

State Parks Along California's North Coast Natural Beauty Along the Coast

California State Parks along the northern California coast offer visitors a chance to enjoy spectacular beauty with rugged beaches and redwood forests.

Benbow Lake State Recreation Area (HUMBOLDT COUNTY), located two miles south of Garberville on Highway 101, has more than 600 acres of forest, 32,000 square feet of water, and a half-mile of beach. It's the perfect place for hiking, swimming, fishing, sailing and horseback riding. Occupying a mile of the South Fork of the Eel River, the park has three miles of hiking trails and a campground. Canoes and paddleboats may be available for rent from a concessionaire in the park. During the summer, the park is home to Shakespeare and art festivals. For more information, call (707) 923-3238 or (707) 247-3318.

As with all visits to California State Parks, it's always a good idea to call before your visit to check on conditions.

Richardson Grove State Park (HUMBOLDT COUNTY), located eight miles south of Garberville on Highway 101, features a forest of towering coast redwoods along the South Fork of the Eel River. The park is one of the oldest state parks. It was acquired in the 1920s and named after the state's 25th governor, Friend W. Richardson. There are developed campsites and a visitor center, built from an old lodge. The park is popular for fishing, with winter runs of silver and king salmon. For more information, call the park at (707) 247-3318.

Sinkyone Wilderness State Park (HUMBOLDT and MENDOCNIO COUNTIES)\ Access to the park from the south is 50 miles north of Fort Bragg via Highway 101 and County Road 431 to Usal Beach. Access to the park from the east is 25 miles west of Garberville via Briceland Road to Needle Rock visitor Center. Both access roads are primitive and not recommended for large

recreation vehicles or travel during inclement weather. The park has 7,000 acres along California's "Lost Coast," one of the few lengthy portions of California's coast not accessible by highways. The park has forests, prairies, bluffs, beaches and tidepools - virtually unchanged since the days when Sinkyone Native Americans lived in the area. Inside the park there are three groves of old-growth redwoods and a herd of Roosevelt elk, introduced from Prairie Creek State Park. The 17-mile Los Coast Trail runs through the park. For more information, call (707) 986-7711 or (707) 247-3319. The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.

Smithe Redwoods State Reserve (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located four miles north of Leggett on U.S. 101, features a 60-foot waterfall. The 620-acre park has picnic areas, trails, and swimming and fishing in the South Fork of the Eel River. For more information, call (707) 925-6482 or (707) 247-3319.

Standish-Hickey State Recreation Area (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located two miles north of Leggett on Highway 101, along the south fork of the Eel River, has 1,020 acres, with swimming and fishing for steelhead and salmon during the fall and winter runs. The park has nine miles of hiking trails and groves of old-growth redwoods, including the 225-foot high Miles Standish Tree. There are developed campsites within the park. For more information, call the park at (707) 925-6482 or (707) 247-3319.

Westport-Union Landing State Beach (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located one and a half miles north of Westport on Highway One, features campsites on a bluff overlooking the ocean. Surf fishing is popular at the park, as is beachcombing along the rocky beach. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Admiral William Standley State Recreation Area (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located 14 miles west of Laytonville on Branscomb Road, has a 45-

acre redwood grove. Visitors enjoy hiking and picnicking in this fairly isolated park. For more information, call (707) 925-6482 or (707) 247-3318.

Mackerricher State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located three miles north of Fort Bragg on Highway One, has eight miles of beach - including sand dunes. Hiking, jogging, bicycling and fishing are popular. The park also has a fresh water lake stocked with trout in the spring. There is a wheel-chair accessible nature trail and four miles of abandoned road open only to foot traffic, bicycles and horses. Laguna Point is a popular area of the park where visitors can watch harbor seals at play. In winter and spring, whale watching takes place in the area. Camping with hot showers is available year-round. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.



Jug Handle State Reserve (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located one mile north of Caspar on Highway One, features a self-guided nature trail ("The Ecological Staircase") that explores wave-cut terraces formed by the ocean as well as tectonic activity in the area. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Point Cabrillo Light Station and Preserve (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located three miles north of Mendocino on Point Cabrillo Drive, occupies a spectacular headland thrusting out into the Pacific Ocean. Visitors can park and walk the half-mile down the access road to explore the Light Station. It is comprised of the lighthouse and three original lightkeepers' houses and outbuildings. The fully restored lighthouse is open Saturdays and Sundays from 11am-4pm from the first weekend in March through the last weekend in October. The Preserve grounds are open for pedestrian use from sunrise to sunset daily. Accessible parking is available in front of the Light Station residences. For more information, call (707) 937-0816.

Caspar Headlands State Beach and State Reserve (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located four miles north of Mendocino on Highway One, features a beach, headlands and a panoramic view of the ocean - good for whale watching. Fishing is popular on the beach. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Russian Gulch State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located two miles north of Mendocino on Highway One, has a redwood forest, Russian Gulch Creek Canyon, the Devil's Punch Bowl (a collapsed sea cave with waves sloshing inside the cauldron-like interior), headlands, and a popular beach. Inside the park, hikers can find a 36-foot waterfall. The park also has a 200-foot sea-cut tunnel that forms a "blowhole". Camping is available from April 1st through November 1st. For more information, call (707) 937-4296 or (707) 937-5804.

Mendocino Headlands State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), surrounding the town of Mendocino, is a popular place for strolling along the beach and whale watching. Abalone diving and picnicking are also popular. The **Big River** unit, which is part of Mendocino Headlands State Park, is one of California's newest state parklands and is located 1/4 mile inland from the town of Mendocino. The park features 7,334 acres of redwood forest and tidal marsh. The park has abundant wildlife, including osprey, black bears, mountain lions, river otters, mink and beavers, as well as coho and steelhead. The park is connected to Mendocino Woodlands, Russian Gulch and Jug Handle State Reserve by a network of 100 miles of hiking and biking trails as well as Big River itself. Kayaking and canoeing are popular in the area. However, no camping is available or allowed in the park at this time. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Van Damme State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located three miles south of Mendocino on Highway One, features the Fern Canyon scenic trail system and the Pygmy Forest. The park has 1,831 acres of beach and upland

areas plus developed campsites. Abalone divers, joggers and bicyclists enjoy the park. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Navarro River Redwoods State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located 18 miles from Boonville along the Navarro River and Highway 128, is an eleven-mile-long "redwood tunnel to the sea." Visitors can enjoy picnicking, swimming, and camping at the Paul M. Dimmick campground. The park is popular for fishing, canoeing, and kayaking in the late winter and spring. Second growth redwood groves stretch the length of the park, which is home for raccoons, black-tail deer, and river-oriented birds such as the belted kingfisher. Unlike the coastal parks, summers at Navarro River Redwoods can be very warm. The campground is closed during the winter months. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

Manchester State Park (MENDOCINO COUNTY), located seven miles north of Point Arena on Highway One, features 5,272 acres of headland bluff and beach with views of the Point Arena Lighthouse. Brush and Alder creeks in the park are popular for fishing. The park has primitive, environmental and group campsites. For more information, call (707) 937-5804.

For more information, visit California State Parks on line at: www.parks.ca.gov

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