

YOU HAVE REACHED THE END OF THE OLD-GROWTH REDWOOD LOOP TRAIL at Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. This grove has been admired and cared for by those who have walked this trail before you; please continue the tradition to ensure this grove will remain preserved forever. These incredible trees can only be protected with your help. Although your walk has ended we hope your interest and enthusiasm for the coast redwood continues.

Thank you for visiting Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

For more information come to our visitor center.



www.parks.ca.gov

Also, visit:

www.mountainparks.org

Phone: (831) 335-7077

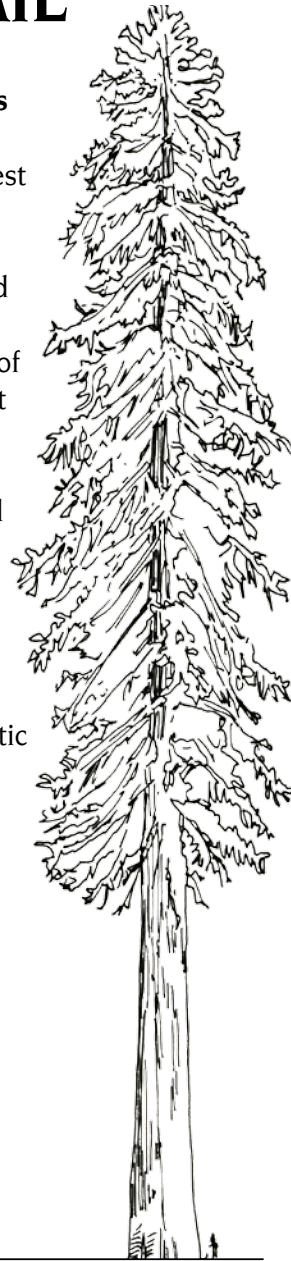


Mountain Parks
FOUNDATION

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Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park **REDWOOD GROVE LOOP TRAIL**

Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park preserves a 40-acre grove of the tallest tree species on earth. This unique ecosystem of ancient coast redwood trees has captured the interest and dedication of many people throughout time. On this .8 mile (1.2 km) flat loop trail, you will discover the survival adaptations of the coast redwood and the inspiration this grove holds that led to its protection. Be prepared to experience the majestic beauty of an old-growth coast redwood forest that stands as a tribute to the efforts of preservationists—past, present, and future.



In order to continue to protect park resources and to make your visit more enjoyable:

- **Leave only footprints, take only photographs. All park features are protected.**
- **Watch for three-leaved poison oak.**
- **A drinking fountain and a semi-accessible restroom are located mid-trail just past the turn to the Fremont tree.**
- **A fully accessible restroom is inside the visitor center located adjacent to the trailhead.**

1. WELCOME TO THE RAINFOREST

Take a moment to breathe in this fresh forest air, feeling the temperature difference between the parking lot and where you now stand. Look up. You have entered a special type of temperate rain forest, an old-growth coast redwood forest. These trees can grow beyond 300 ft. (91m) tall and live to the mature age of over 2,000 years. Rainy and foggy coastal conditions ensure there is enough moisture for their survival.

2. AMAZING CHARACTERISTICS

Sequoia sempervirens, the ever-living redwood, is another name for the coast redwood. Its many survival adaptations include thick bark, long roots, and its extraordinary height. Tannic acid within redwood bark gives it a rich cinnamon red color while providing defense against insects, fungus, and even fire. Almost indestructible, these huge trees persistently survive while battling the natural elements.

3. REDWOODS AND FIRE

More than 100 years have passed since the last forest fire burned through here.



Feel the trunk of this tree, noticing the fire scars that are still present. Most fires cannot penetrate the thick fibrous and almost fire resistant redwood bark. An intense fire may burn

through the bark and hollow out a tree, but, if enough living tissue remains unharmed, the tree, like this one, continues to live and slowly heal its fire scars.

4. THE OTHER TALL TREE

Touch the bark of this Douglas-fir tree. The other tall tree in this forest feels different than the coast redwood. The stringy, fibrous redwood bark feels spongy and Douglas-fir bark is hard and furrowed. When comparing leaves, the Douglas-fir needles resemble a bottle brush while redwood leaflets lie flat on the twig. Both trees make small cones, though differently shaped. The coast redwood cone is round and the Douglas-fir cone is conical with small bracts that resemble a mouse tail and hind feet.

5. REDWOOD FAMILY CIRCLES

The coast redwood has the ability to sprout from its trunk base. You are now standing in the middle of a redwood family circle, where a larger redwood once grew. The trees that make up this circle have sprouted from the base of a parent tree. Even if a redwood tree

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has been logged, its root system is still alive. This unique ability among conifers testifies to their strength and tenacity. Find young redwood sprouts just around the corner of the fence, gently feel the delicate new growth, and consider what will become of these young redwoods over time.

6. NEW LIFE FROM DEAD TREES

The tallest trees in the world have a shallow root system growing only 6-12 feet below the surface. Instead of growing deep, their roots grow out, extending hundreds of feet laterally. Wrapping their roots around other redwood roots, these trees help each other stay in the ground until flood and wind finally knock them over. Fallen redwoods provide a fertile place for new trees to grow. Count how many trees you see growing from this downed redwood.

7. THE GIANT

Aptly named, this tree called The Giant grows to 270 ft. (83m) tall and over 17 ft. (5m) wide, almost as high as a 25-story building. Imagine—a tree this large grows from a seed the size of an oatmeal flake! Redwood seeds come from olive-sized cones containing, on average, 60-120 seeds. The redwood forest floor is thickly covered with leaves, so seeds rarely find their way to the soil except after a fire or flood. It is amazing to think that a tree the size of The Giant can germinate from something so small!



8. THE “GREAT STORY” OF THE FRÉMONT TREE

Known as ‘The Pathfinder’, John Frémont came through this forest in 1846. It was reported

that General Frémont spent the night in the burnt-out, hollow redwood tree in front of you. Asked if he ever slept in this tree when he returned here in 1888, Fremont’s reply was “It makes a great story, let it stand.” Today you can explore the inside of the Frémont Tree. Once inside, feel the humid air and marvel at this still-living tree and its great story.

9. CALIFORNIA BAY TREE

Under your feet, the crunch of dry California bay leaves reveals a spicy aroma. Reach down to pick up the long slender leaf; crush it to release a familiar fresh scent. This bay leaf is different from, though related to, the Italian bay leaf used in cooking. Squirrels, deer, and birds eat the round bay nut. Natives of the area used them for making flour and a coffee-like beverage.

10. REDWOOD, RAILROAD, AND RESORT

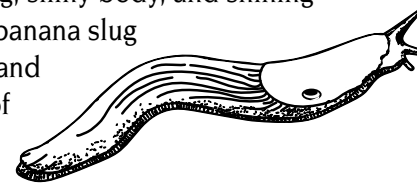
Listen for the whistling sound of a train. On the other side of the fence, railroad tracks line the ground. Many years after the Frémont expedition, disembarking passengers from San Francisco came to the Welch’s Big Trees Resort. The Welch family acquired this grove in 1867, and by doing so preserved the trees. Now close your eyes, imagining the sounds of chatter and excitement with resort patrons dancing to live music, on their way to dinner, and relaxing among these glorious trees. Because of the extraordinary qualities of this grove, the resort lasted about 50 years. The resort has long been gone but the train now runs once again just outside the grove and through the park.

11. BURLS

The profusion of bumpy growths on this tree is a burl. Harmless to the tree, burls are a mass of natural, dormant buds and can sprout new foliage. Some burls are found on root tops while others can be seen higher on the tree. As a redwood grows, the burl steadily grows until the number of buds reaches thousands. Sprouting among cone-bearing plants is rare, and these curious bumps add to the magnificence of the coast redwood.

12. BANANA SLUGS

Under the low-growing, clover-like plant called redwood sorrel, you might catch a glimpse of a banana slug. A native mollusk, this animal helps the redwood forest by recycling nutrients through eating various parts of the forest, such as green plants, fungus, and decaying matter. Identified by its bright yellow color, long, slimy body, and shining “footprint”, the banana slug is a charismatic and important part of this ecosystem.



13. AWE-INSPIRING TREES

With all the characteristics the coast redwood possesses, it is no wonder many people grew to admire these trees and want to preserve them for future generations. This fine example of one root system supporting many trees demonstrates the sheer persistence this species has to survive. Listen to sounds of this old grove. The melody of the Pacific wren and the loud chatter of the western grey squirrel remind us they live here in this protected place, and of how fortunate we are that places like this exist.

14. THE PHANTOM OF THE FOREST

The white foliage of the albino redwood leaves lack chlorophyll, which green plants need to make their own food. By sharing a root system with a green-leafed tree, this distinctly white redwood sprout survives by getting its necessary nutrients from the parent tree. Depending on seasonal conditions, the albino redwood may seem like a ghostly apparition, and very difficult to spot growing right in front of you.

JETER STONE

On your way to Stop #15, locate the Jeter Stone on the left side of the trail. In 1930, William T. Jeter, a state and local community leader, saved this grove from being cut. The grove you are now standing in was then named Santa Cruz County Big Trees Park. The Cowell family donated neighboring lands in 1953, when this grove and surrounding property became the California State Park named Henry Cowell Redwoods.

15. REDWOOD FAMILY TREE

This slender tree is the dawn redwood. A close relative of the coast redwood, it was thought to be extinct until the 1940s, when it was rediscovered in a remote valley in China. This deciduous redwood is also planted near the park entrance station; both trees were reportedly planted on the same day more than 60 years ago. A giant sequoia has also been planted there all three redwoods may be compared.

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