



See California's redwood forests for free and help protect them into the future

This year marks an important milestone for the preservation of [California's](#) historic redwood forests, and to celebrate, travellers can gain free entry into [Redwood State Parks](#) once a month in 2018.



Sunny redwood forest in Northern California. Image by @welcomia/Shutterstock

Redwood State Parks contain part of the ancient coastal forest that originally spanned more than 2.2 million acres along [California's Big Sur Coast](#) and north into Oregon. The gigantic trees were heavily hit by the demand for lumber following the 1849 Gold Rush, suffering a devastating reduction to cover only 5% of their original range. Thankfully, conservation efforts launched 100 years ago to help save the lumbering giants, which are now a huge attraction to nature-loving visitors in California.

To mark the occasion, there will be free day-use admission to more than 40 redwood state parks on the second Saturday of each month, thanks to the Save the Redwoods League conservation campaign and California State Parks. The first free second Saturday is on 13 January. More than 16,000 free vehicle day-use passes are available, covering the cost of admission and parking fees – but hurry as there are a limited number of passes each month. They can be downloaded in advance at [FreeRedwoodsDays.org](#).



Hiking through the Redwood forest. Image by ©Jordan Slemens/Getty Images

The move marks the centenary of the league, which was established in 1918 and helped to create 66 redwood parks and preserves. The league has protected more than 200,000 acres of redwood forest and the majestic trees now draw in more than 31 visitors from around the world each year. The large network of [Redwood National and State Parks](#) can be confusing – they include spots like Redwood National Park, Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park and more – but are worth visiting, as they are less visited than other spots like Sequoia National Park.



Save the Redwoods League celebrates 100 years of protecting California’s majestic coast redwood and giant sequoia forests. Image by Jon Parmentier/Save the Redwoods League

“To walk among these giants is to look upon the original face of nature and experience the incomparable majesty of the world’s tallest and largest living things,” said Sam Hodder, president and chief executive officer for Save the Redwoods League, in a statement. The year-long celebrations will include multiple initiatives to help protect and restore the forests, as well as help people connect with them.

They are also launching a new website ExploreRedwoods.org on 23 January, which will be an online guide to all of the redwood parks in California, and will include trip-planning tips. There will also be activities for kids and people of all ages throughout the year, including the Stand for the Redwoods Festival. Find out more here.

<http://bit.ly/2mVTWe3>