

# Richardson Grove State Park



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### **Richardson Grove State Park**

**1600 U.S. Highway 101**

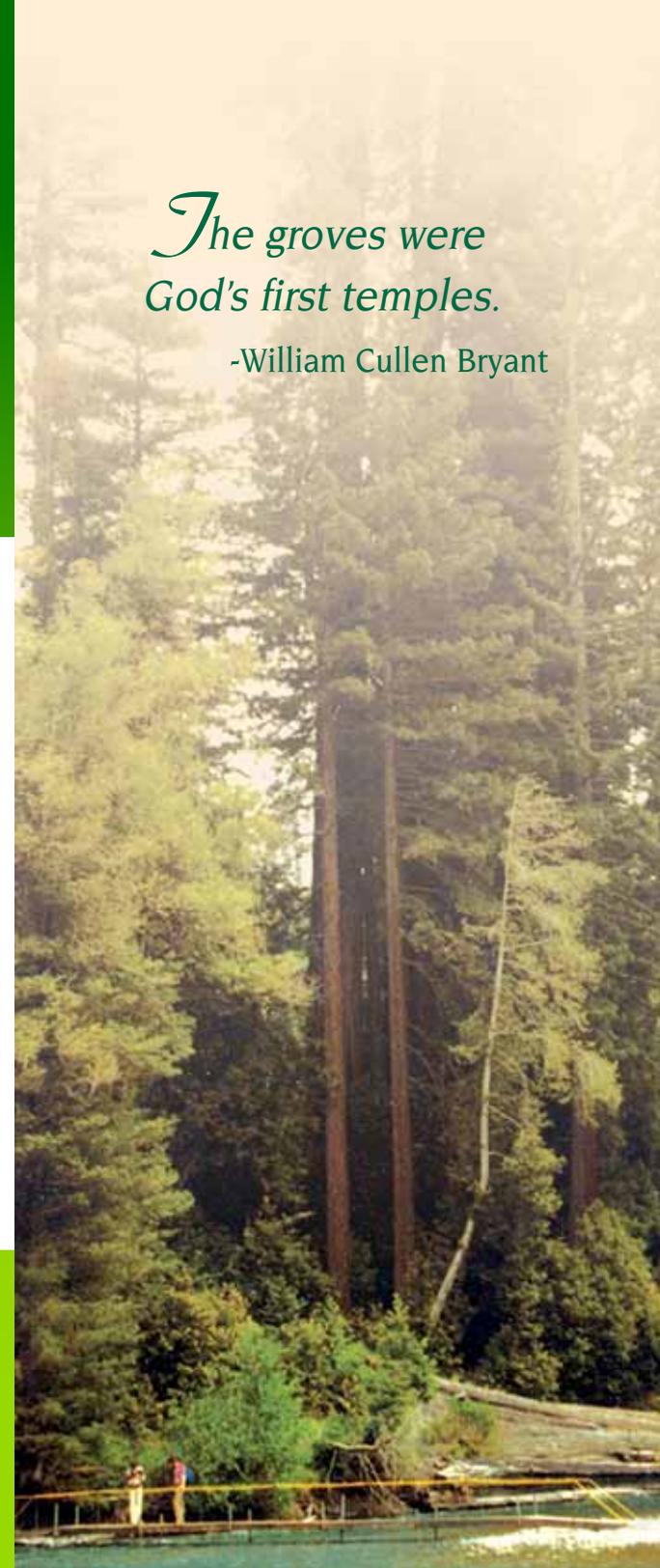
**Garberville, CA 95542**

**(707) 247-3318**

*Marbled murrelet photo  
courtesy of Rich MacIntosh*

*The groves were  
God's first temples.*

*-William Cullen Bryant*



## **R**ichardson Grove State

**Park**—a traditional destination of countless vacationing families since the early 1920s—is one of California's premier state parks. Deep in the majestic redwood forests of southern Humboldt County, "The Grove" started in 1922 with 120 acres. It now encompasses more than 2,000 acres. Located about 200 miles north of San Francisco and seven miles south of Garberville, the park is bisected by Highway 101 and the Eel River's south fork.

### **PARK HISTORY**

#### **Native People**

The first known inhabitants of this region, the Wailaki people, used the area as a seasonal encampment for hunting, fishing and food gathering. These expert hunters trained dogs to drive game into the river so that it could be more easily caught. Both men and women made beautiful baskets.

#### **The Grove Preserved**

The first settler recorded in the area, Kentuckian Ruben Reed, arrived here in the late 1860s. By the early 1900s, Canadian immigrant Henry Devoy had purchased Reed's land. Devoy then leased the redwood grove to a man named Edwin Freeman, who built a store, a dining room



*Eel River Canyon*

and fifteen cabins at the site of today's visitor center.

In 1922 the Save-the-Redwoods League, concerned about potential destruction of the trees by highway construction and logging, persuaded the State to acquire 120 acres of the redwood grove. Between 1922 and 1935, Freeman, who had been instrumental in naming the park after former California governor Friend W. Richardson, operated the new park as a concession. Today's visitor

center was built in 1931 by the Civilian Conservation Corps, who later constructed the campgrounds, picnic facilities, trails, water systems and restrooms. Unfortunately, most of the CCC-built facilities were damaged or destroyed when the south fork of the Eel River overflowed in the floods of 1955 and 1964. Only the original visitor center remains.

### **NATURAL HISTORY**

#### **Plants**

The most notable natural feature of Richardson Grove is the old-growth redwood

forest, which thrives in the area's mild climate.

Many of the trees in the grove are more than 1,000 years old and over 300 feet tall. Strolling among these towering redwood giants is an unforgettable experience.

Redwood sorrel, ferns and mosses take advantage of the deep shade in the heart of the forest. Younger redwoods, Douglas-fir, California laurel, various oaks and madrones compete for sunlight and moisture outside the established groves. Lower growth includes huckleberry, manzanita, coyote brush, Douglas iris,

calypso orchids, redwood violets and poison oak.

#### **Wildlife**

The Eel River is named for the Pacific lamprey that once lived here. During fall and winter, salmon and steelhead inhabit the river. Black-tailed deer, raccoons, gray foxes, black bears, mountain lions and river otters thrive in the park.

Eagles, owls and hawks soar the skies, hunting for small game. A wide variety of native birds includes great



*Coast redwood branch*



*Giant redwood tree*



*Juvenile marbled murrelet*

blue herons, osprey, belted kingfishers, acorn woodpeckers and the endangered marbled murrelet.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Camping

Richardson Grove's three campgrounds—Huckleberry, Madrone and Oak Flat—have a total of 170 family campsites. Each site has a fire ring, picnic table and food lockers, and restrooms with coin-operated hot showers are nearby. Sites can accommodate trailers up to 24 feet and motor homes up to 30 feet. One site is reserved for hikers and bicyclists. Oak Flat Campground, on the east side of the river, is open only during the summer, when a seasonal bridge allows access across the river. The year-round group camp, near the river among giant redwoods, can accommodate up to 40 people and 11 cars.

### Picnicking/Day Use

The picnic area, along the Eel River under redwoods, maples and oaks, is popular with swimmers in summer, and for those fishing for salmon and steelhead during winter. The "Racetrack," a short, accessible trail with interpretive displays, is nearby, and several longer hiking trails range from gentle to strenuous.

### Visitor Center

The visitor center has wildlife exhibits, displays on the park's natural history and a gift shop.

### Programs

Check the park calendar for scheduled programs and activities. Summer evening campfires and guided nature walks are offered to all visitors. For youngsters, the park holds Junior Ranger, Litter Getter and Children in Nature programs.

### ACCESSIBLE FEATURES &

The visitor center, three campsites in Madrone campground, the Group Camp, the Racetrack trail and the picnic area are all accessible. Call the park for specific details or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.



*Racetrack trail*

## PLEASE REMEMBER

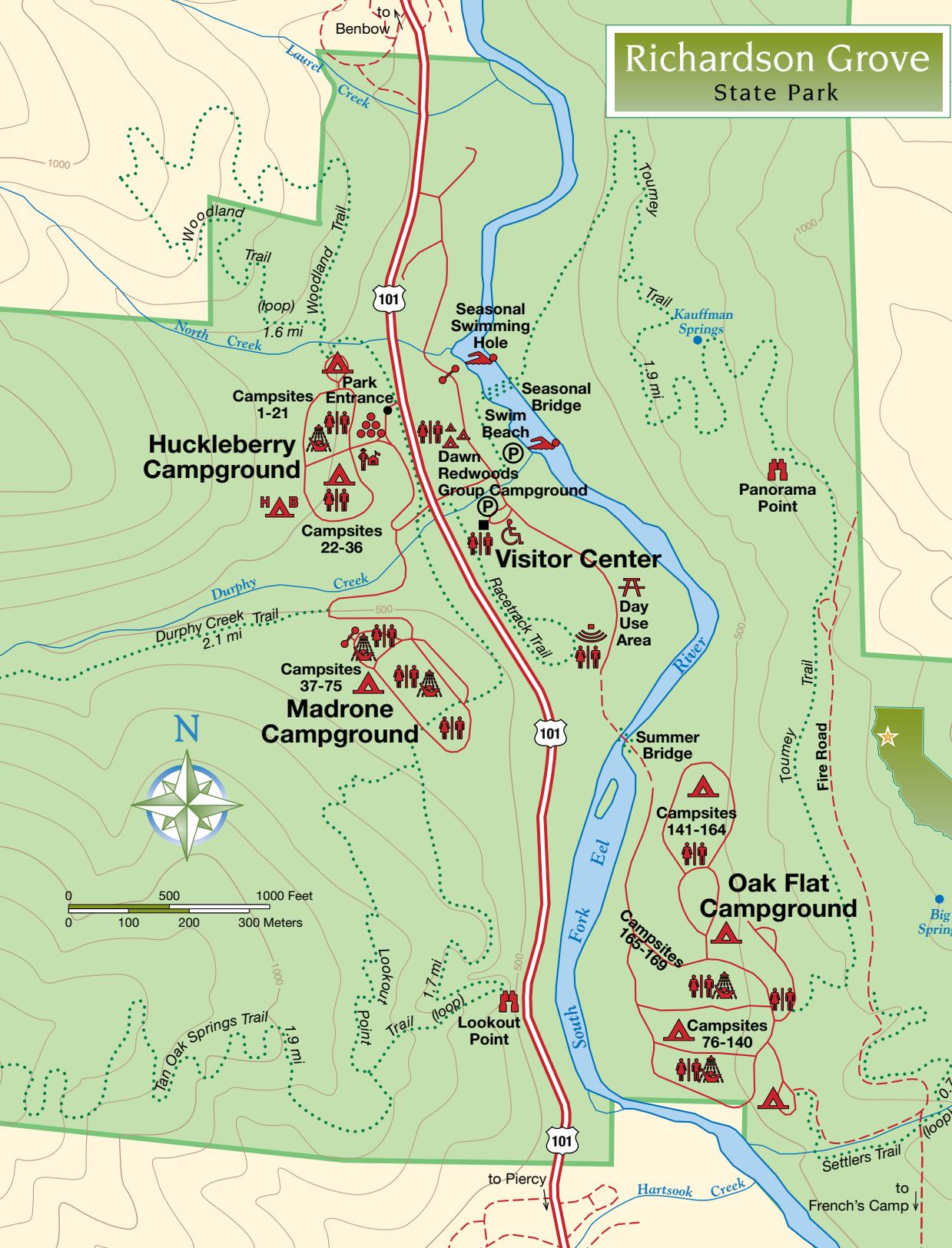
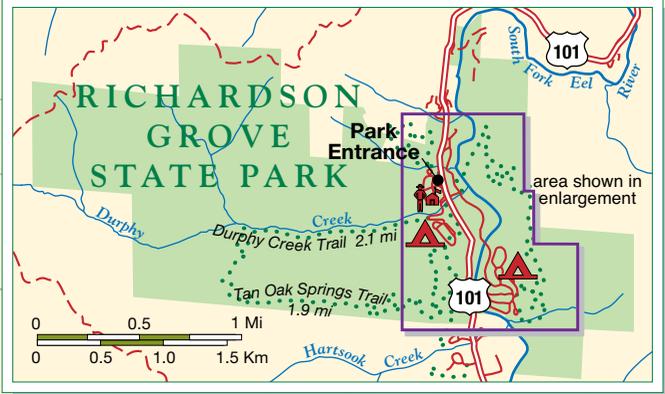
- No diving or jumping into the river.
- No lifeguards are on duty; children should be supervised at all times.
- Fires are permitted only in fire rings provided.
- All park features are protected by law and must not be disturbed.
- Bicycles and motorized bikes are not allowed on the trails.
- Do not feed wild animals.
- Dogs must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet, and must be kept in your tent or motor vehicle at night. They are not allowed on hiking trails.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Benbow Lake State Recreation Area, 5 miles north on Benbow Drive (707) 923-3238
- Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, 43 miles west on Briceland-Thorne Road (707) 986-7711
- Standish-Hickey State Recreation Area, 17 miles south on Highway 101 (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, Garberville, CA 95542. (707) 247-3378

# Richardson Grove State Park



## Legend

- Paved road
- Unpaved road
- Trail
- Accessible Feature
- Campfire Center
- Campground
- Firewood Sales
- Gate
- Group Campground
- Hike/Bike Campground
- Parking
- Picnic Area
- Ranger Station
- Restroom
- Shower
- Swimming
- Viewpoint

