

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

on

REDWOOD CREEK

Prepared by Susie Van Kirk

for

Vicki Ozaki
Redwood National Park

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In contrast to Mad and Eel rivers, historical references on Redwood Creek in the Arcata Union newspaper are limited. The following summarizes those references along with two other sources and information from seven interviews.

Snyder (1907) specifically identified seven fish species from Redwood Creek: a new sucker species, Catostomus humoldtianus; a stickleback, Gasterosteus cataphractus; two sculpins, Cottus asper and C. aleuticus; and three anadromous species, Salmo clarkii (cutthroat), Oncorhynchus kisutch (coho or silver salmon), and Salmo irideus (rainbow). He referred to steelhead, of which no specimens were taken, as S. rivularis.

He noted that cutthroat were abundant in all the coastal streams, "fairly swarming" in those streams that had not been fished to excess and rainbow were seen in every coastal stream examined.

In his notes on the Chilula Indians of Redwood Creek, Goddard (1914) stated that their use of weirs in the Creek was for catching lamprey eels and trout rather than salmon. The salmon were generally taken in the small tributaries by spears or at the base of certain waterfalls with nets.

In 1890, the military established a fish hatchery at Camp Gaston in the Hoopa Valley and as an ancillary facility, what was probably an egg-taking station on Redwood Creek (AU, 8 Feb. 1890; 5 Sept. 1891; 19 March 1892; 11 June 1892; 27 Aug. 1892). References indicate that the facility on Redwood was at Bair's ranch, which is shown on the 1909 Lentell map in the east half of the east half section 28, 7N3E on Minor Creek and it may well be that the eggs were actually taken from Minor.

A March 19, 1892 reference stated that about 150,000 salmon had been hatched at the Redwood plant and a large quantity of eggs was being taken from the spring run of steelhead salmon in Redwood. Of the eggs procured from Redwood, 150,000 young salmon went into Supply Creek on the Trinity River and 160,000 into Redwood Creek (AU, 11 June 1892)

It is noteworthy that within forty years of settlement, a hatchery program to restock coastal streams was already in place. Commander J.J. Brice of the U.S. Navy in a report to the Fish Commissioners in Washington D.C. called attention to the "wholesale destruction of the fish, many of the coast streams being now almost entirely depleted" (AU, 24 Dec. 1892). Fishing pressure was significant, especially in the Eel, Mad, and Klamath rivers, where commercial instream fishing began soon after settlement. Commercial companies were formed to harvest and can salmon on Eel River in 1854 (HT, 23 Sept. 1854) and their unregulated exploitation of the resource continued until the first restrictions were imposed in 1913 (AU, 22 May 1913).

On one November day in 1878, thirty-one tons of salmon were caught at the Eel River fisheries and the following day 4,600 fish were taken in just one seine (HT, 16 Nov. 1878).

Fish were planted in Redwood Creek beginning with those first releases in 1892. In 1922, 45,000 "spotted Lake Tahoe trout fry" were planted in the Creek and rainbow trout fry from the Steelhead hatchery on Eel River were released at Berry's (AU, 3 Aug. 1922). Forty thousand "black brook trout" were released at Berry's in August 1925 (AU, 6 Aug. 1925).

The hatchery at the junction of Prairie Creek and Lost Man Creek was established in temporary facilities in 1927 for the purpose of raising cutthroat, chinook and possibly steelhead and "silverside." It was estimated that 85,000,000 salmon eggs would be available at the hatchery and during its first year, 100,000 cutthroat were planted in Prairie Creek (AU, 13 Oct. 1927).

The Humboldt Fish and Game Association requested double the allotment of fish planted in local streams in 1927 for the following year, including 100,000 rainbow trout for upper Redwood Creek, 80,000 steelhead for Redwood, and 150,000 cutthroat to be divided between Maple Creek, Redwood Creek and Prairie Creek (AU, 15 Dec. 1927).

Operations at the Prairie Creek hatchery expanded over the years with over a million steelhead and salmon planted by the Prairie Creek crew in the fall of 1940. Upper Redwood Creek and the lower section received 50,140 and 30,400 steelhead, respectively; salmon releases into Lake Prairie Creek totaled nearly 10,000 and Prairie Creek received 48,400 salmon (AU, 20 Sept. 1940).

Fish species in Redwood Creek, identified in newspaper references, are not always clear, but some conclusions are obvious. Summer steelhead were present in Redwood Creek. In 1892, there were sufficient numbers to supply eggs for the hatchery (AU, 19 March 1892) and steelhead in the spring of 1900 were described as "running...quite freely" (AU, 31 March 1900). A "prize lot of steelhead" was landed in Redwood Creek in the spring of 1928 (AU, 17 May 1928).

Fall-run chinook were plentiful and individuals were large. The boys were having "great sport in spearing" salmon near the mouth of Redwood Creek in 1904, some of the fish weighing "50 pounds or more" (AU, 26 Nov. 1904). Two Arcata fishermen took 20 large salmon, weighing 30 to 50 pounds each, in seven hours of fishing at the mouth and the entire catch was estimated to weigh between seven and eight hundred pounds (AU, 29 Nov. 1917). Salmon caught at the mouth in 1922 weighed 30 to 40 pounds a piece (AU, 26 Oct. 1922). The following fall, a local man caught a sixty pound salmon at the mouth (AU, 25 Oct. 1923). Two king salmon, weighing 42 and 35 pounds each, were caught by Arcata fishermen in the fall of 1939 (AU, 3 Nov. 1939) and a 35-pound fish was caught at the mouth in 1946 (AU, 8 Nov. 1946).

Two references to "hookbill" salmon were found: a fishing party at the mouth took two salmon in the 30-40 pound range and "several nice hookbills, smaller in size" in 1922 (AU, 26 Oct. 1922) and in 1939, an "18-pound hookbill salmon" was landed on the Creek (AU, 3 Nov. 1939). Terry Roelofs of the Fisheries Department of Humboldt State University suggested that "hookbill" could refer to coho, but could also mean chum salmon. Moyle and Yoshiyama (1992) described spawning male chum salmon as having a long "hooked snout" with conspicuous canine-like teeth. Since newspaper references to coho usually applied the name "silverside," and the "hooked snout" description fits "hookbill" rather than the characteristic hooked jaw of spawning male coho, it appears these fish were chum.

Cutthroat trout were historically called "speckled beauties" or "speckled trout." An 1855 reference to Humboldt Bay stated that the "brooks and creeks emptying into the bay [were] filled with speckled trout," which were readily caught and consequently the tables were kept well supplied with that most "luscious variety of fish" (HT, 31 March 1855).

Trout Fishing--Those who are fond of this sport possess excellent opportunities in this section to enjoy themselves, as every little creek and rivulet putting into the larger stream or into the Bay is filled with speckled trout, similar to the New England trout (HT, 27 Sept. 1956).

A party of gentlemen, twelve in number, went fishing one day this week to Freshwater Creek, about three miles below this place and caught, cleaned, cooked, and ate three hundred and eight speckled trout and returned home the same day (HT, 15 May 1958).

Snyder (1907) described coastal streams as "fairly swarming" with cutthroat trout and Redwood Creek was probably no exception. Early newspaper references focus on salmon, but as fishing became more of a sport and a season was established for a trout fishery which opened on May 1, reports of trout or speckled beauty catches became more common.

A 1910 reference to a "magnificent lot of trout" reported that two men had taken their limit of 25 pounds of speckled beauties every day for three days on Redwood Creek (AU, 9 July 1910). A reporter for the Union spent a few days on Redwood and Prairie creeks in August 1913 and found the fishing to be "first class" with each member of his party experiencing "no extra hard work" in getting full creels every day (AU, 13 Aug. 1913). A fishing party, using both flies and spinners, made fine catches of trout, including a "number of big fellows" in 1916 (AU, 22 June 1916). "Speckled beauties" were taken in Redwood Creek and Prairie Creek during summer months by campers from Arcata and neighboring areas (AU, 5 July 1917; 12 July 1917; 22 Aug. 1918; 6 May 1920; 27 July 1922; 3 May 1923; 7 May 1925). Among the "speckled victims" taken on Redwood in the summer of 1922 was a trout fourteen inches in length and weighing one and three-fourths pounds (AU, 24 Aug. 1922).

The abundance of individual species and the size of individual fish have declined, if newspaper references over time are accurate indicators of such trends. The cause of these declines are probably multiple, but interviews with people who have lived on Redwood Creek, some for forty to seventy years, carry a common theme. Fish, at least, salmon were present in quantities up to about 1970. Migrating salmon were described as sounding like horses in the creek or were so numerous that the kids felt like they were "swimming on top of fish" (Doreen Burden, 6 Jan. 1994).

Changes in Redwood Creek as a result of the 1955, 1964 and 1972 flood events were cited as one factor in the decline of the fisheries. Those interviewed all talked about the filling of pools, lack of cover, and loss of riparian trees. They also indicated that the Creek is gradually recovering with the best recovery in the upper reaches at Ayres Cabin where Joe Massei lives and decreasing as the sediment moves downstream. Several mentioned that rocks that were covered by sediment are now becoming exposed and riparian vegetation is providing more shade and cover. While several people interviewed did not seem particularly knowledgeable about fish species (several said they didn't know what a cutthroat looked like), all seemed to be good observers of the Creek and held common opinion about the effects of flood events.

Since some see the habitat as recovering, several identified the ocean and commercial fishing, the estuary, and predators as factors affecting the Creek's fisheries, but poor logging practices, Caltrans activities, and Mother Nature were also identified.

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REFERENCES ON REDWOOD CREEK AND ITS FISHERIES

According to Goddard (1914), the Hupa took vast numbers of salmon by means of weirs...The weirs employed in Redwood Creek were small and insignificant in comparison. They were employed for catching lamprey eels and trout, rather than salmon. The salmon were generally taken in the small branches of Redwood Creek by spears or at the base of certain waterfalls, called Nole, by means of nets.

Snyder (1907) presented an account of the fish fauna of the smaller coastal streams of Oregon and northern California which had their origin west of the Sierra-Cascade Mountain system and drained a section of the coast extending from the Columbia River to the Sacramento. All of the streams reaching the ocean between the Columbia and Sacramento were included except the Klamath, which rises in the high table-lands east of the Cascade Mountains.

The material was collected during a series of field investigations conducted under the auspices of the Bureau of Fisheries for the general purpose of studying the fish fauna of this region. Specimens collected from Redwood Creek, Orick, were listed as follows: Catostomus humoldtianus (new species) [sucker]; Gasterosteus cataphractus (Pallus) [stickleback]; Cottus asper Richardson [prickly sculpin]; Oncorhynchus kisutch (Wallbaum) [coho or silver salmon]; Cottus aleuticus Gilbert [Aleutian sculpin].

Salmo clarkii (Richardson [cutthroat]). The trout observed by the writer in the coastal streams of Oregon and northern California referred to two species. From the Nihalem River southward to Redwood Creek in California a fine-scaled form was frequently taken, while from the Russian River northward, at least to the Tillamook, a large-scaled form was found to be abundant. He indicated that specimens which could hardly be referred to either species were sometimes taken in the streams north of Redwood Creek. No specimens of the form known as the steelhead, S. rivularis were examined. Trout were abundant in all the coastal streams, fairly swarming in those that had not been fished to excess. Their quality was unsurpassed, living as they did in clear, cool water, well supplied with food.

Salmo irideus Gibbons. The trout found in the coastwise streams as far north as Redwood Creek were identified with this form. North of Redwood Creek examples brighter in color though apparently belonging to this form were frequently seen, together with others which could not be distinguished from the preceding species. Trout were seen in every coastwise stream examined.

Newspaper references

AU (Arcata Union)BLA (Blue Lake Advocate)HS (Humboldt Standard)HT (Humboldt Times)

AU (8 Feb. 1890) "News has been received that Redwood creek near the mouth was over the bottom and the water was two feet deep in the dairy barn of R. Swan."

AU (8 Feb. 1890) "It will be a matter of news to people in this section that a fish hatchery has been established at Camp Gaston and is now in operation...The hatchery was established and Mr. Morgan is still there in charge, but the business will soon be turned over to Capt. Dougherty, commander of the post. The hatchery has a capacity to hatch out and put in the streams from two to three million young salmon yearly. Aside from the great benefit to resident whites and Indians of this great increase, the canneries will be benefitted and to supply their drain a hatchery is absolutely necessary, otherwise there will be no fish.

There has already been sent out from the east Penobscot salmon eggs and the ova of the eastern brook trout that are to be hatched at Camp Gaston and put into the streams. Gaston was selected on account of its proximity to the spawning beds of the salmon, also for its pure and abundant supply of clear water of the proper temperature. The eggs can only be taken from salmon in the vicinity of their spawning grounds, which are near the heads of the small streams flowing into the rivers and fish hatcheries are always located with reference to the convenience of taking the fish when ready to spawn. By comparison, one thousand eggs are hatched out artificially to one hatched naturally and of the fish put into the streams still a greater per cent live than those hatched naturally. Government determined sometime ago to establish sixteen hatcheries on military reservations and the one at Gaston is one of the number."

AU (15 Feb. 1890) "Peter Hanson of this place is the owner of a ranch on Redwood, two and a half miles above the mouth of that stream. He had a comfortable dwelling and the necessary out houses on the place. Mr. Riley and family lived on the ranch. By the late flood the house and other buildings were carried to sea..."

AU (22 March 1890) "The fish eggs, both salmon and trout, shipped out from the east for the Hoopa hatchery were too long on the way and few of them hatched. Capt. Dougherty informs us that they have 90,000 young salmon ready to turn into the pond but they are the product of McCloud river eggs."

AU (5 Sept. 1891) "Capt. Brice, representative on this coast of the national fish commission, made us a call on Tuesday. The Capt. has been at Hoopa for several weeks overhauling and adding to the works of the hatchery there. About 90,000 salmon were turned into the river last winter and arrangements have been made for increasing the number greatly. Trout will also be propagated at Hoopa for which purposes a breeding pond has been built which now contains about 200 trout. An auxiliary salmon hatchery will be established at Bair's place [Minor Creek; Lentell's 1909 map shows Bair's in the east half of the east half sec. 28, 7N3E] on Redwood, and another on Mad river, but just at what point has not been determined. Capt. Brice expects to be able to turn out about a half a million of salmon yearly, after this year."

AU (19 March 1892) "The U.S. Fish Commission is paying much attention and expending considerable money to the propagation of salmon and trout in this county...We learn that the hatcheries at Redwood and Hoopa are progressing satisfactorily. There are now four ponds attached to the hatchery at Hoopa, which are being used for breeding German and Eastern brook trout of which Mr. Boyce has a large number which will be ready to turn loose in a short time. About 150,000 salmon have been hatched at the Redwood plant and large quantities of eggs are now being taken from the spring run of steelhead salmon in Redwood. Mr. Boyce has been notified that the Commission will send him a lot of eggs from landlocked salmon, which he will have hatched out for this district. The temperature of the water in this latitude has proven satisfactory for the fish industry and Mr. Boyce is of the opinion that within a year a hatchery will be established near Arcata. He is also of the opinion that the removal of the troops from Gaston would seriously interfere with the fish business there, as the Indians are opposed to breeding fish by artificial means. They claim that fish bred in hatcheries will never come back when once turned into the sea. Some superstition governs them in this matter."

AU (11 June 1892) Hoopa--"The Hoopa hatchery, under the management of Mr. Boyce, is the only hatchery in the county, but there is a branch hatchery at Redwood Creek, under the care of 'Charley.' There were no salmon in the Trinity this year and all the eggs used were brought from Redwood creek. Of the eggs procured there, 150,000 young salmon were turned out in Supply creek near the post and 160,000 in Redwood..."

AU (27 Aug. 1892) "Among the most important of the newly inaugurated industries of Humboldt is the fish hatcheries at Gaston and Redwood. Though still in their infancy the success of the enterprise is assured...Capt. Brice, who established the two hatcheries now in operation in Humboldt, will not return here again...He feels a great interest in the success of the plants established here, and expressed a regret to us that he could not remain in charge long enough to establish auxiliary hatcheries on Mad river and Eel river..."

AU (22 Oct. 1892) "Deputy U.S. Fish Commissioner Livingston Stone has been up to Redwood and Hoopa to inspect the hatcheries located at those points."

AU (24 Dec. 1892) From San Francisco Chronicle --"An interesting report has been made by Commander J.J. Brice, United States Navy, to the Fish Commissioners at Washington regarding the propagation of salmon on the Pacific coast. He calls attention to the wholesale destruction of the fish, many of the coast streams being now almost entirely depleted and to the importance of the salmon industry, which, he maintains may be easily and economically maintained, if not materially increased. Many obstacles were found in the way of rehabilitating a river once depleted of its fish, aside from the great increase in the labor and expense of transporting young fry from remote localities. It was therefore proposed by the United States Fish Commission to establish hatcheries on military or Government reservations and other desirable localities for the production of the salmon and its species, so arranged as to benefit all the streams on the Pacific. As an experiment, a hatchery was established at Fort Gaston, Humboldt county, Cal., with auxiliary hatcheries on neighboring streams which empty directly into the ocean. These auxiliary hatcheries are used for taking the spawn and depositing the young fry on or near the spawning grounds and are kept open only during the spawning and hatching season. It is proposed to connect with the Gaston station, two others on the Mad and Eel rivers..."

AU (11 Oct. 1893) New fish hatchery on North Fork Mad.

AU (27 Jan. 1894) Trinidad, Jan. 24--"The late storm flooded the Redwood creek section worse than at any time for the past twelve years. Much damage has been done to ranches and much stock drowned, but the full accounts are not yet received...The rainfall for the storm has been 7.94 inches; for the month, 9.76 inches and for the season, 33.82 inches."

AU (5 May 1894) "From the Redwood hatchery, 100,000 salmon eggs have been shipped to the fish station at Northville, Michigan."

BLA (4 May 1895) Redwood Creek, April 25--"The writer is informed that there are [a] great many salmon in the creek above the fish dam at the fishery on Bair's ranch, seeking their way back to their home in the deep blue sea."

AU (27 March 1897) "Capt. Dougherty, in charge of the Camp Gaston fish hatchery, has forwarded, through the U.S. Fish Commission, 150,000 steelhead salmon eggs to two different points. To East Oxford, Maine, 100,000 and to Bozeman, Montana, 50,000."

AU (18 Dec. 1897) "Thos. Bair and W.J. Wiley returned from a ten day outing at Bair's Redwood ranch on Sunday. Walter says he caught all the fish and killed all the quail he had any use for and could have killed deer if he wished. Dayton Barnhardt in charge of the government hatchery there is taking large quantities of salmon eggs..."

AU (31 March 1900) Orick--"Steelheads are running up Redwood quite freely since the late rain."

AU (14 Dec. 1901) Orick Items--"The river is now past fording and all travel goes by the ferry boat...Old settlers say that the run of salmon in Redwood is larger than it has been for many years past."

AU (18 Jan. 1902) Orick--"The mouth of the creek has been closed for the past ten days. The Indians say that it is the first time the creek has been closed at this time of year that they know of."

HT (22 May 1902) Orick, May 17--"The fishing in Prairie Creek is fine at present. There is also a big run of salmon in the Klamath river and they are unusually fat this year."

AU (9 May 1903) Orick--"The mouth of the river is just about closed. Trolling will then be good in the Lagoon."

HS (6 April 1904) "Damage along the course of Redwood creek has been considerable this winter, many of the ranches being badly injured by the stream cutting away the rich soil along its banks."

AU (26 Nov. 1904) Orick--"The mouth of the river broke open last Thursday and let in another lot of salmon. The boys have been having great sport in spearing them and some very large fish have run up the creek this season, some weighing 50 pounds or more."

AU (14 Dec. 1904) "Charles Stone and wife returned Saturday, home from a week's visit to the Bair ranch on Redwood. As was predicted, Charley had good luck spearing salmon and brought back quite a quantity of salted and smoked fish."

AU (4 March 1905) "Redwood Creek is the lowest it has been for a good many years at this season."

AU (24 June 1905) Orick--"The mouth of the river is closed and from this [time] on, there will be good trolling."

AU (5 July 1905) Orick, July 1--"Surf fish are all the go now days. At times they are so thick the young lad es cannot go in bathing in the surf."

AU (23 Dec. 1905) Orick, Dec. 18--"The long expected rain has arrived, starting the night of the 14th. The mouth of the creek is still closed and has been open but once this winter. The first time the creek opened there was a small run of salmon."

AU (27 Jan. 1906) Orick--"The high water destroyed the breakwater built at the Pete Hanson ranch on Redwood Creek. Mr. Neelson lost two acres of land and a hen house by the freshet. A part of the Prairie Creek bridge was torn away by the flood."

AU (6 Oct. 1906) Orick--"G. Tomlinson has commenced the work of reconstructing the breakwater on the Hansen place. This will be quite an extensive piece of work as piles will have to be driven."

AU (9 July 1910) "Dick Decker returned from Redwood Creek at Orick on Thursday with Mr. Jerry O'Connel of San Francisco, bringing home a magnificent lot of trout. The speckled beauties were taken on flies and the limit of 25 pounds was taken every day for three days."

AU (18 July 1912) Random Notes--"Redwood Creek, which has been closed for several weeks, broke out a few days ago and fishing conditions will improve there now."

AU (13 Aug. 1913) "The Union man spent a few days last week at the Orick Inn...Fishing at Redwood and Prairie Creeks was found to be first class and the party of which the Union man was a member experienced no extra hard work in getting full creels every day they were there."

AU (26 Aug. 1915) "Attorneys L.F. Puter and J.F. Quinn, who have just returned from Crescent City, report some excellent fishing at Redwood Creek and on Big and Stone Lagoons. The conditions in these waters now are due to the planting of a quantity of fry obtained from the State Fish and Game Commission some time ago. The fish were sent to Trinidad and from there were taken to the creek and lagoons by Burr McConnaha who volunteered his services.

The above clipping taken from the Standard speaks the truth when it states that fishing is excellent in Redwood Creek, Stone and Big Lagoons, but, when the writer states that 'the conditions in these waters now are due to the planting of a quantity of fry...' it is amusing. Such a statement leads us to believe that the writer would not know a lamprey eel from a steelhead if he saw the two specimens together, after reading the above remarks on 'good fishing.' As the planting was done last June and as it takes a year for a trout fry to attain a size that a fisherman would care to put into his creel, we are of the opinion that Larry and John did not take any of these fish, though the Standard scribe pronounces them quilty. It is now up to Puter to square himself with Doc Perrott and Fred Barnum."

AU (22 June 1916) "A fishing party consisting of Wirt Lane and father, C.C. Burkett and George Merz

made a fine catch of trout at Redwood creek, Orick on Sunday. A number of big fellows were taken, both with fly and spinner and a magnificent day's sport was enjoyed."

AU (13 July 1916) Orick--"The rain on Thursday of last week caught some hay down at Orick, but fortunately the most of it had not been cut when the storm came. Thursday night Redwood Creek raised one foot. The old Allen place, now owned by the Hammond Company, was nearly all taken out by the high water in Redwood Creek last winter, some 14 acres of bottom land being lost. The barn on the place went into the rushing stream and the bank is now within 10 feet of one corner of the old residence, which is doomed to go in the next freshet...The party enjoyed some splendid fishing in Redwood Creek, until the increased flow of water caused myriads of cadis worms (rock bait) to move down stream, which the fish devoured in such quantities that their stomachs became more like a rock quarry than the food pouch of trout. Members of the party then changed their base of operations to Prairie Creek, where a great many large cut throat trout were caught daily."

AU (5 July 1917) "A fishing party consisting of Wirt Lane, L.F. and W.J. Wiley of Arcata and George Lover of Eureka left Sunday morning for a three days stay at Orick. They were expected back tonight with a supply of speckled beauties from Redwood Creek."

AU (12 July 1917) Orick--"There are a number of campers about here now. Most of them are enjoying the fishing afforded by the streams of the valley."

AU (18 Oct. 1917) Orick--"A run of salmon has appeared at the mouth of Redwood."

AU (29 Nov. 1917) Big Salmon Catches At Orick--"Dick Decker and Driver Wyman of the big oil truck returned Friday evening from Orick bringing with them 20 large salmon which they took on trolls that day at the mouth of Redwood Creek. The fish ran from 30 to 50 pounds in weight and were caught in about seven hours fishing, the catch being estimated at between seven and eight hundred pounds, which sort of 'puts it over' the recent Heumann-McCurdy catch in Mad River...Later in the week, a party consisting of F.H. Tooby and the Misses Era Chamberlin, Meta Smith and Bena K. Hansen visited Orick and had fair luck, Miss Chamberlin landing a thirty pounder. Cal Ackerman and party also had fine success and secured their winter's food supply."

AU (20 June 1918) "Harry Moore and William Grotzman went on a fishing trip up to Redwood Creek and a fine catch was reported."

AU (22 Aug. 1918) "Mrs. Thos. Durdan and daughter Miss Juanita and Miss May Wentworth returned Saturday evening from an outing spent at Bair's Resort on Redwood. Miss Wentworth proved herself to be the champion angler of the party and kept the table well supplied with speckled beauties."

AU (12 Feb. 1920) "Walter Stover, the Redwood sheep-raiser, was an Arcata visitor Monday. Mr. Stover states that Redwood Creek is lower than it usually is in the middle of summer and that the ranges are looking fine. He states that there is no snow on the high ridges and that if any does fall now that it would melt off quickly as the weather has been so warm." AU (6 May 1920) "Frank [Hufford] reports trout fishing good in Prairie Creek, but Redwood is a little too high yet for good sport."

AU (5 May 1921) "Regardless of the heavy rain which fell almost all day Sunday, a number of the Brizard Store crew journeyed to Prairie Creek above Orick for a day's fishing. Owing to the heavy rain, the day's catch was small. Happy Hill was the champion fisherman of the day, he succeeded in landing eighteen trout..."

AU (4 May 1922) "Monday, May 1st, being a holiday, the local anglers were out in force...Mr. and Mrs. Lester Johnson and Mr. and Mrs. Husted Heinrici motored to Orick Sunday and spent the night at the Orick Inn which they pronounced as [an] ideal place to spent an outing. They rose early Monday morning and went to Prairie Creek and had the limit for all by 6:30. Oscar Boren of Brizards also fished Prairie Creek and took a nice basket full."

AU (27 July 1892) Personal Mention--"Wirt Lane and Charles Spaulding, accompanied by their families, camped at the mouth of Redwood near Orick on Saturday night. A nice catch of cutthroat trout was made on trolls with small copper spinners."

AU (3 Aug. 1922) Lake Tahoe Trout Planted-"During July the Humboldt County Fish and Game Association planted 90 thousand spotted Lake Tahoe trout fry. Redwood Creek at Orick and Maple Creek at Big Lagoon received 45 thousand each. The spawn from which this fry was hatched came from Lake Tahoe high up in the Sierras and the result of the planting will be watched with interest. The Tahoe trout grow to a good size and were sold extensively in San Francisco markets."

AU (3 Aug. 1922) "On Monday and Tuesday nights' train two shipments of rainbow trout fry were received from the station of Steelhead on Eel River. The entire shipment of 80,000 were (sic) received by the Arcata Chamber of Commerce and sent by trucks to Redwood Creek near Berry's for planting [Lentell's 1909 map shows Berry's in the north half of the north half, sec. 14, 6N3E].

The California Fish and Game Commission has been making investigations of the trout conditions applying to the streams of Humboldt county and have found that the rainbow trout fry planted in our various streams near the ocean are not making the growth expected, mainly owing to lack of food.

The Commission strongly urge[s] that the fry should be planted in the upper reaches of our creeks and rivers, claiming that the food and conditions for spawning are ideal far back in the mountains...

There is some expense attached to making the night trip by auto truck from Arcata to Berry's, but everyone is interested in having Humboldt County keep up its reputation as a sportsman's paradise and we must make good by keeping our streams stocked.

Harry Howell with his truck piloted by John Lima made the deliveries and the trout fry were planted in good shape and where good results will follow..."

AU (10 Aug. 1922) "Mr. and Mrs. N.C. Bonnicksen and two sons spent last week camping on Redwood near Berry's. They all enjoyed the outing and the boys kept the camp supplied with trout from Redwood Creek."

AU (24 Aug. 1922) "Among the many people to enjoy country life at Green Point on Redwood Creek this summer were (sic) a group of San Francisco vacationists...Mrs. Smith, who is noted with the hook

and line in many parts of the state, proved her ability by supplying the camp with choice trout which only a woman of considerable fishing skill could catch. Among the many speckled victims was a trout fourteen inches in length and weighing one and three-fourths pounds."

AU (24 Aug. 1922) "The first carload of rainbow trout assigned for distribution in the streams of Humboldt county arrived in Eureka...The car...contained 500,000 trout...Two trucks were sent from Eureka with large shipments which were planted in streams in this section and as far north as Orick."

AU (26 Oct. 1922) "The fishing party consisting of Joe Gray, Verne Lancaster, Sammy Beer, Cal Ackerman, and Oscar Boren made

a trip to the mouth of Redwood Creek at Orick on Sunday making a large catch of salmon and trout. Two of the salmon were up to the 30 to 40 pound class and several nice hookbills, smaller in size, were also taken. The salmon were taken on trolls and the smaller fish on bait."

AU (3 May 1923) Many Speckled Beauties Taken May 1--"The small creeks were invaded on May 1st by many fishermen and the school kids were out in force...Lester Johnson and Husted Heinrici brought the limit from Prairie Creek. Dr. Caskey, Dr. Bonstell and Wirt Lane fished Redwood at Orick with fair success, the creek being too high at present for fly fishing..."

AU (25 Oct. 1923) Sixty Pound Salmon On Troll, Who Can Beat It--"R.W. Bruce, local manager of the Standard Oil Company, now holds the county record for landing a big one which he did on Sunday at the mouth of Redwood creek near Orick. Mr. Bruce was trolling with light tackle for steelhead which were in evidence when he hooked up with a 60 pound salmon and after a tussel for an hour and a half succeed[ed] in landing the fish. The salmon was weighed at Orick in the presence of witnesses and Mr. Bruce remembered his Arcata friends with a feed from the big fellow."

AU (7 May 1925) "While most of the streams were too high for good fishing on May 1, a number of our local nimrods took the limit. Louis Everding, Carl Zamloch, and Lester Johnson took limits on Redwood and Prairie creeks..."

AU (11 June 1925) "W.J. McMillan and friends motored to Redwood and Willow Creek Sunday. While there Mac met a young man who exhibited a nice basket full of trout, which indicates that fishing has improved in Redwood and Willow Creek."

AU (30 July 1925) Orick A Busy Place--"A _Union_ man spent several days along the coast last week and found fishing very poor. The reason being apparent by the large number of autos parked along and near the different streams. Orick is no doubt the busiest place on the Redwood Highway..."

AU (6 Aug. 1925) "Last week a hundred and twenty thousand black brook trout were planted, forty thousand of which were taken to Redwood Creek at Berry's and eighty thousand were put in Mad River near Blue Lake..."

AU (8 July 1926) "In an effort to rehabilitate the fishing streams of Humboldt region, the Humboldt Fish and Game Commission is fostering extensive plans for replenishing the trout streams with thousands of small trout now being planted throughout the county."

The program of refilling the streams with fish was commenced following discovery recently that the Humboldt streams were ceasing to be a prolific source of fishing and that anglers from the bay region lured north by the former fishing paradise were returning disappointed.

The plans, which include the establishment of a hatchery in Humboldt to provide a new supply of cutthroat trout, suggested as a necessary step in the work of replenishing Humboldt streams, are now fully under way by the commission.

Shipments of small fish have been received each night for the past two weeks from San Francisco and are transported in trucks to the various mountain streams where they are deposited. The truckloads of fingerlings are of the rainbow trout species and within a short time should have the Humboldt streams teeming with fish again.

...The commission hopes, through the establishment of a hatchery here for cutthroat trout, to overcome the complaints that are being heard from anglers as to false reports of fishing in Humboldt and to provide tourists to this region with plenty of opportunity for fishing sport."

AU (18 Aug. 1927) Experimental Fish Station For Prairie Creek--"I. Zellerbach, President of the California Fish and Game Commission, has released a formal statement of the program of the Commission's activities for the coming year...Experimental egg-taking stations will be established on Smith river in Del Norte County and Prairie Creek in Humboldt County..."

AU (13 Oct. 1927) Hatchery At Prairie Creek--"It seems to be a settled fact that a new fish hatchery will be established on the Robert McIntosh place on Prairie Creek, about three miles above Orick.

The first step, the finding of a site, has been accomplished with the announcement that Robert McIntosh, owner of the land, has leased to the State an acre of land at the junction of Prairie Creek and Lost Man Creek. McIntosh leased the land for a 24-year period at the low price of a dollar a year, showing a fine public spirit and cooperation with the fish and game commission in the establishing of the hatchery.

At the hatchery, which will be the most northern one in the State, it is planned that cutthroat trout, chinook salmon and possibly steelhead and silverside will be hatched.

If the egg supply will permit, the hatchery at Prairie Creek will be as large as any in the state and it has been estimated that 85,000,000 salmon eggs will be available there. At the present time, the collection of cut-throat trout eggs is hardly more than an experiment. This year, 166,000 cut-throat have been planted from the hatchery near Fort Seward on Eel River, 100,000 in Prairie Creek and 66,000 in Maple Creek, a tributary to Big Lagoon. If enough eggs can be obtained at the new hatchery, the streams of northern California will be kept well stocked. This would aid greatly in attracting tourists as the streams in this part of the state do not go dry in the summer time.

The construction of the new hatchery is in tune with the idea that it is more economical to have the hatchery near the streams where the fish are to be planted and the hatchery at Fort Seward is not large enough to supply all of the streams in this section of the state.

J.C. Lewis, from the Steelhead hatchery, about eight miles from Fort Seward, has charge of the northern district.

It is expected that a hatchery will be established in Del Norte county in the near future, but a

location has not yet been determined. The Del Norte Chamber of Commerce has been working on the project."

AU (15 Dec. 1927) "Double the allotment of fish planted in Humboldt county streams this year will be asked for next year, according to a decision reached at a meeting of committees of the Humboldt Fish and Game Association...the fish will be distributed as follows: rainbow trout, upper Redwood Creek, 100,000; steelhead, Redwood Creek, 80,000; cut throat, Maple Creek, Redwood Creek and Prairie Creek, 150,000..."

AU (19 April 1928) Prairie Creek Closed To Anglers For The Season-"After a thorough study and investigation by the state division of fish and game, one Humboldt county stream was ordered closed on April 13 to trout fishing for the rest of the 1928 season by Fred G. Stevenot, state director of natural resources.

Prairie Creek, a tributary of Redwood Creek, which flows into the Pacific Ocean, was closed by the official order.

"The division of fish and game working with Humboldt county game commissioners, recommended that this stream be closed all summer for protection of the trout with which they have stocked this stream,' Stevenot said.

"The closing of this creek insures the larger growth of the fish and is a better means of propagation,' Stevenot said. 'It also provides an adequate supply of trout eggs for the various fish hatcheries in California to the end of improving fishing conditions generally throughout the state.

AU (10 May 1928) Prairie Creek Fish Hatchery--"The Union man recently had the pleasure of visiting the fish hatchery at Prairie Creek, conducted under the auspices of the California Fish Commission and was shown through the plant by the accommodating foreman, George Null.

At the present time, the hatchery contains some 215,000 steelhead fry and 65,000 silver salmon, the fry being several weeks old, some eggs still being in the process of hatching at the time of the visit. The hatchery, which is a branch of the hatchery at Steelhead on Eel River, is under direct management of Superintendent J.C. Lewis and was ready for business in September of last year. The traps were built on Prairie Creek for the principal purpose of securing trout eggs for stocking the various streams of the county, but before the trout run commenced the high water of November cut around the traps making it necessary to rebuild them. Only a very small quantity of trout eggs were taken but the catch of steelhead and silverside salmon was quite satisfactory.

The baby fish are all doing well and with a loss of less than three percent of the hatch, which is considered good, and the commission will have a fine lot of fry ready for distribution in the fall. The fish are fed three times daily on a diet of fresh whole milk and raw beef liver, the liver being ground up fine in a meat

grinder. The milk is supplied from the Arthur Davison dairy ranch nearby, the fish traps being located on the Davison property.

The hatchery troughs are housed in a temporary building, 24 by 80 feet, with a tent roof, and the water is carried down Prairie Creek for 1800 feet from a dam in wooden troughs, 12 inches square. The water is returned to Prairie Creek through a central trough and deposited in a deep hole. The trout population of the creek was not long in learning where to look for free lunch as a portion of the food introduced into the troughs for the fry is not consumed and is cleaned up in short order by the trout in the hole near the building. Several hundred trout are congregated here, some fine big speckled

fellows being among the number and when food is thrown into the hole, the surface of the water fairly boils with the gamey fellows. This would be a favorite fishing pool for anglers but the fish are protected, the entire stream being set aside for the capture of eggs for propagation. Several eager anglers visited the stream on opening day and later and had to be informed of the new rule, much to their regret.

Mr. Null is assisted in caring for the fish by his son, Virgil Null, who lives at the hatchery with his family. Two other employees are assisting at present but will return to Steelhead shortly.

All the eggs that could be accommodated in the temporary hatchery were hatched this season and in addition, 752,000 steelhead eggs were sent to the present hatchery at Steelhead together with a few silverside salmon eggs. It is hoped that this fall at least a million and a half eggs will be secured for hatching, as the traps have been put in good condition for a big run. The hatchery at present is more or less of a temporary proposition, but if the catch this fall is large, it is more than likely that permanent buildings will be erected and hatching conducted on a considerable scale. The streams and lagoons on the northern portion of Redwood Hatchery need restocking badly and people in this end of the county hope that Prairie Creek will prove to be an important stream for egg collecting and hatching and that the commission will see fit to establish a permanent hatchery.

John Davison, one of the new 'dollar a year deputies' takes a live interest in protecting the fish life of that section and deserves the thanks of the writer for courtesies extended while in the vicinity."

AU (17 May 1928) "Gus Peterson and Clarence Hill landed a prize lot of steelhead in Redwood Creek last Sunday morning..."

AU (30 April 1931) "Prairie Creek will be the only Humboldt county stream closed to anglers during the coming fishing season which opens on May 1..."

AU (23 July 1931) "Through the efforts of Sheriff John Breen, Ray Plaisted and Game Warden Jack Hurley, over eighty cans of fish were planted in various parts of Smith river recently...The fish were gotten from Prairie Creek near Orick..."

AU (3 Nov. 1939) Redwood Creek Now Open, Many Fishermen Land King Salmon. Photo Caption: "Pictured here are two of Arcata's most ardent anglers, Don Yendes, left and Gus Peterson, right. Yendes and Peterson fished at Redwood Creek Wednesday where they caught four fish. Peterson's two king salmon weighed 42 and 35 pounds, respectively. Yendes landed a four-pound steelhead and an 18-pound hookbill salmon."

AU (10 Nov. 1939) "The Prairie Creek fish hatchery at Orick is installing a unit of four tanks which will be used to speed the growth of fish, Foreman A.F. Pollitt announced...The tanks will accommodate 100,000 fry. The fish will be held in the tanks for two weeks prior to their release in streams.

Foreman Pollitt explained the tanks will provide a greater volume of water without increasing the flow. The tanks are constructed of high grade redwood and will cost about \$50 a piece. The units will consist of two new tanks and two that have been reconditioned. The tanks are four by sixteen feet and are three feet deep."

AU (31 May 1940) "With streams reported to be in fine condition, thousands of anglers are slated to

invade mountains and valley this weekend...Local sporting goods men...have released the following information...Redwood Creek at Orick--good, big ones in water, No. 2 or 3 spinner."

AU (20 Sept. 1940) 905,995 steelhead and 213,070 salmon planted by Prairie Creek Crew...Redwood Creek, upper section, 50,140 steelhead...lower section, 30,400...Lake Prairie Creek, 9,920 salmon; Prairie Creek, 48,400 salmon...

AU (11 Oct. 1940) "The mouth of Redwood Creek is now open and fish are expected to start running at any time."

AU (8 Nov. 1940) "Don Yendes, the fishing butcher, landed a fighting 22-pound salmon at Redwood Creek. He tied into two other giants but was cleaned of his tackle."

AU (22 Nov. 1940) "Frank Hufford, widely known Orick rancher, who resides near the mouth of Redwood Creek, expects a late run of king salmon in Redwood Creek this year. 'In all the years I have lived on Redwood Creek, I can't remember when we failed to have a fine run of big salmon,' Hufford said."

AU (8 Nov. 1946) "Several fine catches of salmon were made last weekend and during this week at the mouth of Redwood Creek. Among the local spinner trollers who landed fish are Roy Moreland, Ed Anderson, Bert Hill and Florence Getchell, Orick school teacher, who caught her first big fish, a 12 pounder.

Anderson took top honors with a 35 pounder and one 12 pounds. It was also reported Lee English landed three big ones early this week.

Most of the fish were taken on an incoming tide, according to Joe King, ardent angler, who failed to catch one."

HT (14 Nov. 1948) Orick, Busy Logging And Shop Center-"To the newcomer, Orick, which is 45 miles north of Eureka on the coast, seems like an up-and-coming lumberman's town. Its rows of new motel cabins, its trailer camps, and its continuous stream of logging rigs and trucks, portray it as additional evidence of the great boom that has hit the west.

To the older resident of Humboldt, the sight of booming, busy Orick brings a touch of nostalgia as he remembers the quiet little highway settlement whose principal industry was the creamery--now converted into a logging rig repair shop. He remembers the good cutthroat trout fishing in Redwood creek, which flows right through town, and the huge chinook salmon he used to tangle with in the creek's lagoon at the seashore, two miles away...Art Davison came to Orick from Nova Scotia, Canada, 67 years ago, in 1881, and has lived in Orick ever since...The Davison ranch borders along Prairie Creek, long noted for its excellent trout and Art always makes fishermen feel welcome. 'When I first came here,' he said, 'we used to catch some whoppers in the stream. Not so many nowadays, of course, but I tie into a nice one every once in awhile.'"

AU (20 Jan. 1950) Residents In Orick Valley Flee Homes-"Humboldt county had scarcely recovered from one of the coldest spells in its history, accompanied by a heavy snowfall, when it was struck by another storm of heavy rains and strong winds of gale proportions last Friday. By Tuesday, communities near rivers were in a flooded condition. 3.87 inches of rain fell between 4 a.m. Tuesday and 4 a.m. Wednesday...At Orick, 60 miles north of Arcata, Redwood Creek overflowed its banks,

causing residents in that area to flee their homes. The water rose so rapidly during the early morning hours Wednesday that many families who had not left their homes by daylight were stranded and had to be rescued by boat.

The Red Cross set up headquarters in the Grange Hall. An approximate three feet of water was reported in the center of town and three to six feet at the southern approach completely isolated the town and stalled traffic for 14 hours."

AU (17 Feb. 1956) Report Released On Schools Hit By Present Flood Waters, Orick School--"The entire community was badly hit by flood waters from Redwood Creek. The gym floor is concrete slab on grade, so it had about five feet of water and silt on it. The new addition has wood floors above grade, so it had about two feet of flood. The original building had its floor barely above the crest of the flood...The school was in the path of Redwood Creek as it went over its bank..."

AU (1 Jan. 1965) Reporter's Trip To Orick On Dec. 22, 1965-"Via reports Redwood Creek had flooded the highway to the southern end of Orick, so we decided to cut off at the south end of Freshwater lagoon and take the old 101. By doing this we might also get an over-all picture of Orick and the valley. What a sight. Redwood Creek was on a rampage that covered the valley floor from foothill to foothill..."

The debris in the river was thick. Valuable timber logs and slag (sic) from stream banks [of] cut over land were jamming the

center of the creek. One report is that over a million board feet of logs were lost up Redwood creek from Orick. These also may have gone out to sea."

AU (22 Jan. 1965) Silt, Debris Clog Streams--"The recent flood was extremely damaging to wildlife, according to Captain Walter L. Gray of the Department of Fish and Game. 'We know the loss of fish life was much greater than in 1955,' Gray said. Many large, unspawned fish have been found in pastures, buried in silt, and on the Smith River, 50 dead steelhead were found on the beach..."

All in all, the Captain estimated 435 spawning streams for salmon and steelhead were affected. These streams were damaged by siltation, logging debris and erosion. To make the matter more complex, heavy runoff in many small tributaries have created deltas at the mouth which will go dry during periods of low water and will prevent fish from migrating."

Interview with Bill Stover at the Stover Ranch on Redwood Creek, 6 January 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

Bill Stover was born on the Ranch a short distance from his present home in 1923. He is the son of John Stover and grandson of Arthur. He is now retired and the ranch is leased out. He lives on the east side of Redwood Creek between Lacks Creek and Stover Creek and is most familiar with this area relative to the Creek and its fisheries.

The local name for Lacks Creek is North Fork and Panther is referred to as the South Fork.

Stover Creek never had salmon. Molasses Creek had fish in it in the past, but he hasn't seen any lately. Lacks Creek has lots of steelhead still, but less than when he was young. It used to have silvers a short way up, but not now. He never saw summer steelhead in Lacks, but there are still some in Redwood, a few in every other hole. He never saw fish in Roaring Gulch. Minor Creek still has steelhead and salmon; this is a pretty good-sized creek like Lacks. Last year they found seven fish carcasses of fish in the 30-50 pound class in the willows along Redwood. There are still a few pretty good sized fish.

The lower portion of Garrett Creek and the lower portion of Lacks Creek were used by silvers for spawning. The chinook spawn in Redwood Creek, but farther up than his place. There used to be big runs of chinook and fish weighed 50, 60 and 70 pounds. He caught an 80 pound chinook in Redwood just above Lacks Creek in the late fall when he was about 18 years old, circa 1940.

There used to be a "real good" summer steelhead run, which came in Redwood soon after snowmelt in late February and early March. They used Lacks and Minor Creeks. There are still a few, but not nearly as many as there used to be. The early fall run is also smaller in size.

He has no knowledge of resident fish, but there is a trout in Lacks above the falls. In Coyote Creek, there is a different species of trout, about 13 inches and a pound in size. They fight like Chinook, but look like a German Brown. They come into Redwood to spawn in late fall before heavy water. He doesn't know if they are still there.

Cutthroat are supposed to be in Coyote Creek, but he never saw them, There used to be lots of eel, but not so many now.

People mostly fished for chinook in the main stem, but there isn't much fishing, because it is just too far from the ocean and the fish aren't much good by the time they get to his area. Some folks float Redwood in rafts and kayaks.

Their house was 200 feet from the Redwood and in the evening, during the runs, "you could hear them going over the riffles." This was prior to about 1940.

One thing that happened which he believes affected Redwood fish occurred in the 1930's. The Department of Fish and Game put Klamath fish in the stream and they had a "bug" that was not present

in Redwood Creek fish [a parasite].

The big floods of 1955 and 1964 filled up the holes with gravel, but whatever caused the decline in fish started before major logging started after World War II. The growth in the sea lion population affects fish populations in the Creek. The sea lions eat the belly out of female fish. He fished commercially in the 1940's and recalls three piles of sea lion bones, killed by Indians, along the beach between Trinidad and Big Lagoon. There were only a few sea lions on off shore rocks then, but now there are lots.

The water in Redwood used to be like "ice," but warmed up after logging along the Creek. The warm water caused the fish to get big worms. Redwood used to have a thick canopy; it is beginning to come back because of the restrictions on logging. There was lots of woody debris in the tributaries.

He feels the fish populations have been affected by the use of land below the bridge at Orick, where the small fish hold up in the estuary. Filling the estuary for farming has affected them. He also believes mergansers and herons take a lot of fish out of pools. At one time there used to be lots of crayfish in Redwood, but a gray slime on the rocks killed them off and they never came back. The coon populations went down with the decline in crayfish. They occurred about 35 years ago. He feels sea lions are having a major impact on the fish.

He suggested that fish rearing tanks along the creek would help restore the fish. The fish are vulnerable to sea lions at the mouth, especially when the mouth closes. It would help the fish to control the sea lions.

When asked about the fish-taking station at Bair's, he thought they took the eggs in Minor Creek. The big Bair's hotel [built for Thomas Bair in 1911] is across the Creek near where the county road crosses it and the Hoopa Road takes off up the hill. The Barnums own the property now. He has seen elk tracks above Lacks Creek and elk on the other end of the ranch in Garrett Creek.

There used to be close to 30,000 sheep this side of Highway 299, but they quit the sheep business about 20 years. When price supports went off, they didn't get enough for the wool to pay for the shearing; the shearers got two bits a sheep. The "Moon tribe" sheared for them--Bob, Jim, Billy, Mike and Charlie, along with Albert Falor and a man named Felix. He thinks Bob is still living. They could shear 75-100 sheep in a day. They always came drunk and the sweat would pour off of them. Shearing was in late June and they were finished by the Fourth of the July.

The Indians had two dugout canoes and they used a gallon jug with carbide which they dropped into a hole. It exploded and turned up 40-50 fish in a pool, which they gathered for the winter. They would fill their dugouts with fish.

Interview with Doreen Burden at her home on Redwood Creek at the end of Cookson Road, 6 January 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

Doreen's family, the Cooksons, moved to this place in 1934, when she was a child. Her house is on the east side of Redwood where there is a large eastward bend between Karen and Stover Creeks.

She did not recall different names for any of the creeks. She felt all the creeks had salmon in them. She said her father caught a fish in the road one time! He was fording Molasses Creek and a big salmon was in the ford; he jumped out and caught it. She does not fish so is not knowledgeable about what is in the creeks now, but she felt the floods had ruined the fish runs by filling up the Creek with gravel.

The salmon were so thick in Redwood when she was a child that it "sounded like horses" when they were running. She recalled that when the kids started swimming in Redwood in the spring, there were so many fish that they felt like they were "swimming on top of fish." They had fish in the creek until the first flood. There are still lots of little fish, but few big ones.

There were steelhead in both Molasses and Mill Creeks. _ _ _ @ _ She has heard people talk about rainbow, but never heard about cutthroat trout.

The water in Redwood was "icy." The kids would "freeze" when they swam. Today the water is warmer because the Creek is more "filled up."

There were lots of lamprey eels in the Creek, but not as many today. They used to put culverts in the Creek to dam it up for swimming and when they took out the culverts, there were always lots of eels between the gravel and the culverts. They still put in a dam each spring to back up water for swimming as part of the church camp they have on their property.

The floods have filled in the holes with gravel. It is beginning to clean out, but the water temperature is warmer than when she was a girl and the Creek is swallower and more open with fewer trees along the bank. There was more woody debris in the Creek in past year and big rocks where the fish held. The gravel covered these rocks, but they are beginning to show up again.

She felt fish declines were tied to the Creek filling up with gravel and the more open character of the Creek. She suggested using hatcheries to restore the fish, since there are so few fish coming back. Lots of local folks fish in Creek and there are just too few fish to maintain the population.

Interview with Joe Massei at the Golden Harvest Cafe in Arcata, 11 January 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

Joe's place is at Ayres Cabin on upper Redwood Creek. He owns one-and-a-half miles of Creek frontage. His grandfather bought the property in 1941.

He never saw salmon in any of the tributaries between High Prairie Creek and Cool Spring, the tributaries with which he is most familiar. High Prairie Creek has year-round flows and resident rainbow trout, which he referred to as fingerlings. He doesn't know about steelhead use of the tributaries. Spawning is in the main stem, both summer and winter steelhead and salmon between February and May. He saw fish in there last year. He hasn't seen cutthroat in his area. There used to be lots of eels and within last three years has seen both eel and salmon carcasses. There were lots of crawdads in the creek, but not now, probably prior to 1964 flood. He recalls that there was a time when "we could hook 100 fish in an hour." These were small resident trout. His grandfather caught a big salmon in the Creek in late 1950's or early 1960's. He recalls holes with 30-40 fish during April and May and big winter steelhead.

He believes stream temperatures are warmer, especially during the recent dry years, but there is canopy closure now with willows right down to the water's edge. When there was intensive logging, lots of woody debris came down, but the 1964 flood flushed it out.

He talked about the impact of the 1964 flood on the Creek, noting that it was ten years after the flood before they began to see fish again. The river was abundant with fish prior to 1964; high water and lots of sediment came in, but he thinks the river is getting back to normal and the fish are coming back.

He believes the decline in fish numbers is the result of poor logging practices and Mother Nature. He referred often to the impact of the 1964 flood on the Creek and fish, saying it devastated the river.

Instream structures and Fish and Game's rehab work should be continued. He believes that the structures have been very beneficial to the fish.

Joe has a strong sense of stewardship for his land and the Creek. He does not let the public in and there is no fishing along his stretch of the Creek, except kids and they have to use barbless hooks. He "rules" his stretch of the Creek and is interested in doing whatever he can to see the fish come back. He said there is a large slide upstream from him and he would like to see what could be done about it.

The prettiest reaches of the Creek are in his area and in the gorge in the lower Creek. A few years ago he walked down the Creek from his place to Orick. He was upset with Redwood Valley, which he felt was "junky," and poorly cared for by the landowners and other users. He does not ranch or log on his place; it is simply for his and his family's enjoyment.

He has photographs of the Creek, both pre and post 1964 flood. The photos are at Ayres, so he will call me. He suggested contacting Matt Smith, who does rehab work on the Creek, because of his knowledge of species and use of the habitat.

Interview with Marlan Stover at his home on 13th Street in Arcata, 13 January 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

The Stover Ranch is located on the east side of Redwood Creek north of Stover Creek and up to Garrett. He lived there as a child, for a short time in the late 1940's, and again in the late 1960's.

The only name difference he noted was that Lacks Creek was called North Fork in the past. The Creek is named for Berryman Lack, who owned land at the mouth along with Jonathan Lyons. After looking at the map, he thought that Mill and Molasses creeks were switched, i.e., that Molasses is Mill and Mill is Molasses. The only tributary he mentioned as having salmon is Lacks Creeks. Garrett has winter steelhead. There are falls about one mile up Lacks which are a barrier to salmon and steelhead. There are resident fish, probably rainbow, above the falls. He never saw summer steelhead, but then he said he wouldn't know one if he saw one. Steelhead don't reach his part of the Creek until January and February. He used to see eels in the Creek before the flood, but hasn't seen them in a long time. He doesn't know about cutthroat trout.

There were still lots of fish in the Creek after the War in the late 1940's and early 1950's. He would see two or three pair on a riffle and there were lots of riffles with deep holes below them. He caught 16-inch trout in the fall. The only place he ever fished was lower Lacks Creek and in the main stem in that reach.

There used to be lots of crawfish in the Creek and above the falls in Lacks Creek; he recalled how the crawfish would come to fish guts thrown in the Creek. There was a gray slime that killed the crawfish in late 1940's and he hasn't seen a crawfish since 1954. There was a freshwater mussel in Redwood Creek above the mouth of Lacks Creek, but he hasn't seen them since late 1940's.

The numbers of fish in Creek are decreasing and seemed to be doing so even before logging really got going. There were still lots of fish in the creek after the War. He doesn't think logging affected the fish populations, but perhaps fishing pressure in the commercial fishery could be affecting them. He recalls catching two fish in late 1940's that weighed 50-60 pounds; they were rotting fish, which he boiled in a big kettle for dog food and they filled the kettle. He feels the Creek is beginning to come back and they saw carcasses a few years ago of 40-50 pound fish.

Logging roads built in early 50's disturbed the soil and the culverts were too small. During the 1955 event, the rain came so fast it couldn't run off. It put lots of debris and sediment in the Creek, filled up the holes and built up around the willow and alders along the banks. The 1964 event did the damage, coming on top of the '55 event and after ten years of logging. It swept through the Creek, taking out the debris, moving the sediment, and putting in more sediment.

The floods impacted the Creek, but it is digging out, and he can now see stumps that he recalled from the 1940's. The Creek is getting down where it was, so that he can now see rocks that had been covered by flood sediments. During recent dry years, there has been too little water to move sediment, but the Creek looks like it used to look. Near his house, there was a 12 to 14-foot hole, but the hole is gone now. It was very cold in its lower depths. There aren't as many deep holes as there used to be. He thinks foreign boats, sea lions, and the gaffing of fish at Orick are factors in the decline of fish

populations.

He suggested talking with Mitch Upshaw of Eureka. Mitch has seen steelhead in holes in the Creek. Marlan doesn't have photographs of the Creek or of fish.

Marlan called on 15 January 1994 to add some comments. His grandfather said that in the early 1900's, there were so many fish in Redwood Creek that you could walk across the Creek on their backs. The dog used to run the fish up on the bank.

He recalls smaller salmon--silvery ones--that went up Redwood Creek in October in the late 1940's. He recalled baby eels, three to four inches, in the sand at the bottom of the pools.

Interview with Matt Smith, North Coast Fisheries Restoration, at Redwood National Park Office in Arcata, 14 January 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

Matt is most familiar with Redwood Creek above the Highway 299 bridge up to Honeymoon Hill at Lake Prairie; he has installed 22 structures in this reach, all log with one boulder exception. He was not familiar with the following names on the map: Simon, Gunrack, Six Rivers and Emmy Lou. He calls Negro Joe Creek, O'Haniel Creek; he calls Cut-Off Meander, Dave's Creek.

The tributaries in the upper watershed are too confined and steep for chinook salmon, so are limited to steelhead, cutthroat, and coho. He believes he has seen juvenile coho with steelhead. Tributaries support resident rainbow and some cutthroat. Lower one-half mile of Minor is low gradient and could support chinook spawning, but most spawning is in main stem all the way up. Possibly Captain Creek could have some chinook spawning. He has never seen summer steelhead in the tributaries, but has seen them in the main stem up to about Noisy Creek. He has seen them on one of his structures. During the summer of 1993, he saw three above Highway 299 and the surveyors saw 13 in the Creek. He has not actually observed cutthroat, but referred to accounts from those who fish to indicate their presence. He has seen eel nests upstream of Highway 299 and good-sized carcasses.

Woody debris is not adequate and potential recruitment is poor. There are only a few old-growth areas which could furnish good-sized conifer logs to the Creek. What LWD there is lies above the channel and is in a rotting condition, essentially worthless to the stream system. LWD is a limiting factor, resulting in insufficient cover for the fish. The riparian canopy is inadequate along the Creek.

His structures consist of two to eleven logs and are placed in pools four feet and deeper where cover is lacking. Fish use is almost immediate.

He says pools are recovering and getting deeper, but the bed is still extremely mobile. Terraces of stored sediments from the 1964 event can easily be mobilized during high water. The entire basin is full of stored sediment that can and will continue to come down. Logging in the basin continues. Barnum has a big THP at Mill Creek and the Creek in Redwood Valley has big problems. Simpson owns nearly all of the land from headwaters down to Wiregrass on the west side of the Creek. The Company has conducted massive clearcuts on either side of the Creek in the upper basin in the past few years. Watercourse and Creek buffers are not adequate and CDF carries out little oversight and enforcement.

He believes the Creek is suffering from a combination of impacts from land use and those generated by the geology of the basin. Recovery is variable from year-to-year. Some pools are scouring out, but high water shifts them around, so that where a pool may clean out, another fills, or even a scoured out one can fill up the following season. Even pools that are scoured out may have a sandy bottom with very little gravel.

He feels you can't point to a single factor and say that is the one that has caused and is causing the decline in the fisheries. Everything is acting on the fish. Certainly, foreign drift nets can scoup up entire populations as they school together. He discussed the impacts of the Co_rps of Engineers dyking

of the lower Creek, which destroyed the estuary so important for rearing of juveniles and the smolting process.

Redwood Valley temperatures can be lethal; fish move above the 299 bridge where the water temperatures are cooler. They also use the gorge where there are some pools with colder waters. Habitat quality is so poor that there is poor egg survival due to sediment deposition and shifting bed. The redds are either smothered or washed away.

He discussed Chezem's dam at Captain Creek, which he has constructed for past thirty years. There is essentially no fish passage, the water backs up one mile to the old road, and the pond is about thirty feet deep. Fish rear in it all summer, but the reduced flow below the dam causes the water to go into the gravel. The water is also warmer since it comes off the surface of the pond instead of from the bottom. This pond is part of his development, which is a kind of summer place for people from the coast. In addition to diverting water for the development and the dam, water quality problems could be generated by the development's septic system. There are several other small weirs above Highway 299, but Matt has tried to get the land owners to stop constructing them and several have done so on their own accord. There is a 1603 project at Noisy Creek each summer.

He suggested several areas that need attention. There are a number of small ownerships above Highway 299, including the Bareilles Subdivision, where roads and development are having impacts. Most of these landowners lack a sense of land stewardship. A watershed association might be a way of developing this stewardship so that people begin having a stake in the Creek and its fisheries, i.e., become responsible for these resources.

Caltrans also needs attention. Its project on Lupton Creek has resulted in the filling of this drainage and the slope continues to move and generate sediment. This project has caused problems for the Green Point Ranch. Caltrans has also abandoned miles of the old road without making any provisions for maintenance to protect against culvert failures and resulting water quality impacts. The Agency needs to be made accountable for this abandoned system, either maintaining it or decommissioning it.

Riparian areas are devoid of the large conifers needed for LWD recruitment. Willow and alders are coming in, but these species lack the size and longevity of conifers. A conifer-planting project alongside the Creek would be a long-term benefit to the Creek.

Matt suggested talking with Vernon Hailing of McKinleyville and Tim Mason of Everett's Club in Arcata.

Interview with Charlie Barnum at Humboldt State University Library, 24 February 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

He has heard Mill Creek called Fish Creek and thought perhaps that was where the egg-taking station was. He also suggested that Mill and Molasses Creeks were switched on the map, i.e., Mill should be Molasses and Molasses should be Mill.

Sweathouse Creek may have had salmon at one time. Minor Creek has salmon but only up to the six-foot waterfall. The steelhead go above, but the salmon can't and he thinks he has seen coho redds in lower Minor Creek. The salmon spawn near mouth of Minor Creek. After the '64 flood, there were big salmon in Minor Creek; he recalled seeing 15 salmon in one group in Minor Creek in 1965. Minor was heavily logged between 1949 and 1955. He saw a lot of carcasses in the late 1960's, but there was a decline in the 1970's.

Summer steelhead hang out at the 1951 bridge and in six-foot deep pools between Sweathouse and Minor Creeks. Minor has rainbow trout, but he doesn't know about cutthroat. In 1960's and 1970's, eels went up Minor Creek to the falls.

He said that the canopy on Redwood was taken out in the 1964 and 1972 floods, but that the alders have come back and there is a good canopy cover along the creek. There are not many conifers and his family is planting redwoods along the creek between Minor and the Hoopa Road.

Charlie was well aware of the value of large woody debris in the stream system and cited lack of logs as a factor in fish declines. He talked about the value of logs as cover and in the creation of pools. He raised the question of how the changes in the estuary after the 1964 flood have affected the fisheries. He also talked about recovery of the stream after flood events and how the sediment is moving through the Redwood Valley reach.

Regarding temperatures, he suggested that I find a study done in 1975 by a student at HSU named Tom. He did a temperature study on Minor Creek, which at that time was considerably more open than it is today, much of the canopy having been taken out in the 1972 flood. He suggested that another study of temperatures on Minor twenty years later would be valuable.

He suggested several ways of helping the creek recover: rock roads, comply with Forest Practice rules, plant conifers in riparian zone, restore LWD in creek. He thought opening some of the alders along the stream in order to get the conifers going would be worthwhile.

Charlie is interested in history and stewardship of the family's land. He has photographs of fish and the creek. He recalled several photos, beginning in the 1930's, that show a rock in the stream that was covered by the '64 flood, but is now five feet out of the water. He will have copies of the photographs made for the Park.

Interview with Jim Chezem at his Redwood Creek Ranch on Chezem Road, 1 March 1994. Interviewer Susie Van Kirk.

Jim Chezem came from Oregon in 1948 and purchased the 9,000 acre ranch, which was part of the Bair Ranch, from Helen Barnum. The house, where Helen and Jim live, was built 32 years ago, where Captain Creek enters Redwood Creek.

He thought that Mill and Molasses creeks were switched on the map, but felt the other names were correct. He noted that the Molasses family had a little hut near his present house.

Captain Creek had salmon, but not now. The creek dries up in late summer and fall. He named Bradford, Noisy, Lupton and Minon as having salmon in them in the past. He said most of the creeks have barriers that limit salmon use to the lower reaches. When they moved here, they saw lots of salmon in February and March. Helen Chezem recalled seeing salmon in numbers below the bridge throughout the 1950's and 1960's, but that ended prior to 1970.

Every tributary had steelhead. He said there are still lots of fingerling-size fish in the tributaries and the Creek and identified them as steelhead. Both silvers and chinook spawn in Redwood Creek. The steelhead come up in the fall with a spring run of fish coming in during February. He said he didn't know about cutthroat, since he couldn't identify them. They always see eels in the creek in June.

There are places where the water goes into the gravel in the late summer and fall. He said the 1972 flood had higher water than the 1964 flood, but he pointed out a flat just below the bridge and in front of the house, where the creek cut through and deposited tremendous amounts of woody debris. Prior to the floods, there were lots of boulders and the creek was down to bedrock. The flood brought in lots of gravel and the boulders are beginning to show up again. Most of the timber in this area was cut during the 1940's.

He recalled the Creek being "full of fish" up to Bradford Creek. There was lots of mud in the creek after rains, but still there were fish. He doesn't know what has become of them. Perhaps, he suggested, the outside cannery fishermen have reduced the fish numbers. He felt something was happening in the ocean to affect fish populations. He also said that river otters clean out the holes where fish stay during the summer months. The big changes in fish populations became noticeable in late 1960's. He felt stream temperatures were about the same as when he came here. He did note that the floods of the 1950's and 1964 took out lots of riparian trees. The floods created tremendous log jams which have now been removed.

He suggested that closing the mouth of the Creek to fishing as a viable means of increasing spawning escapement. Mr. Chezem doesn't fish and does not encourage fishing by his summer guests.

California Department of Fish and Game files, Eureka, 6 Jan. 1994.

Field Notes, April 23, 24, 25, 1973 by Don La Faunce, Dave Rogers and Len Rudder. On April 19, word reached Fish and Game that candlefish (Thaleichthys pacificus) were running in Redwood creek, commercial fishermen caught 2,500 pounds. La Faunce and Rogers observed millions from Orick to mouth. Found them passing Tom McDonald Creek 12.5 miles from mouth, but not 4 miles farther up, so it was assumed they probably got as far as Bridge Creek, 15 miles. Last large run in Redwood was in 1967.

Del Norte Triplicate, 7 Feb. 1973. Survey of Redwood by Dave Rogers and Ted Hatzimanolis. They walked creek, 61 miles, from Board Camp Mtn., elevation 4,750 feet. There were 28 named tributaries and numerous unnamed, totaling 153 miles of named streams and 121 miles unnamed.