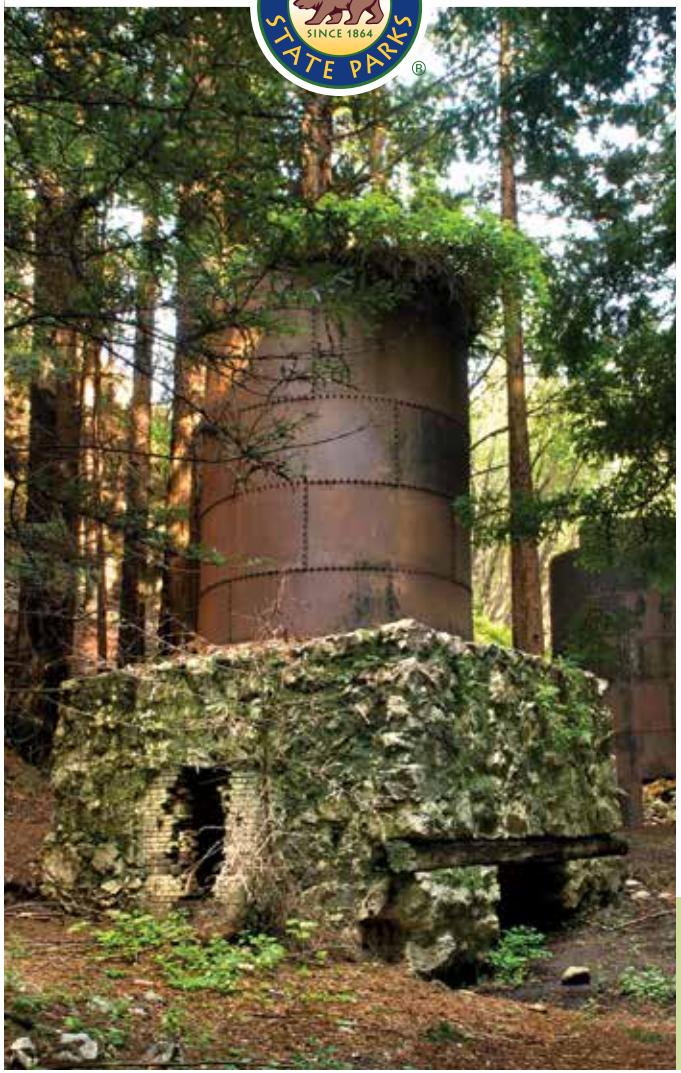
Limekiln

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 **(805) 434-1996**. 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

This park is operated in partnership with Parks Management Company: www.campone.com

Limekiln State Park
63025 Highway 1, Big Sur, CA 93920
(805) 434-1996

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"At dawn, Big Sur's majesty is almost painful to behold. That same prehistoric look, the look of always, Nature smiling at herself in the mirror of eternity."

–Henry Miller, Big Sur and the Oranges of Hieronymus Bosch

From the redwoods to the sea describes the unique topography of Limekiln State Park. This gem of a park, 52 miles south of Carmel, adjoins the Ventana Wilderness area of the Los Padres National Forest. On the legendary Big Sur coastline where the Santa Lucia Mountains meet the Pacific, the park's more than 700 acres offer peaceful solitude, a breathtaking waterfall, and seascapes of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Watch wildlife from the beach or along fern-lined trails, and picnic among the redwoods. Deep within their forest sanctuary, along the west fork of Limekiln Creek, tower the four enormous kilns from which the creek takes its name.

The summer climate at this sparsely populated segment of the central coast is typically mild. Morning fog in the summer usually burns off before midday. Temperatures vary from about 50 to 75 degrees. Other seasons can vary from one extreme to another on the same day.

NATIVE PEOPLE

Archaeological evidence suggests that the ancestors of today's Salinan, Esselen, and Ohlone people inhabited the Big Sur coast for thousands of years, adapting their lifeways to the area's climatic and environmental changes. Native groups traveled from the coast to the interior valleys, following the marine and terrestrial resources that sustained them. They gathered fish, shellfish, and various grasses and seeds or hunted small and large game and birds. They traded with other groups for items they could not produce themselves.

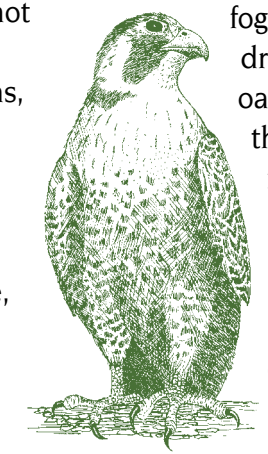
The incursion of the Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans brought changes that drastically affected the lives of the people. Taken into the mission system, the people struggled with diseases to which they had no immunity. Pestilence, violence, and broken promises all took their toll; seemingly well-intentioned treaties with the Indians were not sent to federal offices for ratification. Within a few generations, the native people's traditional lands had been taken over by the settlers.

Limekiln Creek

At the end of the mission era, some of the native people were employed in agriculture, fishing, and other industries. Today, descendants of the Salinan, Esselen, and Ohlone people are working to revive their cultural traditions and to pass them on to the next generations.

NATURAL HISTORY

The park is located in the geologically young (about 2½ million years) Santa Lucia Range, which runs from Monterey southeast to San Luis Obispo. Because its geography creates numerous microclimates, the park is one of the few places on earth where fog-loving redwoods thrive not far from drought-tolerant yucca. Young redwoods, oaks, sycamores, and maples flourish in the canyons; chaparral and scrub are found at higher elevations.



Peregrine falcon

WILDLIFE

Limekiln Creek's year-round water supply provides excellent habitat for diverse animals, including mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, raccoons, and ringtails. Offshore, sea otters play in kelp beds, and female gray whales with calves migrate north in early spring. The varied terrain is home to more than 200 bird species, including seabirds such as pelicans and gulls and shorebirds such as willets, oystercatchers, and sandpipers. Some rare and endangered birds, including California condors and peregrine falcons, glide above the canyons.

THE LIME KILNS

Beginning in 1887, the Rockland Lime and Lumber Company extracted, processed, and exported thousands of barrels of lime from Limekiln Canyon. Four stone and iron furnaces were built at the base of a large talus slope eroding from a limestone deposit. Limestone rocks were loaded into

the kilns, where very hot wood fires burned for long periods to purify the lime.

The lime was packed into barrels, hauled by wagon to Rockland Landing on the coast, and loaded onto ships that carried it to northern ports for use in concrete.

After only three years, the limestone deposit was all but depleted, as was the redwood forest that had been nearly clear-cut to use for lumber and fuel. Today the four kilns, some stone walls, and bridge abutments are the only remains of the once-thriving lime industry.

In 1994 Save the Redwoods League and the American Land Conservancy sought to protect and restore this coastal redwood forest. California Conservation Corps team members built trails and campgrounds so that people could experience and enjoy this park forever.

Historic lime kiln

Limekiln Falls

DAY USE

Hiking

Limekiln Trail—An easy half-mile walk leads you across three scenic bridges to the enormous furnaces that once supplied lime used for mortar in San Francisco's brick buildings.

Falls Trail—Hike along Limekiln Creek to the beautiful 100-foot waterfall. The vision of this fan-shaped fall is worth getting your feet wet when crossing the creek.

Picnicking—A short walk from the parking lot will reveal many picnic spots without tables at the beach or in the redwood groves. Please do not use the campsite tables.

Fishing—Rough surf conditions can make fishing from the beach difficult and dangerous. Stream fishing is prohibited in the park most of the year.

Anglers 16 and over must carry valid California fishing licenses. For full regulations, visit **www.wildlife.ca.gov**.

Camping

About a dozen developed campsites sit among the trees near Limekiln Creek. Several ocean-view sites on the beach are perfect for watching sea birds before the sun goes down over the rolling surf. Hot pay showers are nearby. Make camping reservations well in advance at **www.parks.ca.gov** or call (800) 444-7275.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument
  26 miles south off Hwy. 1
  Cambria 93428 (805) 927-2020
- Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park
  12 miles to the north on Hwy. 1
  Big Sur 93920 (831) 649-2836

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit **http://access.parks.ca.gov**.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- **DANGER**: Coastal cliffs and the walls of Limekiln Canyon are steep and unstable. DO NOT CLIMB.
- **WARNING**: Use extreme caution near the ocean; unexpectedly high waves and strong currents can surprise you.
- Recreational vehicles over 24 feet cannot maneuver in the park. Maximum trailer length is 15 feet.
- Parking is limited to one or two vehicles per site. See the site limit when reserving.
- Showers are only for registered campers.
- Dogs must be kept on a six-foot leash at all times; only service animals are permitted on trails.
- Fires are permitted only in provided fire rings. Do not gather dead or down wood. Firewood is sold at the entry kiosk.
- Natural and cultural features are protected by state law and may not be removed or altered.
- Please help us preserve the natural features of the park by staying on trails.
- **POISON OAK:** Avoid poison oak's itchy rash by staying on trails and in designated campground areas.

Poison Oak

Limekiln State Park