

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Preservation through Education and Stewardship

Russian River District State Parks

Volume XXX, Number 3, Fall 2015



Transforming Our Parks

April Reza, Bilingual Outreach Coordinator

It's not every day you get to assemble a Lakota Tipi in a meadow... Or roast marshmallows for s'mores, or touch sea urchins and sea stars at the ocean, or sleep over a padding of duff and wake up to the song of birds nestled within the canyons of the Sonoma Coast. This Labor Day weekend, over 60 residents of Sonoma and Marin counties were able to experience these moments, most of them for the first time in their lives.

This was our second year bringing together 5 partners who helped make the 2nd Annual *Campamento Familiar* at Pomo Canyon Campground possible for over 20 families of the North Bay.



Are you wondering why Latino focused programs or bilingual outings are necessary today?



Tidepool Ecology presentation by Irma Cuevas

On a county and state level, our student population has been identified as primarily Latino. The County of Sonoma Department of Health Services recently published a document known as *A Portrait of Sonoma County*, which "draws attention to [the] disparities within the community and highlights methods to address the often interlocking disadvantages faced by families". Of the 70,600 K-12 students in Sonoma County, the *Portrait* identified 42% of them as Latino and 22% of them as English learners. These children are our next generation of stewards, trail crew volunteers, tide pool docents, redwood ecology gurus, program coordinators and voters. If we want to see our state parks flourish in the years to come, we must nurture our community with values of conservation and preservation.

Why should we encourage the community to participate in the conservation and preservation of our State Parks?

In 2013, an independent commission, known as Parks Forward, began an assessment of the California State Park System to answer this very question. They addressed many of the financial, operational, and cultural challenges facing state parks. They developed initia-

tives designed to ensure the system's long-term viability. Their final recommendations were submitted to the Governor who in turn created a Transformation Team committed to implementing key changes within the state park system. California State Parks recognizes that a key component of those changes is to "Create Meaningful Connections and Relevancy to People". Visit <http://www.park.ca.gov> for more info.

The need for cultural relevancy in our state park system has been recognized. Through our partnership with Latino Outdoors, Stewards is learning more about connecting and engaging communities with nature through cultural relevancy. As Latino Outdoors National Director Graciela Cabello stated, "We are building a community of outdoor, environmental, and conservation professionals, as well as outdoor enthusiasts to help provide these connections. When you have first time campers, it is important to be culturally relevant in order to establish trust so communities feel welcomed." Establishing outings where Spanish is spoken, meals are shared, and large group camping areas are provided represent examples of the culturally relevant values many desire to see reflected in our programs and institutions.

Mission

Stewards Promotes, Restores, and Protects Your State Parks.

Vision

Stewards is the Link between People and Their Parks.

State Parks

Armstrong Redwoods State Nat. Reserve
Austin Creek State Recreation Area
Sonoma Coast State Park

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods
P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430
707.869.9177, 707.869.8252 Fax

stewards@stewardscr.org

www.stewardscr.org

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E-New

Sign up at www.stewardscr.org!

TRANSFORMATION CONTINUED



Father Naylor and Parents cover the Tipi

Why is it important to support these programs?

In Sonoma County, Caucasians are estimated to earn a median of \$15,000 more annually than Latinos. In essence, this highlights the fact that discretionary income for purchasing camping equipment or planning outings away from home, may not be a priority amidst the other expenses of living in Sonoma County. Parents are faced with transportation and budgeting time off work issues that make it difficult for them to venture with their children into unfamiliar territory. Organizations and agencies can use these facts to better understand the gaps in opportunity for Sonoma County residents. When we identify the strengths and assets within potential community partnerships, we can initiate comprehensive and inclusive responses that will help bridge those gaps.

Every family deserves access to a quality park. Whether it is a nearby city park, a regional park, a state or national park, we know that there are tremendous health and academic benefits to being outside in nature. The success of this year's 2nd Annual *Campamento Familiar* at Pomo Canyon Campground was thanks to the cooperating partnership between Stewards, California State Parks, Latino Outdoors, UC Davis Bodega Bay Marine Lab, and Sonoma County Regional Parks. Together, we strive to create a culture of conservation, #ConservationCultura. In order to do so, we must work to provide children and families with positive experiences in nature. These moments are critical to their development as stewards. As Graciela says, "when we organize events like camping, hiking, nature walks, and astrology talks - nature provides the opportunity for a positive transformative experience." Once a relationship with the outdoors is established, it is only natural for people to defend what they love. By connecting more communities to public lands and expanding the Latino experience in the outdoors, we collectively invest in the conservation and preservation of these natural spaces.

**Photos by Latino Outdoors Ambassadors: Maribel Sierra & Alvaro Casanova*



Descending to Shell Beach

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Michele Luna, Stewards Executive Director

This past month has been filled with a mix of emotions as we mourn the loss of two dedicated State Park employees who left this world unexpectedly and who did a lot for Stewards over the years (See page 3). Our success is only as good as what we are approved to do by the District Superintendent, and Liz Burko supported Stewards on many of our projects. Most recently she approved our use of the Pond Farm Pottery guest house for our Artist-in-Residence program that we plan to launch in 2016. Jack Ekstrom also supported Stewards as the Admin. officer for the District and as a volunteer at our special events. He was a wonderfully kind man and a personal friend of mine.

This issue of our newsletter reports on many of our recent accomplishments, which I won't repeat except to say that I am honored by the achievements of our staff and volunteers. Whether it's coordinating special adventures in our parks, coordinating special events, keeping our website and database updated, producing and posting outreach information, providing excellent visitor services, keeping our campgrounds and parklands maintained, helping with grantwriting, fundraising or volunteering for our many programs and at our events, Stewards is fortunate to have a dedicated group of fine people working with us. Thanks to you all!

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE JENNER VISITOR CENTER (JVC)

Finally, I would like to request your help with our fundraising effort to put a new roof on the JVC. We've been working very hard to launch our Capital Campaign to raise \$16,000 to get this work done before the predicted el Niño arrives. I invite you to visit our website and our Indiegogo webpage [www.igg.me/at/stewards-jvc] for all the information you need to help us succeed. Share our posts on Facebook, forward our e-newsletters, talk to people about how amazing the Sonoma Coast is and how the JVC fills an important role in protecting our natural marine resources!

CAL REPORT

Ranger Greg Probst, Cooperating Association Liaison



It is with a heavy heart that I get to recognize and honor State Park Superintendent Elizabeth Burko in this newsletter. Liz died earlier this month due to injuries she sustained in a vehicle accident.

Liz was part of the “state park family” for over 30 years and I feel very fortunate to have known and worked with Liz during these past 14 years. I first met Liz when I was a brand new ranger working at Seacliff and New Brighton State Beaches in Santa Cruz and she was the supervising ranger at Big Basin State Park. Two years later, Liz and I became neighbors living down the street from one another in Big Basin. Liz promoted and became a park superintendent for the state parks in Humboldt County. Then in 2007, Liz transferred to the Russian River area to manage our local state parks. At one point, as staffing in state parks decreased, Liz became responsible for managing all the coastal state parks from Bodega Bay to the Oregon border.

Looking back, what I remember about Liz is that when she was given any added responsibility - she never complained, she never appeared cynical, and she always chose to do the best she could with what she was given. Liz took on any added workload and any new responsibility as a “happy duty.” Liz set the example that all state park employees should come to work each day and be happy that we get to do our duty for California State Parks. Liz personified professionalism. As a leader, Liz would hold employees accountable for their actions and also made sure that we were supporting each other, supporting our park visitors, and supporting the state park mission. I am extremely grateful that Liz chose to guide, lead, and mentor me during these past 14 years.

While living at Big Basin I grew close to some of the newer rangers- like myself. Three of them wrote to me this week and were gracious enough to share their own personal thoughts and experiences. Their kind words helped me put into perspective just what Liz Burko meant to me. I think their emails also show the unseen, positive influence Liz had on California State Parks. My peers had no idea I would be sharing some of their correspondence with you; I hope they won't mind because these three quotes closely illustrate the heart and spirit that is Liz Burko.

“We had just spent some time with her at Management Practices, and she was definitely a caring, positive person and mentor to us all in those early days in Santa Cruz.”

“Liz was my second supervisor, and was definitely there for me at a formative time in my career. She was one of the best supervisors I've had. When I first got to Basin, she gave me space and time to find my way without inundating me with assignments. She was extremely supportive of suggestions the Rangers had such as assigned backcountry patrol days, and even supporting me to work an overnight in the back country. During times of turmoil, Liz maintained her professional composure. She will be missed, and will always be remembered as an important influence and role model for me.”

“I look upon those early days in Santa Cruz very favorably and Liz was a major contributor to those fond memories. She was a good boss and a supportive friend. Over the last few years I hadn't talked to her much but I recently saw her in May for the transformation team conference meeting. It was like a day hadn't passed. I am so grateful I had that day to catch up with her and reminisce about the days at Big Basin. She will be missed.”

Memorial & Celebration of Liz's Life

October 9, 2015, 11:45 am, Armstrong Redwoods Forest Theater ~ Please RSVP to lizburkomemorial@gmail.com by 10/5/15
Mass at Saint Elizabeth's Catholic Church, 14095 Woodland Ave, Guerneville at 10:00 am

Memorial fund donations may be made by visiting <http://www.cspra.com/member/burko.html>

Flowers may be sent care of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, 17000 Armstrong Woods Rd, Guerneville, CA 95446

More information, virtual guestbook and photo sharing available at <https://memoriesoflizburko.shutterfly.com/>

JACK (JOHN) EKSTROM



Jack (John) Ekstrom passed away at home on August 31, 2015 after a long illness. An avid hiker, conservationist and naturalist, Jack dedicated his life to preserving his beloved giant redwoods and the natural resources of the State of California. Jack was the Administrative Officer in the Russian River District for more than 20 years. He was one of those people who was an out-of-the-box-thinker and whose creativity helped get a lot of projects accomplished.

A memorial for Jack will be held in the group picnic area of Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve at noon on Saturday October 10 2015. In lieu of flowers please send donations to the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods (PO Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430), <http://www.stewardscr.org/>

PROGRAM UPDATES

WHALE WATCH

Norma Jellison, Whale Watch Volunteer

The 2015 Whale Watch season gave the Whale Watch (WW) volunteers as well as the visitors memorable sightings of our beloved Pacific Gray Whales. WW starts the season in January, as the whales head south to the Baja lagoons to mate and birth. This year, like last, the first weekend started off with a great show - lots of whales and quite a few breaches. This is one example of change, as in past years we did not see breaching on the southbound migration, although there is plenty of such activity in the lagoons. Now its not uncommon.



2015 continued what we experienced in 2014 here at Bodega Head, lots of whales and lots of calves! This season, the American Cetacean Society, LA Chapter reported the highest overall northbound count in 27 years and a new record high of both southbound and northbound calves counted. The record high southbound calves seems to indicate more calves are being born along the southerly migration path, before the mothers arrive in the lagoons, where the majority of births have traditionally occurred.

Stewards WW volunteers are at Bodega Head on weekends from Noon to 4 PM January to late May/early June. We are there to interpret and assist visitors to see the whales. We do not count. Nevertheless, our founder, Bea Brunn and long time volunteers can "sense" trends. In the past two years, we feel we have seen more whales and more calves. We are hopeful this trend will continue. WW volunteers see the first northbound whales about mid February each year. This is a fun time in the season when the juvenile whales (these whales are not sexually mature; will likely not go all the way to Baja) are still swimming south, while the newly pregnant females are headed north to Alaskan waters to eat.

We generally see the first mother and calf pairs going north around the 20th of March. Since they travel slowly (mom is still nursing; and the calf stops to rest and play a lot) and hug the coast, they come particularly close to the Head giving the best views and best show - especially if the calf breaches! The peak months for seeing the mothers and calves are April and May.

On August 12th, a solo Gray Whale was photographed at the jetty entrance to Bodega Harbor, swam in the channel and ultimately swam back out into the Bay. A reminder that in not too many months, the Gray Whale migration will be upon us again. Hope to see you at Bodega Head in 2016!

HOW TO TURN A HAPPY CAMPER INTO AN EVEN HAPPIER ONE

Rich & Colleen Draffin, State Park Volunteers

My husband Rich and I always liked State Park camping when our family was young. So as our children grew up and it was just the two of us, we got a small camper. We planned to make frequent trips from our home in Sacramento to the coast. But other things kept getting in the way and those frequent trips were few and far between. On one of the times we made it up to Salt Point State Park, I saw a sign that caught my eye. "Become a whale watch volunteer," it said. When I asked the nice lady in the volunteer center about it she enthusiastically explained that all it took was a Saturday training session and to sign up on her calendar. It seemed to be the perfect solution! Lucky for us that nice lady was none other than Bea Brunn, who is now known as our Whale Mother. That was 22 years ago and we still sign up for about six weekends a season.

Volunteering for State Parks has given us so many opportunities that we never expected. First and foremost we meet and talk to interesting people from all over the world. We share what we know about the whale migration and they share stories about what they have seen and done. The best part is that what brings us together is our love of nature.

How lucky we are to have the public access that makes it possible to enjoy the beautiful seascape together. Then our wonderful whales may treat us to a show with breaching and spy hopping. Often the crowd is so delighted that they clap their hands and I've even seen tears in some eyes. Where else can you see a huge animal in its own habitat displaying its natural behavior? It feels like they are doing it just for you.

We have also enjoyed the enrichment opportunities that are available to us as volunteers. There is so much to learn about the coastal community. Participating in fundraising events also gives us a chance to meet other volunteers as well as a grateful public.



A Sonoma Coast Trail Crew Selfie!

This group of awesome volunteers are out on the Sonoma Coast once a month on the 4th Wednesday of the month, keeping our trails cleared, building puncheons and bridges, stairways and so much more. This photo executed by Bill Nay was taken after a hunting camp cleanup project on State Park land near Red Hill.

OUR EVERYDAY HEROS OUR VISITOR CENTER VOLUNTEERS

Annie Cresswell, Administrative Director

As our summer starts to flow into fall we at Stewards would like to extend a very special thank you to the volunteers at the two State Parks Visitor Centers we manage: the Armstrong Redwoods Visitor Center (ARVC) and the Jenner Visitor Center (JVC) for Sonoma Coast State Park. These dedicated docents are often the “front line” at our parks. They are the ones assisting visitors with their plans, answering questions and offering suggestions for their time spent in the parks. These volunteers not only provide important visitor services to the guests but they also play an important part in fundraising activities. It's staggering to think that in 2014 over 60,000 visitors came through the small ARVC and 16,000 through the JVC, with each of these visitors experiencing some level of contact with a volunteer! You are awesome, inspiring and so very dedicated! Our Visitor Center help raise \$85,000 per year to support Stewards' environmental education programs!



Thank you Visitor Center Volunteers for all you do to keep these centers going, for your dedication and for creating the best possible experience for all our park visitors! We couldn't do it without you and want you to know that each and every one of you are a valued part of the State Parks Team!

UPCOMING VOLUNTEER TRAININGS

REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED - To register for these orientations use our Online Reservation Form.

If you would like more information contact: Pete Bidigare, Programs Director,
at pete@stewardscr.org or call (707) 869-9177 ext. 1#.



Armstrong Redwoods Guide Program Training

Monday, October 5, 2015

10 AM - 2 PM, bring lunch, meets in front of Visitor Center

This field-based training is for both new and experienced nature guides. We will take an easy walk in the park and learn about how to be an effective guide in leading both schools and other groups in the park. Come along and learn to share the joy and wonder of this ancient forest with park visitors of all ages.



Tidepool Guide Program Training

Monday, October 26, 2015

3:30 PM - 6 PM, meets at North Salmon Creek Parking Lot

Exploring the wet and wild Sonoma coast is an amazing and humbling experience. We think it's worth sharing too! Meet us out at Salmon Creek to learn how we guide school groups in exploring the rocky intertidal. We will be going tidepooling at Miwok Beach so get ready to learn...and get your feet wet!



Annual Whale Watch Orientation

November 14, 2015 - 9 am-1:30 pm,

bring lunch, Bodega Bay Fire District & Bodega Head

Assist the public in viewing the annual gray whale migration. Docents are needed at Bodega Head on weekends January to May.

Annual Volunteer Celebration! - Save the Date!

Our Annual Volunteer Celebration & Auction will take place

Friday December 4th from 6:00 - 9:00 pm at the Guerneville Veterans Memorial Building on the corner of Church and Mill St. Volunteers who recorded hours in 2015 will be invited.

Submit your Volunteer Hours

To our 300+ volunteers, your time and dedication is invaluable! Thank you! The time has come to document all your volunteer hours for State Parks! By submitting your hours, you will ensure your invitation to the Annual Volunteer Celebration on December 4th. In California, the Independent Sector currently equates the value of your volunteer time to \$26.34 per hour. Some grants will match funds we solicit according to the value of volunteer hours documented. Record your hours on our website after you log into your account. Use the Volunteer Hours form that can be found in “Forms”, located within the “E-Store/Resources” tab on our website:

www.stewardscr.org. You may also call our office at (707) 869-9177 or email us at stewards@stewardscr.org if you have any further questions.

Volunteer Opportunities

Call the Stewards office:
869-9177 x1# or email
pete@stewardscr.org

Program Activities Armstrong Redwoods

Visitor Center Staffing
Friends of Armstrong
Redwoods
Docent Tour Guides
Trail Maintenance
Habitat Restoration Project
Pond Farm Interest Group

Sonoma Coast State Park

Visitor Center Staffing
Seal Watch
Whale Watch
Tidepool Programs
Watershed Programs
Environmental Living Prog.
Sonoma Coast Stewardship
Pinniped Monitoring
Seabird Monitoring

Other Projects

Office Help & Special Events

Volunteer Program Coordinators

Joyce Bacci, ARVC
Doris Dickenson, FAR
Laura Parent, Pond Farm
Linda Fisher, Jenner VC
Jim Fleming, Seal Watch
Bea Brunn, Whale Watch
Suzanne Abrams, ELP
Cindy Gillease, Willow
Creek Education Program
Bill Bambrick, Sonoma Coast
Water Quality Monitoring
Trail Crew
The Sorensens, Marine
Debris & Beach Cleanups
Hollis & Jerry Bewley,
Tidepool Programs
Hollis Bewley,
Seabird Monitoring
Louise Patterson, MAU
Mark Anderson, Foot Patrol

2015 YOUTH ECOLOGY CORPS

Craig Wilkinson, Stewards Ops Service Aide

In July, the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps provided 9 crew members and a crew leader over a two week period of time to help build eight new food lockers for the Bullfrog Pond Campground in Austin Creek State Recreation Area. The ages of the crew members ranged from 16 to 20 years of age.

The project succeeded in the goals to benefit the community, support the local youth as they gain valuable work experience, learn what is necessary to hold a job, develop new skills and advance their educational goals.

The crew members were introduced to the California State Parks system as well as Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.

The crew members also worked an afternoon at the Pond Farm Pottery Studio cleaning the studio and surrounding landscape in preparation for a public tour of the studio and grounds.

One hot day while eating lunch at Bullfrog Pond Campground, a park visitor approached anxious and concerned about her husband and daughter who had not returned from a hike. The crew assisted in reassuring the guest we would help her and immediately sent four crew members with bottles of water and a two-way radio in the most likely direction to find the hikers. The crew members found the hikers, offered water and communicated the condition and location of the hikers via the two-way radio. This information was passed on to the concerned wife and mother of the hikers. The hikers were transported down from their location and joined with their family. The actions of the crew were insightful and appropriate and resulted in a successful and timely resolution to the incident.

Markis, one of the Youth Ecology Corps crew members who worked with Stewards for 8 weeks, was eventually hired by the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods as the newest Field Operations Service Aide to help finish off the season and has proven to be a strong and welcomed team member. Lisa Piazzola, Markis' supervisor shared recently, "When I first started working with Markis he definitely did not want to attend school and he was at a loss about what he wanted do with his future. Now he wants to be a part of the work you do up at Armstrong Woods and is considering going to SRJC to continue his education."

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods wishes to thank the Sonoma County Youth Ecology Corps for their programs and labor to help maintain the Austin Creek State Recreation Area and Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve.

Sustainable Partnership Program for Stewards Members

We would like to thank our local businesses for participating in our Sustainable Partnership Program!

Visit your local shop with a valid Stewards Membership Card and receive your discount today!

Shop Local & Support Your State Parks!

BikePartners.Net - 10% off Bike Rentals

Boon Hotel and Spa - 20% off Midweek

Johnsons Beach - 20% off Kayak & Canoe Rentals

Rio Villa Beach Resort - 10% off Two-Night-Stay

West Sonoma Inn - 20% off Midweek

Boon Eat & Drink - 10% off Total Purchase

Higher Ground Organic Espresso - 50¢ off Cup

Rubicon Adventures - 10% off Any Class

Santa Nella House - 20% off Midweek

Food For Humans - 15% off Total Purchase

To find out how to get involved in the program please call April at 707.869.9177 ext. 6#

or EMAIL at april@stewardscr.org.



Youth Ecology Corps of Sonoma County 2015

In Appreciation of our Donors

Foundations/Agencies

Bodega Bay Fisherman's Festival
Bodega Seafood, Art & Wine Festival
California Coastal Commission
California State Parks Foundation
Clifbar Foundation
Community Foundation Sonoma County
County of Sonoma
Dean Witter Foundation
Gary Heck Foundation
George Lucas Family Foundation
The Joseph and Vera Long Foundation
The Medtronic Foundation
Mitchel Family Fund
National Trust for Historic Preservation
The Ohio State University
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
Russian River Rotary
Russian River Recreation & Park District
Santa Fe Community Foundation
Save the Redwoods League
Sonoma County Trailblazer Foundation
The Sebastopol Rotary
The Whittier Trust Company
Zitrin Foundation

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Barbara J. Parkyn
Gilbert Roberts & Penelope Cohen
Timothy Rodrigues
Catherine Ries
Mary Tausheck

\$500 plus

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John Brundage
Efren Carrillo
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Margo Eachus & Rudy Nothenberg
David Faris
Leonard Fisher
Gary Frenkel
Diane Gifford
Michael Hofman & Janet Moyer
Michael & Margaret Kennett
Nicole King
Tina Kelly
Lanny Keyston
Kristine Kolton
Brian Konoske
Dorothy Levitan
Sandy Leonard in memory of Robert Leonard
Kathie Lowrey
Dennis P. Martino

NEW MEMBERS

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Mary Tausheck

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Virginia Wallace
Kathryn Welch Howe

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Kevin O'Connor
Rita O'Neill
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David Westphal
Julie & Kurt Whitaker

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

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Return Service Requested

Stewards members receive this quarterly newsletter by email or mail, a 20% discount at Stewards run Visitor Centers and our special events and discounts on our educational seminars.

**CALL 800-320-0476
TO MAKE A
VEHICLE DONATION
IN THE NAME OF
STEWARDS.**

For information on contributing to Stewards' Endowments please contact Michele Luna (707) 869-9177 X4# michele@stewardscr.org

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

Membership Form

RENEWAL

YES, I'd like to become a member.

- Senior/Student \$25.00
Individual \$30.00
Family \$45.00
Contributing \$100.00
Sustaining \$150.00
Business \$150.00
Patron \$250.00 plus
Osprey Circle \$500.00 plus

Name(s) _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

I'd like to help with an additional donation of \$_____

Payment type: Check Charge Card Visa MC Total tax deductible donation \$_____

Make check payable to Stewards. Account # _____ Exp. Date _____

Annual Renewal Date: February 1 Signature: _____

Bequests

Your Gift to the Future of State Park Preservation

With your help, future generations will enjoy the State Parks in the Russian River District, including education and stewardship programs supported by Stewards. A gift to Stewards is a rewarding form of giving from your estate. There are several types of charitable bequests by will (or beneficiary designation).

Sample:

I hereby give and bequeath to Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California, with a principal address at P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430, _____ percent of my estate, (or) the sum of _____ dollars, (or) the following assets _____, Tax ID # _____ provided upon request. Contact your legal advisor for further information. There are also other planned giving options for your consideration.