



# California State Parks

## Quick Facts



Last updated 10/4/2005

### The Future of California State Parks

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The Department actively tracks trends in outdoor recreation and leisure travel, both on a national and a statewide basis, and conducts periodic user surveys to determine the needs and interests of park visitors. The

*Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California* survey indicates that the following recreation opportunities are important to the public:

- Camping in developed sites
- Trail hiking
- Nature study
- Visiting museums or historic sites
- Recreational walking
- Visiting zoos or arboretums
- Picnicking in developed sites
- Use of open grass or turf areas
- Camping in primitive sites

This information helps direct the future of California State Parks.

### Parks' Connection to Tourism

California State Parks provide a valuable and vital tourism resource to both U.S. residents and travelers from other countries. According to the California Division of Tourism, 73 percent of travel by U.S. residents in California was for leisure purposes

(2004). These travelers enjoyed the wide variety of leisure activities available in California, many of which can be found in California State Parks. Park-related activities and the numbers of leisure travelers who reported participating in them are as follows:

Activity	California Resident Leisure Travelers (Millions of person-trips)	Non-California Resident Leisure Travelers (Millions of person-trips)
Sightseeing	46.8	13.9
Beach/waterfront	23.4	5.0
Parks: National, State, etc.	13.7	3.3
Visit Historic Site	9.8	3.0
Hike, Bike, etc.	7.8	1.3
Nature/Culture: Observe & Conserve; Eco-travel (Bird/Wildlife Watching)	7.8	1.3
Camping	7.8	1.0
Hunt, Fish, etc.	3.9	0.7
Boat/Sail	2.0	0.7



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Overseas travelers also participate in park-related activities and are an

important part of the California State Parks' visitor base.

Activity	Percentage of Overseas Travelers (2004)
Visit Historical Places	40.4%
Visit National Parks	33.6%
Touring Countryside	31.4%
Water Sports/Sunbathing	17.0%
Camping/Hiking	7.9%
Environ./Eco. Excursions	5.0%

## Travel Dollars and State Parks

On the average, each California county earns approximately \$1.4 billion per year in direct travel expenditures by visitors. While it is not possible to tie all of these funds to specific drawing points in each county, it is a fact that California State Parks are vital to the economies of many communities. For example, a study by California Polytechnic

University, San Luis Obispo in 2003 found that visitors to Morro Bay State Park added \$15 million to the local economy in direct and indirect expenditures over two years. The visitors' expenditures were responsible for 364 jobs in Morro Bay, primarily in recreation and amusement, hotels, restaurants, and retail shops.

## Transportation Modes

The majority of leisure travelers in California use private vehicles for their trips. This is good news for California State Parks. The average distance traveled one-way by California residents on leisure trips is 171 miles, bringing many state park units within driving

distance of urban centers. Also important to note is that 59% of leisure travel by California residents is for day trips, and 19% is for getaway weekends. California State Parks are convenient destinations for California residents for all types of leisure travel.

## Mode of Transportation Used by Leisure Travelers in California

Point of Origin	Auto (net)*	RV
U.S. Residents	54%	3%
CA Residents	88%	2%
Total Overseas	71%	2%
United Kingdom	61%	1.3%
Japan	70%	0.3%
Mexico (air travelers)	68%	N/A
Australia/New Zealand	66%	1.3%

\* Includes rented and private cars, trucks and small vans



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### Sources:

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