



**A FOREST IS MORE THAN ITS TREES.** There's a whole web of relationships unfolding before our eyes. Here, we see a patchwork of different habitats that supports a high diversity of life, such as redwood forest, oak woodland, and grassland. There are elusive animal species such as Northern Spotted Owl and California giant salamander, unique plant communities, and more. Can you see some of Roy's Redwood's inhabitants?

**MAKE A LIST!**

Four horizontal lines for writing a list of observations.

Nature observations (from top to bottom): Pileated Woodpecker, California sweetgrass, lace lichen, redwood rafter, and California giant salamander with its banana slug prey

**THERE'S MORE!**

This self-guided experience is part of a series about our work to help Marin's forests. Each tour showcases a special place and what forest stewardship looks like there.

**TAKE ANOTHER TOUR:**

[parksconservancy.org/forestwalks](https://parksconservancy.org/forestwalks)

**LEARN MORE ABOUT:**

Forest health:

[onetam.org/forest-health](https://onetam.org/forest-health)

Roy's Redwoods:

[onetam.org/roys-redwoods](https://onetam.org/roys-redwoods)

You can support this work and get involved, so that Roy's Redwoods and other beloved places will thrive for future generations to enjoy.

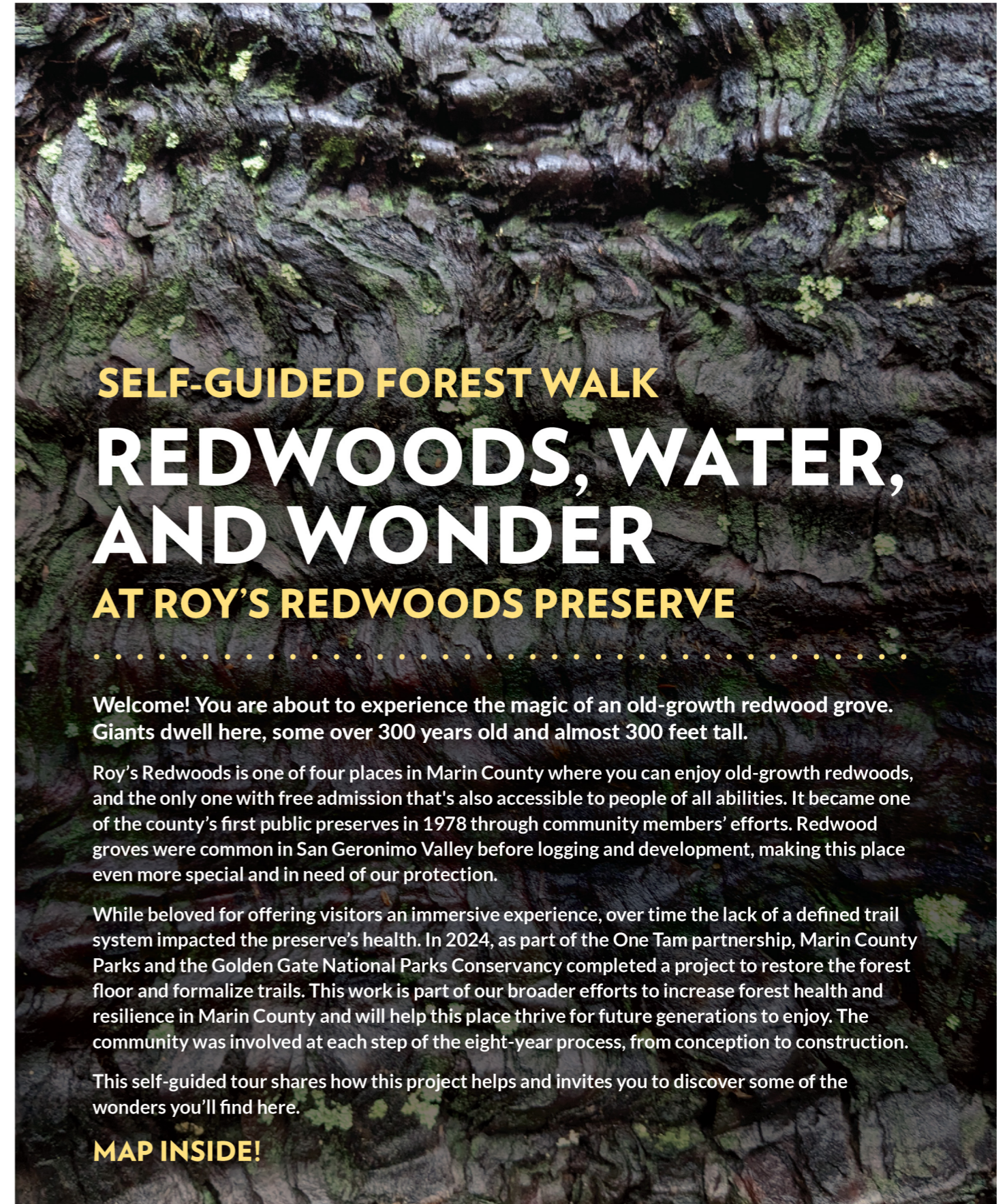
**BECOME A MEMBER:**

Join at [onetam.org/give](https://onetam.org/give) to support this work and to access member events.

**VOLUNTEER:**

See opportunities to get involved in caring for our public lands at [onetam.org/calendar](https://onetam.org/calendar)

Questions or comments about this self-guided experience can be shared with [info@onetam.org](mailto:info@onetam.org)



**SELF-GUIDED FOREST WALK**  
**REDWOODS, WATER,**  
**AND WONDER**  
**AT ROY'S REDWOODS PRESERVE**

Welcome! You are about to experience the magic of an old-growth redwood grove. Giants dwell here, some over 300 years old and almost 300 feet tall.

Roy's Redwoods is one of four places in Marin County where you can enjoy old-growth redwoods, and the only one with free admission that's also accessible to people of all abilities. It became one of the county's first public preserves in 1978 through community members' efforts. Redwood groves were common in San Geronimo Valley before logging and development, making this place even more special and in need of our protection.

While beloved for offering visitors an immersive experience, over time the lack of a defined trail system impacted the preserve's health. In 2024, as part of the One Tam partnership, Marin County Parks and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy completed a project to restore the forest floor and formalize trails. This work is part of our broader efforts to increase forest health and resilience in Marin County and will help this place thrive for future generations to enjoy. The community was involved at each step of the eight-year process, from conception to construction.

This self-guided tour shares how this project helps and invites you to discover some of the wonders you'll find here.

**MAP INSIDE!**



One Tam brings together its five partners and inspired community members to support the long-term stewardship of Mt. Tamalpais. Get involved at [onetam.org](https://onetam.org)



The trails shown below take you through a valley where Larsen Creek supports large redwoods. Find each stop to learn more. You don't have to go in order!

This map represents one part of the preserve. From here you can continue to explore.

Get a full Roy's Redwoods map at [parks.marincounty.org](http://parks.marincounty.org)

## 1 FRESH TRAILS AMONG OLD TREES

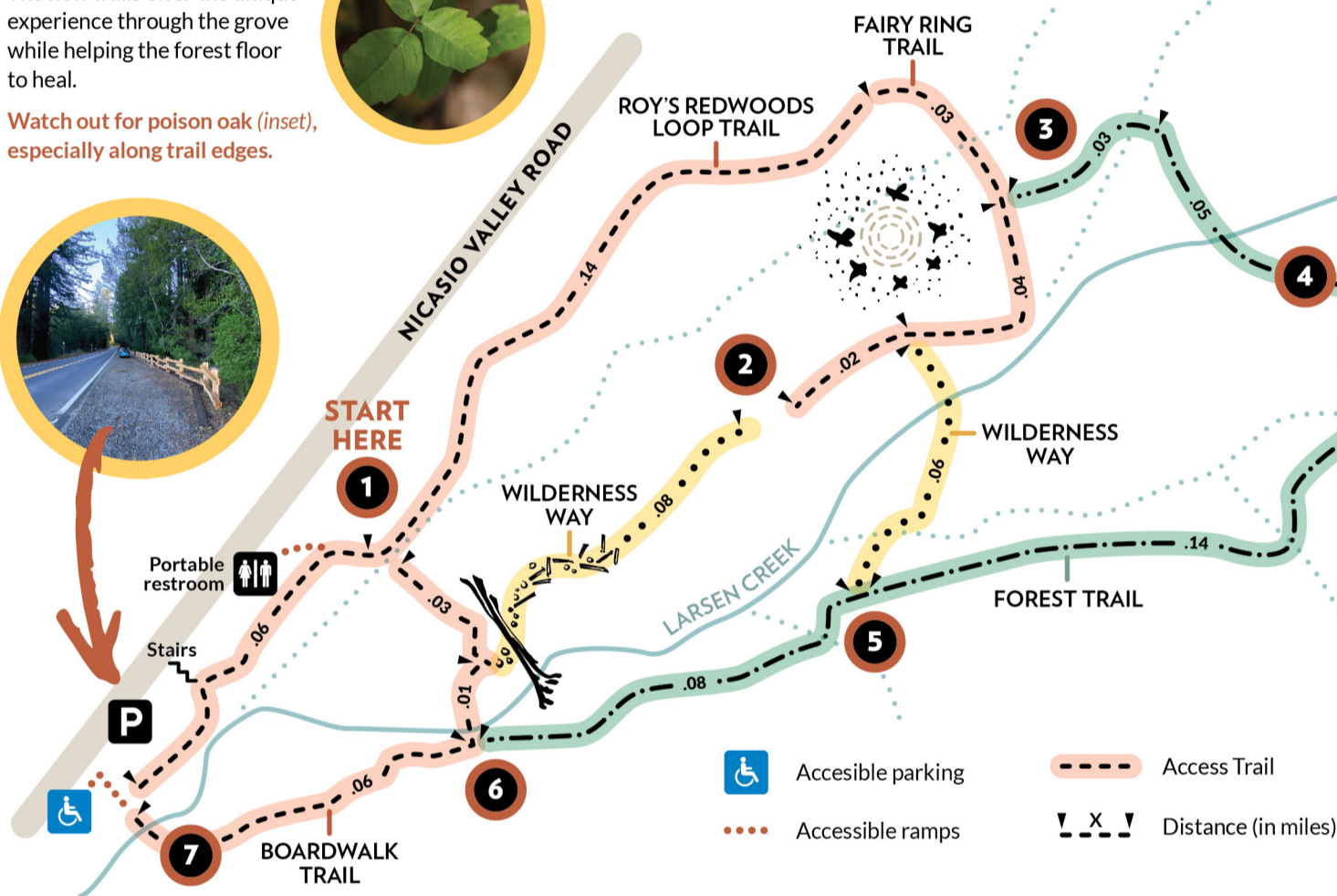
What are your first impressions? What do you see, hear, and smell? What are you reminded of?

If you've visited before, you'll notice new trails complete with boardwalks, steps, and immersive areas. Visitors can now move more easily through the preserve with less impact to the forest and creek. The new trail system was also designed to be more accessible for people of all abilities to enjoy.

Impacts of informal trails included compacting the soil, trampling vegetation, and changing the creek's flow. This hurts the redwoods and shortens their lifespan, and reduces the diversity of life on the forest floor.

The new trails offer the unique experience through the grove while helping the forest floor to heal.

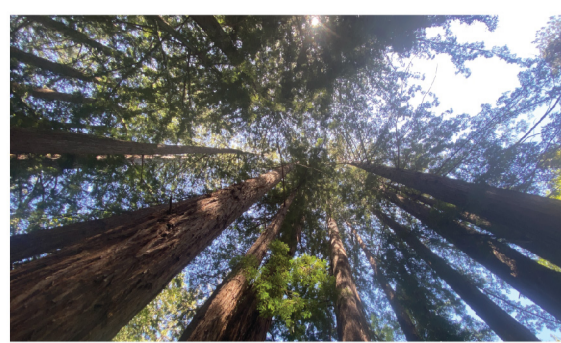
Watch out for poison oak (inset), especially along trail edges.



## 2 GATHER AND PLAY

You're now approaching an especially immersive part of the preserve. This is a great place to gather, play, and participate in group activities. Did you see a fairy ring on your way here? When mature coast redwoods die, new trees commonly sprout from the roots around the stump, often in a circle. Over time, the stump will decay and disappear, leaving only the clearing with the circle of younger trees around it. What can you imagine in these spaces?

If you continue on the Wilderness Way, be prepared to balance and scramble as you explore.



## 3 LOOK UP, LOOK AROUND

What makes old-growth redwood forests special? Not only are they meaningful to people, but they also support high biodiversity and play an important role for clean air and water. Old-growth forests tend to be more complex ecosystems than forests that are regrown after cutting.

At Roy's Redwoods, we have a relatively small number of giant redwood trees. Historically, there would have been more redwoods of varying ages, covering a larger area, and interspersed with wetlands and grasslands. High up is the canopy, which is home to many animals, and plants that live suspended there called *epiphytes*. The cooler, wetter conditions created by the creek and the redwoods themselves allow animals such as salamanders to thrive. Open spaces where light reaches the forest floor provide opportunity for new trees to grow. Redwoods create homes even after they die. In addition to nurse logs, dead or broken standing trees provide important habitat for wildlife like owls.



Coast redwoods are adapted to fire. Their thick bark (up to two feet) and high water content allow them to resist ignition, and their seeds germinate in response to fire and other disturbance.



## 6 SLOW IT, SINK IT, SPREAD IT

To restore Larsen Creek, scientists studied how water moves through the low-lying areas of Roy's Redwoods, called the floodplain. This helped us create conditions for the creek to reestablish its natural flow, including carefully locating the new trails. We also placed over 150 redwood logs to help slow the flow of water. Now, those braided streams of water and sediment can return and sink into the ground more slowly, over a larger area.



**Mess or method?** The logs you see on the forest floor play several important roles. Beyond slowing water flow, redwood logs also become *nurse logs*, or homes to wildlife, fungi, mosses and other plants, including new redwoods—even for hundreds of years after they fall. The logs brought into the site were not cut for this project—they were salvaged from several places, including some that had fallen into Kent Lake and had to be fished out! Some of these were also used for the boardwalk.

## 4 SIGNS OF FIRE

What evidence of fire, such as burned tree bark, can you see? Fire plays an important role in our forests, but most of Marin County hasn't experienced beneficial fire in decades. The last fire to occur at Roy's Redwoods was in 2014, when an unintended fire burned 3.7 acres before it was contained. Prior to this, the area last burned in 1861 and 1923.

Unlike other sites in Marin County where forest stewardship is happening to reduce ground debris, often referred to as fuels, the large trees here are well-spaced and the understory and groundcover are sparse. Restoring a healthy forest here means bringing back more forest layers rather than reducing them. This is a different goal than other places where dense fuels may be hazardous for a potential wildfire.

## 5 LOOK DOWN

What do you see at your feet? Plants growing on the valley floor are an important part of the forest. This redwood grove is a bit dryer than others in the region, so we find a different community of plants at the redwoods' feet. For example, we don't see redwood sorrel which commonly carpets other redwood forests. Instead, we see enchanter's nightshade (inset), which plays a similar role in this forest, and is uncommon in Marin. During the rainy season, you may see a great variety of fungi and lichens spring to life. Please watch your step, as salamanders, snails, banana slugs, and other moisture-loving wildlife will be more active. Spring brings many wildflowers.

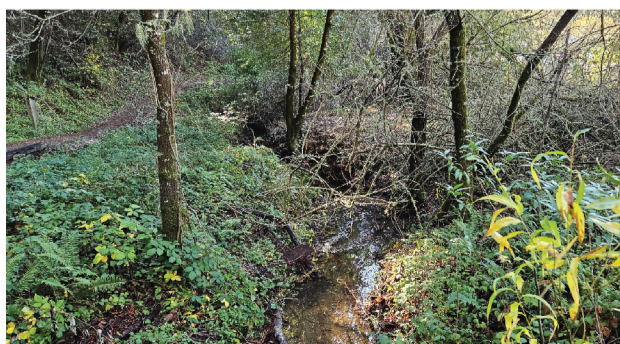
At this junction, you can stay on the Forest Trail or explore the Wilderness Way.



## 7 GO WITH THE FLOW

Can you see the creek? From this boardwalk, you can see Larsen Creek, the preserve's main watercourse. Several intermittent streams drain the slopes of the preserve and meet on the valley floor, where they spread out and leave sediment. These braided streams gradually form the creek, which eventually flows to Tomales Bay.

Before recent restoration, water flows concentrated and accelerated, causing erosion and deeper channels. Instead of a complex network of shallow streams across the valley, a single channel flowed along much of the creek's length and less water stayed in the valley. Faster flows can also carry away sediment, potentially impacting coho salmon living downstream.



Depending on the time of year, you may see different signs of the creek that flows through Roy's Redwoods. What are some signs that water flows here? What if you can't see any water? Blue dotted lines on the map mark out possible waterways. Keep an eye out for changes each time you visit.