

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Divisions of Boating and Waterways, Historic Preservation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation

For Immediate Release

Aug. 14, 2018

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California State Parks Refills Hearst Castle's Neptune Pool

SAN SIMEON, Calif. — California State Parks announced today that the project to repair and restore the world-famous Neptune Pool at Hearst Castle moved into the final phase. The department began refilling the 345,000-gallon pool today.

The historic castle, built between 1919 and 1947 by William Randolph Hearst and architect Julia Morgan, includes a 115-room main house plus guesthouses, pools, gardens and a world-renowned collection of art. Donated by the Hearst Corporation to the State of California in 1958, the castle attracts on average 750,000 visitors a year.

The nearly 90-year-old Neptune Pool was drained in 2014 at the height of the drought due to cracks that caused it to leak up to 5,000 gallons a day. State Parks immediately launched a major renovation project to fix the leaks. Design work for the pool, including historical surveys, permitting, and environmental reviews, was completed by the end of 2015 and the construction contract was awarded in 2016. To help Hearst Castle better prepare for droughts, the department also looked at other ways to improve water-use efficiency and upgraded the irrigation system, replaced thirsty plants with drought-tolerant varieties and added mulch.

“We are pleased that visitors can again enjoy the artistry of the Neptune Pool,” District Superintendent Dan Falat said. “More importantly, this fully restored structure and other improvements ensure that water is being used efficiently and wisely for the long term.”

The project cost totaled \$10 million, including \$5.4 million for construction. Renovations included:

- Removal of more than 9,000 square feet of marble tiles.
- Repair of the concrete shell.
- Installation of three layers of waterproofing and 1,500 feet of new underground piping.
- Replacement of tiles with thousands of new marble tiles sourced from the original quarry in Vermont.
- Restoration of the gigantic Art Deco sculptures.

The project was funded by Proposition 84 (passed in 2006) and the State Parks and Recreation Fund. California State Parks thanks the many partners who helped make the restoration

possible, including the Hearst Castle Preservation Foundation, Stephen Hearst, Hearst Corporation, Friends of Hearst Castle, and the general contractor, T.B. Penick and Sons.

The refilling of the Neptune Pool is expected to take about 2 to 3 days and may be observed on any of Hearst Castle's tours. Advance tour reservations can be made by visiting www.reservecalifornia.com or by calling (800)444-4445.

More information about this extraordinary project can be found at <http://hearstcastle.org/neptune-pool-restoration-project/> and <https://www.terracon.com/renovating-the-hearth-castle-neptune-pool/>.

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