

# GREATER PRAIRIE CREEK ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECT

## Introduction and Overview



Under the umbrella of Redwoods Rising, the National Park Service (NPS) and California State Parks (CSP) are beginning the planning process to continue restoration efforts in the Greater Prairie Creek (GPC) watershed through forest and aquatic restoration and road removal. NPS and CSP are preparing a joint Initial Study/Environmental Assessment (IS/EA) to fulfill the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act and National Environmental Policy Act, respectively. As part of this planning effort, NPS and CSP will also assess the effects of restoration activities on cultural resources under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and California Public Resources Code 5024, respectively.



The GPC Ecosystem Restoration Project (the project or Proposed Action) is located primarily in the lower portions of the Prairie Creek watershed within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP). The project area was extensively logged from the 1930s to the mid-1970s. The forest now consists of dense stands where tree growth and development are hindered, species compositions have shifted, and habitat quality is low. Unmaintained logging roads, landings, and stream crossings are eroding, leading to sediment entering the stream channels. These historical uses have degraded aquatic habitat and the mainstem of lower Prairie Creek is without large pieces of wood needed for fish habitat.

The project area is a high priority for restoration because of its location between two of the largest remaining stands of old growth redwood forests in RNSP. Addressing issues related to forest structure, erosion threats, and aquatic habitat in the planning area would accelerate habitat connectivity and development of beneficial conditions for park resources, including threatened and endangered species.

Under the Proposed Action, ecosystem restoration activities would occur throughout the project area in three phases. Phases were determined based on a combination of factors, including the urgency in addressing sedimentation threats or problems, proximity to old growth stands, and stand density. The flowchart to the right shows the general order of ecosystem restoration activities that would occur within a given area that uses heavy equipment.



### IS/EA Milestones

