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The  
**Catalyst**



The Newsletter for Interpretation in California State Parks

Summer 2010

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# The Power of Partnerships



**"If we are together nothing is impossible.  
If we are divided all will fail." — Winston Churchill**

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## Contributor's Guidelines

*The Catalyst* welcomes your original articles up to two pages in length. We prefer unpublished material, but will occasionally reprint items published elsewhere. Be sure to include information about the publication so we can get permission to use the material. You may submit an article at any time. Please include a photograph whenever possible.

We really appreciate items submitted on CD or by email. We can read most DOS/Windows file formats. Please send photographs as separate files, not inserted into your document. You may also submit original photographs or other illustrations to *The Catalyst*. All photos and artwork submitted will be returned promptly. We reserve the right to edit all material. Items are selected for publication solely at the discretion of the editor and publisher. We appreciate your suggestions.

## Guest Editors Wanted!

Are you looking for an opportunity to work with other writers on engaging interpretive topics? Would you like to develop and challenge your creative and technical skills? Then consider becoming a Guest Editor for an upcoming issue of *The Catalyst*. Among the topics we're planning for future issues are:

**Interpretation and Technology**  
**Interpreting Climate Change**

Please contact Donna Pozzi with your ideas, dpozz@parks.ca.gov.



**STRONGER**

**TOGETHER**

# From the Editors

At a local, state, and national level it seems that everyone has noticed the power of partnerships. In the spirit of joining forces for a common cause, we co-edited this issue of *The Catalyst*.

In this publication you will learn how a little help from our proud partners helped keep PORTS moving when **Brent Reed** (Deputy Director at Partnerships and Economic Development) spotlights the valuable relationship between Subaru and California State Parks.

**Winter Bonnin** (State Park Interpreter II, Crystal Cove State Park) shares the powerful "sisterhood" developed between multiple agencies in Orange County. A common vision and joint endeavors produce educated docents and exciting environmental education programs for kids each year.

**Dr. Elizabeth Barrie** (Public Lands Institute, University of Nevada, Las Vegas) and **Katie Bliss** (Training Specialist, Interpretation and Education, National Park Service) discuss the development of the National Park Service's online tools for interpretive training. Working with their partners, NPS created a learning network for more than 70,000 who offer interpretive and educational services at national parks.

**Sara Skinner** (State Park Interpreter II, Training Specialist, Training Section/William Penn Mott Jr. Training Center) examines the growing collaboration between state parks and the academic realm. These connections make training for Department staff a reality.

**Harry Helling** (President of Crystal Cove Alliance) explores the cutting-edge partnership his group forged with Crystal Cove State Park. This invaluable cooperating association continually displays their dedication to California State Parks.

**Donna Pozzi** (Chief of the Interpretation and Education Division) outlines the origins of a successful collaboration between governmental agencies and education. This organization developed a unified response to the environmental education needs of California's educators.



Above: **Blythe Liles** (left) and **Winter Bonnin** (right).

**Bonnie Davis** (California State Parks Foundation) promotes the personalized park picnic table program. Perhaps this article will inspire you to memorialize your significant memories at your favorite state park.

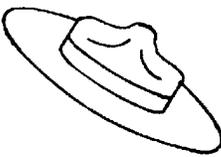
**Blythe Liles** (Regional Interpretive Specialist, Orange Coast District) interprets John Mott's "Partnership Skill Building" training and sheds light on how strategies for success can enhance interpretation and education.

**Michaele DeBoer** (Supervising Ranger, Office of Community Involvement) highlights the programs presented by her award-winning team. The partnerships involved build lasting impressions on youth and continue to connect new people to parks.

While this is only a sampling of the relationships that exist between parks and outside entities, we hope this issue begins illuminating the diversity of partners who help create dynamic interpretation and education at California State Parks.

We would also like to recognize **Cate Murphy** (Publications Editor), **Brock Patel** (Business Service Officer II, Business Management Services), **Wendy Martin** (Associate Park and Recreation Specialist, Acquisition and Development Division, Accessibility Section), and **Patricia Clark-Gray** (District Interpretive Specialist, Monterey District) for their contributions to this issue.

# What's Up?



## Resources for Interpreters

Your potential partners come in all shapes and sizes including, but not limited to, volunteer centers, cooperating associations, community organizations, nature centers, businesses, schools, universities, or other state agencies within your community. Identify your interpretive and educational goals for your park and seek partners in your local area to achieve your desired outcomes. Investing in new relationships may create revolutionary programs and fantastic facilities, broadening your park audience and enhancing the visitor experience. This section provides a few resources to help enhance partnerships and build lasting connections at your park.

The **Office of Community Involvement (OCI)** at California State Parks connects to communities and touches people never reached before. Providing services and facilitating new park experiences, this award-winning office aims to make California State Parks more relevant to all Californians. The OCI continues to develop and implement programs—including FamCamp®, Outdoor Youth Connection™, Outdoor Recreation Leadership Training, California State Parks Police Activities League, and Health and Wellness Initiatives—that increase services to non-traditional park users and underserved communities.

To find out how you can help connect new people to your park or

potentially participate in one of these programs, contact Michael DeBoer at [mdeboer@parks.ca.gov](mailto:mdeboer@parks.ca.gov) or (562) 207-7210.

In partnership with the California State Parks Foundation, California State Parks has developed the **Proud Partner Program** to allow corporations and businesses to reach out to the more than seventy million people who visit California State Parks each year. Corporate partners exemplify leadership and innovation in their stewardship of our state's cultural and natural resources. Partners may align themselves with an individual park, or with the entire State Park System. These partnerships generate critical financial support, which helps improve the visitor's park experience and also helps to ensure that future generations will continue to enjoy the treasures of the Golden State. To receive more information, email the Office of Corporate Partnerships at [partnerships@parks.ca.gov](mailto:partnerships@parks.ca.gov).

**California League of Park Associations (CALPA)** strives to foster mutual support and networking among cooperating associations linked to the California State Park system. For more information, visit [www.calparksleague.org](http://www.calparksleague.org).

**Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL)** has fostered stewardship and appreciation of public lands and historic sites through effective partnerships. To find out

more about the array of partners who work together to benefit the nation's public lands, explore their online resources by visiting [www.appl.org](http://www.appl.org).

**National Association for Interpretation (NAI)** and their two regional branches in California provide interpreters with training opportunities, online resources, and networking opportunities. While this is primarily a professional development organization, involvement may help you to find the like-minded partners that you seek for your park. For more information, visit [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com).

The **National Parks Service Partnerships** page at [www.nps.gov/partnerships](http://www.nps.gov/partnerships) provides resources and case studies to help you learn more about building partnerships in parks.

The **Bureau of Land Management's Partnerships** page at [www.blm.gov/partnerships](http://www.blm.gov/partnerships) provides resources to help BLM employees and interested members of the public build and sustain successful partnerships. Of particular interest is "Knowing Your Nonprofit Partners: A Desk Guide for Federal Employees", a great resource for government employees working with non-profit entities.

# Dear Master Interpreter

**Dear Master Interpreter,**  
What is DARC and how can I use this at my park?  
**Confused**

**Dear Confused,**  
DARC is the Department of Parks and Recreation's "Distribution and Reproduction Center," located in the wilds of West Sacramento. A subsidiary of the Business Management Services Division, DARC makes and distributes document hard copies in both color and black-and-white.

Items to be reproduced can be ordered and sent electronically or via inter-office mail to DARC, West Sacramento (074).

Each request must be accompanied by a fully filled-out **DPR 179** form, available on the Department's share drive under **N:\FORMS\DPR 100s**. If printed out, the DPR 179 should be printed on pink paper. Be certain to total the number of impressions (not copies). In other words, double-sided copies require twice the number of impressions as copies.

DARC also takes care of distribution to intra-department locations and employees. Your cost center is not charged for reproduction at this time.

DARC's services are limited by volume and type of job—paper size, folding, collating, stapling, binding, etc. Before submitting requests, inquire by calling DARC at (916) 376-1951.

**Dear Master Interpreter,**  
My cooperating association is creating a panel for display in the park. Does the panel have to meet California State Parks' ADA guidelines?  
**Aiming for Excellence**

**Dear Aiming for Excellence,**  
Yes, it is the Department's policy to provide an accessible environment in which all visitors are given the opportunity to understand and participate in the state's cultural, historical, and natural heritage. Tools to help us all meet these goals include the *California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines*, which includes a chapter on accessible exhibit design.

Prior to production all exhibit panels and mounting details must be reviewed by the Accessibility Section to ensure full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Contact the Accessibility Section at (916) 445-8949 or at [access@parks.ca.gov](mailto:access@parks.ca.gov) for submittal procedures specific to your project.

**Dear Master Interpreter,**  
What are some good ways of connecting with the community surrounding my park?  
**New Interpreter**

**Dear New Interpreter,**  
One way to connect with your local community is to attend meetings of your local natural history museums and historical societies. You can find these contacts online or in the



phone book. Many communities have chapters of national groups like Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, and Native Plant Society. Most of these organizations now have Facebook Fan pages, so join these to find out what is going on with these and other organizations.

You can also schedule a meeting with a representative of your local Chamber of Commerce or Tourist Bureau and ask to meet with them to introduce your park to them. Make sure you bring your park brochure and any other promotional material.

A great way to connect with your local community is to become a volunteer. If you want to promote your park, write an article and place it in volunteer newsletters. Becoming a volunteer leads to numerous networking opportunities and community connections. Also, check out scouting and other youth organizations and see how you can help them. Have fun getting to know your community!

# California State Parks and Subaru

By Brent Reed, Deputy Director, Partnerships & Economic Development

California State Parks and the California State Parks Foundation developed a partnership with the **Subaru of America, Inc.** manufacturing company to develop a two-year (2010-2011) vehicle assessment program. As part of this partnership, Subaru provided DPR with a total of six **2010 Subaru Outback** 4-cylinder vehicles. Four vehicles are to be used by Department employees in our parks, one vehicle for use by the PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers) program and one vehicle for auction through the California State Parks Foundation. There is zero cost to the state for these vehicles, in that these free leases will include complete maintenance for the entire pilot program time period.

This pilot program is to assess the utility of the Subaru Outback, a **Partial Zero Emission Vehicle (PZEV)**. Subaru PZEVs help their owners contribute to the environment by emitting fewer pollutants to the atmosphere. California vehicle standards have led the way in requiring low emissions by vehicles. The Subaru vehicles in this pilot program have all-wheel drive and are naturally aspirated (non-turbocharged) vehicles that have achieved a PZEV rating by the California Air Resources Board.

The Subaru vehicles in this pilot program will be four-cylinder engines with all-wheel drive and will provide better fuel economy than the current standard V-8 four-wheel drive trucks used by State Parks. Because of their PZEV rat-



**Above: CA State Parks staff from Silver Strand State Beach, Bolsa Chica State Beach, and PORTS all met at the Puente Hills Subaru dealership to receive their cars from Subaru. Shari Boyer of Government Solutions Group (GSG) was on hand. Photograph by Saveria Tilden, GSG.**

ing, these pilot program vehicles will have lower emissions than our current vehicles. Lower emissions and fuel efficiency are important in protecting the environment. State Parks does have the option of using 4 or 6 cylinder vehicles in the pilot program, if staff requires that the pilot program vehicles be more like those in our current fleet.

Of critical importance to the Department is the fuel efficiency of its vehicles in the future. Currently, the standard DPR vehicle with four-wheel drive, a four-speed automatic transmission and the two-valve, 4.6-liter V-8 engine has an estimated 14/19 mpg city/highway rating. The pilot program Subaru Outback PZEVs are 2.5 liter V-4 engines that have an estimated 20/26 mpg city/highway rating. The partnership will assist in determining whether these Subaru

vehicles provide equal or greater utility in the field and thereby assess vehicles for future use by the Department.

In conjunction with the partnership, Government Solutions Group (a company that worked to connect Subaru with State Parks and state park visitors) and Subaru held special "Ready for Adventure" events at a number of high profile Southern California park units. At these events, the park-visiting public was invited to learn about recreational opportunities in state parks and the PZEVs.

Vehicle decals will be placed on the donated vehicles indicating Subaru's participation in the Proud Partner program. State Parks will return the freely-leased vehicles to Subaru at the end of the pilot program.

# Building an NPS Training Program

Dr. Elizabeth R. Barrie  
Public Lands Institute,  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas  
and  
Katie L. Bliss  
Training Specialist  
Interpretation and Education  
National Park Service

**“Approximately 70,000 practitioners work in partnership with the National Park Service to deliver interpretation and education services to the public,”** according to the *NPS Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan* (National Park Service, 2006). However, “only 3,000 of this workforce currently participate in interpretation and education training.” A gap in training that encompasses 67,000 people creates vast challenges for maintaining and upholding professional standards. New tools—built on an interpretation and education training platform that has evolved over the years—are beginning to address this challenge.

As early as 1994, the NPS Division of Interpretation and Education defined competencies for interpretation in the parks. In 2004, using the Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory-Close-Ended (MOSAIC) methodology, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) validated 13 competencies

integral to the delivery of interpretation and education services:

- Knowledge of the Resource
- Knowledge of the Audience
- Knowledge of Appropriate Techniques
- Informal Visitor Contacts
- Interpretive Talk
- Conducted Activity
- Illustrated Program or Demonstration
- Interpretive Writing
- Curriculum-based Education Program
- Interpretive Planning
- Interpretive Media Development
- Interpretive Training and Coaching
- Interpretive Research

The MOSAIC process incorporated input from interpreters at multiple pay levels who rated the competencies on several scales, including importance and requirement for entry. The rigor of this methodology ensures that the competencies can withstand legal challenges.

These competencies established professional standards for national park interpretation and education services, but they did not provide the necessary training materials to reach all of the volunteers, concessioners, partners, and employees performing these services. Therefore, in 2005 the National Park Service partnered with **Indiana University's Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands** in order to revise the Interpretive Development Program curriculum and address this vast training gap. After a systematic review of the curriculum, the partners decided to create the **Interpretation and Education Distance Learning and Credentialing Platform**. This platform contains a blended curriculum based on the OPM-validated competencies.

**The partners launched a pilot course in 2006**, and courses on the Foundations of Interpretation (addressing the first three competencies listed above) and Informal Visitor Contacts rolled out in spring 2007. Subsequently the program has released courses on the interpretive talk, interpretive writing, conducted activities, and training and coaching.

The curriculum for each competency now includes (1) a competency narrative, (2) an online self-paced course, and (3) a classroom training packet. NPS partners and the public alike can access all materials at <http://www.interptraining.org>.

Since the initial launch of the platform, people all over the world (e.g., China, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates) have registered for more than 7,000 courses. Hence, the training gap is closing via a mechanism that provides park managers with flexible tools for upholding NPS interpretation and education standards, while also providing widespread access to NPS-sponsored training of OPM-certified competencies.

Republished with permission.  
Barrie, E. R., and K. L. Bliss. 2009. “Building an NPS training program through distance learning.” *Park Science* 26(1):42-45. Accessed April 2010 at <http://www.nature.nps.gov/ParkScience/index.cfm?ArticleID=288>.

# Sisterhood Is Powerful

By Winter Bonnin, State Park Interpreter II, Crystal Cove State Park

About a dozen years ago, a group of conscientious naturalists met with the ultimate goal of sparking public interest to purchase land in Orange County, already an urban concrete jungle, and prevent further development. Orange County is one of the most biologically diverse counties in California, and at the same time one of the smallest and most densely populated. Because of such scarcity, the remaining wildlands in Orange County are all the more precious. But what started as a land acquisition goal quickly morphed into one that was education based and focused on attracting more people to the parks, open spaces, wilderness areas, and natural settings.

After numerous brainstorming sessions *Orange County Wild*—a coalition of Orange County wilderness land managers and stewards, including state, county and city park systems, as well as public conservancy groups—was formed. Thus the mission of *OC Wild* became to educate the public about the importance of preserving, protecting, and enhancing wildland resources from the mountains to the sea. It embraced the inspiration of Baba Dioum, who wrote, "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught."

A short while later, the *WILD Women*, a group of dedicated passionate naturalists (of which I am a proud founding member) formed the planning committee. The collaboration has become a sort of

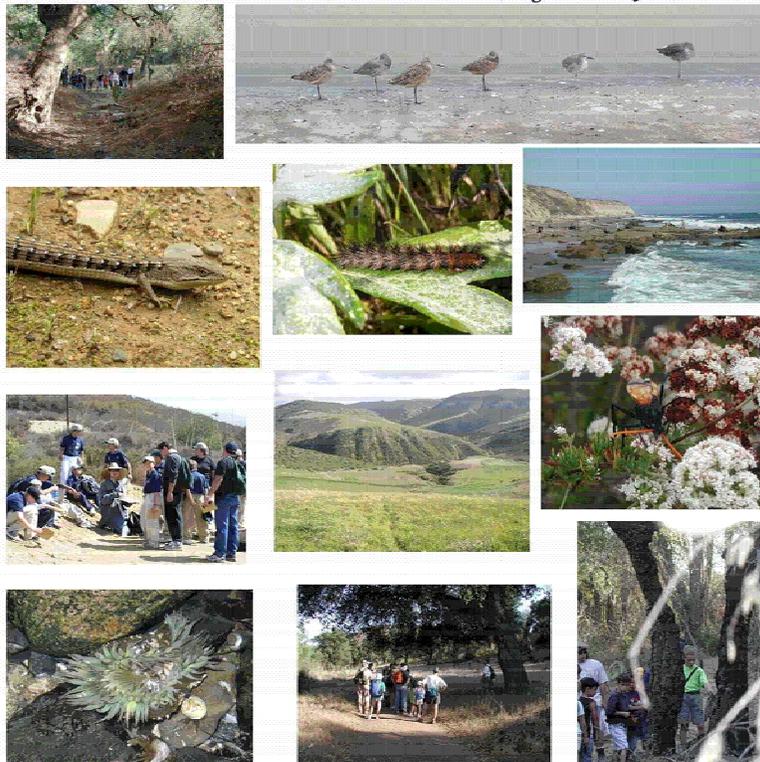
sisterhood with the *WILD Women* roar being heard and felt throughout local environmental circles. We immediately developed a web site ([www.orangecountywild.org](http://www.orangecountywild.org)) and brochure, and we created an innovative passport program which invites participants to attend five interpretive programs at any of the Orange County Wild locations, receive a stamp for each program, and upon completion be awarded a patch. Today, *Orange County Wild* hosts quarterly programs:

## Winter Workshop

Early in the year, a workshop is held primarily to reinvigorate park staff. This year we hosted Jon Young, who developed the educa-

# Go Wild

*Orangecountywild.com*



Earn a "Wilderness Lover" patch by participating in 5 interpretive programs at 5 different Orange County Facilities

For more information call the Orange County Natural History Museum at 949-831-3287 or the Peter and Mary Muth Interpretive Center at 949-923-2297



Above: Promotional poster for *Orange County Wild*.

tional approach known as Coyote Mentoring. He engaged 30 rapt naturalists in lecture, stories, and outside activities. Past workshops have featured Jacque Nunez of Journeys to the Past, the awe inspiring Joseph Cornell, and Teri Rogoway from the Leopold Education Project.

**Earth Day at Upper Newport Bay**  
Each year *WILD* Women staff a table at the Upper Newport Bay's annual event. This Earth Day draws thousands of people to enjoy interpretive programs, children's activities, tanks with sharks, rays, and other marine life, science discovery, and craft booths. There is also an Orange County Wild Passport drawing for all who completed their passport during the previous year, and winners are treated to donated nature prizes.

### Camp Wild

This camp offers a unique opportunity for children to enjoy a week of outdoor hands-on exploration in five different locations around the county. My favorite theme was last year's "Simply Sense-sational" as each day, at each park, campers used all their senses to discover nature. We have also taught "Critter Connections," "Wonderful Wildlife," and "Working Our Way Down the Watershed."



**Above: Volunteers eagerly await new training opportunities from subject experts at Docent Day.**

### Docent Day

For the past 12 years, Docent Day has been a highlight for Orange County trail guides, naturalists, and interpreters. These volunteers are invited to attend a day of presentations by local researchers, biologists, and specialists to learn new information to share with the public. Each year the location changes, as do the presenters, allowing for continued interest and inspiration.

Orange County Wild has forged seamless partnerships amongst the participating agencies, and has bonded the women on the planning committee. This sisterhood is indeed powerful as the *Orange County Wild* county-wide collaboration continues to connect, educate and leave lasting impressions on so many Californians.



**Left: At Camp Wild campers learned that while humans use their taste buds to taste with, other animals may "taste" with different parts of their body. Because each person differs slightly in the number of taste buds they have, the kids colored their tongues to illuminate their taste buds and count how many were in a given area.**

# Partnering with Higher Education for Training and Development

Sara Skinner

State Park Interpreter II,  
Training Specialist, William Penn  
Mott Jr. Training Center

Partnerships are an amazing tool that many employees of California State Parks rely on daily to keep parks open, funded, and staffed. In this same way, the Training Section has a unique partnership with Monterey Peninsula College that enables many of the training courses that California State Parks (CSP) offers to assist our employees with development.

This partnership includes Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) who accredits the majority of our training programs. The accreditation process is thorough and labor intensive. In order to become accredited by MPC, extensive information regarding objectives, subject matter, hours, instructors, lab/lecture content, materials, books, prerequisite skills, and other information must be entered into a data system. This information is then evaluated by many different subject experts and members of the MPC staff before being approved for the MPC Catalog.

The result of this process is that the Training Section (and therefore the Department) receives training funding for every employee that we put through one of the MPC accredited programs. Our employees receive a small amount of college unit credit in return for the lengthy MPC application process



**Above: Participants of Skills for Interpreting to Children Group 7 are introduced to Marine Life by Interpreter Marie Lindsay in March 2008. Courtesy of Sara Skinner, California State Parks.**



**Above: Dr. Itchy Scratchy introduces BVST 31 to the world of BILS Chapter 10: Roving during their park operations training. Courtesy of Sara Skinner, California State Parks.**

required at the start of every accredited program. The benefit is that when times are tough, the courses that are accredited through MPC have a better chance of being approved and staying on the CSP training schedule.

Another benefit of partnering with MPC is the ability for employees to receive a Certificate of Achievement and/or an Associate in Science Degree in Parks and Recreation. The Interpretation Certification Committee of the Interpretive Performance Improvement Team (IPIT) has been working to establish an Interpretation Certificate Program with MPC in addition to the Parks and Recreation Certifi-

cate/Degree. The certificate will signify a balance among natural, cultural, and recreational resource contents in the interpretive course offerings. The balance is necessary to give potential participants a broad range of potential training, development, and employment opportunities. The balance does not imply that the primary emphasis of each course would change, but will ensure that all three emphases are addressed.

The Interpretation Certification Committee hopes to work on this project over the 2010 summer season and will update our *Catalyst* readers when we have made significant progress. For more informa-

tion, please feel free to contact Wes Chapin, Michael D. Green, or Sara M. Skinner.

The partnership with MPC and California State Parks is one of many that exist throughout the state.

# When the Benefits of Partnership Are Crystal Clear!

**Harry Helling**  
President of Crystal Cove Alliance

## It's More Than Just Funding

Cooperating associations are much appreciated by the interpretation staff and the admiration is quite mutual. Cooperating associations and California State Park staff have a unique type of partnership that classically leads to a sum greater than the parts. Certainly, a cooperating association's ability to attract additional support for a broad range of efforts (including programs, exhibitions, signs, educational equipment and supplies) is a sure fire way to build affection between the partners. However, the relationship between the Crystal Cove Alliance and staff is really much more than that.



**Above: State Park Interpreter Rick Connella and volunteer Marty Sorkin act out a scene from *Treasure Island*, filmed in the park, during Shorty's Historic District Fun Tour .**

This article will explore some of the partnership benefits achieved at Crystal Cove State Park that extend beyond a simple funding model.

The Crystal Cove Alliance (CCA) became a cooperating association in 2002 and has worked for most of its existence to support the restoration of the 46 historic beach cottages in the Historic District within Crystal Cove State Park. In early 2009, the organization began to explore innovative ways to contribute to the interpretive efforts in the park. And the timing could not have been more perfect as the park's interpretation master plan was emerging and there was a need to develop a specific implementation plan. And, of course, last year with the recession and deep cuts to State Parks, there was an opportunity to expand the definition of how a partnership could contribute to a larger plan.

The Crystal Cove Alliance was successful at attracting funding in support of special projects (over \$4.8 million for restoration this year!), salary, and equipment for PORTS and other programs. The partnership realized a wealth of non-financial benefits including increased opportunities for training staff, recruiting non-traditional park visitors, attracting academic partners, leveraging public relations, and introducing new types of educational experiences.

## Value Added with Strategic Partnerships

All cooperating associations are, to some degree, acting as external relations departments for their parks. With our board of directors, advisory boards, donors, members, volunteers, and community networks we are in an optimal position to recruit strategic partners that can benefit the interpretive efforts within the park.

In 2009, historic cottage #22 was restored and opened as the Park & Marine Research Facility. University of California, Irvine's (UCI) Vice Chancellor for Research sat on the CCA board, and the Dean of the School of Biological Sciences sat on the advisory board, so it was relatively easy to develop partnerships with that university. CCA worked with State Parks to develop a use policy that would encourage researchers' use of the Park & Marine Research Facility in exchange for new data to help manage the natural resources and an agreement to participate in the emerging education programs. CCA created the SNAP! (Science and Nature in the Park) initiative firmly aimed at translating park-related science to visitors. In 2009, over a dozen new researchers from UCI, Stanford, Chapman, California State University, Fullerton, Pepperdine, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and Orange Coast College participated in the program.

The resulting 4-month rotating SNAP! exhibition showcased park

research for over 25,000 visitors and introduced a new type of educational program that would be enhanced through a research partnership. CCA and State Parks, for example, hosted over 500 students through a new High School Ocean Acidification Lab in collaboration with Stanford, UCI, and Oceana. CCA and State Parks hosted after-school underserved teens from local Boys & Girls Clubs in a bird bioacoustics program with State Park natural resources staff. CCA and State Parks hosted a public Microsurfscience Lab with Chapman University and a Grunion Historic Research Project with Pepperdine University.

A new citizen science program was introduced into the park with free 'shoe-box' dolphin observation science kits that encourage visitors to take data for Orange Coast College. In fact, there's even a new project with the local medical school where seniors participate in our Healthy Parks initiative while having their blood oxygen measured. This is only a partial list and only the first year of the SNAP! program, but it is obvious that there is deep value in properly managed partnerships with the academic community.

### **Training and Motivation of Staff and Volunteers**

The partnerships and programs introduced over this past year have offered a broad range of opportunities for increased professional development for the interpretive staff and volunteers. While all of our interpretive staff throughout the State Park System are knowledgeable and competent, all — by virtue of their job choice — are interested in further content mastery and learning best practices for



**Above: CCA & park staff hosted more than 300 high school students for an ocean acidification program in the Park Marine & Research Facility.**

content delivery. As CCA began developing programs and services, there was an unintended benefit of also providing training in pedagogy.

As professional curriculum designers and teachers were employed, CCA and State Park staff and volunteers were trained to deliver tightly developed programs with measurable educational outcomes and all based on the park's interpretive plan. Collaboratively, CCA and State Park staff worked to integrate new types of programs into the park. The new Shorty's Historic District Fun Tour (and one of the first fee-based educational programs to be approved under PRC 513) was a wonderful exercise in partnership and served to motivate everyone with new immersive learning styles and a communal approach to providing excellence in education.

### **Publicity and Great Programs**

Other non-financial benefits are available when cooperating associations can use their external relationship to help publicize — and, thereby, make successful — already excellent programs. An example of this in 2009 was the park's Junior Ranger program, not

ever suffering from quality as much as public awareness of that quality.

Two of CCA's external relationships were able to leverage the success by increasing the amount of media distribution outside of the park. CCA had just developed a new partnership — the Marriott Vacation Timeshares near Crystal Cove — and negotiated program announcements to be sent to all owners and visitors each week during the summer. In addition, CCA's new pro-bono relationship with HKA & Associates, a professional media relations firm, allowed us to distribute announcements through both conventional and social media conduits. The results were spectacular with six straight weeks of Junior Ranger programs filled to capacity, a first for the park!

CCA's partnership with Crystal Cove State Park and, in particular, with the interpretive staff has yielded some wonderful surprises this past year. The most encouraging part is that we are really just beginning to recognize what the potential is for pushing the boundary of what can be done and achieving excellence in programming in our park.

# A Statewide Partnership for Environmental Education

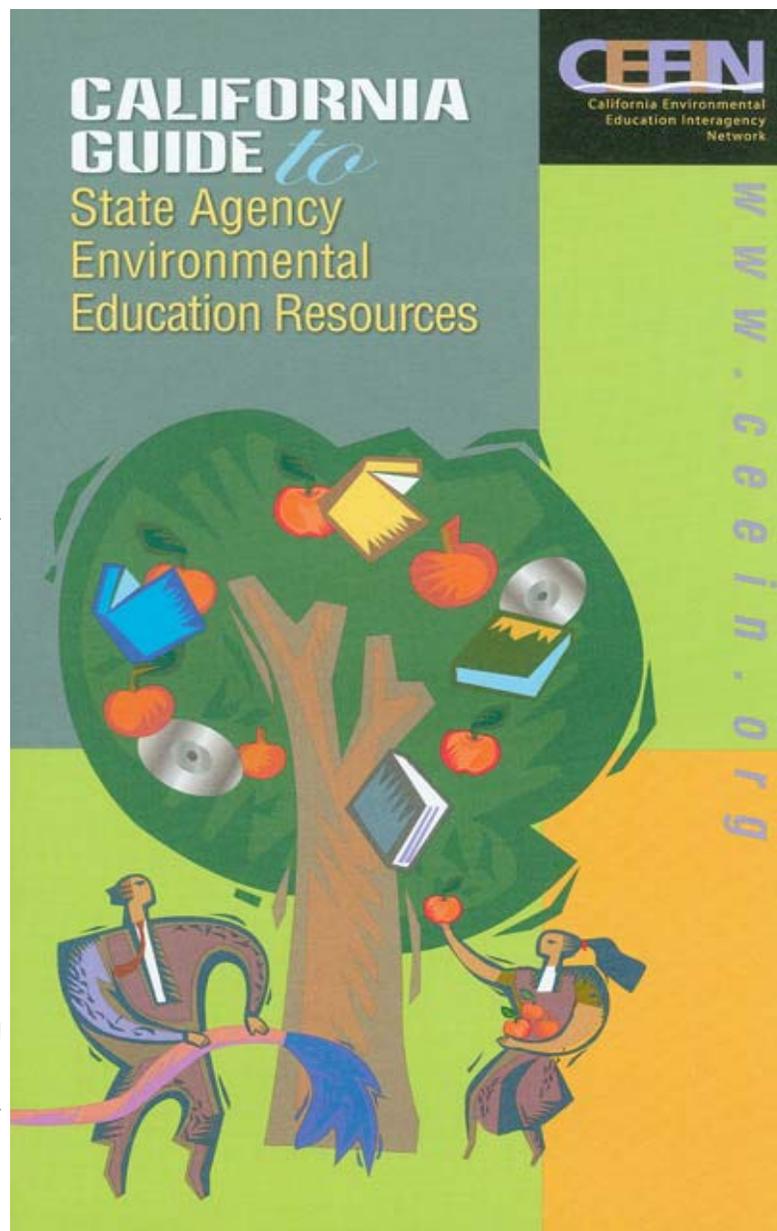
**Donna Pozzi**  
**Chief of the Interpretation and Education Division**  
**California State Parks**

In 1993, several colleagues in other state agencies and I began to work together to implement legislation that had passed mandating a statewide "Adopt an Endangered Species" contest for schools. We realized we all worked with complementary programs aimed at helping school children learn about California's environment. Some departments had special curricula while I was primarily promoting State Parks as field trip venues where any curricula could be employed. In the mid-1990s, we formalized our networking and "CEEIN" was born.

The California Environmental Education Interagency Network (CEEIN) is a consortium of environmental educators, primarily made up of state government but also including some federal agencies and other partners, represent-

ing departments, boards, and commissions of the California Department of Education (CDE), California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), the Natural Resources Agency of California (NRA), and the Department of Food and Agriculture (DFA). CEEIN provides a

forum to share resources, programs, and materials with California's public schools, primarily K-12. This partnership is made official by a memorandum of understanding signed by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction and the secretaries of Cal/EPA, NRA, and DFA.



The CEEIN partnership has proven to be a very cost-effective means of promoting collaboration among government agencies to develop a unified response to the environmental education needs of California's educators. Our accomplishments include the Curricula and Compendia Project, supporting the California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) network, establishing an outreach program that includes development and distribution of the CEEIN brochure, conducting workshops designed specifically for educators, and staffing exhibit booths at environmental conferences and fairs. See [www.ccein.org](http://www.ccein.org) for more information.

# Partnerships and How They Help Your State Parks

**Bonnie Davis**  
**California State Parks Foundation**

Partnerships between government agencies and non-government organizations can be a key lifeline for State Parks. The partnership between the California State Parks Foundation (CSPF), California State Parks and the Sonoma County Probation Camp (SCPC) is a perfect example.

CSPF has a program in place that allows you to memorialize a loved one or celebrate something special like a marriage proposal or a child's or grandchild's birth. For a tax-deductible gift of \$1,600 you can

donate a personalized picnic table to one of our state parks on an as-needed basis.

CSPF has arranged with SCPC to produce these beautiful ADA picnic tables. SCPC has been making State Parks products for more than 25 years. Established in 1955, the SCPC is a 24-month, three-phase, short-term correctional and vocational treatment facility for 16 to 18 year-old males committed by the Juvenile Court.

By participating in the Personalized Park Table Program, you will help three worthy entities: California State Parks, the Sonoma County

Probation Camp, and the California State Parks Foundation.

For more information, please contact Bonnie Davis (415) 262-4409 or [bonnie@calparks.org](mailto:bonnie@calparks.org)

*Be sure to keep the Department's Donor and Sponsorship Guidelines in mind. This longstanding picnic table program is an approved partnership. Note the recognition is small and discreet. New recognition programs must be developed in conformance with the guidelines. Permanent donor plaques are generally discouraged. See the complete guidelines on the Department's intranet site.*



**Above: Rebecca and Rodrigo Santamarina celebrate their engagement at Heart's Desire Beach in Tomales Bay State Park with the generous gift of a new picnic table.**

# Successful Partnerships

**Blythe Liles**

**Regional Interpretive Specialist  
Orange Coast District**

Partnerships breathe life into interpretation and education at California State Parks. I am amazed by the variety of successful networks established between the parks, the four cooperating associations that support the Orange Coast District, and the local community. Our partners, much like those throughout the state, come from diverse backgrounds and feel connected to the resources we protect in many different ways. But how do California State Parks employees and our partners continue to develop shared goals and visions for the future of our parks? Also, how can the success and sustainability of partnerships be ensured?

I found some answers to these questions after attending "Partnership Skill Building" along with Susan Goggins (Executive Director of the San Onofre Foundation), Todd Lewis (Orange Coast District Central Sector Superintendent), and various other cooperating association and state park representatives. John Mott (Interpretation and Education Division Cooperating Associations Program Manager who has spent a lifetime at California State Parks) wallpapered the room with strategies authored by late Brian O'Neill (former National Park Service Superintendent), who set the gold standard for park partnerships. After decades of experience and gathering insight from around the United States and beyond, Mr.

O'Neill documented that certain actions (emphasized in bold) lead to success. Below, I take a moment to explore how ten of these twenty-one strategies may apply to our interpretive and educational endeavors at California State Parks.

## ***Focus on important needs.***

Perhaps a well-meaning potential partner offers great ideas to help out the programming or visitor center at your park. Perhaps these ideas do not fit with the interpretive direction developed at your park. Identify your priorities and assess if a partnership will best accomplish your goals. If so, proactively seek out the right partners to help satisfy your existing needs.

## ***Make the partnerships a win-win.***

Often with limited funding, we depend on our partners to sponsor our interpretive programs and facilities. Paraphrasing John Mott, "people are not ATMs." While engaging our partners, always strive for mutually beneficial joint efforts.

## ***Adopt a shared vision.***

Involve your partners in the development of an interpretation master plan for your park, and establish and articulate shared visions and goals. Engage your partners and stakeholders in your interpretive planning process and meet on a regular basis to ensure that the established vision for your park does not become blurred.

For more information on developing an interpretation master plan for your park, contact Carolyn Schi-

mandle (Interpreter III, Interpretation and Education Division) or visit the California State Park website [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov) and explore the resources and tools under the learning tab.

## ***Ensure good communication.***

Any successful relationship relies on communication. This means being both an active listener and an effective speaker and writer. Make sure to include stakeholders in meetings on a regularly scheduled basis, giving all interested parties a forum to communicate their ideas, questions, and concerns. Good communication will keep your interpretive boat afloat and paddling in the right direction.

## ***Ensure the partnership is owned by your whole organization.***

Try not to work in a bubble and identify any potential problems associated with the relationships you build. Always make sure that your supervisor, and other staff members impacted by the partnership, support pursuing this new relationship.

## ***Leave your ego and control at the door.***

Take a team approach and listen to your partners. Find ways to break down territorial divides or unhealthy feelings of entitlement and ownership by developing joint endeavors. Do not be afraid of others who might think outside the box. New people or outside sources just might contribute great ideas or establish fresh connections to the community that enhance the visitor's experience at your park.

***Find ways through the red tape.***

Clearly articulating the obligations of state parks (ADA guidelines, donor recognition guidelines, special-event permits, volunteer paperwork) and anticipating these with a little "creativity and persistence" will lead to more successful collaboration.

***Build step by step.***

Start small and dream big, and you will implement the interpretive and educational goals for your park. Establish partnerships by completing "mini" projects together and building upon your successes.

***Strive for excellence.***

By engaging your partners, determine what interests and expertise they bring to the table. Use these to your advantage when you com-

bine your efforts and establish new projects. Also, continually evaluate interpretive programs, exhibits, and activities. Ask your partners to help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. Continually strive to raise the bar as you work together to take on new, innovative undertakings and improve existing services.

***Celebrate success.***

Take time to thank your partners and acknowledge the wonderful results of joining forces.

By applying some of the success factors, interpreters can strive to build strong relationships with the community and take on rewarding new challenges. Without continually nurturing our partnerships, we are at risk of missing opportunities and

exciting new ventures that we may never have dreamed of achieving. I would like to extend a warm thank you to all our partners who strive to make our parks, facilities, and programs the very best that they can be.

If you would like to read all twenty-one "Partnership Success Factors", or know more about skills for building partnerships go to [www.parks.ca.gov/associations](http://www.parks.ca.gov/associations) and click on "Bulletins, Resources and Training". You can also contact John Mott.



**PARTNERSHIP SKILL BUILDING GROUP 15**  
February 28-March 4, 2010

# California's Tapestry

A Diversity Feature Article

Spring 2010

**By Michaele DeBoer  
Supervising Ranger  
Office of Community Involvement**

For many adults of the Baby Boomer and X generations, when asked to describe their most vivid and fun childhood memory, they recall an outdoor experience with family or friends. For so many kids today, that won't be the case.

With the advent of technology, over-scheduling, perceived crime rates, and budget issues, kids don't have the same types of opportunities or access to the benefits that outdoor experiences provide. As a result, high childhood obesity rates, low self-esteem among teens, and high numbers of youngsters with Type II diabetes are among the many social and health issues affecting youth today.

It has become more important than ever for park professionals and the outdoor industry to explore new methods for introducing youth to the outdoors while maintaining on-going access and interest.

The *Outdoor Youth Connection*™ (*OYC*), an innovative partnership program of California State Parks, the Pacific Leadership Institute (PLI), and the California State Parks Foundation, addresses this need. The program is designed for youth ages fourteen to seventeen who are affiliated with community-based organizations.

The *OYC* combines and utilizes several resources and approaches including parks, programs, partnerships, and communities to unlock the potential for young people to become leaders and catalysts for

change in their communities. *OYC* uses the outdoors as a "training facility" for the leadership experience. Youth participants are empowered to use this experience and what they learn as tools to address issues within their daily lives and communities.

The *Outdoor Youth Connection*™ experience has several components. The first part consists of a three-day camping trip where youth participants learn team-building and leadership skills. Setting up camp, participating in outdoor challenges, and recreational activities such as hiking, swimming, and kayaking help build self-esteem, overcome fears, and encourage problem solving.

The experience does not end with the training. Using the skills learned and connections built, each youth graduate is required to plan, lead, and facilitate an outdoor adventure for his or her peers and conduct a community service project. These post-training outdoor activities and projects engage hundreds of youth that did not directly participate in the training.

Current data shows that for every youth who graduates from the *OYC* experience, an average of twenty other youth benefit as they participate in the outdoor activities and service projects. Some of the projects potentially can have lasting effects on communities for years to come. Examples include community gardens, beach and com-



**Above: Youth participate in several team-building and problem-solving challenges at San Luis Reservoir.**

munity clean-ups, tutoring programs, and many others. These results have exceeded all expectations. Youth have continued to organize outings and projects for their communities above and beyond the minimum program requirement with great enthusiasm for trying new things and venturing to new places.

The *OYC* collaboration acts as a one-of-a-kind bridge that connects resources from state parks, universities, local community based organizations, and other entities to create a pipeline for direct access to the outdoors. The *OYC* curriculum is built on each partner's expertise and resources in education, youth development and outdoor recreation. As the lead agency, the State Parks Office of Community Involvement provides recreation expertise with program trainers



**Above: An introduction to kayaking at Silverwood Lake SRA, one of many activities offered as part of *OYC*.**

and developers, logistical coordination, and access to outdoor venues and equipment, while working directly with community organizations. *PLI* provides a unique approach to experiential learning and youth development. The California State Parks Foundation provides expertise in program administration and accountability. Community

based organizations are directly connected to the youth, providing the day-to-day contact. Various funders, including the Stewardship Council, Southern California Edison, and the Save-the-Redwoods League Foundation have recognized the value of *OYC* and provide generous support. The success of *OYC* can be attributed to using the outdoors as a tool for communities to build leadership, as well as the innovative ongoing collaborative efforts of all partners involved.

*OYC* shows youth that there are alternatives to just "hanging out" in their neighborhoods through exposure to activities that are not only fun but promote leadership and healthy lifestyles. Through *OYC*, youth improve their health and their community's well-being, with increased use of local parks and open spaces. As a result, the youth come full circle realizing their own strengths and assets, giving back to their communities, and making parks culturally relevant to their daily lives.



**Above: Youth learn how to lead a hike at Mt. Diablo.**

For more information and the 2010 *OYC* schedule check us out at [www.parks.ca.gov/oyc](http://www.parks.ca.gov/oyc).

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# The Catalyst

## Summer 2010

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