SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, Monday, July 17, 1967 CCCCA

The President
The White House
Washington 25, D.C.

Mr. President: There is one great forest of redwoods left on earth; but the one you are trying to save isn't it.

...*Meanwhile they are cutting down both of them.*

THE lumber industry has already cut nearly two million acres of redwoods down to two possible sites for our much-talked-of Redwood National Park.

One of them—Redwood Creek—is magnificent still. The other—Mill Creek? Well, it is less unacceptable to the lumber companies.

Soon Congress will decide which of these to save from the saws—which in the meantime buzz on, despite a so-called moratorium on cutting.

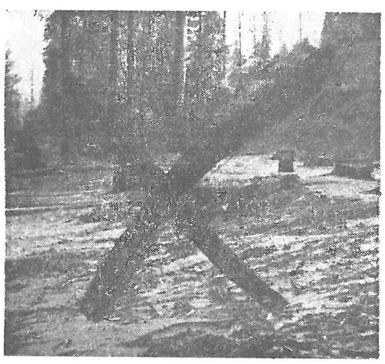
It's an old story, Mr. President. In the 1920's there were four great forests left: 1) that along the Eel River and on the Bull Creek and the Dyerville Flats, 2) along the Klamath River, 3) along Redwood Creek, and 4) on the Smith River at Mill Creek.

Considering these as possible sites for *that* year's Redwood National Park, Madison Grant, a founder of the Save-the-Redwoods League, said: *"Each has its peculiar beauty and it is difficult to choose among them."* And so they didn't.

The lumber companies did, however:

I have just seen the rip-rapped banks of the Eel, and its slash- and gravel-choked side streams. I saw the high, steep slopes pitifully scarred and eroded by logging. I drove through the great groves left along the Eel—on a high-speed freeway that has effectively and forever ruined the integrity and peaceful beauty of this place.

I walked in the Rockefeller Forest, among the sky-scraping giants, and then saw the glacier of gravel up Bull Creek—the product of catastrophic logging and floods—moving inexorably and lethally toward them.

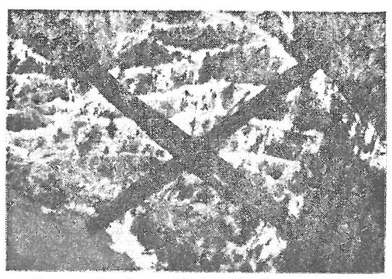


There is no longer a chance for a great Redwood National Park on the Eel River.

I have just seen the final throes in the destruction of a superlative landscape on the Klamath.

The waters of this river—only a short time ago among the most gorgeous in the northwest—are muddy and roiled and swollen with silt. The high hillsides through which they travel, once clothed in dark, magnificent forests, are now shorn and scraped bare. They are shucking off huge fans of topsoil in a classical display of erosion.

Side streams, long beloved of fishermen, are now gutted and filled with slash—their bright fish gone.



No one talks about a National Park on the Klamath any more.

A few exquisite fragments of the Smith River groves at Mill Creek still remain. They are already protected in California's Jedediah Smith and Del Norte Coast State Parks.

I walked through these in a few hours.

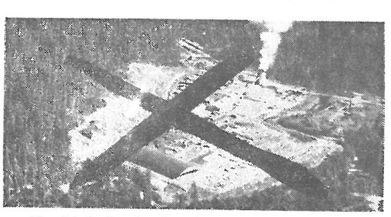
Outside these state parks less than 1,100 acres of superior old-growth redwoods remain in Mill Creek. More than half its forests have been logged.

The proposed park is girdled along the Smith River by summer homes, motels, gas stations and grocery stores. The heart of it has been completely cut out, and now boasts a splendid multi-million dollar industrial complex.

Hardly the stuff a great National Park is made of.

Yet Mill Creek would cost us an estimated 60 million dollars.

Much of that would go to buy developed private property. The rest would add only 7,500 acres of virgin redwoods to the existing state parks. (Consider Olympic National Park: nearly 900,000 acres. That, indeed, is preserving the marvelous Douglas Fir forests of Washington for the enjoyment of people for all time. Can we seriously be talking about adding *only 7,500 virgin acres* to our present state parks to preserve the incomparable redwoods? And this for $60,000,000?)



Yet this is the site that the Secretary of the Interior has espoused on behalf of the Administration, because he "wanted to pick a park, not a fight." Not a fight with the lumber industry, anyway.

One last chance remains: Redwood Creek.

In 1920 Madison Grant called it "peculiarly adapted for a national park." In 1964, after fifteen months of study, National Park Service planners called it the finest large block of redwoods left, in terms of park values.

This was confirmed, at one time or another, by conservation groups throughout America. And it was re-confirmed *this year* by the Hammon, Jensen and Wallen report to the Secretary of the Interior.

I was four days exploring Redwood Creek and its drainages this trip. Even then I saw only a fraction of the area I and other Sierra Club members have been looking into for four years. For there are great reaches of it not yet penetrated by logging roads—a unique circumstance in what is left of the redwood country.

The last long stretches of virgin acres in all the redwood region are at Redwood Creek: 20 miles and 34,000 acres of them. And there are more than 10,000 acres of superior old-growth stands. ***Ten times what is left at Mill Creek.***

The last virgin forests on both sides of a river are at Redwood Creek; over four miles of them, including the magnificent Emerald Mile.

In short, the last chance to preserve the entire ecological variety of the redwood species—from the ocean shore at Gold Bluffs Beach through inland stands of near rain-forest luxuriance to 3,000 foot high mountain ridges, is at Redwood Creek.

And it is here that the National Geographic Society discovered the tallest tree on earth—and where the second, third, fourth, sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth tallest trees were subsequently discovered.

Clearly then the $60,000,000 mentioned as the price of a park at Mill Creek would buy far more at Redwood Creek. If indeed $60,000,000—the equivalent of but 2 days' work on federal highway construction projects—is all the money available.

$140,000,000—*but 3 more days of highway building*—would give us the great national park we ought to have.

Meanwhile they are cutting it down. The area the National Park Service recommended for preservation *in 1964;* that named at Senate hearings as the best possible Redwood National Park by 94% of those who favor any park at all; the subject of Senate and House Redwood National Park bills sponsored by 17 Senators* (S. 514) and 41 Congressmen** (H.R. 2849, for example) *is being cut down.*

Mr. President, the Sierra Club and most of its 53,000 members, the 58 Congressmen listed below—and we believe *all* conservationists, were some of them not afraid that lumber interests had ruled it out already—are convinced that Redwood Creek is the only national park this wealthiest nation in history can *afford* to establish.

Speaking for them, and for future generations with every interest in the creation of the park—but no voice in it—I urge you to reconsider the site of the Administration's proposed Redwood National Park, while there is still time.

Yours sincerely,
Edgar Wayburn, President
Sierra Club, Mills Tower, San Francisco

P.S. to other readers. *Your* letters, giving the President and the following Congressmen your opinion in the Redwood National Park crisis, could just do it.

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Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs
Senate Office Building, Washington 25, D.C.

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*Senators Lee Metcalf, Montana; Mike Mansfield, Montana; Quentin Burdick, North Dakota; Joseph S. Clark, Pennsylvania; Thomas J. Dodd, Connecticut; Ernest Gruening, Alaska; Daniel Inouye, Hawaii; Robert Kennedy, New York; Eugene McCarthy, Minnesota; Gale McGee, Wyoming; Walter Mondale, Minnesota; Gaylord Nelson, Wisconsin; Claiborne Pell, Rhode Island; Abraham Ribicoff, Connecticut; Joseph D. Tydings, Maryland; Ralph Yarborough, Texas; and Stephen Young, Ohio.

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The Sierra Club, founded in 1892 by John Muir, is nonprofit, supported by people who, like Thoreau, believe "In wildness is the preservation of the world." The club's program is nationwide, includes wilderness trips, books and films—as well as such efforts as this to protect the remnant of wilderness of the Americas. There are now twenty chapters, branch-offices in New York (Biltmore Hotel), Washington (Dupont Circle Building), Los Angeles (Auditorium Building), Albuquerque, Seattle, and main office in San Francisco.

Edgar Wayburn, President
Sierra Club, Mills Tower, San Francisco

- ☐ I have sent the letters.
- ☐ Please tell me what else I can do.
- ☐ Here is a donation of $_____ to continue your effort to keep the public informed. (I understand that you can't promise this will be tax-deductible.)
- ☐ Send me "The Last Redwoods," which tells the complete story of the opportunity as well as the destruction in the Redwoods. ($17.50)
- ☐ I would like to be a member of the Sierra Club. Enclosed is $14.00 for entrance and first year's dues.

Name_____

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