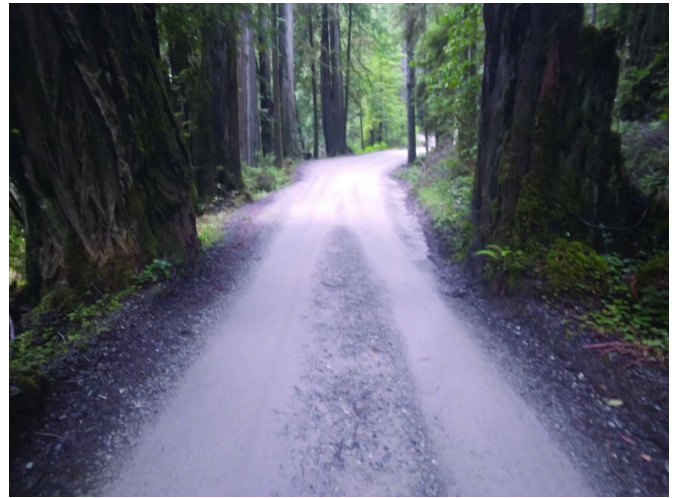


## Howland Hill traffic pilot program postponed

April 22, 2023



Redwood National and State Parks managers announced the postponement of the Howland Hill one-way traffic pilot program, scheduled this summer. The decision was made last Wednesday.

The pilot program was scheduled for 12 weeks, starting June 25. In announcing the postponement, managers said the parks will continue to address safety and visitor use issues along the 5.9 mile stretch of gravel road amongst arguably the most magnificent landscape geography in North America:

- Parks will install signage on park property to alert travelers of “neighborhood ahead, please drive slowly.”
- Parks will collect additional traffic, safety, visitor use and satisfaction data, through a variety of methods, including an on-line survey and park law enforcement rangers continuing to patrol Howland Hill Road this summer enforcing speed control.
- Parks will continue to explore shuttle and non-single family van options.
- With the completion of Mill Creek Trail (connector to Grove of Titans), parks will increase marketing and outreach campaigns to alert visitors of the option to access both Stout Grove and Grove of Titans, via the Jedediah Smith day-use area by utilizing the footbridge. This effort will help reduce vehicle traffic on the fragile, historical and iconic route.

Parks disclosed a September 2021 study that indicated 600 vehicles per day enter Howland Hill from the west and 450 vehicles pass Douglas Parks from the east.

33d District supervisor Chris Howard reported to the board that 1.2 million vehicles traverse Howland Hill Road, annually. He did not disclose to his colleagues the details of the one-way traffic pilot.

The proposed pilot program would have allowed two way traffic from 199 through Douglas Park to Stout Grove, allowing for a turnaround, while preventing westerly access toward Crescent City.

Conversely, the pilot program would permit one-way traffic in an easterly direction, past Douglas Park, across Slant Bridge to 199.

Many of the Douglas Park homeowners attended an impromptu meeting, last week at the Hiouchi fire station and expressed their primary concern: excessive speeding.

Douglas Park homeowner Cynthia Menaugh shared her opinion, when asked if she thought it was a good idea to suspend the pilot program and did she think Howland Hill Road affects more than Douglas Park? Her answers were yes to both questions.

She continued, “The decision to delay will allow the park to gather more traffic data and implement other measures on Howland Hill Road to improve parking and address safety concerns. (The postponement) will allow the park to more effectively reach out and invite the greater gateway community which is all of Del Norte County allowing us to work together and development an appropriate plan.”

Hiouchi resident Joe Akin, speaking independent of his board membership on the Big Rock Community Service District, questioned the economic impact on Hiouchi over the proposed 12-week study.

“How does a one-way traffic flow impact the two-way traffic currently in place? The turnaround at Stout Grove appears to a traffic nightmare in the making,” he said. “I also question the wisdom of exiting all traffic on to a very dangerous intersection on 199. Ingressing vehicles cannot see oncoming traffic from the north because of the mountain. This condition makes a dangerous road even more intimidating. More accidents would result because of the overload of traffic.

Hiouchi Café partner Johana Hill concurs.

“I’m in the insurance industry and it makes no sense to load all exiting traffic from Slant Bridge on to 199,” she said. “What happens when there’s a fire? People panic. It would be chaos. Look what happened in Paradise. On a secondary basis, tourism supports our Hiouchi business. Hiouchi Café would suffer if traffic would be routed in a one-way direction.”