



# PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

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## **California State Parks and Partners Provide Off-highway Vehicle Recreation and Mentoring Opportunities to Urban Youth** *Media Invited to attend NYPUM Rodeo on June 12*

SACRAMENTO, Calif., - California State Parks' Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division and the National Youth Project Using Minibikes (NYPUM) today announced a unique partnership to provide mentoring and education for urban youth through off-highway motorcycle recreation. Using the trail bike in the outdoors, NYPUM captures a young person's imagination, enthusiasm and harnesses it to promote positive change and growth.

"We are proud of this partnership that helps us engage with younger generations and introduce them to safe and responsible outdoor recreation," stated California State Parks Director Lisa Mangat. "California State Parks hopes to not only build a strong stewardship for California's outdoors, but to build strong leaders who can help promote the healthy lifestyles and communities that are uniquely Californian."

For 50 years, NYPUM has worked nationally with community youth service organizations, including government, nonprofit, and faith-based groups, to help mentor youth using its time-tested mentoring program. The program introduces urban youth, ages 10–17, to fundamental engineering concepts, internships, and studies in environmental stewardship opportunities, helping them build self-esteem and develop self-discipline and leadership abilities. The program also teaches teamwork and responsible riding skills, and provides a way for youth to work together with their communities.

"When California State Parks reached out to us through Commissioner Paul Slavik and wanted to consider becoming partners in serving youth in California communities, we were very excited," said NYPUM's National Director Mark Speller. "There are currently no park, recreation or forest agencies in the United States that have taken on the NYPUM Program. Having State Parks partner with the NYPUM family will establish a new space, and more importantly a new model for areas across the U.S. who want to mentor youth who may not otherwise have access to the experiences this partnership will create together. We even went to the extent of taking several of their staff through the required six-day training that we mandate for all of our NYPUM instructor/mentors. So as you can see, this is a commitment both partners embrace."

Paul Slavik, a commissioner for the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission who was instrumental in bringing the partnership together, is excited about the possibilities and opportunities NYPUM brings to the youth of California. “At all levels this a value creator for California’s communities and the youth that want to be part of the program.”

The NYPUM Program, which is free, mentors participants in facilities within their communities. Those who excel are rewarded with a trip to outdoor public spaces, such as Hungry Valley or Prairie City state vehicular recreation areas, to ride off-highway motorcycles and learn about the importance of protecting California’s diverse cultural and natural resources. Participants can use trail bikes and equipment anytime during their scheduled programming. All NYPUM activities are fully insured. Employees and volunteers who work as mentors are trained as Certified NYPUM Instructors.

The program can last anywhere between six and eight months. Some participants continue participating in NYPUM’s activities for several years and become mentors themselves.

“NYPUM did not make me a better person by chance. It made me a better person by giving me the tools to make better choices,” said Jose Esqueda, director of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program in Los Angeles and past NYPUM participant.

More than 90 youth from the Los Angeles, El Centro (Imperial County) and Bakersfield communities are currently participating in the NYPUM Program. As the partnership with California State Parks matures, expansion to large metropolitan cities near state vehicular recreation areas are planned such as Sacramento County.

For more information on the NYPUM Partnership, please visit [www.parks.ca.gov/NYPUM](http://www.parks.ca.gov/NYPUM). To view a video about the NYPUM partnership, click [here](#). To view a video on the pilot program, please click [here](#).



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**NOTE TO MEDIA:** Media is invited to learn about this new partnership at an upcoming NYPUM Rodeo scheduled for June 12 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Hungry Valley State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). More than 20 youth from the Los Angeles NYPUM program will participate in the three-day event.

Media interested in attending must R.S.V.P. to [Jorge.Moreno@parks.ca.gov](mailto:Jorge.Moreno@parks.ca.gov) by close of business on Monday, June 10.

**What:** NYPUM Rodeo with Los Angeles Urban Youth Participants

**When:** Wednesday, June 12, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**Where:** Honey Valley Group Camp in Hungry Valley SVRA  
5301 Ralphs Rd., Interstate 5, Gorman

*Directions: From Interstate 5, take the Gorman exit to the North Entrance of the park. Drive about two miles to the Honey Valley Group Camp.*

**Who:** California State Parks, NYPUM and Los Angeles Police Department

**Visuals:**

- Youth riding off-highway motorcycles in various races.
- State Park Rangers provide outdoor safety tips and responsible environmental stewardship.
- Opportunity to ride in a recreational off-highway vehicle.

Hungry Valley SVRA is the third-largest off-highway vehicle state park located in the Tejon Pass, about an hour and half north of Los Angeles and along Interstate 5. Hungry Valley offers 19,000 acres and more than 130 miles of scenic trails for motorcycle, all-terrain vehicles, dune buggies and 4x4 recreation. This SVRA is one of nine outdoor public spaces for off-highway vehicle recreation. For more information on these areas, please visit <http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/>

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**California State Parks** provides 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. Learn more at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

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**OHMVR Division** provides leadership statewide in the area of off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation and works to ensure quality recreational opportunities remain available for future generations by providing for education, conservation, and enforcement efforts that balance OHV recreation impacts with programs that conserve and protect cultural and natural resources. <http://ohv.parks.ca.gov/>  
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**National Youth Project Using Minibikes** offers the youth of America an opportunity to develop self-esteem, values for daily living, and a sense of belonging through effective mentoring and using the minibike as a motivational tool. <https://www.nypum.org/>  
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