

# Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Preservation through Education and Stewardship

Russian River Sector State Parks

Volume XXXV, Number 4, Winter 2020



## Looking Forward to New Opportunities

Michele Luna, Executive Director

Thirty-five years ago, local residents in the town of Jenner became concerned about the fate of the harbor seal colony that resides at the Russian River mouth after a large sewage spill impacted the river. From that incident, Stewards of Slavianka was formed as a State Park Cooperating Association to provide programs and support for our local State Parks. Our name changed to Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods in 2003. Seal Watch and Whale Watch were the first programs that Stewards supported with volunteer efforts. In all these thirty-five years we haven't experienced anything like we have in 2020, a year for the history books, that includes Covid-19 and wildfires that affected four of our local State Parks. In the face of this year's challenges, I continue to be inspired by the resilience of our natural resources and of Stewards' staff and volunteers. We look forward to welcoming you back to Austin Creek State Recreation Area and Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve by the summer of 2021.

There is much work to be done to make that goal a reality. At the same time, our hopes are high based on the incredible support we have received on many fronts, including from:

- State Parks' staff who have been partnering with us closely on every fire recovery step
- Park foundations and funding organizations
- Our dedicated volunteers – working on fire recovery efforts, helping to open the Jenner Visitor Center, doing citizen science monitoring, and staying in touch with creative ideas for new ways to deliver environmental education programs as soon as the green light is given.
- Our donors – thank you!! – you have contributed so generously both in response to Covid-19 and to fire recovery when all of Stewards' major revenue sources dropped away.

*Stewards is excited about working with our partners and stakeholders on new ways to address the recovery challenges we face.*

We are propelled by good news to share, as Stewards moves into the new year:

- Careful management of our financial resources has allowed us to bring our staff back to working fulltime.
- We are partnering with State Parks on an Austin Creek SRA fire recovery plan that will result in a new 3rd restroom at Bullfrog Pond campground with ADA-compliant stalls, in addition to restoring the water system, picnic tables, food lockers, fencing and signage.
- Thanks to the efforts of science and environmental education docent Mike Roa, plans are underway to open Pomo

### Final Quarterly Newsletter

Stewards has decided to take another step towards conserving resources and lightening our carbon footprint by discontinuing this quarterly newsletter, which has been a member benefit for 34 years. We will continue sending out our weekly e-newsletter with current information about the parks we support, volunteer opportunities and educational content. Special thanks to those who have regularly contributed to making this an engaging publication for Stewards.

Canyon Campground as a site for our Redwood Ecology programs while Armstrong Redwoods SNR recovers. We brought a small pod of home-schooled students and their parents to Pomo Canyon for a watershed education session as a first step in adapting to the Covid-19 pandemic, and will be applying what we learned to future programming.

- Stewards looks forward to an early 2021 signing of our co-management agreement with State Parks to include Armstrong Redwoods SNR as well as Austin Creek SRA.

*Continued on Page 2*

## 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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(707) 869-9177  
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# Moving into the Future

Continued from page 1

*We are grateful for your support in helping Stewards exceed our 2020 fire recovery goal of \$100,000. Please consider a contribution to keep our work on track to raise another \$100,000 to reopen your parks in 2021.*

We are energized to do all that is necessary to prepare for re-opening Austin Creek SRA and Armstrong SNR by June of 2021, recognizing that Covid-19 containment, along with the weather, may affect our implementation schedules.

Rainfall is a key ingredient to putting out many remaining fire hotspots. At the same time, we recognize the need to be alert to debris torrents and landslides that heavy rains may bring to Stewards and State Parks facilities in Armstrong Redwoods along Fife Creek. Major hazards also still exist from trees that have been weakened by the fires and have the potential to fall.

## 2021 work ahead

- Continue fire recovery work by staff and experienced volunteers, including fence restoration, trail rebuilding and clearing burned and hazardous trees in partnership with State Parks.
- Upgrade our environmental education programs, adding fire and climate science curriculum elements, and engaging our volunteer docents in the process, taking advantage of the time when parks remain closed and local schools continue to limit on-site instruction.
- Move forward at Sonoma Coast State Park with plans for socially distanced Whale Watch and Seal Watch community environmental education programs when Covid-19 precautions lessen, including virtual volunteer trainings that include practices for ensuring that safety protections are in place.
- Share next steps with you regarding implementing Diversity and Equity strategies after our November 2020 Board and Staff retreat. Stewards has committed to ensuring that diversity and equity are integral to who we are, what we do and how we realize our vision of serving as "the link between people and their parks."

*Wishing you and your families a safe & joyous holiday and new year!*

## Cal Report

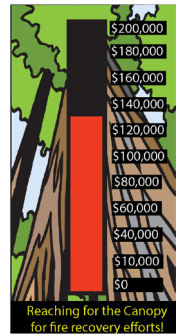
Greg Probst, Sonoma Coast Ranger and State Parks Cooperating Association Liaison

Much has been written about the year 2020, so I am going to instead write about perspective and opportunity.

The past year has given me the opportunity to pause and reflect in both my personal and professional life allowing me a much different perspective than in years past. As I enter into the year 2021, I am going to reevaluate what is important to me and why these things are important in my life. I see this as a perfect time to honor the past while also changing those things that need a new direction.

The same thing could be said for our local parks. After the devastating/healing fires impacted our local communities, this next year will be a great opportunity to change what is not currently working and begin looking at different ways to accomplish our shared mission and goals. There will be hard work ahead as we move forward but it is work that will be rewarding in the long run for our park visitors and our park resources. This year has also been a great opportunity to reflect on our local park history and honor all those persons who have helped to make these natural treasures the places that mean so much to us all.

I want to wish a big thank-you to ALL our state park volunteers and the staff of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods over this past extraordinary year.



## Volunteer Trail Crew - 4th Quarter Update

Rich Lawton - Trail Crew Coordinator, Photos by Mark Anderson

Best news ever; our long time Trail Crew Co-coordinator Bill Bambrick returned after surgery and treatments. We look forward to a full recovery. Great to have you back, Bill!

On another note, we are looking for a GIS Wizard who could assist us in developing some map-ware program. The program would be used by Trail Crew and Trail Patrol volunteers to report maintenance issues and problems on our trails.

If interested please contact me at [rangerrlawton@aol.com](mailto:rangerrlawton@aol.com) or text (707) 543-6723.



After a very slow start to clearing trails due to the COVID-19 shut down, our Crew has been very busy brushing and weedwacking trails in Willow Creek and Sonoma Coast.

The Crew got permission to re-enter Armstrong Redwood SNR on a very limited basis. Jason Eaton of State Parks conducted a basic Chain Saw Safety Class so we were able to start bucking up large logs in Armstrong Redwoods SNR.

This is the beginning for Stewards to start processing firewood for Sonoma Coast and Austin Creek SRA. We are still looking forward to starting to clear trails in Armstrong

and Austin Creek.

In Willow Creek, we brushed back Hunters Camp Road, Creekside Trail and the Willow Creek Road from the lower gate to Hunters Camp Road.

At Sonoma Coast we finished weed wacking and brushing the Kortum Trail from Wright's Beach to the Sunset Rocks (Mammoth or Climbing Rocks).

All the trail work created a six foot vegetation (grass) fire fuel break. The Hunters Camp Fire Road now has an additional six foot fire fuel break.

The Public Assistance Trail Patrol continues to provide accurate feedback on trail conditions so the Trail Crew can adjust priorities. Keep those reports coming and please cc. a copy to me at [rangerrlawton@aol.com](mailto:rangerrlawton@aol.com). Photos with descriptions and accurate locations are extremely helpful.

If you would like to join this fun park loving group check the Stewards website at: <https://www.stewardscr.org/armstrong-redwoods-volunteer-trail-crew.html> or <https://www.stewardscr.org/sonoma-coast-volunteer-program-trail-crew.html>

We all work and learn together as a team and have a lot of fun. In the past few years we have build woodsheds in Bodega Dunes and Wrights Beach, built bridges, re-routed trails, dropped large and small trees, cleared many miles of trails and much more.

Our next scheduled Trail Crew Days are first Wednesdays of the month in Willow Creek, second Wednesdays at Armstrong/Austin Creek and the 3rd or 4th Wednesdays at Sonoma Coast. We are also excited to start using Stewards' new wood splitter/processor, which Scotty and Rachel picked up in Sacramento this week. On Wednesday December 16, at Sonoma Coast, we'll be finishing clearing the Kortum Trail.



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

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

## PROGRAMS

### Armstrong Redwoods/ Austin Creek

Visitor Center Staffing  
Docent Tour Guides  
Redwood Ecology Docents  
Trail Crew/Maintenance  
Pond Farm Docent Tours  
Roving Docents/Public  
Assistance/Rovers

### 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  
Office Help & Special Events

## VOL. PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Vacant, Watershed  
Greg Armstrong, Seal Watch  
Mary Follis, Seal Watch  
Vacant, ARVC  
Mike Roa, Armstrong Red-  
wood Ecology  
Rich Lawton & Bill Bambrick,  
Trail Crews  
Hollis Bewley, Seabird &  
Tidepool & Pinniped Citizen  
Science Programs  
Linda Fisher & Joan Bacci, JVC  
Norma Jellison, Whale Watch  
Rich & Colleen Draffin, Whale  
Watch  
Michael Murphy, AC Mounted  
Assistance Unit

## South to Baja!

*Norma Jellison, Whale Watch Volunteer Coordinator*

It's that time of year again. Usually, close to the end of November, Gray Whales start to swim past Bodega Head on their way south to the mating and calving lagoons of Baja.

A report came in on November 27th that the first southbound Gray Whales were seen off Pt. Arena Lighthouse. So, if you happened to be at Bodega Head around then and were lucky, you might have seen the beginning of the southbound migration from that vantage point.

Their blows are usually seen close to the horizon, as they use the California Current on the southbound migration. The first to stream by are pregnant females headed for the calving lagoons on the Pacific Ocean side of Baja from mid way (Baja Sur) on south. Gray Whales have spent the summer and fall feeding, predominantly in the amphipod rich bottom sediments of the Bering, Chukchi and Beaufort Seas in Alaska, until they ice up. Gray Whales eat about a ton a day. This enables them to bulk up and be able to make the trip south to the lagoon of choice, have their calf, feed it, teach it to swim and then head back north when the calf is strong enough to make the trip. The female feeds her calf 50 gallons of milk a day while in the lagoons and continues nursing on the northbound migration.

The rest of the population follows a similar pattern of feeding and migrating. The lagoons serve as mating, as well as, calving grounds, although mating also occurs along the southbound migration.

The Gray Whale migration traverses the west coast from Alaska, passing Canada, Washington, Oregon, California to Mexico. Hence we no longer call them California Gray Whales, but rather Pacific Gray Whales.

Whale Watch will be different this season, as with just about every aspect of life. While we figure out if and how the program can proceed, the Gray Whales will continue the trek they have undertaken for millennia.

We hope should you venture out to Bodega Head with or without Whale Watch volunteers to interpret, you will look to the horizon and be lucky enough to say 'Thar' She Blows!

**Editor note:** Whale Watch will be postponed until later in the season due to the Covid-19 surge. Stay tuned as we will let you know when you can visit our docents in the months ahead.

## Volunteer Hours Due Now

Our State Park District Volunteer Coordinator, Amelia Schall, is asking volunteers to enter your 2020 volunteer hours into the State Park Better Impacts portal by December 1st so you will be in the first batch of day-use passes processed. We know many of you haven't been able to volunteer as much as you usually do but, nonetheless, your hours are important to record. Amelia is available to help so feel free to contact her at [schall.amelia@parks.ca.gov](mailto:schall.amelia@parks.ca.gov). Those of you who earned District (24-hour) day-use passes for 2020 will have them extended for 2021 by Superintendent order. Statewide (200-hour) passes will be extended until March 31, 2021, and for 2020 you will only need to volunteer 150 hours to earn a Statewide pass for 2021. Thank you to all volunteers for sticking with us during these challenging times.



### Become a California Naturalist

New Course Feb. 17,  
to April 24, 2021 with  
Meghan Walla-Murphy  
and David Berman.

Vitural classroom and  
in-person field trips.

Register online:  
<https://www.stewardscr.org/upcoming-events-programs.html>

# Armstrong Redwoods Ecology Program Update

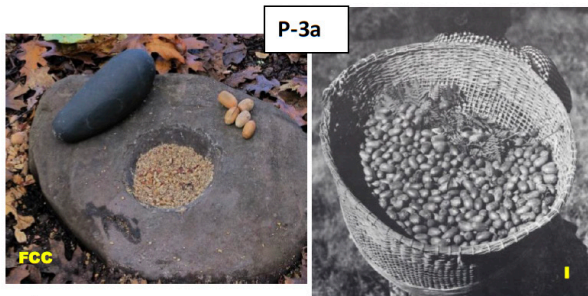
Mike Roa, Redwood Ecology Program Volunteer Coordinator

Last winter AR Docent Greg Corby and I started a project to create four sets of laminated cards to use both as tools for training docents and to use with tour participants. Karen Gebbia has contributed some photos too. We had them almost done when COVID arrived and look forward to sharing them with current and new AR docents. The four sets are:

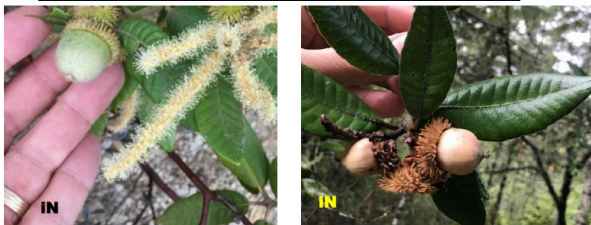
1. Spotter Cards, which are 5" x 8" cards with pictures of things that kids are likely to see (spot) along the trails... nurse log, Parson Jones Tree, Goose Pen, tanoak leaves, etc. They will be given to kids and those kids are supposed to be on the lookout for whatever is on their card. There is information on the backs of the cards that older kids can share with their peers. We feel that this will help keep the kids involved and focused.
2. Another set of cards is called Docent Trail Cards. These show the things that we usually point out to groups...actually many more things than would be pointed out to any one group. Again, there is information on the back of the cards. These cards will be especially useful for new docents as they learn the features found along the trails.
3. A third set is called Organism Cards. These are for docent education and teach about organisms that one is likely to see.
4. The fourth set is called Carry Cards. These are a bit larger (6" x 9") and show relevant things that might be of interest to tour participants such as the map of the redwoods' range, Dawn and Giant Sequoia redwoods, plant anatomy, historical photos of logging.

Since it will apparently be quite a while until we will be leading tours in Armstrong, several docents and I have begun to look at the opportunities available at Pomo Canyon Campground. Beth Lamb, Larry Williams, Richard Shipps and I visited Pomo a few weeks ago to scout it out and are excited about the different types of opportunities available there. I'm working on writing up some ideas and taking photos for Redwood Education at Pomo Canyon. The Save the Redwoods League has offered to help us develop the program for Pomo Canyon, and we're looking forward to working with them.

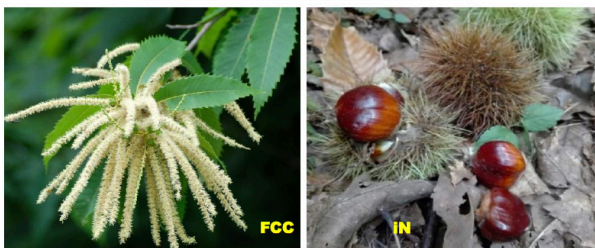
So...The Armstrong Redwoods Docents are chomping at the bit to get back into Armstrong Woods, and we're also excited about developing a program at Pomo Canyon.



Acorns were an important food crop for Native Americans



Tanoak seeds (acorns), flowers, leaves



American chestnut seeds), flowers, leaves

## P-3a. Tanoak acorns (and chestnuts) 4+

Acorns were an important food resource for California Indigenous peoples. Tanoak acorns were especially prized because they are large and plentiful. A single tree might give over 200 pounds of acorns!

Native Americans managed their environment by setting fires, which helped keep grasslands open, which provided a suitable environment for blackberries, deer, rabbits, and other desired resources, including tanoaks.

The tanoak is more closely related to chestnuts than to true oaks. Note the similarity not only of the leaves and seeds but also the flowers

Chestnut trees were once a common sight in the eastern U.S., but a fungus practically wiped them out. Recently a fungus has attacked oaks in California, causing a disease called Sudden Oak Death. Will California's oaks go the way of the chestnut? See card P-1c.

### Photo credits:

Mortar and pestle: from Flickr by John Rusk  
 Pomo acorn basket: West Sonoma County Historical Museum  
 Tanoak acorn and flowers (middle left): from iNaturalist by Todd Plummer  
 Tanoak acorns and leaves (middle right) from iNaturalist by Tri Do  
 Chestnut flowers and leaves: (lower left): from Flickr by Bob MacInnes  
 Chestnuts (lower right): from iNaturalist by Mario Vega

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

*Special thanks to major donors who moved up their donations to earlier in the year to help us with revenue reductions due to Covid-19 and fire recovery.*

### **\$20,000 to \$30,000**

Marcy Beck  
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California State Parks Foundation  
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Kathryn A Law  
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Susan Cohen and Robert Youngs

## Welcome to New Members ~ 4th Quarter

We are grateful to report that our fire recovery campaign has brought in over 200 new members to Stewards.

### Osprey Circle

Joanna Patzek  
Cynthia Podsiadio  
Ashley Tittle  
Joseph Wiedman

### Gray Whale

Ellen Athens  
Jeannette Lebell  
Patty Levenberg  
Susan Sattler  
Paul Schoch  
Keith and Carla Schoenthal  
Curt and Carol Terwilliger

### Bobcat Business

Nicole Cancilla  
Obi Kaufmann

### Harbor Seal (Contributing)

Judith Barry  
Sue Bates-Piintar  
Cynthia Bradley  
Wendy Bummer  
Stan and Carole Chapman  
Adele Gower  
Christopher Kluthe  
Susan Lehr  
Robert Mascola  
Sudia McCaleb  
Ryan Miller  
Steve Messinger  
Jessica Johnson  
Teresa Moore  
Kathy Paquette  
Elizabeth Robinson

Teresa Sammis  
Anna Shneiderman  
Paul Simpson  
Ann Strack  
Laura Tan  
Peter Turney  
Sharon Warden  
Jisho Warner  
Donald Wolf

### Otter (Family)

Stephanie Adams  
Deborah Allen  
Robin Arthur  
Lauren Brougham  
Juanita Davidson  
Amy Dixon  
Damon Gay  
Heather Harshman

Kevin Jude  
Mary Lou Pizzio-flaa  
Danya Martin-Voelker  
Katie Shill  
Leslie Schaaf  
Kathleen & Jim Stoddard Dolinsek  
Julie & Kenneth Voss  
Wei-min Wang

### Trillium (Individual)

Haley Andrews-Northey  
Sonia Binnendyk  
Blaise Cirelli  
Katie Drake  
Kelly Flynn  
Daniel Katz

Jack Kear  
Marilyn Pahr  
Marla Petal  
Virginia Tominia  
Justin Tulloss  
Brian Turner  
Victoria Williams

### Owl (Senior & Student)

Russell Beeson  
John Berton  
Joanie Blechel  
Vladimir Buldyrev  
Rachel Chalmers  
Laurel Chambers  
Janet Clover  
Ceylan Crow  
Vivian Diaz

Collin Dunnivant  
Ian Faerstein  
Suzanne Farrell  
Michael Gordon  
Gabrielle Grady  
Laura Handeland  
Ganna Hawkins  
Chu-Min Lee  
Lizzie Leech  
Paula Litsky  
Troy McFadden  
Eric Migicovsky  
Kaylee Powell  
Dickie Schmidt  
Dana Smith  
Valerie Tisdell  
Douglas Whichard  
Jacob Winik  
Kristan Zwerling

### Picnic Table Donor Program

#### Four new tables are needed in Austin Creek

Stewards is 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](mailto:michele@stewardscr.org)



## Ways to Leave a Legacy ~ more info at [www.stewardscr.org/leave\\_a\\_legacy.html](http://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 below. 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 the form of traditional IRA accounts. Consider designating Stewards as one of the beneficiaries of your IRAs.

### 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](mailto:michele@stewardscr.org).



Redwood Regeneration  
Photo by Rachel Hallaway

# Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

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**Your Stewards Membership**  
includes this final 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**

## Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods Donation Form

*YES, I'd like to become a member/donor!*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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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)

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Use where needed most

Fire Recovery for Armstrong Redwoods/Austin Creek

For more info on how you can contribute to Stewards' Endowments, please contact:

**Michele Luna**

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