

# Planning for the Future

Save-the-Redwoods League has begun an exciting new chapter in the development of the *Master Plan for the Coast Redwoods*. The *Master Plan* is a strategic, science-based planning process that helps the League identify priority places that when conserved will ensure survival of the ancient redwood forest for the coming millennium. The *Master Plan* is a tool the League uses to identify priority actions, determine appropriate methods for protecting the most critical lands, and identify partners. It enables the League to respond to opportunities effectively within a planned context.

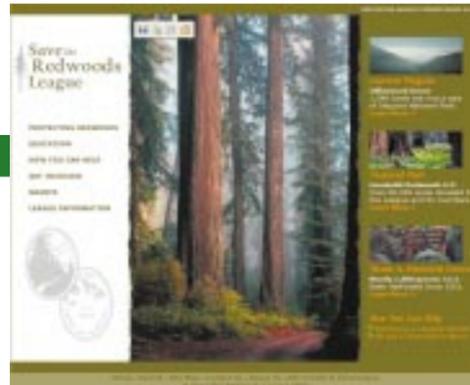
The *Master Plan* guides the League's land acquisition program by identifying important project areas and consolidating information to assess opportunities initiated by landowners. All conservation decisions made by the League will be based upon the *Master Plan's* scientific principles and strategies. The heart of the *Master Plan* is the identification of conservation strategies to foster protection of the ancient redwood forest.

In 2003, the League completed the first of seven sub-region conservation plans focusing on the Santa Cruz Mountains. In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the North Coast Regional Land Trust the League is working on the next sub-region—Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.



## THE MASTER PLAN:

- Identifies remaining ancient redwood forest
- Assesses threats to the redwood forest
- Gauges the visitor experience
- Ascertain potential conservation partners
- Recommends specific conservation strategies



## SAVE-THE-REDWOODS LEAGUE – WEBSITE WINNER

On January 30, 2004, the League's website was acknowledged as an official Macromedia "Site of the Day" winner for its strong visual design, superior functionality, and innovative use of web tools. Please visit our website, [SaveTheRedwoods.org](http://SaveTheRedwoods.org), and give us your feedback.



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Save-the-Redwoods League  
*Spring Bulletin 2004*

Humboldt Forest Fire Fall 2003  
Photo by Ian Condon

# Better from the Executive Director

Dear League Members,

In the heat of California's fire season this last fall, a dry lightning storm struck Northern California igniting more than fifty fires. From the air, water was dropped on a blaze deep in the old growth redwood forest of Humboldt Redwoods State Park's Canoe Creek watershed. But it soon became clear that hand crews would be necessary to extinguish that fire in the remote reaches of the world's largest old growth redwood forest.

For days, crews tried without success to cut a trail up steep slopes through dense huckleberry to the fire. The fire would ultimately burn 11,500 acres before it was contained a month later.



Photo by Ruskin Hartley

*Fire destroys.* But fire also creates and is a natural process central to the ancient redwood forest's sustainability. The success of the League's work to save the redwoods is measured by protecting core forest reserves large enough to support dynamic natural processes. If the Canoe Creek fire had started in a dense, young

stand, the intense heat of the fire could have consumed old growth trees. Instead, the fire remained relatively cool as it burned the forest duff, creeping along the forest floor through the old-growth. Where the fire moved into second growth forests, the fight was fierce and dangerous.

In its 85 years, Save-the-Redwoods League has protected more than 160,000 acres in California's state redwood parks. Today the League continues to purchase unprotected old growth stands and surrounding second growth forests that, in time, will develop characteristics of the ancient forest and bolster the forest's resistance to the threats of fire and flood.

A month after the Canoe Creek fire was declared "contained"; I hiked into Canoe Creek with a group of Park rangers and scientists. I had heard how the fire was beneficial: that "it did what it was supposed to do". But I was unprepared, shocked by the change. I



Photo by Ruskin Hartley

dropped back from the group to try to take it in. The fire that crept through the forest duff had also climbed the trunks of many beautiful old trees leaving burn scars as high as 80 feet. Many dead snags had burned up completely. Some still smoldered, smoky wisps curling through the sunlight. Holes opened in the forest floor where roots had burned, leaving deep subterranean cavities. Clustered, blackened stubs bristled where sword ferns once had stood. *Fire destroys.*

But as we walked, we began to see a hoary white foam lacing the foot of the blackened trunks: a fungus that none of the scientists had ever seen, responding to this rare fire in the ancient redwoods. Soon we noticed five inch green shoots stretching through the cinders at the foot of trees. Will any of these mature to stand in the forest of the future? Probably not, but what a display of the redwood's resilience.

Many challenges remain to save the redwoods. We continue to fund research to learn what the redwood forest needs to support and withstand fire. And with your support, we continue to buy land to restore and protect the ancient forests that connect us with the primeval past and reach forward to an unimaginable future. I hope you will visit the redwood forest this summer. No matter where you go, you will see evidence of the fires that for centuries have shaped the forest and you will relish the persistence and peace of the redwoods.



Photo by Ruskin Hartley

*Katherine Oelant*

# League Advances Two Acquisitions Vital to Protecting Forests

The League is pleased to report progress on two critical acquisitions: the Carter property near Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park and a parcel within the *Corridor from the Redwoods to the Sea* owned by Sierra Pacific Industries.

Thanks to a resounding response from our members at the end of 2003, we raised the entire purchase price for the Carter property in only 3 months! We are moving ahead with the purchase and expect to be able to transfer the property to the State Parks later this year. In the meantime, this 33.5 acre parcel along the scenic Van Duzen River will remain protected, providing critical habitat for the endangered marbled murrelet and helping forge a key habitat connection for wildlife between Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park to the east and Cheatham Grove to the west. Our thanks go out to everyone who contributed to this important project.

Across Humboldt Redwoods State Park from Grizzly Creek is the League's *Corridor from the Redwoods to the Sea*. The Corridor is one of the League's largest projects, encompassing thousands of acres stretching from Humboldt Redwoods State Park—the largest contiguous reserve of ancient redwoods in the world—to the King Range National Conservation Area, the longest roadless coastal stretch in the lower-48 states. This spring the League purchased 965 acres from Sierra Pacific Industries to expand protection of forest and grasslands bordering several miles of the Mattole River and its tributaries. Grants from the State's Wildlife Conservation Board and a major foundation made the purchase possible. The League is working with the Bureau of Land Management and an adjacent land owner on property transfer plans. These plans would include conservation easement restrictions that would maintain the biological health of the land.

# Education Grants Make a Connection

The League's education grants program seeks to connect children with the redwoods by underwriting field trips, forest stewardship programs, and curriculum development. This year twenty-three grants were awarded to schools and interpretive associations statewide.

Students at South Fork High School located on the Avenue of the Giants in Humboldt Redwoods State Park, will use grant funding to study redwood forest ecology. Biology students "see what true science is like" said teacher Melinda Bailey. "South Fork High School is committed to educating our students about the importance of maintaining vital and rare ecosystems for present and future generations." With guidance from local university scientists, students will install a solar-powered sensor in a large redwood tree to monitor relative humidity, light, and temperature. Tracking changes in the tree's microclimate introduces fundamental biology principles.

Other grants are enabling students in Los Angeles to study the giant sequoia through art, transporting students from inner-city Richmond into the redwood forest, providing raingear to keep students dry on trips

to Redwood National Park, and funding development of new interpretive material for use in redwood state parks by interpretive associations.

If you know a school, teacher, or student committed to redwood education, we encourage you to check the League's website for grant program details.



Photo by Melinda Bailey

*Above: Mogan and James sampling water. South Fork High School is committed to educating their students about the importance of maintaining vital and rare ecosystems for present and future generations.*

# Fire in the Ancient Redwoods

## Humboldt Redwoods State Park

Hikers will have the opportunity for a true wilderness experience with the re-design of the Johnson Camp Trail at Humboldt Redwoods State Park. This challenging, 5.5-mile route begins in the ancient redwoods of Bull Creek Flat, deep in the shadows of many of the world's tallest trees. As the trail contours up toward Grasshopper Peak, redwoods give way to Douglas-fir, madrone, and tanoak. The new trail crosses Miller, Connick, and Tepee Creeks, as they rush to join Bull Creek below. The trail ends at Johnson Camp, after a 1400 foot climb in elevation. Hikers are rewarded by the commanding view of the world's largest old growth redwood forest stretching below.

The trail's redesign will enhance the park visitor's enjoyment, minimize impacts on resources, and increase trail sustainability. The original trail which followed an old roadbed, will be stabilized to prevent erosion and sedimentation of waterways. The new trail will open in spring 2005, when it is certain to spark excitement among hiking enthusiasts and nature lovers.



Photo by Stephen Underwood

Crackling and snapping echoed above the rippling currents of the South Fork Eel River as white smoke veiled the primeval forest. Ignited by a lightning strike in September 2003, the Canoe Fire — centered in Humboldt Redwoods State Park south of Eureka — was the largest fire in old growth redwoods on record. The fire burned 11,500 acres, including nearly 7,400 acres of ancient forest.

This natural wildfire did not kill most trees. Rather, it rejuvenated vegetation and cleared ground cover fuels that can cause catastrophic blazes. Within weeks, from the base of scorched redwoods, new sprouts appeared and clover-like redwood sorrel emerged from the ashes.

"This is the first significant old growth burn that we've had in this generation of ecologists and fire fighters," says Jay Harris, senior state parks resource ecologist. "We're going to learn volumes from this." Harris noted that one reason the ancient forest withstood the fire so well was the height of lateral branches above the ground. In the dark of the ancient redwood forest, lower limbs drop off so that in many trees there are no branches for more than 100 feet.

In younger forests, lateral branches on tree trunks serve as ladders conducting flames from the forest floor up into the canopy where the fire increases in intensity and can completely consume the forest.



Photo by Ruskin Hartley

*"This is the first significant old-growth burn that we've had in this generation of ecologists and fire fighters. We're going to learn volumes from this"*

JAY HARRIS  
SENIOR STATE PARK RESOURCE ECOLOGIST

Old growth redwoods' thick bark and low resin also make them fire-resistant. Although not fatal to the tree, fire does often burn large basal hollows — termed "goosepens" because early settlers penned chickens, geese, and other livestock inside. Today, goosepens provide shelter to silver foxes, coyotes, and bobcats, and host nesting bat colonies. The old growth redwoods that did fall in the Canoe Creek fire will eventually provide foraging opportunities for pileated

woodpeckers, moist habitat for California clouded and black salamanders, nests for woodrats, and nutrients for the soil. Trees falling into the streams will create slow, deep pools vital for chinook and coho salmon.

### HOME OF THE LEAGUE

In 1917, Highway 101 (the "Redwood Highway") brought large-scale mechanized logging into Southern Humboldt County. Leading to the area

that is now Humboldt Redwoods State Park, majestic redwood forests were leveled as far as the eye could see. Thankfully, the Redwood Highway also brought prominent conservationists, John C. Merriam, Madison Grant, and Henry Fairfield Osborne who recognized the imminent threat of destruction and resolved to act quickly. They founded Save-the-Redwoods League the following year. Dramatic photographs in *The National Geographic*, told the story of the destruction of the redwood forest and inspired people across the country to join the League in saving the redwoods. In 1921, the League completed its first purchase in the heart of the forest which became Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

With persistence over more than eight decades, sometimes acquiring five acres, sometimes five thousand, the League has succeeded in protecting more than 51,000 of the Park's 53,000 acres. It is the largest California State redwood park, protecting the greatest expanse of contiguous old growth redwood forest in the world. More than 60 percent of the world's tallest trees thrive along the park's Bull Creek, in towering ancient forests that are thousands of years old.

Whether the redwoods are enjoyed by driving leisurely down the Avenue of the Giants through spectacular old growth forests, following the self-guided nature trail along the Eel River in the Founders Grove — named for the Save-the-Redwoods League founders — or venturing out on longer hikes in the 10,000-acre Rockefeller Forest, a visit to Humboldt Redwoods State Park will inspire any visitor.

*written by Elaine Miller Bond*

The Lolankoks people of the Sinkyone tribe inhabited most of what is now Humboldt Redwoods State Park. The Lolankoks spent the warm months hunting in the upper elevations for black-tailed deer, Roosevelt elk and small game and spent the rest of the year near the Eel River fishing for salmon and steelhead. The Lolankoks and their way of life disappeared with the arrival of the settlers leaving behind no record of their cultural practices.

It is believed that, like other local tribes, the Lolankoks used fire to keep grasslands open for game and to manage oak groves for acorn production. These fires, and others caused by lightning spread across the countryside until stopped by natural barriers, the onset of fall rains, or the lack of fuels due to previous fires. They caused significant changes to forest fuels, forest species composition and the amount of bare soil available for plant rooting.

Fire has long played a significant role in shaping the redwood forests of Humboldt Redwoods State Park.

Understanding fire's role will be important to reforestation efforts as the League works with park managers to recreate a semblance of the old growth forests that existed prior to logging.



## REDWOOD LEADERSHIP SOCIETY

The Redwood Leadership Society is Save-the-Redwoods League's premiere circle of donors, providing the financial foundation for the League's vital efforts to protect and preserve the remaining ancient redwood forest. Save-the-Redwoods gratefully acknowledges these generous supporters who made 2003 such a success. Your dedication to preserving redwood forests is invaluable.

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# Mill Creek Redwoods Restoration



Photo by Stephen Corley

The League and its conservation partners have embarked on an ambitious journey to restore the forests and streams of Mill Creek. Spurred by the purchase of 25,000 acres of forest in June 2002, our shared vision is to restore the rich complexity of the ancient redwood forest to this landscape. Strategically located at the northern extent of the redwoods range, Mill Creek completes watershed protection for the primordial forests of Jedediah Smith and Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Parks and creates a landscape-scale linkage between the Pacific Ocean, Redwood National and State Parks and the inland forests of the Klamath-Siskiyou bioregion.

In the past twelve months, the focus has been on immediate restoration needs: identification and repair of eroding roads, ecological thinning of dense, young forests, and monitoring of the five salmon species inhabiting Mill Creek.

The restoration of the forests and streams at Mill Creek is an ambitious undertaking. Given the longevity of the redwood forest and the time it takes individual trees to achieve the characteristics of ancient monarchs, it is also a lengthy undertaking. The League and its partners are committed to ensuring that the remaining ancient forests endure the pressures of population growth, resource extraction and climate change.

## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Lucille Vinyard came by her love of the redwoods naturally. A member of Save-the-Redwoods League for 20 years, an environmental crusader for over 40 years, and a redwood advocate her entire life, Lucille tells the story of her grandmother, Lucille MacDonald, who in the early 1930s rode her horse to a large old redwood and sat at its base to halt loggers from cutting it down. That tree still stands today. Lucille carries on her grandmother's active passion for the redwoods. "You can't live among the redwoods without thinking they are something very special. They surround you, they are part of you."

Among a lifetime of redwood activism, Lucille counts as her most memorable experience a trip to Washington DC where she spoke before a Senate committee in support of the creation of the Redwood National Park. She spearheaded an education and awareness campaign to rally support for expanded protection of redwoods in the park and carried her message to service clubs and government agencies far and wide. Her "redwood job" became her life and full time vocation.

While on the road, she was pleasantly surprised by how many people outside of California already knew about the redwoods. She thanks the League for creating awareness beyond the redwood region and getting people involved.

**Lucille, we thank you!**



Photo by Bob Doran

*Above: 20-year member Lucille Vinyard. In the 1930's, Lucille's grandmother rode her horse to a large old redwood and sat at its base to halt loggers from cutting it down. The tree still stands today.*