

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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National Park Service to Help Keep Portions of Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park Open Through September 2012

In order to continue providing opportunities for over 45,000 visitors annually to enjoy camping, hiking, and exploring Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park (DNCRSP), the National Park Service (NPS) and California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) are entering a one-year trial to keep portions of the park open through September 2012. Via a partnership between the two agencies, the NPS will provide operational support to CDPR, including fee collection, maintenance, law enforcement, and interpretive services for operating and maintaining the Mill Creek Campground, Wilson Beach, Damnation Creek Trail, the Coastal Trail, and other trails throughout DNCRSP. NPS employees will be utilized to conduct most operations.



“This agreement is a great step forward for our enduring commitment to the long-term protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and scenic wonders of Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, one of the emerald gems of the California State Park System.” said California State Parks Superintendent Jeff Bomke.

While the NPS will not be able to maintain public access on weekends to the Mill Creek Watershed (via Hamilton Road) which CDPR has provided over the last few years, CDPR is willing to work with other organizations or groups with an interest in doing so. CDPR will continue to manage extensive ongoing resource restoration projects within the Watershed which are funded through sources other than the state’s general fund.

Established in 1925, Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, which is an integral part of the Redwood National and State Park partnership and is located just south of Crescent City, CA, was targeted as one of the 70 California State Parks to be closed in 2012 due to budget cuts. In addition to the 145-site campground, the 31,261- acre park contains large stands of old-growth redwood forest, seventy miles of scenic trails, and eight miles of stunning coastline. Due to proposed budget reductions over the next two years, the State of California can no longer afford to operate all the parks within its system, including DNCRSP.

The NPS feels that such a closure would likely have impacts on NPS resources, visitors, and employees, as well as the local economy, diminishing the quality of visitors’ experiences not only in DNCRSP, but also in the surrounding national park lands and throughout the Redwood National and State Park partnership. Therefore, the NPS is adjusting operations in other areas in order to take on the operations at Del Norte Coast and keep the park open for at least a one year trial period. This will mean that some

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NPS trails and facilities will be maintained less frequently or to a lesser standard in order to divert NPS funding and resources to the operation of DNCRSP.

The NPS will support normal day-to-day operations needed to keep the area open. However, no additional funding is available and no major or long-term infrastructure repairs will likely be accomplished. Operations managed by the NPS for CDPR will be dependent upon existing NPS funds along with fees collected for camping and day use. 100% of fees collected by the NPS will be used to support operations and facilities at DNCRSP.

Redwood National Park Superintendent Steve Chaney stated, "While taking on these additional responsibilities will mean we will have to do a little less of something somewhere else in the park, we look at the National Park and all three state parks within Redwood National and State Parks as a nationally significant resource and World Heritage Site which the NPS has a responsibility to help protect and make available to the public." He added, "Redwood National and State Parks is a partnership. We stand together to manage these magnificent resources for the people in the most effective and efficient manner possible."

Visitors planning next year's trip to the redwoods and DNCRSP can be assured that Mill Creek Campground will be open to the public beginning at least one week before Memorial Day weekend until at least one week following Labor Day weekend. Current fees charged by CDPR for camping and day use will be maintained by the NPS as will the existing campground reservation system. Under this agreement, all California State Parks as well as all federal park passes will be honored.

CDPR is hopeful that budgets will improve sufficiently over a 3-5 year period for them to resume operation of these parks; therefore, the agreements with the NPS will only be for one year, renewable as long as both the NPS and CDPR desire to continue such an arrangement.

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