are protected in parks and reserves.

protect the groves—obtaining donations from concerned citizens and acquiring land from lumber companies. The League and the State of California were able to buy thousands of acres adjoining Prairie Creek. By 1923, some of the grandest old-growth tree stands on the planet had been acquired by the State.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a national work program, began during the Great Depression of the 1930s. CCC members built themselves a camp at Elk Prairie, where they lived while building the present visitor center, trail system, campground, and picnic facilities.

## Redwood National and State Parks

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 co-manage four parks: Del Norte Coast, Prairie Creek and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks, and Redwood National Park. Both entities agreed that managing the parks together would ensure commitment to greater protection and restoration of more than 105,000 acres of redwood forest.

## NATURAL HISTORY

A variety of trees call Prairie Creek home. Big-leaf maples, azaleas, and rhododendrons fill the understory, while Sitka spruce, western hemlock, and Douglas-fir tower nearly as tall as their redwood counterparts.

Coast redwoods have existed along the North Coast for about 20 million years. Ever-present coastal fog meets about one-third of their annual water needs. However, experts fear that the Earth's changing climate, due to humans' excessive use of fossil fuels, endangers the redwoods' survival as temperatures increase and coastal fog diminishes. The redwoods and the "soil mats" of leaf litter that collect in the redwood canopy support a variety of other plants and animals.

Although much of this ancient ecosystem is intact, large portions were logged before Prairie Creek became a park. Today, efforts are underway to restore those damaged lands to health.

## Fern Canyon

This spectacular, shady canyon's 50-foot walls, lush with seven kinds of ferns, resemble a hanging garden. Prairie Creek's Fern Canyon is draped in mounds of five-finger, deer, lady, sword, and chain ferns. The canyon's restful quiet is broken only by far-off bird songs and the distant sound of breaking waves.



Northern red-legged frog

## Wildlife

Many species—including brown bats, red squirrels, black bears, and even coyotes—feed on berries. In this deep, rich soil, salamanders and slugs thrive. Mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats hunt at night for black-tailed deer, elk, and other mammals.

Endangered marbled murrelets (closely related to puffins) nest in old-growth

redwood trees. Since corvids (crows, ravens, and jays) prey upon murrelet eggs and chicks, do not feed wildlife or drop food scraps.

Double-crested and pelagic cormorants, common murres, and surf scoters can be seen off the coast, while federally threatened western snowy plovers, gulls, great blue herons, and peregrine falcons fly along Gold Bluffs Beach.

Western garter snakes, northern red-legged frogs, and rough-skinned newts are common. Look for Pacific gray whales and dolphins offshore. California sea lions, harbor seals, and Steller sea lions lie on rocks just off the coast.

## Roosevelt Elk

Once teetering on the brink of extinction, the Roosevelt elk now thrive in their habitat. During the elks' mating season—six weeks from August to October—the air resounds with the calls of bulls challenging each other for mating rights.

Bull elk and cows with calves can be extremely dangerous. Approaching elk is not only hazardous, it is against state law.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

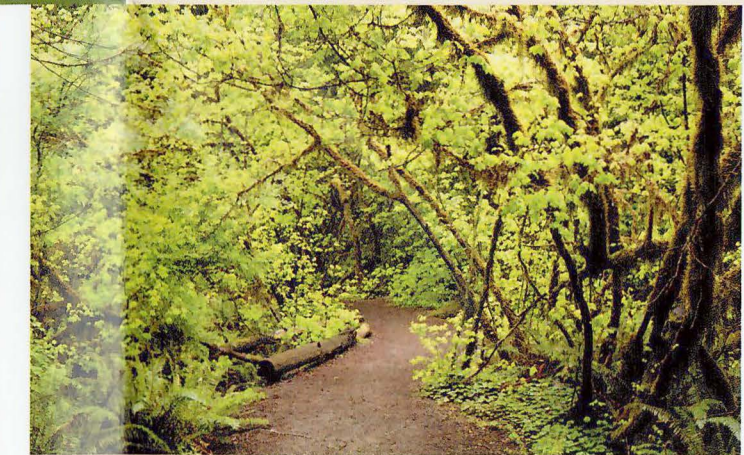
**Trails**—The park's 75 miles of trails are rated from very easy to strenuous. The trails chart on the map shows mileage and degree of difficulty. Use caution and bring water.

Backcountry hikers can park at the lot near the visitor center. Hikers and their cars must



Photo courtesy of Brian Reub

Roosevelt elk roam free in the park meadows.



Be kind to the forest and stay on the trails.

show a free backcountry permit, available at Kuchel Visitor Center in Orick.

**Camping**—Elk Prairie Campground has 75 family sites and hike-and-bike sites. For reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov). Gold Bluffs Beach Campground has 26 tent or RV sites and three nonreservable environmental sites. RVs more than 8-feet wide or 24-feet long may not use Davison Road or Coastal Drive. No hookups or sanitation stations are available. Call (707) 488-2171 for updates.

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

**Camping**—Elk Prairie has three accessible sites, restrooms, showers, and travel paths. Gold Bluffs Beach is hard-packed, not paved.  
**Trails**—**Big Tree Trail:** 0.3 mile. Trailhead north of Big Tree lot. Roadside parking.  
**Prairie Creek Trail:** 1.5 miles. Trailhead off Newton B. Drury Parkway.  
**Revelation Trail:** Interpretive 0.25 mile. Accommodates visually impaired users.  
**Elk Prairie Trail:** 1.3-mile loop from the visitor center.

For accessibility updates and details, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Patrick's Point State Park  
4150 Patrick's Point Dr., Trinidad 95570  
(707) 677-3570
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods SP, 7 miles south of Crescent City off Highway 101  
(707) 465-6101

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- 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.
- Natural and cultural features are protected by law and may not be disturbed.
- Never approach elk or other wild animals.
- Do not feed wildlife. Keep a clean camp; store food and scented items in lockers.
- All firearms are prohibited.
- Help keep your park clean and litter free. If you bring it in, take it back out.

# Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park

TRAILS	MI.	DIFFICULTY	DRURY PARKWAY MILE MARKER
Ah-Pah Interpretive Trail	0.4	Easy	133.5
Big Tree Wayside	0.1	Easy	127.96
Brown Creek Trail	1.2	Easy	129.00
California Coastal Trail	11.4	Easy	
CA Real Estate Assn (CREA)	1.9	Moderate	130.17
Carruthers Cove Trail	1.0	Strenuous	
Cathedral Trees Trail	1.4	Moderate	127.27
Circle Trail	0.3	Very easy	127.96
Clintonia Trail	1.4	Moderate	
Corkscrew Tree Trail	0.1	Easy	128.0
Davison Trail	2.8	Moderate	
Elk Prairie Trail	1.3	Easy	
Fern Canyon Loop	0.6	Easy	
Foothill Trail	2.2	Moderate	
Friendship Ridge Trail	2.8	Moderate	
Hope Creek/Ten Taypo Trails	3.6	Easy/Strenuous	132.74
James Irvine Trail	4.5	Moderate/Strenuous	
Little Creek Trail	0.2	Easy	131.9
Miner's Ridge Trail	4.1	Moderate	
Mooman Pond Trail	0.3	Easy	
Nature Trail	0.3	Easy	
Ossagon Trail	1.6	Moderate	132.74
Prairie Creek Trail	4.3	Easy	130.19
Redwood Access Trail	0.7	Easy	
Revelation Trail	0.3	Very easy	
Rhododendron Trail	7.8	Moderate	130.54
South Fork Trail	0.9	Strenuous	129.0
Strelow Creek Trail	2.1	Easy	
West Ridge Trail	6.8	Moderate	
Zigzag 1 Trail	0.5	Strenuous	129.37
Zigzag 2 Trail	0.5	Strenuous	130.54

## Legend

- State Park
- Wilderness Area
- Freeway
- Paved Road
- Unpaved Road
- Trail: Accessible (Hike Only)
- Trail: Hike
- Trail: Hike & Bike
- Accessible Feature
- Cabin
- Campground
- Campground: Hike & Bike
- Campfire Center
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Ranger Station
- Restrooms
- Seasonal Bridge
- Showers

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Map by Eureka Cartography, Berkeley, CA



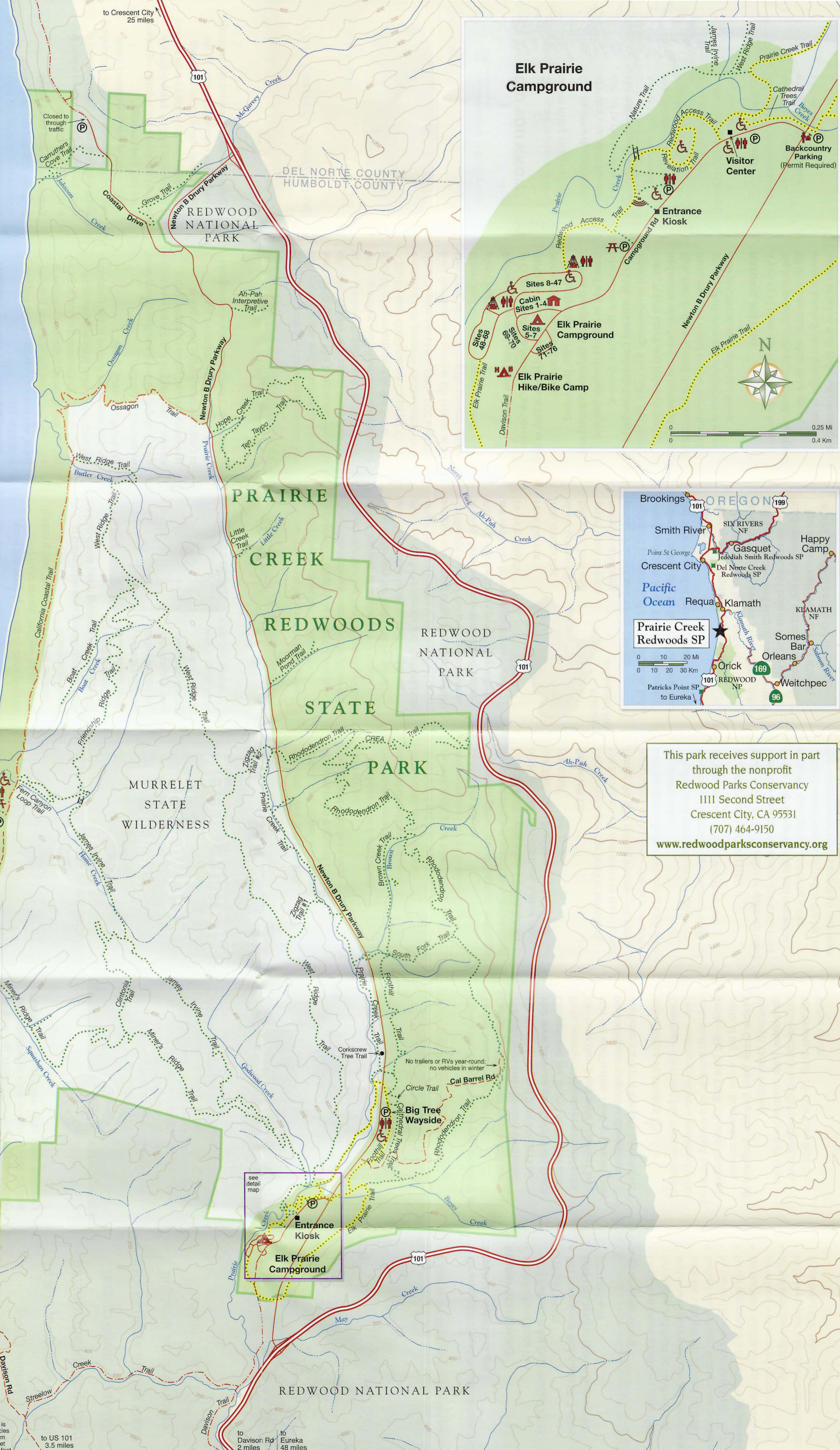
Entrance Kiosk (Fee area)

to US 101 3.5 miles

to Davison Rd 2 miles

to Eureka 48 miles

Davison Road is limited to vehicles with a maximum length of 24 feet and width of 8 feet. No trailers.



This park receives support in part through the nonprofit Redwood Parks Conservancy  
1111 Second Street  
Crescent City, CA 95531  
(707) 464-9150  
[www.redwoodparksconservancy.org](http://www.redwoodparksconservancy.org)