

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Preservation through Education and Stewardship

Russian River Sector State Parks

Volume XXXV, Number 1, Spring 2020



Keeping our Community Safe - Fuel Reduction

Michele Luna, Executive Director

Thanks to funding provided by the Sonoma County Vintners Foundation, Stewards has been able to work with our dedicated volunteers to reduce fuel loads in Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve, Austin Creek State Recreation Area and in the Willow Creek Watershed. In addition to the regularly scheduled trail days that are scheduled three times a month, we've worked with corporate groups and the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps to accomplish significant fuel reduction results.

The goal of these projects is to alleviate the threat of a high intensity fire by thinning densely forested areas in wilderness parks so that State Parks can implement prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads in the future. There is a need to transform a forest structure with dense forest floor fuels, ladder fuels, and canopy fuels to a more open forest condition. If a wildfire occurs under reduced fuel load conditions, the land will recover quickly and there will be fewer adverse soil and vegetation changes affecting watershed health. This is consistent with our larger goal to reduce fire danger in the almost 7,000 acres of parklands that are a gateway to the communities of Guerneville, Rio Nido, Monte Rio and Cazadero. As a park co-manager, Stewards places a high priority on doing all we can to prevent this type of devastation in western Sonoma County. Stewards is looking for funding to continue this important work.

The Armstrong Redwoods and Austin Creek projects are headed up by Scotty Lawyer, Stewards' Field Operations Manager, who manages the efforts of our well-trained trail crew volunteers, corporate volunteers and the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps (SCYEC). The Willow Creek Trail Crew volunteers work under the direction of State Parks staff and are also well trained to clear downed trees and underbrush. We are grateful for all the volunteers who have dedicated themselves to this hard and rewarding work.



Top left 2 photos - Willow Creek, 3rd & 4th top photos from left - Austin Creek, top & bottom photos on right - SCYEC Armstrong Redwoods, Bottom 3 photos on the left - Austin Creek

Mission

Stewards Promotes, Restores & Protects Your State Parks.

Vision

Stewards is the link between people and their parks.

State Parks

Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Austin Creek State Recreation Area
Sonoma Coast State Park

Contact

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Duncans Mills, CA 95430
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(707) 869-8252 Fax
stewards@stewardscr.org
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New Partnerships: First-time Experiences for Youth

Stewards is excited to be embarking on two new partnerships that will provide first-time park experiences for some of our youth participants. Every year our docents encounter young park visitors who have never seen a redwood tree close up, or traveled to the Sonoma Coast and walked in the sand. These are experiences that many of us take for granted. The wonder in the eyes of youth enjoying these first-time experiences can spark a lifetime of stewardship.

This year Stewards is working with the **Napa County Office of Education** and **State Parks** to provide field trips to Armstrong Redwoods. The students from multiple schools in Napa County will first have an in-classroom **PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students)** interaction with State Park interpreter **Steve Jahelka** followed by an interpreter or docent-led field trip to the park. We will be serving about 500 students under this program through the end of the school year. State Parks will provide these schools with bus transportation scholarships to facilitate their participation.

This summer Stewards will also be working with the **Sonoma County Boys and Girls Club** and their after-school and summer day camp program that operates out of Guerneville School. These students will benefit from docent-led Forest to the Sea activities at their Guerneville campus and in the parks. About 200 K-8 students will explore our parks with redwood ecology activities at Armstrong Redwoods, watershed education at Pomo Canyon Campground and tidepool exploration at Miwok State Beach on the Sonoma Coast. Stewards will also bring our Mobile Marine Van (Steward Ship) to their campus for interactive experiences during the summer.

New State Park Interpreter II

Michelle Levesque has joined the State Parks' Sonoma Mendocino Coast District as our new Interpreter II. Having graduated from Humboldt State University with a BA/BS in Natural Resources Planning and Interpretation, Michelle is excited to make her way back to the redwoods with her husband. She has worked as an interpreter I in the Calaveras Sector and at Hungry Valley SRA, a volunteer and interpretive program manager at the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institute where she oversaw a team of six staff and 450 (!) volunteers, and recently as a park interpretive ranger with San Diego County Parks. After just two short weeks on the job she was already working with our co-manager Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods and the Interpretation and Education Division to help set up an after school program that will bring students to Armstrong Redwoods SNR as well as working with our sister cooperating association, Men-doParks, to facilitate the production of interpretive panels on Pomo culture.



Steve Jahelka and Michelle Levesque

Picnic Table Donor Program

Stewards is now offering supporters an opportunity to donate an ADA-compliant picnic table in one of our state parks. Your table can have your family name, a memorial designation or be engraved to honor a loved one. Tables are 8 feet long and 3 inches thick and made out of con-heart redwood.

For info contact: michele@stewardscr.org



Cal Report

Greg Probst, Sonoma Coast Ranger and Cooperating Association Liaison

State Park News from Duncans Mills to Sacramento

I always appreciate this time of year as wildflowers are abundant here in Sonoma County. These Winter/Spring flowers are all the more special as many of them are in bloom for only a few days each year along the coast or in the redwoods. The recent temperate weather has made for a great time to be outside to explore and discover.

There is also some other positive news for our local state parks here in 2020.

There are three new hires in the Russian River parks on the maintenance side. These positions are greatly appreciated as they will augment current park staff with routine operations and also begin addressing some of the many local deferred maintenance projects in Armstrong Redwoods SNR, Austin Creek SRA, and in the parks along the coast.

Adam Coyne has joined us from the Bay Area and is a water systems supervisor. This is a huge task as all of our local parks are not on city/county water or sewer.

Mathew "Woody" Woodall has joined us from the Sierra foothills and the Central Valley. Woody is the new maintenance mechanic responsible for repairing all of the equipment in the parks.

And one of our local employees, **Louis Guglielmino** has been promoted to a Maintenance Worker I position. Louis began his career with state parks working in the entrance station at Armstrong Redwoods SNR and has hit the ground running while working in his new position.

If you bump into any of these employees and you have the time, please introduce yourself to these hard working employees as they make the park experience much more rewarding for our many visitors.

2020/2021 Budget Update:

Governor Gavin Newsom introduced his proposed budget in January with good news for the Natural Resources Agency. The proposed budget includes investing in access for all to our natural resources, including parks and beaches. In total, \$65.1 million has been proposed to help expand on the work that State Parks has done through its Parks for All initiative to improve access and expand the State Park System. Funds would go toward improving facilities in urban areas, acquiring land to expand parks, improving access for underserved populations and establishing a new state park.

If you would like to learn more about these budget highlights, please watch Natural Resources Secretary Crowfoot's short video on YouTube. The link is:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOOWfxmtaiw&t=2s>

Congratulations and Farewell to Kat

Stewards' Volunteer Programs Manager, Kat Rawhouser, is embarking on some major life changes. On March 3rd, Kat became Kat Probst when she married Jake Probst. Kat and Jake have decided to move to Montana where they have purchased property and a house and where they will raise a family. As much as we are sorry to see Kat go, we are very happy for her and the life that lies ahead in the beautiful countryside near Missoula.

Kat has done a lot for Stewards in the past two years. She's helped to develop systems to better track school reservations, new volunteers and tackled the task of helping our volunteers transition to the new State Park Better Impacts portal. Kat has worked efficiently, professionally and always with a good sense of humor, even when she encountered challenges along the way. She will be missed.

This coming week we will be interviewing candidates for her position and are pleased with the qualifications of those who have applied for her job. In addition to a new Programs Manager, we will be hiring a seasonal part-time programs assistant to help out during the busiest time of the year. Stewards is also hiring seasonal service aides to work with our operations team. All job openings are listed on our [website](#) and in our weekly e-newsletter.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Interested in a program?
Call Stewards at
(707) 869-9177 or email
stewards@stewardscr.org

PROGRAMS

Armstrong Redwoods/ Austin Creek

Visitor Center Staffing
Docent Tour Guides
Trail Crew/Maintenance
Pond Farm Docent Tours
Roving Docents/Public
Assistance
Lizzie Armstrong Welcome Ctr

Sonoma Coast State Park

Visitor Center Staffing
Seal Watch
Whale Watch
Tide Pool Program
Watershed Program
Sonoma Coast Trail Crew
Willow Creek Trail Crew
Pinniped Monitoring
Seabird Monitoring
Roving Docents/Public
Assistance

Other Projects

Mobile Marine Van
Forest to Sea Nature Store
Office Help & Special Events

VOL. PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Vacant, Watershed
Greg Armstrong, Seal Watch
Joyce Bacci/Dori Heath, ARVC
Bill Bambrick, Trail Crews
Hollis Bewley, Seabird &
Tidepool Programs
Julie Cross, Seal Watch
Linda Fisher, JVC
Mary Follis, Seal Watch
Norma Jellison, Whale Watch
Rich & Colleen Draffin, Whale
Watch
Michael Murphy, AC Mounted
Assistance Unit
Keary & Sally Sorenson,
Marine Debris

Watching for Whales

Norma Jellison, Whale Watch Coordinator

Our volunteer vests have Whale Watch lettering on the back. We often joke with visitors that whale watch doesn't guarantee 'whale see.' Kind of like fishing vs catching.

Watching has been a challenge so far this season. High winds and white caps on many weekends have compromised our ability to set up our display and interpret. Combined with a dearth of grays visible, even our long-time veterans have been frustrated. We know they are going by as the crew at Pt. Arena Lighthouse reports seeing over 500 southbound in January. Pt. Arena juts further out into the ocean than Bodega Head giving them a much better perspective on the migrating Grays, plus other whales we never see. And, they are out watching every day during daylight hours when weather cooperates. Our Whale Watch volunteers are only at the Head on weekends from noon to 4, weather permitting.

Now that it's March, we are just beginning to see the northbound migration. Females who got pregnant in the southbound migration or in the mating and calving lagoon in Baja are now headed to Alaska to do some serious feeding. The juveniles should change course and join these northbound female Grays, followed by the major pulse of the population.

On March 1st, a very early mother and calf pair was seen off the Head. We don't usually see mothers and calves until well into April. We are hopeful that sighting was a harbinger of good numbers of northbound Grays in March and through the end of May, when we close out the season.

Spring flowers are popping up adding to more reasons to come out to Bodega Head. Join us to watch for Gray Whales and other ocean going marine mammals and seabirds passing by and those that nest on the rocks off the Head. You never know what nature will reveal.



Mexico Lagoon - Photo by Michele Luna

POND FARM POTTERY DOCENT TOURS



POND FARM POTTERY TOURS

Upcoming dates: 3/21, 4/18, 5/16, 6/20
9:30 to noon, \$20/\$16 for members
Meet at the Stewards office/Vol. Center.
Registration required.

SAVE THESE DATES

Family Day in Your Park - June 20
Armstrong Redwoods, 1-4 PM

Nature activities, Wildlife Presentations,
Entertainment, Snacks and Beverages.
Spanish speakers onsite.

Sunset Dinner - July 18
Austin Creek ~ Pond Farm, 4-8 PM

A benefit for Pond Farm Pottery, Gourmet
Food and Wine pairings, Art Auction.

Old Grove Festival - Sept. 12, 4:30 PM
Armstrong Redwoods Forest Theatre

A magical evening of Bluegrass with **Dirty
Cello, One Grass Two Grass, Real Sarahs.**

Tide Pool and Seabird Programs

Hollis Bewley, Volunteer Coordinator

Tidepool Program

Stewards' tide poolers are looking forward to a new season of leading classroom students and park visitors on treasure hunts in the intertidal. Our Tide Pool Education classroom schedule of low tide mornings in April and May is full and roving docents are ready to assist park visitors in exploring this very special environment with both the visitors' safety and well-being of the inhabitants in mind. A new component of the program is the fabulous Touch Table built by the Bodega Marine Lab which enables us to bring a "tide pool" to events, allowing children and their families to become acquainted with and touch (gently!) some of the special animals who make a tide pool their home without the need for a low tide or water-proof shoes.

We had a wonderful turnout for our orientation and site visit but we'll happily get you caught up if you're interested in joining this fun curious group of volunteer docents. If so, please contact stewards@stewardscr.org or Hollis Bewley at hollisbewley@comcast.net



Tide Pool Docent Steven Beck staffing the Tidepool Touch Table

Seabird Monitoring Program

The scope has been cleaned, camera batteries charged and new data collection forms printed and ready to go in time for the arrival of Common murre, Western gulls, three species of cormorants, cute little Pigeon guillemots, and of course the engaging and adorable Black Oystercatchers, on their nesting sites, ready to perform their courtship rituals, build nests and begin the all-important job of raising their families. We've had our orientation and classroom training but there's still time to get caught up if you'd like to join us this season. If so, you can contact stewards@stewardscr.org or Hollis Bewley at hollisbewley@comcast.net.

Beginning in early April, our citizen scientist monitors will be on the west side of Bodega Head on Saturday mornings, counting and monitoring the progress of nearby nesting seabirds and their families. Park visitors are welcome to come by, share views through our equipment and learn about our local seabirds. Be sure to join our Whale Watch docents looking for northbound whales while you're at it.



Oystercatcher and Chick



Nesting Cormorants at Bodega Head

Upcoming Events ~2020

Register & get details at stewardscr.org/upcoming-events-programs.html or (707) 869-9177 or email stewards@stewardscr.org. Year-long offerings are on our website.

DOCENT/VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS & TRAININGS

POND FARM DOCENT TRAINING

Saturday, April 4, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM, FREE
Armstrong Redwoods Volunteer Center/Stewards Office
Instructor: Stewards Docents, Michele Luna

Learn about the inspiring history of Pond Farm Pottery and the life's work of Marguerite Wildenhain, first woman master potter from the Bauhaus in Germany. Docents will be trained to give tours of this cultural site on the National Registry of Historic Places. Registration Required

WATERSHED EDUCATION PROGRAM TRAINING

Thursday, August 27, FREE
9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Armstrong Redwoods Volunteer Center/Stewards Office
Instructors: Staff and Experienced Docents

Learn to lead students in interactive watershed citizen science activities. Includes the life cycle of Salmon, water quality testing, and benthic macroinvertebrates. Registration Required

COMMUNITY EDUCATION SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

HIKE WITH MIKE

March 27, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM,
\$20/\$16 for members
Instructor Mike Roa, retired teacher

In this workshop Mike will share with you how to use curriculum developed for docents to effectively lead Armstrong group tours of all ages. Registration required.



SONOMA COAST WILDFLOWERS

Saturday, May 16, 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM,
\$20/\$16 for members
Meets: Carlevaro Way parking lot, just south of Shell Beach
Instructor: Dr. Laura Morgan (Naturalist and Author of Three Jewels: A Field Guide to Three West Sonoma County Trail Systems)

A great opportunity to join naturalist Laura Morgan for a Wildflower Hike on the Sonoma Coast. The hike will go for 3 miles north to Blind Beach. Participants can hike as far as they feel comfortable. Families with kids are welcome (no charge for kids under 13). Hikers will need to bring fluids and bag lunches. Significant rain cancels.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION CERTIFICATION COURSES

Wilderness First Aid Certification Course (NOLS)

Fee: \$188 for members, \$235 non-members
Meets: Saturday and Sunday, June 13 & 14, 7:45 AM - 5:00 PM, Bring a lunch each day
Armstrong Redwoods Volunteer Center/Stewards Office
Instructor: Daniel De Kay, RN (WEMT) - Details on our website
This course is limited to 15 participants.

CPR/AED Certification - Monday, June 8th, 6-8:30 PM, \$75/\$60 for members
- Details on our website.



In Appreciation of Our Donors, Sponsors & Funders ~ 2019 -2020

\$15,000

Marcy & Jim Beck
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation

\$14,999 to \$10,000

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Kristin Hite
Save the Redwoods League
Sonoma County Vintners

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and Neil McDaniel
Dennis P Martino
Russian River Chamber

\$2,499 to \$1,000

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Ways to Leave a Legacy ~ more info at www.stewardscr.org/leave_a_legacy.html

Board member Jeff Edmonds presented information about Donor Advised Funds and about Beneficiary Designations on page 5 of the [Summer 2018 newsletter](#). A Bequest example is also included on page 8.

Board member Dale Wannan would like you to consider these giving options:

Gifting Appreciated Stock - If you're fortunate enough to own stock that has gone up in value since you purchased it, you may consider a gift to Stewards. This will not only help a good cause, but enable you to reap substantial tax savings.

Designate Stewards as a Beneficiary on your IRA - These days, many people have a large percentage of their wealth in

Welcome to New Members ~ 1st Quarter

Osprey Circle

Elizabeth Penn
Tom Toy

Gray Whale (Patron)

Mary Burger
Ellen Hoberman

Bobcat (Business)

Colin Beck
Kathleen Jernigan

Harbor Seal (Contributing)

Sandra M Bugg
Catherine McIntosh
Jennifer Shaw

Otter (Family)

Daniel Karbousky
Brent Robert
Ron Wood
Alice Frost
Andy Hilldale
Francesca Lamb
Judy McCann

Trillium (Individual)

Jeb Berman
Kathleen Bryant
Brendan Coen
Christine Condon
Dylan Dockstader
Stacey Dominik

Alison Duke
Michael Foss
Jack Goldthorpe
Elizabeth Kilchoer
Erika Lutz
Julianna Rice
John Roulac
Jennifer Seeley
Brooke Syme
Jennifer Zacks

Owl (Senior & Student)

Carolyn Bell
Susan Burke
Autumn Buss
Rita Conway

Greg Corby
Yulahlia Hernandez
Jon Lucca
Rachel MacBeth
Michael Marano
Vince Montague
Stepi Nacouzi
MaryBeth Neill
Brook O'Connor
Randi Pantera
Judith Salomon
Cindra Spencer
Dana Testa
Melissa Wang

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

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includes a copy of this quarterly newsletter by email or mail, a 20% discount on retail items, special events & community education seminars.

TO MAKE A VEHICLE DONATION CALL:
(800) 320-0476

For more info on how you can contribute to Stewards' Endowments, please contact:
Michele Luna
(707) 869-9177 X 4
michele@stewardscr.org

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods Membership Form

YES, I'd like to become a member!

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- RENEWAL
- \$25 Owl (Senior/Student)
- \$35 Trillium (Individual)
- \$45 Otter (Family)
- \$100 Harbor Seal (Contributing)
- \$150 Bobcat (Business)
- \$250 Gray Whale (Patron)
- \$500+ Osprey Circle

Payment Type: Check (made payable to Stewards)

Credit Card (VISA, MC, Discover acceptable)

Card #: _____ Exp. Date: _____ CVV #: _____

Signature: _____

Bequests

Your Gift to the Future of State Park Preservation

With your gift of a bequest, future generations will enjoy the State Parks in the Russian River District, including education and stewardship programs supported by Stewards. A gift to Stewards is a rewarding form of giving from your estate. There are several types of charitable bequests by will (or beneficiary designation).

Example: *I hereby give and bequeath to Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California, with a principal address at P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430, (____) percent of my estate, (or) the sum of (____) dollars, (or) the following assets (____). Tax ID # 94-3039895*

For more information and other planned giving options, please contact Michele Luna at michele@stewardscr.org and your legal advisor.