



As your parks reopen, Stewards' front-line staff and volunteers are providing excellent visitor services and natural resources information!

June 1, 2020

Dear <salutation>,

The board and staff of Stewards hope this communication finds you and yours weathering the Covid-19 pandemic in good health and without severe financial impacts. We have been working hard to stay current with directives from our county's public health officer and State Parks so that Stewards can respond quickly with timely information for our supporters, park visitors and our dedicated volunteers. Despite being furloughed for two weeks, our staff was able to quickly get back to work as soon as we secured an SBA Payroll Protection Program forgivable loan. We are grateful for this federal assistance that has allowed our staff to be ready to reopen our parks and provide visitor services within days of being notified that we were able to do so. **As of this writing, Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve and Austin Creek State Recreation Area are open for hiking and walks through the magnificent old growth redwoods and oak woodlands.** We know these recreational activities are helping the public feel nurtured with a renewed sense of hope for the time that our lives will open up again on all fronts.

I am pleased to report the ways that we have continued to restore, protect and promote your State Parks during these uncertain times:

- Our operations staff spent weeks ensuring that **fuel loads were reduced, trails were cleared and roadsides were weed whacked for fire protection** to be ready for reopening your parks.
- In the past few weeks, we have **held video meetings with each of our volunteer groups** to see how they are doing, give them updated park information, and discuss how and when they might be able to get back into their parks to provide the services they miss and enjoy so much.
- This past week, **we welcomed back our amazing and dedicated trail crew volunteers**, who helped with much needed trail work in Armstrong Redwoods. Some of our roving docents were also back in Armstrong providing information to park visitors and reminding them of the current health directives (wearing masks when near others and maintaining 6 feet of physical distancing).
- Our staff has worked with State Parks to **develop protocols for sanitizing park facilities, including our visitor centers**, to protect staff, volunteers and park visitors.
- Our Programs Manager Kimberly and volunteers have been producing **inspiring educational videos** within our parks and sharing them through our e-newsletter and social media.
- Admin Staff and volunteers pulled together a very **successful online auction** that raised much needed funds for Stewards. We are re-evaluating other summer and fall fundraising events to determine the feasibility of holding them virtually or if cancelling is the best option.
- **Finally, staff and board are working to make sure Stewards continues to be viable financially as lost revenue continues to significantly impact our 2020 budget.** Decision-making is being guided by ongoing financial projections and review of different scenarios based on the uncertainties associated with timing of approved reopening of our campgrounds and visitor centers.



Kimberly & volunteers recently created tide pool videos

Stewards needs your help now more than ever to make up for lost revenue.

At the same time, we are projecting a \$150,000 budget shortfall for 2020 from the loss of day-use and camping fees, visitor center sales and special event cancellations.

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Thank you to our dedicated staff for their resourcefulness and creativity during these uncertain times as we re-evaluate how to best serve youth in our community.

When schools closed early this year and shifted to distance learning, Stewards began sending teachers and parents links to online educational resources for learning about their park's natural resources, supporting educational curriculum. California State Parks has been providing particularly engaging educational programming through its PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students) program. <https://www.ports-ca.us>



One area of focus for Stewards in the upcoming months will be preparing our **Steward Ship - Mobile Marine Van** for school excursions since we anticipate that field trips to the coast may not be allowed for some time. We look forward to bringing our **Tidepool Touch Table** to new audiences at schools where, even under usual circumstances, students don't have the opportunity to experience our amazing coastal resources first-hand. We are excited to move forward with new partnerships with the **Sonoma County Boys and Girls Club** and **Napa Valley Schools** that will introduce many first-time youth visitors to our parks in the year ahead.

Protecting our Parks from a devastating wildfire is as important as ever.



Stewardship volunteers working in Austin Creek SRA and in the Willow Creek Watershed prior to Covid-19

As grasses dry out and wildfire season rapidly approaches, staff and volunteers will continue efforts to reduce fuel loads in the backcountry of Austin Creek, the backyard to our vulnerable communities of Guerneville, Monte Rio, and Cazadero. Efforts in the Willow Creek watershed are also ongoing.

Many thanks to those of you who have already given generously!

We are grateful to those of you who have already moved up your annual donations to help us recover lost revenue and to those who supported our recent online auction and are purchasing merchandise from our online e-store.

Please consider a donation that will help mitigate our revenue losses and support Stewards' vital park programs.

By gifting \$500 or more, you also become a member of our Osprey Circle. You will receive two general admission reservations to the 2020 Old Grove Festival (a virtual or in-person event), along with other benefits including a 20% discount in our nature stores and at other Stewards sponsored events.

Your support and commitment sustain us on so many levels!

On behalf of the Stewards' board and staff, please accept my gratitude for your continuing support, along with my hope that you and your families remain safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Michele Luna
Executive Director

Thank you for your last donation(s) in the amount of <amount>. An increase in your contribution is welcome and needed!



Donation Form or Donate online at www.stewardscr.org

Yes, I want to continue to invest in the work of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods.

\$75* \$100* \$200* \$300* \$500** \$1,000** \$ _____

*All donations over \$35 include a membership (20% discount at Visitor Centers, for seminars and special events)

** Includes two general reservations to the Old Grove Festival (virtual or live) on September 12, 2020.

Name: _____

Make Checks payable to: Stewards

Address: _____

CC# _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Exp date: _____ CVV# _____

Email: _____

Use where needed most

School Scholarship Fund

Pond Farm Fund