



SPECIAL EVENT GUIDELINES 2026

Santa Cruz District
California State Parks
303 Big Trees Park Road, Felton, CA 95018

***The Mission of California State Parks** 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.*

Thank you for your interest in having your special event at one of the beautiful and distinctive State Parks found in the Santa Cruz District. Throughout our 32 park units, the Santa Cruz District offers a variety of unique event venues.

Please note that all the locations in the park are outdoors and rustic. Events in our parks are suitable for those wishing to have a low-key event in a natural setting without modern accoutrements.

Because of the rustic nature of these sites, we highly recommend visiting the park and location(s) you are interested in reserving for your event prior to applying for a Special Event Permit.

Please also visit www.parks.ca.gov and type in the park unit to obtain additional detailed information regarding the available venues.

SPECIAL EVENTS:

includes all activities beyond the normal scope of park visitor use which could impact public access or enjoyment, and activities which create a greater potential for hazard and liability to the state than incurred through typical operations. The Special Event Permit must be in accordance with State Park rules and regulations. (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 4301(j)). **Permits are required for any activity within the State Park System which meet any of the following criteria:**

1. Fees are charged by the event sponsor beyond the regular State Park Facility use fees
2. When the department has determined the event will create a greater potential hazard or liability to the State than incurred through typical operations.
3. When the activity includes the exclusive use of an area within the park.
4. When the activity interferes significantly with the public's use of an area.
5. When additional staffing or staff time is required.
6. Where items or services are sold.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMIT PROCESS	p. 2, 3
FEES AND DEPOSITS.....	p.4
INSURANCE INFORMATION.....	p. 5
PERMIT PARAMETERS.....	p. 5, 6
CANCELLATION POLICY.....	p. 6
SECURITY DEPOSIT.....	p. 6
ALCOHOL.....	p. 6, 7
ENVIRONMENT.....	p. 7
DECORATIONS.....	p. 7
SIGNAGE.....	p. 8
ELECTRICITY.....	p. 8
FIRES.....	p. 8
PETS.....	p. 8
PARKING.....	p. 8
VEHICLES.....	p. 9
MUSIC/SOUND.....	p. 9
OUTSIDE VENDORS/CATERERS.....	p. 9
SCHOOL GROUPS/LIFEGUARDS.....	P. 9
BEACH EVENTS.....	p. 10
MAJOR EVENTS.....	p. 10
FILM PERMITS.....	p. 10
CLIMBING PERMITS.....	p. 11
WEDDINGS.....	p. 11

PERMIT PROCESS:

Special Event Permit Process

1. Review the entire Special Event Guidelines. Keep this for future reference.
2. Contact the Special Event Coordinator to check a specific date for availability and to request an application. (Events are not placed on the calendar until after the Special Event Coordinator’s office receives the completed application and applicable non-refundable filing fee).
3. Complete the Special Event Application and email or mail with the applicable non-refundable filing fee to the appropriate Special Events Office:
 - **Mountains Special Events** includes: Castle Rock State Park, Portola Redwoods State Park and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park. *Big Basin RSP & Little Basin are currently not available.*

Mountains Special Events Office

303 Big Trees Road

Felton, CA 95018

Mountain.sector@parks.ca.gov

- **Pajaro Coast Special Events** includes: Wilder Ranch State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, Lighthouse Field State Beach, Twin Lakes State Beach (Seabright), New Brighton State Beach,

Seacliff State Beach (Rio Del Mar State Beach), The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park
Manresa State Beach, Sunset State Beach, Castro Adobe State Park, Santa Cruz Mission SHP

Pajaro Coast Special Events Office
303 Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018
SCD.SpecialEvents@parks.ca.gov

- **San Mateo Coast Special Events** includes: Montara State Beach, McNee Ranch, Half Moon Bay State Beach, Cowell Ranch Beach, San Gregorio State Beach, Pomponio State Beach, Pescadero State Beach, Bean Hollow State Beach, Pebble Beach, ~~Pigeon Point Light Station SHP~~, Butano State Park, Año Nuevo State Park, Gazos Creek Beach, Waddell Creek Beach, Rancho Del Oso.

San Mateo Coast Special Events Office
95 Kelly Avenue
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
SMPermits@parks.ca.gov

4. If approved, the Special Events office will email your approved Special Event Permit back to you. The following must be received by the Special Event Coordinator's office at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the event:

- Special Event Permit. Signed and dated.
 - All permit fees.
 - Refundable security deposit.

For Large events the following may also be required:

- Certificate of liability insurance
- Vendor list
- Transportation plan
- Site Safety plan
- Additional chemical toilets
- Garbage Removal plan
- ABC license (alcohol permits)

All checks and money orders must be made payable to **California State Parks**. Do not send cash through the mail.

The event will remain on the calendar as long as all due dates are met.

5. Once all required fees, deposits, and documents are received by the Special Event office, your permit will be approved, and you will receive a final copy of your permit. ***Please remember to bring this permit on the day of your event.***

FEES AND DEPOSITS:

Non-Refundable Filing Fee: Paid with your completed application.

- \$25 Non-refundable fee must be paid 30 days prior to the event date –or–

- \$100 Non-refundable Rush fee if the filing fee is received by the special events office less than thirty (30) days prior to the event. All rush permit fees must be paid in the form of a cashier's check or money order.

Special Event Fees:

{Special Event fees will be determined by State Park staff based on type of event and/or amount of people attending}

SANTA CRUZ DISTRICT SPECIAL EVENT FEES	
Filing Fee	\$25
Late Filing Fee (if less than 30 days to event date)	\$100
Regular Permit for up to 50 people	\$300
Regular Permit for 51 to 100 people	\$400
Regular Permit for 101 to 150 people	\$500
Regular Permit for 151 to 200 people	\$625
Major Event Permit for up to 100 people	\$575
Major Event Permit for 101 to 150	\$825
Major Event Permit for 151 to 200	\$1000
Major Event Permit for 201+	TBD
Security Deposit	\$250
Security Deposit w/ alcohol	\$350
Alcohol waiver up to 50 people	\$50
Alcohol waiver 51 to 150	\$100
Alcohol waiver 151 to 250	\$250
Alcohol waiver over 251 people	\$300
Additional Area fee	\$50
Ranger Monitor fee	\$700
Facilities Maintenance fee	TBD
Trails/Roads Maintenance fee	TBD

{State Park staff will make final determination of classification of event (regular or major event).}

An additional location fee is required for the following Prime locations.

SANTA CRUZ SPECIAL EVENT PRIME LOCATIONS	
BIG BASIN CAMPFIRE CENTER	\$1,200
HENRY COWELL PICNIC AREA 1	\$250
HENRY COWELL RESERVABLE GROVE	\$200
NEW BRIGHTON RAMADA	\$300
SEACLIFF RESERVABLE RAMADA	\$200
SUNSET RAMADA (S) Upper & Lower	\$200

INSURANCE INFORMATION:

Liability Insurance Requirements

Insurance is required when a commercial vendor, caterer, event planner, etc. is involved in your event, or the event and its specific details pose a greater risk to the environment or persons involved in the event. Generally, weddings should not require insurance, except when “out of the ordinary” park activities are to take place, i.e. band, tent set up, etc.

If proof of insurance is required, please contact a qualified insurance company for the insurance policy; your current renters or homeowners’ insurance provider is a good place to start.

The Certificate of Insurance must be received at least sixty (60) days in advance of the event.

The State Of California requires the following regarding liability insurance:

- 1. Must be on an ACORD25 form.**
- 2. The name of the permittee must be the same of the insured.**
- 3. The *Certificate Holder* must be listed as:**

The State of California
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

- 4. The *Special Endorsement* MUST Read:**

The State of California, its officers, employees, and servants are included as additional insured, but only with respect to work performed for the State of California under this contract.

OR

The certificate holder is added as an additional insured, but only with respect to the liability arising out of the operations of the insured named above.

- 5. The *Insurance Requirement Amount* must be a combined single limit (CSL) \$1,000,000per occurrence.**
- 6. *Host Liquor Liability (and an ABC permit)* is required for any events where alcohol is being sold.**
- 7. Location address is: 303 Big Trees Road, Felton CA, 95018. Do not list this location or park as the certificate holder.**

Please note: If any of the above information from lines 1-6 is missing or if any additional names and/or verbiage is added to the Certificate Holder or Special Endorsement, the certificate will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant for correction.

PERMIT PARAMETERS:

Special Event Permit Parameters

All park rules and regulations must be observed. Information on some of the park rules and regulations are listed below. Complete rules and regulations can be obtained on the California State Park website at www.parks.ca.gov under the specific park unit.

- Special Events are permitted during day-use hours only, from **8 AM to half hour before Sunset**, unless otherwise noted.

- Special Events are **NOT** permitted on **holidays** or **holiday weekends**.
- The Special Event **Filing Fee** is non-refundable.
- Cashier's checks, company checks, and personal checks are accepted. No credit cards.
- The permittee is responsible to know the specific times for their event and to adhere to said times.
- The number of Special Events in any given area will vary and is determined by State Park Staff.
- **An event is not placed on the calendar nor is a date held until after the Special Event Coordinator has received approval from the supervising ranger.**
- A **RESERVED** sign is placed at the picnic areas and ramadas when they have been permitted.

***Should any person involved in the special event be detained, cited, or arrested by State Park law enforcement personnel for violation of any of these conditions or other unlawful behavior, the applicant shall be liable for the cost of staff time at a rate of time and one half under the authority of the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 4301 (j) and California Government Code section 53156 and may result in the cancellation of the event and forfeit of all fees and/or deposits.**

CANCELLATION POLICY

In the event the applicant decides to cancel the event, and it is at least 15 days prior to the scheduled event date, then all fees except the filing fee will be refunded. If notification of cancellation is less than 15 days of the event date, then all fees will be refunded except the filing fee and half of the special event fee. Refunds are not available for events cancelled due to inclement weather.

SECURITY DEPOSITS

- A refundable deposit is required for all events to ensure permit compliance and to prevent damage to the site.
- The deposit may be held due to, but not limited to:
 - Non-compliance to the permit parameters.
 - If a Park Ranger or other peace officer(s) is called to your event for law enforcement reasons.
 - If the permittee or permittee's guests violate park rules.
 - If there is any garbage left at the site and/or damage to the site or park property.
- Refund requests are sent to the accounting office by the Santa Cruz Special Event coordinator's office at the beginning of each month. Refunds are issued by the State of California and may take up to eight (8) weeks to process after the Accounting Department receives the refund request from the Santa Cruz Special Event Coordinator's office.

ALCOHOL

Alcohol Waiver:

Alcohol is **PROHIBITED ON THE PAJARO COAST BEACHES**, however alcohol waivers are available in the Santa Cruz Mountain Parks as well as the San Mateo Parks. You are not guaranteed an alcohol waiver. If your event is approved for the use of alcohol, you will need to include the alcohol waiver form with your special event permit application. If your request is approved, you will be required to pay an additional alcohol waiver fee ranging from \$50 to \$300 depending on the number of participants.

All events where alcohol will be provided and/or consumed require at least one (1) SPPO Ranger Monitor. The permittee will be responsible to pay for an 8 hour shift.

- Beer or wine only. Spirits or hard liquor are not permitted.
- Only persons over twenty-one (21) years of age may possess or consume alcohol.
- The permittee is responsible for compliance with California Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) regulations.
- All alcohol service/consumption must end one (1) hour prior to the end of the event.
- Alcohol may only be consumed for a *four (4) hour period* during the event.
- An ABC permit is required for all events where alcohol is served by an outside vendor, caterer, or bartender.
- Permittees may be required to submit a written proposal of the exact quantity of alcoholic beverages that will be at the event with a plan to limit overconsumption.

SPECIAL EVENT PARAMETERS

ENVIRONMENT

- California State Parks is committed to maintaining the delicate and natural ecosystem of the rugged Santa Cruz Coast District. Be aware that some natural “hazards” exist in the park, such as poison oak, wasps and bees, falling branches, gopher holes, unstable cliffs, etc. Stay on designated trails and areas open to the public to minimize exposure.
- Littering is NOT permitted. Littering includes leaving, depositing, or scattering flower petals, rice, seeds, ashes, confetti, or any other litter in a unit except in a receptacle designed for that purpose. Littering will result in the withholding of security deposits and citations to the event provider.
- All events are required to pack their trash and leave no trace on site. Non-compliance will result in the holding of the security deposit refund.
- The Keep it Crumb Clean Program and other policies which prohibit the intentional and unintentional feeding of animals must be adhered to.
- No altering the environment in any way. No digging or cutting of any shrubs, vegetation, and/or trees.
- Wood gathering and/or flower picking/gathering is not permitted.
- The releasing of birds, butterflies, or balloons is NOT permitted.
- Fireworks of any kind, including “sparklers,” are NOT permitted.
- **Use of drones or model aircraft is not permitted**

DECORATIONS

- Ground staking, fasteners such as staples, nails, and screws are strictly prohibited. Signage must be A-frame/Sandwich board style.
- No spray paint or chalk used on roads or trails.
- Glass is NEVER permitted on beaches.

- Tiki torches and candles may be allowed in certain areas, as long as wax is contained.
- Outside plants and soil must be approved ahead of time by environmental staff.
- Balloons, rice, bird seed, flower petals, confetti, live animal releases, floating/wishing lanterns, fireworks, fire dancing, eggs, bounce houses, hot tubs, dance floors, and cooking in the sand are all **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**.
- Large decorations such as arches, must be approved prior to the event.

SIGNAGE

- Proposed signage should be preapproved on the permit.
- The sign must be completely free standing, such as sandwich-board style, and may not be affixed or attached in any way to any park structures, fences, benches, plants, or trees, nor may the sign(s) be driven or staked in the ground. Weighing down with sand bags, etc is fine.
- The sign may not block trails, trail heads, roads, buildings, nor hinder any vehicles or public access.
- The sign must be removed from the park by the permittee upon completion of the event.
- Chalk, chalk paint, paint, flour, ribbons, and zip ties are not permitted.

ELECTRICITY

- Electricity is generally not provided by the park, however some picnic ramadas and campfire centers do have electrical outlets. Please ask in advance as there may be a maintenance fee to turn this on.
- Gas and electric grills are allowed unless a high fire warning has been alerted.
- Bug zappers are not allowed.
- If generators are needed they must be brought in by permittee at the permittee's expense and approved in the permit. { If generators are allowed, you may be asked to hire a fire marshal to clear your event }

FIRES

- No fireworks or sparklers are allowed.
- Gas and electric grills are allowed unless a high fire warning has been alerted.
- Portable fire pits are not allowed. • Portable heaters are not allowed.
- Tiki torches and candles may be allowed in certain areas, as long as wax is contained.
- Fires are allowed only in State Park/Beach fire rings

PETS

- All animals cannot be turned loose in any park unit.
- Visitors with vicious, dangerous, noisy, or disturbing animals will be ejected from park units.
- Dog policy varies from park to park. Please look up specific park rules
 - Dogs must be on a tended leash no more than 6 feet.
 - Pets may not be left in vehicles unattended.
 - Dogs may not be confined in an enclosed vehicle, tent, or pen.

PARKING

- Park entrance fees for day-use are charged for all entrants including caterers and rental companies.

- Approved permits do not guarantee parking will be available. All parking spaces are on a first come first serve basis for ALL park visitors. We do not allow spaces to be held or saved unless for State Park Vehicles. No event shall take up more that 20% of the State Park parking lot spaces.

VEHICLES

- In general, no vehicles are permitted off-road, on beaches, paved paths, or in picnic areas unless specifically authorized by the permit terms and conditions.
- Segways, scooters, mopeds, motorcycles, ATVs, boats, are **PROHIBITED** unless specifically authorized by the permit terms and conditions.

MUSIC/SOUND

Amplified sound, including bullhorns, DJs, and live bands are generally prohibited. Acoustic music, limited duration public address systems, and background ceremonial type music may be considered on a case-by-case basis. State Parks reserves the right to terminate sound which is determined by the event monitor or Park staff to be excessive or detracting from the experience of other park visitors. Amplified sound permits may be necessary at permittee's expense.

PLEASE NOTE: AMPLIFIED MUSIC/SOUND IS PROHIBITED IN REDWOOD PARKS DUE TO THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON NESTING BIRDS, INCLUDING THE MARBLED MURRELET

OUTSIDE VENDORS/CATERERS

- The sale and/or distribution of food, beverages, and merchandise are prohibited unless specifically authorized by the permit terms and conditions.
- Any vendors arriving prior the allotted permit time will not be admitted to the park.
- The permittee is responsible for the conduct of their vendors during their Special Event.
- A copy of all contracts/agreements with outside vendors (event planners/food trucks/caterers/photographers/etc.) must be provided 30 days prior to the event date. A vendor event fee of each contracted service may apply.
- All permit applications must include the name of the applicant, organization or business. If the permit is coordinated by an event planner or catering service, the permit application and a copy of the contract must be provided a minimum of **30 days** prior to the event or the reservation date will be cancelled and all non-refundable fees paid to date forfeited. If applicant claims services or goods are being provided at a reduced or zero value, the State will assess a fair market value for such goods and services to the permit fees.
- For events with more than 50 people, vendor/caterer or permittee must remove all garbage and recycling created by the event. Extra dumpsters and/or trash bins may need to be brought in by permittee at their expense.

SCHOOL GROUPS

- For free bus and or vehicle parking, all school groups must schedule an interpretive talk through the visitor center of the park unit they wish to attend. Failure to schedule this, will result in full parking fees upon entry of the park unit.

LIFEGUARDS FOR HIRE

- For all groups in need of a lifeguard, please coordinate with the Pajaro Coast Special Event Coordinator to schedule lifeguarding needs. This is for beach events only. If you are also inquiring to reserve a specific park venue location (covered Ramadas, picnic areas, etc) full special event fees will be applied as well.
- If hiring a lifeguard (LG), fees will apply. Specify how many LG's & for what time frame you are requesting.
- All lifeguard shifts are a minimum of 4 hours which includes a minimum of 1 hour travel time.

{ If the school group is looking for parking passes, please see above "SCHOOL GROUPS" }

BEACH EVENTS

- Special Event permits at the beaches do not give exclusive rights to specific sand areas on the State Beach. It is your responsibility to occupy the area you choose for your event.
- A lifeguard monitor may be needed for events involving water activities; the monitor's fee will be at the expense of the permittee.

MAJOR EVENTS (trail runs, bike races, surf competitions, etc.)

- Major events must be planned at least 6 months in advance and event planners should coordinate all aspects of these events with State Parks staff.
- No trail races of any kind will be allowed between October 15th through May 1st
- Limited events and absolutely no events involving amplified sound will be allowed in Portola Redwoods, ~~Little Basin, Big Basin~~, and Butano from September 15th through March 24th due to the Marbled Murrelet nesting season.
- Park rules and regulations and other applicable laws are strictly enforced. Additional permits from other governmental agencies such as City, County, CHP, CalTrans, ABC, and the California Coastal Commission, may be required for certain events and are the sole responsibility of the applicant.
- A detailed map of the event (i.e. trails etc.) will need to be submitted prior to approval of the event.
- A traffic plan and map will need to be submitted.
- Traffic control personnel and/or extra security may need to be hired at the expense of the permittee.
- Depending on the event, an EMS (emergency medical services) or EMS unit may be required at the expense of the permittee.
- All large scale events will need to comply with Santa Cruz State Parks trash regulations. A pack your trash policy, recycling, and composting procedures may need to be planned with the parks Refuse Reduction Committee.
- ADA compliancy for large scale events including a sign language interpreter for performance events may be required.
- Depending on the size and scale of the event, additional porta-potties may be required. State Parks recommends one (1) porta pottie for every 50 to 100 patrons.

FILM PERMITS

- A film permit issued by the California Film Commission (CFC (www.film.ca.gov)) is required for any film, motion or still photography that will be published, used for advertisement, used commercially, etc. Film permits are not issued retroactively.
- Any event utilizing a professional photographer will need to obtain a film permit through the California Film Commission @ film.ca.gov

CLIMBING PERMITS

- All climbing groups will be required to apply for a rock climbing permit as well as send in a certificate of liability insurance.
- All climbing groups will be required to sign-up on a Google calendar (we will invite you once your permit has been approved and paid for). It will be mandatory for each group to schedule their climbing events at least 48 hours in advance. This calendar will help us better manage the climbing program and allow all of you to see how many groups are scheduled on individual dates.
- All climbing groups will be required to check-in at the Kirkwood entrance kiosk with their approved permit before climbing (each time). If the kiosk is closed, please sign the Guided Climbing Group check-in sheet hanging outside.
- Permit costs have changed to the following flat rate schedule:
 - Single day permit: \$25 filing fee plus \$100 climbing permit
 - Annual permit: \$25 filing fee plus \$1,000 climbing permit
- A representative from each group is required to wear a company identification during the event so that State Parks staff can identify your participation as a group.

WEDDINGS

All weddings in Santa Cruz State Parks need to be permitted and must take place in the designated wedding venue locations listed below.

MOUNTAIN SECTOR:

- Portola Redwoods State Park
 - Campfire Center/Amphitheater = 100 person capacity
 - Picnic Ramada = 75 person capacity (additional seating for an extra 25 is allowed)
- Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
 - Reservable Redwood Grove off the Redwood Loop = 20 person maximum/no decorations/no set-up/1 hour ceremony
 - Picnic Area 1 = 150 person capacity

PAJARO SECTOR (please note: all weddings on the Pajaro Coast can have a maximum of **50 people/no alcohol**)

- New Brighton Ramada only
- Twin Lakes (beach weddings)
- Seabright (beach weddings)
- Manresa (beach weddings)
- Seacliff Ramada only
- Sunset (beach weddings and ramadas)
- Castro Adobe and Santa Cruz Mission

SAN MATEO SECTOR (please contact SMPermits@parks.ca.gov for inquires)