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PUBLIC STATEMENT BY

Redwoods Nzt-
ional Park

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for the

REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK FIELD HEARINGS
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR & INSULAR AFFAIRS

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First of all, I wish to thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify. I am Rudolf W. Becking, Associate Professor of Forestry at Humboldt State College, a consulting research forester and a member of the Society of American Foresters. In speaking, I do not in any way represent in any capacity the educational institution with which I am affiliated. Although under consideration is the establishment of a Redwood National Park (RNP) in the Mill Creek drainage, I wish to limit my remarks to an alternate proposal: This is the Regional Redwood Park Plan in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. This plan has been advanced by me and other concerned local citizens and it was first presented at the RNP hearings in the Department of Interior, Washington, D.C., on November 22, 1965. Copies of this plan are included in my statement.

After intensive investigations of the area under consideration, I find I cannot support the establishment of a RNP in Del Norte County. Although the area is worthy of preservation, it would lend itself best as an extension of a state park rather than a national park. The heart of the proposed park has already been cut out in the upper Mill Creek drainage as well as some 400 acres cut out of the center of Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park. The park proposal does not provide for significant additional acreages of virgin redwood forest and the anticipated tourist impact upon the limited park may endanger the park values for which the RNP would have created. Therefore, a much broader plan must be adopted

and considered like the RRPP because only by regional planning can the economic impact of acquisition of sizeable acreages of private land be lessened and eliminated.

Basically, the RRPP consists of three major components: a Redwood Creek NP, the Klamath Wild River area, and the Southern Recreational Unit. In total, it encompasses some 211,000 acres of land. I wish to highlight a few of the most important features of this RRPP; the only plan to my knowledge of a regional scope which compliments preservation use, recreational development, economic alternatives, and employment opportunities leading to a stabilized tax base and economic growth. These matters are all of vital concern to us who live and work here.

Let me try to describe to you the splendor and majestic beauty of the Redwood Creek Forests, the only and exclusive area worthy of national and international recognition as a Redwood National Park. No other portion of the Redwood Region can match it. It incorporates the serenity of the untouched ocean beach, the Gold Bluffs, the river flats of Redwood Creek of which the so-called "Emerald Mile" between Bridge Creek is the most spectacular portion of a virgin redwood valley, the two mile-long Rock Canyon, the magnificent stands of the slope-type of redwoods mixed with conifers and alternated by hardwood groves on slide areas, redwoods growing at their highest elevations in the Redwood Region, the large-open grass prairies with scattered oak groves providing magnificent vistas of the Redwood Creek gorge.

The areas within this regional plan are the true home of the Roosevelt Elk, bear, and deer, the most significant spawning grounds of salmon, steelhead and trout upon which the sports fishing and the commercial fisheries' industry depends, and the major resting place for migratory waterfowl along the Pacific Coast.

The Redwood Creek drainage contains the tallest-known redwood trees, discovered first by the National Geographic Society. All this variety is offered within this regional plan which is not rivaled in the Mill Creek proposal.

Under NSF grants, a scientific exploration of the Redwood Creek drainage has discovered nine of the most magnificent river flat redwood groves between Orick and Stover Ranch as indicated on the enclosed maps. Unfortunately two groves (8 and 9) have already been logged in the summer of 1965 and many other groves are in acute danger of being liquidated. At the present time, there is no point along Redwood Creek where the sound of power saws and falling trees does not penetrate.

As proof of the uniqueness of the redwood forests in this drainage, I am happy to report that a recent exploration party lead by me as a principal investigator of a National Science Foundation grant, has discovered a redwood giant that is taller than any previously known redwood tree. This tree is approximately 202 inches or 16.8 feet in diameter and 385 feet long, which is some ^{WHEN REMEASURED ACCURATELY, IT WAS 308' TALL} 17 feet taller than the previous record holder. In addition, we also measured the previously reported redwood giants on Redwood Creek using the same instruments and techniques, and came very close to the reported measurements by the National Geographic Society. However, the Howard A. Libbey tree proved to be shorter because of silt deposition by the 1964 floods. This disastrous flood cut severely into the creek bank and eroded the protective alder and maple cover away and came within 80 feet of the Howard A. Libbey tree. This siltation resulted in shortening this tree by 1.2 feet. In addition, we discovered another giant redwood tree of 353.5 feet with surveyor's stakes for a logging road planted within 20 feet from its tree base. Probably, the surveyors already have calculated the road grade, and tomorrow the caterpillars and the fallers may move in to cut this sixth tallest tree. We discovered many other tall trees in every redwood grove

which resulted in a revised listing of the ten tallest redwood trees included with this statement. From this incomplete and short exploration four new tallest trees were added to the present listing of the ten tallest redwoods. Continued scientific explorations within this Redwood Creek drainage may reveal even taller redwood trees.

Incidentally, in our scientific studies of these redwood groves we also measured some tall trees of other associated species. We found a 285 foot Douglas fir tree which is also a new record holder according to a recently published listing of the champs among trees in the American Forest magazine of May 1966. The former record Douglas fir was reported to be 221 feet in height. This newly discovered Douglas fir tree shatters the record by more than 60 feet. In another grove, we found a Grand fir tree measuring 250 feet high which surpasses by 75 feet the previously reported record tree of 175 feet. Additionally, we measured a 217 foot Western Hemlock tree as compared to a former record of 125 feet. This is a tremendous difference of 92 feet in height! We found a 126 foot red alder which is 34 feet taller than the one on record now. At the time, we considered this just an average height and thought little of record heights. Continued exploration and investigations may even yield much higher trees of these species because no concentrated attempts were made to discover the tallest individuals in this magnificent area. A detailed listing of record trees, their heights and diameters is included in Appendix 1, 2, and 3 in the back of this statement.

In this regional plan, the Klamath Wild River Area has been the scene of important historic events from the early Indian settlement, the first entrance of white man into the Redwood Region to the gold rush days. It is unique in that it is the only navigable river in the world where you can cruise by power boat through majestic stands extending down to the river banks. Unfortunately, many redwoods have recently been logged in the area. It is one of the major salmon

and steelhead fishing streams on the West Coast, and it has unlimited recreational potential. A recent private operation called the Klamath Jet Boat Cruises started operations in 1963, and last season its three jet boats accommodated over 3,000 tourists on its 64 mile river round trip tour. The Klamath River is rich in early Indian culture and still support small Indian settlements along the river banks, including ancient Indian burial grounds. The RRPP proposes that the few thousands acres of Indian lands located within this area are not to be acquired unless voluntarily offered for sale to the Federal government. Their exclusion will in no way detract from the recreational value of this unit, and it may even enhance it.

The Southern Recreational Unit of 75,000 acres is the most significant deviation from any of the proposed park plans yet offered. Its major development is towards intensive recreational use, particularly water-orientated recreation in the close vicinity of the heavily populated Humboldt Bay area. Three major lakes and two smaller lakes could be created by damming Lindsey Creek, Little River, Maple Creek, and two of their tributaries; thus, creating some 4,600 acres of freshwater lake area. This would provide together with the three salt-water lagoons excellent year around water sport activities. A recent increase in water sports can even be illustrated locally by the Humboldt Yacht Club with some 40 boats (valued at an average of \$1250/boat) and the Orick Yacht Club with 75 power boats (value at an average of \$2000/boat). This recreational area is covered almost exclusively with young redwood forest of various age classes. It contains many old logging roads which could be readily developed for hiking and riding trails. This area abounds in wildlife. The development of recreational facilities together with the establishment of a Redwood Conference Center holds the most promise for offsetting the immediate negative economic impact of the creation of this regional plan. Priority should be given to private enterprise in development and management of these extensive recreational facilities and services.

The major economic safeguards for economic growth are provisions of in lieu tax payments to affected communities. Instead of limiting in lieu tax payments to a period of five years, the RRPP proposes severance payments indefinitely until the present actual annual property tax loss resulting from public acquisition of these lands, has been fully recompensed by an increased property tax base up to 125% of its present value level. Also the allocation on a permanent basis of 25% of the total park revenues to the affected communities will derive new revenues contributed by recreationists, themselves, rather than local tax payers. This form of reimbursement is widely used by the U.S. Forest Service, and it has already been employed in the case of the Olympic National Park.

The economic development of the Redwood Region depends not only upon a strong and dominating lumber industry with its associated paper and chemical industries. Of far greater importance is that other industries are attracted to this area and share in local property taxes and employment opportunities towards the total economic stability of any region.

Acquisition costs will be, of course, a determining factor in the realization of this Regional Redwood Park Plan. Because of changing patterns of depletion and ownership, accurate cost estimates are just now becoming available. I am happy to note that the Administration's Bill follows the same form of financing we advocated in our RRPP in November 1965. This entails using funds derived from the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965. However, because of the great urgency, a much larger share of these funds should be allocated for the purpose of immediate acquisition of redwood forest land. Several private foundations have already offered substantial matching funds, and with the help of preservationists, sportsmen organizations, and recreationists the needed funds for the complete development of this regional plan could be readily obtained. Of the utmost importance is the immediate adoption of this RRPP because time is rapidly

running out. Predictions on the permanence of the old-growth redwood economy vary. The most pessimistic one derived from available lumber production statistics published by the Eureka Chamber of Commerce and timber inventories of various county tax assessors offices leads one to believe that within a few short years the old-growth economy of the California North Coast must be replaced by a pulp-log economy. Revenues from the land and timber resources under a pulp-log rotation of less than 40 years would yield no property tax revenues under a constitutional law of the State of California Section 12 3/4 which exempts timber of under 40 years of age from timber taxation. Also drastic reductions in employment will accompany this shift from the sawlog production of old-growth to the fully automated pulp and chemical industries.

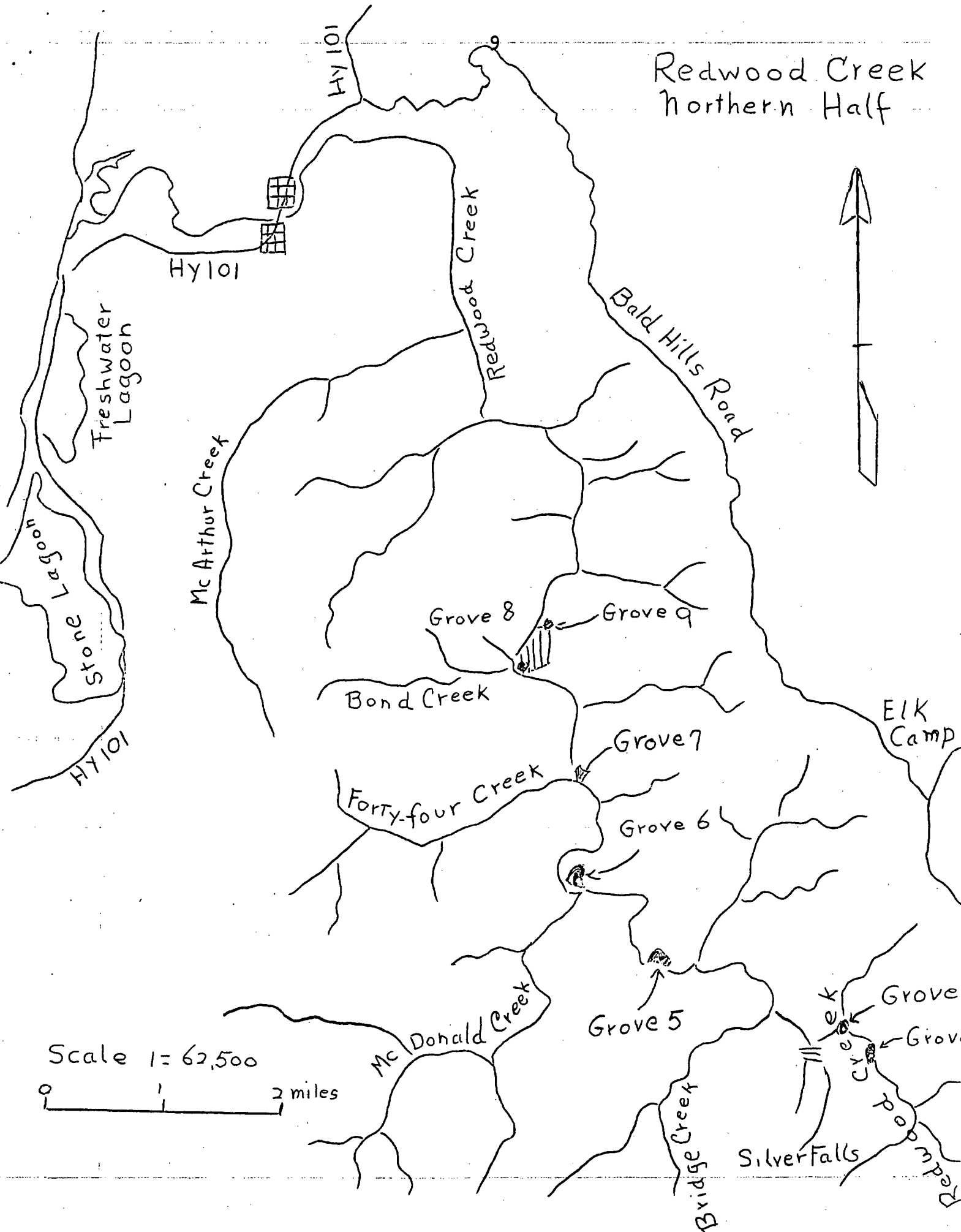
The question whether there will be a RNP or not must be judged by considering the alternatives. In constantly removing timber from the property tax rolls, the county's base will continue to decline. Increased tax rates will be levied against the remaining timbered properties, which will force many landowners to liquidate their timber crops before maturity and further defer any transition into a second-growth sawlog economy. In fact, the present unfavorable timber tax structure may permanently impair any second-growth log economy. Therefore, since no constructive alternative exists, the establishment of this RRPP may well prove to be a blessing to the economic future of this area.

Time is running out rapidly. Already, there is no place in the Redwood Creek drainage where the signs of eminent logging operations cannot be seen. Survey lines for logging roads already have been staked out in precious groves and many of the monarchs are destined to be cut tomorrow or the next year. I am greatly concerned about this accelerated rate of timber removal concentrated in the Redwood Creek drainage. In a few years, the only opportunity to create a RNP worthy its name may be lost forever. I urge you to act now and to reconsider establish-

ing a RNP in the Redwood Creek drainage together with the simultaneous development of the two recreational areas on either sides. The best plan to my knowledge is the RRPP because of its regional scope, and its great potential for recreation and private development and local participation into the economic benefits of a RNP.

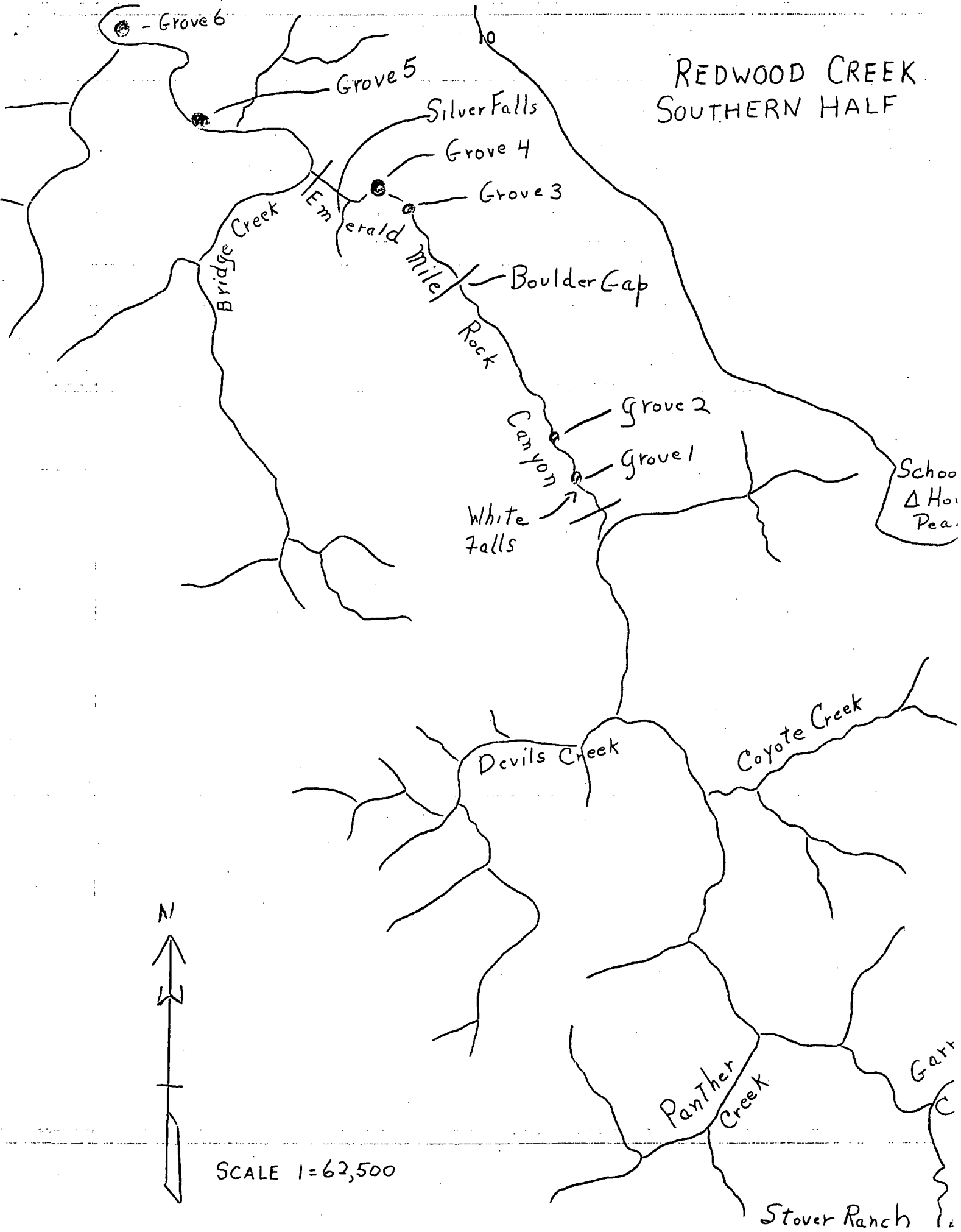
This area has already distinguished itself with record breaking trees of every major species measured. The uniqueness of the total Redwood Creek drainage between Orick and Stover Ranch is thus amply demonstrated, and further explorations will undoubtedly bring to light many other phenomenal ecological aspects of this drainage. If you want to preserve these world wonders, ACT NOW--TOMORROW IT WILL BE TOO LATE. The world and the Redwood Trees will thank you forever.

Redwood Creek Northern Half



Scale 1:62,500
0 1 2 miles

REDWOOD CREEK
SOUTHERN HALF



SCALE 1=62,500

Stover Ranch

A P P E N D I X O N E

TALLEST COAST REDWOOD TREES

TREE RANK	HEIGHT (feet)	DBH (inches)	LOCATION
1	385	202**	Along a creek
2	*367.4	183	Harry W. Cole Tree -- Grove 7 Forty-four Creek and Redwood Creek
3	366.6	168	Howard A. Libbey Tree ARCO Grove of the Giants (Formerly *367.8 feet, but now ground is silt covered from the winter floods of 1964.)
4	*364.3	155.6	National Geographic Society Tree ARCO Grove of the Giants -- Grove 6 Redwood Creek
5	*356.5	160.8	Rockefeller Tree Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Weott, California (Plaque reads 359.3 feet)
6	353.5	169.2	Grove 5 -- Redwood Creek
7	*352.6	152.3	Founders Tree Humboldt Redwoods State Park, Weott, California
8	*352.3	?	Hill-Davis Tree ARCO Grove of the Giants -- Grove 6 Redwood Creek
9	349	134	Grove 3 -- Redwood Creek
10	347.8	180	Grove 1 -- Redwood Creek

*Double tree, diameter

**Source: National Geographic Magazine: July 1964, "World Tallest Tree Discovered"
(p. 1-51).

All the other measurements were made as a part of the scientific investigations on the Ecology of the Coastal Redwood sponsored by the National Science Foundation under NSF Grant GB-3468 (1965-66) and NSF Grant GB-4690 (1966-67). These measurements were obtained with the use of a relascope by graduate foresters. Repeated measurements were taken for accuracy and the obtained accuracy checked very closely with measurements obtained by transits in the National Geographic Society's survey.

APPENDIX TWO

TREE HEIGHT MEASUREMENTS

IN THE VARIOUS GROVES ALONG REDWOOD CREEK

COLLECTED UNDER THE NSF GRANTS

	HEIGHT (feet)	GB 3468 & GB 4690 DBH (inches)	SPECIES
Grove 1	347.8	180	Redwood
	247.2	98	Douglas fir
Grove 2	328	78	Redwood
	250	48	Grand fir
Grove 3	349	134	Redwood
	333	141	Redwood
Grove 4	300	130	Redwood
	285	139.5	Redwood
Grove 5	353.5	169.2	Redwood
	326	110	Redwood
	217	43	Western Hemlock
	298	116.6	Redwood
	132	18.9	Western Hemlock
	285	50.6	Douglas fir
Grove 6	366.6	162	Redwood
	364.3	155.6	Redwood
	329	192	Redwood
Grove 7	367.4	183	Redwood
Grove 8	Bond Creek--already partially logged in Summer 1965		
Grove 9	Redwood Creek--already partially logged in summer 1965		
<u>MISCELLANEOUS:</u>			
Grove at 1000 ft. elevation	321	102.5	Redwood
Up a creek	385	202	Redwood
Up a creek	225+	35.5	Grand fir
Slide area	126	19	Red Alder