

# Redwood field trips: Not just for little kids

by Deborah Zierten on October 16, 2024

## League leads "world-expanding" hikes with Bay Area Older Adults



Members of Bay Area Older Adults explore the redwood forest on a League-led interpretive hike. Photo courtesy BAO ©2024.

On a sunny summer morning, I met up with a group of two dozen adults for a hike through Butano State Park in San Mateo County. Some of the participants had gone on previous hikes with me, but others were brand new to visiting a redwood park. Judging by the lively chatter and big smiles, I could tell everyone was looking forward to a great visit to the big trees.



As we began walking into the forest, I talked about the history of the park and the role Save the Redwoods League played in protecting this special place. All along the 3-mile hike, features in the landscape provided jumping-off points for interpretation. Passing massive redwood stumps, I mentioned the impact the logging industry had on this forest and what forest conservation looks like today. Blackened fire scars on some of the redwood trees prompted a discussion about restoration efforts in the wake of the 2020 CZU Complex fires.



Participants from Bay Area Older Adults, a non-profit that offers local adventures and opportunities to build community. Photo courtesy BAO ©2024.

The morning's hike was just one of [many events \(https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/BAO-group-events\)](https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/BAO-group-events) provided by Bay Area Older Adults (BAO), a non-profit organization that looks to expand the world of adults over 50 years old. BAO offers monthly group activities that include lectures, cultural events, and day hikes. Cheese tasting and a walk with the Tule Elk at Point Reyes? How about dinner and Shakespeare? Or a redwoods adventure paired with wine-tasting? BAO has something for everyone.



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Many BAO members are retired and often live alone. The organization provides a community in which they can get outside to exercise, stay healthy, and have fun with new friends. "I don't like hiking by myself and so being with the group has motivated me to get out, exercise, and enjoy the fresh air," said one participant. "BAO gets me to go out to parks that I would not visit on my own."

Another BOA member appreciated the opportunity to make new connections. "The hikes provide not only the health benefits of walking outdoors, but also the social aspect of meeting people from all over the Bay Area."



Deborah Zierten (right) weaves elements of history, ecology, and conservation into an interpretive hike with BAO members. Photo courtesy BAO ©2024.

I've been working with BOA for 10 years, leading interpretive hikes in various redwood parks around the Bay Area. Every hike is different, and I enjoy weaving in information about the park's history, redwood ecology, and the latest redwood research, as well as current League projects and initiatives.

Our partnership with [Bay Area Older Adults \(https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/\)](https://www.bayareaolderadults.org/) is just one way the League helps connect people to the peace and beauty of the redwoods. We aim to foster a sense of connection, expose people of all ages to these majestic forests, and share why redwoods are such unique trees—and so worthy of protection.



About the author

Deborah joined the League's staff in 2013 as the Education & Interpretation Manager. She brings with her extensive experience teaching science, developing curriculum and connecting kids to the natural world.

[More from Deborah Zierten \(https://www.savetheredwoods.org/author/debzierten/\)](https://www.savetheredwoods.org/author/debzierten/)

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