

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Team Effort Lifts Sugarloaf Ridge State Park Off Closure List

California State Parks Director Ruth Coleman has signed an agreement and early entry permit for Team Sugarloaf to assume operations of Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

A team effort of five non-profit agencies pulling together has lifted Sugarloaf Ridge State Park off the list of state parks targeted for closure. The Team Sugarloaf organizations are ready to take over with the early entry permit as of June 1. This tentative contract agreement now goes to the Department of General Services for final approval.

"This is an example of extraordinary collaboration among many partners in Sonoma County who stepped forward to keep this park open," said Director Coleman.

With the Sonoma Ecology Center serving as lead agency, Team Sugarloaf raised funds and used its shared expertise to develop a successful operating agreement. The Valley of the Moon Observation Society, United Camps, Conferences and Retreats, Valley of the Moon Natural History Association and Sonoma County Trails Council rounded out the Team. The Team brings expertise in campground operations, ecological restoration, education, astronomy, trails management and volunteer recruitment and training. Team Sugarloaf plans to leverage the park's abundant assets and create new opportunities for Sugarloaf Ridge and its visitors.

"We are fortunate to have a team of community and our long standing partners step up to insure that Sugarloaf Ridge State Park will stay open during these unprecedented times," said Diablo Vista District Superintendent Danita Rodriguez. "We look forward to working with each of them."

"We were devastated to learn about the closing of Sugarloaf and other significant parks that support California's heritage," said Sonoma Ecology Center Executive Director Richard Dale. "As our groups came together, we realized that there might be a chance to turn the state's crisis into an opportunity. "

"We welcome the opportunity to help keep this remarkable park open," added Dale. "The efforts and commitment of Team Sugarloaf during the past year underscore what a team

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of groups and individuals working toward a common goal can accomplish. State Parks has been a key partner for us, helping us move the project ahead with grace and integrity as they faced significant challenges. The effort highlights the strength of a state/local partnership and how far it can go toward making our parks more sustainable in this era of financial uncertainty.”

Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is located in Sonoma County east of Santa Rosa and offers 25 miles of hiking trails, seasonal waterfalls and views of the Sierra Nevada and Golden Gate Bridge from Mt. Baldy. The park is also home to the Robert Ferguson Observatory, one of the largest telescopes with public viewing. The park is home to more than 40 rare species of plants and animals.

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