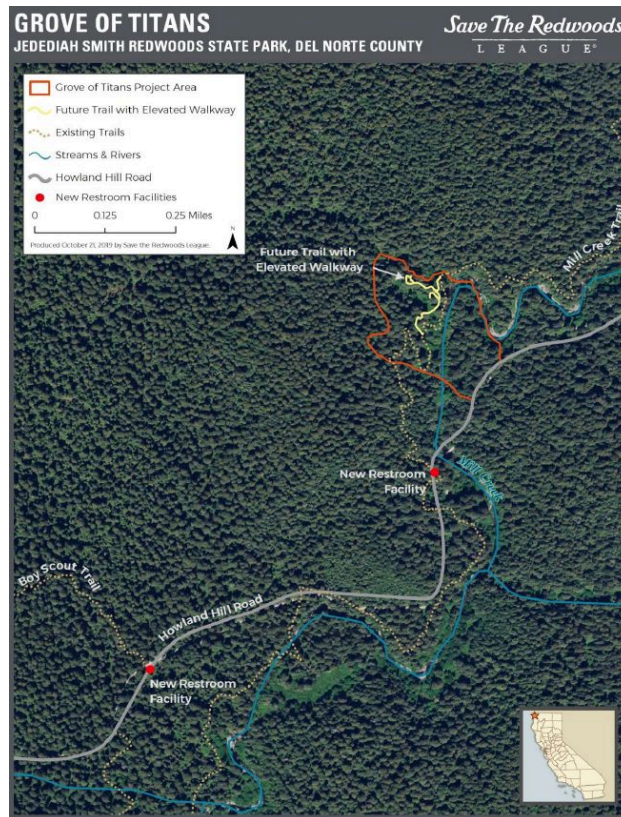


Construction begins on elevated walkway in Jedediah Smith Redwood State Park

November 13, 2019



Construction began Nov. 6 on a 1,300-foot elevated walkway through the Grove of Titans in Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, part of Redwood National and State Parks in Del Norte County.

This work is phase one of a three-year, \$3.5-million project organized and implemented by California State Parks, Save the Redwoods League, Redwood Parks Conservancy and the National Park Service.

The project, first announced in November 2018, was conceived to provide environmentally sensitive access to the Grove of Titans and adjacent forest. Thousands of visitors have been finding their way on “social trails” or unofficial pathways since the location of the grove was first shared online in 1998, which has caused considerable damage over time, according to a California State Parks press release.

“Instead of looking like a prehistoric and pristine forest, it’s been looking increasingly like the L.A. freeway system,” said Brett Silver, deputy district superintendent of California State Park’s North Coast Redwoods District.

“I know it will be frustrating for people not to have access during this extended construction period. We ask all visitors for their patience and cooperation, as we work to preserve and protect this incredible place for future generations to enjoy.”

The renovation project will establish official, safe access to the Grove of Titans; provide ecosystem protections for the trees; and provide visitor services and amenities, including a new restroom facility where the Mill Creek Trail meets Howland Hill Road, said the state parks agency.

During construction, the area around the Grove of Titans will be fenced and closed. Park visitors in violation of the posted closure will be subject to a citation, according to the parks system.

Mill Creek Trail will be closed from Howland Hill Road to the Smith River through the anticipated completion date of May 2021. Park visitors may use the nearby Boy Scout Tree, Nickerson Ranch, Little Bald Hills or Stout Grove trails, which are accessible from Howland Hill Road.

For more recommendations on trail alternatives to avoid the potentially hazardous construction area, go to the California State Parks website at www.parks.ca.gov.

The Grove of Titans was identified deep in the old-growth forests of Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park in 1998. Following the unofficial publication of its location, in print and online, visitation increased dramatically over 20 years, with peak summer travel of 13,000 cars per month along Howland Hill Road, often resulting in gridlock.

The parks agency said that over the years, a complex web of “social” trails has formed, with the resulting influx of foot traffic destroying understory plants and compacted soil.

California Parks said the unsupervised foot traffic has inhibited the uptake of water and nutrients by the shallow roots of the redwoods threatening the long-term survival of the Grove of Titans itself.

Additionally, unplanned trails can cause soil erosion and corresponding runoff affecting streams where coho and steelhead live, feed and spawn.

For more information, go to SaveTheRedwoods.org/Titans or GroveofTitans.org.