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Ah Pah Road Project
Redwood National Park
December 1993

Redwood National Park and Prairie Creek State Park are coordinating a project to remove those portions of Ah Pah Road, East Ridge Road, and S-Line and B-Line spurs, located in the SE qt. sec. 3 and in sec. 11, 12N1E, all within Park boundaries. Since construction of the Highway 101 Bypass, Ah Pah Road no longer accesses the Klamath River from Prairie Creek State Park. East Ridge Road will continue as a trail to access dedicated groves and the Hope Creek-Ten Tapo Loop Trail.

To assess possible impacts of the project on historic resources and to develop a history of the area, a field survey and archival research were conducted in November 1993. Land ownership records, maps, newspapers, other reference material, and interviews provided information to establish a general land-use history of the area.

No resources were located that are National Register eligible and the project would not result in adverse impacts to any significant historic values. Keeping the East Ridge corridor as a trail to dedicated groves preserves an important historic context which recognizes the unparalleled efforts of Save-The-Redwoods League and the contribution of many individuals in protecting virgin redwood forests. It also preserves a portion of a road which appears to be a Civilian Conservation Corps project of the 1930's.

All of the project area was owned by Sage Land and Improvement Company in 1922 (Belcher Map). Sage acquired these lands in the early 1900's, expanding its ownership of redwoods in 1916 with the purchase of 7,500 acres on the Klamath and in Prairie Creek from Minneapolis timber speculator C.A. Smith (Blue Lake Advocate, 20 May 1916). With a second purchase of 11,000 acres on Redwood Creek from Smith later that year, Sage was considered the "largest holder of standing redwood timber in the county" (Blue Lake Advocate, 4 Nov. 1916). In 1931, Sage sold 2,280 acres to Save-The-Redwoods League, including the SE qt. sec. 3 and the S half NW qt. and SW qt. sec. 11 (Deed Book 205:10, 16 Oct. 1931). Another transaction at this time conveyed an additional 2,612 acres to the League in 12N1E and 11N1E (206:97, 16 Oct. 1931). Within a month, Save-The-Redwoods League transferred title to the SE qt. sec. 3 and the S half NW qt. and SW qt. sec. 11 to the State of California and the land was incorporated into Prairie Creek State Park (206:58, 12 Nov. 1931).

Although the E half sec. 11 was among the lands embroiled in agreements and conveyances with A.K. Wilson and his various companies, clear title apparently remained with Sage which sold it, as part of a large land transaction, to Simpson Redwood Co.

in 1956 (O.R. 397:406, 15 June 1956). Simpson sold its lands in sections 2, 11, 13, 14 and 24 in 12N1E to the United States in 1988 for incorporation into Redwood National Park (1889:992, 26 Aug. 1988).

Ownership of the N half NW qt. sec. 11 and Ah Pah Road is complex and chiefly involves A.K. Wilson, several of his operating companies, and the holding company known as the Union Bond and Trust Co. In 1946, Sage entered into a purchase agreement with the Union Bond and Trust Company involving 6,757.90 acres and 382,333 M board feet of redwood timber in 12N1E and 12N2E, including the N half NW qt. and the E half sec. 11 (298:330, 13 Dec. 1946). The purchase price was \$1,146,998 and Union was to pay Sage, prior to removal of any timber, at a rate of \$3.00\thousand feet on an estimated volume for each 40-acre parcel. The volume of redwood on the 400 acres in section 11 was estimated at 45.22 MMBF. The Agreement stipulated that Bond was to keep all logging camps and other structures in a clean and sanitary condition with the rubbish removed, burned or buried and Bond was permitted to construct all roads desirable and necessary for operations. As the 40-acre parcels were logged and paid for, Union was to receive a grant deed from Sage for those particular parcels and when the total purchase price was paid, Sage was to deliver a deed for the entire property.

Although deeds were found from Sage to Union for lands in 12N2E, 12N3E, 13N3E and 13N2E, the deed for this particular parcel was not located; Union, nonetheless, conveyed the E half and N half NW qt. sec. 11, along with other lands in 12N1E, to Edward Mills, Jr. in 1954 (315:544, 22 Nov. 1954). Mills immediately filed a quitclaim deed back to Union, evidently as a way of "clearing" title to lands Union may not have owned (317:245, 26 Nov. 1954). Mills was A.K. Wilson's San Francisco attorney and handled his drawn-out legal affairs (personal communication, Mitch Boyd, San Rafael, 2 Dec. 1993). Union conveyed the N half NW qt. sec. 11 and other lands to James C. Dezendorf in Sept. 1955 (359:524, 3 Sept. 1955). In 1968 this parcel and other lands were deeded to Western Title Insurance Co. (966:378, 24 June 1968) and then to Simpson Timber Co. in 1968 (968:282, 15 July 1968). Simpson conveyed it to the federal government in 1988 (1889:992, 26 Aug. 1988).

During the period between the 1946 agreement and the 1968 conveyance to Western Title Insurance Co., the portion of section 11 outside State Park boundaries was part of the continuing A.K. Wilson saga. Attachments, liens, and foreclosures were issued against Wilson, his family and associates, and a myriad of operating and holding companies. In a foreclosure action initiated by the United States in 1961 the defendants were Coast Redwood Inc., A.K. Wilson Lumber Co., Arthur K. Wilson and Myrtle E. Wilson, Union Bond and Trust Co., Mountain States Uranium Co., Ah Pah Redwood Co., James and Nancy

qt. sec. 3, 12N1E. Joe Romanini recalled that this road was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps prior to construction of Ah Pah Road (personal communication, Joe Romanini, Orick, 30 Nov. 1993).

The Prairie Creek CCC Camp was authorized in the summer of 1933 for veterans of the World War, but did not accept enrollees until that fall (Humboldt Standard, 10 June 1933; 13 April 1934). Just when the camp was abandoned was not determined; however, the Eureka District Office closed in April 1936 and by that time "most of its camps were either partially or totally dismantled" (Trentman, 1981). CCC projects in the Park included construction of the headquarters, campground, trails, and bridges, and clean up of debris from construction of the State Highway (Humboldt Standard, 27 April and 26 Oct. 1935; Union, 17 March 1977). They also worked as fire suppression crews and, nationwide, the CCCs built thousands of miles of service roads through timbered areas principally for fire protection (Humboldt Standard, (27 July 1935; 28 Aug. 1935). It is reasonable to assume that East Ridge Road was built to provide access for fire suppression. Also, it would have been an effective barrier against fire from private lands east of the Park, since the road runs almost the entire length of the eastern boundary of Prairie Creek State Park. If, in fact, the CCCs built the road, construction would have been in the mid 1930's.

The parcel containing Ah Pah Road, sometimes known as the A.K. Wilson Road, and consisting of 42.88 acres in sections 11, 12, and 13, 12N1E was first granted by Sage to Union Bond and Trust Company in 1949 (89:91, 11 Feb. 1949). Union immediately conveyed the land to the United States government with several provisions (89:101, 14 Feb. 1949). Union agreed that on two additional strips of land each 50 feet in width on both sides of and adjacent to the road, it would cut and remove only 50% or less of the volume of live redwood timber in trees greater than 36 inches in diameter and only 50% or less of the volume of other species in trees greater than 24 inches in diameter. They were not to cut small trees except for construction of roads or landings. It was also agreed that if the 50-foot strips did not afford adequate protection to the "scenic values or to the standing timber along the road constructed," the width of the strips could be increased. The trees to be removed under the agreement were to be marked by the U.S. Forest Service. This road remained in Forest Service ownership until 1983 when a quitclaim deed was granted Simpson (1724:1136, 18 Nov. 1983).

According to Frank Brickwedel, the Ah Pah road was built incrementally by A.K. Wilson, beginning in 1947. Two to three miles of the road, beyond its juncture with East Ridge Road, were completed by 1949 (Six Rivers National Forest map, California Division of Forestry map and Metsker map, 1949), with the remaining portion completed to the Klamath River shortly thereafter. The Forest Service acquired the road as part of its

authorized acquisition of 200,000 acres in the Northern Redwood Purchase Unit (personal communication, George Fry, 22 Nov. 1993). These lands were to be located outside the boundaries of Six Rivers National Forest and were for the purpose of studying and demonstrating sustained yield forest management in redwoods (Six Rivers National Forest Map, 1949). According to Fry, some acquisitions were made in the Purchase Unit, but the authorized acreage was never acquired and Ah Pah Road was not needed for access.

In summary, Ah Pah Road within the project area was constructed in the late 1940s, during logging operations by Coast Redwood Co. The developed site along the road, consisting of a concrete foundation and springhouse, dates to Coast's operations. It is likely that the CCCs constructed East Ridge Road in the mid 1930's; maintenance of this road as a trail to the Hope Creek-Ten Tapo loop trail and the dedicated groves preserves a CCC project, one of many within the Park. No National Register eligible sites or structures were located within the project area and no significant historic resources will be adversely affected by the proposed project.