FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  Contacts: Roy Stearns  John Arnold
May 24, 2005 (916) 654-7538 (916) 653-7090

Update on Memorial Day Weekend Camping
State Park Campsites Still Available, But Visitors Better Act Today

SACRAMENTO – If high gas prices are driving you crazy, then drive the family to a State Park closer to home and cut the gas bill. For fun and economy this Memorial Day weekend, California’s State Parks can’t be beat.

Whether it’s for a weekend or longer, camping at a California State Park campground has been called one of the best vacation deals around, with reasonable fees and plenty of picturesque scenery to enjoy. The parks are close to home and provide its many visitors a respite from the pressures of everyday life.

The upcoming Memorial Day weekend is the traditional kick-off for the summer camping and recreation season, the time when hundreds of thousands of campers find their campsites and make themselves at home in a private way at a public place.

But they are the campers who made reservations in advance. As always, the most popular campgrounds on the reservation system fill up fast and early.

But, don’t despair. You may still get to pitch that tent.

According to State Parks’ reservation system computers, there are a limited number of campsites that can be reserved for this weekend if people act quickly.

State Park officials cautioned that availability at any of the parks listed below can change daily, or even hourly. If you want to make a reservation, don’t delay and do it now.

- MORE -
Parks with Availability May 27, 28, and 29, 2005

Benbow Lake SRA
Brannan Island SRA
Colonel Allensworth SHP
Del Norte Coast Redwoods SP
Humboldt Redwoods SP
Standish-Hickey SP
Woodson Bridge SRA

Parks with Availability for One or Two-Night Stays, May 27 and 29, 2005

Calaveras Big Trees SP  Malakoff Diggins SHP
Castle Crags SP  McConnell SRA
China Camp SP  Morro Strand SB
Clear Lake SP  Mount Diablo SP
Crystal Cove SP  Mt. San Jacinto SP
Cuyamaca Rancho SP  Portola Redwoods SP
D.L. Bliss SP  Prairie Creek Redwoods SP
Donner Memorial SP  Richardson Grove SP
Folsom Lake SRA  Salton Sea SRA
Freemont Peak SP  San Luis Reservoir SRA
Grizzly Creek Redwoods SP  Silverwood Lake SRA
Hendy Woods SP  Standish Hickey SP
Jedediah Smith Redwoods SP  Sugar Pine Point SP
Lake Oroville SRA  Tahoe SRA
Lake Perris SRA  Woodson Bridge SRA

Telephone toll-free 800-444 PARK (7275) if you want to make a California State Park reservation, or go on line to www.parks.ca.gov

If you cannot find a reservation spot that you like, California State Parks also has first-come, first-served campsites. They include Plumas-Eureka State Park, Emma Wood State Beach and Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park. Further information can be found on the State Parks website listed above.

The Memorial Day weekend is the first big camping weekend of the summer season and one of the big three camping weekends of the entire year, along with July 4th and Labor Day weekends.

No matter what your destination is or whether you have a reserved or a first-come, first-served site, it’s always a good idea to call ahead and check on park conditions. And, while you’re at it, the following are some helpful camping tips for year-round camping enjoyment:
Determine where you want to camp and be flexible. Have alternate parks in mind in case your first choice is booked.

Consider non-reservation sites. If the reservation sites are full, look for a first-come, first-served campground and try to arrive on a Wednesday or Thursday to maximize your chance to get a campsite. For information on first-come, first-served campgrounds call 1-800-777-0369.

Consider less busy days. Sometimes reservations are easier to make if you can camp mid-week.

Consider less popular camps. Southern coastal campgrounds can be full year-round. You may have better luck getting reservations at State Parks north of Santa Cruz or inland. Look for sites that are more remote, away from major metropolitan areas.

Remember the holiday crush. The closer you try to make reservations to a holiday (Memorial Day weekend, Fourth of July, or Labor Day weekend), the further north and inland you may need to go.

Consider cancellations. Check the Reserve America website, or call 1-800-444-7275. Cancellations are rare, but they do occur.

If the campground you want is booked, consider a day visit to the park for a picnic, hike or other outdoor recreation.

The "shoulder season" (April, May, September and October) is a good time to enjoy California State Parks. The weather during these months is usually good.

The annual State Park day-use pass, which is good for 12 months from the date purchased, is $125 each. The annual pass provides access to more than 230 state parks.