



CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING STAFF REPORT COVER PAGE

Santa Rosa, CA
March 5, 2026

AGENDA ITEM: 08 – Review and Approve Annual Report

STAFF: Prasanna Hankins, Commission Liaison

SUBJECT: State Park and Recreation Commission Annual Report

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Review Annual Report for clarity and accuracy and make recommendations and/or approve Annual Report.

II. BACKGROUND/SUMMARY

Per California Public Resource Code Section 535, the State Park and Recreation Commission must submit an Annual Report to the Governor. The Annual Report for review and approval is for the period of January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2025.

III. ATTACHMENTS

- Staff Report
- Draft Annual Report



CALIFORNIA STATE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING STAFF REPORT

**Santa Rosa, CA
March 5, 2026**

STAFF REPORT: Review and Approve Annual Report
STAFF: Prasanna Hankins, Commission Liaison
SUBJECT: Annual Report to Governor

INTRODUCTION

Per California Public Resource Code 535, “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 the 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.

DESCRIPTION

The Annual Report to the Governor before the State Park and Recreation Commission is for the period of January 1, 2023, and December 31, 2025. The Annual Report summarizes all the Commission’s actions during that period along with the Commission’s priorities.

NEXT STEPS

Once approved, the final version will be sent to the Governor’s Office.

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend approval of the Annual Report.

COMMISSION ACTION(S)

Upon review, the Commission may suggest updates, approve, or send back to subcommittee for additional work.

State Park and Recreation Commission Annual Report



Reporting Period:
January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025

California State Park and Recreation Commission

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

The California State Park and Recreation Commission (SPRC or Commission) aids DPR in this mission. The SPRC establishes general policies to guide the director in the administration, protection, and development of the California State Park System, makes compatibility findings for proposed concessions, classifies units of the state park system, and approves general plans for units of the state park system.

California Public Resources Code section 535 states that SPRC 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 the 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.

This report covers the actions of the SPRC during the years 2023-2025.

Learn more online:

California State Park and Recreation Commission <https://www.parks.ca.gov/commission>

California State Parks <https://www.parks.ca.gov>

SPRC Commissioners

The SPRC was created as the State Park Commission in 1927. In its current form nine voting commissioners are appointed to staggered four-year terms. The governor appoints the voting members of the Commission; these appointments require Senate confirmation. State law requires that:

- Three members represent the public.
- One member demonstrates expertise in cultural or historic resources management.
- One member possesses a background as a park professional.
- One member represents a nonprofit or other organization with a statewide operating agreement or other arrangement.
- One member represents a statewide conservation organization with expertise in the administration or programs of DPR.
- One member has a background in the recreational industry.
- One member represents a local business community that has significant and beneficial relationships with state parks.

SPRC Subcommittees and Priorities

During the reporting period, the SPRC subcommittees focused on the following commission priorities.

Operations Subcommittee (Annual Report, Strategic Plan, Budget, Partnerships and Concessions, Grants and Local Services, Hiring and Recruitment)

- Addressing underserved communities (culturally competent interpretation, external facing equity and access, acquisition, expansion of parks, prioritization of areas that need parks, and grants to fund urban parks.)
- Equity in the workforce at all levels, budgeting, internal operations, enhancing the general planning process.

Programming and Advocacy Subcommittee (Climate, Planning, Acquisitions)

- Network of resiliency, protection, cooling centers, sea level rise, wildfire risk, public safety, facilities, transportation, etc.

Public Engagement and Communications Subcommittee (Access for All, Golden Bear Awards)

- Public access to grants, public meeting visibility, effective commissioner engagement, communication amongst commissioners and the public.

Commissioners



Phil Ginsburg, Chair

August 2019 – January 15, 2026



Jeff Williams

August 29, 2023 – January 15, 2027



Francesca Vietor, Vice Chair

March 9, 2022 – January 15, 2026



Tom Huntington

March 21, 2025 – January 15, 2028



Christina Jaromay

March 29, 2022 – January 15, 2028



David Galaviz

August 27, 2025 – January 15, 2029

Ex-Officio Members



Assemblymember Gail Pellerin

Member, Assembly Standing Committee on Natural Resources



Senator Henry Stern

Member, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

Former Members (served during reporting period)

- Benjamin Bashein (Nonprofit)
 - November 8, 2023 to September 4, 2025
- Sara Elizabeth Barth (Statewide Conservancy Organization)
 - May 8, 2020 to January 15, 2025
- Diane O. Wittenberg (Public)
 - February 9, 2018 to January 15, 2022
- Katherine Michelle Toy (Cultural & Historic Resources)
 - May 8, 2020 to January 15, 2024
- Asma Yasmin Mahdi (Non-Profit Pol or Op Agree)
 - May 8, 2020 to January 15, 2023
- Roulette Mapp (Public)
 - March 21, 2019 to January 15, 2023

Former Ex – Officio Members (served during reporting period)

- Senator Robert Hertzberg
 - Former Chair, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
- Senator Fran Pavely
 - Former Chair, Senate Natural Recourses and Water Committee
- Assemblymember Marc Levin
 - Former Chair, Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee

Board Member Appointments

During meetings held on the dates noted below, the Commission approved the appointment and/or reappointment of the California Citrus State Historic Park Non-Profit Management Corporation (Friends of California Citrus Park) board members:

- 9/21/2023: Heather Ross
- 9/21/2023: Dr. Benjamin Jenkins
- 9/21/2023: Andrew Emery
- 3/26/2025: Jennifer Gamble
- 3/26/2025: Lynn Brown-Summers
- 12/17/2025: Laurie Cook

Consent Items

Memorial Grove Resolutions

During this reporting period, the Commission approved 120 memorial redwood groves, dispersed as follows by park units:

SHP: State Historic Park
SNR: State Natural Reserve

SP: State Park
SRA: State Recreation Area

Big Basin SP (13)	Montgomery Redwoods SNR (3)
Butano SP (12)	Navarro River Redwoods SP (15)
Castle Rock SP (5)	Portola Redwoods SP (13)
Forest of Nisene Marks SP (2)	Prairie Creek Redwoods SP (9)
Jedediah Smith Redwoods SP (43)	Wilder Ranch SP (3)
Jug Handle SNR (1)	Del Norte Coast Redwoods SP (1)

Commission Initiated Resolutions

The Commission unveiled the resolution process at the March 2025 SPRC meeting. These resolutions may address specific matters, policies, procedures, and opinions of the commission. This process is intended to increase public engagement and opportunities for the public to comment on resolution topics. Each Subcommittee will present at least one resolution for the Commission to consider per calendar year. The resolution should relate to the priorities of the Subcommittee and is drafted in collaboration with department staff.

Since March 2025, the following Resolutions have been presented by the Commission:

- 11-2025 Recognizing and Appreciating California Department of Parks and Recreation Staff After Recent Fire Events
- 17-2025 Recognizing and Appreciating the California Natural Resources Agency and the California Department of Parks and Recreation Efforts in Support of Co-Stewardship with California's Native American Tribes
- 22-2025 Promoting California Department of Parks and Recreation Efforts in Support of California's 30x30 Conservation Initiative



Image of S. Barth, P. Ginsburg, C. Jaromay, J. Williams, F. Vietor, B. Bashein, and Assemblymember G. Pellerin

Five-Year Strategic Plan

During this reporting period, the Commission was actively involved in providing recommendations for the Department's Five-Year Strategic Plan, *Path Forward*, prior to its official public release in February of 2024. The momentum from the Transformation effort, which identified and initiated several priority projects, led to the start of the *Path Forward* role in the Department's efforts in response to the final recommendations of the Parks Forward Commission.

Path Forward, which aligns with Governor Gavin Newsom's Equity Executive Order N-16-22, 30X30 and Outdoors for All Initiatives, builds upon the existing priorities established through Transformation and introduces new ideas, goals, and objectives for the next five years and into the future.

Two factors set *Path Forward* apart from previous change efforts. Department staff from all levels developed the plan with input from our partners rather than a top-down approach. Public comment during the development of *Path Forward* was collected at eleven department commission meetings which helped inform the contents of this strategic plan. The second factor involves the creation of an actionable implementation plan, beginning in January 2024, that is led by a committee made up of key department leaders representing all program areas. The implementation plan will include interdisciplinary teams to carry out and manage projects tied to the goals and objectives of the plan. These teams will use a designated project management tool to develop specific plans, timelines, regular status updates, and evaluation metrics to achieve each goal. The teams will provide annual progress and status updates.

Since *Path Forward* was launched in February 2024, the Commission has received quarterly updates from DPR's Director and Executive Staff regarding progress of the plan via public commission meetings. The next update will include data on all ongoing projects since 2024 that are meeting the goals and objectives of *Path Forward*.

Meetings

2023 Meetings

- April 2023 – Lancaster, CA
- June 2023 – Irvine, CA
- September 2023 – Berkley, CA

2024 Meetings

- March 2024 – Cupertino, CA
- April 2024 – Tracy, CA
- June 2024 – West Sacramento, CA
- September 2024 – San Diego, CA

2025 Meetings

- March 2025 – Palm Springs, CA
- June 2025 – Los Angeles, CA
- September 2025 – West Sacramento, CA
- December 2025 – Loma Linda, CA

General Plans

During the reporting period covered in this report, the Commission considered and approved two General Plans:

- Sutter's Fort State Historic Park (6.2024)
- Red Rock Canyon State Park (3.2023)

Classification and Naming

Classification of Wildwood Canyon Park Property to a State Park at the December 2025 Commission meeting.



Wildwood Canyon Park Property

Meeting agendas and recording are available at
<https://www.calspan.org/meetings/CSPRC>

Schedules for future meetings are available at
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id30545

Golden Bear Awards

In January of 2019, the California State Park and Recreation Commission approved the revival of the annual Golden Bear Awards Program. The Golden Bear Award serves to acknowledge positive and creative efforts to preserve and enrich our state parks, recognizing individuals and organizations who have been instrumental in protecting cultural and natural resources, as well as creating diverse, high-quality outdoor recreation opportunities. A call for nominations is announced mid spring and typically runs through summer. Each year, up to six awards will be presented, one in each of the following categories:

- Central Division
- Coastal Division
- Desert Division
- Northern Division
- Statewide
- Honorary Partner



Golden Bear Recipient Dorothy Benjamin with Chair Ginsburg and Co-Chair Vietor

The following Golden Bear Awards were presented during this reporting period:

2022

Central Division

Santa Cruz Mountains Trail
Stewardship, Partner
Organization, Santa Cruz
Mountains District

Desert Division

Mark Faul, Retired DPR
Employee, Volunteer, Great
Basin District
Tom Trakes, Retired CDFW
Employee, Volunteer, Inland
Empire District

Coastal Division

Dr. Jarrell Jackman, Member
of the Public, Channel Coast
District

Statewide

Jeanne Marie Ekstrom, Retired
DPR Employee, Office of
Grants and Local Services,
Community Engagement
Division

2023

Coastal Division

Rick Matsuo, Park
Maintenance Chief, Angeles
District

Juan Carlo Mendoza,
Mountain Bike Unit (MBU)
Volunteer, Angeles District

Northern Division

Sierra State Parks Foundation,
Sierra District

Desert Division

Dorothy Benjamin, Volunteer
at Colonel Allensworth State
Historic Park, Great Basin
District

Statewide

Viktor Patino, Office of Grants
and Local Services,
Community Engagement
Division

2024

Central Division

Tim Highland, Natural
Resources Project Manager
Santa Cruz Mountain District

Honorary Partner

Coastside State Parks
Association

Coastal Division

Barbara Tejada, Cultural
Resources Program Manager,
Angeles District
Jason Findlay, Trail
Coordinator, Angeles District

Desert Division

Walt Kirkwood, Volunteer
Cuyamaca Rancho State
Park, Colorado Desert District

Northern Division

Lauren Shoemaker, Sector
Superintendent II, Auburn
State Recreation Area

Statewide

Dr. Stephen Lockhart, Member
of a Partner Organization

Nominees should be a past or present DPR employee, volunteer, partner organization, member of a partner organization, legislator, or member of the public who works for, with, or in support of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

To learn more about the history, qualifications, past award recipients and how to nominate candidates for a Golden Bear Award, please visit

<https://www.parks.ca.gov/GoldenBearAward>.

Concession Notifications and Compatibility Findings

During this reporting period, the Commission reviewed the following concession proposals and ascertained that the proposals were compatible with the classification and approved general plans for the relevant park unit.

2023

- Fremont Peak SP – Negotiate a concession contract for interpretive astronomical programs and services.
- Folsom Lake – Marina Concession (6.22.2023)
- Columbia SHP – Negotiate concession contract for the operation of a horse drawn conveyance that will create an environment in Columbia SHP representative of the Early Days, circa 1850-1870 during the Gold Rush, with a variety of innovative interpretive and educational services. (7.5.2023)
- San Elijo SB – Beach concession (9.21.2023)
- Bolsa Chica State Beach – Beach Concession (9.21.2023)

2024

- Silverwood Lake SRA – Silverwood Marina (3.7.2024)
- Columbia SHP – Issue RFP for concession contract for retail and food concessions (4.26.24)
- Emerald Bay SP – Negotiate a concession contract for food and beverage service at Los Angeles State Historic Park with LA Pattie Shack dba Cargo Snack Shake (6.6.24)
- Old Town San Diego SHP – To amend a concession contract for a historic retail, restaurants, and hotel operation (9.17.24)

2025

- Carnegie, Hollister Hills, Hungry Valley, and Prairie City SVRA – Negotiate a concession contract for off-highway all-terrain vehicle (ATV) tours (1.6.25)
- Folsom Lake SRA – Issue RFP for concession contract for retail and food concession (1.28.25)
- Old Town San Diego SHP – Hotel Concession (3.26.2025)
- Lake Oroville SRA – Negotiate a concession contract for the operation of the Forebay Aquatic Center (4.9.25)

- Los Encinos SHP – Negotiate a concession contract for food, beverage, and related hospitality services with Lankershim Investment Properties, LLC (5.15.25)
- Folsom Lake SRA – Negotiate a concession contract for equestrian rides and lesson services (6.30.25)
- Sonoma State Historic Park – Blue Wing Inn (9.25.2025)
- San Clemente SB – Restaurant and Catering (12.17.2025)