

# MATTOLE MEANDERINGS



News and inspirations from the Mattole Council and the Mattole Camp and Retreat Center.....Autumn 2023

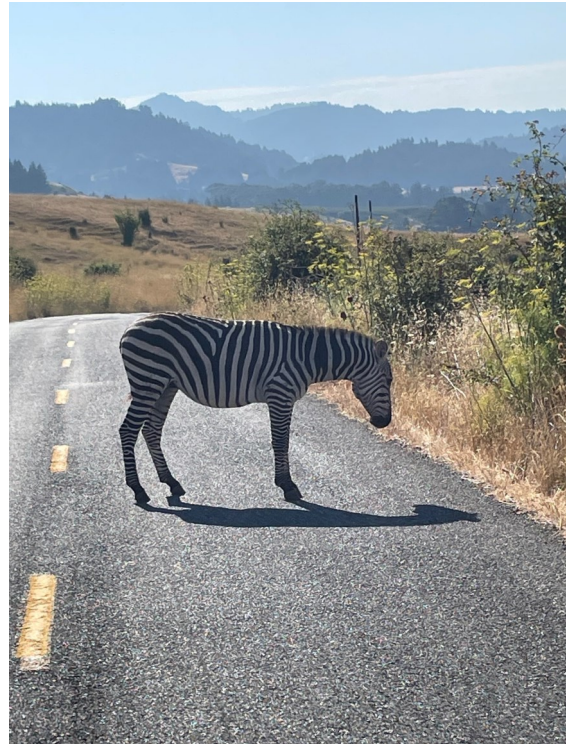
## Early autos, stage coach, and the Mattole Road

In 1911, autos first started to appear in Mattole. Ken Roscoe remembered when his uncle said, "we must go to Eureka, see the District Attorney, and get him to take these off the road. They can never be a success. They just go around scaring our horses, and there will always have to be a team available to pull them out of mud holes and river crossings."

Few people buying cars then, thought they would ever have graveled, all-weather roads. In the winter time, road conditions were so bad, the Upper Mattole was referred as "upper mud hole".

Train travelers would get off at Fernbridge where a stage would take them to Ferndale, where they could check into the Ivanhoe for the night. After an early breakfast the next morning, they would take the horse-drawn Petrolia stage. The Wildcat road could be a sea of mud at times. They would arrive in Capetown around noon, where a meal was prepared. With a fresh team of horses, they would continue to Petrolia. After a number of stream crossings, they would arrive in Petrolia to spend the night. The next morning they would complete the final 10 miles to Upper Mattole.

"Heydays in Humboldt", by Ken Roscoe



Think about that travel the next time you drive the hour and 15 minutes to Camp from Ferndale. Also, you may never know what you will see along the way.



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## The Return of the Harmony Makers

### ...aka... Paddling to Paella!

Perhaps you are old enough to remember these iconic lyrics from a simpler time in your life:

'Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, A tale of a fateful trip

That started from this tropic port, aboard this tiny ship...'

Yes, of course, you remember. This is the Gilligan's Island theme. It's forever imprinted in our minds and forebodes the travails that may occur to those setting sail on an ocean, sea, river, stream, pond, or other navigable waterway.

As fate would have it, a similar expedition set out from Mattole Camp on Saturday, June 17 along the Mighty Mattole River destined for adventure (and paella) at a place mysteriously known as '3030'. The 'expedition' was led by Captain Richard Sykes (aka Cap'n Rich) and his able first mate Joe Sykes. Cap'n Rich has earned his stripes, not only as the Executive Director of the Mattole Salmon Group, but also leading numerous similar voyages on the Mighty Mattole over the years. The expedition also included seven hardy seaworthy souls from parts unknown seeking fame, fortune, and food. They being Dean, David, Angela, Dave, John, Therese, and Jack.

Before setting off, Cap'n Rich had to decide about what river flow conditions are best to set sail. If the river is flowing too fast, the flotilla would have to employ its finest river piloting skills to avoid danger. However, if the river is flowing too slowly, then there would be many portages over water depths too shallow for the flotilla to glide effortlessly. Since expedition members no longer belong to the Order of the 'spring chicken', the thought of numerous portages of their watercrafts brought a predictable seafarer's reaction of 'AAAAAARRRRGGG.....'. Cap'n Rich set 100 cfs (cubic feet/second) as the minimum river flow for whether the expedition would go forward. On that Saturday morning, the launch of the 'paella expedition' was greeted with perfect weather and river conditions. Temperatures were in the high 60's and the river was flowing at 100 cfs. Game On!

As we set sail, we envisioned a 4-hour journey to the promised land of paella. After getting the kayaks inflated and provisions secured, the flotilla launched a little after 11 am. The first order of business was to get familiar with maneuvering and staying the course on our kayaks. A word to other adventure seekers, the Mighty Mattole is a beautiful river set in an awe-inspiring location, but it is windy. The river meanders like a snake. Many times, as we made our way down river, it was very difficult to determine where the deepest part of the river was to select our preferred path and hope to avoid running aground.

Upon getting launched and making our way under the Mattole Road bridge, we were quickly upon a very busy AW Way Camp. Our kayak had an unanticipated run-in with a gravel bar causing water to flow into the kayak. We righted ourselves and headed downstream once again, greeting AW Way campers as we passed through their playground. Ahoy!

Further down river, we encountered more low flow spots requiring portage of the kayaks. We probably got out and carried the kayak at least 10 times in the next mile stretch. Good thing the water was so refreshing. The best advice to be offered is just enjoy it. It's pretty much inevitable that you'll get wet. Tipping over is nearly impossible to avoid. We also learned, the wet way, that when in a 2-person kayak, it is best to allow one person to exit completely before the second person does.

During the run, we passed under a second crossing of Mattole Road over the river. A beautiful site and another 30 minutes until we stopped for lunch. Cap'n Rich and first mate Joe found a perfect location where we could beach the kayaks. Boy, was that trail mix and cold beer tasty beyond words!

We finished lunch around 3:00 and charted the last mile or so to our destination of 3030 where we experienced a nice run of deep water and one last grueling portage before concluding the expedition. We arrived about 4:30, completing 4.5 or so river miles in a little over 5 hours.

We were hosted by Richard and Sue, who cooked up an awesome paella on the deck. It was a classic Mattole moment in time. A good time was had by all as we rejoiced, ate, and drank, and enjoyed this beautiful place.

If you have the chance, get out on the Mighty Mattole. No doubt it looks great from the landside, but floating upon it is even better!

A special thank you to Mattole Camp for hosting our group, once again, year after year, for 16 years and counting. There's no place on earth as special as Mattole Camp, where memories are created and experiences are shared!

~David Bruzzone (Harmony Makers)





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## From the kitchen of NSQ Camp 2023.....

...The campers and staffers of North Star Quest Camp were excited to return to Mattole camp for our annual retreat of educating and empowering middle school students from throughout Humboldt County. I've never fed a hungrier group of campers!

NSQ serves two sessions of campers. The first week is 6-7th graders, and the second is 8-9th graders. We specialize in catering our daily workshops around these age groups and providing the most engaging and meaningful experiences for the youth of our community.

Let's not forget what makes the most memories at camp; arts and crafts, sing-a-longs at the campfire, and of course, the majestic Mattole River full of swimming holes, bustling wildlife and nature hikes. Everyone gets to take home a camp shirt, a few bug bites, and a variety of beaded, braided and painted memorabilia that will last a lifetime.

I feel extremely blessed to continue to be a part of this lovely group of humans. This year

marked our 27th year of providing a camp experience for today's youth. We've overcome a lot over the years, but the magic of NSQ is real and thriving! You can see former campers and staff members all over the community (and world!) volunteering, mentoring, and inspiring people of all generations to build healthy relationships and foster confidence and creativity in today's unpredictable society.

NSQ is a proud DreamMaker project under the parent company The Ink People. Our mission is to never turn a camper away because they can't pay. This means we are always accepting scholarships, donations and new grants to apply for. If you would like to contribute to this amazing organization, please visit our website [northstarquest.org](http://northstarquest.org) for more details.

Carrie O'Neill, NSQ Camp Chef

## Greetings from the Chair

In a number of ways, this has been a remarkable year. First of all, we received the report and findings and recommendations from the consulting firm Run River, which the Presbytery or the Redwoods contracted with concerning the viability and direction in which the camp might proceed. With that in hand, the council began to implement changes.

The Presbytery also formed a task force to help give direction moving forward. This task force and the council will work together in giving direction to the camp.

Along with the regular maintenance each year, we had to make some major repairs to the lodge roof. Fortunately, we were able to do this at a reasonable expense thanks to the volunteer labor of our skilled workers. It will allow us to do improvements elsewhere that are needed. Financially we are better off this year due to a busy season and some user fee changes.

This is the second year that we have operated without a caretaker/director position being filled. Without the dedication of our council members, we would be unable to operate this facility. My sincere thanks to all of our members who give so freely of their time and talents to make this camp and retreat center possible. It simply would not happen without you. Thank you also to those donors who share financially to the life and improvement of the camp. It makes the difference.

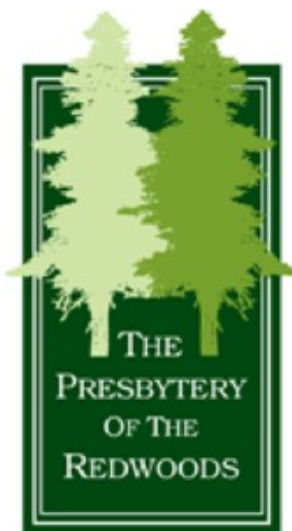
As we come close to the end of another year, I wish to extend blessings to all for the approaching holiday seasons. May 2024 be a good one. Thank you.

David Goodman, Mattole Council Chair



Pictured right: On two hot days in August, a work group removed, repaired, and reroofed a section of the main lodge, which had to be done before winter.

Thanks to Gene Callahan, Pastor Dan Link, Tom Allen, David Goodman, and Lee Dedini.



# Mattole Camp and Retreat Center Annual Newsletter



Mattole Camp & Retreat Center  
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*Mattole Camp and Retreat Center is owned by the  
Presbytery of the Redwoods, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).  
Our camp is open to everyone, regardless of race, gender,  
disability, class or religious persuasion.*

