



Save the
Redwoods
League

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Y U R O K T R I B E

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Note to Media: B-roll and photos for media usage can be downloaded [here](#).

Yurok Tribe, Save the Redwoods League Finalize Major Land Transfer

*Tribally Owned Property Near National Park Preserved in Perpetuity and
Open to the Public Starting August 1, 2026*



The 125-acre 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway. Photo by Michael E. Wier, courtesy of CalTrout.

ORICK, Calif. (July 28, 2026) – [Save the Redwoods League](#) transferred 125 acres of land in the heart of Yurok ancestral territory back to the [Yurok Tribe](#) through a transformational agreement that prioritizes tribal land-management practices, creates a new public space and permanently protects critical salmon habitat.

“This project represents a truly just approach to the restoration of culturally important landscapes and tribal communities. I hope it sets a national standard for collaboration between environmental protection groups and Tribal nations,” said Joseph L. James, the Chairman of the Yurok Tribe. “I sincerely thank Save the Redwoods League for working with the Tribe to make this dream a reality.”

“O Rew Redwoods Gateway shows what is possible when people come together with a shared commitment to healing the land and honoring its history,” said Steve Mietz, President and CEO of Save the Redwoods League. “What was once a degraded and abandoned mill site is now full of life again—a place where people can connect with the majesty of the redwoods and the living culture of the Yurok Tribe. We are deeply honored to support the return of this land to its rightful stewards.”

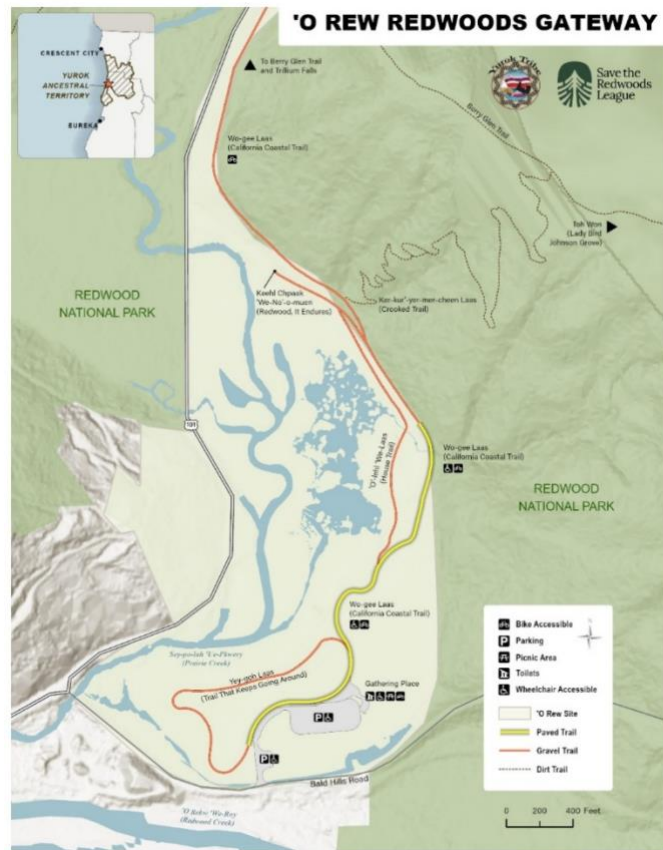
The ‘O Rew Redwoods Gateway and Restoration Project creates a new tribally owned and operated recreational area on Prairie Creek, a Redwood Creek tributary located off U.S. Highway 101 at the base of Bald Hills Road in Orick, Calif. Save the Redwoods conveyed the property to the Yurok Tribe on June 30, 2026.

The space, known as ‘O Rew Redwoods Gateway, will open for recreational access on August 1, 2026, in Orick, Calif. at the southern end of Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP). Information about ‘O Rew is available at <https://o-rew-redwoods-gateway.square.site/>.

(Media: There will be a private ribbon-cutting on Friday, July 31 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For media access, please RSVP to Matt Mais at mmais@yuroktribe.nsn.us.)

This park-like property features an information kiosk resembling a traditional Yurok house and interactive interpretive exhibits driven by Yurok perspective and language in both audio and written formats. These exhibits and amenities provide opportunities to learn about the restored landscape, the Tribe’s culture and its reciprocal relationship with the redwood ecosystem. Additionally, there is a pedestrian plaza with lunch tables, ADA-accessible trails and an elevated vantage point offering a panoramic view of the restored site and surrounding forest.

The freshly laid trails introduce a new segment of the California Coastal Trail and connect with RNSP, providing easy access to some of California’s most prolific old-growth coast redwood stands, including the popular Lady Bird Johnson Grove. ‘O Rew is now an ideal place to spend quality time



with family and friends, while learning about the Yurok Tribe's connection to this land. The Yurok Tribe will be hosting public and private events and programs at 'O Rew for the tribal membership, local communities and the visiting public.

In the near future, the Yurok Tribe aims to construct a cultural center further highlighting the distinct history and living culture of the Tribe and the extraordinary natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the region. The Yurok Tribe also plans to build a traditional village on the site, including plank houses and a sweat house.

Restoring 'O Rew

Save the Redwoods League purchased the property in 2013 with the intent of restoring a severely degraded section of Prairie Creek and expanding recreational access and connectivity in the area. It was covered by 20 acres of asphalt from a former lumber mill and an 80-acre cattle pasture. The stream channel was reduced to a trench flanked by invasive plants. In 2021, after more than five years of collaborative planning and design, Save the Redwoods, the Yurok Tribe, California Trout and numerous other local agencies, professionals and partners began a five-year restoration of Prairie Creek and construction of the Gateway.

"When the mill operated on this property, it was a source of conflict for the Yurok people. Now, it is a point of pride and a place where our people feel welcome," said Yurok Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer **Rosie Clayburn Katri**. "I'm really excited about what this property will look like after a decade of Indigenous land management."

The 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway and Restoration Project presents one of the very few opportunities in rural Northern California to see the evolution of a large-scale stream restoration project. Over five years, the Yurok Tribe Construction Corporation and Yurok Fisheries Department built a one-mile-long braided channel, two off-channel ponds, 20 acres of wetlands and 20 acres of upland habitat designed by more than a dozen groups with restoration expertise. The Yurok Revegetation Crew planted nearly a half-million native seedlings in the ground, spanning 50 species, including redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) and many other native plants to facilitate the restoration of highly productive fish and wildlife habitat. As the native plants and trees mature, the stream will appear as though it had never been disturbed.

Prior to attempted colonization, North Coast streams were filled with downed trees. Beavers, natural tree mortality and heavy storms constantly dropped wood into the creeks, which in turn created dynamic habitat types required for peak fish production. The restoration crew installed numerous large wood features in the stream. The whole logs, coupled with the creek's hydraulic force, create deep pools, scour fine sediment, improve water quality, slow flows, recharge underground aquifers and create cover for baby fish.

Hundreds of endangered juvenile coho salmon, along with western pond turtles and great blue herons, are already using habitat created early in the project. The restoration site is also attracting bears, elk, deer, condors, waterfowl, songbirds, wading birds, raptors and riparian predators such as belted kingfishers, an important indicator of good water quality.

About 'O Rew

During the mid-1800s, there was an attempt to forcibly remove Yurok people from their homeland, to expedite exploitation of the region's natural resources, such as salmon and old-growth coast

redwood trees, many of which were milled at the 'O Rew property. Throughout this devastating period, the Tribe lost more than 90 percent of its land, including 'O Rew and nearby Owr-rekw. For decades, the 'O Rew property served as a stark reminder of this tumultuous era. However, it is now a place where Yurok people can reconnect with the land and feel at home for the first time in generations.

Before Save the Redwoods League purchased and conserved the site in 2013, for more than 50 years, it operated as a lumber mill. While the mill was in operation, large portions of the land were paved over, and much of the natural channel and floodplain of Prairie Creek was buried. For more than 10 years, Save the Redwoods partnered with accomplished restoration experts, including the Yurok Tribe Construction Corporation and Fisheries Department and California Trout, to plan and undertake a full restoration of a critical stretch of Prairie Creek on the site for the benefit of federally listed coho salmon and steelhead.

The Yurok Tribe's participation in the 'O Rew Project is part of a long-term effort to reclaim and restore culturally important landscapes across its ancestral territory.

California Secretary for Natural Resources **Wade Crowfoot** said, "The Yurok Tribe has cared for these lands since time immemorial, and today's milestone honors that enduring relationship while opening a new chapter of stewardship for future generations. The return of 'O Rew is a powerful example of what's possible when conservation is guided by tribal leadership, and California is proud to support this work alongside the Yurok Tribe and Save the Redwoods League. We hope this serves as a model for how partnership can strengthen both people and the places we cherish."

The 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway and Restoration Project was funded by the following: Save the Redwoods League, California State Coastal Conservancy, California Wildlife Conservation Board, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, California Ocean Protection Council, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the National Park Foundation and The Cantus Foundation. California Trout and numerous local professionals and partners have provided essential expertise in the planning and implementation of the project.

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The Yurok Tribe is currently the largest Tribe in California, with more than 6,400 enrolled members. The Tribe provides numerous services to its citizens and the local community. The Tribe's major initiatives include: holistic forest management, fisheries protection, restoration and management, Klamath dam removal, condor reintroduction, natural resources conservation, cultural preservation, sustainable economic development and land acquisition.



Save the Redwoods League revitalizes coast redwood and giant sequoia forests across California's redwood range. In partnership with state and federal agencies, Tribes, and communities, we have conserved more than 220,000 acres in 76 parks and preserves and restored 37,000 acres. Our work bolsters carbon storage, strengthens wildfire resilience, benefits local economies, and safeguards iconic landscapes enjoyed by millions. For more information, visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](https://www.savetheredwoods.org).

‘O REW REDWOODS GATEWAY – KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

‘O Rew Redwoods Gateway is located near the junction of Bald Hills Road and Highway 101 north of Orick, Calif.

Walking, Running, Hiking - Stay on designated trails and leave what you find. The Wo-gee Laas (California Coastal Trail) is a flat, low-grade paved trail. Ker-kur’-yer-mer-cheen Laas (Crooked Trail) connects to NPS land at Berry Glen Trail, which continues into the Lady Bird Johnson Grove. This is not a loop trail—you will need to return the same way to access your vehicle.

Biking - Bicycles are permitted on paved trails and gravel areas where vegetation will not be disturbed. Pedestrians have right of way. Please ride with caution, maintain awareness and be respectful of shared use areas.

Picnic - There are several picnic tables available for day use and shared enjoyment. Please help keep the area clean by disposing of all trash properly.

Wildlife Viewing - Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not feed or disturb animals.

Hours - Open daily, sunrise to sunset. ‘O Rew may be closed to the public for short periods of time for tribal events.

For more information about ‘O Rew Redwoods Gateway, please visit <https://o-rew-redwoods-gateway.square.site/>

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What California Leaders Are Saying About the 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway

Jared Huffman, U.S. Congressman, California's 2nd District

"The transfer of 'O Rew at the heart of Redwood National and State Parks back to the Yurok Tribe is an important step in recognizing Yurok peoples' role in restoring the fish and forests they have known for thousands of years. I'm grateful I could help support Save the Redwoods League, the Tribe, and parks in this effort. They've done amazing work restoring the old lumber mill site and rebuilding a long stretch of Prairie Creek where visitors at the new Trails Gateway can see up close the remarkable ecological work done on the property."

Amy Hutzel, Executive Officer, California State Coastal Conservancy

"I could not be more excited to see the culmination of so many years of hard work and dedication here at 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway. The Coastal Conservancy has prioritized this project for over a decade because it brings together so many of our goals—habitat restoration, public access, tribal partnerships and land return, climate resilience, and protection for some of the State's most spectacular lands. My heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Save the Redwoods League, the Yurok Tribe, CalTrout, and all the project partners on collaborating to achieve a shared vision."

Dr. Jennifer Norris, Executive Director, Wildlife Conservation Board

"Returning 'O Rew to the Yurok Tribe is a major conservation milestone for the North Coast. WCB is pleased to partner on this project to restore the Prairie Creek floodplain and build the new visitor area. This work ensures the landscape will be managed for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and the local community for generations to come."

Mary Burke, North Coast Regional Manager, California Trout

"Watching fish thrive in Prairie Creek at 'O Rew is testament to what can happen when we invest in restoration and work together toward a shared goal. Since restoration completion, researchers have documented record coho salmon returns to the site—a hopeful finding for coho salmon populations that continue to face the threat of extinction. We're proud of the incredible collaboration that powered this project and grateful to every partner who helped restore this landscape. By stewarding rivers and forests, we are restoring ecological function, and we are rebuilding our relationship with the land and water that sustain us."

Armando Quintero, Director, California State Parks

"Returning the 'O Rew Redwoods Gateway to the Yurok Tribe is a powerful reminder that restoration can renew more than the natural landscape—it can also restore human history, culture and community. For California State Parks, it represents a meaningful example of how initiatives like *Reexamining Our Past* can help shape a more honest and inclusive future. It is both fitting and right that generations of visitors to Redwood National and State Parks will now be welcomed by the Yurok Tribe on Yurok land."

Victor Bjelajac, North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent, California State Parks

"The 'O Rew Gateway will be a welcoming place for visitors from all over the world to learn about the original stewards of the lands they are visiting, as culture, nature, habitat restoration, and the beauty of these coast redwood forests all come together at the confluence of Prairie and Redwood Creeks and the southern gateway to Redwood National and State Parks. The transfer of this property to the Yurok Tribe represents a healing moment, and we hope that it inspires other agencies and nonprofits to work in true partnership with Tribes for the benefit of lands, waters, and communities."

Jessica Carter, Senior Program Director, Save the Redwoods League

"'O Rew Redwoods Gateway invites us all to expand our perspectives and sense of what is possible for redwood experiences and recreation. 'O Rew will be the southern gateway for many of the over one million people who visit Redwood National and State Parks each year. It introduces an Indigenous-led management model that we believe will resonate and inspire continued innovation and Tribal partnership and leadership elsewhere."