

# 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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### For Immediate Release

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## “Braille Trail” at Calaveras Big Trees State Park Getting a Facelift

*ARNOLD, Calif.* — California State Parks announced today that work to rehabilitate the Three Senses Trail, often called the “Braille Trail” at Calaveras Big Trees State Park is now underway. The project is a joint partnership between California State Parks, the Arnold Lions Club, and the Calaveras Big Trees Association (CBTA) that will revamp the trail.

The improvements will improve access for visitors and will include:

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

The Braille Trail was originally commissioned in 1976 specifically to serve the blind and the visually impaired. It’s estimated to reopen in early July and by this September, new interpretive stations will be installed. The full rehabilitation will be completed in early 2019 when the “Touching Garden” is finished. Guided tours are set to start next year.

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.

“This project was a natural fit for both the park and the Lions. Being involved in both organizations, it fell into my lap with perfect timing to be considered a Lions legacy project,” said Rod Smith, Project Coordinator and Calaveras Big Trees Association President. Smith was one of only three prestigious Lions Clubs International media recipients this year in California.



The Three Senses Trail, also known as the “Braille Trail,” is currently closed for renovation.

### **About Lions Clubs**

[Lions Clubs](#) are known for their humanitarian efforts worldwide for service projects that have serve 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.

### **About Calaveras Big Trees State Park**

[Calaveras Big Trees State Park](#) became a state park in 1931 to preserve the North Grove of giant sequoias. Lightning strikes in the 1800s hollowed out the Pioneer Cabin Tree’s base and later knocked off its crown and opened up its side. In 1881, the Pioneer Cabin Tree base was squared off and enlarged. Similar to Big Stump, the base of the 1850 Discovery Tree at Calaveras Big Trees State Park, the Pioneer Cabin Tree helped visitors experience the enormous size of the ancient sequoias. For 60 years, tourists rode horses and carriages through the Pioneer Cabin Tree, and in the 1920s, automobiles passed through it. Thousands of visitors posed for photos at the tree. This giant sequoia fell in January 2017 after a series of heavy storms. The Palace Hotel Tree and Smith Cabin Tree remain standing in the more remote South Grove Nature Preserve at Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

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