



## Portola and Castle Rock Foundation

*Inspiring the Protection of Castle Rock and Portola Redwoods State Parks Through Quality Educational Experiences and Infrastructure Improvements*

If you haven't been to Portola in a while, now is the time to go! The trails that were temporarily closed, like Tiptoe Falls, are open and the creek and falls are running. The springtime wildflowers are in bloom and the summer flowers are just around the corner.

The PCRFF Foundation supports both Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State Park. Portola has dappled sunlight, cool foggy mornings, a beautiful creek and towering trees. What it doesn't generally have: crowds. Whether you are looking for serenity or exertion, Portola has it all. Grab your backpack, water bottle, map and your camera and head to Portola Redwoods.

In this issue we describe four great hikes at Portola, provide an update on the front porch project, introduce our new camp host, and share images of some of the beautiful wildflowers in Portola Redwoods.

*Eric Schmidt, PCRFF President*

### Four hikes to enjoy within Portola Redwoods

**Quick and Easy < 30 min – The Old Tree Trail** begins off the main road just south of the main campground entrance. In only 15 minutes you'll be deep in a canyon with huge redwood trees. The Old Tree is approximately 12 foot in diameter and 297 foot tall.

### **Scenic Creek and Falls ~ 1 Hour – The Iverson Trail**



There are two loop options to get to Tiptoe Falls. Both may involve good balance or wet feet to cross Pescadero Creek. It is about 6" deep. The shorter loop leaves the back of the Visitors' Center (Ranger Station), down to the creek. Across the creek is the Sequoia Nature Trail and a left turn up to the Iverson Trail to Tiptoe Falls. The longer loop leaves the front of the Visitors Center, goes left up the road 100' then left on the Iverson Trail. Bring your map to help stay on the Iverson trail. This route includes huckleberry and towering redwoods. Most people take the shorter loop so you'll be alone for the first 30 minutes of your hike. This moss-covered tan oak with huckleberry is located in a gap among the redwoods along this trail.

**Climb Coyote Ridge ~90 min**

If you want to gain some elevation leave the Visitors Center and head up Coyote Ridge. This +2 mile moderate hike includes a variety of spring wild flowers. This trail climbs to a vista point looking toward the Pacific Ocean and goes through about an acre of lightning-induced fire damage. This trail continues into the San Mateo County Park system but at this time the County Park is still closed due to fire damage. Out and back is a good workout and climbs into a mixed forest entirely different from the lower elevations.

**Peters Creek Loop ~6 hours.** Considered a more strenuous hike, this trail is some of the most pristine in an already pristine park! This is an all-day 13 mile trip. Hike the Slate Creek Trail to the Slate Creek backpack Trail Campground. Then hike out Bear Creek Trail to the Peter’s Creek Loop. Like Coyote Ridge, you’ll climb out of the Redwoods then drop back in. If you pay attention, you may see one of the tallest (un marked) trees in the Santa Cruz mountains. For a short hike, go to the Slate Creek Trail Camp, visit the Page Mill site and return to the parking lot via the Slate Creek to Summit Trail (about 2 hours).



**Meet Buzz, Camp host for Portola Redwoods**

Portola Redwoods is open for camping and day use. Make plans today to visit this beautiful redwood park. Camping reservations are available at Reserve California. [reservecalifornia.com/CaliforniaWebHome/](http://reservecalifornia.com/CaliforniaWebHome/)



The visitor center will be reopening very soon. COVID-19 restrictions regarding groups and social distancing apply.

Longtime Bay Area resident and retired software developer Buzz Morada has taken up residence as the new camp host at Portola Redwoods State Park. Buzz will be available to sell firewood and assist campers most days from 9am to 4pm, at least through the end of August. When he’s not driving

around in the Host Mobile serving visitors, Buzz and his two dogs can be reached in their “home office” at the campground entrance.

## Improvements at the Portola Redwoods Visitor Center

Phase 1 of the VC Front Door Project is complete. The improvements include: a bike rack, new redwood benches, redwood planters and message boards. The benches and planters were made from fallen trees, with help from Ed Rogers of Out of the Woods and a generous donor.



*Please help us do more by donating to Portola and Castle Rock Foundation. Send us a check, visit our website (<https://portolaandcastlerockfound.org/donations/>) or the PayPal Giving Fund (<https://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/110027>)*

## Earthy Project at Portola

An enthusiastic team of Earth Day volunteers, including three generations of State Parks supporters from one family, loaded 1.5 cubic yards of fill soil into the newly installed redwood planters at the Portola Redwoods

Visitor Center on Sunday, April 25. The four planter boxes are part of PCRF's ongoing

renovation of the VC porch and were constructed from trees that fell in the park. They will eventually contain interpretive displays of plants native to the park. The Earth Day project was made possible by a generous donor.



## Wildflower Season

This is one of my favorite times of the year for hiking because it's wildflower season! For this newsletter, I thought I'd share some of the flora that I came across recently at Portola Redwoods State Park. Please note that I am a very casual enthusiast – if you are interested in identifying more plants, animals, fungi (and Portola gets a lot!) and/or scientific names, I highly recommend the iNaturalist App. Many wildflowers have a short life span, so if you want to see some, you'll want to visit soon! The hiking trails I took were from the visitor center out to Tiptoe Falls and back, then the Summit Trail to Slate Creek trail to back to the campgrounds. I hope you find this mini-guide helpful. Pass it along to friends who might be visiting the park soon.

*Contributed by PCRFB board member Soya Clapp*

### Douglas Iris



It's hard to miss these flowers as they're large (a few inches across), and such a vibrant purple/blue. There are a lot of them in bloom right now, mostly in areas with a bit more sun, like the Western Heart's Ease. There

were large patches of them on the Summit Trail.

### Fetid Adder's Tongue



While I did not see any flowers on these guys, it is very easy to identify them by their speckled leaves. The beginning part of the Summit Trail that goes down by the creek has a lot of them.

### Star Lily



I saw these on the Summit and Slate Creek trails. They are easy to identify because they are tall, around 2 feet high!

### Western Starflower



There were a bunch of these by the side of the road, usually in shadier areas. They have tiny, pointy, pink flowers (maybe 1 cm across) and lots of leaves.

### Redwood Sorrel



As the name implies, you'll find Redwood Sorrel predominantly in heavily shaded, redwood areas. You'll likely see the clover-like leaves year-round, while the pink flowers are only around this time of year.

### Trillium

This plant is easy for me to remember because of the three large leaves that look like a triangle. While most of the Trillium I saw were starting to lose their blooms, you'll still be able to spot their leaves. I'm pretty



sure I saw a few of the Giant Trillium plants also (maybe a foot in diameter, across their leaves).

### Redwood Violets

Like the Redwood Sorrel, Redwood Violets can be found in shady areas, usually around redwood trees. I only spotted a couple plants but I'd guess there are probably some out by Page Mill. These guys are tiny – their flowers are maybe a cm across. Violets are easy to identify because of their striped petals.



### Western Heart's Ease

This is another violet that has white leaves and is known as a two-eyed violet, because of the purple-y dots on the petals. These flowers are small, but I saw a ton of them on the Summit trail. They like a little more sun than the Redwood Violets but still a bit shaded.



## **Membership**

*Help us do great things! Become a member of Portola Castle Rock Foundation today and we will provide you with free detailed hiking maps of both Portola Redwoods and Castle Rock State parks. Other Membership benefits include a 20% discount at Portola Redwoods Visitor Center Store and an invitation to our annual membership and volunteer appreciation event. Learn more: [portolaandcastlerockfound.org/become-a-member](http://portolaandcastlerockfound.org/become-a-member)*