



# EVENT RECAP: *Oh! The fun we had!* THE REDWOODS NATIONAL BROADWALK

by *Monica Gray*

To celebrate public land in the Redwoods we drove late into the night, with a 19-hour highway ride from Montana lying ahead of my mother and I. When we found the Broadwalk spot, after much (and yet not enough) exploration, the air was sweet-smelling of cedar and Doug fir and full of forest sound. We had arrived.

Susanne Twight-Alexander was the first whom I met; a poet and I did not even know it. I introduced myself to a few other tellurian and alluvial broads and circling up, we shared tidbits about ourselves including our spirit animal. Choosing a place to put a tent was simple enough, and I soon let the day come to an end.

A cloudy Friday morning, I awoke to a banana slug halfway in my teacup, halfway out. Setting the mug atop the coffee station near our kitchen tent for all to extol, the slug drifted down and, with the veracious guidance of Jan Ewing, freed itself from the hum of the tea party, going back to the earth. Almost a dozen Forest Service rangers arrived during our scrumptious breakfast to prepare us for our stewardship project.

Who knew service of the forest could involve leaf blowers and weed whackers, some of the heaviest machinery I have operated? About 11 of us Broads cleaned up the nearby campsite, scrubbing picnic tables and scooping ashes from pits. One of the rangers explained that this type of flat, natural meadow in the forest is unusual to find.

After dinner, Broads enjoyed a presentation by Dan Sealy, of Northcoast Environmental Center, about the history of women in the redwoods. Then, Ryan Henson, from the California Wilderness Coalition, kept us laughing with “punny stories” throughout his presentation about the proposed Northwest California’s Mountains & Rivers legislation (since retitled as the Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act).

Saturday morning came quickly and we headed off for a paddle. Advised by the raft-guide bros on how to do this thing, with implicit understanding, we set off on the placid Smith River. My attention cast from the clear waters to the tremendous cedars on the shore, with an optimistic eye peeled for the marbled murrelet bird. I experienced a personal struggle to remain with the group instead of diving into the tranquil watercourse. The highlight of the float for me, was chatting with Eva while strolling the well-trodden path through magnificent *Sequoioideae*.

That evening, preceding dinner and the sharing circle, Mary Ellen Hannibal, author of *Citizen Scientist* and *Spine of the*

*Continent*, helped us to understand that the death of one species may correspond with the prosperity of another species. The food chain is an ever-changing web of consumption.

Yoga in the morning was lovely. Carol Savonen reminded us to look for the carnivorous

*Darlingtonia californica*, the California pitcher plant or cobra lily, which grows on serpentine soils in the area. Some of us took off for a hike down the lush canyon above the Smith River on a trail cleared of a wet and snowy winter’s fallen oak trees and brush by Broads the day before. We discussed “factioning,” pondered the term “environmentalist,” and reflected on the origins of such terms as “liberal,” “conservative,” and “pigeonhole.” While admiring the twisted Madrone trees and Sword Ferns, Joe Gillespie from Friends of Del Norte explained how the Carter Administration coined the term “sustained yield” and how that evolved to “departure from sustained yield” to facilitate logging and money grabbing. He also told us about “Hugelkultur,” an example of using traditional ecological knowledge to rehabilitate ecosystems.

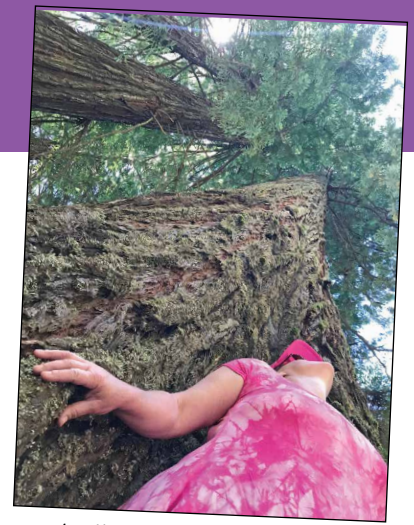
Upon return to our meadow camp, we wrote letters to Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA2), who will introduce the Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act. We also wrote to Secretary Zinke, imploring the preservation of national monuments under fire.

That evening held a discussion about trout populations presented by Phillip Barrington from California Fish & Wildlife. Our second speaker, Kimberly Baker, educated us about the historic liquidation of biomass that happened in these unique and rare, mixed conifer, temperate rainforest biomes, and shared the story of the Redwood Summer of the 1990s.

On Monday, the Broads concluded with teatime and goodbyes. Martha Harnly and I settled on a few things: local knowledge is validity and a healthy forest does not involve fire fighters or logging of any kind.

Considering tree sitting as an

occupation, mother and I set out for a day of swimming and continuance of our journey, leaving no trace behind.



*A tellurian Broad contemplates Sequoian toweriferousness.*



*Monica (left) and her mother, Bozeman Broadband leader Nancy Ostlie (right), put pen to hand on behalf of the Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act and public lands.*

