



Big Tree

BULLETIN

C A L A V E R A S B I G T R E E S A S S O C I A T I O N

From CBTA's President

by Marilyn Regan

Sometimes it seems very easy to become complacent and to take things for granted. At least I find that to be the case with myself. What has brought this to my attention recently is that I have been reading various stories and articles about the 70 parks in the California State Park System that are scheduled to close on July 1 of this year. Each of these parks is precious to many people. Each of these special places has a purpose and a reason for having been made a part of the State Park System, but that purpose and that reason for being are now being denied.

We should not become complacent about the fact that Calaveras Big Trees is not being closed. I believe that part of the reason is the excellence of this supporting Association. Our Association is recognized throughout the state as one of the best. That didn't happen accidentally. It happened because dedicated people, among them Desire Fricot in the 1920's, recognized that this fabulous place and these spectacular redwood trees needed to be protected. He helped to establish the Grove Association, which was the organization that helped to purchase the North Grove of the Park for preservation and is the forerunner of the Calaveras Big Trees Association.

Today the Association is still actively supporting the Park, however, our mission and vision have changed. We are no longer in the business of buying redwood

groves. Our mission now is to raise funds that support the educational and interpretive programs in the Park. Our vision, as stated in our strategic plan, is that "each and every visitor's experience inspires awe and appreciation for the natural, cultural and recreational resources at Calaveras Big Trees State Park".

You no doubt already know the sources of our funds. In addition to the revenue from our great bookstore in the Visitor Center, we are supported by contributions from individuals and businesses, by membership fees, grants, and by fundraising events. We have recently hosted several fundraising events and want to thank the Chairpersons for their hard work in making these fundraisers successful. Bunny Firebaugh organized the holiday festivities which included a sleigh ride through the Park. On President's weekend, we had two events: "California Forever", a wonderful and inspiring documentary about California State Parks, was previewed at a wine and hor d'oeuvres reception organized by Marcy Crawford. The second event, a visit from "Snowshoe Thompson", was chaired by Mara Naber. So, if you are thinking that we are not complacent, you are correct.

One last note, if you are not receiving regular e-mails and would like to, please go to www.bigtrees.org and enter your e-mail address on the home page. That way you will be sure not to miss any important news about the Association and its activities.

Park Update

by Gary Olson, Superintendent 1

Hello and welcome back to another exciting season at Calaveras Big Trees. This year we have many construction projects scheduled to improve the Park, with most of the funding provided by the Prop 84 Bond money that was approved by voters in 2006.

The largest and most visible project will be the construction of the new Visitor Center scheduled to resume in April. This project will continue throughout the summer season and will have significant impact to the parking area. We may need to have the people park in the maintenance yard, but we will provide more information as the summer progresses. The building should be completed by the end of this year and then the interpretive exhibits will be installed, with a grand opening in Fall of 2013.

The Meadow Boardwalk Project is almost complete and will be available for visitors in early May, just in time for the wildflowers. This will be very beneficial for the wildflower walks; if you would like to help lead a few, please contact Wendy. Thank you to the CCC's for this wonderful new all access walkway.

The large concrete water tank above the group camp will be undergoing renovation to reline the interior of the tank and to install new 6 inch valves, required for the water supply to the new Visitor Center fire suppression system.

The entrance kiosk, which was damaged by the December wind storm, will be contracted out and should be completed by the end of June.

The sewer line project may begin this Summer. This project will reline the sewer lines in the North Grove campground to prevent the ground water from seeping into the system and overloading the spray field. In addition, we may be adding a treatment facility to remove the chemicals from the RV disposal site prior to the waste being sent into our disposal system.

We will be continuing to make repairs and clean up the Park from the December 1, 2011 storm, which caused an estimated \$300,000 worth of damage, mostly in the North Grove area, with over 80 trees uprooted and many campsites destroyed. You will see

down trees throughout the Park, along the trails, and many are still blocking the fire roads, but we will be working on those as weather permits.

As you can see, the Park will be busy this year with improvements which have been needed for many years. It will be important to inform the visitors that this funding is from the bond money and is only designated for projects and can't be spent on daily operation or to pay staff. The state is still facing significant budget reductions this year, with another 11 million dollars being cut from the State Parks funding, beginning July 1, 2012. You also will begin to see State Park's closing some of the Parks on the list, effective July 1, 2012, but Calaveras Big Trees is not affected and will remain open.



Volunteer Opportunities

Grant Writers: Help us put in writing the words to bring in the \$. Be available whenever we hear about an appropriate grant possibility and be able to spend the time to get the job done.

Stuffers/Folders: Fold and stuff the Bulletin to help prepare it for mailing. Happens only 3 times/year with just a few hours each mailing.

Speaker s Bureau: Address organizations that request information about the Park and our organization. This is on an "as required" basis and is really fun to do. People love our Park and love to hear about it.

"Poster" Posters: Help distribute flyers, posters, etc., about upcoming events. Area to be covered from Angels Camp to Bear Valley.

Social Media Assistant: Help us keep up-to-date on all of our social media information avenues, i.e., Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Who is giving you the above opportunities to meet new friends with common interests and play an important role in our State Park? Calaveras Big Trees Association (CBTA) invites you to join our team of volunteers. We offer great benefits in a beautiful working environment.

To apply, call the Visitor Center at (209) 795-3840 or Marilyn Regan at (209) 795-7385.

**A lot of people like snow.
I find it to be an unnecessary
freezing of water ~ Carl Reiner**

Is it a Crow or is it a Raven?

Crows and ravens, although in the same genus (Corvus) are different birds. In general, the biggest black species, usually with shaggy throat feathers, are called ravens and the smaller species are considered crows. There are several other differences between the two. The size difference is huge - ravens are as big as Red-tailed Hawks, and crows are, well, crow sized. More subtle characteristics include: ravens soar more than crows. Crows never do the somersault in flight that Common Ravens often do. Ravens are longer necked in flight and its larger bill can be seen in flight. The raven's wings are shaped differently with longer primaries ("fingers") with more slotting between them. It is often said that "ravens are the ones whose wings you can see through".

American Crows make the familiar "caw-caw" sound, but also have a large repertoire of rattles, clicks, and even clear bell-like notes. The most familiar call of a raven is a deep, reverberating croaking or "gronk-gronk". Only occasionally will a raven make a call similar to a crow's "caw" but even then it is so deep as to be fairly easily distinguished from a crow.

Is it a Crow or is it a Raven? Now you can decide.

Bits of History

The Warming Hut at Calaveras Big Trees is as popular with our visitors now as it was in the 1930's. The original Warming Hut was located in the campground next to the meadow on the highway side, but was removed in 1977 in order to restore the natural environment. A ski hill was located on the other side of the meadow with a makeshift rope tow to the top for sledding and skiing attached by a rope to the tire rim of a Park vehicle. In 2002, the Park used state bond funds to construct the new Warming Hut being used today adjacent to the visitor parking lot. The original Warming Hut was open on one side where visitors enjoyed coffee, hot dogs, and beans included in their entrance fee. The new structure generally follows the original's floor plan and includes a similar hand-forged hood over the fire pit.

The CCC built the Big Trees Recreation Hall in 1937. The name was changed to Jack Knight Hall to honor John H. "Jack" Knight, a Park Ranger at Big Trees in the 1940's. Knight began as a seasonal employee in 1937 and spent 40 years with the Park Service. He retired in 1980 as Associate Director of Operations for the Park System.

Grant from Save the Redwoods League

Save the Redwoods League recently made a very generous grant in the amount of \$83,000 to CBTA. The grant is designated to be used to furnish the CBTA office and bookstore in the new Visitor Center. We are most grateful to the league for their continuing support. This organization has been with us from the very beginning. It is no exaggeration to say that much of what we have and have become over the years is due to their generosity.

Seminar Schedule for 2012

May 5 - Bears of Calaveras Big Trees State Park:

Dr. Paul Ustach, Biology Professor at San Joaquin Delta College will present this program about the bears of our Park and the surrounding Sierra.

May 19 - Butterflies: Jim Mori, Entomologist, will be the presenter of this program, sharing his expertise and deep interest in butterflies.

June 9 - The Mystery of Bird Song: Presented by David Lukas, naturalist and author. David will share his insight into the magical world of bird song, from the way we study it to the anatomy of how birds produce sounds.

September 29 - Sequoia Research: Dr. Howard Shellhammer will speak about recent continuing giant sequoia research, including the role of fire in the reproduction of the giant sequoias.

October 6 - Go Native: Steve Stocking, retired Biology Professor from Delta College, will tell us about those native plants which are well adapted to the soils and climate of our area.

All seminars are held on Saturdays in Jack Knight Hall at the Park from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Seminars are free and open to the public; Park admission is \$8.00/car. Pack a lunch, bring the family and plan on spending the day among the Giant Sequoias.

Mark Your Calendars.....

“Take a Trip Down Memory Lane“ on Saturday, June 16, 2012. CBTA presents a Summer Concert featuring The Anne Saunders Trio with Anne Saunders, vocals, Sue Hart on keyboard and Kim Manuel on bass. The event will be held in Jack Knight Hall from 3:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. Local fine wines and hors d’oeuvres will be served.

Tickets are \$25.00 and are available online at www.memorylane.eventsbot.com or by calling (209) 795-3840.

Coast to Coast Raffle: Enter to win one of three extraordinary prizes. Tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00. The drawing will be held at the Summer Concert on June 16, 2012 and you need not be present to win. Visit www.bigtrees.org for complete information and to download your tickets.

Coast: This coast getaway includes a two night stay at the luxurious Moonstone Landing Hotel located in the seaside village of Cambria. Your room will overlook the sea and includes a fireplace, jacuzzi and expanded continental breakfast. Also in this coast getaway is the “Grand Rooms Museum” tour of Hearst Castle and screening of the film “Building the Dream”.

Among the Giants: Four nights of camping in beautiful Calaveras Big Trees State Park will provide your base camp to this outdoor adventure. Your experience will be enhanced by a private tour of the South Grove with lunch served along the way. As part of this package, OARS, the renowned white water adventure company, will provide a thrilling ride down the North Fork of the Stanislaus River.

Mountain Retreat: The famed Black Bear Inn, nestled among the pines in Arnold, is your host for this mountain getaway. A gourmet chef’s breakfast, in room jacuzzi and fireplace will provide the setting for this romantic getaway. Paired with this mountain retreat is a private wine tasting provided by Frog’s Tooth Vineyards, coupled with special hors d’oeuvres.

*Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature.
It will never fail you ~ Frank Lloyd Wright*

“California Forever” Film a Smash Hit

by Marcy Crawford

An enthusiastic sold-out crowd packed Jack Knight Hall last month for the gala local premiere of Director David Vassar’s “California Forever”. The February 18 festivities included an elegant reception followed by a screening of Vassar’s 75-minute documentary that celebrates the beauty, drama and sweeping history of California State Parks. More than 100 guests mingled with Vassar and Producer Sally Kaplan before the screening while sipping wine donated by 17 local wineries. Guests and dignitaries also nibbled fabulous hors d’oeuvres from Lila & Sage Catering and Cupcakes, and Grounds Restaurant in Murphys. After introductions and a few words from Vassar, the hall fell silent for the screening. At the conclusion, “thunderous applause shook the rafters of the hall”, reported Joel Metzger for the Calaveras Enterprise. The clapping went on and on. Emotions ran high, and people were teary-eyed. “This film will make you a preservationist,” commented Merita Callaway, Calaveras County Supervisor. Lee Terkelsen, a nature photographer and videographer said, “...after it was over, I wanted to do all I could to support State Parks”. This film premiere raised money for the Calaveras Big Trees Association, in addition to boosting awareness of the importance of state parks. CBTA thanks David Vassar and Sally Kaplan for their generosity in screening their film for us and for participating in the event. We appreciate their ongoing support. Many local dignitaries joined Callaway at the event, including: Heidi Morton, representing Assemblywoman Kristen Olson; Calaveras County District Attorney Barbara Yook; Ruskin Hartley, Executive Director of Save the Redwoods League; Joe Engbeck, author of “Enduring Giants”; Jess Cooper, District Superintendent, California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR); Vince Sereno, DPR Sector Superintendent; Gary Olson, DPR, Park Superintendent; and Wendy Harrison, DPR, Interpreter I, who appears in the film.

CBTA thanks. . .

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l to r: The Engbeck’s, Joe is the author of “Enduring Giants”; Merita Callaway, Calaveras County Supervisor and Gary Olson, Park Superintendent; David Vassar, Director; Marilyn Regan, CBTA President; Sally Kaplan, Producer; Ruskin Hartley, Executive Director, Save the Redwoods League.

Photos by Alan Beymer

and the volunteers who assisted at the event. . .

Event Coordinator.....

Marcy Crawford

Photographer.....

Alan Beymer

Donated services by Gay Callen, Chatom Vineyards....

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Sue Hoffmann
Tami Rakstad-Schaner

We could not have done this without all of you.

If you couldn’t make the event, “California Forever” will be shown on PBS in the Fall. Check your local listings.

The Visitor Center is off to a fabulous start this year! Because the weather was so nice early in the season, we were able to stay open and people have been buying!!! 2012 is going to be the year of new and exciting items! Dave Gayneaux created some artwork for us which are becoming new patches and lapel pins. They will be coming in during April and May, and are really cool! We are also bringing back another patch and pin that has been absent for a while...it is a surprise! We have also been working with a vendor creating *Scent of a Jeffery Pine*, a lip balm (vanilla & butterscotch) and body butter (vanilla) with a customized label and an informational card explaining why a Jeffery Pine smells. Finally, we have been working with Jackson Pacific on a customized ornament that represents the Park; it should be here in June. With a start like this, I am sure we will continue finding new merchandise throughout the year, so keep your eyes open to see what comes in!

*It is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts,
as for that subtle something, that quality of air that emanation from old trees, that so
wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit ~ Robert Louis Stevenson*

Welcome to CBTA.....

General Membership:

Heather Acuna, Sonora, CA
Juli Alexander, Seaside, CA
Kevin and Cathie Andel, Arnold, CA
Penny Bennett, Foster City, CA
Eddie Berry, Benecia, CA
Clifton Bishop, El Cerrito, CA
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Backcountry Pictures, South Pasadena, CA
Bertini Mechanical, Avery, CA
Black Bear Inn, Arnold, CA
Broll Mountain Vineyards, Murphys, CA
Calaveras Winegrape Alliance, Murphys, CA
Chatom Vineyards, Douglas Flat, CA

Frog's Tooth Vineyards, Murphys, CA
Grounds Restaurant, Murphys, CA
Lila & Sage Bakery and Catering, Murphys, CA
Moonstone Landing, Cambria, CA
OARS, Angels Camp, CA

This 'n That. . . .

Dolores Quyle Mast and her husband are the owners of Brice Station Vintners in Murphys. Brice Station operates alongside Quyle Kilns which is the oldest family-owned and operated production business in Murphys. The Kiln produces handmade pottery as well as mining and processing clay. During the late 1800's Brice Station was a popular stage stop on the way to Calaveras Big Trees. It seemed only natural that in 1980 Dolores would find her way to the State Park as a volunteer. As a young woman, she designed the "tree" we use on all our stationery, business cards, and, yes, the tree on this Bulletin too. Thank you, Dolores, for this "enduring" piece of art work.

It is time for our Annual Brunch in the Jack Knight Hall. On Saturday, April 21, 2012, at 11:00 a.m., CBTA will provide a delicious brunch for all the new members and docents. At this time you will have the opportunity to meet the Park rangers, as well as other Park staff, CBTA Board Members, CBTA staff, new members and old friends. Also, you will be able to find out about and sign up for all the programs that will be going on in the Park this year. Please RSVP to Bunny Firebaugh by e-mail at www.lovetheforest@goldrush.com or by phone at (209) 795-4305. Hope to see you there!

At the January CBTA Board meeting, Mara Naber was appointed Fundraiser/Event Planning Director. Mara has been a member of the Events Planning Committee since its inception last summer and has agreed to fill the vacant position on the Board. She will be formally elected at the Annual Meeting in June. Mara comes to us from Mountain Ranch where she is very actively involved in the community. Her "Calendar Girls" for year 2012 was a popular and successful fundraiser for Mountain Ranch. Mara's background skills include project planning, project management, client communications skills and system design and analysis. Welcome aboard!

The Association's Annual Meeting will be held this year on Saturday, June 23, 2012 at 11:00 a.m. The agenda includes election of officers, review of past year, announcement of intern, and announcement of scholarship recipients. A potluck picnic will follow the meeting so please bring your favorite dish to share.

FUN FACTS.....

The **Rufous Hummingbird** has an excellent memory for location, assisting it to find flowers from day-to-day, or even from year-to-year. Some birds have returned from migration and investigated where a feeder was the previous year, even though the feeder was currently absent.

Scientists can tell the age of a **fish** by looking at its ear bone, called the otolith. Growth rings related to water temperature can be seen in the otolith and counted to give age.

A study of **insects** associated with Giant Sequoia indicates that as many as 143 species may use the tree at various times in their life history.

A **baby deer** lies motionless on the ground in a curled position when in danger. Its lack of scent and spotted pattern protect it from discovery. As sunlight falls between leaves and branches of plants in the forest, a dappled pattern of light and dark spots are spread across the ground. Thus, the spotted fawn looks like its surroundings. Most mammals lack cones in the back of their eyes to see in color, further protecting the fawn.

The average lifespan of a **bat** is 10 years, although some have lived more than 30 years, an exceptionally long time for a small mammal.

The **Great Horned Owl** is one of the most widespread and common owls in North America. It is also the only animal that regularly eats skunks. It also kills and eats other owls, nestling ospreys, adult crows and nestlings. Crows will congregate from long distances to mob these owls and may continue yelling at them for hours.

The **Northern Pygmy Owl** is a small owl found in all types of woodlands, roosting in winter in dense conifer trees, sometimes in parks and gardens. Its defense upon discovery is to sit still and not fly, leading people to perceive them as "tame".

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The Board meets monthly the last Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. and is open to the public. Please call the office at 795-3840 to confirm meeting date, time and place.

The CBTA dues year is the calendar year. You may renew your membership by mailing a check payable to CBTA in the envelope enclosed with your Winter Bulletin or renew/donate through our website www.bigtrees.org. Your membership/donation is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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