

S.P. #2

## DEL NORTE COAST REDWOODS STATE PARK

(Summary by George Tays)

The Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park containing 2800 acres of seashore and mountain land is in southwestern Del Norte County. Its geographic location being latitude  $41^{\circ} 40'$  north and longitude  $124^{\circ} 5'$  west. It has about seven and a half miles of coast extending from half a mile south of Wilson Creek to one mile north of Knapp's Point and is about one and a half miles at its widest part.

This section of the coast probably was first seen by the crew of Ferrelo's ship in 1543, and they were followed by Drake and his pirates in 1579. Twenty-four years later in 1603, Vizcaíno and his men took a look at it. After 170 years new expeditions under Perez, Heceta, Bodega, Artiaga, La Pérouse, Gray, Malaspina, Vancouver, and Winship saw this coast between 1774 and 1806. But it was not until 1828, that Jedediah Smith and his trappers actually set foot in this area for the first time while traveling to Oregon. In 1850 the gold rush to this section brought a permanent white population. A mule trail and later a county road were built through this century. When it was organized as Klamath County in 1851 and later renamed Del Norte County in 1857.

The Yurok Indians who inhabited this section had



a higher level of culture in arts and economics than other California Indians but were so warlike that the whites had to exterminate them.

The wild animal life was also very numerous among them being elk, deer, grizzly and black bear, mountain lion and other game, but most of these became extinct. The small animals and birds, however, are still very abundant, there being at least seventy varieties of birds in the park area during the year.

Plant life is even more abundant, for the different species of flowers and trees run into the hundreds. Of these, the poppy, lupine, violet, clover, lily, rhododendron, azalea, hemlock, spruce, juniper, yew, oak, maple, and redwood are the most common.

When the first highway was built through here some years ago, it opened such a wealth of scenery, that it was proposed to save some of it for the future. The first step towards establishing Del Norte Park was taken by George Frederick Schwarz, of New York, who bought and gave the state in 1924, a redwood tract of 157 acres. This was dedicated to the memory of Colonel Henry S. Graves. Since then a number of additions have been made to the park by private gifts and public purchases until by 1936 the park had grown to over 2800 acres with a value of some \$448,500.

Recently a new, wider and better highway had been



constructed along the old county road. Trails have been built from it to the different groves and scenic spots, while the park has been developed for the comfort and enjoyment of its visitors. This has made it one of the most popular of the purely scenic recreation areas of the state park system.



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This area though seen by navigators from Ferrelo to Winship 1543-1806, was first explored by Jedediah Smith's party in 1828. Its origin as a state park in 1924 was a gift of 157 acres of redwoods by George F. Schwarz. Other gifts and purchases expanded it to 2800 acres.