

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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

For Immediate Release

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California State Parks Invites Visitors to Recreate Safely and Responsibly in 2018

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California State Parks invites new or avid outdoor enthusiasts to invent their adventures this year within the nation’s largest state park system. The Memorial Day weekend kicks off the busiest time of the year for the 280 state parks, drawing large crowds of visitors. Whether they plan on biking, hiking, surfing, recreating on a boat or off-highway vehicle, exploring the desert or redwoods, or simply enjoying time with friends and family, it is important for them to plan ahead and learn about the parks they are visiting.

Safety tips and information on laws can be found online at www.parks.ca.gov/safetytips. Below are some outdoor tips:

General Tips

- **Rules/Laws:** Take the time to visit the webpage of the park you plan on visiting and learn about the rules, such as parking, if dogs are allowed and closed areas. It is also important to learn the laws for recreating in boats and/or off-highway vehicles (OHV).
- **Cell Phones:** Do not rely on your phones. Coverage can be spotty or nonexistent.
- **Weather:** Check the weather and bring appropriate clothing to fit the season.
- **Itinerary:** No matter what type of recreation activity you will be participating in, leave an itinerary of your trip with a family member/friend with information such as name/age of all participants, travel destination and expected return date. This will ensure law enforcement personnel have a better understanding of your location in the event of a rescue.
- **Safety:**
 - Carry a first aid kit.
 - Dress appropriately for your outdoor adventure.
 - Avoid alcohol. It is against the law to operate a boat or off-highway vehicle with a blood alcohol concentration of 0.08 percent or more.
 - Use the buddy system. Hike with a friend or family member.
 - Make sure you have plenty of water and snacks with you.
- **Keep It Clean:** Pack it in and pack it out.
- **Wildlife:** View wildlife from a distance. Never feed or touch them.

Water Recreation

- **Protect Your Loved Ones:** Know your limits. Swimming in a lake, ocean or river is different than swimming in a pool. If someone is in distress, seek help from a lifeguard or call 9-1-1 if one is not available.
- **Ocean Rip Currents:** If you get caught in one, stay calm and do not fight the current. Swim or float parallel to the shore until you are out of the current and then swim toward the shore.
- **Swimming:** Never swim alone and be cautious at unguarded beaches, lakes and rivers. Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- **Wear a properly-fitted life jacket:** Always check the label for correct use and size. Wearing one can increase survival time and provide some thermal protection against the onset of cold water shock. It can also keep you afloat until someone can rescue you.
- **Actively supervise children at all times:** Appoint a designated “water watcher,” taking turns with other adults. Do not assume that someone is watching them.
- **Do not enter the water if it is too cold:** Waterways continue to rise as snow melts and can be dangerously cold and swift. Even the strongest swimmers can be stunned by cold water and become incapacitated.

Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation

- **Equipment:** Use proper equipment such as protective clothing, goggles, a proper helmet, gloves and spark arrester.
- **Natural Resources:** Tread lightly and stay on designated trails.

Camping & Hiking

- **Map Guides:** Get a map of the area you will be camping or hiking.
- **Natural Resources:** Stay on designated trails. You are not only protecting natural resources, but you are also ensuring that you do not get lost.
- **Snakes:** Be cautious of where you are stepping. If you see a snake, maintain a distance of 6 feet. Most bites occur when people get too close or try to touch them.

With over 340 miles of coastline, 970 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites, and 4,500 miles of trails, California State Parks contains the largest and most diverse recreational, natural, and cultural heritage holdings of any state agency in the nation. More than 67 million people annually visit California’s state park system. Invent your adventure online at www.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.

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