

News Release



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Adding Name to Sugar Pine Point State Park

State Parks Seeks Special Honor For Leading Environmental Lawmaker

TAHOE CITY – California State Parks will ask the California Park and Recreation Commission next month to add the name of state Assemblyman Edwin L. Z'berg, a leading environmental legislator and parks supporter who died in 1975, to the name of Sugar Pine Point State Park at Lake Tahoe.

A champion of efforts to preserve and protect Lake Tahoe, Assemblyman Z'berg wrote the 1967 legislation that created the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Sugar Pine Point State Park on the west shore of Lake Tahoe was a favorite of Assemblyman Z'berg's.

Under the proposal, the park would be known as "Edwin L. Z'berg-Sugar Pine Point State Park."

The request for a name change caps a decades-long effort by the assemblyman's daughter, Susan. She contacted Senate President Pro Tem John Burton, who urged the Department to follow through on an earlier formal request by the Legislature to change the name of the park.

"Ed Z'berg was a hero of the state parks system," said Sen. Burton. "It is fitting that his name be added to the Sugar Pine Point State Park that he cared – and did – so much for. As a former colleague of Assemblyman Z'berg, I'm proud to help in the effort to make this overdue honor take place."

Shortly after Assemblyman Z'berg died in 1975, the Legislature adopted a resolution calling upon State Park and Recreation Commission to add his name to Sugar Pine Point State Park in honor of the prominent legislator.

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The Commission at the time opted against changing the name of the park, arguing that it went against the naming policy at the time, which in most cases restricted park names to place names. Since then, however, several state parks have been named as special honors for leading Californians, such as Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area in Los Angeles, named for a long-time Los Angeles County supervisor who died in 1997.

“It is rare for a state park to be named for a person, but certainly the legacy of Assemblyman Edwin L. Z’berg warrants such action here,” said State Parks Acting Director Ruth Coleman. “Legislation he authored while in the Legislature more than 25 years ago still is helping protect our natural environment today.”

There will be no additional costs to taxpayers associated with adding Assemblyman Z’berg’s name to the park. Signs in the park will not be changed until they come up for normal replacement. (Two aging park entrance signs are up for replacement in the next year or so. Two others are new and will not be replaced for years).

The State Park and Recreation Commission will take public testimony and consider the issue at a meeting set for April 5 in Tahoe City. The meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. and will be held in the Boardroom of the Tahoe City Public Utility District Administration Offices, 221 Fairway Drive.

The legacy of Assemblyman Z’berg is found in California’s environmental safeguards, its unparalleled state park system and its urban recreational program helping meet the needs of today’s inner-city youths.

Assemblyman Z’berg, a native Sacramentan who represented the greater Sacramento area in the Assembly, earned respect and renown as a pioneer in environmental legislation and the protection of natural and cultural resources during his 17 years as a legislator.

His commitment to the environment was expressed in his own words: "In this generation the choice is clearly ours...to develop responsible public policies to restore and improve the livability, beauty, and productivity of our environment."

During his tenure (1958-1975), Assemblyman Z'berg authored more than 800 bills, including legislation that protected lands for open space, regulated timber harvesting, funded State Park programs and acquisitions and established the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

He fought to preserve urban open spaces. Today, that legacy of preservation endures through the Roberti-Z'berg-Harris Urban Open Space and Recreational Program, which directs state funds to local recreational needs, emphasizing support for the most urgent park and recreation needs in the most heavily populated and most economically disadvantaged areas of the state.

In his efforts to protect "the legendary clarity of Lake Tahoe" from unregulated development, Assemblyman Z'berg authored legislation in 1967 that created the Tahoe

Regional Planning Agency to oversee efforts to develop and enforce a comprehensive regional land use plan.

One of his favorite parks was Sugar Pine Point, the largest of the Tahoe-area state parks. He said he often used the park as a "favorite place of refuge" from the demands of his busy schedule.

The Sacramento-born Assemblyman Z'berg was a visionary.

Working with off-highway vehicle enthusiasts and fellow lawmaker Gene Chappie, an off-road recreationist, the environment-minded Z'berg crafted legislation that would for the first time provide management of this burgeoning sport. Their efforts were realized in enactment of the Chappie-Z'berg Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Law in 1971. Today, California's off-highway vehicle program is the largest program of its kind, with the strictest environmental standards of any OHV program in the country.

In 1973, Assemblyman Z'berg co-authored the landmark Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act that for the first time established environmental protections and controls of the timber industry.

Assemblyman Z'berg dedicated his professional life to spearheading legislation that preserved and protected some of the finest examples of California's natural and cultural resources.

In 1974 he co-authored the Z'berg-Collier Park Bond Act that provided \$250 million for statewide parks and recreation programs, including \$90 million for State Park acquisitions.

His accomplishments did not go unnoticed. In 1969, he was named "Man of the Year" by the Sierra Club's Mother Lode Chapter, in 1972 received the Audubon Society's Conservation Award and in 1974 was honored by the California State Park and Recreation Commission as the outstanding environmentalist and presented with the prestigious Golden Bear Award.

Upon his death, the director of the Planning and Conservation League said, "Environmentalists all over California are in a state of shock, for we have lost our leader. In every important area – forest practices, solid waste, wildlife, land use, parks and coastline – Ed Z'berg led the way.

"His legacy is a quality of life that future generations will enjoy and thank him for."

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