

# Mendocino Woodlands State Park



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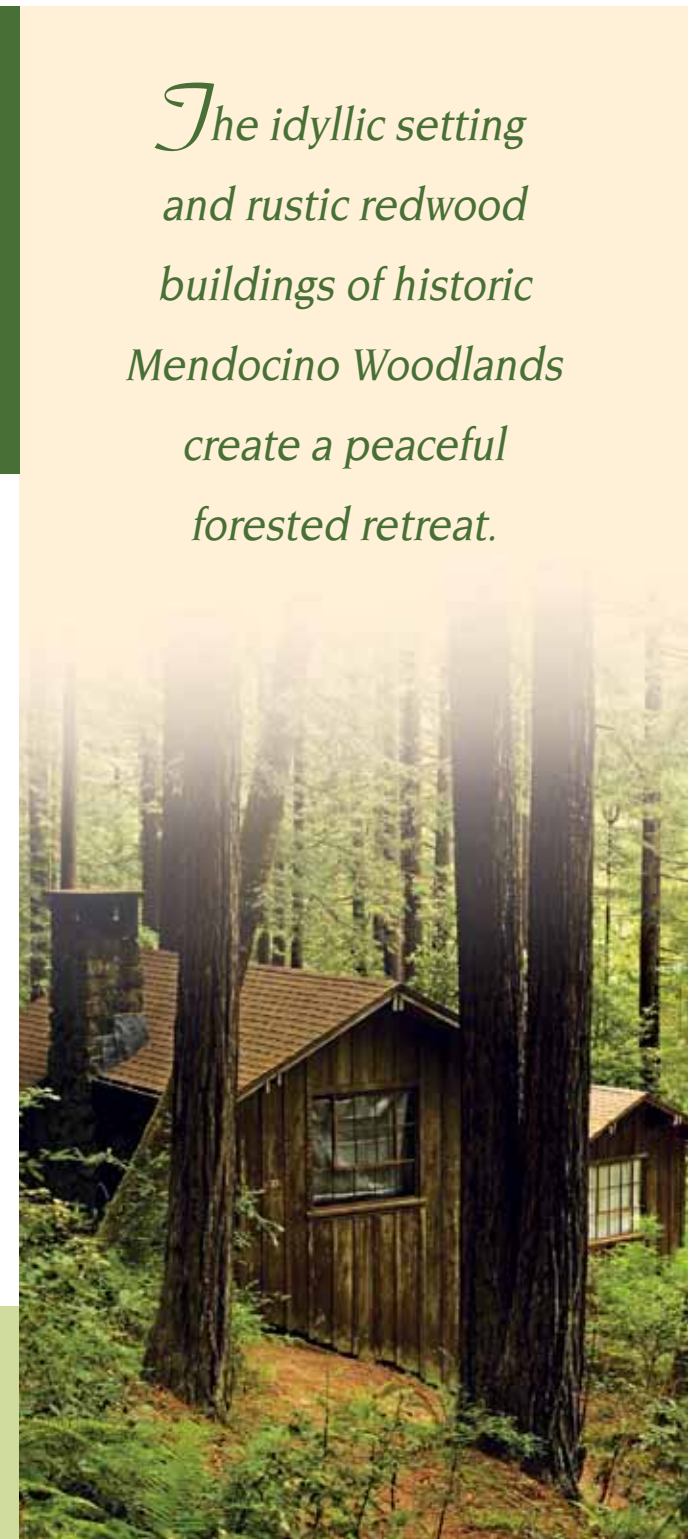
## Mendocino Woodlands State Park

39350 Little Lake Rd., Mendocino, CA 95460

(707) 937-5755

[www.mendocinowoodlands.org](http://www.mendocinowoodlands.org)

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*The idyllic setting  
and rustic redwood  
buildings of historic  
Mendocino Woodlands  
create a peaceful  
forested retreat.*



# A

**long the Little North Fork of Big River, Mendocino Woodlands State Park** sits tucked among 720 acres of second- and third-growth redwoods. Mendocino's ancient coast redwoods grew to heights up to 370 feet—Earth's tallest trees.

Organized groups can reserve time to camp within the hushed forest and enjoy the park's historic buildings. Day users can hike in the recreational area and adjoining forest.

## **PARK HISTORY**

### **Native People**

Northern Pomo groups once lived inland and traveled through this area. At the mouth of Big River—west of Mendocino Woodlands—the Northern Pomo built a summertime village called Buldam.

Spanish and Russian colonists landed on the coastal Pomo territory in the early 1800s. Thereafter, Pomo lands were taken by Mexican land grantees and arriving settlers seeking their fortunes from gold or lumber.

Once their permanent villages were usurped, the Pomo first moved to Buldam. Those native people who survived rampant disease epidemics were soon rounded up and forced to live on reservations at Mendocino and later in Round Valley. The Pomo were imprisoned with other native people from the Yuki, Wailaki, Concow, Nomlaki, and Achumawi/Pit River tribes. Their land was never returned.

## **WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION CONSTRUCTION**

During the Great Depression following the financial crisis of 1929, employment plummeted. Many Americans lost their homes and farms. President Franklin Roosevelt put New Deal programs in place to stimulate employment, relocate people to better farmland, and conserve existing natural resources. One program planned construction of 46 Recreation Demonstration Areas (RDAs) across the country. These rural recreation camps would then be turned over to each of their respective states.

The National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Forest Service hired several hundred thousand young men, known as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), to build the camps. The NPS purchased 5,245 acres for the Mendocino Woodlands Recreation Demonstration Area in 1935. The existing logging camps, school and hotel at the site were razed for the RDA. Local craftsmen and laborers hired by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), aided by CCC workers, then erected more than 120 buildings, cabins, and other “park rustic” structures, using local redwood and native stone.

The NPS turned the Mendocino Woodlands RDA over to the State of California in 1947. In 1949, the nonprofit Mendocino Woodlands Camp Association was founded to manage and maintain the facility. A narrow 700-acre river corridor became Mendocino Woodlands State Park in 1976. Of America's 46 WPA- and CCC-built RDA camps, Mendocino Woodlands is one of only two to maintain its historic integrity, artistic significance and original usage. The park was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997.



*WPA crewmen working on recreation hall roof, ca. 1938*



*Crewmen and tent campsites, ca. 1938*



*Logging Engine No. 1 along Big River*

Today's surviving Pomo live on 20 "rancherias" in Mendocino, Sonoma, and Lake counties, where they practice their ancient customs and cultural traditions.

### **Logging Era**

Cargo salvagers from the 1850 *Frolic* shipwreck off the Mendocino shores saw the economic potential of coast redwood timber. Along Big River, roads were soon graded to build logging camps, a hotel and a school.

Bull and oxen teams dragged huge redwood logs to the river, where they floated downstream to the Mendocino Lumber mill at Big River's mouth. In 1893, railroads

replaced livestock. After the old-growth trees were gone, the mill closed in 1938.

### **NATURAL HISTORY**

#### **Climate**

The moderate coastal climate varies only about 15° each day. Winter rain and some morning or evening fog is common. High temperatures reach into the 80s, while winter temperatures may dip below the 40s.

#### **Geology**

Mendocino Woodlands lies within the Big River Basin on the coastal side of the Mendocino Range. The river canyon composition of this Franciscan Coastal Belt

area is sandstone bedrock interspersed with siltstone and shale.

### **Flora and Fauna**

Willow and alder trees line the creeks and river; tanoak and madrone stand among second-growth redwood, Douglas-fir, hemlock and big leaf maple on the upper slopes. Wild roses, trillium, and stream, phantom and calypso orchids grow among the park's fern-filled understory.

Coho, steelhead, and some Chinook salmon spawn in the healthy stream ecosystem of the Little North Fork. Beavers paddle in the man-made ponds. Species of concern are Northern spotted owls, Cooper's hawks and goshawks.

Riparian species in the watershed include southern torrent salamanders, frogs, river otters and western pond turtles. The flute-like melody of a Swainson's thrush





competes with the songs of Wilson's warblers and hermit thrushes.

## RECREATION

The camp was developed with a mandate to provide quality environmental education. An on-site nature center, herbarium and library enhance learning activities at the Mendocino Outdoor Science School (MOSS). Some MOSS scholarships are provided by Save the Redwoods League. Weekend workshops, field trips, and service-learning days also allow city dwellers and underserved children to bond with nature.

A few vestiges of its former logging days may be seen in the park. Near Camp 3, loggers built the rock crusher in Rocky Gulch more

than a century ago, when the gulch served as a logging quarry.

Eight hiking trails and the ridge road offer 25 miles of forested paths through the park and adjoining Jackson Demonstration State Forest. The Big Tree and Old Jeep trails lead hikers to one remaining old-growth redwood, the Big Tree, scarred by lightning.

Camping at Mendocino Woodlands is by group reservation only. View the park's calendar and driving directions at [www.mendocinowoodlands.org](http://www.mendocinowoodlands.org).

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Mendocino Headlands State Park  
735 Main St., Mendocino 95460  
(707) 937-5397/937-5804
- Van Damme State Park,  
Highway 1, Little River 95456  
(707) 937-5804

## PLEASE REMEMBER







- Except for service animals, no pets are allowed in the park.
- All natural and cultural features are protected by state law and may not be disturbed or removed.
- Swim in the river and ponds at your own risk. Hidden objects and holes may be present. No lifeguards are on duty.
- Please be quiet and respect the forest stillness for the sake of other users.

This park is operated by the nonprofit Mendocino Woodlands Camp Association. For information, reservations, and directions, visit [www.mendocinowoodlands.org](http://www.mendocinowoodlands.org) or call (707) 937-5755.



# Mendocino Woodlands State Park

## Legend

-  Unpaved Road
-  Trail
-  Group Campground
-  Campfire Center
-  Parking
-  Restrooms

JACKSON DEMONSTRATION STATE FOREST (CAL FIRE)

JACKSON DEMONSTRATION STATE FOREST (CAL FIRE)

# MENDOCINO WOODLANDS STATE PARK



# MENDOCINO HEADLANDS STATE PARK



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