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Grove of Titans Trail Project Completed, Providing Access to Some of the World's Largest and Oldest Redwood Trees

Realigned Mill Creek Trail and new boardwalk through the famed grove now open for visitors to Redwood National and State Parks

Del Norte, Calif. (May 20, 2022) – [California State Parks](#), [Tolowa Dee-Ni' Nation](#), [Save the Redwoods League](#), [Redwood Parks Conservancy](#), and the [National Park Service](#) today announce the opening of Grove of Titans and the Mill Creek Trail in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, part of [Redwood National and State Parks](#) (RNSP) in Del Norte County. Park visitors are invited year-round to explore the new 1,300-foot-long boardwalk through the Grove of Titans, which is accessible from the newly realigned Mill Creek Trail.

For the first time, park visitors will have official, low-impact access to the famed grove to see some of the world's largest and oldest coast redwoods.

"The Grove of Titans is a premier example of an extraordinary old-growth redwood forest that was experiencing significant damage from visitors walking 'off trail' to access this area," said **Erin Gates**, deputy superintendent, RNSP and North Coast Redwoods District, California State Parks. "This project is really a story about legacy: being mindful of the role we all play in helping to keep our parks thriving. Through powerful partnerships, we have been able to create an opportunity for visitors to experience the beauty and awe of this grove in a way that also helps protect this sensitive and delicate habitat into the future."

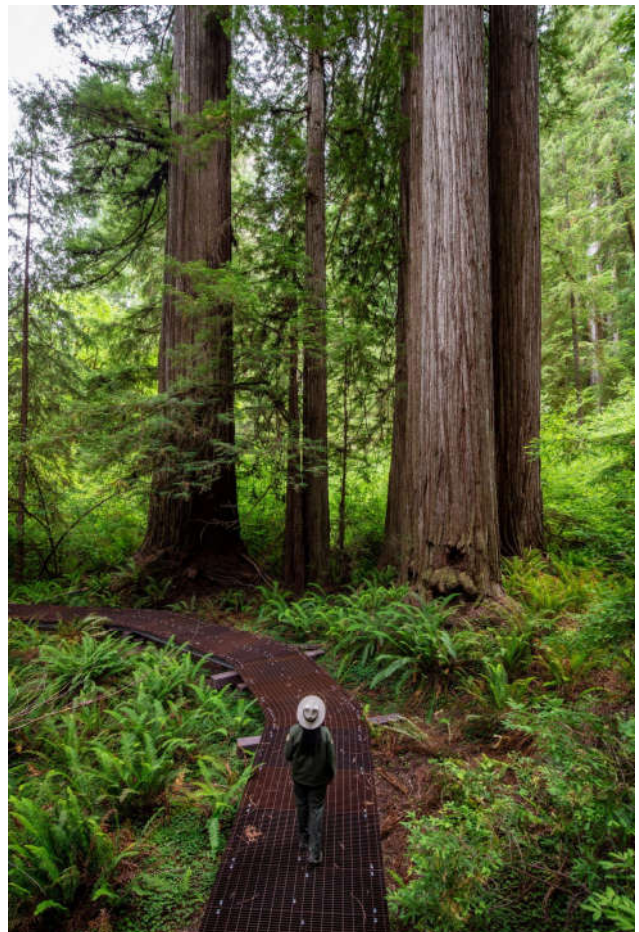


Photo by Max Forster, @maxforsterphotography

New Visitor Experience

The new elevated boardwalk through the Grove of Titans also features interpretive signage and exhibits, complete with redwood forest illustrations and hands-on features to educate visitors about the habitat and safe trail use. Interpretation was developed in consultation with the [Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation](#) to illuminate the Indigenous history of the area and present-day relationships that Tolowa people have sustained with these lands for generations.

The **Tolowa Dee-ni' Tribal Council** offered this statement: "Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation is pleased to have collaborated on the Grove of Titans Trail Project. Tolowa Dee-ni' maintain our responsibility as the original stewards of the Grove of Titans through a government-to-government relationship with the Redwood National and State Parks. With the completion of this project, we are grateful park visitors will be able to more responsibly visit our ancestral territory and magnificent redwood relatives."

New services and amenities have been added nearby along Howland Hill Road, including ADA-accessible parking and restrooms.

In total, trail crews spent more than 23,000 hours to realign the 3-mile Mill Creek Trail and build the new elevated walkway. To minimize construction impact on the sensitive habitat, the crews also hand-carried close to 128 tons of construction materials and tools to the site. They removed old, unofficial social trails and restored previously damaged and degraded areas by replanting ferns and other understory plants.

"Balance is key when planning and building a trail in such a rare and beautiful ecosystem," said **Jessica Carter**, director of parks and public engagement for Save the Redwoods League. "With the realigned trail, new boardwalk and signage, we're respecting the natural grandeur of this special place while also welcoming all visitors to experience and enjoy Grove of Titans for generations to come."

New Titaneers Volunteer Program to Care for the Grove

Redwood National and State Parks is actively recruiting volunteers to monitor the trails and interact with park visitors to support the long-term care of the Grove of Titans and nearby trails. Contact JedSmithTitans@gmail.com to learn more about the new Titaneers volunteer program and to get involved.

"The Grove of Titans project shows how we can—and must—work together to accomplish great things," said **Scott Larson**, executive director of Redwood Parks Conservancy. "It starts with generous giving through organizations like Redwood Parks Conservancy. But the work is not done. We need to teach existing visitors and do a better job reaching out to include new communities, to understand WHY this project happened and how they can help by treading on places like this more gently to truly 'leave no trace'."

Funding the Grove of Titans Trail

The cost of the Mill Creek Trail realignment, Grove of Titans boardwalk, associated new visitor amenities and grove restoration was approximately \$4 million.

Save the Redwoods League supporters contributed more than \$2 million toward the project, including a generous challenge grant from Josie Merck of Connecticut. The project was also supported by \$875,000 from California Natural Resources Agency through the Prop 68 Parks, Environment, and Water Bond Act of 2018; over \$900,000 of in-kind contributions from the project partners; and \$205,000 from Redwood Parks Conservancy donors.

About Grove of Titans

Grove of Titans is within Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation ancestral territories. It is also part of Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) in Del Norte County, California. RNSP is internationally recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because it protects a significant population of coast redwoods, the world's tallest living things and among the most impressive trees in the world.

Social media and unofficial promotion of the grove's off-trail location led to a dramatic increase in visitation over the last 20 years. With no official trails or visitor infrastructure, the influx of people threatened the health of the grove.

A complex web of unplanned social trails formed over the years. This brought meandering foot traffic directly through the grove, which destroyed understory plants and damaged the trees' shallow root systems. Hiking through the sensitive ecosystem also pushed eroded soil and litter into the streams, impacting coho and steelhead spawning habitat. Visitors often left waste behind.

In 2018, California State Parks, Save the Redwoods League, Redwood Parks Conservancy and the National Park Service [unveiled their collaborative plan](#) to safeguard the famed old-growth grove and establish formalized, inspirational visitor access. The realigned Mill Creek Trail and elevated walkway through the Grove of Titans were designed to limit the impact of visitation to the grove while providing official, ecologically sensitive public access.

"The Grove of Titans boardwalk is bound to become one of the signature trails within Redwood National and State Parks", said **Steve Mietz**, superintendent of RNSP, National Park Service. "The unique design of the walkway provides an aesthetically pleasing, intimate connection between visitors and redwoods while protecting the giant redwoods of what is now known as the Grove of Titans."

Recreate Responsibly

California State Parks reminds visitors to recreate responsibly with COVID-19 still present.

Prior to leaving home, visitors are asked to check the status of the park units they want to visit to find out what restrictions and guidelines are in place. Having a back-up plan in case their destination is crowded is recommended. For additional guidelines and safety tips, please visit parks.ca.gov/COVID19.

Learn more about the Grove of Titans project at SaveTheRedwoods.org/GOT.

To schedule an interview, contact Robin Carr at (415) 971-3991 or redwoods@landispr.com or Adeline Yee at newsroom@parks.ca.gov.

About the Grove of Titans Project Partners



[California State Parks](#) and the recreational programs supported by its divisions of Boating and Waterways, Historic Preservation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation provide the opportunity for families, friends, and communities to connect. Off-highway motor vehicle recreation, boating activities, horseback riding, cycling, hiking, camping, rock climbing, tours, hikes, school group enrichment, and special events are just some of the activities enjoyed in 279 park units organized into 21 field districts throughout the state.



The [National Park Service \(NPS\)](#) preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The national park system includes 417 areas covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The NPS cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. The variety and diversity of park units throughout the nation require a strong commitment to resource stewardship and management to ensure both the protection and enjoyment of these resources for future generations.



The [Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation](#) is a federally recognized Indian Tribe of Tolowa Dee-ni' People. The Nation is headquartered three miles south of the Oregon-California border in Pacific Northwest California. The Nation's general membership consists of more than 1,900 Tribal Citizens.



[Save the Redwoods League](#), one of the nation's longest-running conservation organizations, has been protecting and restoring redwood forests since 1918. The League has connected generations of visitors with the beauty and serenity of the redwood forests. The nonprofit's 29,000 members have enabled the organization to protect more than 216,000 acres of irreplaceable forest in 66 state, national and local parks and reserves.



The [Redwood Parks Conservancy \(RPC\)](#) is a non-profit cooperating association established to foster understanding, enjoyment, and stewardship of our public lands through educational outreach, visitor services, and support of our partners entrusted with the care of public lands along California's north coast. We use donations from people who love these places and the proceeds from sales at visitor centers to support education, preservation, habitat restoration and visitor services for our partner parks.

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