
ACHIEVING THE VISION

(Opposite) Schooner Gulch
State Beach

Important actions we can take

Working to achieve excellence requires ensuring preservation of the park system as a whole and the resources within the parks, addressing barriers to park visitation and use, and sustaining strong, broad-based networks that will take responsibility for maintaining excellence. To achieve the vision for excellence in California's state parks, the following five strategies and subsequent recommended actions provide a roadmap for action by the community of partners and stakeholders to the state park system, the Department, and the public at large:

Make Parks Relevant

GUIDING STRATEGY: State parks compete with other recreational, technological, and social pursuits for attention and use by Californians and tourists. An excellent state park system creatively engages and interacts with residents and visitors, provides high-quality hospitality and amenities, and visibly showcases the benefits of park use.

Recommended Actions

1. Provide hands-on activities and interactive demonstrations that allow park visitors to participate in telling and interpreting park stories.
2. Develop a statewide public outreach and education effort to kindle the imagination of all Californians about their state parks and promote awareness of the affordability, amenities, and features of state parks.
3. Train park staff, volunteers, and concessionaires in hospitality and providing integrated service to visitors.
4. Update and modernize existing interpretive displays and materials in parks.
5. Utilize technology to support and enhance in-park experiences (i.e., audio tours/podcasts, mobile apps for park use, etc.).
6. Develop new models for providing recreational opportunities and park features that will attract new audiences of state park visitors.
7. Explore new models for campgrounds, lodging, picnicking, and visitor centers to welcome and accommodate new communities and visitors.
8. Include themes of relevance to California's diverse populations when interpreting park history.
9. Initiate an outreach campaign with the medical and public health communities to utilize health professionals as advocates for increasing use of state parks as part of a healthy lifestyle.
10. Encourage state park-specific identification and marketing in statewide Travel & Tourism Commission advertising and marketing campaigns.

Increase Access for All

GUIDING STRATEGY: Californians need to see themselves as owners of, stewards of, and investors in of their state parks, and see that ensuring their use of state parks is fundamental to those goals. An excellent state park system helps Californians become comfortable in nature, is easily reachable—(physically or virtually), grows the next generation of

stewards, and integrates with other education and recreation programs.

Recommended Actions

1. Increase availability of public transportation routes and lines that include access to state parks.
2. Conduct research and community assessments to identify key geographic, cultural, recreational, and other factors that will ensure fair distribution of new state park resources.
3. Collaborate with outdoor and recreation groups to create an “ambassador” program to train non-visitors in park use and increase their familiarity with state parks.
4. Translate all basic park materials (maps, visitor guides, web-based information) into languages that reflect those spoken by California’s diverse public.
5. Target outreach to science, math, and history teachers to integrate state parks within curriculum and lesson plans.
6. Encourage use of state parks to bring concepts from the model curriculum in California’s Environmental Education Initiative to life.
7. Promote the use of state parks as a venue for facilitating a student’s continuum of learning during summer and non-school periods.
8. Promote state park connections to the California Children’s Outdoor Bill of Rights.
9. Expand the existing Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) program.

Defend Park Lands and Resources

GUIDING STRATEGY: Protecting state park lands and the natural, cultural, and historic resources within the parks strikes at the core of why state parks exist. An excellent state park system is protected by legal tools, collaborates with other park systems, uses science-based practices, and engages citizens in safeguarding their parks.

Recommended Actions

1. Create a system for all state agencies to share specific information regarding planned or pending infrastructure projects that impact state parks.
2. Enact state legislation to achieve the highest level of protection for the entire state park system.
3. Develop volunteer programs to assist with monitoring natural, cultural, and historic preservation resources within state parks.
4. Encourage use of conservation easements and adjacent land buffer purchases to assist in protection of existing state parks.
5. Enter into cooperative management agreements with other agencies (federal, regional, local, and non-profit) to strengthen protections across park systems.
6. Develop an ongoing network for science and academic leaders and experts in natural, cultural, and historic preservation efforts relevant to California state parks to regularly share information, new research findings, and best practices.
7. Institute a collaborative planning effort to highlight connections and identify areas of cooperation between state parks and other park systems, open spaces, and protected lands.

Broaden Leadership for Parks

GUIDING STRATEGY: The task of protecting park resources and providing high-quality recreational experiences lives in a network of public, private, and non-profit efforts and expertise. An excellent state park system cultivates leadership from a diversity of sources, creates efficiencies in operations, and encourages a shared and collaborative approach to ensuring the secure future of state parks.

Recommended Actions

1. Establish a Partners Leadership Institute for non-profit and for-profit partners and staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation to learn and improve management, partnership, and entrepreneurial techniques.
2. Convene community, non-profit, and for-profit partners on a semi-annual basis to share best practices and identify opportunities to collaborate.
3. Create paths and career support that allow all state park employees opportunities for leadership.
4. Hire, train, and invest in professional park managers and rangers with background in natural and cultural resources, environmental education, and/or park management.
5. Reorient park operation priorities to emphasize visitor services, education, and resource management and protection as the primary operation activities.
6. Encourage performance-based management practices by the Department of Parks and Recreation.
7. Encourage operational decision making at the lowest appropriate level, while providing central standards, practices, and advice.

Strengthen and Diversify Funding

GUIDING STRATEGY: Reliable funding to ensure the long-term existence of the state park system is a necessary condition for excellence. An excellent state park system is funded by a three-pronged approach that balances stable public funding, philanthropic and non-profit support, and revenues generated from concessions and new business opportunities.

Recommended Actions

1. Secure long-term, sustainable public funding to guarantee the future of the state park system.
2. Conduct a statewide assessment and inventory of assets for mission-centered revenue opportunities (i.e., historic buildings as overnight accommodations).
3. Review current approaches to concessions to create new efficiencies and identify new concession opportunities and categories (i.e., recreation concessions, facility concessions, interpretive concessions).
4. Increase philanthropic efforts to support state parks in ways that enhance citizen engagement in state parks.
5. Encourage appropriate, mission-centered options for locally earned revenue.
6. Ensure that future bonds include appropriate funding levels for growing the state park system, consistent with research and community assessments.

(Back Cover) Sugarloaf Ridge
State Park

California State Parks Foundation (CSPF), with 120,000 members, is the only state-wide independent nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and advocating for California's magnificent state parks. Since 1969, CSPF has raised more than \$173 million to benefit state parks. CSPF is committed to improving the quality of life for all Californians by expanding access to the natural beauty, rich culture and history, and recreational and educational opportunities offered by California's 278 state parks—the largest state park system in the United States.

For more than 90 years, **Save the Redwoods League** has been dedicated to protecting the ancient redwood forests so all generations can experience the inspiration and majesty of redwoods. In 1850, there were nearly 2 million acres of ancient coast redwood forests in California. Today, less than 5 percent remains and faces threats from unsustainable logging practices, poorly planned development and global climate change. Since its founding in 1918, the League has protected more than 189,000 acres of land.

For more information about how you can help achieve the vision for excellence for California's state parks, please contact us.



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