Historic gateway to the north coast redwoods, these ancient giants have inspired people for centuries.

Richardson Grove State Park

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P.O. Box 942896
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Discover the many states of California.
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istoric gateway to the coast redwoods, the Fallen tree growth ring exhibit that has drawn visitors to the park since 1933. One can see some of the world’s tallest coast redwoods. These towering redwood giants include black-tailed deer, gray foxes and bears and mountain lions. Native birds include bald eagles, great horned owls, and California quail, and acorn and pileated woodpeckers. The Grove's ancient redwoods, which they considered sacred. These Athabascan-speaking people trained their dogs to drive game toward waiting hunters. Both men and women were basket makers. Today's Sinkyone descendants maintain cultural and spiritual ties to the Grove. The first recorded settler in the area, Kentuckian Ruben Reed, bought the land on the South Fork of Eel River in the late 1860s. His brother and his widowed father homesteaded 160 acres, now part of the park. In the early 1900s Henry Devoy bought Reed's land. Devoy leased the redwood grove in 1920 to Edwin Freeman, who built a store, a dining room and cabins at the site of today's visitor center. In 1922, the Save the Redwoods League, concerned about the potential destruction of the trees by highway construction and logging, persuaded the State to acquire 120 acres of the redwood grove. Between 1922 and 1932, Freeman operated the new park as a concession and lobbied to name the park for Governor Friend W. Richardson. The Richardson Grove Lodge, which is now the visitor center, was built between 1928 and 1930. In 1933, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) began building campgrounds, picnic facilities, trails, water systems and restrooms in the main grove.

Periodic flooding of the Eel River, particularly during the floods of 1955 and 1964, has damaged CCC-built facilities and trees. In February 1986, the river again overflowed its banks, destroying the campfire center and picnic area. Later, new facilities were built outside of the main grove. Today, only the visitor center remains in the main grove, lessening the human impact on its fragile ecosystem.

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woodpeckers. Endangered marbled murrelet chicks and eggs can fall prey to ravens, crows and jays if food scraps dropped by visitors attract these corvids.

Be sure to ask park staff about the “bat tree” where the Yuma myotis roost. These little brown bats are welcome residents that help to reduce the mosquito population.

VISITOR CENTER
The visitor center in the 1930s Richardson Grove Lodge—where families once watched movies, ate ice cream and danced under the towering trees—offers interpretive displays that encourage children to handle selected natural items. The Grove Nature Trail begins at the visitor center.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
Camping—Richardson Grove has 169 family sites in three campgrounds. Huckleberry has one site for hikers and bicyclists. Oak Flat Campground is open only during summer. The Dawn Redwood Group Campground can accommodate from 9 to 40 people. For more camping details, information and reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit www.parks.ca.gov.

Picnicking/Day Use—The picnic area is near the South Fork of the Eel River under redwoods and maples. The river is popular for swimming and sunbathing during summer and for salmon and steelhead catch-and-release fishing during winter. The park’s several hiking trails range from gentle to strenuous.

Events and Programs—Check bulletin boards throughout the park for details.
• Summer evening campfire programs feature songs, storytelling and interpretive talks.
• The Junior Ranger Program teaches children 7 to 12 about the park’s natural and cultural features.
• The Litter-Getter Program encourages children of all ages to respect their environment through recycling.
• Guided walks interpret natural features.

PLEASE REMEMBER
• Diving and jumping into the river are not permitted.
• No lifeguards are on duty. Children should be supervised at all times.
• Fires are permitted only in fireplaces provided. No ground fires are allowed.
• All park features are protected by law and must not be disturbed in any way.
• Do not leave food scraps out or feed wild animals.
• Pets must be on a leash no longer than six feet during the day and must be kept in your tent or vehicle at night. Except for service animals, pets are not allowed on hiking trails.
• Bicycles are not allowed on hiking trails.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES
The visitor center, the Grove Nature Trail, Dawn Redwood Group Campground, the picnic area and three campsites in the Madrone Campground are accessible. For updated information, call (916) 445-8949 or visit http://access.parks.ca.gov.

NEARBY STATE PARKS
• Benbow Lake State Recreation Area 5 miles north on U. S. Hwy. 101 at Benbow Dr. (707) 923-3238
• Sinkoyn Wilderness State Park, Briceland Road (Co. Road 31) (707) 986-7711
• Standish-Hickey State Recreation Area 69350 U S Hwy. 101, Leggett 95545 (707) 925-6482

This park receives support in part from a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact: Richardson Grove Interpretive Association, 1600 US Hwy. 101, #7 Garberville, CA 95542 (707) 247-3378
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