



# Castle Rock State Park


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[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov) • [www.santacruzstateparks.org](http://www.santacruzstateparks.org)


The park encompasses over 5,200 acres of wildlands, and perches on the highest ridge in the Santa Cruz Mountains, separating San Francisco and Monterey Bays. Above the fog and smog, the park offers over 35 miles of trails through a wide variety of plant and animal communities, interesting rock formations, and sweeping views of the San Lorenzo Valley and Pacific Ocean. A few of the activities visitors can enjoy are hiking, back-




*Be aware of the presence of poison oak, rattlesnakes, ticks and mountain lions.*




Poison Oak



Western Rattlesnake



Tick

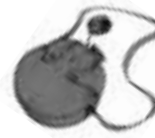


Mountain Lion

packing, horseback riding and rock climbing.

To ensure that your visit is safe and enjoyable, please stay on the trails, and abide by the regulations listed on the back of this handout.

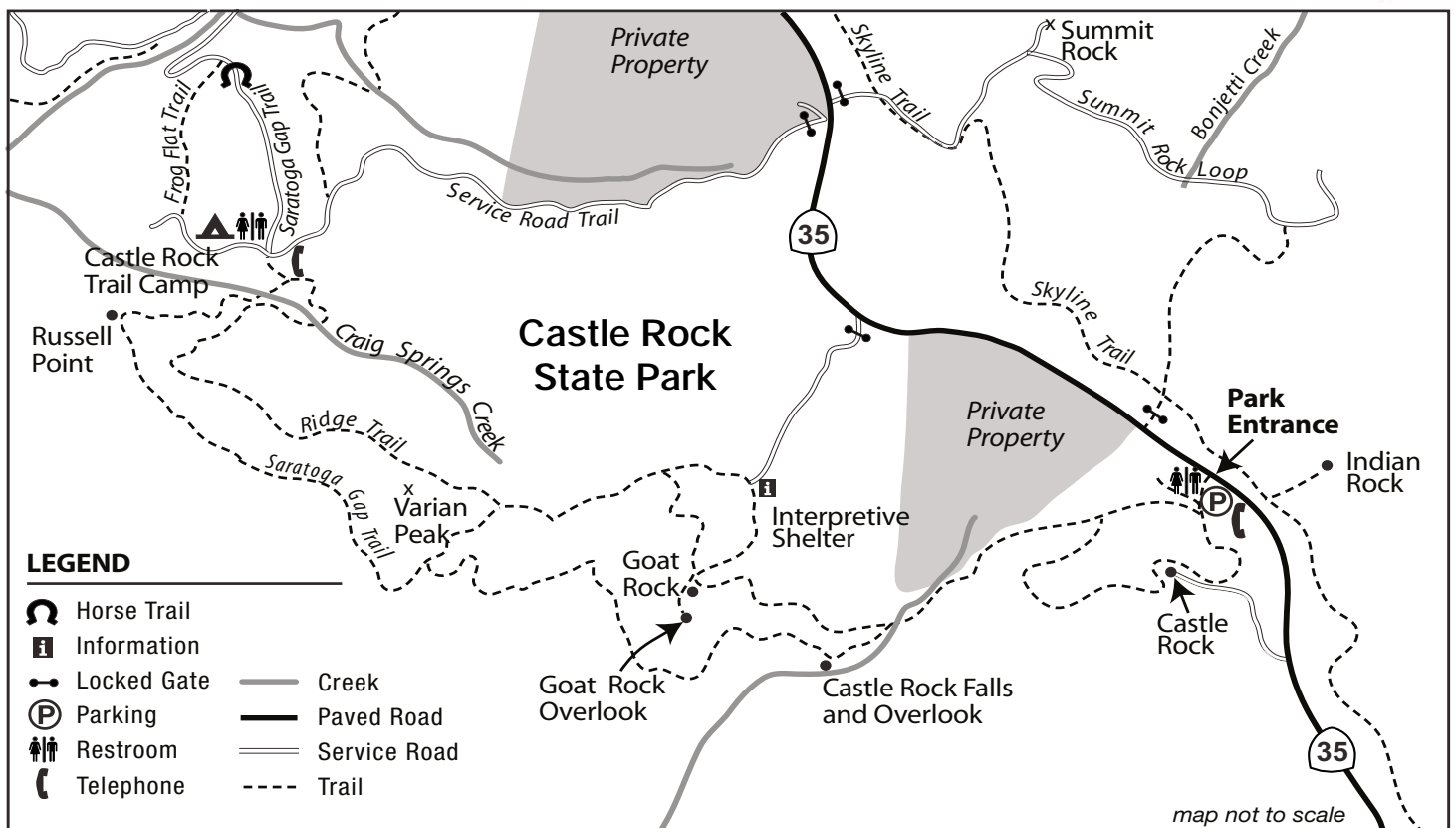
**Maps:** Two maps are available: *Castle Rock Trail Map* and *Guide to Rocks & Climbing*. To purchase maps by mail, send \$2.00 (make checks payable to Portola & CR Foundation) and a self-addressed, stamped (2 oz. = 2 stamps) #10 envelope (9-1/2" x 4-1/8") for each map of the park.



Always carry and drink plenty of water to avoid becoming dehydrated. Water availability in the park is very limited, and temperatures can be very high.

Castle Rock Trail Camp has piped water.

Use caution when you are among or on the rocks. Slips and falls can result in serious injury.



map not to scale

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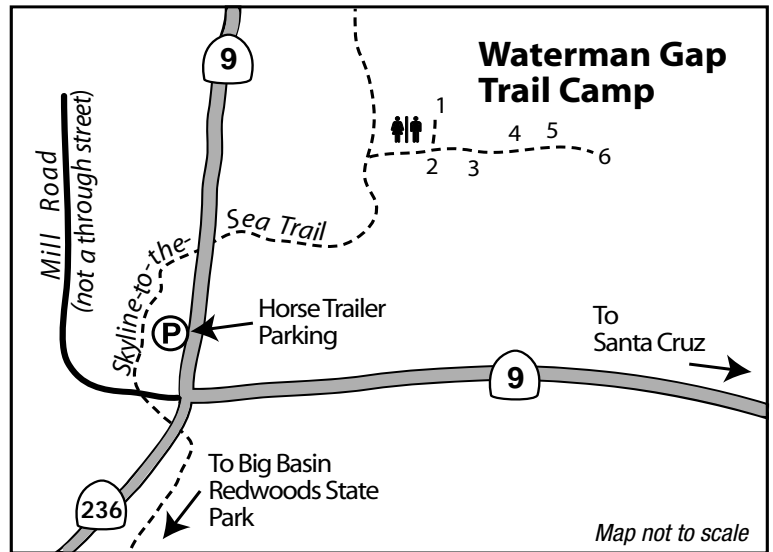
## BACKPACKING AT THE TRAIL CAMPS

Castle Rock has two backpacking trail camps: Waterman Gap Trail Camp and Castle Rock Trail Camp. All trails are closed at sunset. Campers are required to remain in the campground from sunset to 6 a.m. Plan to be in your campsite at least 1/2-hour before sunset to have enough light for camp setup and check-in with the ranger. Dogs and smoking are not permitted in either campground. The only overnight parking at Castle Rock State Park is in the main parking lot on Hwy. 35, 2.5 miles south of Hwy. 9.

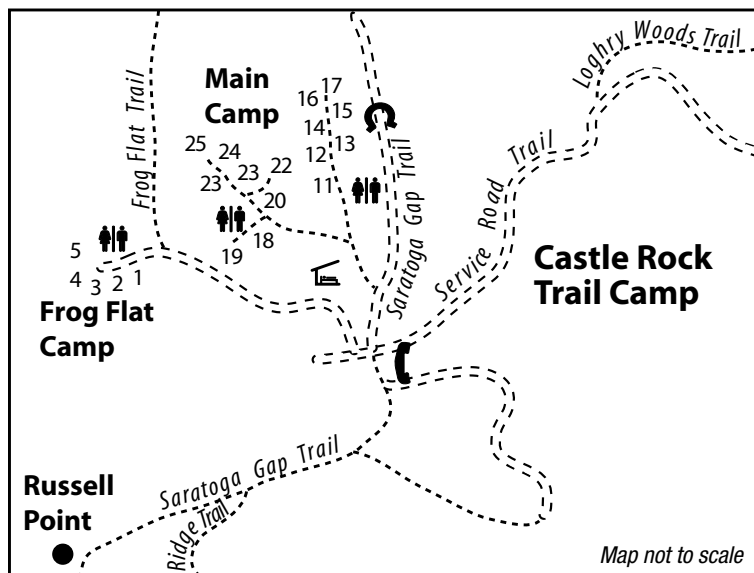


**Castle Rock Trail Camp** — Located 2.6 miles from the main parking lot via the Saratoga Gap Trail, this camp is situated on a ridge. Each of the 20 first-come, first-served sites has a table, fire ring, nearby piped drinking water and vault toilets. A camp shelter is available for everyone's use during inclement weather. Fires are allowed only in designated fire rings when fire season is closed. Wood gathering is prohibited, but campers may purchase firewood at the camp. The only access for bicyclists to this camp is via the Campground Service Road Trail, off Hwy. 35. Bicycles are not allowed on any trails beyond this camp.

**Waterman Gap Trail Camp** — Located 6.3 miles from the north end of Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail at Saratoga Gap (no overnight parking at this location), or 9.3 miles from the Castle Rock State Park main parking lot on Hwy. 35 (2.5 miles south of Hwy. 9), this camp, in a mixed hardwood and redwood forest, has 6 primitive sites and a vault toilet. Reservations are required and may be made by calling the trail camp reservation line at Big Basin Redwoods State Park at (831) 338-8861. Fires and smoking are not permitted. However, gas camp stoves are allowed. There is very limited drinking water so carry water with you.



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## SKYLINE-TO-THE-SEA TRAIL CAMPS

**Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail** descends for 28.2 miles from Saratoga Gap (intersection of Hwys. 9 and 35) through Castle Rock and Big Basin Redwoods State Parks, ending at Waddell Beach.

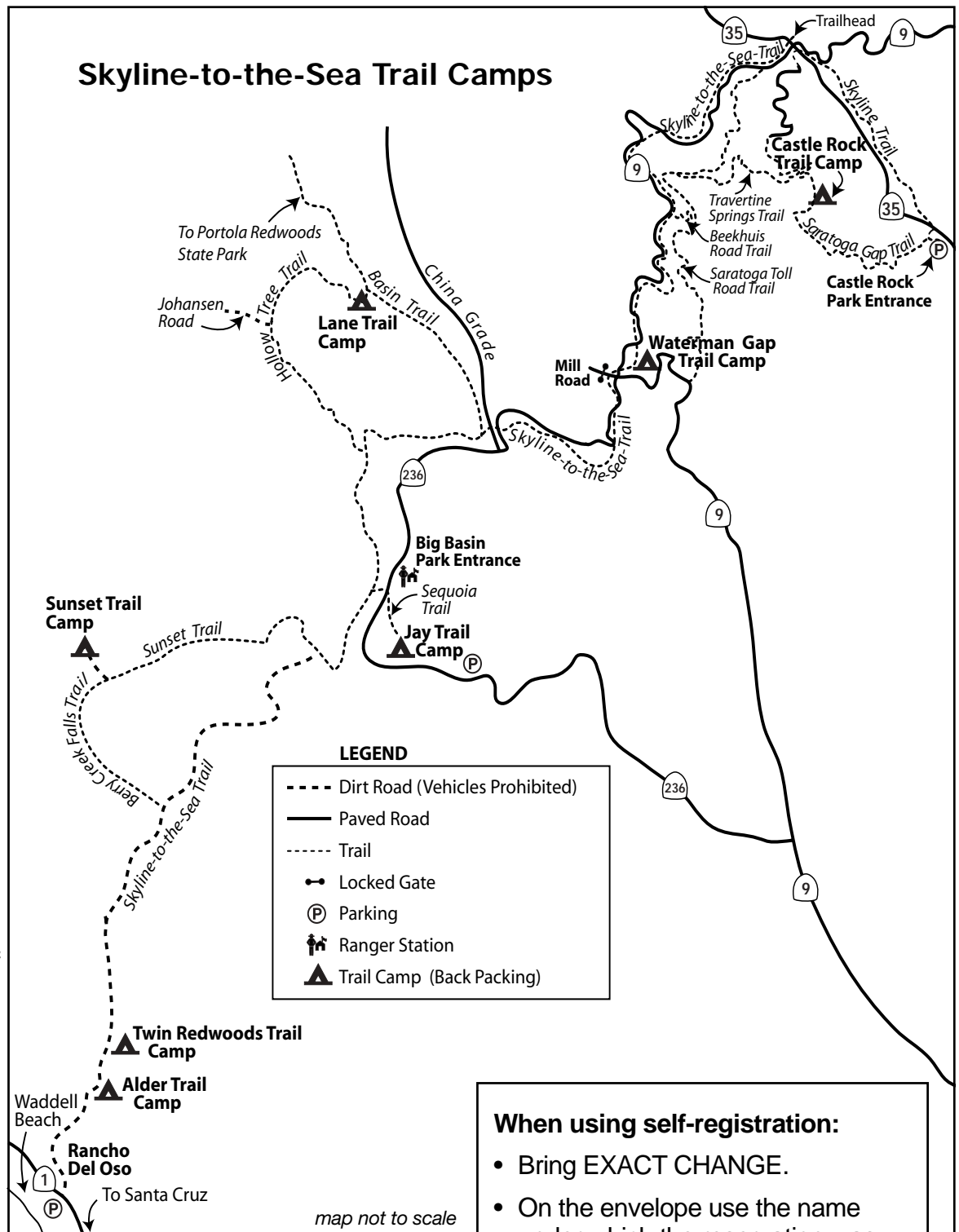
For required trail camp reservations, location of overnight parking areas and information on planning your hike, call Big Basin Redwoods State Park at (831) 338-8861.

There are 3 major starting points for this trail system, all with overnight parking areas. Each stopping point has somewhat different registration procedures.

**Castle Rock**—Park your vehicle in the main parking lot on Hwy. 35 (approximately 3 miles south of the Hwys. 9 and 35 junction). Use the self-registration envelopes and pay station at the kiosk to register.

**Big Basin HQ**—Register, pay trail camp fees, and get the combination to parking lot gate and trail permits at the Big Basin Ranger Station during office hours. When the station is closed, use the self-registration envelopes and pay station. You will park at Jay Trail Camp.

**Rancho Del Oso**—Park entrance is on Hwy. 1, four miles north of Davenport. The trailhead is directly opposite the Waddell Beach parking lot. (Do not use the Rancho Del Oso Nature and History Center entrance.) You will find a closed, unlocked gate on a paved road. Drive up this road (close gate behind you) to the office and overnight parking area. Use self-registration envelopes to register.



### When using self-registration:

- Bring EXACT CHANGE.
- On the envelope use the name under which the reservation was made.
- Include the vehicle license number.
- If you are parking a second vehicle for the same site, pay for it as posted, using a separate envelope for each vehicle.
- Leave the envelope end tag in plain sight on the vehicle's dashboard.

**Please follow these park rules and regulations:**

**Hours:** The park is closed from sunset to 6 a.m., including all trails and climbing areas.

If you park in the main lot, you must pay day-use or camping fees.

Dogs, bicycles, glass containers and smoking are prohibited.

**Firearms** and devices capable of injuring or killing a person or animal are prohibited, including airsoft, paintball and pellet guns, bows and arrows, sling shots, etc.

**Fires** are permitted in the metal fire rings in the Castle Rock Trail Camp **ONLY WHEN FIRE SEASON IS CLOSED.** (Check for posting.) During this time firewood is available for sale at Castle Rock Trail Camp.

**Camping** is permitted only in designated camps. (See maps on inside of this handout.) Campers are required to be in their campsites from sunset to 6 a.m.



**Quiet Hours** are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Sounds may not be heard beyond your own camp. You may not disturb another person with loud or unreasonable noises at any time.

**San Lorenzo Headwaters Natural Preserve:** Use is restricted to established hiking trails. No off-trail use or climbing is allowed in this area.

**All vegetation, wildlife and geological features** are protected. Do not pick wildflowers, mushrooms or any other plant, or remove any park feature. Do not feed, disturb or harm wildlife.

**Horses** are only permitted on designated trails.

**Volunteers** are vital to the trail maintenance program. For information go to [www.scmata-trails.org](http://www.scmata-trails.org).



*Bleeding Heart*



*Mariposa Lily*

**LOW IMPACT CLIMBING**

Local climbers are committed to good stewardship. To preserve the character and beauty of the park’s rock formations and minimize impacts on soils, vegetation, wildlife and other visitors, support “Leave No Trace” practices.

- Use natural colored chalk. Use a chalk ball.
- Help prevent erosion. Use only existing access trails. Carry crash pads—do not drag.
- Protect park vegetation. The park is home to a variety of mosses, plants and trees, which in turn provide food and shelter for wildlife. One of the challenges of climbing is to work around branches, mosses and lichens without damaging them.
- Do not climb when the rock is wet. This sandstone is more fragile when it is wet, so climbing routes may be damaged. Please allow a few days after heavy rain for the rock to dry before climbing.

