

Happy Earth Day! Five redwood parks you've never heard of — and why you should go

By Mary Forgiione | Apr 20, 2018

Earth Day on Sunday is a good time to think about planning a trip to see California's redwoods. Yosemite's spectacular Mariposa Grove, which has been shut for a three-year restoration project, will reopen to visitors June 15.

Big trees, however, draw big crowds. For a quieter experience, here are five lesser-known redwood parks where you may just have the trees to yourself.



Felton, Calif.

The old-growth giants at [Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park](#) in Felton are pretty easy to find. Head to the visitor center and follow the flat loop that's less than a mile long. The largest coastal redwood in this 40-acre grove is about 1,500 years old and 277 feet tall.

You'll also find the Fremont Tree, a large hollowed-out redwood you can stand inside. Explorer John Fremont is said to have camped here.

The park, by the way, is named for the businessman who once owned this forest and used the redwoods (fortunately not all of them) to fuel lime kilns.

Info: [Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park](#)

Woodside, Calif.

The coast redwoods in [Wunderlich Park](#) in Woodside aren't old-growth, but they are dense and provide a cool refuge on a warm day.

At the nearby [Folger Stable](#), you can see the big trees during a horseback trail ride (\$60 for an hour) in the mixed forest dominated by redwoods.

The ranch, which includes the historic stable, once belonged to the Folger family of Folger's coffee fame. If you're on foot, head out on the easy Redwood Trail for a quiet stroll among the trees.

Info: [Wunderlich Park](#)

Philo, Calif.

The most impressive redwoods at [Hendy Woods State Park](#) southeast of Mendocino are at Big Hendy, an 80-acre grove with a thick understory of ferns and redwood sorrel.

There's a .6-mile wheelchair-accessible Discovery Trail that runs through the grove too. Hikers can take a 1.6-mile loop to marvel at the trees and then head off on the Hermit Hut Trail.

You'll find a downed redwood that once housed a Russian immigrant known as the Hendy Hermit.

Info: [Hendy Woods State Park](#)

Gualala, Calif.

At [Gualala Point Regional Park](#) on Highway 1 north of the community of Sea Ranch, you can camp under coastal redwoods for \$32 to \$35 a night.

Walk-in and drive-in sites are located along the Gualala River. You're within spitting distance of the ocean; with luck, you may see whales before bedding down among the big trees.

Info: [Gualala Point Regional Park](#)

Southern Oregon

Redwoods in Oregon? Just over the California border are trails that will take you to the northernmost range of coast redwoods.

The trees here are spindly, not brawny, but allow you to claim bragging rights to having seen the only redwoods in the Pacific Northwest. The [Redwood Nature Trail](#) in Brookings and the nearby [Oregon Redwoods Trail](#) along Peavine Ridge offer easy walking along short loops.

Info: [Redwood Nature Trail](#); [Oregon Redwoods Trail](#)

[Redwood Hikes](#) and [Save the Redwoods League](#) provide excellent online trip-planning information.

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