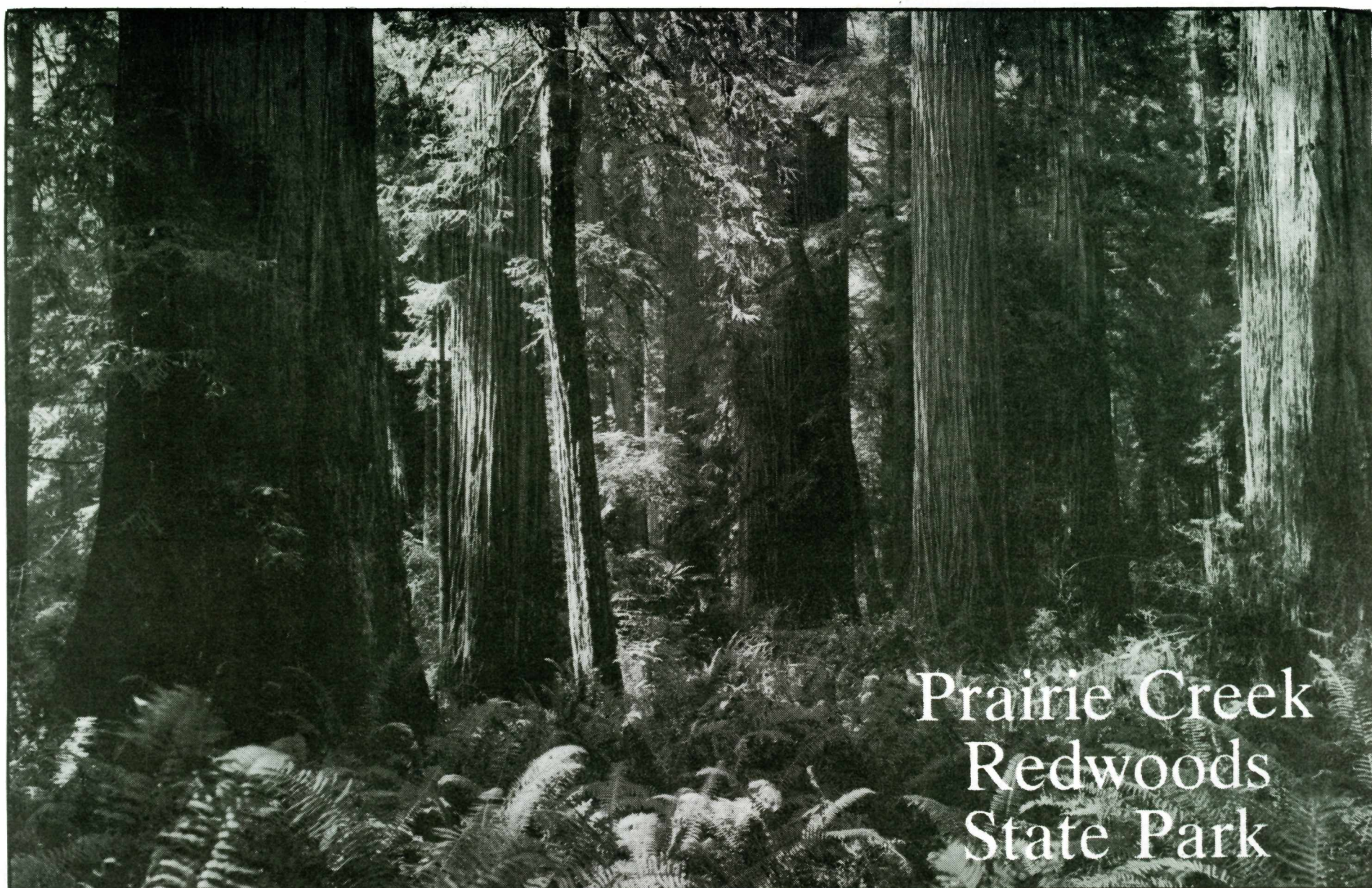




Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park

Photo by David Swanlund Courtesy of Save-the-Redwoods League

Park Map & Guide

Welcome to Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, home of the world's tallest trees. Set aside in the early 1920's by the forethought of the people of California and the generosity of the Save-the-Redwoods League, Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is a 14,000 acre sanctuary of old growth coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*).



Photo By David Swanlund Courtesy of the Save-the-Redwoods League

Camping

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park has two developed campgrounds. The Elk Prairie campground has 75 campsites and is located 6 miles north of Orick just off Highway 101. Gold Bluffs beach campground has 25 campsites and is reached by way of Davison Road. Both campgrounds offer firerings, tables and water nearby. There are restrooms with showers and flush toilets at both campgrounds. Reservations for the Elk Prairie campground can be made from late-May through mid-September by phoning MISTIX 1(800) 444-7275. Gold Bluffs campground is on a first-come first-served basis. There is also an environmental camp and two backcountry camps within the park. Backcountry campers are reminded they must register and park at the Elk Prairie campground.

Prairie Creek on Foot

There are nearly 75 miles of hiking trails through verdant forest and along wild and scenic beaches. As Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is a preserve of uncut forest, all trails lead you through the tall trees. No where can you better appreciate the splendor of an ancient redwood forest. Take time to walk some of the many and varied trails. There are all day hikes and short leisurely strolls. The terrain is relatively mild with only 800 feet of elevation gain. Please practice "minimum impact" hiking. Crosscutting trails causes erosion and destroys plants.

Prairie Creek by Car

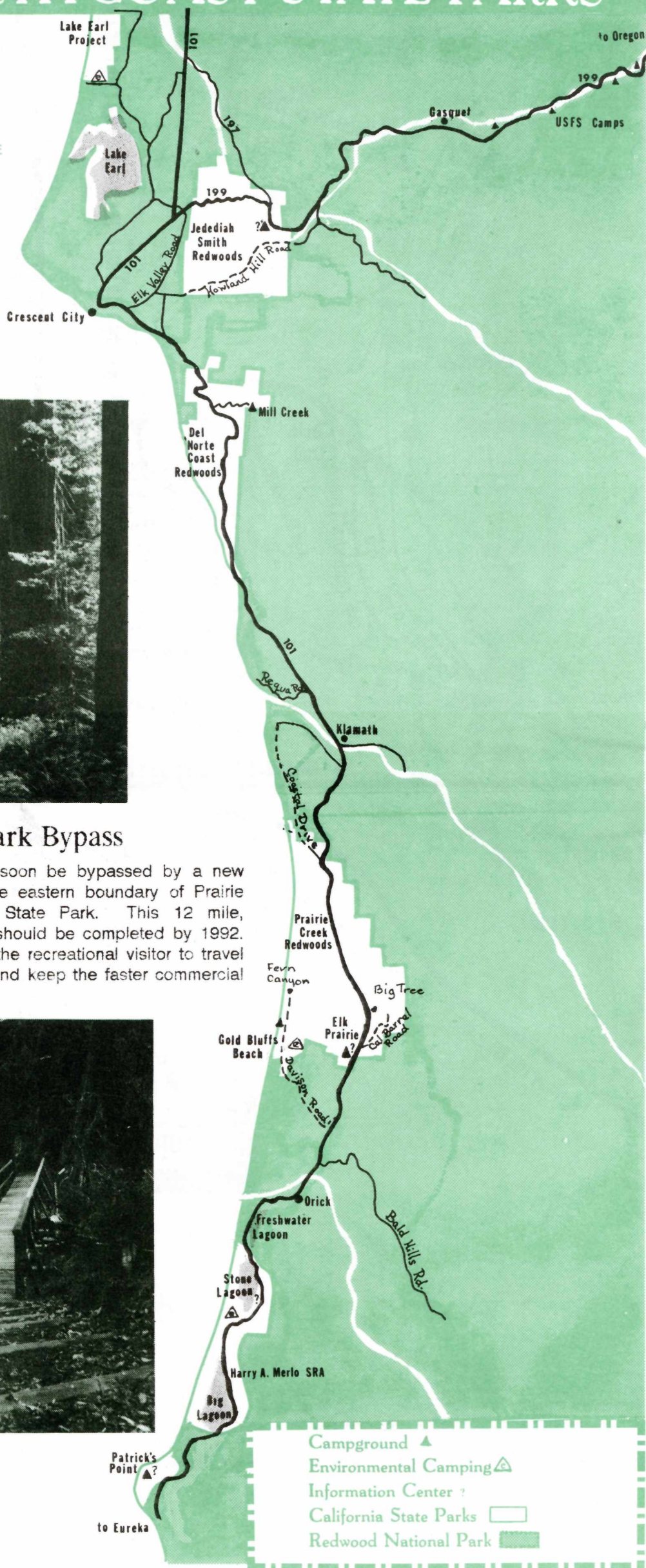
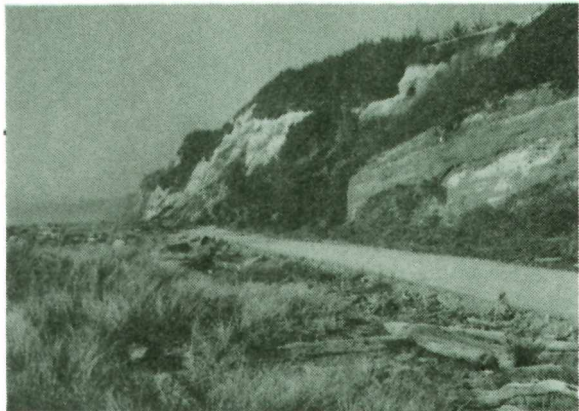
An eight mile section of Highway 101 winds its way through the magnificent redwoods of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. There are numerous "turn-outs" along the way. Stop and walk a short distance to better experience the redwood forest.

Approximately one-quarter mile north of the Elk Prairie Campground entrance is Cal Barrel Road. This 3 mile road offers spectacular views of old growth coast redwoods. Cal Barrel Road is a narrow gravel road, but it's in good condition and suitable for regular vehicles. It is not recommended for trailers or large motorhomes. Approximately one-half mile north of the campground, turn into Big Tree Wayside and walk a short distance to the Big Tree. This tree is over 300 feet tall and 21 feet in diameter.

At the north end of the park, turn west onto Coastal Drive where you'll find a two mile road through the redwoods. Soon you will come to a scenic overlook of Gold Bluff beach. On a clear day you can see 100 miles. You can continue north along Coastal Drive and eventually end up at Highway 101 at the south side of the Klamath River.

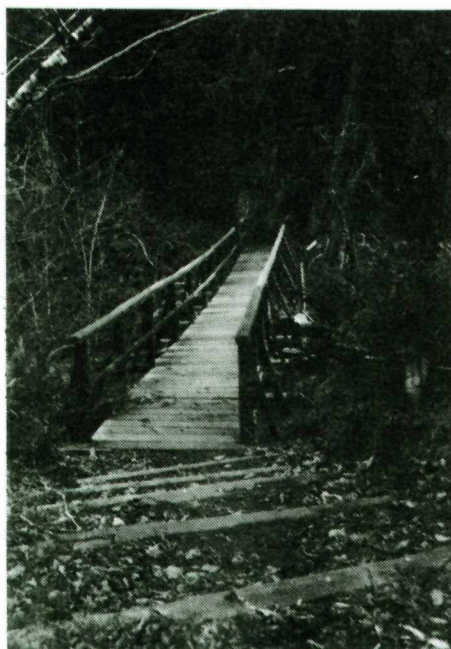
Three miles south of the Elk Prairie, turn west onto Davison Road to reach Gold Bluffs beach. This gravel road is narrow and rough, but 4-wheel drive is not required. Vehicles over 24 feet in length and 8 feet in width are prohibited, and regular vehicles should use caution. It is 4 miles from Highway 101 to the beach and an additional 4 miles up the Beach Road to Fern Canyon. There is a day use fee to enter the park by way of Davison Road.

EXPLORE YOUR NORTH COAST STATE PARKS



Redwood Park Bypass

Highway 101 will soon be bypassed by a new freeway around the eastern boundary of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. This 12 mile, four-lane freeway should be completed by 1992. This should allow the recreational visitor to travel at a slower pace and keep the faster commercial traffic to the east.



Memorial Groves

As you drive through Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park or walk along the many trails, you will see signs naming some of the groves along the way. These groves have been "purchased" by private individuals and organizations through the Save-the-Redwoods League's Memorial Grove Program. The program was started in 1921. Now more than 700 groves have been established in the California redwood state parks, and more are being established each year. Donors don't actually own these memorial groves. Save-the-Redwoods League uses the donations to purchase additional redwood lands which they then donate to the parks. Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park has over 280 memorial groves, and many groves are still available. If you would like more information about the Memorial Grove Program, contact the Save-the-Redwoods League at 114 Sansome Street, Room 605, San Francisco CA 94104.

Park Plants

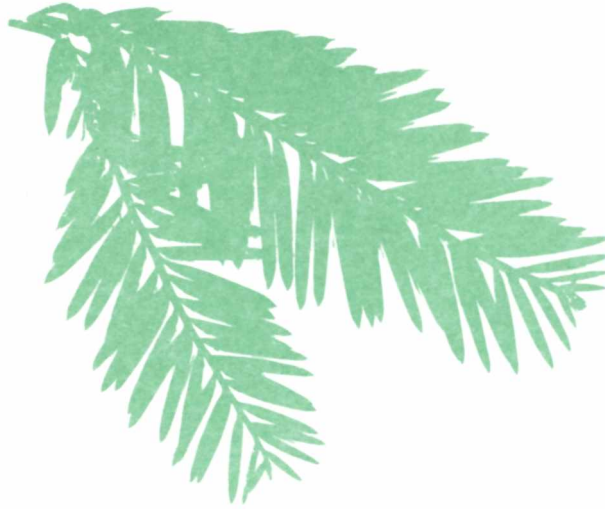
Sequoia sempervirens

The coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is the dominant tree in the park. The coast redwood region is a narrow 450-mile strip of land from southern Oregon to 150 miles south of San Francisco. The "Redwood Belt," as this region is known, is closely tied to the Pacific Ocean, where thick summer fogs prevail, temperatures are moderate year-round and winter rainfall is considerable. Redwoods, with their massive trunks and shallow root systems, depend on this moist and mild climate.

A coast redwood can live to be over 2000 years old and can soar to over 360 feet in height. In sharp contrast to their towering and large stature, redwoods have many delicate features. The sharp-pointed needles grow on branchlets, forming flat sprays. Their cones are quite small, approximately one-inch long. It would take about 123,000 redwood seeds to equal one pound!

Redwoods have few natural enemies. Tannic acid makes redwoods resistant to diseases, insect infestations and fire.

Redwoods, so named for their reddish-colored heartwood, are generally found in association with other tree species, principally Douglas-fir, Sitka spruce, big leaf maple, tanoak and red alder. Nine species of fern decorate the forest as well as salal, oxalis, western azalea, rhododendron, huckleberry, salmon berry, blackberry and numerous flowering herbs.



Park Animals

Watch for native Roosevelt elk in the prairie along Highway 101 and on spectacular Gold Bluffs beach. Rabbit, squirrel, raccoon, mink, otter, fox, coyote, mountain lion, bobcat, and bear might also be spotted. And of course the infamous banana slug, an important and welcome resident in the forest. Remember, park animals are the residents of the forest . . . you are the guest. Please treat their home gently.

Roosevelt Elk



This large member of the deer family is also known as "wapiti," an Indian name meaning white rump. The light rump patch contrasting strongly with its tawny brown coat makes the elk easy to identify. The hair is darker on the head, neck and legs and forms a shaggy mane in winter. Elk stand about 1.4m on long legs and weigh between 700 and 1000 pounds. Fall is the "rut" season when the herd bull claims his harem of cows. In spring, the cows give birth to a single calf, and the bulls shed their heavy branched antlers and begin to grow velvet-covered replacements. Roosevelt elk are native to the Pacific Northwest, and there are around 500 in the immediate area.

Black Bear



Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is black bear country. Contrary to their name, these small native bears range in color from jet black to cinnamon brown, and weigh up to 300 pounds. Their shaggy hair and ambling gait tend to disguise the fact that they are well-muscled athletic animals which can move quickly when they wish and can climb trees with ease. Bears are solitary animals except when attracted by man's carelessness. In winter they become dormant, but do not completely hibernate. A bear's natural diet consists largely of vegetation but they also eat meat, fresh or carrion, when the opportunity arises. Black bears are timid and will move away if they hear or smell people. Unfortunately, bears quickly learn that campgrounds can provide a source of easily obtained food. Their exposure to man then makes them less afraid and occasionally dangerous. Don't add to the problems . . . keep all your food supplies and equipment locked away or hung on a high branch. Life for bears is a constant battle to obtain enough food. Like ours, their instinct is to defend what they consider "their" food supply.

Birds of the Redwoods



Over 260 species of birds have been sighted within Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park boundaries. The combination of open prairie, forest, streamside woodlands, coastal headlands, beach, and ocean provides a wide variety of habitats within which birds can find food and shelter. Some species of special note include the spotted owl, and the marbled murrelet. Both are believed to be dependent on old growth forests. Watch and listen for murrelets at dawn and dusk throughout the year. One of the most common birds you might encounter is the Stellar's jay. This bright blue bird is commonly spotted near campsites in search of food. Or listen for the "squeaky brakes" bird . . . the varied thrush.

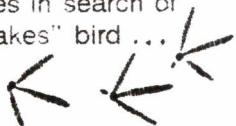


Photo by David Swanlund
Courtesy of Save-the-Redwoods League



Park Rules & Reasons

ANIMALS - Family pets are welcome in the campground, on Gold Bluffs beach, and on park roads. Pets must be on a leash at all times, and should not be left unattended. Pets are not allowed on any trails because they may introduce disease, threaten park animals, and/or become lost or injured. Pets are not allowed in any park buildings.

PLANTS - Plants are beautiful attractions of the park. You are welcome to harvest berries, but all plants and flowers are protected and removal is not allowed.

FIREWOOD - Over 10 million people visit California State Parks each year. If each person collected their camp fuel the soil would suffer from lack of nutrients. You are welcome to collect driftwood from Gold Bluffs beach, but collecting downed wood in the forest is not permitted. You can bring your own firewood or purchase it from the park.

FIRES - Fires are allowed only in designated firerings. An oversized campfire or careless cigarette on the trail could be disastrous.

BICYCLES - Bicycles are welcome on any road where cars are allowed, but not on trails unless otherwise designated.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL & GEOLOGIC FEATURES

All features are protected and disturbing or collecting is not allowed. Leave any historical artifacts you might discover in place and let the park staff know of its whereabouts. An artifact "out-of-place" is historical knowledge lost.

LITTER - Please keep the park clean. Trash is unsightly and can be a hazard to the park animals. Be a full-time "litter getter."

PARK ANIMALS - Please do not feed the animals. Twinkies and other junk food are not a healthy diet for wild animals. They'll frequently starve after visitors leave for the winter. Remember, they may seem tame but these are wild animals. Let's keep them that way!

PEACE & QUIET - Some folks drove a long way to "get away from it all." Please observe the quiet hours of 10 PM to 6 AM. No generators from 8 PM to 10 AM. Please be considerate of fellow campers.

VEHICLE OPERATION - Please observe the park speed limit of 15 MPH. There are lots of people around and an accident could really spoil a vacation. What's your hurry anyway? To avoid causing unnecessary wear-and-tear on this beautiful park, please park only in designated areas.

Published by

North Coast Redwood Interpretive Association

The North Coast Redwood Interpretive Association is a non-profit, volunteer organization dedicated to assisting the state parks along the northern California coast. Our purpose is to increase public awareness of the rare and natural beauty of the redwood environment. We operate natural history bookstores at Patrick's Point, Humboldt Lagoons, Prairie Creek Redwoods, Del Norte Coast Redwoods, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Parks. Bookstore sales, donations, and special events generate funding for development of interpretive facilities such as visitor centers, improvement of interpretive programs and equipment, design and construction of exhibits and displays, training opportunities, and publication of informative pamphlets and park maps.

The North Coast Redwood Interpretive Association is actively seeking members and volunteers. Come get involved!

North Coast Redwood Interpretive Association

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park
Orick CA 95555 (707) 488-2171

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Recycled Paper

Hiking in Prairie Creek

There are nearly 75 miles of hiking trails through verdant forest and along wild and scenic beaches. As Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park is a preserve of uncut forest, all trails lead you through the tall trees. No where can you better appreciate the splendor of an ancient redwood forest. Take time to walk some of the many and varied trails. There are all day hikes and short leisurely strolls. The terrain is relatively mild with only 800 feet of elevation gain. Please practice "mimumum impact" hiking. Crosscutting trails causes erosion and destroys plants.

Five Minute Trail

Wandering through some wonderful examples of old growth redwoods, this mini-trail features several living trees which were hollowed out by fire. One tree shows signs of a door and ceiling left behind by a family in the 1930's. The trail is located just behind the visitor center.

Revelation Trail

Developed for the visually impaired, this easy trail encourages you to use all of your senses while treating you to beautiful forest scenery. Feel the rough bark of a redwood. Compare it to the smooth covering of a tanoak. Smell the aromatic leaves of the California bay. Listen to the splash of the creek. These are just a few of the many natural realities that can be experienced. The trail is located between the visitor center and campground.

Nature Trail

Developed to help familiarize you with the redwood ecosystem, this 1.5 mile long stroll leads you past many interesting forest features and helps you better understand this unique environment. A trail guide is available from the visitor center. The trail begins near the visitor center and ends at the campground.

Fern Canyon Loop

Lush ferns cover the canyon's fifty-foot walls, and moss carpets fallen tree trunks. The most common fern in this area is the delicate five-fingered fern, but lady and sword ferns are also present. Wind up the canyon floor then up into virgin forest and back to the canyon mouth.

Elk Prairie Trail

This 2 1/4 mile trail circles the edge of the Elk Prairie passing through old growth forest and providing good views into the prairie. This trail is often a good place to view elk, but caution must be used as elk are wild animals and should not be approached. You can link up with the Nature Trail to make this a longer loop. Use caution when crossing Highway 101.

Brown Creek- Rhododendron- South Fork Loop

This loop trail is just long enough and steep enough to stimulate your tight muscles. Its spectacular pristine beauty will stretch your eyes, mind and imagination as well. One of the park's most beautiful hikes at any time of the year, it will reward you in spring with a dazzling array of rhododendrons and other wildflowers. You can stroll up Brown Creek and return by the same trail for an easy 2.5 mile trip. Or follow the loop for a steeper 3.5 mile loop. This loop begins about two miles north of the visitor center.

James Irvine- Miners Ridge Loop

In the early 1850's, the Irvine trail was the main route to the gold fields on Gold Bluffs beach. Today explorers come for different reasons: to see the magnificent virgin forest, to revel in nature's quiet, and to explore the non-negotiable treasure of Fern Canyon. Explore the scenic wonders of Miner's Ridge, relax while walking up the beach to Fern Canyon, and stroll along a crystalline creek on the James Irvine. This easy 10 mile day-hike will give you a true taste of what Prairie Creek has to offer.

West Ridge - Friendship Ridge - James Irvine Loop

This 11 mile loop offers varied elevations through the ancient redwood forest. The West Ridge trail features redwoods soaring above fern carpeted slopes. The Friendship Ridge trail drops near the ocean where wind-swept trees struggle to survive on the edge of their comfort zone. James Irvine winds along a tiny creek through the tall trees and a broadleaf riparian habitat. This loop offers many opportunities to experience the silence of the redwood forest.

Bicycle Trail

Old growth redwood forests are precious resources where we should limit our "use" to minimum impact activities. Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park has designated a 20 mile bike ride for your enjoyment. This loop takes you out the Jogging Trail through a stretch of old growth to Davison Road. Follow Davison Road to the wild and scenic Gold Bluffs beach, then north on Beach Road to Fern Canyon. Follow the Beach Trail north to Ossagon Trail. Ossagon Trail climbs up to Highway 101 where you can follow the highway back to the park visitor center. All other park trails are closed to bicycles.

Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park Trails

Trails	Miles	Difficulty	Highway 101
			Mile Marker
Coastal Trail	5.3	Easy	
Circle Trail	0.2	Very Easy	127.96
Brown Creek Trail	1.2	Easy	
Cathedral Trees Trail	1.4	Moderate	127.27
Clintonia Trail	1.0	Moderate	
Elk Prairie Trail	1.4	Easy	
Friendship Ridge Trail	2.8	Moderate	
Fern Canyon Trail	0.5	Easy	
5-Minute Trail	0.1	Very Easy	
Foothill Trail	2.7	Easy/Moderate	
Hope Creek/Ten Taypo Loop	3.5	Moderate	132.74
James Irvine Trail	4.5	Moderate	
Jogging Trail	2.0	Easy	
Miner's Ridge Trail	4.1	Moderate	
Nature Trail	1.2	Easy/Moderate	
Ossagon Trail	1.6	Moderate	132.90
Prairie Creek Trail	4.3	Easy	
Redwood Access Trail	0.2	Easy	
Revelation Trail	0.3	Very Easy	
Rhododendron	7.8	Moderate	
South Fork Trail	1.0	Strenuous	129.00
West Ridge	7.0	Moderate	
Zig Zag No. 1	0.5	Moderate	
Zig Zag No. 2	0.5	Moderate	130.54

Vehicles or combinations of vehicles over 8 feet in width or 24 feet in length prohibited on this road.