

## **Visiting the Redwoods**

**(Story words: California, Muir, National, special, moisture)**

Bryan lives in Sacramento, California, and every chance he gets he likes to drive a few hours to the coast and hike in the redwoods near San Francisco, at Muir Woods, or at Redwoods National Park. In a redwood grove, Bryan feels he is walking in a fairyland. Even though Bryan is six-feet tall, he feels like he is a tiny sprite when he looks up at the giant trees.

Redwood trees are special because they are both the tallest and the oldest of trees. Old growth redwood groves can be found on the coasts of California and Oregon.

Redwoods like the damp soil in the winter when it rains. In the summer when it is dry, the redwoods rely on coastal fog for moisture. They are said to “sip” the fog, as their needles absorb moisture from the air.

The tallest coastal redwood is named Hyperion and stands at 379 feet somewhere in Redwoods National Park. The oldest coastal redwood is thought to be over two thousand years old.

Bryan was amazed and excited when he considered how the land and world had changed during the lifetimes of these giant trees. This prompted him to learn more about redwoods.

While redwoods are very tall, their root systems are shallow. Although their roots do not go deep into the ground, they can travel up to 100 yards away from the tree. Because redwoods live in groves, the roots of a single tree must intertwine with the roots of all the other trees nearby. Those intertwined roots give all the trees in the grove more stability.

When Bryan imagined what the roots looked like under the ground, it gave him a new way of seeing the redwoods above the ground. These giant trees were like a gigantic

family of trees—a gigantic family that has been together for hundreds and hundreds of years!

When driving home to Sacramento, Bryan felt more relaxed and peaceful than he did before. He knew that his latest pilgrimage to see the redwoods would not be his last.