

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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

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California State Parks Teams Up with Counties in Pilot Program to Provide Field Trips for Hundreds of K-12 Students

SACRAMENTO, Calif.— Over the spring and into the summer months, California State Parks collaborated with Imperial County’s and Napa County’s Offices of Education in a pilot program to provide grade-school students with fields trips to state parks. These trips were part of the California State Parks Interpretation Digital Engagement and Access (IDEA) Project.

“The California State Parks IDEA Project allows students to experience parks with a blended access approach to learning, both digitally and physically,” said Brad Krey, Interpretation and Education Program Manager for California State Parks. “By providing the funds for transportation costs, State Parks is increasing access to parks for K-12 students who may not have had a chance to visit without these funds.”

Through the program, California State Parks teamed with the Napa County Office of Education to provide a dozen field trips to Angel Island State Park for more than 500 students in Napa County.

In April, 39 students from the COOL School After School Program at Irene M. Snow Elementary School in Napa traveled by bus and then ferry to Angel Island State Park. The students experienced both a previsit program digitally via the Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students (PORTS) Distance Learning Program, and then an onsite visit. Many of these students had never visited a state park or traveled by boat. The remainder of the field trips went on through the end of June.

[Angel Island State Park](#), the largest natural island in the San Francisco Bay, offers some of the best views of the surrounding Bay Area along with great hiking trails and other recreational opportunities. From 1910 to 1940, the U.S. Immigration Station processed hundreds of thousands of immigrants, the majority from China. The island has been a cattle ranch and was also used by the military for more than 100 years. Angel Island became a state park in 1954.

"The California State Parks IDEA Project is a unique opportunity for students to explore the wonder of our state parks," said Dr. Barbara Nemko, Superintendent of Napa County of Education. "Thanks to this funding, the students from our COOL School Program experienced an exciting ferry ride on the San Francisco Bay, the natural beauty of Angel Island, and the rich history of the immigration station. This is an opportunity many of our students likely wouldn't otherwise have without the support of California State Parks."

In June, about 120 students from the Imperial County from both Holtville Unified and Calexico Unified Afterschool Programs took field trips to Mount San Jacinto State Park. The students experienced a previsit program digitally via the PORTS Distance Learning Program. These pretrip programs allowed Park Interpreter Allison Barnes to prepare students on what to expect on the tram ride and the nature hike, what to pack to keep them feeling comfortable and energized (due to the high elevation), and what to get excited about when they finally arrive and experience Mount San Jacinto firsthand.

At [Mount San Jacinto State Park and Wilderness](#), you come into the heart of the wilderness, high in the San Jacinto Mountains. This 14,000-acre park is accessible via Highway 243 from Idyllwild or, more popularly, by the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. Granite peaks, sub-alpine forests and mountain meadows offer the best opportunity to enjoy a primitive high-country experience south of the Sierra Nevada range.

Not only did the IDEA project fund their bus transportation to the Tramway, it also paid for their tram tickets. Many Imperial Valley students had never been to the mountains, let alone, ridden an aerial tramway. Many students reveled in the amazing panoramic views seen from the top of the mountain, while others were lucky enough to witness a deer bouncing through the meadow, experiences many have never enjoyed before.

"This was a learning experience that they were able to tie in a lot of science standards and our guide was great in providing many examples of what they actually learn in the classroom," said Holtville teacher Fernando Costa.

The IDEA Project is continuing to work with the Imperial County Office of Education to provide several field trips to other local state parks later this year. The program will expand to five more counties next school year. Schools with after-school programs interested in participating can contact their County Office of Education or Brad Krey at State Parks at (619) 228-6785.

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