

# REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

## A national wonder

1111 Second Street, Crescent City, CA 95531 • 707-464-6401

[www.nps.gov/redw/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/redw/index.htm)

**Home to the tallest and oldest trees in the country, Redwood National Park is nestled along 40 miles of breathtaking Northern California coastline. This stop should be a bucket list item for any traveler. My wife, Nadyne, and I camped in nearby Klamath, a great central starting point for our exploration, with sections of the redwood forest and rugged coastline an easy driving distance in both north and south directions.**

Our adventure primarily took two days, one in the south within the Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, which includes the famous Fern Canyon, and one in the north at the Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park, near Crescent City. Though both are California State parks, our National Park pass was accepted for any entry or parking fees, due to the joint venture with the National Park System.

Our self-guided tours of the areas were astounding. We took short hikes both days we spent in the forests and watersheds, providing us with awe-inspiring and unforgettable views of the redwoods. During our jaunts, we also witnessed the most beautiful rocky coastline and crashing waves from all angles, as well as an abundance of wildlife, including elk and deer, condors and hawks, sea lions and even several whales near the shore. It was certainly exciting to see the numerous blowing air holes. Intertidal zones abound up and down the coastline, with low tides revealing a great deal of ocean floor.

The trees take the center stage on any visit to this park. Words struggle to properly describe them, though powerful and immense are accurate. Many of the redwoods are as tall as 35-story skyscrapers, according to the park's website. Even more impressive is the width of the trunk at ground level, which can exceed 20 feet. Stand or park next to one and the context is stunning.

Fern Canyon was a bit of a misnomer, not really being a canyon and not primarily consisting of ferns. The woods are thoroughly covered in moss and algae, and it projects a primeval feel as you hike the easy trail. Be sure to bring water-proof footwear or the ability to go barefoot through the creek in order to proceed farther inside the small gorge.

You will not regret changing plans to visit this part of California's northern coast. Because summer is often considered the primary time to visit, that is the most crowded tourist season. We spent a week in May and were not disappointed. While hours of interpretive centers and certain roads and trails may be closed seasonally, the parks themselves are always open. One could easily spend a month here without becoming bored.

**Jack Huber #135651**

Visitor among old-growth coast redwoods on Howland Hill Road in Redwood National and State Parks.  
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