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Leading State Park Organizations Launch Public Survey to Create Vision for Excellence for California's State Parks

SACRAMENTO, CA – Today, the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) and Save the Redwoods League (League) are launching the State Park Excellence Project aimed at creating a statewide vision for excellence for California's state park system. Annual budget proposals to raid state parks funding and shutter the doors (and gates) to state parks have created a heightened awareness and affinity for California's parks by residents across the state. This new State Park Excellence Project seeks to involve all Californians in a statewide discussion about their wishes, ideas, dreams and suggestions for the future of our state parks.

The first phase of the Park Excellence Project is being kicked off today by the launching of an online survey designed to gain public input about what excellence should look like in California's state parks. [The survey can be found here](#), and it will be active through mid-March. Survey questions will ask Californians to share their thoughts on a variety of areas, including new amenities and services they wish to see in state parks, current barriers to park access, the primary purpose of California's state park system, and the role that California's state parks should play in the lives of its residents and visitors from around the country and the world.

"In this moment, we believe it's critical to begin a public discussion about what excellence in California's state park system should look like," said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of CSPF. "Over the last several years, Californians have all fought against park closures and budget reductions with successful results. Yet now is the time to fight for something, to create and reach a vision for a park system that includes our collective expectations, desires and hopes for our California state parks. We're excited to launch this new online survey to truly involve the public in a discussion about their state parks."

The State Park Excellence Project is intended to engage all Californians in a dialogue about excellence, with the goal of increasing public support for an enhanced, improved and excellent state park system and the mechanisms to achieve that vision. In addition to the public engagement that will result from the online survey, the Park Excellence Project will also include outreach to key park constituency groups, interviews with experts from other state and national park systems, and review of existing, successful park management, operations, and partnership models that can serve as examples for California's state parks. By utilizing a variety of outreach and data-gathering methods, the project will identify a shared vision of excellence for the state park system in the 21st century and eventually create a set of metrics that the public, park organizations, policymakers, and the media and others can use to measure, monitor, and

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publicize California's progress toward the vision for excellence. In addition to creating those benchmarks, the project will also identify potential pilot projects where short-term changes can be implemented in select California state parks to move toward excellence.

"The very formation of California's state park system was, itself, a visionary step toward excellence," said Ruskin Hartley, Executive Director of Save the Redwoods League. "Yet changes in California's population, demographics, recreational pursuits and uses of the outdoors create a need to look at what Californians want to see from their state parks today. The Park Excellence Project is an opportunity to look forward to a new vision and develop a strategy that park advocates and all Californians can work to achieve in our state parks."

The results of the online study and other outreach methods will be synthesized into a final report that will be published and electronically available in late summer 2010. Final report recommendations are anticipated to include a focus on gaps between the public's vision of excellence identified through the Park Excellence Project and the current reality of park funding, infrastructure, management or other existing barriers.

For more about this project and the survey, visit calaparks.org

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About CSPF

With over 115,000 members, the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) is the only statewide independent nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing and advocating for California's magnificent 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 information about California's state parks, visit www.calparks.org.

About Save the Redwoods League

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 181,000 acres of land. For more information, visit www.savetheredwoods.org.