

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Preservation through Education and Stewardship

Russian River District State Parks

Volume XXX, Number 4, Winter 2015



As the Seasons Change

Michele Luna, Stewards Executive Director

This fall was especially beautiful with some very large colorful maple leaves falling at Armstrong Redwoods. Rain seems to be back in our lives and we are hopeful the creeks will be filling up soon. I love the sound of Fife Creek flowing outside our office. Our Annual Meeting in October was a special occasion of sharing stories and memories from the past 30 years. I enjoyed reflecting on my time with Stewards and on all the exceptional people who have helped us accomplish great things throughout the years.

In 2015, we offered new overnight camping programs for youth and families. We took the Steward Ship to schools, to events and for coastal visits. We've worked with the Pond Farm Partnership to begin stabilization of the historic structures and made plans for exciting new programs, exhibits and events. With the help of a successful capital campaign, we put a new roof on the Jenner Visitor Center. Over 110,000 park visitors were inspired when they came in contact with our docents and volunteers. Your generosity and support have made these and other achievements possible and we thank you so very much!

We hope 2016 brings a lessening of our serious drought conditions with winter rains that provide the needed breaks in between to prevent flooding. Our work, on the other hand, won't lessen in the least as we move forward in the coming year with exciting new projects to further our mission in State Parks. With a \$45,000 grant from The San Francisco Foundation we will be installing new fencing in Armstrong Redwoods to protect the fragile understory that is so important to the health of our redwood giants. We expect the stabilization work at Pond Farm to be accomplished by mid-year and there are plans to make ADA improvements to the guest house as well. We also plan to launch an oral history project in partnership with UC Davis' Public Scholars Program and are planning a gathering with Pond Farm students in the spring. The second phase of the Jenner Visitor Center Renovation Project will provide new windows, doors and interior improvements. The interior of the Steward Ship is currently under construction and we are very excited to put together a schedule of when it will be sailing to schools, events and specific locations on the Sonoma Coast in 2016. State Parks has indicated that the long awaited General Plan for Armstrong Redwoods and Austin Creek is finally getting closer to commencing. This public process will be important for everyone to keep on their radar as the schedule for stakeholder meetings is released early in 2016.

Mission

Stewards Promotes, Restores, and Protects Your State Parks.

Vision

Stewards is the Link between People and Their Parks.

State Parks

Armstrong Redwoods State Nat. Reserve
Austin Creek State Recreation Area
Sonoma Coast State Park

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430
707.869.9177, 707.869.8252 Fax

stewards@stewardscr.org

www.stewardscr.org

Overall, our programs will benefit from the new energy of our two recently hired Programs Coordinators, Sequoia Etcheverry and Jazzy. Dingler We are excited to enhance existing programs and develop new opportunities for you all to get out into nature, where the benefits are abundant for renewal of spirit, intellect and wellbeing. On behalf of the Stewards staff and board, we wish you a joyous holiday season and Happy New Year!



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E-New

Sign up at www.stewardscr.org!

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Michele Luna, Executive Director

Stewards is fortunate to have an amazing group of dedicated docents, volunteers, staff and board members. Without this wonderful team of supporters our accomplishments would not be possible. Besides the time it takes to realize our goals and objectives, it also takes funding, which our team also helps to raise through special events and other fund development activities. For many years, I was the sole grantwriter for Stewards. Now, I have had the pleasure of writing grants with board member Marcy Beck. It's not always easy to find the right person to help with this important task, but Marcy has been truly a pleasure to collaborate with on our funding proposals. With her help, we've been able to secure over \$100,000 in grant funding for Stewards in the past year.

California State Parks Foundation - Park Enrichment Grant (\$8,825) for Environmental Education programs. Earth Day grant (\$3,000) for campfire center renovation at Bodega Dunes.

Sonoma County Landmarks Commission - (\$3133) Pond Farm support for Docent Manual, website upgrades and rackcard

Sonoma County Wine Country Weekend - (\$15,000) for Volunteer Stewardship Projects.

Community Foundation Sonoma County - (\$15,000) for Place-based Environmental Education Programs.

Resource Legacy Fund - (\$10,000) Marine Protected Area Video Project

Bodega Bay Fisherman's Festival - (\$2,500) Sonoma Coast Programs

San Francisco Foundation - (\$45,000) Armstrong Redwoods Restoration Project

Bureau of Land Management - (\$5,000) Seabird Monitoring Program

Coastal Conservancy - Explore the Coast Grant (\$38,000) - funded in 2014 and spent in 2014-2016 for Sonoma Coast Outreach and Education Programs.

Sonoma County Water Agency - (\$14,059 spent in 2015) Pinniped Monitoring Program

County of Sonoma - (\$5,000) Advertising Funds

Legacy Gifts to Stewards

In the past year Stewards has been honored to receive two significant Legacy Gifts:

Josephine Marks Estate Gift (\$43,084) - This gift was designated for Redwood Education Programs

Carmen Finley Endowment (\$40,000) - This generous endowment was set up to continue to fund the books and DVD's produced by Carmen and Doris Dickenson as well as education programs.

WHALE WATCH PROGRAM UPDATES

As we wind down 2015, we look forward to the 2016 Whale Watch season and hope it will treat us



*Humpback Whale & Surfer, Salmon Creek 11/28/15
Francyne Kunkel*

to memorable sightings of our beloved Pacific Gray Whales. WW season starts the first weekend in January and runs through the end of May.

However, the Gray Whales are already in evidence going south from Alaska to the Baja lagoons. Recently, we have been treated to Humpbacks as well. Both have been sighted closer in than would otherwise be expected.

Our founder, Bea Brunn, continues to convalesce and we look forward to her joining us at the Head at some point in the 2016 season.

In the meantime, Colleen and Rich Draffin and I will be coordinating the weekend shifts and will make sure the materials and displays are available for our visitors and our volunteers. Hope to see you at Bodega Head in 2016!

Norma Jellison, Whale Watch Volunteer

CAL REPORT

Ranger Greg Probst, Cooperating Association Liaison (CAL)

Do you love your California State Parks and want to show your support in a new and unique way? If you answered yes - then there is some good news!

The California Vehicle Code has been changed to allow a new type of specialized license plate that can be issued for your vehicle. The "Parks Plate" is one of the first steps in a long political process to secure dedicated, long term funding for California State Parks - funding which does not rely so heavily on the volatility of the state general fund. State Parks are funded primarily from three sources: the State Park and Recreation Fund (SPRF) which gets its money from park fees, special funds (for example, the fee you pay for a specialized license plate), and the general fund.

The money raised by the Park Plates will be allocated back to state parks for the exclusive trust purposes of preservation and restoration in the parks. 7500 Park Plates must be ordered before the state will even begin making them. I urge you to make every attempt to order one of these beautiful plates if you are able to do so.



The Park Plates have original artwork on a white background. The artwork is that of the iconic Sequoia sempervirens which are commonly referred to as the Coast Redwoods. The plate was designed by Wyn Ericson, a Napa artist and art teacher. Ericson did not receive any money for winning the design contest yet he was quoted as saying, "What I'm getting is the satisfaction that I'm helping the parks." If you would like more information on the Park Plate and information on how to order yours today please go to: www.parks.ca.gov.

NEW PROGRAMS COORDINATORS

JAZZY DINGLER



Jazzy started with Stewards just before Thanksgiving of 2015. She moved to California from the East Coast to become a banana slug (UC Santa Cruz) and study Marine Biology, Ecology, and Evolution. She loves exploring scenic wine country, local food culture, and all of California's beautiful State Parks! Her priority is getting to know Stewards' amazing volunteers, members, and donors by name and furthering Stewards' vision of being "the link between people and their parks."

Jazzy's professional life has focused on promoting biological diversity and growing environmental stewardship through research, community engagement, and firsthand experience. Her experience includes working as a Youth Conservation Corps Crew Leader for U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Naturalist for Nature-Bridge in Southern California, Wilderness Trip Leader for Lifeschool, and Teacher's Assistant at UC Davis. She has been involved with various citizen science projects, and looks forward to growing and diversifying Stewards' programming in this area.

Jazzy is an avid birder and comes to Stewards from The Nature Conservancy, where she spent the fall monitoring migrating sandhill cranes, waterfowl, and shorebirds in the Central Valley. She loves teaching field capture and safe animal handling, and spends much of her volunteer time training others at bird banding stations.

SEQUOIA ETCHEVERRY

Sequoia is excited to be stepping into her new role with the Stewards as a Programs Coordinator. For the past year, she has enjoyed sharing her love for the natural world with students and park visitors as a Naturalist for Stewards. During this time she has become well acquainted with many of the Environmental and Public Education Programs at the Stewards and is looking forward to continuing to spend time out in the field learning from and playing with the volunteers.

For many years, Sequoia followed her heart into the work of teaching ecology, sustainability, wilderness awareness and primitive skills to people of all ages. As a deep nature connection mentor and seasoned facilitator of human relationships, Sequoia emphasizes the importance of developing awareness to the patterns and rhythms of the natural world and remembering our sense of belonging to the wild places that help us thrive. "It is a pleasure to continue this work in the wild places of West Sonoma County!" Sequoia holds an M.A. in Depth Psychology from Sonoma State University and a B.A. in Forest Ecology from the Evergreen State College.



FOREST THERAPY - STEPPING INTO AN UNTAMED WORLD

Forest therapy, known in Japan as shinrin-yoku or “forest bathing”, is a new interpretive program being offered by Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods. This guided program is presented as a simple, relaxing and approachable way for visitors to experience their parks. Forest therapy provides an opportunity for visitors to relax and enjoy nature and may even promote good health and well-being. Last Spring, I attended a seven day intensive training on forest therapy in Sugarloaf Ridge State Park in the Sonoma Valley. Let me tell you a story from that experience.

So there we were, on the second day of our training being led on a shinrin-yoku walk in Sugarloaf. Our guide led us to an older elderberry tree. We were directed as students to surround the tree, making a big circle. Our guide then gave us a simple invitation: get to know the tree. Quietly, we all stood there: taking it all in. I started wandering and touched the gnarled and rough bark on the trunk. Stepping back for a wider view, I noticed glistening new green leaves spread out from branches that stretched low over a grassy meadow. At the tips of some branches were elder flowers. I stood there, smelling every flower that was within my reach. I was totally content with my nose in a flower when I heard some whispering.

She was across from me, pointing at something that I could not see. Immediately curious, I broke out of the natural circle our group had formed and quietly tip-toed over to where she was. It was a snake, a western yellow-bellied racer, and it was resting on an inner branch. So, we just stood there, a small group of us, just watching the snake. As if waking up from a nap, it began to slowly move down the low branch. I remember focusing on the snake and just tuning out everything around us, including directions from our guide to continue the previous invitation. It was not until it slowly started moving that we noticed the two western fence lizards that were sitting still on the branch, straight in the path of the snake.

The western yellow-bellied racer feeds on lizards, amongst other prey. It will catch them in its jaws or crush them underneath its body. The snake advanced down the branch, towards the lizards. It zig-zagged with its head lifted above the rest of its light green body.

Its characteristic bright yellow underbelly contrasted sharply with the brown bark. Then, at that crucial moment: we stood holding our breath. The snake advanced ahead and then slid right in between the two lizards. As if they were not even there. We all exhaled, loudly. Once it made its way to the ground, the snake disappeared into the tall grasses. All that was visible of the snake's exit was the subtle swaying of the grasses. This all happened in the span of less than one minute, but it felt like an eternity.

In the tradition of rites of passage and vision quests, some refer to experiences like this as moving from the “tamed” world of our daily lives to the raw world of nature or the “untamed world”. How many of us have had experiences like this in nature? I would wager that all of us have in some way. What is most meaningful for me with this snake experience is that it was not really just about the snake. It was the whole of the experience. Our guide had set the stage for us to open our senses and immerse ourselves in nature. We were primed and ready to slow down, to turn off our busy minds and to plug back into nature.

For the last twenty years, authors such as David Sobel and Richard Louv have expressed the value and role of nature in our own human development. Since the early 1980s, the Japanese government and a team of scientists and doctors have also been championing both the emotional and physical benefits of spending time in nature. So much so, that in Japan there are designated shinrin-yoku parks, trails, and a growing network of certified guides. Several studies point to the effect of phytoncides, the anti-microbial organic compounds found in many plants that may help us build and strengthen our own immune system. Worldwide, some doctors have even been issuing “nature prescriptions” to patients.

For whatever purpose, be it for fun or for health, Stewards hopes that you join a forest therapy walk sometime soon. All walks are on flat ground and cover less than a mile. The pace is slow and we encourage you to bring water, snacks, and even a comfy camp chair to sit in. The first walk of the new year is scheduled for January 10 in Armstrong Redwoods. You can register online and view all of our other fun adventures for 2016. For more information about forest therapy and guide trainings in the area, please visit the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides site at: <http://www.natureandforesttherapy.org>.



Photo by Robert Janover

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS, TRAININGS & SEMINARS

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED - To register, please use our Online Reservation Form.

If you would like more information contact: Sequoia or Jazzy, Program Coordinators
at sequoia@stewardscr.org, jazzy@stewardscr.org or call (707) 869-9177 ext. 1#.



Forest Therapy in Armstrong Redwoods

Saturday, January 16, 10 AM - 1 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Guided stroll through Armstrong Redwoods. Open your senses to the natural world around you! **\$20**

The Art of Interpretation: Engagement with all Age Groups

Saturday, January 16, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Focus on interpretive teaching and entertaining techniques that awaken curiosity. **\$20**

General Volunteer In Parks (VIP) Orientation #1

Saturday, January 23, 10 AM - 12 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Learn about volunteer opportunities available within the Sonoma Mendocino State Parks District.

Redwood Education with Mike Roa

Saturday, January 23, 1 PM - 4 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Interdisciplinary workshop providing knowledge, skills and resources for redwood ecology. **\$20**

Armstrong Redwoods Guide Training

Tuesday, January 26 10 AM - 1 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Learn to share fascinating redwood ecology with tour groups, park visitors and school groups.

Pinniped Monitoring Orientation

Monday, February 1, 10AM - 12 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Volunteers collect data to ensure the protection of harbor seals during Russian River estuary activities.

Pinniped Monitoring Site Visit & Training

Tuesday, February 2, 10 AM - 12 PM, Sonoma Coast State Park
Review equipment, monitoring protocols and tour the different monitoring sites along the coast.

Tide pooling Field Seminar

Saturday, February 6, 3 PM - 5 PM, Sonoma Coast State Park
Explore the tides and learn valuable techniques used for interpreting this fragile resource to the public.

Pinniped (Harbor Seals, Sea Lions, etc.) Seminar

Saturday, February 13, 9 AM - 12 PM, Bodega Bay Fire Protection District Office
Dr. Sarah Allen presents on harbor seals, sea lions, & the abundant marine life along our coastline. **\$20**

Seal Watch Orientation

Saturday, February 13, 1 PM - 4 PM, Bodega Bay Fire Protection District Office
Learn how you can help protect the seasonal harbor seal colony at the mouth of the Russian River.

Seabird Monitoring Orientation

Thursday, February 18, 1 PM - 4 PM, Bodega Bay Fire Protection District Office
Join the Bureau of Land Management seabird monitoring program in Sonoma Coast State Park

General VIP Orientation #2

Saturday, February 20, 10 AM - 12 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Learn about the volunteer opportunities available in the Sonoma Mendocino State Park District.

Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center Orientation

Saturday, February 20, 1 PM - 2:30 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Learn to interact with and inspire visitors from all over the world by staffing the ARVC.

Tide pool Guide Orientation

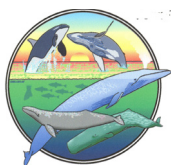
Monday, March 7, 3:30 PM - 6 PM, Volunteer Office, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve
Introduce school groups to the amazing life in the intertidal zone. Training dates TBA.

Tracking: Seeing Patterns on a Landscape

Saturday, March 12, 9 AM - 3 PM, Sonoma Coast State Park
Join in as Meghan Walla-Murphy shares the discipline and mechanics of tracking. **\$20**

2016 Whale Watch begins January and will run through the end of May

Join our volunteers every Saturday from Noon to 5 PM at Bodega Head.
Observe these beautiful creatures as they migrate from Baja California to Alaska!



Volunteer Opportunities

Call the Stewards office:
869-9177 x1# or email
sequoia@stewardscr.org or
jazzy@stewardscr.org

Program Activities

Armstrong Redwoods
Visitor Center Staffing
Friends of Armstrong
Redwoods
Docent Tour Guides
Trail Maintenance
Habitat Restoration Project
Pond Farm Interest Group

Sonoma Coast State Park

Visitor Center Staffing
Seal Watch
Whale Watch
Tidepool Programs
Watershed Programs
Environmental Living Prog.
Sonoma Coast Stewardship
Pinniped Monitoring
Seabird Monitoring

Other Projects

Office Help & Special Events

Volunteer Program Coordinators

Joyce Bacci, ARVC
Doris Dickenson, FAR
Laura Parent, Pond Farm
Linda Fisher, Jenner VC
Mary Follis Seal Watch
Bea Brunn, Whale Watch
Suzanne Abrams, ELP
Cindy Gillease, Willow
Creek Education Program
Bill Bambrick, Sonoma Coast
Armstrong/Austin Creek,
Willow Creek Trail Crews
The Sorensons, Marine
Debris & Beach Cleanups
Hollis & Jerry Bewley,
Tidepool Programs
Hollis Bewley,
Seabird Monitoring
Vacant, MAU
Mark Anderson, Foot Patrol

EXCERPTS FROM A CHICKAREE'S DIARY

On August 28, 2015, after falling from my nest, I was curled up in a sick, scared little ball and discovered on the East Ridge Trail by the back parking lot. I was found by a hiker who reported my dire state to the Visitor's Center. The lady who was working at the center asked a lady in a park uniform if she could fetch me as she couldn't leave. The nice uniformed lady brought me to the V.C. lady, who just happened to be licensed by the Sonoma County Wildlife Rescue to care for little wild creatures, which was a handy coincidence for me. So she took me home and in two weeks, after feeling exhausted for three days...then after getting enough rest... being hydrated and receiving



delicious nutritious food... and getting morning doses of vitamin D... I really felt good again and was anxious to go back to Armstrong Woods and see all the gang. I'm sure they thought I was dead. My temporary house was put between the maintenance building and the Stewards office for safe keeping. It's now Sept 11th, I'm back home again, healthy, happy and thankful to that visitor who took the time to report my problem. *LIFE IS GOOD*



Submit your Volunteer Hours

To our 300+ volunteers, your time and dedication is invaluable! Thank you! The time has come to document all your volunteer hours for State Parks! Record your hours on our website after you log into your account. Use the Volunteer Hours form that can be found in "Forms" located within the "E-Store/Resources" tab on our website: www.stewardscr.org. You may also call our office at (707) 869-9177 or email us at stewards@stewardscr.org if you have any further questions.

ARMSTRONG TRAIL CREW & YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

Armstrong Redwoods SNR Maintenance Staff would like to acknowledge and thank our dedicated Trail and Youth volunteers for their continual support this year. With their help through the year we accomplished a lot, such as: trail maintenance, picnic ground maintenance, fence repairs, interpretive sign installations, Old Grove prep, and finally the renovation of the Old Ranger Station in our front parking lot (just to name a few)!

Thank you All! Looking forward to another year of working together!



From left to right: Tim Mayer, Rich Lawton, Duanne Nibblett, Andy Kaufman, Bill Bambrick, Alan Durall, Norman Hill, Larry Bulinski, Jamie Archer, Melanie Fraley, Trevor Schapp, Justin Schapp and Jordan Klinetobe

In Appreciation of our Donors

Foundations & Agencies

Bodega Bay Fisherman's Festival
Bodega Seafood, Art & Wine Festival
Bodega Volunteer Fire Department
California Coastal Commission
California State Parks Foundation
California State Park Rangers Association
Clifbar Foundation
Community Foundation Sonoma County
County of Sonoma
Dean Witter Foundation
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The Ohio State University Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
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Save the Redwoods League
Sonoma County Trailblazer Foundation
Sonoma County Water Agency
The San Francisco Foundation
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Holiday Auction

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Graton Ridge Cellars Hand Goods
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Honey Sliced Ham
Kool City Surf Shop
Le Visage Skin Care
Main Street Station
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Northwood Restaurant
Old World Winery
Park Avenue Catering
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Graton Ridge Cellars
Kendall - Jackson
Korbel
Lagunitas
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Moshin Vineyards
Old World Winery
Russian River Brewery
Russian River Vineyards
Salmon Creek
Third Street Ale Works
Wild Hog

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

PO Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430

(707) 869.9177, FAX (707) 869.8252

Stewards@StewardsCR.org, StewardsCR.org

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Return Service Requested

Stewards members receive this quarterly newsletter by email or mail, a 20% discount at Stewards run Visitor Centers and our special events and discounts on our educational seminars.

**CALL 800-320-0476
TO MAKE A
VEHICLE DONATION
IN THE NAME OF
STEWARDS.**

For information on contributing to Stewards' Endowments please contact Michele Luna (707) 869-9177 X4# michele@stewardscr.org

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Membership Form

RENEWAL

YES, I'd like to become a member.

- Senior/Student \$25.00
Individual \$30.00
Family \$45.00
Contributing \$100.00
Sustaining \$150.00
Business \$150.00
Patron \$250.00 plus
Osprey Circle \$500.00 plus

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

I'd like to help with an additional donation of \$_____

Payment type: Check Charge Card Visa MC Total tax deductible donation \$_____

Make check payable to Stewards. Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Annual Renewal Date: February 1 Signature: _____

Bequests

Your Gift to the Future of State Park Preservation

With your help, 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).

Sample:

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 # _____ provided upon request. Contact your legal advisor for further information. There are also other planned giving options for your consideration.