

Land of the Giants

[Music playing with opening credits]

Narrator: The home of the Californiacks was the first state park state. Back in 1865 the federal government gave her the Yosemite Valley which was a state park until it went back to Uncle Sam again in 1890, to become part of Yosemite National Park.

At the turn of the century she made a second effort, buying 9,000 acres of redwood forest and creating California Redwood State Park.

Redwoods, the tall tapering giants of the tree world, are largely responsible for the fact that the Golden State has a state park system, one of the finest in existence.

During the World War, an extraordinary organization, the Save the Redwoods League was brought into existence, chiefly to save as much as possible of the virgin redwood forest along the northern coast of the state.

Out of the work of this league, drew the movement for a series of parks to contain liberal samples of the best of California's natural beauty. Three to one, Californians voted in 1929 in favor of a bond issue of \$6 million for parks. The Bond Act required that, of that, \$6 million has been spent. And for it, California has obtained mountain and sea, forest and desert, canyon, stream and waterfall worth.

Quite a majestic world carpeted with smooth Oxalis or Giant Fern, from which great tree trunks rise 300 feet towards the sky, are found in California State Parks, saved forever from the axe to fill those who behold them with awe and reverence.

[Main Video]

California Redwood State Park, consisting of some 10,000 acres, mostly redwood forest, two and one half hours distant from San Francisco in Santa Cruz County, was the first California State Park to be established when the Golden State set out determinedly to create a system of state-owned recreational areas second to none. It is a magnificent monument to those stately giants of the forest world.

The park is splendidly equipped to serve the requirements of the visiting public and in the summer season is constantly thronged with pleasure seekers. The coming of the Civilian Conservation Corps under the ECW plan speeded up a program of continued development which will take many years to complete.

Additional roads and trails are badly needed for it must be remembered that the park covers almost sixteen square miles. The trail building isn't easy for there are timbered canyons to be encircled and traversed and real mountains to be climbed.

Bridges are being put in, constructed entirely of bold native materials. Timbers are easy to procure and therefore inexpensive. The Conservation Corps, under the expert direction they are given, are able to handle every detail of the work.

A park as large as this one, as well known and as intensively used, must go in for the minute details of park equipment in a rather big way. There are lots of outdoor cooking or camp stoves and the yards in which they are built, with much of the labor done by Conservation Corps enrollees, are real concrete fabricating plants. The camp equipment is designed by draftsmen and engineers attached to the camps. The chief aim in design is that of fitness in relation to forest environment.

Along and near the south fork of the Eel river and its tributaries, and in the region traversed by the Redwood Highway are outstanding beauty spots of stream and valley landscape. Though long established as popular resort for visitors to Humboldt County, Humboldt Redwoods State Park has always needed just the kind of work which was made possible through inauguration of the ECW plan with its army of Civilian Conservation Corps workers. It was imperative that the beauty of the area as a whole be preserved by extending the boundaries of the original lands comprising the park

Clearing dense undergrowth from the big redwoods for fire prevention and freer growth provides lumber for practically any kind of construction job which may be desirable.

The Conservation Corps boys make everything from heavy bridge timbers to park signs.

Many of the trails being built have exceptional scenic beauty. They wind for miles over fern-clad slopes to reach the mountaintops. Around the Corps campsites, the traffic set up by the new work project, using tractors, trucks, and other heavy machinery, make constant road work necessary. Increasing the telephone communications system in these big forest areas is an invaluable conservation measure which the enrollees are contributing. Timber fires haven't nearly the chance they had some years ago.

Here are some of the most impressive and earliest known groups of big sequoias. The Stanislaus River, one of the most beautiful of the many California mountain streams, flows near the groves. In forest where necessary thinning provides the poles, the extension of telephone and telegraph systems is not difficult. Miles of fire lanes are being cut. Trenching and the improvement... [Cuts out]

The San Jacinto Mountains in Riverside County constitute an outlying and isolated southern representation of conditions characteristic of the Sierras. Here are more than fifty square miles of beautiful wilderness, virgin timber, and rugged mountains – one towering peak that rises well over two miles. The summit of the range affords an impressive view of the surrounding country for hundreds of miles around. And from Hidden Lake, one can see the desert so weirdly and mysteriously barren, on the very edge of this amazingly fertile California.

In recent years, the world over, there seems to have been an awakening to the joys of a more rugged life outdoors. Thousands of men, women, and children are tramping the countryside not merely riding through it in comfortable conveyances. Pack train trips in our larger national parks are more popular than ever before. San Jacinto is one area where the beauties of nature will never unfold themselves completely to those who think of scenic sightseeing as a job for automobiles. Here there must always be miles of foot trails at the ends of motor roads. One Conservation Corps camp was established way up in the clouds. Lumber had to be carried up on

the backs of horses and burros. From the winding trail, the traveler is able to enjoy a constantly changing panorama of natural beauty spots, fern covered ledges, waterfalls, unusual rock formations, and the countless other wonders which nature alone can create.

There's a lot of work to establishing the kind of camp in which more than 200 people can live for an indefinite period, winter and summer in comfort and with safety to their health.

In this mountain country, the same rocks that make grating difficult have their virtue in providing splendid material for foundations, wherever building strength is essential.

Building additional trails is a part of the enrollees' work at San Jacinto. Some of these trails look like little shelves in the solid rock walls of Owens [?] spouting chasms. Culverts and supports are made from granite blocks quarried right on the job.

The first chow call of the day in most Conservation Corps camps is at the early hour of six in the morning. But no one is ever late for breakfast – his appetite won't let him. Looks like ham and eggs. Luncheon is sometimes served in the field for the boys frequently work many miles from camp. And the camp administrators insist that the workers have hot food three times a day. Dinner, or supper if you prefer the term, is served about 4:30 in the afternoon, every man his own dishwasher.

Rubicon Point is a scenic area on the shores of Lake Tahoe, one of the highest and the largest of the Sierra Lakes. The lake itself, because bodies of water this size are rarely found at such high altitudes, is an outstanding attraction in the Pacific coast section. Here's an expanse of 193 square miles of cold crystal clear water, perched almost a mile and a quarter high in the mountains. Many of the motion picture celebrities from southern California have cottages along its shores. Within easy motoring distance of Sacramento, Oakland, and San Francisco, the Rubicon Point Park development attracts many visitors. Campsites, particularly around Rubicon Point proper, with its sandy beach, are popular. The Conservation Corps boys are doing much of their work in the forests, cutting new trails and establishing additional campsites. Some times they find it necessary... [Cuts out] ... their period of usefulness, and are interfering with the development of the park as a whole.

One of those not infrequent examples of eroded rock is a point of interest. It is called the Balanced Rock. Not enough is know of the Civilian Conservation, or conservation of civilians, part of this unique nationwide recovery plan. More than one million young men and war veterans have been participants. Few of them have failed to absorb benefits of even greater value to them than the mere employment and money they have been given. These boys here are being taught many things about tree and plant life, insect pest control, and so on which they can apply in later life.

Prairie Creek in Humboldt County is a magnificent redwood park. Rocky ocean shores with here-and-there stretches of sandy beach, add materially to the charm of the region. Think of the peace of a camp like this where trees lift themselves 300 feet from the springy turf redolent with the incense of redwood, pine, and fur.

At Patrick's Point, forests give way to meadows and meadows, in turn, to the sea. One stretch of beach is being cleaned of debris to provide fine ocean bathing. Undergrowth is luxuriantly deep and the trail building is being carefully done to preserve it.

One of the interesting activities of the boys here is the making of redwood signs to mark trails and places of interest. Unusual talents along widely varied lines have been uncovered among the enrollees.

From roads along the tumultuous Big Sur River there are vistas of churning rapids, lively waterfalls, stately forests, wood-fringed meadows, and lofty mountain peaks. Just before it plunges into the Pacific, the Big Sur traverses a beautiful valley about 250 feet above sea level. Six hundred acres, including this valley, are comprised in this outstanding state park area, variously named from the Big Sur River, Pfeiffer's Woods, and Pfeiffer's Point, which are in the same vicinity. Mountain streams in the California region are unusually swift and powerful. When they start for their ocean destination from elevations much greater than those which are common along the Atlantic seaboard, they move with speed and determination. The distances they traverse are relatively short. Their drop is much more precipitate. They are really a part of one great waterfall, from the peaks of the Sierras to the expansive and powerful Pacific.

The park is in Monterey County about thirty miles south of Carmel, with its western boundary about six miles from the junction of the Big Sur and the Pacific Ocean. It is on a fine state highway and easily accessible to travelers en route between Los Angeles and San Francisco, the two largest cities in the state. Its scenic features are unusually diversified. Manuel Peak and Post Summit are each about 3,500 feet high. Sycamore and Big Sur are mountain canyons well worthy of the name. The Juan Higuera Creek Falls are an exceptional beauty and there are inspiring groves of redwoods. Generally speaking, building construction work done by the Conservation Corps enrollees is confined to structures incident to the program being carried out. Barracks and administration buildings are usually built for them before they arrive in town. This garage for their tractors, trucks, and so on is however a Conservation Corps construction.

Much of the trail and road work being done requires nothing more than the good old pick and shovel but in some instances the most modern of motorized equipment is being used. There are seasons of the year when the Big Sur becomes quite unruly and an important part of work is on the riverbed easing the flow of water at floodtide. With 200 active young Americans on hand good baseball is an almost inevitable result ... [Cuts Out] ... Miles of babbling brooks, just the sort of place that people from the coast cities like so well.

Roads and trails to open up new spots frequently require retaining walls, culverts and short bridges. A fortunate circumstance at Cuyamaca is that sand and gravel are easily available, enough material to keep steam shovels and trucks busy for days.

Useful and attractive and ... medical Incense-cedar, careful choice of the trees which are already dead or are being crowded to death, is helping, not hurting the forest. Cedar is comparatively easy, splitting into good clean rails which have splendid lasting qualities. The fence you see being erected is near the Corps camp. Grasshoppers go unnoticed in the beautiful meadows which abound in the park. They are effectively stopped with a diet of poison bran. Here are the boys who are doing the job, answering the bugle for assembly before the day's work begins.

On Morro Bay, where the ancient pile known as Morro Rock is an outstanding scenic attraction, the old club is being expanded and developed in a manner which will make it attractive and useful to everybody. The Conservation Corps camp has been established near the site of the old Cabrillo Country Club Colony. A fine natural beach is being improved for bathing. The old wooden pier is being replaced with a new pier of modern masonry construction.

Roads near the beach are being relocated to provide picnic grounds and parking areas. There will be the usual outdoor ovens, freshwater outlets, tables, and benches.

The State Park Commission is interested in a purely conservation measure: the development of a wild fowl refuge. Dikes are being built to shut out the ocean from the low marshland crisscrossed by inlets from the bay. A freshwater supply will be provided for small lakes and lagoons to attract waterfowl.

Russian Gulch in Mendocino County, richly clothed with redwoods, rhododendrons, ferns, huckleberry, and salmonberry, is another of California's parks fronting on the Pacific. The shoreline is sharply cut by inlets in which ocean tides lash wildly to create ever-changing water spectacles.

Conservation Corps boys are policing the beach, clearing it of ocean wreckage which comes with the tides from nowhere to interfere with the bather's full enjoyment of the salt sea water. Deep in the forest, they are modifying nature's handiwork in accordance with modern civilization's requirements. Roads and trails are being made safe and easy for motor cars. Careful intelligent work is making many a sluggish brook an even more delightful haunt for the finny beauties which idle in its cold clear waters. Fallen timber tangles that constitute an ever-present fire hazard are being removed. Accommodations for picnickers are being provided.

Housing of the Conservation Corps and their equipment has caused a considerable amount of construction in the park. The boys at Russian Gulch are fond of the manly art and the number of surprisingly expert boxers in the regularly organized tournaments which are held. These Negro lads prove in their every action the value of the basic elements of the Conservation Corps idea: worthwhile work outdoors in the fresh air and sunshine, good food, plenty of sleep, and an easy mind. Looks like a real go! A well-constructed squared circle, gloves light enough to allow one to feel the sting of a punch, and even the jauntily worn bathrobes. A cheering and enthusiastic audience.

These trophies paid for by the boys themselves will recall some of the happiest days in the lives of these fine young Americans.

One million unemployed young men and war veterans were enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps in the first two years of its existence. Enrollees are taken from the states on a population percentage basis. Their personal care is in the hands of the United States Army, the country's most experienced organization for a task of such magnitude. Each state park Corps camp is set up according to a carefully organized plan. The superintendent, employed by the state park division of the National Park Service, is in charge of the work. Skilled workmen from the vicinity of each camp conduct all work that requires such supervision, the enrollees serving as helpers. The base pay of each enrollee is \$30 per month, \$25 of which is mailed directly to his declared dependents. Everything the enrollee requires is supplied to him: clothing, comfortable barracks,

good food; doctors are in regular attendance. Direction of this unique and fundamentally sound program to preserve and develop the nation's resources by means of a plan that places high value on manpower is in the hands of some of the country's most important individuals and agencies, headed by President Roosevelt, the man who conceived it and put it into action.

[End]