

## **SCHOOL TOUR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION**

### **ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS AUGUST 15 FOR SPRING AND FALL**

#### **SCHOOL TOURS – Grades K-12**

#### **GOALS**

Our goals for School Tours at Big Trees State Park are:

1. Provide an educational experience related to the Next Generation Science Standards.
  - a. Deliver an educational experience to K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students.
    - i. Self-guided groups can download a “kid-friendly” tour guide.
  - b. Relate Guided Tours to the student’s grade level and classroom curriculum.
    - i. Grades K - 1 can receive a short guided tour and age-appropriate activity focusing on the park and its trees per teacher’s preference.
    - ii. Grades 2 – 6 will be tours based on grade level, Next Generation Science Standards.
    - iii. Grades 7-12 will receive a presentation/tour based on their teacher’s goals. If we do not receive teacher’s guidance, the tour subject will be at the inclination of the tour guide.
2. Provide an enjoyable experience for the class and other park visitors by:
  - a. Arranging a ratio of one guide to a group of 15 to 20 students, to our best ability.
  - b. Offering teachers alternative activities for the students who are waiting for their turn on the trail.
  - c. If you have registered for two time slots, we understand that all students may arrive at the same time. Alternative activities will be required as only 60 students will be permitted on the trail at one time.

#### **GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR GUIDED & SELF-GUIDED**

1. Registration for the school year opens August 15<sup>th</sup> for fall and spring tours.
2. Refunds are not available after tour confirmation is sent.
3. Tours are only available from March 15 to the end of May and September and October. You may call or email us to discuss exceptions to these dates and times.
4. There will be no refunds or rescheduling for groups due to weather. Organizers should be aware that weather in March, early April and in October is unpredictable. We will provide a refund if Calaveras Big Trees State Park cancels your tour due to weather.
5. Teachers and parents are responsible for ensuring kids are dressed appropriately for cold or wet weather at all times.
6. Large student groups:
  - o We are limiting the maximum number of students on the trail for any time slot to 60 students. Student groups over 60 will be required to register for both the 9:30 am and 11:00 am time slots. Each time slot can accommodate three (3) groups of 20.

- If you have over 60 students coming, you must register for both time slots. You will have an opportunity to register for the second time period before you pay. The new system will ask you if you wish to “add another booking”. Say yes and you can easily add the second time period for your group.
    - Both groups can arrive at the same time. See next bullet point.
  - The group that is not on the trail may need alternative activities. Suggestions are:
    - Visitors Center museum and scavenger hunt.
    - Visitors center video (15 minutes)
    - Nature journaling
    - Lunch
    - If you need help with activities let us know (Project Wild, Project Learning Tree and the Teacher’s Guide are good resources).
  - Ideally, teachers should have pre-arranged groups with approximately 20 students with a teacher & chaperone. Tours are limited to students, teachers and a chaperone. Siblings and other parents are welcome to tour on their own.
- 7. Children should be able to walk for 2 hours. K & first graders’ tours can be shorter if requested.
- 8. Parking is often at a premium. We encourage groups to car-pool.
- 9. The Teacher’s Guide, aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards, is available online for downloading at <https://www.parks.ca.gov/> - Calaveras Big Trees.
- 10. The entry station will have passes for the bus and chaperone cars.

Teacher’s responsibilities:

- Register school group online.
- Identify chaperones.
- Assemble students into groups of 20.
- Work with Interpretive staff on any special curriculum requirements or requests.
- Discipline students as needed while in park.
- Provide one chaperone for each tour group (2 if no teacher with group). Parents should not bring siblings.

Chaperone’s responsibilities:

- Help teachers keep students in their groups.
- Help teachers with discipline.
- Encourage students to keep up with the tour guide.
- Assist with alternative activities.
- Provide one chaperone for each ten students.
- The chaperone’s responsibility is to help with the students therefore; they should not bring younger siblings.

Tour Guide’s responsibilities:

- Present the students with a fun & educational tour.

## GUIDED TOUR

- Guided tours are offered starting March 15<sup>th</sup> and Sept 1 for Wednesdays through Fridays only. Costs are \$60 per reserved time slot.
- To keep tour groups small, non-chaperone adults & siblings will not be included on the guided tour but are free to explore the park on their own.
- The tour may not be the full North Grove trail depending on time, weather and trail conditions.
- Groups that arrive late will receive a modified, shortened North Grove tour.
- If a tour group becomes disruptive, the tour will be terminated and the school will not receive any refunds.
- All school tours must register a minimum of 30 day in advance.
- Schools with paid tour reservations receive free bus parking and up to 5 (chaperone) vehicles may enter for free. Groups arriving without a bus will have 10 free vehicles. Other vehicles must pay entry costs.
- We do not offer cancellations and reschedules, or refunds for any scheduled tours due to adverse weather. We will do our best to obtain guides for bad weather tours but guides cannot be guaranteed. If Big Trees State Park cancels due to weather conditions, we will refund monies and will try to provide a three-day notice.

### Teacher

- Prior to arrival – Review appropriate sections of Teacher’s Guide.
- Arrive at park - see staff person for instructions.