



# CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION

## **BACKGROUNDER**

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### **Why Open and Accessible State Parks are Vital to California**

#### **Economical**

- California state parks had over 65 million visits in 2010, compared to the National Parks' most recent visitation figure—281 million a year for the entire nation in 2010. California's state parks generate \$4 billion in economic activity across the state while offering an affordable vacation alternative for countless families. State parks return more money to the state's General Fund than they receive in General Fund support. Park closures will undermine the earning power of state parks, more jobs will be lost, and California's travel and tourism industry will be hit hard. Hotels, locally-owned bed and breakfast establishments, restaurants, retail shops, tour operations and many more businesses that rely on parks for visitation and economic activity will be devastated. Closure will also add to State Park's existing \$1.2 billion deferred maintenance deficit.

#### **Natural**

- California's 278 parks preserve 1.5 million acres and protect some 300 miles of coastline. State parks also harbor 50 percent of all the rare habitat types in California and represent 75 percent of all of California's 202 habitat types. Additionally, 17 state parks have been recognized for their national or international significance and inclusion in one or several categories: World Heritage Sites, National Natural Landmarks, Biosphere Reserves, and Biodiversity Hot Spots.

#### **Historical**

- The state parks system includes 51 designated State Historic Parks and thousands of Native American cultural sites. California's state parks are home to two dozen National Historic Landmarks, including Hearst Castle, the Jack London Ranch, the Donner Party Camp site, and the San Juan Bautista historic district. National Historic Landmarks are the highest level of historic significance awarded by the Federal government.

#### **Cultural**

- Open and accessible state parks are critical for all Californians. They define California. They are at the core of broader eco-systems across the state and they constitute a web of cultural stories, environmental legacy and recreational opportunities available to all Californians and visitors alike. They are the product of 100 years of hard work, dedication and creativity. State parks are an integral part of what makes Californians proud to live and work here.