



Annual Report to the Governor on the California State Park System 2005–2006

California State Park and
Recreation Commission



Commission Actions



Left: Camping at Malibu Creek State Park



Right: Beach Play Day, Huntington State Beach

California State Parks' mission states that it shall provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by preserving the states' extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. The Park and Recreation Commission aids the department in this Mission by approving general plans for units of the State Park System, classifying units of the system, establishing general policies to guide the department Director in the administration, protection and development of the system, and recommending to the Director a comprehensive recreation policy for the state.

This report covers the actions of the Commission during the 2005/06 fiscal year, specifically July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006.



Above: California toad and California poppies, new life at Rio de Los Angeles State Park

Recreation Policy Leadership

At the September 2005 hearing, we approved *California's Recreation Policy*, providing park and recreation professionals with direction for addressing the needs of Californians. It is intended that all suppliers of park facilities and recreation opportunities will be guided by *California's Recreation Policy* as they work to provide the high quality recreation experiences Californians have come to expect and which they deserve.

1. Adequacy of Recreation Opportunities—the supply of park lands, waters, open space, recreation facilities and services must be adequate to meet future and current demands, particularly in the State's most populated areas.
2. Leadership in Recreation Management—leadership, cooperation and partnership must be

demonstrated at all levels to ensure quality recreation resources, opportunities, programs and services are provided.

3. Recreation's Role in a Healthier California—meaningful recreation activities, facilities, programs and increased opportunities for physical activity are vital to improving the health and well-being of Californians.
4. Preservation of Natural and Cultural Resources—educating Californians about their state's resources is a critical part of ensuring these resources continue to be available for the enjoyment of current and future generations.
5. Accessible Recreational Experiences—all Californians have the right to enjoy the state's park and recreation legacy.



Commission Hearings

In 2005/06, Commission hearings were held in: Los Angeles, San Jose, Tahoe City, Chico and San Juan Bautista. During these hearings, five general plans and two amendments to existing general plans were approved.

Angel Island State Park

An amendment to the existing Angel Island State Park General Plan (1979) was approved to permit rehabilitation and public use of the historic Immigration Station buildings on the island.

Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park

Located in Butte and Glenn Counties, Bidwell-Sacramento River State Park preserves a fine example of a disappearing natural resource, the native river habitat. Approval of the general plan allows expanded public access and recreational opportunities along the Sacramento River.

Burton Creek State Park

Increased statewide demand for camping, particularly in the Tahoe Basin, was of primary interest at Burton Creek State Park. The approved general plan adjusts a boundary of the Burton Creek Natural Preserve, allowing safe and ecologically preferable access to the park unit, and assures that future camping areas will be placed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Forest of Nisene Marks State Park

The approved 2003 general plan for the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park in Santa Cruz County was amended to restrict mountain bike use of trails in the upper portion of the park, as mandated by a Superior Court ruling on the deed restrictions on the property's use.

Los Angeles State Historic Park and Rio de Los Angeles State Park

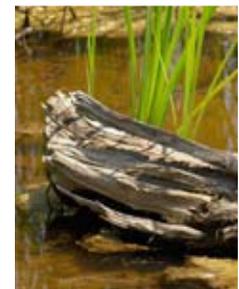
These new park units, acquired for \$72.8 million from the General Fund and the 2000 Park Bond Act, are located within the underserved Los Angeles city limits. The approved general plans provide outdoor recreation facilities, connect the parks to the adjacent Los Angeles River corridor, and celebrate the ethnic diversity of Los Angeles both past and present. Noted design firm Hargreaves Associates is preparing the final park design.

Pacheco State Park

Pacheco State Park is within driving distance of both the Central Valley and the Bay Area. Adoption of the general plan for the park allows planning to proceed for multiuse trails and developed campsites in close proximity to a significant portion of the State's population.

Left: Rehabilitation in progress at Immigration Station, Angel Island State Park

Right: Planning meeting, Los Angeles State Historic Park



Above: Scenes at recently opened Rio de Los Angeles State Park

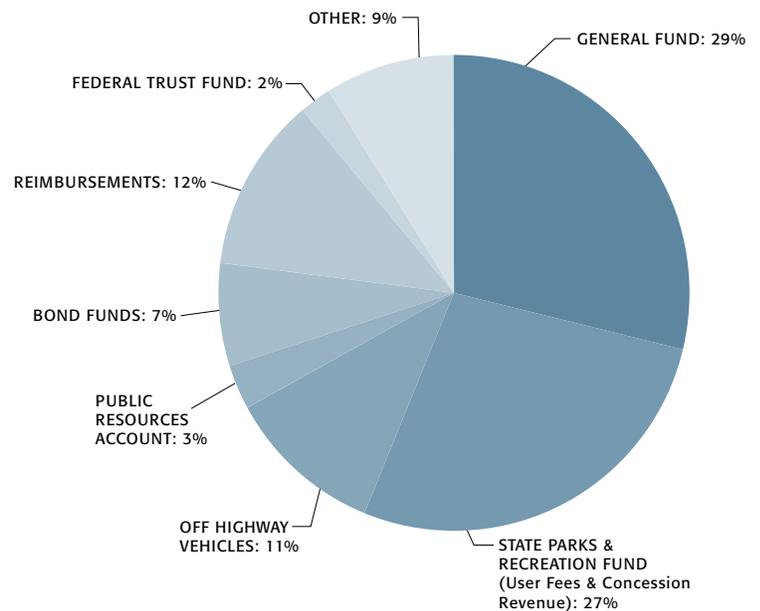
Threats to California's State Parks



Top:
Significant repairs
needed to the John
Marsh Home

Bottom:
Beach bluff stairway
lost to erosion,
Garrapata State Beach

2005/06 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES



DEFERRED MAINTENANCE PROGRAM: 2005/06

Program	# of Projects	Cost
Facilities	3,400	\$512.3 million
Natural Resources	1,800	\$246.2 million
Cultural Resources	1,200	\$201.4 million
Total	6,400	\$960.0 million

Precarious Financial Condition

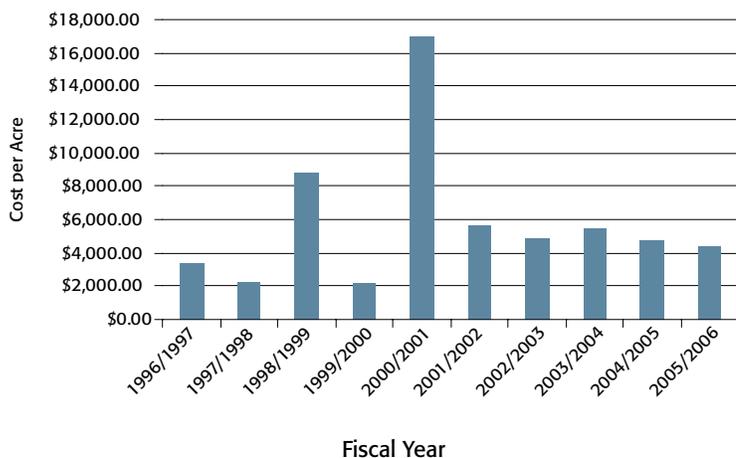
In the past four years, California State Parks has reduced its reliance on General Fund dollars by more than 30 percent (from \$130.3 million to \$87.9 million), and user fees have doubled. Day use and camping fees and concession revenue constitute 27 percent of the department's total 2005–2006 budget. Dependence on revenue from fees is a risky funding source, considering the recent dramatic rise in gas prices and the array of other recreation opportunities available to potential State Park visitors.

Deferred Maintenance Program

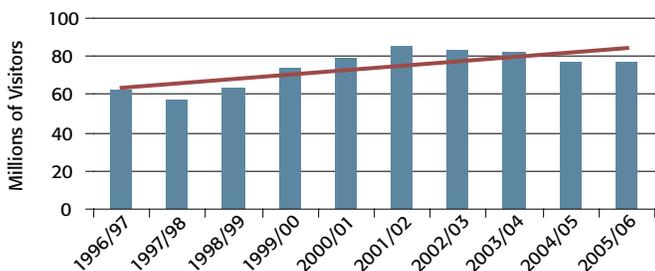
The Department has an infrastructure repair list that includes more than 6,000 individual projects, estimated at \$960 million. Not performing these repairs increases liability, health and safety risks. In addition, construction costs continue to rise. Had these projects been done five years ago the cost would have been approximately \$800 million. Responding to this list is a top priority for the Department and the Commission. The Commission successfully lobbied for the inclusion of \$250 million for the Deferred Maintenance Program in the department's 2006/07 budget. These funds will be used on the most serious health and safety related maintenance projects first.

Threats to California's State Parks

LAND ACQUISITION COST



TOTAL ATTENDANCE



Increasingly Expensive Land Acquisition

Land purchases are increasingly difficult because of rising real estate prices. Property purchased in the 1996/1997 fiscal year averaged \$3,450 per acre, while the average land price in 2005/2006 fiscal year was \$4,420 per acre, a difference of 28%. Bond acts approved by the voters and gifts from land preservation organizations have provided the funds. These infrequent funding increases, however, cannot be relied upon to provide a steady funding source to acquire endangered properties as they become available.

Supported by the Commission, the Department acquired a total of 5,333 acres during the 2005/2006 fiscal year. Funding from Park and Water Conservation Bonds, grants, and private donations was utilized to preserve valuable natural and cultural resources. The following are major acquisitions from this period:

- 102 acres of the Soka University/King

Gillette Ranch property, Malibu Creek State Park. \$7.2 million

- 91 acres of the Sand Hill Bluff property in Santa Cruz County near the town of Davenport. \$4.6 million
- 3,400 acre Willow Creek property, Sonoma Coast State Park. \$16.4 million
- 359 acres of the Desert Cahuilla property, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. \$180,000
- The Pigeon Point Lighthouse was transferred from the U.S. Department of the Interior to California State Parks free of cost.

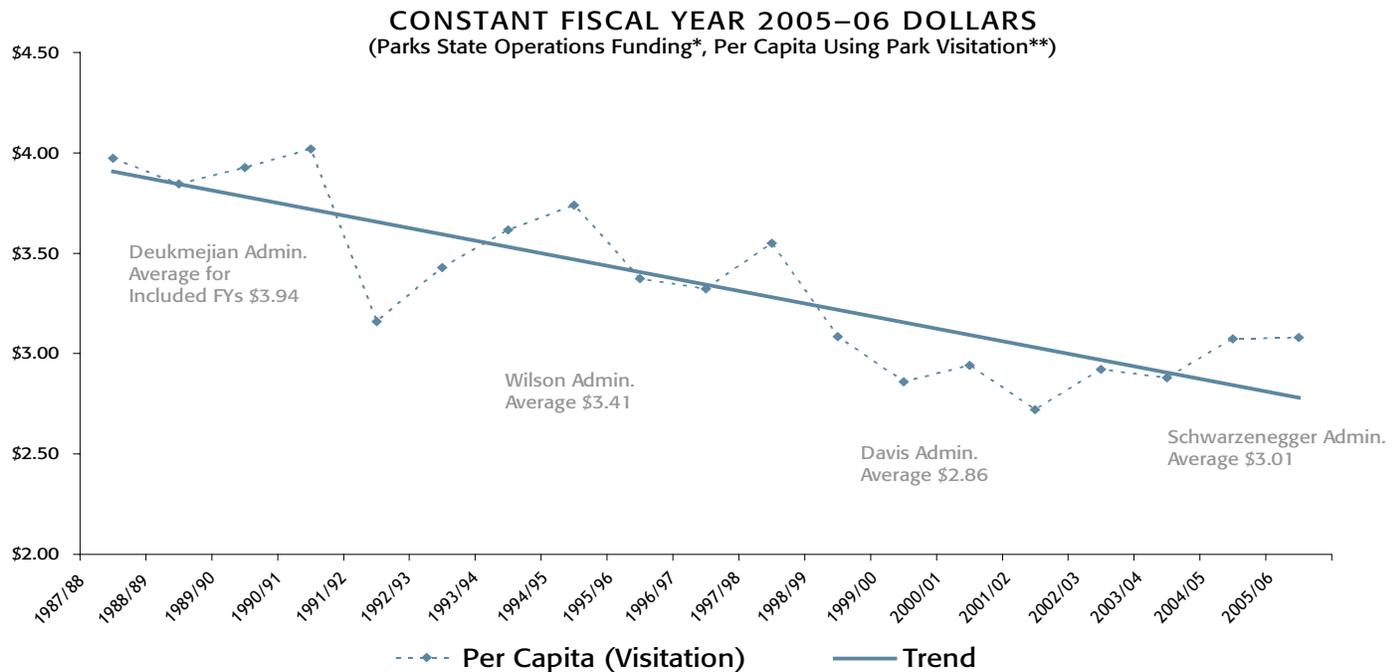
Operational Concerns

California's demand for recreation exceeds the supply. According to Department statistics, the number of visitors to the State Park System has increased by about 22 percent in the last 10 years. More than 76 million people visited state parks in fiscal year 2005–2006. Seven million of those visitors camped overnight. To prevent overcrowding of popular areas, some parks restrict the number of visitors.

Top:
Red Hill, Willow Creek property, Sonoma Coast State Park

Bottom:
Pigeon Point Light Station Historic Park

Threats to California's State Parks



*Current Year Support Budget excluding carryover authority, one-time funds, OHMVR, bonds & reimbursements adjusted to 2005-2006 California CPI
 **Excludes OHV park visitation

Decrease in Operating Funds

Per capita spending of operating funds per visitor has decreased over the past 20 years from an average of \$3.94 to the current average of \$3.01, a loss of 24 percent. Our concern is that this continued decline could lead to curtailment of park services to the public, as well as loss of effective stewardship of park lands.

Non-mission Uses

Proposed non-mission uses (e.g., a toll road in a state park) and potential impacts to state park properties are a looming threat. We, as stewards of the State Park System, must act to protect these threatened lands. Incursions on park land are viewed by proponents as a cost effective way of accomplishing non-mission related projects. For these developers, it is less expensive to promote legislation allowing unprecedented use of State Park land, or to advocate changes in State Wilderness designation, than to acquire land or access outside of state property.

- Following a public hearing, the Commission joined the State Attorney General in a lawsuit to protect San Onofre State Beach from the construction of the proposed Foot-hill-South Toll Road. We believe this development is inconsistent with the protection of the park's resources and that there are adequate alternatives to the proposed route through the State Beach.
- San Diego Gas & Electric's proposed Sunrise PowerLink transmission line route through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park directly impacts hundreds of acres of designated State Wilderness. We have received thousands of public letters and commentary on the proposed route, continue to monitor this proposal, and will consider legal alternatives as needed.
- We join the Big Lagoon Tribe in supporting the Big Lagoon and Los Coyotes Compact to construct an off-reservation casino in Barstow, rather than on Big Lagoon Reservation lands directly adjacent to environmentally sensitive Big Lagoon State Park.

Response to Threats on Park Resources



Increased Concession Services

Concessions provide needed services to park visitors, including food, beverages, equipment rental, lodging and supplies; and increase revenue for State Parks. Revenue from concessions in fiscal year 2005/06 exceeded \$10.4 million, an increase of 13% over the previous year.

Concession contracts are evaluated by the Commission's Concessions, Enterprise and Fiscal Committee to determine their compatibility with the classification and general plans for park units, and whether the sale of alcoholic beverages in the park unit meets with Commission policy. We approved the following concessions in the 2005/06 fiscal year:

- Angel Island State Park: ferry service to the park
- California State Railroad Museum: catering services and sale of alcoholic beverages in the historic-style cafe
- Crystal Cove State Park: lodging, food and beverage sales
- Old Town San Diego State Historic Park: specialty food and/or retail sales, and sale of alcoholic beverages
- Pismo State Beach: Pismo Lodge concession and sale of alcoholic beverages
- San Clemente State Beach: sale of food, beverages and beach-related items

Development Within Existing Park Units

During the 2005/06 fiscal year, several projects were completed that help meet the needs of California State Park visitors:

- Thirteen cottages, including 3 dorm-style cottages, were opened for public overnight use at Crystal Cove State Park. This non-traditional park lodging provides unique facilities for families and individuals from near by urban areas.
- The infrastructure left behind by the "Not a Cornfield" art project added a mile long trail, a turfed area, irrigation and lighting to Los Angeles State Historic Park, an open space within a densely populated community.
- The home of famed humorist Will Rogers in Will Rogers State Historic Park was re-opened to the public after undergoing a \$5 million renovation that protected valuable cultural resources.
- Construction began on Rio de Los Angeles State Park. In partnership with City of Los Angeles, the city development will offer recreational opportunities for children and adults. State Park facilities will offer riparian areas and quiet places for passive recreation.

Eagerly Anticipated Bond Funding

The Commission worked with the State Parks Foundation and other advocacy groups to pass Proposition 84, the "Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006." Funding from this bond act, which allocates \$400 million to State Parks, could support such projects as new campgrounds, visitor centers and rehabilitation of existing Parks, helping us to fulfill the promises made in the California Recreation Policy.

Left:
Commission visit to
San Onofre State
Beach

Right:
Rental Cottage, Crystal
Cove State Park



Recently opened Rio de Los Angeles State Park

Public Resources Code Section 535 Annual Report to the Governor

The commission shall report annually to the Governor, through the director, on existing and operating recreational facilities, programs and activities of the state park system, and on the needs of the state and local subdivisions thereof for recreational facilities, programs, and activities, and shall make recommendations for programs and activities to meet future needs of the state for parks and recreation.

Sources:

California State Park and Recreation Commission, Minutes of Hearings, 2005-2006 fiscal year

California State Park Acquisition Records, 1996/97 to 2005/2006

California State Park statistical records, 1997/98 to 2005/2006.

California State Park System Statistical Report, 2005/06 Fiscal Year, October 2006

Park Infrastructure Database

California State Park and Recreation Commission, 2005/06

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