

John Muir, famed naturalist and one of the founders of Yosemite National Park, once wrote, "Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul. Most of us spend a good deal of our lives working for bread by necessity, and I would argue that bringing home the bread is more than finding a job, and buying stuff, it is also about serving others which gives purpose and deep meaning to life. But today let's talk about beauty not bread.

I recently made a trip inland and then southward: visiting the California's Great Central Valley, and later attending a funeral in Los Angeles. While the Valley is the nation's bread basket, and LA has lots of jobs, I was eager to return home to the cooler climate and extravagant beauty of Humboldt County.

We who dwell in Humboldt are surrounded by some of the finest natural beauty anywhere in world. Our beaches and lagoons provide coastal beauty; the forests supply not only timber for building houses, but awe and wonder should strike the hiker who ventures into the coastal redwoods—and especially the old growth. Though over 90% of the old growth has been cut, thank goodness the remaining old forests are mostly protected. Why protect these trees, especially when their commercial value is so high? Many reasons, but today I'd like to focus on the sheer aesthetic appeal of an ancient forest.

Recently, I combined exercise and adventure by riding my mountain bike into the Headwaters forest. I dismounted and ran up to the top where the loop trail shows off the few remaining giants which were saved about two decades ago. I believe it would have been criminal to cut down those ancient giants. The forest on the way up the hill is impressive, but when you make the effort to climb the loop trail, then turn the corner and suddenly see those ancient giants stretching up toward heaven—there is more than <sup>the</sup> knowledge or biological science—there is reverie for the soul in the presence of those <sup>ancient</sup> trees.

I am heartened to see that our civic leaders are finally putting some money into developing trails that will give people access to our coastal and forest beauty. In recent weeks those of us who live in Cutten have seen some delays as the men are at work building a parking lot at the trailhead providing entry into the McKay Tract. It's worth the delay to know that soon there will be increased access to these nearby forests.

North Ridge Access Trail.

Currently there is some controversy about removing Eucalyptus trees to complete the Humboldt Bay Trail. What's a nature lover to do? Complete the trail? or cut down the trees? I think it important to remember these are not indigenous trees. While Eucalyptus are good at breaking wind, they also break in the wind. Cutting them down in order to safely increase access to the bay and coastline that surround <sup>the</sup> us is hardly ~~the~~ a moral equivalent to cutting down the ancient redwoods.

So get out there and enjoy a local trail. To close with another quote by Muir: "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment