

Summer Learning Program 2014



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California State Parks Summer Learning Program 2014

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SUMMER LEARNING PROGRAM 2014 REPORT

CONTENTS	PAGE
Introduction and Summary	6
Program Strengths	7
Areas for Improvement	9
Planning	10
Implementation	11
• William B. Ide Adobe SHP	12
• Lake Oroville SRA.....	12
• China Camp SP.....	13
• Angel Island SP	13
• Tomales Bay SP.....	13
• Petaluma Adobe SHP.....	13
• Mount Tamalpais SP	14
• Marshall Gold Discovery SHP	16
• Folsom Lake SRA.....	17
• Henry W. Coe SP	17
• Malibu Creek SP	18
• San Clemente SB.....	20
• Bolsa Chica SB.....	21
• Crystal Cove SP.....	22
• San Onofre SB	22
• Doheny SB.....	23
• Silverwood Lake SRA	23
• California Citrus SHP	24
Overall Observations	26
Sustainability—Overview of Suggested Strategies	27
Conclusion	29
Appendices	29

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

California State Parks is proud to partner with the **Summer Matters** campaign (www.summermatters2you.net) to close student learning and achievement gaps over the summer months and to expand and improve summer learning programs across California. The **2014 Summer Learning Program (SLP)** was once again successful.

This year's programs:

- 4,618 participants served
- 89 park interpretive programs presented
 - 55 guided day-trips (four hours or more)
 - 19 ranger-led programs at school sites
 - Seven two-night campouts
 - One one-night campout



Ranger Jen Naber hikes with middle-schooler from Gilroy's Power School program.

Detailed attendance figures are available in *Appendix A*. More than half the trips to the parks would not have been possible without transportation funding from a **David and Lucile Packard Foundation Grant**. In addition to the programs for youth, the SLP educational staff offered seven staff and parent orientations. This year, both park staff and SLP staff were challenged with developing sustainability ideas, actions and materials.

In addition to school bus transportation, the grant funds this year were spent on camping equipment, such as tents, sleeping bags, and cooking equipment. The parks also purchased educational materials and interpretive kits with items such as pelts and bones, fishing rods and lures, and materials needed to learn such historic skills as dipping candles and making cornhusk dolls. Shade structures, water jugs and other items for safety and comfort were also purchased. State Parks staff time was supplemented, which was essential as these programs were conducted during the parks' peak season.

State parks are naturally a great place to facilitate summer learning, and park interpreters are passionate about connecting children to the natural world—especially children who may not have many opportunities to explore nature. Cooperative learning and open-ended questions are typical strategies used by our staff. Youth are challenged to think about actions, consequences and responsibilities on a variety of subjects from littering to climate change. Hiking and camping promote working together, as do the life skills that the youth learn at our state parks. These new adventures and the abilities that are developed broaden the horizons of youth who visit the parks.

This summer, park educators were able to bring summer learning participants to 18 different parks. The parks represented the wide spectrum of what California State Parks as a whole has to offer.

One new park participated this year: **California Citrus State Historic Park** in Riverside. Students explored both the past (building wooden citrus crates and designing personalized citrus labels) and the future, as park staff taught them how to use GPS units and search for geocaches in the park.



Docents at the California Citrus State Historic Park told the history of several varieties of oranges and encouraged students to compare tastes.

Three State Recreation Areas participated this year, providing opportunities for kayaking, playing in the sand, and learning about the native fish, birds and ecosystems around the lakes. The youth learned about careers—including why only the most courageous, strong, and dedicated people can become professional lifeguards. Youth also tried on personal flotation devices, and they had the opportunity to use them in the water.

At the remaining state parks, programs focused on helping the children get to know the natural environment and explore the natural habitats that are virtually right next door to the students' communities. Youth were encouraged to take ownership of their parks and bring families back to visit. While park interpreters reinforced curriculum-content standards in a variety of ways, it was evident that the youth are not only gaining confidence and learning content, they are experiencing joy and connecting with nature.

PROGRAM STRENGTHS

In February, the **California State Parks Foundation** hosted a symposium that brought together park, school and Summer Matters campaign participants to explore the role of the state parks in summer learning programs and their impact on youth. Participants also explored ways to continue and fund partnerships, and to strengthen our commitment to supporting underserved youths' learning through parks.

Together, the group worked to identify the elements of great park programs that reach non-traditional audiences and impact students' achievement gaps.

We identified the following five actions:

- Sustain engagement through relevancy
- Use best practices of youth development
- Leverage resources through partnerships
- Incorporate diverse experiential learning
- Create comfort in the outdoors

“As we planned this year's programs, we continued to use these as benchmarks for quality.”

—Joanie Cahill, California State Parks Summer Learning Coordinator

Through the process of reflecting on and evaluating SLP programming to date, park staff identified what was working well. Strengths included:

- Active, meaningful learning
- Collaboration and partnerships in communication and commitment
- Investing in all youth
- Visits to parks
- Summer Matters campaign buy-in
- Site-specific programs (locally designed)
- Designated points of contact
- Clear and meaningful program structure
- Culturally relevant role models
- Professional cross-training

The 2014 season showed many examples of the above-listed strengths. The parks and the resources within them are among the greatest strengths of this program. In addition, the parks' outstanding outdoor educators devise clear and meaningful programs with active learning and a variety of other learning styles built in. This year, each site worked cooperatively with the schools to continue designing the program that would work best for the parks and their school partners.

State Parks staff was very eager to work with the youth, especially those with the least access to and experience with natural or cultural sites. The Summer Learning Program did take a significant time commitment from the park staff during the busiest time of the year. That is only possible due to the support from district superintendents, state park headquarters, and supplemental funding from the Packard Foundation grant.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Sustainable funding sources
- Collaboration across parks
- Greater buy-in by leadership of school and parks' systems
- Measuring quality and impact of programs
- Diversity and relevance of staff (a current strength, but even more is desired.)
- Transportation
- Strengthening outreach
- Connection to youth development
- Family and community connections
- Succession planning and workforce development
- Overcoming misperceptions on safety

Park staff continued to see transportation as the biggest obstacle between the parks and these underserved youth populations.

The Packard Foundation's generous grant made it possible for 42 bus trips that school groups otherwise would not have been able to take this summer.

The second biggest challenge for parks is the large numbers of children arriving at one time. Since each bus holds 55-75 students and occasionally a school group wanted to bring two busses at once, a large number of staff and volunteers were needed. In order to provide a safe environment outdoors and a quality program, the outdoor educators need to divide the youth into small groups. Therefore, eight to fourteen interpreters/educators are needed for a busload of 70 students. This requires the park supervisors to pull staff from various areas of service and to secure as much volunteer help as possible. It also demands a commitment from the school site to provide chaperones and encourage their full participation. Teamwork has developed by working through these obstacles as partners.



On the trail at Malibu Creek State Park

Each summer, park staff continues to build relationships in the community and gain the trust of the school staff and parents. As relationships with the school staff develop, communication improves. This summer, relationships were strengthened through communication, teamwork, and both staff and parent orientations.

Misconceptions about safety continued to be a great frustration for park staff. Some schools or school districts have policies preventing their students from going into the water. As one can imagine, that is a big disappointment to the youth who visit sites with water features—ocean, lakes or reservoirs. State Parks lifeguards are widely regarded as some of the best-trained water-safety personnel in the world. Park managers will continue to strongly encourage school districts to re-evaluate this policy.

PLANNING

Starting the planning early in the year is very important to the success of the summer programs. Planning for the 2014 summer season began in December 2013, when campsites were taken off the public reservation system for summer learning program use.

This summer's budget was developed in January. California State Parks Summer Learning Program Coordinator **Nina Gordon** began training **Joanie Cahill** to take over her position after Nina's retirement.

In February, budget plans were sent to each participating park district for review. Park staff from all over the state who were involved in the summer program attended the "How to Pitch Your Tent" symposium hosted by the State Parks Foundation. The budget continued to be revised as new information flowed in from the field.

In April, the field staff started scheduling programs with local school program staff and notifying the park's SLP program coordinator. Staff arrangements and scheduling were planned for the summer.

An April meeting also took place between State Parks and **Sacramento County Libraries**. **Natalie Cole** from the California Library Association and **Christie Hammond**, the Sacramento County Library Youth Supervisor, met with SLP's Nina Gordon and Joanie Cahill, as well as park interpreters **Terri Lopez** and **Holly Thane**. State Parks and Libraries agreed to pilot a program in the Sacramento area that connected the library and books related to the park sites with Sacramento-area summer learners. Park and library staff members jointly created book lists for the two participating parks (**Folsom Lake SRA** and **Marshall Gold Discovery SHP**) and increased access to these books for the summer program sites. Some of the school sites were not near a library, so the library explored the possibility of long-term checkouts to the summer learning sites. When the students reached the park, park rangers showed and talked about relevant books during the outdoor programs. This partnership should assist both parties in reaching their goals: the library is seeking new readers, and the park is seeking new visitors.

In May, arrangements were made for the camping trailers to be inspected, re-stocked if necessary, and moved to the needed location. The field staff began ordering supplies. Park coordinators confirmed with the park field leads that everything was ready.

IMPLEMENTATION

Participating State Parks

Summer learning programs took place in the following 18 parks in 2014:

- William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park
- Lake Oroville State Recreation Area
- Mount Tamalpais State Park
- China Camp State Park
- Angel Island State Park
- Tomales Bay State Park
- Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park
- Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park
- Folsom Lake State Recreation Area
- Henry W. Coe State Park
- California Citrus State Historic Park
- Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area
- Malibu Creek State Park
- Bolsa Chica State Beach
- San Clemente State Beach
- San Onofre State Beach
- Crystal Cove State Park
- Doheny State Beach



Students from Glenn County made their own candles at William B. Ide Adobe State Park.

PARK AND PROGRAM SUMMARIES

GLENN COUNTY: *EXPECT SUCCESS*

William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park

Programs: 2 **Participants:** 155

One hundred and fifty-five youth from the Glenn County Expect Success program visited William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, where they spent the day rotating through eight different stations as they experienced life in the 1850s. The students were surprised at how much hard work goes into making adobe bricks, and delighted at how much they enjoyed playing the same games as children 150 years ago. The stations were operated by volunteers from the Ide Adobe Interpretive Association. They were assisted by youth docents who had been trained last year through the alternative high school's partnership with the park. Learning observations from park staff are available in *Appendix B*.

Sustainability: The staff at Ide Adobe is currently creating a binder with each of the activities described in detail so that school staff could lead some or all of the stations. Advance training for the school staff would also be offered in future. In addition, further developing the relationship with the alternative high school will provide opportunities for their students to teach and allow the program to operate with fewer paid staff. The high school students have been trained as historical docents in the past, but the school was not able to participate this year. The students from the alternative high school have been great role models for the younger Summer Learning Program students.

Partnerships: The Ide Adobe Interpretive Association has supported the program through volunteer help and logistical support. Costumed docents act as instructors, and the association provides lunch for the high school students who assist. This year there was no formal partnership with the alternative high school, but staff is hoping to renew that relationship next year.

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area

Programs: 2 **Participants:** 155

This program combined lots of learning with lots of fun. Each child tried on personal flotation devices, paddled a kayak, learned about the park's plants and animals, and even took a ride on the ranger patrol boat. This program was a huge success with the students, many of whom had never been to a lake before. The students were also given an exciting presentation by two lifeguards, who explained and demonstrated their myriad tools and encouraged the youth to consider this as a career.

Sustainability: The prospects for sustainability at Lake Oroville were undetermined. The park has been facing a staffing shortage and that problem will need to be solved before they will be able to plan for next year. The park rangers and lifeguards who participated this year are eager for the program to continue.

Partnerships: The Forebay Aquatic Center partnered with State Parks to provide waterfront equipment and kayak instruction.



“This is awesome! I wish I were a 5th-grader already so I could come back and do this again!”

—Ten year-old girl at Lake Oroville

Many of the Expect Success students had never been to a lake before, but were kayaking in no time.

SAN FRANCISCO: SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES (HILLCREST SCHOOL)

China Camp State Park, Angel Island State Park, Tomales Bay State Park and Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park

Programs: 5

Participants: 168



Students from San Francisco's Hillcrest School explored the past at Tomales Bay State Park.

Students from Southeast San Francisco experienced a wide variety of activities. They took day trips to China Camp State Park, Angel Island State Park, Tomales Bay State Park and Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park. At each site, the youth learned about the people who helped shape California and the natural and cultural resources the state is safeguarding. Lessons and activities were designed to promote curiosity, self-confidence, a love of learning and pride in their Bay Area state parks.

Many of these parks had special significance; for example, 30% of the students from Hillcrest School are Asian.

The students learned about the history of the Asian population through the stories and activities they experienced at China Camp and Angel Island. A Chinese shrimp-fishing village thrived on the China Camp site in the 1880s. Nearly 500 people, originally from Canton, China, lived in the village. In its heyday, there were three general stores, a marine supply store and a barber shop.

At Angel Island, the U.S. Immigration Station processed hundreds of thousands of immigrants between 1910 and 1940, the majority from China. During World War II, Japanese and German POWs were detained at the station before being sent to facilities farther inland.

Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park was the main residence of Rancho Petaluma, the agricultural empire built by General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. Vallejo was one of the most powerful men in the Mexican Province of California from 1834 to 1846. Vallejo ran his cattle, hide and tallow business, raised sheep, bred horses, and grew numerous crops. The adobe contains authentic furniture and exhibits depicting early rancho life. This may be especially meaningful to the 43% of Hillcrest students who are Hispanic.

Visiting and learning about these historic parks gave the students a solid foundation for the California and United States history they will be studying during school year.

OAKLAND: EAST BAY ASIAN YOUTH CENTER (EBAYC)

Mount Tamalpais State Park

Two-night programs: 5 **Participants:** 254

Five groups of youth from EBAYC spent two nights each camping at Mt. Tamalpais State Park. Students were taught the elements of a tent's structure and how to assemble one. Once each team had successfully set up their tent, they worked cooperatively to make a sign or poster that represented them as a group.

After the campsites were settled, groups rotated through stations to learn about the culture of the Coast Miwok people and played some Miwok games. Another station featured interactive games and information about wildlife. The final afternoon rotation was a presentation by the Subaru / "Leave No Trace" Traveling Trainers, who gave a talk about being a responsible visitor to nature and reducing ones' impact on the resources. The day's activities were designed to increase the youths' awareness of the animals that live in the surrounding forest. Reading the park map and learning outdoor etiquette led to discussions about humans' place in the wilderness.

The first night of camping was thrilling and a little unnerving for the many students who had never slept outdoors in a tent. Park staff made them feel comfortable and oriented them to the night sounds. In the morning, the youth all had exciting stories to share with friends about what they heard during the night.

In the morning, the students increased their observation skills and developed an awareness of the subtleties of the colors of nature. After making Mini-Nature Journals, each youth was given a color chip and, on their own, they explored the area, seeking matches for their unique color. Eventually, students either wrote a haiku or drew pictures of the natural objects or the ideas/feelings that the natural objects inspired.

After lunch, the youth hiked to Muir Woods and Muir Beach. Rangers from the National Park Service facilitated activities about redwood ecology and climate change. Throughout the day, the youth had the opportunity to learn first about specific organisms in nature, then population and ecosystems, and lastly the way it all fits together globally. The students greatly enjoyed the hike down and the activities. The hike back, when everyone was tired, was a physical challenge that left the youth with a powerful sense of self-achievement.



Students were challenged with hikes and campouts in unfamiliar environments.

On the final morning of the two-night campout, students worked together to take down the camp and to clean and repack the gear. Park staff emphasized to the youth that anyone can come and camp at the park at any time, and that this is a recreational opportunity available to their families. The final activity of the program was a scavenger hunt focused on sensory awareness, and again gave the teens the opportunity to explore on their own in this new environment they had mastered.

Sustainability Plans: One of the great successes of this program was the involvement of the EBAYC staff who attended an overnight training with park staff before the student's campouts began. To extend sustainability, park staff would like to extend EBAYC staff training to include the skills for leading some of the activity stations that are currently being facilitated by park staff. Reducing the amount of park staff time will reduce the costs of the program significantly.

Partnerships: Mt. Tamalpais staff has plans to develop more local partnerships. This year's summer learning program was augmented by the Subaru/ Leave No Trace "Traveling Trainers." Four teams of two educators each travel across the country in Subaru hybrid vehicles, teaching people how to protect and enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This program is created by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

National Park Service rangers from the Muir Woods National Monument / Golden Gate National Recreation area provided teaching support and interpretive programming.

SACRAMENTO CITY SCHOOLS: SUMMER OF SERVICE

Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park

Day trips: 4

Student participants: 200

Youth toured the historic town of Coloma, where gold was discovered in 1848, and learned about Sutter's sawmill and various mining techniques. In addition, the walking tour explored the cultures that have left their marks at Marshall Gold, from the early Native Americans, to the prospectors, Chinese merchants, and park visitors today. The highlight of the program was panning for gold. Each youth used his/her own pan and learned to master the technique for swirling out water while letting gold sink to the bottom. The students "panned" in troughs that had been planted with gold, fool's gold, and garnets, along with an abundance of river gravel.

Sustainability Plans: The main cost of this program is for the gems, minerals, and park staff needed for the gold-panning program. Otherwise, highly trained docents who work with school groups all year long lead most of the tour. The park staff believes a new sponsor might be found to support the staff and gold-panning expense.

Another option would be to remove the gold panning program from the tour and substitute a scavenger hunt. This would reduce a significant amount of the cost, but is the least viable choice for park staff since the panning is such a powerful experience.

Partnerships: Volunteers are supported by the Gold Discovery Park Association. The Marshall Gold staff also worked with the Sacramento County Libraries to develop a list of relevant books at the appropriate age level for the students.



At Folsom Lake, students learned about energy and water conservation, while at Silverwood Lake, these CAPS participants found out about snakes and other wildlife.

Folsom Lake State Recreation Area

Day trips: 4 **Student participants:** 200

The teens who visited Folsom Lake learned about water and energy conservation, and considered the effects of humans on the environment. Through hands-on activities, youth explored concepts like renewable vs. nonrenewable energy, the water cycle, and sources and forms of energy. At one station, participants used a solar PV cell, wires, motor, fan and/or sound chip and built both a series and parallel circuit to learn and understand the flow of current being generated by the energy of the sun. The stations were designed with Common Core standards in mind, as well as the Next Generation Science Standards. For more information about how the programs met State K-12 educational standards, see *Appendix C*.

Partnerships: The park's cooperating association FOLFAN, Friends of Lake Folsom and Natoma, provided volunteer support for the program stations.

Sacramento County Library: Folsom Lake SRA staff prepared book lists for the Sacramento libraries, suggesting reading material that would enhance the students' visits.

GILROY SCHOOL DISTRICT: *POWER SCHOOL*

Henry W. Coe State Park

Programs: 14 **Participants:** 576

Through the years of working together on this program, the Power School after-school staff and the Henry W. Coe State Park staff have developed a strong working relationship. Meetings between the two started in April to prepare for the July trips. A variety of programs was offered. During the in-school programs, the youth learned about predator and prey relationships, geology and wildflowers.

After four parent orientations, the middle school boys and girls were each ready to participate in a two-night campout. When the youth arrived at the park, they were greeted with a two-mile hike. Once they arrived at the campground, they worked in groups to set up their tents and other camping supplies. During the campout, the youth evaluated pond water quality, learned about nocturnal wildlife, and attended a ranger-led astronomy program. Students attached a motion-sensor camera to a tree near camp to find out if any animals visited during the night.

On the second day, the middle-schoolers started with a nature hike. Upon return to camp, they learned that owls cough up the bones and fur of their meals in what are called "pellets." The youth had the opportunity to dissect pellets and try to determine what the



These girls from Gilroy used GPS technology to find clues on a scavenger hunt at Henry W. Coe State Park.

owls had been eating at Henry Coe. Later, park staff taught the students how to use hand-held GPS units to locate educational geocaches throughout the camp area. Crafts and games rounded out the evening. The last morning found the students packing, cleaning, and hiking two miles back to the parking lot.

Third- and fourth-graders attended day trips, where they netted bugs, dissected owl pellets, and tested water quality to learn about the health of the stream. During their day trips, the students also learned how to navigate using GPS devices, and they enjoyed a special sensory hike. Since the Power School staff had been meeting regularly with the park staff, they were prepared to assist at each station.

Sustainability: The park staff would like to see the program continue. The lead teacher for the Power School program left the program at the end of the summer, so a new relationship will need to be established in 2015. The park staff and the assistant teachers are eager to keep communication lines open and find ways to continue this program.

Meanwhile, the park staff has created a teacher's guide for the summer program. It contains directions to the park, background information and directions for leading the activities in the park. Park staff has made activity packets, which could be checked out by the summer program staff.

"We're going on a great adventure!"

—A student hiking at Malibu Creek

LOS ANGELES: LA'S BEST

Malibu Creek State Park

Programs: 8

Participants: 391

Administrators from LA's Best requested that the students visit Malibu Creek this year rather than Baldwin Hills as in the past. Many of the students had already visited Baldwin Hills with the summer program, and they were eager for a new experience. At Malibu

Creek, the students took a hike along the creek trail to the nature center. Along the way, they saw birds and lizards as they looked for deer.

At the nature center, the group was divided in thirds. One group played a game about food webs using giant dice. They also explored the nature center, which had pelts, bones, and taxidermied animals.

The second group stayed outside to play “habitat limbo.” The ranger read different real-life scenarios of events that could affect the wildlife at Malibu Creek. The students had to decide if the effect would be positive or negative for the wildlife. When the wildlife population would decrease, the limbo bar went lower. If the event helped the wildlife,



Stream studies were an important part of the nature investigations at several parks.

the bar would be lifted higher. Students had to do the limbo each time a new scenario was presented. This brought about many discussions about both nature’s effects on nature and humans’ effect on nature.

The third group played running games that helped them understand about predator/prey relationships and the concepts of climate change, bioaccumulation and sustainability.

As part of California’s new Common Core Standards, students are required to learn and get experience using various types of digital media. For the first time, California State Parks staff collaborated with staff from Los Angeles Unified School District’s (LAUSD) Digital Media Learning Center to help the students create a digital story of their visit to the park. However, instead of simply creating a documentary video of the students’ visit, the story instead focused on a comparison between the community, homes and habitat of the animals with the students’ own families, homes, and community.

Sustainability: The creative staff of outdoor educators at the California State Parks’ Angeles District have developed carefully detailed lesson plans throughout their participation in the Summer Learning Program. Their hope is that with this support, summer staff and teachers may be able to lead more activities, reducing the number of staff needed. Kits with activities and props could be provided for checkout to the groups. Park staff would like to offer LAUSD school-site staff training before the field trips to give the counselors and teachers some of the information and techniques they will need to have a successful park experience.

Partnerships: California State Park staff were assisted by National Park Rangers from the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, as well as a teacher from the NPS Teacher-Ranger-Teacher program. The NPS rangers helped guide the hike and direct the game station. State park volunteer docents also facilitated games and hiked with the children. Having these partners made it possible to divide the large group into smaller teaching groups.

Another partner this year was the Los Angeles Unified School District's Digital Media Learning Center. Working with the park staff made it possible for the students to create their documentary video during the visit to the park.

"I'm so tired—I wish I could fly!"

—A student after the hike at Malibu Creek State Park

San Clemente State Beach

Programs: 1 **Participants:** 24

On this one-night campout, youth set up tents and learned about water safety. This was followed by free time at the beach, supervised by state park lifeguards. Park staff also facilitated interactive games that teach about predator-prey relationships and the water cycle. Youth had the opportunity to learn about the local Native California Indians who lived in what is now the San Clemente area. Lastly, state park Interpreters, lifeguards and rangers talked to the students about careers in parks.

Sustainability: Detailed lesson plans were created for each of the activities so that school-site staff could potentially lead some of the stations.

Partnerships: While there are currently no partnerships taking place at San Clemente, the staff members believe there may be local organizations that would contribute to this program.

In-Classroom Programs for LA's Best

Programs: 13 **Participants:** 510

Park interpreters presented programs on-site at LA's Best schools. During the programs, the kindergarten through second-grade children shared hands-on objects, puppets, and other materials that exemplified the animals of Bolsa Chica State Beach. Then students put on costumes and acted out a story called Sammy the Stingray. The program concluded with an art project that invited the children to show what they had learned. Details are listed below under Bolsa Chica.

WHITTIER: JUMP START**Bolsa Chica State Beach****Programs:** 5**Participants:** 261

This was the first time students from the Jump Start program came to Bolsa Chica; for many of the children, it was their first time ever visiting the beach. Children in grades three through five enjoyed a program called Animals of the Beach. At the beginning of the program, the students learned about four beach animals through hands-on activities, interacting with media, and exploring objects like pelts and bones. Through this process, the children learned the characteristics of these four animals: desert cottontail rabbit, round stingray, Pacific bottlenose dolphin, and California brown pelican.

Next, each child “adopted” an animal, and the children played animal movement games. One was an obstacle course to learn more about their particular creature’s method of movement and adaptations to escape predators. For example, the cottontail rabbits hop in a zigzag pattern to escape predators. They can leap 10-15 feet, so the students practiced hopping and zigzag hopping to escape, and then measured their leaps. Cottontails also thump their hind paws to communicate danger to their community, so the children practiced that. By the end of the session, each child was able to move and communicate like his/her adopted animal and understood many of its special adaptations.

This was followed by an art activity where students made models of their animals to take home out of recycled materials and art supplies. The concluding activity was “sand soccer,” with each child portraying his or her animal. After lunch, the students had time to explore the beach on their own. This is an important part of the program that allows the youth to freely experience the environment and process the subject matter they have been taught. To view Bolsa Chica’s lesson plan, see *Appendix E*.

“We truly believe that this was our most successful year to date, not only because the students enjoyed themselves, but because our interdisciplinary programs were exciting, imaginative and creative, while still applying to many different learning styles, the California State Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards and the Education and the Environment Initiative. We look forward to working with the Packard Foundation on these programs next year.”

—California State Parks Staff

Sustainability: The Bolsa Chica staff put together a sample field trip that school staff could potentially lead with minimal assistance from the park. It includes detailed lesson plans and lists of supplies. Again, having the ability to train school staff in advance would be ideal. Because of the number and quality of activities presented by park staff, the school staff may find this difficult, especially if they do not have much time to prepare.

Partnerships: Partnerships are currently being sought by the Bolsa Chica staff.

SANTA ANA: *THINK TOGETHER*

Crystal Cove State Park

Programs: 9 **Participants:** 500

At Crystal Cove State Park, nine groups of children took day trips to the park and participated in field stations that included All About Birds, All About Ants, and Nature Games. At the bird station, students learned how to use binoculars and to identify birds using their “field marks.” At the ant station, the children explored different species of ants and learned how each group lives. The students used hand-held lenses and microscopes and created drawings. Another station centered on playing a variety of nature games, including bilingual games, to reinforce the subject matter the youth had learned.

“It was a great experience for children and staff”

—Teacher, LA's Best

San Onofre State Beach

Programs: 3 **Participants:** 120

At San Onofre State Beach, three summer learning groups began their visits at the San Mateo Campground. After hiking a mile and a half to the beach through the wetlands area, they explored with scavenger hunts and participated in hands-on activities related to the San Mateo Creek watershed. The staff offered many similar activities to those provided at Bolsa Chica, but with a watershed emphasis.

Doheny State Beach

Programs: 2 **Participants:** 85

The children who went on day trips to this beach visited the new aquarium and visitor center, and they participated in educational and recreational beach activities. Again, this year's theme was "animals at the beach," so many of the activities were the same as those offered at Bolsa Chica and San Onofre.

Sustainability: The staff at Doheny, San Onofre, Bolsa Chica, and Crystal Cove suggested several actions to promote the sustainability of these programs. The staff has developed self-guided activities and detailed lesson plans that the teachers/counselors could download and teach with fewer park staff present. The staff also believe there are local organizations that may help fund the staffing and transportation.

Another option that is available to this region and would eliminate the transportation issue is the Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) program. Through this state park program, children at the school site could take a visit to the beach through the internet and interact with a park ranger on screen. While this program is very educational and fun, it definitely is not the same as real visit to a park. As mentioned above in our overall strengths, bringing the children to the park and letting them smell, touch, hear and see the environment with a knowledgeable guide will do far more towards helping the children reach their full potential.

"We got to eat berries off a tree!"

—Diego, ten years old

SAN BERNARDINO: CAPS (CREATIVE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESS)

Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area

Programs: 6 **Participants:** 400

Silverwood Lake drew on a variety of its staff to accommodate these large groups. The youth rotated between three stations. One station offered a guided nature walk, looking for signs of wildlife and then viewing and touching animal pelts. One group did not want to sit on the grass because they were sure it must be full of rattlesnakes. The park ranger was able to help this whole group understand that the grass was safe and that natural world is not always hostile. At another station, the students rode on a barge operated by the park's maintenance workers, who had lived in the area for quite a while and knew all about the lake and its history. A ranger also brought out a live snake for the children to



Students at Silverwood Lake made plaster casts of animal tracks to take home.

meet and touch. Getting to know the snake proved to be a big challenge for many of the students whose main information about snakes has come from media. However, by the end of their snake visit, they had conquered their fears.

Lastly, the youth made plaster casts of animal tracks on the beach, reinforcing what they had learned about the area's wildlife. While the plaster was setting, the children had free playtime in the sand. This was greatly appreciated by the students, who showed creativity, engineering skills, problem-solving, and teamwork by making sand castles and digging elaborate canal systems.

Sustainability: The staff at Silverwood Lake is eager to continue their work with CAPS. To be sustained, this program will require full financial support from an outside entity.

Because the park's staff is very limited in number, welcoming large groups of youth for a nearly day-long program while still patrolling the park and covering

the normal day-to-day duties was a big challenge. This required several staff members working on their days off and other labor charges to make the program a success.

California Citrus State Historic Park

Programs: 5

Participants: 500

California Citrus State Historic Park stepped in this summer when the reservoir at Lake Perris State Recreation Area was too low on water. With help from the Lake Perris staff, this new addition to the Summer Learning Program was able to create a strong program for the youth. Since there were about 100 middle- and high-schoolers on each day, they were divided into groups and worked through stations that linked the past, present and future. At one station, the youth created their own citrus labels and built their own wooden citrus crates to take home. At a second, there was a citrus-tasting presentation by a park volunteer, followed by a tour of the historic orange groves and the Visitor Center. Lastly, the students learned more about the park by finding geocaches that contained information about the history of the park. In groups of eight, the youth were taught how to use hand-held GPS units and followed coordinates to the geocaches hidden throughout the park.



Park staff modeled the use of hand-held global positioning devices (GPS units) at California Citrus State Historic Park.

Sustainability: Before the CAPS students arrive at the Silverwood or California Citrus parks, their CAPS staff was invited to come and camp at one of the parks and get to know each other and the planned activities. They were also provided with maps, brochures, and had a tour of the location that the students would visit. Perhaps the CAPS program staff could lead the geocaching activity in the future. Because two activities require carpentry skills and history information specific to orange varieties, this program would be impossible for the school staff could do on its own. Perhaps simpler activities suitable for middle- and high-school students could be developed here.

The biggest challenge for sustainability at California Citrus is the same as at Silverwood Lake. In order to accommodate groups of 90 to 100, the park needs to bring in additional staff and keep other staff on overtime. If there were a way for CAPS to bring smaller groups to the park, the park could accommodate the program more easily.



CAPS students built citrus crates with personalized labels.

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

Successes

Overall, park staff members have stated that this was the best year yet, with things running more smoothly than ever. Each summer, the park staff apply what they have learned about the youth, their teachers, and their logistical support to improve upon the previous year's program. Most parks noted that the communication between park staff and school-site staff continues to improve.

Communication and identifying the point of contact person for both school and park continues to be essential. In many areas, strong relationships have been built.

Flexibility is still a strong asset to this program. Each park has the opportunity to develop a program tailored to their site and their school groups. It is easy to see that the wide variety of settings generates a wide variety of experiences.

Pre-visit staff training and parent orientations continue to increase success, and more parks are scheduling them. The park staff who held pre-visit staff training felt that it was invaluable and helped make their programs outstanding.

For many students, this program was the first opportunity for them to go on a long hike and spend extended time in nature. Many children had never visited the beach or explored a lake before.

Adrian, a third grader, proudly showed staff members a June bug that he found and promptly named "George." Upon being reminded that he could not take the bug home as the park is protected, the student found a particular shady spot and carefully set George down, "Good-bye, George! I'll see you later!"

Ongoing Challenges

Transportation continues to be a challenge. It is difficult for park staff to predict when the buses might arrive. This can sometimes be a problem when the rangers have planned a hike but there is not enough time to complete the route. The park staff make revisions in the schedule as needed and then substitute other activities as necessary. On a happy note, it does seem that the buses are finding the park sites more easily each year.

Occasionally there is a breakdown in communication. This is made more challenging because many of the summer-school staff don't start work until mid-June. During the

planning period, park field staff talk to park coordinators, who then talk to school program coordinators, who then pass on the message to the often-new program site staff, so it is easy for the chain to break along the way. Program coordinators will continue to identify key persons for communication and work to ensure that connections are made.

Lastly, as mentioned above, the parks usually have a small staff, and it is often difficult to accommodate large groups of students all at once.

SUSTAINABILITY—OVERVIEW OF SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

This summer, park staff focused on ways that they could make this program sustainable after the grant project has ended. Parks are eager to continue this program as it helps us meet an underserved audience that we are trying to reach. Following is an overview of suggestions in addition to the strategies specific for each site included in the information below.

Training Teachers on Site—Camping and Hands-on Training



The Summer Learning Program at California State Parks is more than academic. Students build confidence, curiosity, and social skills.

Summer school program teachers and counselors received training about the park and related activities at the actual park site in many instances. At Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area, CAPS teachers were invited to spend a night camping at the site. The teachers received an in-depth orientation, and they were introduced to the activities that the students would experience. The teachers and students will later receive free passes to camp at Silverwood Lake later in the year.

At Henry W. Coe State Park, park staff created a teacher-orientation day. The summer-program staff leaders experienced each of the activities that the youth would do on the field trip. Teachers had the opportunity to become familiar with the park setting and logistics such as bus parking, gathering areas, etc. Park staff and teaching staff had the chance to build relationships, which are essential for the success of this program. In addition, the Henry Coe staff held four parent orientations at the school site to help parents understand the program and assure them that the children would be well cared-for and safe.

Pre-and Post-Visit Curriculum

State Parks staff has developed (and continues to expand) information and activities for the classroom that the teachers can use on their own without assistance by state park staff. This information includes how to prepare for a visit to state parks (with site-specific information), hands-on activities to facilitate exploration of the natural and cultural history of the area, and activities to later reinforce what they have learned. This information is available on paper, through websites and even in video format.

Most of the participating parks are creating detailed Teacher Guides for the summer learning staff. The guides explain how to get to the park, what reservations are necessary, and what fees—if any—to expect. They also contain a plan for the day that includes a schedule and specific activities for the students to do. In the event that fewer park staff and volunteers are available to serve this program, there are some self-guided directions. Of course, the most effective method is to have a knowledgeable guide from the park. This is especially necessary if many of the teachers and students are not comfortable being in nature or familiar with local plants and animals.

Some of the parks have the resources and contacts for working directly with the summer programs in their areas. The park unit's staff will still require administrative support from Headquarters staff, but could do much of the planning unassisted. Other parks are not ready to take that step, as personnel have changed and establishing relationships has been more challenging.

State Parks staff and the California State Park Foundation are both actively looking for new financial sponsors. Bus transportation is essential, and neither the schools nor the parks have the funding to pay for it. Now that this program has demonstrated that it is worthwhile and valuable to the community, there is a possibility local sponsors could be contacted to assist. This requires a staff person or persons dedicated to seeking out these groups and educating them about the program. Because park staffing is so minimal, this will most likely need to come from an outside agency.

Lastly, continuing the program will require a commitment from both the local park unit and the corresponding summer program staff. Both sides will need to bring resources to the table and be willing to seek creative solutions to problems. California State Parks is ready to make this commitment.

CONCLUSION

This summer, more than 4,500 children and teens had the opportunity to see the world around them in a different way through the Summer Learning Program. Students learned about their state's resources in unique settings with a personal experience. By coming to California state parks and experiencing the natural or historical worlds with an experienced guide, their eyes were opened to see beyond their neighborhoods. The youth were challenged, and they responded with curiosity and self-confidence. Many even forged personal connections with their nearby parks, nature or history.

The Packard Foundation grant gave California State Parks the opportunity to teach youth multiple concepts. The students learned history, social studies, science, math, physical education and art as they explored, experimented and played during the field trips. The students were encouraged to take their new information and skills and apply them in their own homes and neighborhoods. For some, the opportunity to play on a beach or walk in the woods was a completely new experience. The participants in the Summer Learning Program came away changed, with their minds expanded and their worlds broadened.

Sustaining this rewarding program is very important to California State Parks. Park staff has developed lesson plans and activity kits so that more of the lessons could be taught by the summer program staff if park staff was unavailable. However, nothing replaces an educated and experienced guide when you are exploring a new environment, especially one that is foreign to you. To that end, participating parks are seeking additional sponsors to pay for bus transportation and additional program costs. Park staff are also examining options for incorporating this program into the already packed summer schedule, rather than having it as a special, separate program. In order to sustain the Summer Learning Program, parks and summer program staff will both need to put forth commitment and effort, but we believe it can be done.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Summer Learning Program 2014 Attendance Figures

Appendix B: Evidence of Learning (sample Bolsa Chica)

Appendix C: Evidence of Meeting State Educational Standards (sample Folsom Lake)

APPENDIX A: Summer Learning Program 2014 Attendance Figures

Park Unit	Park District	Summer Learning Program	# In-School Visits	# In-School Participants	# Day Trips	# Day Participants	# Overnight Campouts	# Overnight Participants	# Staff or Parent	Participants	
Mt. Tamalpais SP	Marin	EBAYC	0	0	0	0	5	420	1	42	
Angel Island SHP	Marin	San Francisco DCYF	0	0	4	44	0	0			
Petaluma Adobe SHP	Marin	San Francisco DCYF	0	0	2	67	0	0			
China Camp SP	Marin	San Francisco DCYF	0	0	1	40	0	0			
Tomales Bay SP	Marin	San Francisco DCYF	1	60	1	40	0	0			
William B. Ide Adobe SHP	Northern Buttes	Glenn County	0		1	75	0	0			
Lake Oroville SRA	Northern Buttes	Glenn County	0		1	75					
Marshall Gold Discovery SP	Gold Fields	Sacramento City Schools	0	0	4	200	0	0			
Folsom Lake SRA	Gold Fields	Sacramento City Schools	0								
Henry Coe SP	Monterey	Power Schools (Gilroy)	3	204	4	193	2	63	5	114	
Malibu Creek SP	Angeles	LA's Best	0		8	391	0	0			
Bolsa Chica SB	Orange Coast	Jumpstart (Whittier) / LA's Best	12	510	5	261					
San Clemente SB	Orange Coast	LA's Best	1	0	0	0	1	24			
San Onofre SB	Orange Coast	Think Together (Santa Ana)	0	0	3	120	0	0			
Crystal Cove SP	Orange Coast	Think Together (Santa Ana)	2	180	9	500	0	0			
Doheny SB	Orange Coast	Think Together (Santa Ana)	0	0	2	85	0	0			
California Citrus SHP	Inland Empire	CAPS	0	0	5	500	0	0			
Silverwood Lake SRA	Tehachapi / Inland Empire	CAPS – Creative After-School Program for Kids (San Bernardino)	0	0	5	360	0	0	1	50	
Total Participants				954		2,951		507		206	4,618
Total Programs			19		55		8		7		89

APPENDIX B: Bolsa Chica State Beach Evidence of Student Learning

- All three of the programs at Bolsa Chica repeated key concepts that students learned throughout their field trip. For example, in the Beach Animals program, they learned about the physical and behavioral traits of the four animals. In the craft and game program, they again learned about the physical traits of the animals. And then in the Beach Animal activities program they learned more about the behavioral traits and habitats of the animals. While some of this was repetitious, they were learning about this material in different ways, which helped us to reach all types of learners. By the time the students were in their 3rd rotation of the day, they were able to answer most of the questions we posed to them because they had learned about the animals in their previous two rotations. Typically, by the time they reached their 3rd rotation, students were answering 80–90 % of our questions correctly.
- Last year, our theme was Marine Mammals and one of the animals the students learned about was the Pacific bottlenose dolphin. This year, the Pacific bottlenose dolphin was one of the 4 beach animals the students learned about. In each group from LA's Best, we had about 12–15 students who had experienced our Marine Mammal program from the previous year. These students were able to remember some of what they had learned about the dolphin and share this knowledge with us during our programs.
- At the end of each of the group rotations, staff would ask the students to name something new they had learned that day, or we would ask specific questions, such as “Which animals are mammals?”, “Why does the cottontail rabbit hop in a zigzag pattern?”, “Do dolphins have teeth like us? What do they specifically use their teeth for?” and “Which animals use camouflage? What do they use it for?” The students were able to answer these questions with a high success rate, and if they were unable to answer a particular question, we discussed the answer with them.

On-Site School Visits

- For the first part of our program, we shared about the various animals that one can find on the beach and we had a physical representation of each of these animals (puppet, skull, picture, etc.). After sharing about these animals, students were able to repeat back at least 1–2 key concepts about the animals.
- The next part of our program was the interactive story. During the story, each of the students were able to become an animal character. The students were able to demonstrate what they had learned about the traits of their animal while participating in the story.
- As our culminating activity, students drew their “favorite beach buddy” on a template we provided. While doing this, students were able to talk about the animals they learned about and the traits those animals had. While the students were drawing, we walked around the room and discussed the drawings with the students.

APPENDIX C: Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, Examples of Educational Standards Met — Part 1 of 2

	SCIENCE		*(This column format in hyperlinks)
GRADE	Common Core State Standards	California Education and the Environmental Initiative	Next Generation Science Standards www.nextgenscience.org
K		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K.3.A Science – <i>The World Around Me</i> • K.3.C Science – <i>A Day in My Life</i> • K.4–5 & K.6.3 Science – <i>Some Things Change and Some Things Stay The Same</i> 	Forces and Interactions: Pushes and Pulls Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Animals, Plants, and Their Environment Weather and Climate Engineering Design
1st	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry 1.G.1–3 • Economics 1.2.4, • Physical Science 1.1.a, 1.1.b • Life Science 1.2.a–e • Earth Science 1.3.a–c • Investigation 1.4.a–e 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.2.4 History/Social Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>People and Places</i> - <i>Science Surviving and Thriving</i> - <i>Finding Shelter</i> - <i>Open Wide! Look Inside!</i> 	Waves: Light and Sound Structure, Function, and Information Processing Space Systems: Patterns and Cycles Engineering Design
2nd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry 2.G.1 • History 2.2.4, 2.4.1–3 • Physical Science 2.1.a–g • Investigations 2.4.a–g 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.2.4 History/Social Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>CA Lands: Then and Now</i> 	Structure and Properties of Matter Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems Earth's Systems: Processes that Shape the Earth Engineering Design
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History 3.1.1, 3.2.2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.1.1 & 3.1.2 History/Social Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Geography of Where We Live</i> 	
3rd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Science 3.1.a–h, 3.2.a–d, 3.3.a–e, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.3.C & 3.3.D Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Structures for Survival in a Healthy Ecosystem</i> - <i>Living things in Changing Environment</i> 	Forces and Interactions Inheritance and Variation of Traits: Life Cycles and Traits Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Environmental Impacts on Organisms Weather and Climate
4th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geometry 4.G.1 • History 4.1.3, 4.1.5, 4.2.1 • Physical Science 4.1.a–g 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.1.3–4.1.5 History/Social Science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reflections of Where We Live</i> - <i>The Flow of Energy Through Ecosystems</i> 	Waves Energy Structure, Function, and Information Processing Earth's Systems: Processes that Shape the Earth

APPENDIX C: Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, Examples of Educational Standards Met — Part 2 of 2

SCIENCE			*(This column format in hyperlinks)
GRADE	Common Core State Standards	California Education and the Environmental Initiative	Next Generation Science Standards www.nextgenscience.org
5 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measurement 5.3.a Science 5.3.a–d Physical Science 5.1.a–c, 5.4.a–e Investigation 5.6.c–i 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.3.A Science – <i>Earth's Water</i> 5.3.D Science – <i>Our Water: Sources & Uses</i> 	Structure and Properties of Matter Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems Earth's Systems
6 th	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical Science 6.3.a–d, 6.4.b, 6.5.a–c, 6.6.a–c Investigation 6.7.a–h 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6.2.B Science – <i>The Dynamic Nature of Rivers</i> 6.5.C Science – <i>Energy: Pass It On</i> 6.6.A Science – <i>Energy: It's Not All The Same To You</i> 6.6.B Science – <i>Energy & Material Resource: Renewable or Not?</i> 6.6.C Science – <i>Made From Earth: How Natural Resources Become Things We Use</i> Pg 104 – <i>Effects of Consumption/What Does It Cost?</i> 	<p><i>These standards group from 6th–8th grade</i></p> Structure and Properties of Matter Chemical Reactions Forces and Interactions Energy Waves and Electromagnetic Radiation Structure, Function, and Information Processing Growth, Development, and Reproduction of Organisms Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems Natural Selection and Adaptations Earth's Systems Weather and Climate Human Impacts Engineering Design
8 th		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.8.4 History/Social Science - <i>Struggles With Water</i> 	
8 th		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.12.1 8.12.5 	
9 th –12 th		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> E.9.C Earth Science – <i>Liquid Gold–CA Water</i> 10.3.3 – <i>World History/Social Science Growth of Populations, Cities, and Demands</i> 12 – <i>Economics</i> 8.8.4 History/Social Science – <i>Struggles With Water</i> 8.12.1 8.12.5 	