



Redwood National and State Parks Foundation Document

DRAFT Park Purpose

Redwood National and State Parks share in the perpetual stewardship and watershed-scale restoration of ancient coast redwood forest, mountains, streams, and coastline for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of people forever.

DRAFT Significance Statements (why the park is important and what makes it special)

The following significance statements have been identified for Redwood National and State Parks. (Please note the statements are in no particular order.)

- Nearly half of the world's remaining old-growth coast redwood forest, including some of the oldest and tallest trees in the world, are found in Redwood National and State Parks. These forests provide an important refuge for a diversity of plants and animals and help to protect the world's climate through their ability to sequester massive quantities of carbon from the atmosphere.
- Redwood National and State Parks are the ancestral lands of the Tolowa, Yurok, Chilula, and Hupa people. Through their resilience, the Tolowa, Yurok, and Hupa people remain on their homelands today, and continue to rely on the landscape and its resources for spiritual, cultural, and physical sustenance as they have done since time immemorial.
- Redwood National and State Parks provide opportunities to experience and draw inspiration from the natural sounds and subtle variations of light and fog found within the natural cathedral of old-growth redwood forests. The exceptional air quality, wilderness character, and dark night skies found within this landscape enhance and contribute to the quality of this experience.
- Redwood National and State Parks' unique combination of powerful flooding events and unstable geology, violent earthquakes, and tsunamis generated by uplift near the intersection of three tectonic plates, make it one of the most rugged and wild landscapes along the Pacific Coast of the continental United States.
- The intensity of 19th and 20th century old-growth redwood logging spurred unparalleled conservation efforts that resulted in the establishment of the three state parks and a national park that comprise Redwood National and State Parks. The contrast between the old-growth forests, visibly damaged ecosystems, and ongoing restoration efforts provide a stunningly graphic example of the evolution of resource practices and our nation's conservation values;

this example fosters for the public a deeper understanding of, and appreciation for, the protection of complex and fragile ecological systems.

- The 1978 Redwood Act that expanded Redwood National Park and the 2002 expansion of Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park established a precedent for park land protection by prescribing comprehensive management for watershed-scale restoration and recovery of damaged ecosystems extending beyond park boundaries. The internationally recognized restoration efforts of Redwood National and State Parks have continued to evolve and set a standard for building ecological resiliency through cooperative management.

DRAFT Fundamental Resources and Values (key resources and values that enable the park to achieve its purpose and maintain its significance)

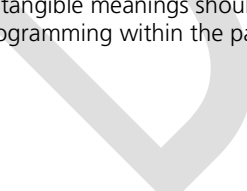
- ***Ancient Redwoods.*** Redwood National and State Parks preserve some of the largest contiguous ancient coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) stands in the world. Nearly half of the world's remaining old-growth redwoods and several of the world's tallest trees are found within the park's boundaries.
- ***Physical Processes and Water Resources.*** A constant interplay of physical, climatic, and oceanic processes shape the parks' landscapes of rugged coastlines, wild rivers and streams, rich estuaries, and inland marshes and lagoons. These landscapes showcase the diversity of the parks' water resources and the transformative properties of crashing waves, fierce winds, and the geological instability of the coast.
- ***Ecosystem Diversity.*** The almost 132,000 acres (53,400 hectares) within Redwood National and State Parks represent a mosaic of incredibly varied but interconnected ecological communities that house an astonishing level of biodiversity. Old-growth redwood forests, second-growth stands, oak woodlands, open meadows, tidal and estuarine zones, and the park's rivers and coast and their associated wildlife contribute to the park's broad range of flora and fauna.
- ***Ecological Integrity.*** Since the 1978 Redwood Expansion Act, many of Redwood National and State Parks' efforts have been dedicated towards watershed-scale protection of existing ecosystems and the revitalization or restoration of degraded lands. Increasing ecological resiliency and maintaining habitat connectivity is crucial for preserving native biodiversity and ecosystem function.
- ***Scenic Resources and Natural Sounds.*** The parks' natural environment provides benefits to both visitor experiences and the integrity of the biological communities found in Redwood National and State Parks. The parks provide one of the darkest and quietest temperate coastal environments on the Pacific Coast. These dark night skies, scenic daytime experiences, and natural soundscapes contribute to the health of biological communities as well as the feeling of solitude.

- ***Traditional Culture and Use.*** The Yurok, Tolowa, Chilula, and Hupa peoples have been intimately connected to the land included within Redwood National and State Parks since time immemorial and continue their traditional use of resources for spiritual, cultural, and physical sustenance. Redwood National and State Parks strive to recognize and respect the continued connection of American Indians to this landscape.
- ***Cultural Resources and Landscapes.*** Sites and landscapes found throughout the parks show the precontact, historic, and continued cultural use of land and resources by local Yurok, Tolowa, Chilula, and Hupa people as well as the 19th and 20th century economic development of the area.
- ***Science and Education.*** The park lands' rich biodiversity and old-growth redwood ecosystem allows for research and educational opportunities relating to old-growth redwood, threatened and endangered species, ecosystem interconnectivity, resilience, restoration and the effects of climate change. Redwood National and State Parks foster a learning laboratory for all ages through an extensive education program aimed at creating new environmental stewards and supports research to better understand and manage the park's natural resources. The park's educational programs play a significant, ongoing role in the development of national environmental education practices.
- ***Partners in Stewardship.*** Partnerships with other public agencies as well as other organizations and private entities are vitally importance to successfully managing, maintaining, and improving the health of the ecosystems within Redwood National and State Parks. Since 1994, the National Park Service and the California State Parks have jointly managed the four parks that make up Redwood National and State Parks in a national model for collaborative management and landscape-scale resource protection.
- ***Opportunities for People to Connect to the Landscape.*** Redwood National and State Parks encourages visitors to interact with the landscape and build personal connections with park resources. To help facilitate these connections, the parks offer a variety of active and passive recreational pursuits.

DRAFT Interpretive Themes (key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park)

- Redwood National and State Parks provide opportunities to connect to and be inspired by a diverse landscape of coast redwood forest, mountains, streams, and coastline. The knowledge gained from these experiences inspires stewardship and respect for our natural world.
- Powerful earth movements, dramatic water events, and intensive human use shaped the vast landscape of Redwood National and State Parks that we see today. These forces of change instill in us an awareness of the interconnectedness, strength, and resilience of nature.

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