

BEAR FACTS

Planning Trends and Information from California State Parks

February 2005

Heavy Snow May Signal a Good Year for Recreational Boating

This February, as the Sierras are blanketed by record levels of snow, it is tempting to think a few months ahead. In Spring the snow will transform California's rivers and lakes into torrents of recreational white water and fill-up reservoirs to accommodate the annual tide of recreational boats. For this reason it was intriguing to see the recent article, "State is Tops in Boats" (*Sacramento Bee*, January 21, 2005).

California has the most people, so it only stands to reason we have the most boats. For 2003, this was indeed the case. As noted in the National Marine Manufacturers Association's annual boating survey for 2003, California had 963,369 recreational boat registrations, #1 in the country and 7.5% of the national total. Michigan came in second at 953,443 registered boats. Florida was third with 939,968 followed by Minnesota (845,279) and Texas (619,088).

Of course, these figures do not include unregistered boats and there are plenty of them in the state. Boat owners in California must register their vessels with the Department of Motor Vehicles unless the vessel is a:

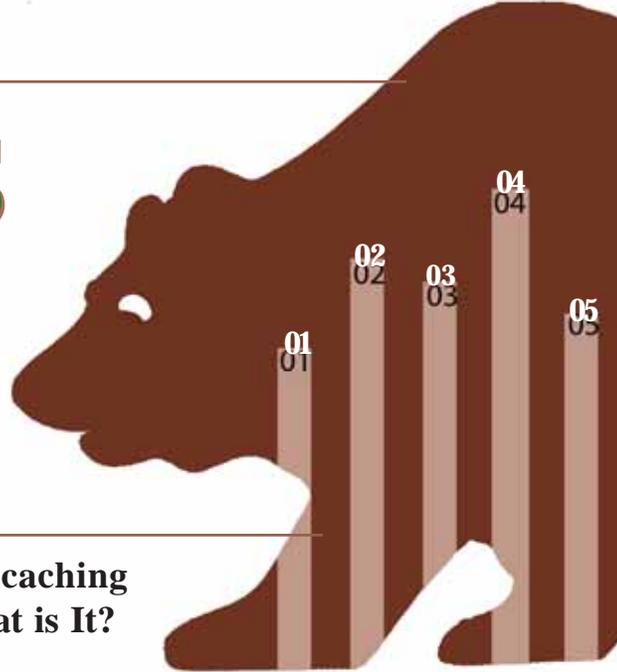
- Vessel propelled solely by oars or paddles (canoe, kayak, raft, etc.),
- Nonmotorized sailboat eight feet or less in length,
- Ship's lifeboat (a dinghy is not a lifeboat),

Geocaching What is It?

First there was Orienteering and Letterboxing. Now we have Geocaching. What is it and how does it affect our parks? Geocaching requires physical and mental exercise, provides an opportunity to experience the great outdoors, gives us a chance to build valuable skills and offers lots of fun and excitement. But more importantly, the new sport has the potential to harm our parks and we should be aware of the negative impacts.

Orienteering was developed in Sweden in 1919 as a military training exercise and received a technical boost by the invention of a new more precise compass that was brought to the U.S. in 1946. At that time, Orienteering with a map and compass became an organized competitive sport with participants racing each other to find a series of points on a map (marked on the ground with orange and white flags) and returning to the finish in the shortest time.

Many different Orienteering team and relay disciplines have emerged. The race is performed on skis, in canoes, on mountain bikes, at night, on trails by those with disabilities and, along strings for training preschoolers. The "Rugged Outdoor Group Activity Involving Navigation and Endurance" takes place over long distances by foot during a 24 hour period. Some races feature international competition and foot orienteering has been recognized as



(Recreational Boating continued)

- Vessel registered out of state that is principally used outside California, or
- Vessel brought into California for racing purposes only (exempted only during races and tune-ups).

What does this mean for recreation? Consider this: In 2003, 98% of the registered boats were “pleasure” boats (DMV data from the Department of Boating and Waterways, <http://www.dbw.ca.gov/PDF/VesselReg/Vessel03.pdf>). On top of that, just about every canoe, kayak, rowboat, river raft, small sailboat and floatable inner tube is used for recreation. California’s coastline, bays, rivers, lakes and reservoirs are obviously powerful attractions for recreational boaters of all stripes.

Yet according to a recent Coast Guard survey of recreational boating safety, California’s recreational boaters have different preferences in their choice of boats than the national averages. For instance, Californians were well above average in their use of kayaks, inflatables, houseboats, sailboats, open motorboats and personal watercraft for recreation. By contrast, far fewer Californians used canoes and pontoon boats for recreation. Over half of California’s recreational boats are open motorboats. About a third are personal watercraft, with kayaks accounting for about a quarter.

The registration numbers confirm that boating is a popular pastime. But a review of trends in recreational boating tells a more complete story. In the 44 years since 1960, the number of registered recreational boats has risen 400%. Over the same time, though, the state’s population grew at a lesser rate of 128%. The number of boats per thousand people changed from 11.2 in 1960 to 24.8 in 2004. In the mid-1970’s the number approached 25 boats per thousand, a level that has held more or less stable since then. Some years are boom years, with a few more boats registered, while other years are leaner with less registrations. It turns out that 2003 (the year for which the survey results showed California was #1) was

one of those boom years. Boat registrations dropped 7% in 2004, dipping from 27.1 boats per thousand to 24.8 boats per thousand. Since the turn of the century, registrations have bounced up and down from year to year while the population has grown steadily upwards. (Department of Boating and Waterways, “Vessel Registration Trend Analysis.” http://www.dbw.ca.gov/ves_reg01.htm). Time will tell if 2005, a wet year, will produce an upturn.

New types of watercraft have come onto the market in recent years, attracting newcomers to boating, especially young adults. Examples include personal watercraft, wakeboard boats, and sailboards. The Department of Boating and Waterways has reported that personal watercraft registration totals have grown faster than any other vessel registration type over the past several years. In 1991, there were 91,000 personal watercraft registered in California; by 1997 that figure had risen to 154,264, and as of 2003 it stood at 184,105. This upswing in boating interest has not necessarily translated into safer and saner waterways, though. For instance, in 2003, personal watercraft accounted for 19% of registered boats, but they were involved in 27% of boating accidents and 40% of injury-accidents. Since many new water toys can be towed behind a boat, it is not a surprise that accidents related to waterskiing (for data purposes, “waterskiing” is when a vessel tows a person on a towline) rose 38% from 2002 to 2003. For more information on boating accidents, and the education efforts needed to help prevent them, see the Department of Boating and Waterways web site (http://www.dbw.ca.gov/safety_edu.htm).

It is clear that many Californians choose boating as a leisure time activity. Overall, recreational boating trends show a bit of growth (e.g. personal watercraft and paddlecraft) from a relatively stable level, with new recreational boating preferences impacting traditional ones. Participation rates remain essentially constant, while the absolute number of participants is growing. And the overall numbers are very large, since the state has a huge, growing

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population. These conclusions, drawn from recreational boating data, are consistent with the findings of the most recent surveys of "Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation in California" (1992, 1997, 2002) used in the California Outdoor Recreation Planning process. There are no signs that recreational boating will decline significantly, especially when this winter has been so wet. So if you are in the recreation business where there is a navigable waterway nearby, you can figure it will be busy at marinas, boat ramps, and launch sites this summer.

Do you see yourself on the water this summer? Bring the sunscreen, wear a personal floatation device [life jacket], leave the alcohol on shore, and watch out for all those other boaters! 🐻

Policymakers Urged to Protect the Environment and Preserve Open Space and Farmland in Central Valley

California's Central Valley is rapidly changing from a rural agricultural setting to the state's newest large-scale urban area. Migrants from other parts of the state and from outside the country are dramatically increasing the population. Migrant population growth is outpacing native birth-rate increases. Population projections show that the area soon will become the fastest-growing region of the state and the socioeconomic characteristics of these new migrants will shape the future of the Great Central Valley for decades to come.

Authors Hans P. Johnson and Joseph M. Hayes, have identified a diversity of income, age, race and ethnicity and educational levels among the migrants in their report, *The Central Valley at a Crossroads: Migration and Its Implications*, published by the Public Policy Institute of California, 2004. In studying migration patterns from the mid-1990s to 2004, they note that these migration flows have brought a great deal of diversity to the valley as a whole and they project that future movement of

people into the valley will greatly impact air quality, water supplies, roads, and community services. The goal of the report is to help local officials and policymakers, including park and recreation professionals, understand the fundamental forces behind these migration flows and recognize the future challenges this unprecedented growth presents.

The valley's four sub-regions, Upper Sacramento Valley, Sacramento Metro, North San Joaquin Valley and South San Joaquin Valley, are experiencing different growth patterns, but each region has attracted more new residents than those who leave for other parts of the state. The number of international migrants is nearly as great as those who come from other regions of the state. Both international and domestic migrants are attracted to the valley because housing is less expensive than in the coastal areas, the cost of living is generally lower and high-skilled jobs are available in the Sacramento metropolitan area.

Central Valley city councils tend to be more favorable toward growth than those in other regions of the state.



Substantial portions of the valley already have been transformed from rural agriculture areas to large urban and suburban communities.

This pro-growth attitude significantly effects land use and substantiates the report's findings. The authors conclude that more of the valley will be transformed and the growth will lead to environmental, economic, social and even political challenges that include building new schools and housing, supplying water and power, protecting the environment, preserving open space and farmland, alleviating traffic congestion, and providing the social services required for a large and growing population. You can read the report online or print out a copy at <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=461>. 🐻

an Olympic sport since 1977. For more information, see <http://www.us.orienteering.org>.

Letterboxing was conceived in 1854 by a Victorian gentleman walker who put his calling card in a bottle and left it in the wilds of what is now southwestern England's Dartmoor National Park. Now, letterboxes containing a guestbook and a rubber stamp are hidden in the park and complicated clues to their whereabouts are posted on Internet sites or published periodically in catalogs. When seekers find the boxes, they log their discovery by writing or stamping with their own, often artistically made, rubber stamps in their journals and in the letterbox guestbook.

Smithsonian magazine published in 1998 an article on Letterboxing and soon it was introduced to the United States. As many as 10,000 letterboxes are hidden in Dartmoor National Park, and the park distributes a brochure outlining how to participate "with moor care and less wear." Over 13,600 letterboxes are said to be hidden in North America, with over 1,000 in California, some on State Park property. Clues for letterboxes in Montana de Oro SP, show a series of loops and above the link for the "waiver of responsibility and disclaimer" is a warning to "watch for lions." Additional information is at <http://www.letterboxing.org>.

Increasingly affordable technology has advanced the new outdoor pursuit of Geocaching. Geocaching is a treasure hunt adventure game for users of personal Global Positioning System (GPS) units. The units range in cost from \$100 to \$1,000. The sport came into being in May 2000 when the government stopped their intentional degradation of GPS for security reasons. The first geocache "treasure" was hidden soon thereafter near Portland, Oregon. The treasure was found, a system of rules was devised and Geocaching was off and running. A website <http://www.geocaching.com/> coordinates the game. The site gives the rules, lists the caches, maps and coordinates, and offers hints for finding them. Today, Geocaching is so popular that enthusiasts can seek caches in over 200 countries.

Caches are hidden by participants anywhere. They can be big or small and are often cleverly named. The rules are simple. When you find the cache, take something, leave something and write about it in the logbook. Variations are encouraged and many spin-offs have been developed. Caches are maintained by 'owners' who are supposed to be responsible for any physical impact to the site. But the impact on the surrounding area is less predictable and often depends on how long a cache is offered.

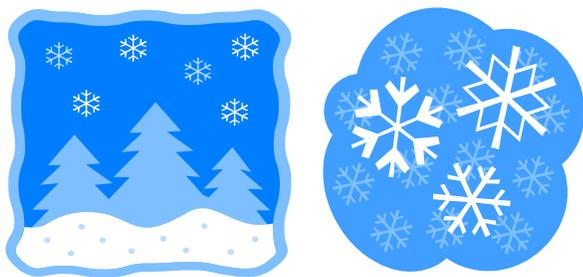
The cache locations may require difficult hiking, orienteering, or specialized equipment and some locations may be underwater. The location demonstrates the owner's skill and daring. A cache can be covered and hidden, but burying it is not recommended, and 'owners' are urged to consider the sensitivity of the environment. Before placing a cache on private or public land individuals should contact the land owner. Locating a cache on National Park Service parkland is a violation of federal regulations established to protect fragile habitat and historic and cultural resources. Before placing a cache on State Park land or in a regional or local park, you should contact park personnel directly. Deborah Chavez, a Research Social Scientist with the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station in Riverside, has described the emerging management issues of Geocaching in her article "Over the River and Through the Woods," *Parks & Recreation*, April 2004.

Understandably, many are concerned about the impact of hiding and seeking in State Parks. Any off-trail use opens a Pandora's box of increased resource damage including unwanted 'volunteer' trails, soil erosion, damage to rock faces from uncontrolled rock climbing, damage to resources and wildlife habitat. Such disturbance can be considered a "take" in listed species habitat. Cultural resources can also be damaged by unauthorized use. Staff at Mount Diablo, Henry Coe, and Mount Tamalpais State Parks describe other negative impacts, including more litter and improper disposal of human waste. Increased law enforcement and search

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and rescue costs also can over extend park budgets.

Although Geocaching may attract new users to California’s parks, the question needs to be asked, “Do the negative impacts outweigh the benefits?” Certainly we need to be aware of Geocaching activities, and be ready to educate users and apply existing laws, regulations and policies to minimize the negative impacts to our parks. [Our thanks to Janet Didion, Natural Resources Division, who contributed to this article.] 🐻



Winter Trail Use at State Parks

It’s cold outside, gray and just plain miserable for Californians who are used to sunshine. Many assume that trails have little to offer during the cold winter months. But for those of us who live for winter, it is time to let the rest of you in on our secret. State park trails are open for business and offer exciting opportunities for cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling.

A February 8, 2005 *Los Angeles Times* article highlighted a perceived battle between cross-country skiers and snowmobilers, a “frosty acrimony” where some Nordic skiers want to eliminate snowmobiles from the trails and snowmobilers want to hold onto their territory. In reality, there are many opportunities on State Park trails for both cross-country skiers and snowmobilers.

California Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation 2002 data shows that cross-country skiing ranked the same latent demand as downhill skiing and snowboarding. But cross-country ski equipment is low cost

when compared to downhill skiing and snowboarding. There is no lift-ticket to purchase and you do not have to wait in the long lines at the ski resorts. In the south, you can cross-country ski at Mount San Jacinto State Park and in the north, Sugar Pine Point State Park offers some exceptional cross-country ski trails with views of beautiful Lake Tahoe. You also can try snowshoeing in Donner Memorial State Park. Little experience is required and you will see many unusual wintertime plant and wildlife adaptations. Guided snowshoe journeys in the moonlight are a truly unique experience.

If speed is important, ride a snowmobile. The *2002 California Public Opinions and Attitudes on Outdoor Recreation* survey indicates that adults who snowmobile spend an average of five days a year on the slopes. Snowmobilers can access 180 miles of U. S. Forest Service track in the Sierra National Forest where California State Parks operates three SNO-PARKS. SNO-PARKS are located at Tamarack on the south side of Highway 168, 60 miles east of Fresno at Eastwood on the east side of 168 at Huntington Lake and at Huntington Lake on the west side of Huntington Lake Road. There are 21 SNO-PARK sites state-wide that provide cleared parking lots with sanitation facilities and access to marked trails. The SNO-PARK program is operated by the Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. Call their hot line at (916) 324-1222. A permit is required for each vehicle from November 1 through May 30.

Take advantage of these exceptional winter time recreational opportunities while you can because before you know it summer will be here again and you will be longing for these cooler temperatures. 🐻



Which Park and Why?

California's State Parks have been photographed by many well known American cameramen. Some of these artists identified and pictured the natural and cultural resources in the parks even before the state acquired the land for public use. Can you match the park to the cameraman?

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1 Malakoff Diggins SHP | A Andrew Russell |
| 2 Old Sacramento SHP | B Bob Walker |
| 3 Anza-Borrego Desert SP | C Ansel Adams |
| 4 Point Lobos SR | D Alfred Hart |
| 5 Donner Memorial SP | E Galen Rowell |
| 6 Mount Diablo SP | F Edward Weston |
| 7 Mono Lake Tufa SR | G Carleton Watkins |
| 8 Oceano Dunes SVRA  | |

Answers on back page—Which Park and Why?)

Central Valley Vision Update

California State Parks' *Central Valley Vision* recently received a flood of press coverage throughout the state. Director Ruth Coleman has kicked off this initiative to create additional park and recreational opportunities in State Parks to accommodate the additional needs of this region's growing population. The *Vision* proposes new park facilities at 32 State Park units in the Central Valley. The objective is to expand the units and to acquire new lands for natural, cultural and recreational resource purposes. The Department will work closely with local government and non-profit organizations to assure the success of this important program. In recently released media announcements, Director Coleman committed to a series of public outreach meetings beginning in the spring of 2005. Specific sites for the workshops are yet to be determined; however they are expected to occur in conjunction with functions initiated by the Great Valley Center and other public and non-profit agencies in the Central Valley. For more information on the Department's *Central Valley Vision* project, check out www.parks.ca.gov/pages/21491/files/cvreport.pdf or call (916) 651-8691 or (916) 653-9377. 

NARRP Is Coming To Town

Okay, so what is NARRP and why are they coming to town? NARRP is the National Association of Recreation Resource Planners, an organization of outdoor recreation professionals in approximately 40 states who have an interest in recreation resource planning. NARRP's mission is to advance the art, the science and the profession to enhance recreation opportunities for all Americans. This group is responsible for the development of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP), a federal requirement to maintain funding eligibility from the Land and Water Conservation Fund – a fund used to acquire, develop and rehabilitate recreation resources.

The planners are coming to Folsom's Lake Natoma Inn on May 2 - 4, 2005 for NARRP's 25th annual conference. The theme is "Healthy Landscapes, Healthy People", a fitting topic for California. The conference will present guest speakers, educational sessions and workshops. Topics may include health and wellness, federal, state and local recreation planning, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning, community partnerships, performance management, public participation techniques, and interpretation and education.

Joining NARRP this year will be the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers (NASORLO). NASORLO's members come from each of the 50 states and work to promote wise use of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and discuss efforts to increase allocations for state and local projects. If you want to learn more about NARRP or register for the conference go to <http://www.narrp.org>. 

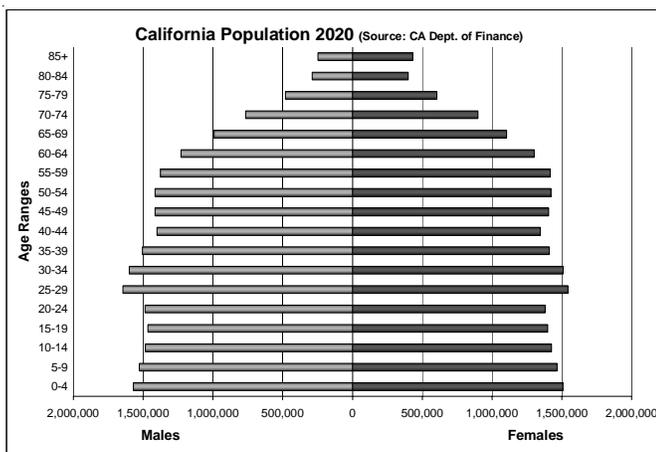
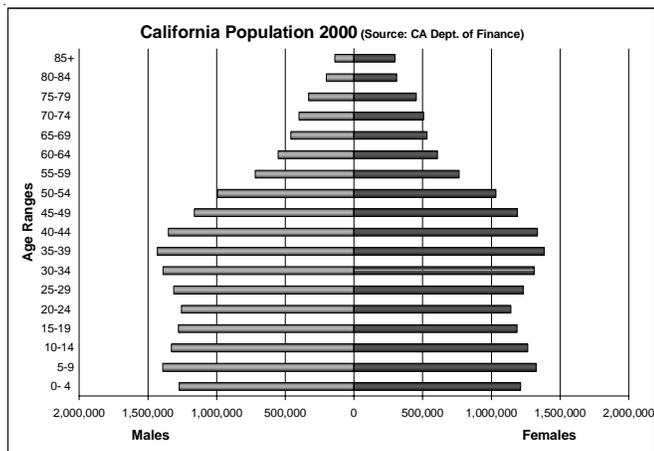


What to Watch

Both planners and policy-makers are often captivated by the study of trends. And, just as often, the trends being studied, while interesting, are not the most significant factors that will produce major impacts on the delivery of park and recreation services.

Too much attention is given to almost anything new, odd or interesting, while the small, incremental changes that occur to factors that are already having a large impact go unreported. For example, the one factor that will have the most significant impact on services is the growth in California's population.

A comparison of the two charts below (California's population in the year 2000 and projections for the year 2020) shows that the state is growing at a tremendous rate. Each year, we add a population roughly equivalent to the State of Vermont.



One implication of this growth (and there are many, many implications) is that where recreation activities show stable or slightly declining participation rates (i.e., the number of times per year in which the average Californian participates in the activity), the actual number of participants will likely grow.

When you couple this growth with the companion changes in the structure of California's population (particularly age and diversity), park and recreation service providers can be justifiably concerned. 🐻



Connecting Californians to the Outdoors

The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism is sponsoring the 2005 Symposium, "Connecting Californians to the Outdoors."

The symposium will examine the need to serve California's diverse and growing population by interesting people of all ages and backgrounds in the value of the outdoor experience. The event offers the general public and private and non-profit recreation professionals solution-based workshops and case studies of successful programs that examine current issues effecting the outdoor recreation profession.

The symposium will be held on May 25-26, 2005 in downtown Los Angeles at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Registration for the symposium is \$125 for a day and a half of presentations, materials and meals. For information about the event, please contact the Planning Division at (916) 653-9901 or e-mail

symposium@parks.ca.gov 🐻

Bear Facts

is published in February, June, and October of each year by the Planning Division of California State Parks

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Answers to Which Park and Why?

- 1-G Carleton E. Watkins (1829-1916) "Malakoff Diggings (sic.), North Bloomfield, California," 1871, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/o62083.html>
- 2-A Andrew J. Russell (1829-1902) "Looking Up K Street, Sacramento," 1869, <http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/photos/ajrussellstereo/r0567.shtml>
- 3-E. Galen Rowell (1940-2002) "Moonrise over the Anza-Borrego Desert," ca. 2000, <http://mountainlight.com/gallery.thewest/images.html>
- 4-G Carleton E. Watkins (1829-1916) "Gibson Beach, Point Lobos, Monterey County" ca. 1876-1880, <http://www.getty.edu/art/collections/objects/o62037.html>
- 5-D Alfred A. Hart (1816-1908) "Donner Lake, Tunnels No. 7 and 8," ca. 1868, http://cpr.org/Museum/Archive/97709701_nr.html
- 6-B Bob Walker (1952-1992) "Diablo Foothills Regional Park, with Mount Diablo in background," ca. 1990, http://www.baynature.com/2001spring/ancient_sea.html
- 7-C Ansel Adams (1902-1984) "White Branches, Mono Lake, CA, 1950," <http://www.anseladams.com/White-Branches-Mono-Lake-CA-1950-by-ANSEL-ADAMS-P819C0.aspx>
- 8-F Edward Weston (1886-1958) "Black Dune, Oceano, 1934," <http://www.davidrumsey.com/amico/amico10103515-31294.html>

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