

California State Park Information

For information about State Park hours of operation, fees, annual passes or specific park regulations, you may contact your nearest State Park. Please check the front of your telephone directory under State Government, Department of Parks and Recreation.

For general State Park information, contact the Public Affairs Office at P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-6995.

For camping reservations call MISTIX at (800)444-7275.

For a catalog of State Park merchandise or for a listing of all State Park publications and videos, write to California State Park Store, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-4000.



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

PETE WILSON
Governor

DOUGLAS P. WHEELER
Secretary for Resources

DONALD W. MURPHY
Director of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For additional information, contact:

Pismo State Beach
555 Pier Avenue
Oceano, CA 93445
(805)489-2684

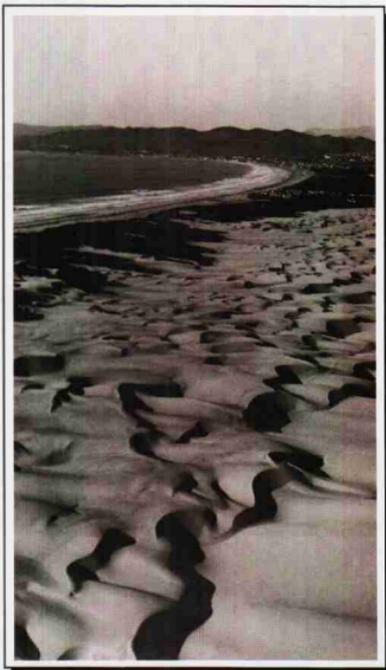
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Pismo State Beach



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

About halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles, along coastal Highway 101, lies Pismo State Beach, with its broad sandy beach, sand dunes and campgrounds. Thousands of visitors are drawn each year to the many seaside attractions nearby, including the public pier administered by the City of Pismo Beach and the State Vehicular Recreation Area. Families and friends gather here to camp, to stroll through peaceful dunes or riparian areas, and to experience all that the beach and ocean have to offer.

Mild weather at Pismo State Beach makes it a popular travel destination year-round, averaging temperatures of 60 degrees. Summers tend to be foggy and winters are usually clear and windy. Water temperatures, both summer and winter, are cold – often less than 58 degrees.

The name "Pismo" comes from a Chumash Indian word "pizmu," meaning tar. The word was used to describe the tarry deposits that were produced by natural off-shore oil seepage and occasionally washed up on the beach. The Chumash used this "tar" to make woven baskets waterproof and to caulk the insides of their canoes.

The local Indians also found an important food source at the beach – the Pismo clam. Digging for these clams was popular in years past, but the clam population suffered a serious decline, followed by cycles of partial recovery and further declines. Currently, clamming on Pismo Beach is not very productive. Check at the park information station for clamming rules and regulations.

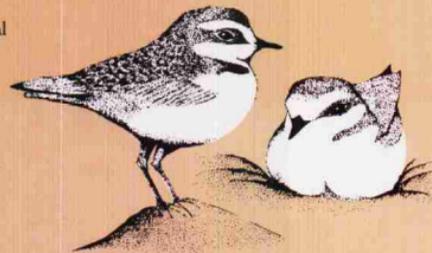
For people who like to fish, there are abundant options. Surf-fishing is popular, while others prefer fishing from the nearby public pier. A fishing license is required in every location except the public pier. The lagoon near Oceano Campground offers fishing in a riparian area, with its dense plantlife. Willow trees, blackberry vines and poison oak are abundant. A special fishing platform within the campground offers safe

and easy access to the lagoon for those with mobility impairment.

Pismo is the only beach in California where the sand is firm enough to support travel by standard highway automobiles and where this activity is permitted. Adjacent to Pismo State Beach, at its southern end, is a 2800-acre off-highway vehicle area. For information, call Pismo Dunes SVRA at (805) 473-7230, or write to 576 Camino Mercado, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420.

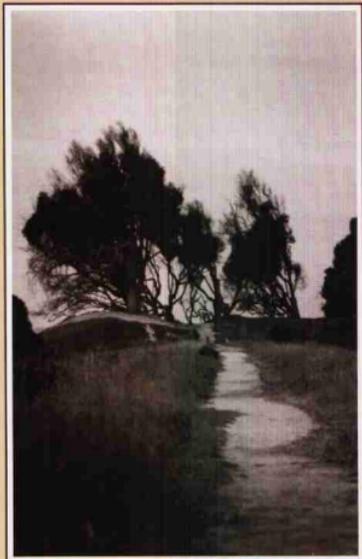
Natural History

Shorebirds flock to the Pismo Beach area to feed, nest and find shelter. The snowy plover is a federally-designated threatened species that nests on the upper portion of the beach, near the foredunes. The California Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for managing park resources to preserve the habitat of threatened and endangered species. Snowy plover nests are easily destroyed by human activity, pets, or predators, so park managers protect them with fencing, signs, and partial closures of park areas.



Snowy Plover

Nature observers are drawn to the eucalyptus grove at Pismo State Beach, which makes a fine winter home for monarch butterflies. Protected from the elements, near sources of water and nectar, the grove often shelters the largest overwintering population of monarchs in California. Scientific studies have shown that these butterflies, up to 225,000 of them, travel from as far away as central Canada to spend November through February in this grove. Though monarch butterflies are distributed worldwide and are not in danger of extinction, the North American population is vulnerable because they cluster together in only a few, small geographic areas.



Trail to Monarch Grove

Each year during the overwintering season, an interpretive trailer, with exhibit displays and publications for sale, is set up near the grove. State Park docents offer guided walks through the overwintering site, and also to the beach, the dunes, and the lagoon. For more information on guided walks, call the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History at (805)772-2694.

Pismo Dunes Natural Preserve is at the southern boundary of Pismo State Beach, where strong onshore winds from the northwest have deposited large quantities of sand. This 570-acre parcel of land was set aside to protect the threatened and endangered plant and wildlife species of this fragile dune habitat. As dunes build, they are stabilized by low-growing plants, such as dune primrose and sand verbena, that are specially adapted to the shifting dunes. Sand settles around the base of the plant, stimulating it to grow. Hikers can find peaceful solitude in the natural preserve where vehicles, horses, and dogs are not allowed. Human activity easily damages dune plantlife, so it is important to stay on the designated trails when traveling through the dunes. Fires and camping are prohibited in this fragile habitat.

Camping

Two developed campgrounds are available on the inland side of the dunes. North Beach Campground, with 103 developed sites, is grassy, open, and well protected from brisk ocean breezes. To the south, adjacent to a creek and small lagoon, Oceano Campground has 42 sites with water and electric hook-ups and an additional 40 developed sites. Both campgrounds offer coin-operated hot showers for registered campers only and restroom and shower facilities accessible to the disabled. Oceano campground has a wheelchair-accessible campsite in the hookup area. Hike and bike camping is also available. In the summer, Rangers and volunteers lead

interpretive campfire programs at either campground. Check entrance station bulletin boards for the current schedule.

Reservations can be made for campsites in North Beach Campground from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends. North Beach is open on a first-come, first-served basis the rest of the year. Campsites at Oceano Campground may be reserved year-round. For reservations at either campground call MISTIX at 1-800-444-7275.

Activities

Fun and recreation are of prime interest to visitors at Pismo State Beach. You will find people surfing, sunbathing, fishing, horseback riding, strolling on the beach or walking on a trail through the dunes. Use caution when swimming or wading; lifeguard service is not available and water conditions can be hazardous due to recurring rip currents and heavy surf.

The Grover Beach Day Use Area, located at the end of Grand Avenue, offers access to the beach area where cars aren't allowed. From this parking lot, visitors have access to a nine-hole golf course (open to the public), a restaurant with an ocean-view, a picnic area with tables, restrooms and boardwalk, and the trailhead for the Grand Dunes Trail.

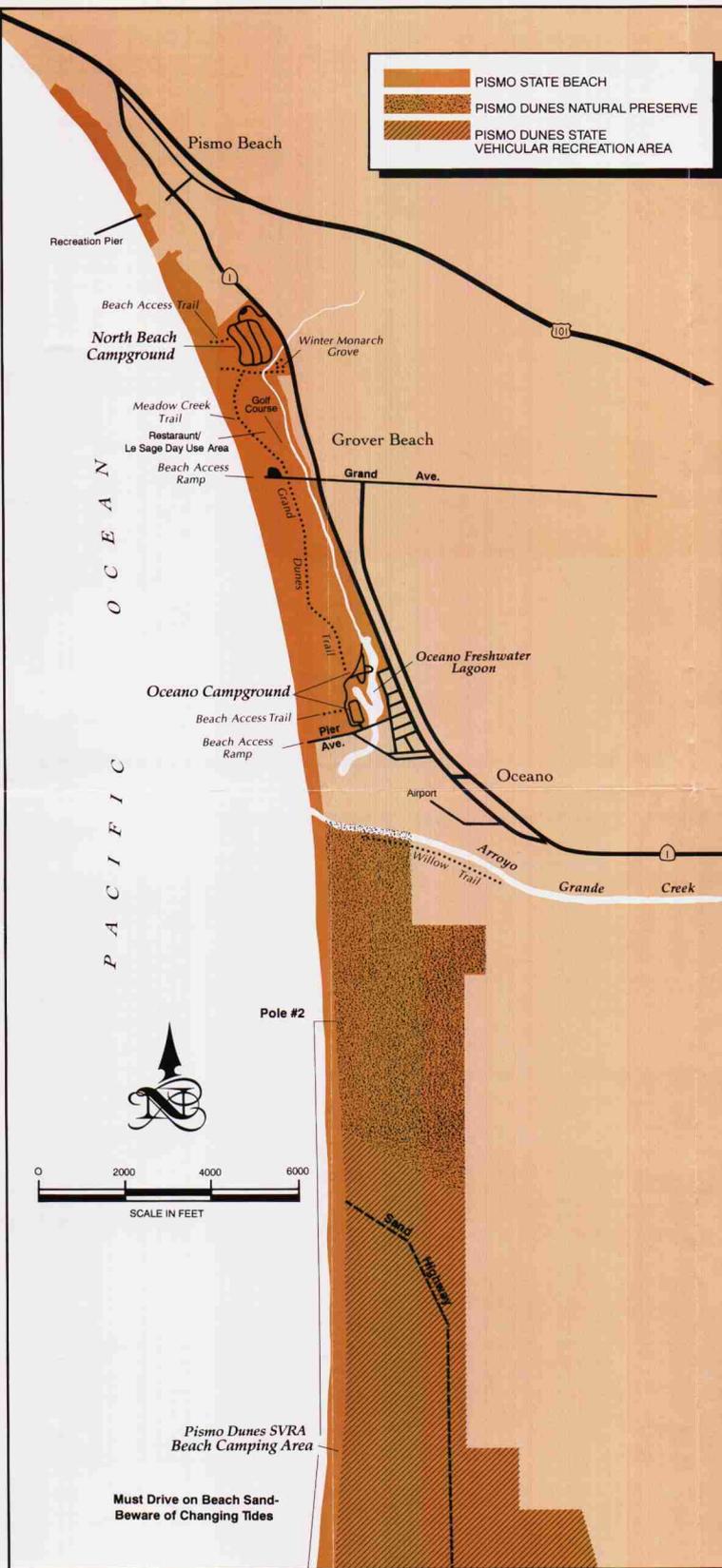


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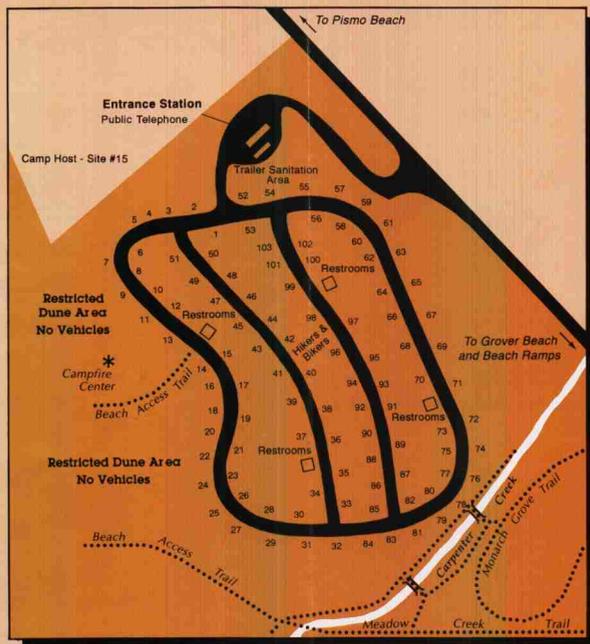
Over 100,000 people enjoy camping at Oceano and North Beach campgrounds every year. The park staff is dedicated to providing a high quality recreational experience for you, your friends and family, and for the generations to come. We need your help in preserving the natural resources of Pismo State Beach. Please follow the rules listed below to help assure a safe and enjoyable visit for everyone.

- *Help protect park resources—camp only in designated sites and don't bang items such as swings, hammocks, or lanterns from the vegetation.*
- *Park all vehicles with all wheels on the pavement. Drive only on designated roadways at 15 mph or less.*
- *Dump all wastewater in a toilet or at the trailer sanitation station at North Beach Campground.*
- *Keep your dog on a six-foot leash at all times and in a tent or vehicle at night. Your dog must be attended at all times (not left alone).*
- *Only vehicles registered for street use may be operated at Pismo State Beach. No vehicles are allowed in the dunes between the campground and the beach.*
- *Quiet hours are between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m. Generators must be turned off by 8 p.m. Your neighbors will appreciate it.*
- *Checkout time is 12 p.m.*
- *Thefts do occur! Secure and conceal all valuables and report any thefts or suspicious activities to a ranger.*
- *Fires are not allowed on the beach north of Grand Avenue or West of North Beach campground.*

In case of emergency, call 911. If you need Ranger assistance, call Pismo Dunes Dispatch at (805) 473-7220.



North Beach Campground Detail



- The Meadow Creek Trail starts at the western end of Le Sage Drive and continues north, ending at a grove of eucalyptus trees that are the winter home to thousands of monarch butterflies.
- The Grand Dunes Trail begins near the Grover Beach Day-use Area on Grand Avenue and winds south through the dunes to Oceano Campground. This one-mile trail is all sand and can be moderately strenuous.
- The Oceano Lagoon Trail is an easy, self-guided, 3/4 mile walk.

Oceano Campground Detail

