Butano
State Park

Our Mission

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.

California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(650) 879-2040.** If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact **interp@parks.ca.gov**.

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Save The Redwoods LEAGUE®

SaveTheRedwoods.org/csp

Butano State Park
1500 Cloverdale Road
Pescadero, CA 94060
(650) 879-2040

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Visitors to Butano, astonished at the breathtaking beauty of this park's lush central canyon, have just begun their adventure.

Butano State Park, situated in the Santa Cruz Mountains midway between Santa Cruz and Half Moon Bay, is prized for the diversity of its habitats and wildlife, and for the depth of its solitude. Many visitors to Butano—thought to be named after a drinking cup made from a bull's horn—find it the perfect place to shed everyday stresses.

Nature's vital processes can be seen everywhere. The unusual bend of a redwood tree tells the story of a long-ago earthquake. Elsewhere, the root of an alder tree begins eight feet up its trunk before reaching the ground, revealing the history of flooding in this area. The Candelabra redwood tree, with five huge branches jutting upright parallel to the trunk, is an odd natural phenomenon on a parcel recently added to the park.

Those who take the time to stroll along a park trail or set up a tent will discover the beauty and solace of one of California's least-known parks.

PARK HISTORY

Native People

The human and natural histories of Butano State Park are closely linked. Though the indigenous people profoundly altered the natural landscape, they both depended upon and had intimate knowledge of it.

When the first Spanish explorers reached California after 1769, what is now Butano State Park lay within the territory of the Quiroste tribe—a large group of Native Americans who had settled the area many thousands of years before. The Quiroste hunted game, harvested plant foods, dined on a great variety of seafoods, and sold coastal resources to their inland neighbors using shell beads as money. In autumn, the people burned large tracts of meadowlands to manage the foods they ate—especially hazelnuts and acorns. The fires improved plants that fed the deer, pronghorn, and tule elk they hunted. Their once-managed landscape has reverted to wilderness.

In the San Francisco and Monterey Bay regions, the Quiroste numbered among more than fifty tribes whose descendants are today called the Ohlone.

European Settlement

European migration brought new settlers to the region, beginning with the 1769 Portolá expedition. The new crops and grazing animals cultivated by these settlers decimated traditional Quiroste food sources, so most of the Quiroste gave up their land and were taken into the Spanish mission system. Some Quiroste hid in the mountains. After the missions were secularized in 1834, the land passed into private hands.

Redwood Logging and Preservation

In the late 1860s, three families resided in the area—the Jacksons, Taylors, and Mullens. These settlers and a man named Purdy Pharis logged the canyon,

transforming the old-growth redwood forest into a variety of second- and third-growth habitats. Stumps and non-native vegetation are now the only signs of the logging that finally ended in the mid-1950s. In 1921, the Sempervirens Club, Save the Redwoods League, and the Sierra Club all joined in the efforts to preserve the land. The property was acquired by California State Parks in 1956; since then, with the help of Save the Redwoods League, it has more than doubled in size.

NATURAL HISTORY

Redwoods get about 30 percent of their vital moisture from fog. As the Earth's climate warms, reduced fog threatens the redwoods' long-term survival.

Butano State Park harbors six distinct natural communities—each named for its most prominent natural features.

Redwood/Douglas-Fir Forest—Much of the interior of Little Butano Canyon is dominated by towering redwoods and mossy Douglas-firs. Huckleberry bushes top the stumps of fallen redwoods. Western wake-robin and false Solomon's seal bloom at ankle height. Purple calypso orchids bloom from February to April. Redwoods hollowed out by ancient forest fires provide homes for bats. In wet weather, watch out for newts and banana slugs along the trails through the ground cover. Look for tiny pacific wrens, nearly invisible until their resonant songs give away their locations among the logs and stumps.

Coastal Grassland—The entrance area is grassland dominated by bush lupine and coyote brush. Blue-eyed grass and coastal suncups grow here. Sunrise and sunset are the best times to see such predators as bobcats and coyotes.

Alder Woodland—The first half-mile of Little Butano Creek is shaded by alders. Under their canopy, blackberries, stinging nettles, elderberries, dogwoods, and willows provide food and shelter for insects, small mammals, reptiles, and a variety of birds. Trout, crayfish, and endangered red-legged frogs live in and around the creek. Berries may not be picked. Look for flowering currants, twinberries, thimbleberries, salmonberries, osoberries, gooseberries, and baneberries.

Oak Woodland—On the side of the canyon above the park entrance, grasslands give way to a grove of live oaks. Bright orange chanterelle mushrooms sprout from the decayed oak tree litter. (Mushroom collecting is not allowed in Butano State Park.) The duff provides a garden bed for honeysuckle, coffeeberry, blackberry, and poison oak. Look for arboreal salamanders on the ground and chickadees and warblers overhead.

Vernal Wetland—At Jackson Flats on the north side of the canyon and at Goat Hill on the south, the trees open onto mountainside marshes. The marshy terraces may be the heads of ancient landslides—the work of earthquakes along the San Gregorio fault. The marshes dry up in summer, yet they are vital to wildlife that breed in winter. Pacific tree frogs and California newts swim among the cattails; giant skunk cabbages and other water-loving plants thrive here.

Chaparral—On the ridge tops, softer soils turn into the chalky gravel of Santa Margarita

Photograph courtesy of Ken Hickman

sandstone, and tall firs and redwoods give way to shrubby, sap-encrusted knobcone pines, scrub oaks, manzanitas, and chinquapin. Quick-moving western fence lizards scramble underfoot, and rattlesnakes may be encountered. The fragrance of the chaparral and the sight of blooming ceanothus, monkey flower, and Indian paintbrush are well worth a summer hike.

RECREATION

Family Camping—Ben Ries Campground's 39 family sites have tables, food lockers, and fire rings. Restrooms with flush toilets are nearby. Reserve campsites by calling (800) 444-7275 or visit **www.parks.ca.gov**.

Trail Camping—Backpackers may camp by permit only at designated sites. Pit toilets are available. Bring your own drinking water. Ground fires are not allowed; please use only gas or backpack stoves. Call (831) 338-8861 weekdays between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to obtain a permit.

Hiking—Inviting trails allow visitors to photograph mushrooms in January, spot newts in February and orchids in March, or to stroll among alders on Six Bridges Trail.

Accessible visitor center

Bridge access over Butano Creek

Picnicking—Seven picnic sites are equipped with picnic tables and upright barbecue grills. Parking and pit toilets are located nearby. (Picnic tables in the campground are only for the use of registered campers.)

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The visitor center and parking lot are generally accessible. The restroom in the campground by site #10 is usable, but assistance may be needed.

Accessibility is continually improving. Visit **http://access.parks.ca.gov** for updates.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Año Nuevo State Park
  1 New Years Creek Road, Highway 1,
  Pescadero 94060 (650) 879-2025
- Big Basin Redwoods State Park
  21600 Big Basin Way
  Boulder Creek 95006 (831) 338-8860
- Portola Redwoods State Park
  Portola State Park Road
  La Honda 94020 (650) 948-9098
- Pigeon Point Light Station SHP
  210 Pigeon Point Road, Highway 1
  Pescadero 94060 (650) 879-2120

Photograph courtesy of Ken Hickman

The redwood forest floor is vibrant with life. ***Previous page bottom photos, from left to right:*** *Trillium, also known as wake-robin—look for its white, three-petaled flower in the spring; banana slug, the second-largest species of terrestrial slug; the Calypso orchid, which blooms from February to April.* ***This page:*** *a sleepy-eyed California newt; a bracket fungus, named for its shelf-like shape, attached to a tree.*

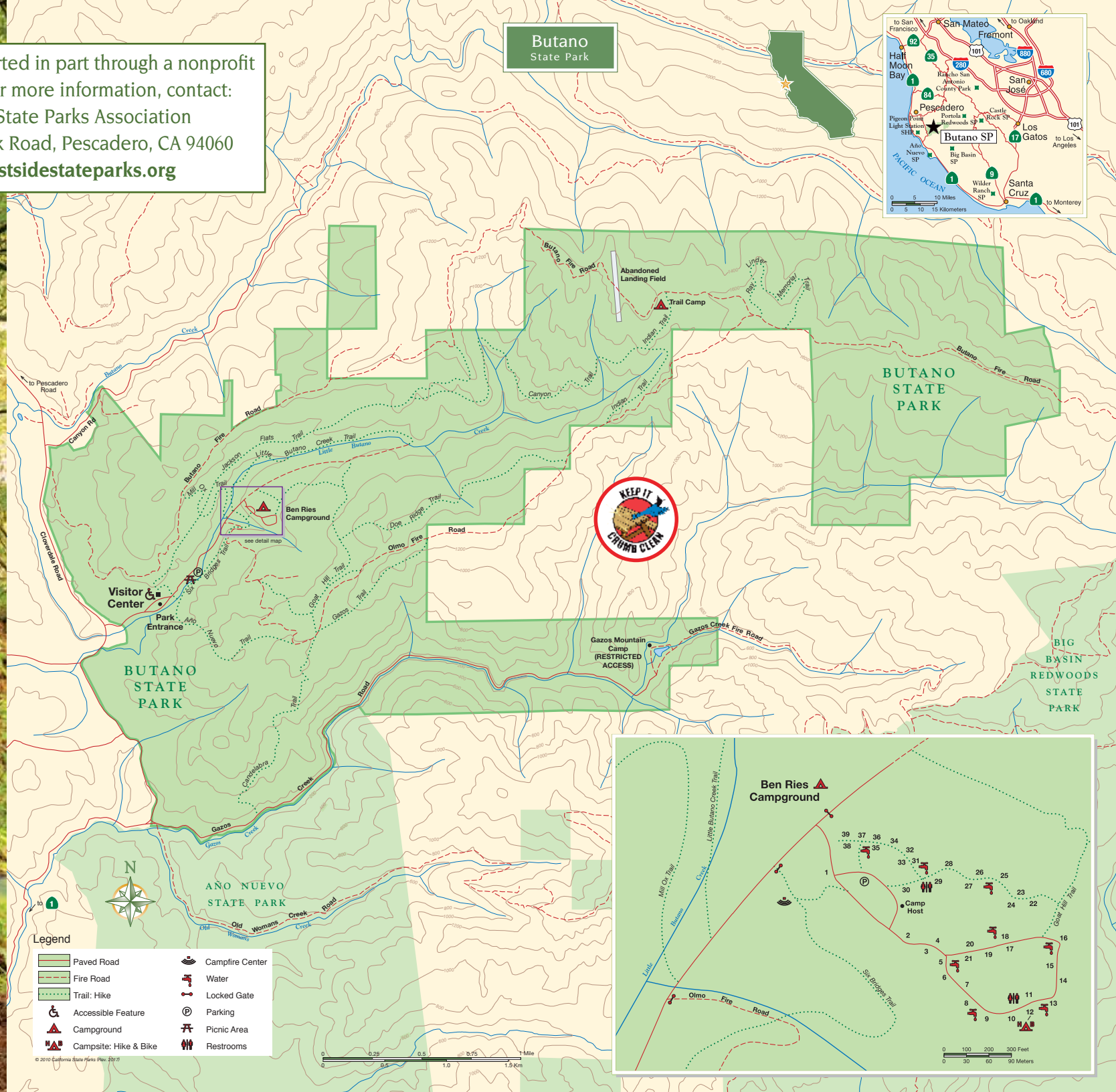
Trail Mileage

Año Nuevo Trail	1.3 miles
Little Butano Creek Trail	1.5 miles
Candelabra Trail	2.0 miles
Canyon Trail	2.75 miles
Doe Ridge Trail	1.6 miles
Gazos Trail	0.75 mile
Goat Hill Trail	1.75 miles
Indian Trail	0.9 mile
Jackson Flats Trail	2.76 miles
Mill Ox Trail	0.46 mile
Ray Linder Memorial Trail	1.0 miles
Six Bridges Trail	1.0 miles

approximate mileage

PLEASE REMEMBER

- All natural and cultural park features are protected by law. Do not remove or harm plants, animals, or other features of the park.
- Dogs must be on a leash no more than six feet long during the day and enclosed in a tent or vehicle at night. Except for service animals, dogs are not allowed on trails. Leashed pets are allowed only in campsites, picnic areas, and on paved roads and fire roads.
- All hiking trails are closed to bicycles. Cyclists may use only the Butano and Olmo Fire Roads.
- Be crumb clean! Please leave no food out—not even a crumb. Use food lockers, and don't leave any food unguarded.
- Build fires in the fire rings provided; do not leave fires unattended. Camp stoves are permitted.
- Collection of dead and down wood is prohibited. Firewood may be available for purchase at the park.
- Quiet time is 10 p.m. to 8 a.m. daily. Do not operate generators between 8 p.m. and 10 a.m.

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact:
Coastside State Parks Association
New Years Creek Road, Pescadero, CA 94060
www.coastsidestateparks.org

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