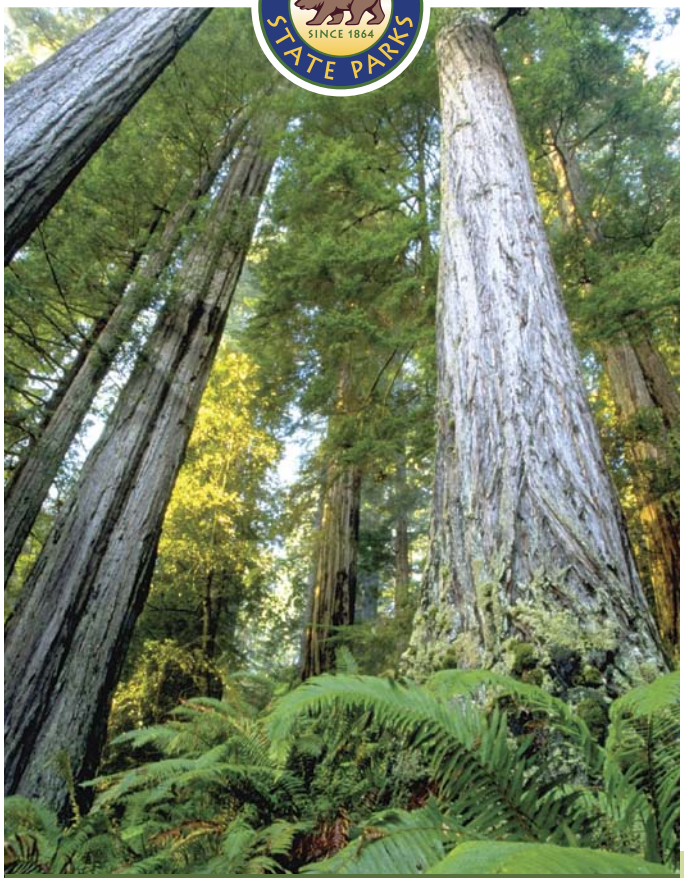
Jedediah Smith Redwoods

State Park



Redwood National and State Parks

Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at (707) 465-7335. This publication can be made available in alternate formats. Contact **interp@parks.ca.gov** or call (916) 654-2249.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call: (800) 777-0369
(916) 653-6995, outside the U.S.
711, TTY relay service

www.parks.ca.gov

Discover the many states of California.™

Save The Redwoods LEAGUE®

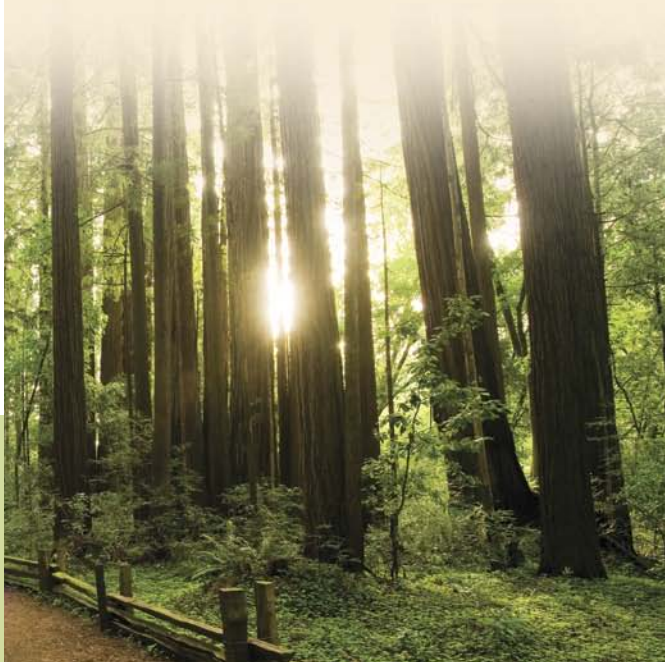
SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp

Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park
1440 Highway 199
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 465-7335 or 458-3496 (Information)

Cover Photo by Stephen Corley. © Save The Redwoods League.

© 2003 California State Parks (Rev. 2012)

Remaining coast redwood forests grow naturally only in a narrow strip along the Pacific coastline from central California into southern Oregon. Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park protects 10,000 acres of these first-growth, primeval treasures.



Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, named for an American explorer of extraordinary courage, is a feast for the eye. The park protects 10,000 acres of primeval redwood groves, a lush undergrowth of rhododendrons and azaleas, and banks of ferns against giant fallen trees.

Here at the confluence of the Smith River and Mill Creek, summer temperatures range from 45 to 85 degrees, in contrast to the cool, fog-bound coast. Winter can bring 100 inches of rain and temperatures between 30 and 65 degrees; snow is rare.

PARK HISTORY

Before European contact, the lives of the Tolowa people, along with their neighbors the Yurok, Hupa, Karuk and Chilula, were secure and well-ordered. New settlers depleted natural resources, causing radical environmental changes and cultural conflict. European diseases to which the Tolowa had no immunity decreased their numbers, and many were sent to the reservation at what is now the Smith River. Part of the site of Camp Lincoln, built in 1862 as a buffer between the native people and the settlers, is located in the park. Tolowa descendants are still present in northern California, and many continue to practice their traditions.

WHO WAS JEDEDIAH SMITH?

Jedediah Strong Smith was the first non-native known to have traveled overland from the Mississippi River, across the Sierra Nevada to the Pacific coast. In 1821, at age 22, he came west and joined the fur-trapping party of General William Ashley. By late 1826, Smith and two partners had bought out General Ashley. Smith led his trappers across southern Utah, Nevada, Arizona, the Mojave Desert and Cajon Pass to Mission San Gabriel, where they rested for two months.

When Mexican Governor José María Echeandía ordered them to leave, Smith headed north into the San Joaquin Valley. In May 1827 Smith went to Utah to recruit more trappers, but as they re-crossed the Colorado River, the formerly friendly Mohave Indians attacked, killing ten men. When Smith and his surviving men reached Mission San José, Smith was arrested and sent to Governor Echeandía in Monterey. Again ordered out of the province, the party went north through the redwoods, reaching what is now called the Smith River in June 1828. Two years later Smith and his partners sold their business and returned to St. Louis. But in 1831, Smith felt the lure of the Santa Fe Trail. While seeking water during his last wagon train west, he was killed in a Comanche ambush along the Cimarron River.

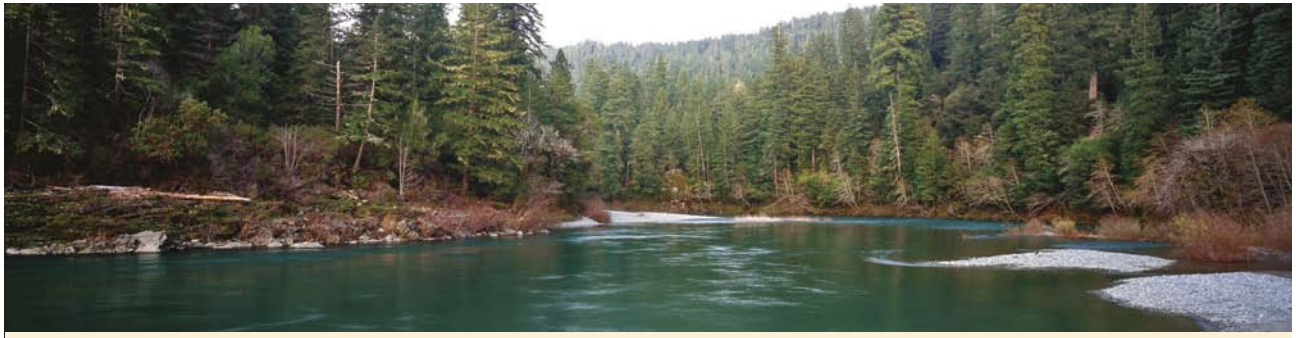
Jedediah Smith's wish was to be "the first to view a country on which the eyes of a white man had never gazed and to follow the course of rivers that run through a new land." His reports on the geology and geography of the western territories appeared in newspapers of the day, and proved that the Sierra Nevada could be safely crossed to reach California. In a remarkably few years, his travels, observations and notes filled in many blank spaces on the country's map.

COAST REDWOOD COUNTRY

California's coast redwoods follow the fog and thrive in continuous belts at elevations below 2,000 feet, where heavy winter rains and moderate year-round temperatures occur. Trees can grow to 350 feet or more, with a base diameter of about 20 feet. Their root systems are broad and shallow, from only a few inches to six feet underground.

The oldest coast redwoods are about 2,000 years old and show no signs of dying out. They resist insects, fire and rot to a remarkable degree, and their vigor in sprouting back when cut or badly burned is an important factor in their longevity.

Photo courtesy of jeffbright.com



The scenic Smith River

PLANT COMMUNITIES

Spotted owl

Feathery ferns, redwood sorrel, salal, trillium, Douglas iris and tiger lily grow in splendor beneath redwoods. Salmonberry, thimbleberry and huckleberry provide wildlife forage, and acres of rhododendrons and azaleas bloom from April to June. The area's warm climate encourages many other tree species—including western hemlock, Douglas-fir, big-leaf maple, red alder, California laurel, tan oak, madrone and Port Orford cedar—to share the redwood habitat.

WILDLIFE

Deer, gray and Douglas squirrels, raccoons and redwood chipmunks are common among park mammals, and bears and mountain lions are sometimes seen. A rare treat is the sight of an otter playing in the river or a beaver working in a deep pool. The noisy Steller's jay steals food from picnic tables. Other local birds include American dippers, varied thrushes and several species of woodpecker, with an occasional ruffed grouse, belted kingfisher, osprey, spotted owl or marbled murrelet.

SAVING THE REDWOODS

California's redwood parks are monuments to those whose vision preserved their beauty. In 1900 concerned citizens helped to save the coast redwood groves of Big Basin near Santa Cruz, and in 1918 the Save the Redwoods League was formed.

The names of several memorial groves at Jedediah Smith reflect the generosity of lumbermen who donated them or preserved them until the League could purchase them. When the park was established in 1929, the Frank D. Stout Memorial Grove became its first dedicated grove. The 5,000-acre National Tribute Grove, dedicated to those who fought during World War II, was purchased with League funds.

In May 1994 Jedediah Smith, Del Norte Coast and Prairie Creek Redwoods State Parks joined with Redwood National Park in a cooperative management effort. Their combined 105,516 acres—representing 36 percent of California's old-growth redwood forest—were designated Redwood National and State Parks.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A picnic area near the Smith River offers tables and stoves. The swimming beach is popular, but the river can be treacherous; there is no lifeguard service. Popular redwood hiking trails are the Stout Grove Trail, the Simpson Reed Trail, and the Boy Scout Tree Trail.

Fishing—Depending on weather, fishing is best from October to February. Large salmon and steelhead have been caught during seasonal runs. Summertime brings cutthroat trout fishing. Anglers 16 and over must carry a valid California fishing license. For current fishing information, visit the Department of Fish and Game website at **www.dfg.ca.gov**.

Camping—Each of 89 sites has a table, fire ring and cupboard, with restrooms nearby. Some sites can accommodate trailers or motorhomes up to 36 feet (no hookups). Reservations are recommended between Memorial Day and Labor Day. For reservations, call (800) 444-7275 or visit **www.parks.ca.gov**. Hike and bike campsites may not be reserved.

Interpretive Activities—Summer interpretive programs include guided walks, hikes and evening campfires on nature and historical subjects. Check the park bulletin board for a schedule of activities.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Some restrooms and campsites, the campfire center and the picnic areas are accessible, as are paths from the parking lot to the campfire and visitor centers. The center has large-print exhibit panels and offers assistance in the sales area. Visit **http://access.parks.ca.gov** for accessibility updates.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Tolowa Dunes State Park, five miles north of Crescent City on Old Mill Road
- Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park Seven miles south of Crescent City on Hwy. 101. For parks information: Crescent City Information Center, 1111-2nd St., Crescent City 95531 (707) 465-7335 or 458-3496

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Stay on established trails to avoid compacting the soil near tree roots.
- All natural and cultural park features are protected by law and may not be disturbed.
- Purchase firewood at the park to avoid spreading tree diseases.
- Do not feed wildlife; secure all food items.
- Dogs must be on a leash no more than six feet long and must be confined to a tent or vehicle at night. Except for service animals, pets are not allowed on trails.

Jedediah Smith Redwoods
State Park

This park receives support in part through the nonprofit Redwood Parks Association
1111 Second Street
Crescent City, CA 95531
(707) 465-9150
www.redwoodparksassociation.org