

# BRIEFING



Governor's Press Briefing  
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## Issue #1 – Attendance

### **State Parks has reached a record high attendance, which has provided an \$800 million Boost to Local Economies**

As of July 31, 2002, annual attendance at California State Parks reached nearly 86 million visitors.

That is an all-time high. (Refer to chart – Attendance)

It is an increase of 9 per cent over the previous year and an increase of **33** per cent during the past four years. (Handout #1, Attendance and Economic Impact packet)

Looking at the last four years, that is an increase of 21 million visitors.

When you translate that to economic impact on California, it means that an additional \$800 million is being spent by the added visitors in the communities surrounding state parks statewide. (Refer to chart – Spending)

When you add that \$800 million on top of what people were already spending, you see that the jump in visitor spending in local communities has gone from \$1.7 billion to \$2.6 billion.

That spending comes at a time when local communities could sure use the money because of the current economic slump.

Clearly, our feeling is that we first want to provide a great parks and recreation experience for our visitors. But it is a great feeling to know that State Parks are a significant benefit to local economies all across the state.

# State Parks Bucks the National Trend

USA Today (article dated August 9, 2002) is reporting there is a drop in the number of visitors at National Parks across the nation. (Handout #2, newspaper article)

However, as indicated, California State Parks are experiencing an all-time high in visitor attendance at its 273 units.

USA Today is quoting numerous sources from the lodges at various parks, including Yellowstone in Wyoming, Arizona's Grand Canyon National Park and California's Death Valley.

One source within the article states that bookings are down by "double-digit" percentages

However, at the same time, California is showing a single-digit increase over the past year and a double-digit increase over the past four years.

Again, during the past four years, 1998-99 to 2001-02, State Park attendance has increased from 64 million to 86 million visitors, an increase of over 20 million visitors, an all-time high for the State Park System.

## Reasons for the increase:

- The reduction in State Park fees that Governor Davis phased in beginning in 1998-99 fiscal year.
- California's continuing population growth.
- People tending to vacation closer to home and by car this summer, possibly because of the events of 9-11 and the security inconveniences at airports following 9-11.
- The California Tourism In-State Campaign begun by Cal Tourism in the wake of 9-11. A survey in conjunction with this campaign indicated 14% more Californians list California as a travel destination.... meaning, they intend to travel in state.

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## **Issue #2 – Acquisitions and Capitol Outlay**

Proposition 12, the Parks Bond Act of 2000, passed by the voters in March 2000, provided for \$2.1 billion in acquisition and development for a variety of parks and other projects at the state and local level.

This bond act was strongly supported by Governor Davis.

The measure passed by 63.2 percent of the voters, in March 2000.

State Parks was allocated approximately \$524.8 million from Proposition 12.

(Handout #3, Acquisitions & Development lists)

### **Acquisitions**

## **43,000+ Acres Added to State Parks**

Acquisitions means new parklands acquired for addition to the State Park system, and as of this date, State Parks has acquired the following:

28 major acquisitions of property by State Parks statewide

43,889 -- Acres of property acquired.

\$319+ million – Spent on the acquisitions, with roughly 62 per cent of the funding from Prop. 12.

Other sources, non-Prop. 12 sources, include various grants like TEA and the; Prop. 70 – the 1988 California Wildlife, Coastal and Parkland Conservation Act; private donors, and the State's general fund.

### **Development**

This is the part of the Prop. 12 designed for Development projects, for major new developments of facilities, like visitor's center, restrooms, restoration of historic structures, concession facilities and other major capitol outlay projects. (Development Projects Handout)

- 44 Projects listed.
- \$55.8 million allocated

- These are projects, that without Proposition 12, we would not be doing. These projects are significantly adding to the service to the public from the State Park System.

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### **Issue #3 - Deferred Maintenance**

Beyond the need for major development projects, there is the need for funding to maintaining the existing facilities within the parks system now in place. We have a system that has gone nearly a decade with maintenance being deferred year after year.

That is where the Deferred Maintenance Program fits within the funding needs for State Parks. Here's what it has done so far.

## **\$157 Million Facelift for State Parks**

In his first year in office, Governor Gray Davis recognized the seriousness of the problem of overdue maintenance of facilities and structures within the State Park System.

This problem existed because of a decade of economic hard times and resulting budget cuts.

It was estimated at the time that if State Parks were to address all of the deferred maintenance left undone during the 1990's, the cost would be in the neighborhood of \$300 million.

The Governor presented State Parks with a substantial down payment on that debt, by including an additional \$157 million in his budget. (Handout, Update on Deferred Maintenance.)

- Some 1,469 park projects were identified statewide.
- 820 projects have now been completed.
- 649 projects are still active.

- The projects range from replacing signs and asphalt on parking lots, to new roofs and historic site maintenance.
- The handout breaks out a large sample of the projects by various regions of the State.
- The listing is not all of the 1,469 projects, but is a sample of some of the most significant projects.
- A project not listed would be something like fixing a water fountain or other such minor improvements.

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