

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

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

For Immediate Release

Oct. 18, 2018

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Calaveras Big Trees State Park Officially Reopens the Three Senses Trail

ARNOLD, Calif. — This past Saturday at Calaveras Big Trees State Park, California State Parks and partners reopened the Three Senses Trail during a re-commissioning ceremony. Ryder Sitch and his mother Yvonne cut the ribbon to reopen the trail. Ryder, who is visually impaired, helped with the trail development and interpretive components.

Initially referred to as the “Braille Trail,” the trail was created in 1974 for blind and visually impaired visitors to fully experience the Giant Sequoia forest and became a popular teaching trail for children’s school tours. During the past four months, State Parks along with the Arnold Lions Club and the Calaveras Big Trees Association (CBTA) revamped the trail to improve access for visitors.

Improvements to the Three Senses Trail included:

- A wider trail with compacted fill base material that will stand up to harsh winters (trail length remains the same).
- New benches and viewing platforms.
- New interpretative signs.
- A revised trail guide.

Principal funding for this project was provided by the Lions Clubs International Foundation and the District 4-A1 Lions Club, grants from the Calaveras Community Foundation and Sierra Pacific Industries, along with contributions from many friends and supporters of Calaveras Big Trees State Park. Construction involved park maintenance staff, park docent volunteers, the California Conservation Corp and inmates from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The full rehabilitation of the trail is planned for the spring of 2019 when the “Touching Garden” is finished. Guided tours are set to start next year.

[Calaveras Big Trees State Park](#) became a state park in 1931 to preserve the North Grove of giant sequoias. This grove includes the "Discovery Tree", also known as the "Big Stump", the first Sierra redwood noted by Augustus T. Dowd in 1852. This area has been a major tourist attraction ever since, and is considered the longest continuously operated tourist facility in California. Over the years, other parcels of mixed conifer forests have been added to the park. This amazing park has a huge variety of habitats and recreational opportunities to explore.



Top: Ryder Sitch and his mother Yvonne get ready to cut the ribbon to reopen the Three Senses Trail. Ryder, who is visually impaired, helped with the trail development and interpretive components.

Bottom (left to right): Calaveras County Supervisor Michael Oliveira, District Governor for District 4-A1 Lions Club Don Gall, Calaveras Sector Superintendent Greg Martin, Ryder Sitch, Yvonne Sitch, and Rod Smith with the Arnold Lions Club.

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About Lions Clubs

[Lions Clubs](#) are known for their humanitarian efforts worldwide for service projects that have served more than 200 million people. Lions International just celebrated its centennial in 2017 and encouraged Centennial Legacy Projects that focused on Vision, Environment, Youth and Hunger.