

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Division of Boating and Waterways | Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division | Office of Historic Preservation

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Contact:

[Jorge Moreno](#) | Information Officer
916.661.2598

Wildflower Season May Bring Beautiful Blooms—and Crowds—to State Parks

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – California State Parks today announced that its public lands might experience a spectacular floral display this spring. This unpredictable, rare occurrence may attract thousands of people to the outdoors. To ensure safety and conservation, the department asks visitors to please respect the iconic landscapes and be knowledgeable of the area, weather and their body limitations.

Although wildflower blooms will adorn many areas in California, some of the most beautiful blooms take place in desert landscapes. These rare blooms occur when precipitation levels in the areas are high, combined with years-long drought that eliminate grasses and weeds that take up nutrients. These conditions cause wildflowers to thrive. Depending on the park, visitors may see colorful California poppies, sand verbena, desert sunflower, evening primrose, popcorn flowers or desert lilies.

In 2017, colorful arrays of super blooms carpeted Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area. It is impossible to predict exactly where, when and if wildflowers will bloom this year. Should the state experience significant blooms, California State Parks wants its visitors to be prepared. A list of state parks with wildflower bloom information and updates, park rules and tips is available online at www.parks.ca.gov/WildflowerBloom.

Below are some tips and park rules to make viewing the wildflower blooms more enjoyable:

Respect the Landscapes

- Each park has unique landscapes. Stay on designated trails whenever possible. Tread lightly in the desert. Do not trample flowers.
- When viewing the blooms, take only pictures. Flower picking is prohibited.
- Help keep the landscapes pristine, leaving it better than when you arrived by packing out anything you packed in—Pack it in, Pack it out.
- If dogs are permitted, they must remain on leash, designated roads and campgrounds. Dogs are not allowed on hiking trails, in the backcountry or in the wildflower fields. Do not leave dogs unattended in your vehicles - temperatures can reach lethal levels.

- Use of drones require a special permission from individual state park units.

Understand the Area

- Cell coverage can be spotty or non-existent in some parks – be prepared.
- Read about your state park destination online and download a map prior to your visit, especially if you are visiting a desert. Many GPS and map apps will take you to dirt roads requiring 4-wheel drive vehicles.
- Know your vehicle's limits. Know which areas allow off-highway vehicle recreation.
- Visit the parks during the week and arrive early to beat the crowds.
- Remember to pull off the roadway when viewing wildflowers, wildlife or to take photos. Please leave roadways clear for vehicle traffic.
- Leave an itinerary of your trip with a family member or friend with information such as time of departure and expected return, site visit location, and names of everyone in your group. This will ensure law enforcement personnel have a better understanding of your location in the event of a rescue.

Check the Weather

- While planning your trip, check weather conditions. Be prepared and plan for all types of weather.
- Make sure your equipment and clothing are appropriate for the expected weather.

Know Your Body Limitations

- Bring plenty of food and water. There are often no restaurants, gasoline stations or stores near the bloom areas.
- Drink plenty of water prior to your visit to remain hydrated and avoid heat-related emergencies.
- Outdoor conditions can change quickly, especially in the desert. Bring sunscreen, a hat, layers of clothing and closed-toed shoes to avoid injury.
- Walk at a pace that allows you to talk easily. If you are too out of breath to speak, you are probably working too hard. Take a rest or stop exercising.
- In the event of an emergency, call 9-1-1.

California State Parks encourages the public to explore all of the recreational activities available at the parks, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, biking and interpretive programs for adults and children. For specific park information on these activities, wildflower blooms, maps and road conditions, please visit www.parks.ca.gov/WildflowerBloom.



Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, February 2019



Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area, February 2019

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