



Section Two

Program Guide

Program Guide

2.0 Introduction

Welcome to the California Department of Parks and Recreation Volunteer in Parks Program!

This handbook was put together for your benefit to help ensure your effectiveness as a volunteer/docent. It outlines the job performance standards expected of volunteers/docents working in the San Mateo Coast Sector, answers many of the questions you may have about the day-to-day operation of parks in the sector, and provides information about the sector's volunteer/docent programs, their missions and operations.

State Park Volunteer Tradition

Today's California State Park volunteers/docents follow a proud tradition of direct citizen support for public parks that dates back to the mid-19th century. Volunteer support for public parks began in the 1860s when concerned citizens helped to establish Yosemite, the first park managed by the State of California. From that time forward, California's volunteer forces have never wavered from serving the needs of all Californians.

Volunteers were the driving force behind the creation of our modern system of State Parks. In 1928, a massive statewide volunteer program was organized to survey all of California for potential State Park sites. This volunteer program helped define the ongoing mission of California State Parks and created the foundation upon which our modern system of 278 State Park units rests.

The mission of the California Department of Parks and Recreation is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the State's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valuable natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high quality outdoor recreation.

Today, Californians enjoy one of the largest and most popular park systems in the world. The diversity and beauty of California's State Parks attract over 77 million visits annually, challenging park managers to seek alternative and cost-effective ways of providing needed maintenance, visitor programs, and overall operational support.

Volunteers have become an integral link in the overall operation of our State Parks. They provide an equivalent value of millions of dollars in support for State Park programs and projects each year. Such volunteer efforts add to and enrich the visitor's experience, and are of personal value to the volunteers themselves.

Volunteers come from different backgrounds and possess different abilities and desires. Some love to interact with people and make new friends who may have similar interests. Others prefer to work alone. A common motivation is the satisfaction of performing a needed job and doing it well. Volunteering enables people in the community to be actively involved with California State

Parks and, in turn, provides the Department additional resources with which to accomplish its mission.

What is a Docent?

Docents are highly trained volunteers who interpret the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of our State Parks. Docents, along with California Park Service employees, are the people with whom visitors are most likely to have contact. Consequently, docents play a dual role of being educators and public relations ambassadors. The Department greatly appreciates the generous donation of your time and many talents.

Docents work all year long in our State Parks in a wide variety of capacities. Whether working at sales counters, leading walks, demonstrating arts and crafts techniques, or helping with special events, California State Park System docents are special, dynamic people whose assistance is invaluable. Thank you for choosing to join this statewide activity!

You are a representative of the California Park Service. A professional docent who is well-informed and dependable radiates pride and self-confidence, and receives respect. You can depend upon the Park staff for advice, support, and encouragement. We will try in every way to help to make your experience a richly rewarding and memorable one.

Docent Program Organization

The docent program is a responsibility of California State Park System, and thus is managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). In the Santa Cruz District, the docent programs are supervised by the sector supervising rangers. Guidelines are established in the *Volunteers in Parks Program Manual*.

Docents are non-paid state employees, subject to employment benefits and coverage (see Benefits). As employees of the State, docents are under the direction and supervision of the designated DPR staff. The docents and the DPR staff work together in ensuring a high quality interpretive program for the public.

Although docents are state employees, all service is on a strictly voluntary basis. Docents cannot be required by any of the park staff or anyone else to do any work which they do not wish to do. Docents do not receive pay or other goods for work performed. Docents do not establish management or operations policies, and they may not be used to replace permanent or seasonal Department staff members.

The Año Nuevo docent program is administered by the Docent Coordination Team, led by the Interpreter I, stationed at Año Nuevo. The Pigeon Point docent program is also administered by the Año Nuevo Docent Coordination Team. For Pescadero Marsh and Half Moon Bay, the Docent Coordinator is a Ranger I appointed by the Half Moon Bay supervising ranger. The duties of these coordinators include the following:

- Coordinate docent recruitment efforts;
- Develop training outline and programs for docents and arranges for continuing training opportunities (field trips, educational activities, and so on);
- Schedule docents;

- Provide operational support for docents;
- Conduct docent evaluations;
- Reevaluate and revise as necessary the docent program and manuals on a regular basis;
- Maintain volunteer records and prepares annual docent report;
- Maintain a communication network among the docents and with other DPR staff;
- Coordinate all media and public information regarding the docent program;

It is, of course, desirable that docents be involved with and have input into the operation of the docent program. The program needs the active involvement of the docents on many levels!

San Mateo Coast Natural History Association

The San Mateo Coast Natural History Association (SMCNHA) is a non-profit cooperating association that supports educational and interpretive programs in State Parks along the San Mateo Coast. This organization consists of a Board of Directors of volunteers drawn from the ranks of docents, volunteers, and members of the community who care about State Parks. The Board of Directors reviews interpretive funding requests each year and develops a budget for expenditures. Volunteers are welcome to attend the board meetings.

Money raised by SMCNHA (pronounced *smack-n-ha*)—through memberships, donations, firewood sales, and the sale of interpretive items from visitor centers and stores—stays here to directly support the local parks, unlike park fees, which go to the State Park and Recreation Fund. SMCNHA funds are used to purchase audio-visual equipment and other equipment, develop displays, publish educational literature, support volunteer programs, and conduct interpretive programs to help the public better understand how valuable these parks are to us and our children. Books, maps, and other items sold at the visitor centers and stores not only raise funds to benefit interpretive programs, through SMCNHA, but also provide visitors with additional information.

SMCNHA maintains a website (www.smcnha.org) that includes much information of use to volunteers and docents in the Santa Cruz District. The “Docent Training” page provides supplemental training materials, including classroom presentations, interpretive materials and individual park summaries. The “Docent Resources” page provides research material, wildlife sightings at the various parks, and useful tools for docents. News and events articles are posted regularly on a wide variety of topics including new volunteer training classes. General information, maps, and photos of all the sector parks are also provided.

2.1 Docent Standards / Guidelines / Responsibilities

Docents are unpaid California State Park employees and members of the interpretive staff of the Santa Cruz District. As a docent, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects pride in yourself and in the State Park System. In order to operate the interpretive programs efficiently, all volunteer staff members must adhere to certain rules, procedures and standards. The following information is intended to give you some guidance along these lines. Docents who show an unwillingness to conform to these standards will be asked to leave the program.

Recording Hours

It is important that you record the hours you have contributed to State Parks. You are entitled to some benefits based on the number of hours you work. Also, State Parks sometimes receives funding or equipment based on the number of hours dedicated to a particular program or project. Volunteer hours are just as important as staff time.

Punctuality

Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes early for all training programs and work commitments. It is essential that you be on time.

Dependability

Docents are vitally important to the success of daily operations. In other words, we need you. If an unforeseen emergency arises, try to find a replacement from the docent roster. If you are unable to find a replacement, you are required to call and inform the Docent Coordinator. At least one day advance notice is preferred. Docents who do not show for duty and do not call more than three times will be asked to leave the program.

All docents are expected to find a substitute if you are unable to work on a day for which you are scheduled. Give the name of the substitute to the Docent Coordinator prior to the scheduled day of service. Plan in advance for this possibility. We will supply a list of active docents and the days they are available for service. We strongly recommend that you talk with possible substitutes early in the season, to work out a plan whereby you will substitute for each other if necessary.

If you are unable to work and cannot find a substitute, call the Docent Coordinator: (650)879-2032 for Año Nuevo and Pigeon Point docents; (650) 726-8804 for Pescadero Marsh and Half Moon Bay docents, (650) 879-2040 for Butano Program docents. When you are ill, finding a substitute is not necessary, but please call.

Participation in more than one program

In order to participate in more than one program, docents must meet the general requirements and attend all docent training and field trips for new volunteers that are specific for that program.

Appearance

You must maintain a professional appearance when serving as a docent. Anything less would distract from your presentation. You must wear the approved name tag and the approved jacket or shirt.

Attitude

A pleasant and professional attitude is important. All visitors are guests, and it is a primary responsibility to see that their visit is pleasant, enjoyable and safe. Sincere concern and friendly interest should characterize dealings with all visitors. The public expects and deserves to be treated in a courteous and professional manner. If a visitor comes to you with a complaint, explain to him/her what action you can or cannot take, and report the matter to a ranger. If a visitor asks you to identify yourself, do so.

Above all, never give false or misleading information to the public—if you are not sure, do not be afraid to say so. At the same time, try to be well-informed and helpful. Avoid any public criticism of the Department, staff or policies. If there is something you disagree with, discuss it with the Docent Coordinator or Supervising Ranger.

When dealing with visitors, please remember that a park visitor:

- ◆ is our guest, and should be treated as such;
- ◆ is the most important person in any park;
- ◆ is dependent on us for a better understanding of the philosophy of the Park Service;
- ◆ is not an interruption of our work but one of the purposes for it;
- ◆ does us a favor when visiting a park. Serving the visitor is the service we perform;
- ◆ is not a cold statistic but a human being with feelings and emotions like our own;
- ◆ is someone who brings us his/her needs for the outdoors. It is our job to help satisfy those needs;
- ◆ is deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment we can give;
- ◆ expects good manners from Park employees and docents.

Behavior

Immoral conduct, the illegal use of drugs, reporting to work with alcohol on the breath, being drunk or drinking alcohol on duty, or commission of a serious crime are all expressly prohibited, and will result in your being asked to leave the program.

It is your responsibility to treat your co-workers and park staff with courtesy and respect; to obey all lawful orders; to report to the park on time and ready to work; and to remain alert while on duty. It is not proper to listen to radios or cassettes, play cards, read, gossip, or perform other such activities in view of the public. Keep private visiting to a minimum when the public is present. Do not use public contacts as a soap box for your private views.

Authority

As a docent, you do not have peace officer authority. You should be familiar with park rules and regulations and, using your best judgment, you should caution park visitors if you witness a violation of these regulations. You are to report all violations of law or park rules that you witness to a ranger. You are, of course, expected to personally comply with all park rules and regulations.

State Property

State vehicles and equipment are for official use only. After training, you may be permitted to operate certain vehicles and pieces of equipment. You are not to operate a vehicle or piece of equipment without specific authorization to do so.

When you are authorized, you will have additional responsibilities to report any malfunction, to perform the specified maintenance and care procedures, to complete the necessary paperwork and to avoid accidents. You are not to pick up riders or hitchhikers in a State vehicle. You are not to abuse or misuse a piece of State equipment or operate in violation of the California Vehicle Code or any other law.

Confidentiality

Certain information of which you may become aware is confidential and must not be discussed with persons not employed by the DPR. Confidential information includes such things as crimes and incidents, rescue and accident reports, disciplinary actions, employee grievances, budget proposals and proposed policy changes. If you are questioned about these matters, politely but firmly refer the questioner to Park staff.

Privileges

Docents should not expect special privileges or favors regarding park use or use of facilities. The use of State property or equipment for your personal benefit or the acceptance of any gratuities resulting from your participating in the docent program is not permitted. However, docents are entitled to certain benefits; see the Benefits section.

You are not entitled to keep any money, clothing, or other valuables found in the park. All found items should be turned in to a ranger no later than the end of your working day. Visitors reporting lost items should talk with a ranger. If none is available, take the visitor's name, address, and telephone number, a description of the item lost, and a date and location where it was lost. Give this information to a ranger.

Interpretation

You will be required to read various publications and this manual in order to become familiar with basic information. It is important that all docents know and adhere to the same facts for a consistent interpretive program.

A satisfactory speaking voice and the ability to communicate effectively are basic requirements for effective interpretation. Park staff will assist you in your interpretive efforts. It is important that you possess the ability to accept constructive criticism for reasons of self-improvement. All docents are encouraged to repeat training sessions as refreshers, and to assist in sharing

information and experiences as a docent. In addition to attending training sessions, periodic evaluations will be conducted to encourage individual improvement.

Equipment

Wear your name tag and the approved jacket or T-shirt. If it is raining, you may wear rain gear over the jacket or shirt.

Please bring with you the equipment necessary to ensure a successful day:

A watch

If giving a walk, it is important to begin and end your walk on time.

Layered clothing

Weather conditions can change quickly along the coast, and wind can cool temperatures quickly. A warm day can suddenly become chilly when the fog rolls in. If you are miserable you will not be able to provide a very good experience for the visitors! Wear appropriate clothes for the conditions and expect those conditions to change. For cold weather, consider gloves and thermal underwear.

Hat

A hat not only keeps your hair out of your face and protects you from the sun but it can also protect your scalp from biting insects.

Sturdy footwear

Wear shoes in which you are comfortable walking.

Lip protection

Wind, rain, salt air, sun, and talking will all quickly contribute to painful, chapped lips.

Sunscreen

Even in the winter and on overcast days, sunburn is possible.

Sunglasses

Non-reflective sunglasses are friendlier.

Also consider bringing the following recommended items:

- ◆ Insect repellent (it helps!);
- ◆ Field guides;
- ◆ Binoculars;
- ◆ Food;
- ◆ Tissues;
- ◆ Magnifying glass.

2.2 Benefits

District-wide VIP Pass

The Volunteer in Parks (VIP) Pass is a volunteer ID card which provides free day-use entrance to all park units within the Santa Cruz District. To be eligible for this card, a volunteer must work at least 50 hours each calendar year.

Statewide VIP Pass

To qualify for this pass, a docent must volunteer a minimum of 200 hours during the calendar year. The calendar year is defined as January 1 through December 31. This pass is good for day-use admission at any State Park within the state of California but may not be used for tours at Hearst San Simeon SHM.

Overnight Accommodations

Pigeon Point Lighthouse Hostel

Reservations for accommodations are recommended well in advance; regular rates apply. Call (650) 879-0633 during office hours from 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. or from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Hostellers must provide their own linen or sleeping bags and clean up after themselves. Check-in time is 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Smoking is permitted outside the buildings only.

Note: In exchange for providing hostel guests with free guided walks during the breeding season, Año Nuevo State Park has an agreement with the hostel whereby Año Nuevo docents (only) may reserve a dorm-style bed free; anyone accompanying the docent must pay regular rates.

Butano State Park

Año Nuevo docents may camp at Butano State Park for free provided the following conditions are met:

- ◆ Docents are not displacing paying members of the general public;
- ◆ Docents camp in the “walk-in” sites during busy times;
- ◆ Docents adhere to the same rules and standards expected of the general public;
- ◆ From Memorial Day through Labor Day weekends and during holiday periods, docents should call in advance at (650) 879-2040 to make arrangements with park staff and ensure space availability;
- ◆ If a docent is camping for free and the campground fills up, the normal camping fees will be collected;

Federal Tax Deductions for Volunteers

A number of tax benefits are available for volunteers under the general charitable contribution deduction of the Internal Revenue Code. Volunteer may deduct unreimbursed expenditures made incident to rendition of services to a qualifying organization.

Qualifying organizations include: units of government; organizations formed for scientific, literary, or educational purposes; charitable groups and others.

The following are representative types of expenditures that may be deducted:

- ◆ Automobile mileage (at actual expense at a per-mile standard rate specified in the tax code);
- ◆ Bus and cab transportation expense;
- ◆ Parking and tolls;
- ◆ Special uniforms;
- ◆ Telephone bills;
- ◆ Entertainment and meals for others;
- ◆ Costs of meals and lodging if away overnight;
- ◆ Travel expenses above per diem allowance;
- ◆ Tickets for charity benefits (above actual value);

The following may not be deducted:

- ◆ Value of volunteer time;
- ◆ Dependent care expenses;
- ◆ Your own meals and entertainment (unless away overnight);

Items for which a volunteer receives reimbursement may be deducted only to the extent that the amount of reimbursement is below the actual expenditure.

In general, the following requirements apply to these deductions:

- ◆ Must be amount actually paid during a taxable year, not just a pledge;
- ◆ Must be made to a qualifying organization;
- ◆ Must be actual out-of-pocket amount: if banquet ticket is purchased, deduction is for the amount in excess of the value of the meal;
- ◆ Must be recorded: volunteer should know the name of the organization to which the contribution is made; amount and date of each contribution; and method of valuing in-kind contributions;
- ◆ Where possible, especially for large gifts, statement of donation should be obtained from the organization accepting the donation;

A complete description of federal tax deductions for volunteers can be obtained free from the local IRS Taxpayer Assistance Service. Ask for Publication #526, “Income Tax Deduction for Contributions.”

Workers Compensation

Docents are covered by Worker’s Compensation Insurance in the event of injury while working in the park.

Additional Benefits

In addition to the above benefits, Docents will also have access to:

- ◆ Informative and fun docent newsletters (produced as resources allow);
- ◆ On-going educational and enrichment programs;
- ◆ Annual docent appreciation party, sponsored by SMCNHA.

2.3 California State Park System

Introduction

The State Park concept is generally believed to have started in California in 1864 when President Abraham Lincoln signed an act of Congress transferring the areas then known as the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Sierra redwoods to California. In 1905, however, the lands were returned to the federal government.

Three years earlier, in 1902, the present California State Park System began with the establishment of the California Redwood Park at Big Basin in Santa Cruz county. It is only fitting that one of our state's proudest possessions, the magnificent coast redwoods, should have provided the inspiration for the creation of California's first permanent park.

Today, with almost 300 park units, California has the most diversified and one of the largest park systems in the nation. Represented in those units are outstanding examples of the state's unique scenery, including redwoods, deserts, historical units, scenic reserves, recreation areas, and mountain parks for the public to enjoy.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation acquires, designs, develops, operates, and maintains units of the State Park System. These activities are directed toward the accomplishment of eight principal objectives:

- ◆ Secure and preserve elements of the state's outstanding landscape, cultural, and historical features.
- ◆ Provide the facilities and resources that are required to fulfill the recreational demands of the people of California.
- ◆ Provide a meaningful environment in which the people of California are given the opportunity to understand and appreciate the state's cultural, historical, and natural heritage.
- ◆ Maintain and improve the quality of California's environment.
- ◆ Prepare and maintain a statewide recreational plan that includes an analysis of the continuing need for recreational areas and facilities and a determination of the levels of public and private responsibility required to meet those needs.
- ◆ Encourage all levels of government and private enterprise throughout the state to participate in the planning, development, and operation of recreational facilities.
- ◆ Meet the recreational demands of a highly accelerated, urban-centered population growth through the acquisition, development, and operation of urban parks.
- ◆ Encourage volunteer service in the State Park System.

Types of Park Units

While most people agree that parks are for recreation in one form or another, people have widely divergent conceptions of just what constitutes recreation. Some crave the opportunity for leisurely walks in quiet and beautiful surroundings or a restful camping experience. Others will

seek more strenuous activities, such as aquatic sports, snow sports, or hiking steep mountain trails. The prime ingredient in recreation is change of activity or occupation. In modern times, the opportunity to get close to nature in one form or another is one of the most rewarding forms of change.

In meeting the public's diversified recreational needs, the California State Park System must balance resource protection and visitor use. Although the various units of the State Park System are commonly referred to as *parks*, in reality there are several different designations (as defined in the Public Resources, Section 501a).

State Parks

State Parks are major areas of outstanding scenic or natural character, often containing significant historical, archaeological, geological, or other such values. In them are preserved the most significant examples of California's varied landscape. Parks are managed as a composite whole in order to restore, protect, and maintain their natural environmental complexes for the benefit of present and future generations. Improvements are limited to those necessary for public enjoyment and education, in a manner consistent with the preservation of natural, scenic, cultural, and ecological values. While parks ordinarily embrace land areas, they may also include underwater environments.

Historical Units

The historical units are areas established primarily to preserve objects of historical, archaeological, and scientific interest and places commemorating important persons or historic events. Public facilities are limited to those necessary for the safety, comfort, and enjoyment of visitors, such as access, parking, water, sanitation, interpretation, and picnicking.

Recreation Units

Recreation units consist of areas selected, developed, and operated to provide outdoor recreational opportunities. There are five types of recreation units:

- ◆ **Recreation Areas** provide multiple outdoor recreational opportunities to meet other than purely local needs. They are selected for having terrain capable of withstanding extensive human impact and for their proximity to large centers of population, major routes of travel, or proven recreational resources, such as man-made or natural bodies of water.
- ◆ **Underwater Recreation Areas** are in the underwater environment and provide surface and subsurface water-oriented recreational opportunities while preserving basic resource values.
- ◆ **Vehicular Recreation Areas** are those where topographic features and associated recreational vehicle access are the primary values. Such areas are chosen to ensure that no substantial natural values are lost, and that adjoining properties do not incur adverse effects.
- ◆ **Beaches** front the ocean, lakes, or bays, providing swimming, boating, fishing, and beach-oriented activities.
- ◆ **Wayside Campgrounds** are relatively small areas suitable for overnight camping and offering convenient access to major highways.

Reserve Units

Reserves are areas embracing outstanding natural or scenic characteristics of statewide significance; where natural ecological associations, unique faunal or floral characteristics, geological features and scenic qualities are preserved in a condition of undisturbed integrity. Improvements are strictly limited to the minimum day-use facilities necessary for public enjoyment and education in a manner consistent with the preservation of the Reserve's natural features. State Reserves may be either terrestrial or underwater environments of the state.

Natural Preserves

Natural Preserves are distinct areas of outstanding natural or scientific significance established within the boundaries of other State Park System units. For example, Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve is contained within Pescadero State Beach. Areas designated as Natural Preserves are of sufficient size to allow, where possible, the natural dynamics of ecological interaction to continue without interference and to provide, in all cases, a practical management unit. Habitat manipulation is permitted only in those areas found by scientific analysis to require manipulation to preserve the species or associations that constitute the basis for the establishment of the natural preserve.

Wilderness Areas

Wilderness Areas are also established within the boundaries of other State Park System units. State wilderness areas, in contrast with those areas where people and their own works dominate the landscape, are located where the earth and its community of life are untrammled by people and where the visitors do not remain. No permanent improvements or human habitations are permitted in a wilderness area. It is protected and managed to preserve its natural condition.

Organization

The California Department of Parks and Recreation is one of several state departments in the Resources Agency. The executive office of the Park Service is the Director of Parks and Recreation, who is appointed by and holds office at the pleasure of the Governor.

The San Mateo Coast Sector is part of the Santa Cruz District. The San Mateo Coast Sector includes Año Nuevo State Park, Butano State Park, Half Moon Bay State Beach (comprised of Francis, Venice, Dunes, and Roosevelt Beaches), Cowell Ranch Beach, Montara State Beach (including McNee Ranch), Gray Whale Cove State Beach, Burleigh Murray Ranch, Pigeon Point Light Station State Historic Park, Pescadero State Beach (including the Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve), and San Gregorio, Pomponio, Bean Hollow, and Pebble Beach State Beaches.

State Park Rules and Regulations

PARKS ARE FOREVER -- with our help and cooperation. It is very important that the Park visitor is given this message. Parks are for people to use and enjoy -- not to abuse and destroy. Without protection, the highly perishable values of the areas preserved in the California State Park System could soon be destroyed by heedless people.

In most cases, park protection can be accomplished by interpretation of park philosophy, policy, and rules and regulations. Enforcement becomes necessary only if and when other means prove

insufficient. Most people who misuse or abuse a park area or facility do so only through thoughtlessness. It is usually sufficient to bring to their attention the permanent nature of the damage resulting from their improper use.

Though some may resist compliance because of lack of understanding, it is rare that a simple explanation of the reasons behind the rules will fail to obtain willing cooperation. Only a small percentage of visitors will, once they understand the "why", continue to resent or resist a rule. They may require special attention and perhaps enforcement actions.

As a docent, you may encounter situations where you must decide whether a visitor's actions merit only an explanation of a rule or more drastic action. If enforcement action is required, or a public relations problem seems imminent, remember, State Park Rangers have peace office authority. Do not threaten or try to bluff the visitor. Never hesitate to call upon a DPR Ranger for guidance or assistance in any situation that threatens to become a problem.

Every docent is charged with the responsibility of observing and recognizing any acts that may constitute potential hazards to the safety of people or property. Such acts should be reported promptly to the supervisor or any other Ranger. This will permit effective action to eliminate the hazard. It will also help forestall or minimize the liability in case of accident.

It is important that each docent read and become familiar with the Rules and Regulations of the State Park System, especially those that apply specifically to Año Nuevo State Park, Pigeon Point Lighthouse, Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve, and Butano State Park.

Summary of Important Rules and Regulations

The following is a summary of some of the more important rules and regulations. Refer to the publication, *Department of Parks and Recreation State Parks Rules and Regulations* (1979) for exact details.

Animals

No one is allowed to hunt, injure, or otherwise disturb any animal within the boundaries of a Park System Unit. State Fish and Game regulations govern all fishing activity. At Año Nuevo State Park and Pigeon Point, these rules govern activity out to the mean tide line. At Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve, there is a steelhead season from November through February on Pescadero and Butano Creeks.

Plants and Driftwood

Visitors are not allowed to pick, dig up, mutilate, destroy, disturb, move, burn, or carry away any plant material. At Butano firewood is available for purchase, down wood may not be collected.

Geological Features

No person shall destroy, disturb, mutilate, or remove earth, sand, gravel, minerals, or rocks.

Archaeological Features

No person shall remove, injure, disfigure, or destroy any object of paleontological, archaeological, or historical interest or value.

Special Permits

Special permits are issued to certain parties that enable them to collect, tag, etc. without being liable for prosecution for violation of the foregoing regulations.

Dogs and Other Pets

Pets are not allowed out of a vehicle. Exception: If pets are on a leash six feet long or shorter, they are allowed on all Santa Cruz District *beaches*, except at Año Nuevo State Park and Half Moon Bay State Beach. Dogs are allowed on a leash in the campground at Butano but are not allowed on trails. Dogs are not allowed anywhere at Rancho Del Oso.

Fires

Fires may not be lit or maintained within Año Nuevo State Park wildlife protection area, Pescadero Marsh Natural Preserve, or Waddell Beach. Elsewhere they are allowed only in designated stoves, fire rings, or in containers such as hibachis.

Litter

Disposing of anything, other than in trash receptacles, is not allowed.

Firearms and Fireworks

Not allowed.

Bicycles

Not allowed, except on designated roadways. At Butano, bicycles are allowed on the fire roads but not on the trails. Ranch Del Oso allows bikes on the Skyline-to-Sea Trail up to the end of the road but not on single-track trails.

Peace and Quiet

No person shall, at any time, use radios, phonographs, televisions, or other audio equipment at a volume that emits sound beyond the immediate vicinity of the individual.

Nudity

Topless (female) and nude sunbathing are not allowed.

Closing Time

No unauthorized person is allowed in a posted closed area or in the park during closed hours (Sunset to 8:00 a.m.).

Reference to Vehicle Code

All California Vehicle Code rules apply.

Off-highway Vehicles

Not allowed off roads.

Horse and Other Riding or Pack Animals

Not allowed in District parks, except in designated areas and by Mounted Assistant Unit members on patrol.

Camping

Not allowed, except in designated campsites at Half Moon Bay, Butano State Park, and Rancho Del Oso with proper registration.

Public Resources Code

The Department shall protect the State Park System from damage and preserve the peace therein. Any person who violates the rules and regulations established by the Department is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by imprisonment in the County Jail for a time not to exceed 90 days, or by a fine not exceeding \$500, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Año Nuevo Docent Tour Logistics

Scheduling Your Shifts

You will receive an email with a docent schedule request form attached to it in (.doc) and PDF form. If you are unable to receive emails with attached documents be sure to notify the docent office. Please fill out the form completely including three optional dates for each shift.

Completed forms can then be sent back to the docent office via:

- Using the .doc form and typing in your information. Then send it back via email.
- Printing and scanning the form and returning via email.
- Printing out the form and sending it via regular mail.
- Printing and dropping off the form at the docent office or kiosk.

All schedules are processed on a first come, first serve basis. Those who are able to turn in their completed forms early will have the best opportunities to receive their first choices for shifts. Forms sent via email are the preferred and docents will receive a confirmation email so you will know we received it.

Canceling Your Shifts

If you are unable to fulfill a scheduled shift then it is your responsibility to find a sub. Both the Año Nuevo sub list as well as the yahoo email group can assist docents in finding a replacement. Be sure to notify the docent office of who your sub is or if you were unable to find one.

Communicating with the Docent Office

Throughout the year the docent office can be a very busy place. The office hours are from 8am-5pm. Often staff are out in the field and cannot always take calls. If you would like to leave a message for the docent coordination staff please send an email with your comments and questions as they are the easiest to respond to.

If you need to talk with somebody in the park you can always call the kiosk (650-879-2025) and talk with the park aide stationed there. In the event you need to cancel on the same day as you are scheduled, please call the kiosk.

Arriving at the Park

It is very important that all docents check in on time. There is a chain of events for scheduling that can only begin when you arrive at the park. If you are going to be late please notify the kiosk. Refer to your schedule for the appropriate arrival times for each shift.

The Docent Roost

Located on the boundary of the wildlife protection area, a “Docent Roost” is provided for docents leading tours. Here you will be able to prep for your first tour, take a lunch break, and rest before your second or third tour. Other resources provided include fresh water, hot drinks, a stove, a refrigerator, a docent resources library, and more.

During bad or cold weather, the roost does have a heater to help you stay warm and dry. Other amenities provided are a bathroom, sun deck and changing room.

To assist you in your tours a large white board map can be found on the inside wall. Daily updates to the seal tour routes can be found here along with notes about what to see. This should be checked throughout the day for changes.



California State Parks



California State Parks

The Staging Area

This area is where you will meet your group prior to entering the seal preserve. Be sure to arrive here at least five minutes before your tour begins so you can get to know your group. There is a park aide in charge of this area. They will announce when your tour begins, make some introductory remarks to your group and review the rules.

During the molting season (April-Nov) docents have the opportunity to work at this station as well. Numerous interpretive items and displays along with a major trail intersection help make this a highly visited interpretive station for visitors.



California State Parks

Following the Trail

Before you leave the Roost to meet your tour group, make sure you check the map for the latest route within the preserve.

The trail from the Staging Area to the dunes is clearly visible. However, once within the sand dunes this is not the case. It is essential that you follow the route that has been established by the park staff. Each morning a Point Ranger will survey the viewing area and select a safe and interpretive route for all tours to follow. **Do not deviate from this route.**

You will be operating in a protected wildlife zone and these routes are established to ensure the safety of both the animals and the visitors. Remember that elephant seals, although often relaxed, are wild animals that do have the potential to cause harm.

Trail markers will be placed within the viewing area to assist docents in leading their group. Upon entering this area look for these markers to guide you. Only the Point Ranger is authorized to move trail markers.

California State Parks



Single Marker – A single marker by itself marks the established route for that day. Other markers that continue the route can be seen beyond the first one forming a line throughout the viewing area. Docents should keep their groups close to these markers. Do not stray more than 10 feet away from this established route as it marks the safest corridor for walking.

California State Parks



Crossed Marker – Two markers crossed signifies a closed area. **Do not take groups beyond these markers.** Often there is seal activity that is unsafe for tours.

The Point Ranger

Every day during the elephant seal tour season a park staff member will be positioned at the Año Nuevo Point within the Wildlife Preserve. The point ranger is responsible for all activity within preserve and supervises the docent led tours. In the morning they scout the viewing area for the safest and most interpretive route possible and report it to the docent roost.

Often the Point Ranger will meet your group at some point during the tour. They will likely check in with you on updates to the trail and to see if you have any problems with your tour. Be sure to introduce them and allow a few moments for the Point Ranger to address your group if needed. If they do not approach you consider everything in order and proceed along the trail route. In the event you need assistance signal for their attention and motion them to approach you.

2.4 Docent Coordinators

Año Nuevo & Pigeon Point Lighthouse

The work schedule of the Docent Coordinators is variable during the off season. During the Guided Walk Season, a Docent Coordinator is at Año Nuevo daily but may be out in the field. For docent coordination needs, call (650) 879-2032 or email anovolcoordinator@parks.ca.gov.

Half Moon Bay

The programs are coordinated by State Park Rangers at the Kelly Avenue Ranger Station. To contact a docent coordinator, call (650) 726-8819 or email hmbplover@hotmail.com.

Pescadero Marsh & Tidepool

These programs are coordinated by a State Park Ranger at the Pescadero Office. To contact the Coordinator, call (650) 879-2170. Messages can be left on the answering machine or with other rangers.

Butano State Park

The campfire and nature walk programs at Butano are coordinated by a State Park Ranger and a Park Interpretive Specialist. To contact the Coordinator, call (650) 879-2040. Messages can be left on the answering machine.

Rancho Del Oso

This program is coordinated by a Park Interpretive Specialist and a State Park Ranger. The coordinator is mostly available on weekends. To contact the coordinator call (831) 427-2288 or to contact the State Park Ranger, call (831) 425-1218.

2.5 Emergencies

There is always the possibility that you may be working as a docent or in the area when an emergency arises. Notify Park staff immediately.

- At Año Nuevo there is park staff available at the entrance station year-round.
- If you cannot locate anyone, call *Central Dispatch*.
- The California Department of Forestry (CDF) station is also located on Pescadero Road.
- At Butano, staff may be found at the kiosk, or in the Butano office. In the campground, contact the park host.
- At Rancho Del Oso, there is a pay phone in front of the ranger station.
- At Half Moon Bay State Beach, there should be someone available at the entrance station.
- There is occasionally staff at the North Pescadero kiosk, depending on the time of year.

(When using the phones, in the Half Moon Bay and Año Nuevo Ranger Station or Visitor Center, first dial 9 to get an outside line.)

Central Dispatch: (831) 649-2810

It is better to call State Parks Central Dispatch, rather than 9-1-1, because they are more familiar with our parks than other dispatchers you may reach. In addition, cell phone 9-1-1 calls are not answered in the local area.

No matter what dispatcher you reach, you must provide clear information about the emergency and the location in order to get help as soon as possible. Give the nature of the emergency and its location. Get the name, address, and telephone number of the party involved or the reporting party after you have called the information in to Dispatch. Do not administer first aid unless you are certified—wait for the arrival of trained employees or emergency personnel.

If a crime has been reported to you and you have information about a suspect, give as much detail to Dispatch as possible—age, race, hair color and length, clothing description, vehicle description (if applicable), and the last location seen or direction traveled. If someone reports a crime or an incident to you, keep the person with you until a staff member has identified the person and collected contact information.

Injured Wildlife and Beached Marine Mammals

You may receive reports of injured wildlife or beached marine mammals. Get information as to the exact location of the animal, so the animal can be evaluated. Sometimes the visitor who reports the information is willing to help staff find the animal. If the visitor does not stay, ask for the person's name and a telephone number. This way we can get additional information in the event we cannot locate the animal.

Marine Mammals: Marine Mammal Center (415) 289-SEAL

If it is a marine mammal, we usually evaluate the condition of the animal and report it to the Marine Mammal Center. They want to know the type of marine mammal (e.g., sea lion, harbor seal, elephant seal), the approximate weight, the approximate length, any observable injury, and any general health signs. Marine Mammal Center will either send its volunteers to evaluate whether to rescue or advise us of what to do next. People should stay away from the animal. We have signs we can post in the area to keep people away if it seems necessary.

Injured Birds and Animals: Peninsula Humane Society (650) 340-8200

If an injured bird or animal is reported, we should evaluate it to see if it should be captured. Sometimes we are able to free a bird from garbage in which it is caught (including fishing line or plastic bags) and release it. Sometimes a bird or animal will need to go to Wildlife Rescue for treatment and care. If a bird or animal is brought to you, place it in a cardboard animal carrier. Have a ranger evaluate it to see if we can take care of it and release it. If the bird or animal has not been captured, locate a ranger so the bird or animal can be captured. If we have a captive bird or animal that has an obvious injury or illness that we can not treat ourselves, we should contact the Peninsula Humane Society. They will usually arrange for an Animal Control Officer to pick up the bird or animal and transport it to Wildlife Rescue.

Oiled Birds: Oiled Wildlife Care Network (530) 752-4167

Oiled birds are sometimes found on the beach. Live oiled birds are sent to Wildlife Rescue via the Peninsula Humane Society. We report oiled birds to the Oiled Wildlife Care Network. They sometimes collect the dead birds or animals for testing.

Dead Birds and Animals

If you receive a report of a dead bird or animal, pass on the information to a ranger. Sometimes we leave dead animals to decompose and let nature take its course. However, we sometimes will remove or bury them if there are any health, safety, or other resource issues involved. For example, we may remove dead animals that might attract predators or scavengers to the plover habitat area at Half Moon Bay State Beach. Beach Watch, a National Marine Sanctuaries program, collects statistics on dead birds and animals, so only volunteers and parks employees familiar with the protocols should remove these carcasses from the beach.

2.6 Addresses / Telephone Numbers / Email

Año Nuevo State Park

New Years Creek Road
Pescadero, CA 94060

(650) 879-0227 (recorded message)
(650) 879-2025 (public)
(650) 879-2032 (docent hotline)
(650) 879-2031 (fax)

Email: anovolcoordinator@parks.ca.gov

Web Page: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/anonuevo>

Butano State Park

1500 Cloverdale Road, Box 3
Pescadero, CA 94060
(650) 879-2040

Half Moon Bay State Beach

95 Kelly Avenue

Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

(650) 726-8804—Ranger/Lifeguard Line and Voicemail (Volunteer voicemail box 7#)

(650) 726-8816—Fax

(650) 726-8819—San Mateo Coast Sector Office Line

(650) 726-8820—Entrance Station

Pescadero State Beach and Marsh Natural Preserve

404 Water Lane

P.O. Box 370

Pescadero, CA 94060

Ranger Office—(650) 879-2170

Pigeon Point Light Station Historic Park

210 Pigeon Point Road

Highway 1

Pescadero, CA 94060

Bookstore—(650) 879-2120

Lighthouse Hostel Information—(650) 879-0633

Rancho Del Oso

3600 Hwy 1
Davenport, CA
Ranger Station (831) 425-1218
Nature Center (831) 427-2288

Santa Cruz District

3003 Big Trees Park Road
Felton, CA 95018

(831) 335-6318

Central Dispatch

(831) 649-2810

California State Parks Website

www.parks.ca.gov

California State Parks Reservations

1-800-444-7275 or <http://ra1.reserveamerica.com/> for camping reservations
1-800-444-4445 Año Nuevo and Hearst Monument tours

San Mateo Coast Natural History Association (SMCNHA)

San Mateo Coast Natural History Association
c/o Año Nuevo State Reserve
New Year's Creek Road
Pescadero, CA 94060
650-879-2041
Email: info@sanmateocoastnha.org
Website: www.smcnha.org

Wildlife Numbers

Marine Mammal Center (415) 289-SEAL
Peninsula Humane Society (650) 340-8200
Oiled Wildlife Care Network (530) 752-4167

2.7 Commonly Asked Questions

Where can I picnic?

Picnic facilities (barbecue grills and picnic tables) are located at Rancho Del Oso, Bean Hollow, Pebble Beach, South Pescadero, Pomponio and San Gregorio. Visitors are welcome to enjoy cold picnics anywhere as long as they carry out any litter with them when finished; tables (no grills) are provided at Año Nuevo and Pigeon Point. Visitors can also take hibachis and portable stoves onto the beaches (but not into the Preserve or the Wildlife Protection Area at Año Nuevo State Park).

Where can we camp?

Half Moon Bay State Beach has 52 units. Directions: Continue north on Highway 1 into Half Moon Bay and turn left on Kelly Avenue. Follow Kelly Avenue until it ends.

Butano State Park has 20 developed sites for trailers and campers, and 19 developed walk-in sites. Directions: Follow Pescadero Road to Cloverdale and turn right, continue south for 7 miles to the park. From Año Nuevo, follow Gazos Creek Road to Cloverdale and turn left.

Memorial County Park has camping on a first-come, first-served basis. Directions: Follow Pescadero Road approximately 15 miles.

Rancho Del Oso has backpacking sites and horse camping sites. Directions: Approximately 1 mile south of Año Nuevo State Park.

How can I make camping reservations?

State Park camping reservations are made through The California State Parks Reservation Service ticket agency, not through the individual parks. Visitors wishing to make a reservation can call The California State Parks Reservation Service toll-free at 1-800-444-7275.

Where can we fish?

The State of California has recently established a network of Marine Protected Areas along the Central California Coast. All fishing is prohibited in the area from Greyhound Rock (in northern Santa Cruz County) to Gazos Creek. This includes Waddell Beach, Año Nuevo State Park, White House Creek and Franklin Point.

Fishing is also prohibited from Pillar Point to Montara, including Fitzgerald Marine Reserve in Moss Beach. At other locations, fishing is generally allowed as long as all Fish and Game (CDFG) requirements are obeyed, including license requirements. For specific information, go to the CDFG website at: www.dfgca.gov/mlpa.

Will we see whales off the coast?

Early in October, the pregnant female California gray whales begin their annual 10,000 mile journey to Baja California, where they will give birth to their young. Non-pregnant females, mature males, and juveniles follow over the succeeding weeks. The expectant females travel alone or in groups of two or three with little rest and seldom pausing to feed, traveling up to 20 hours and 100 miles a day. The trailing whales travel in groups and reach Baja California in six

to eight weeks. During their journey, the males and females court and mate. By mid-January, most of the early females have reached Baja, and stragglers continue to arrive for another month or more.

From February to June, gray whales migrate northward in two distinct phases. By mid-February, newly pregnant females have left the lagoons for the long journey north. Adult males follow (continuing to court these females over the next several weeks), trailed by juveniles of both sexes. New mothers and their calves are last to leave, occasionally remaining as late as May or June.

When and how can I see the seals at Año Nuevo?

The elephant seal guided walk season is December 15 through March 31. It is during this time when the breeding season takes place. The bulls arrive first, as early as late November. The females begin to arrive in mid-December and continue through February. Most of the adults are gone by mid-March but the weaned pups remain until late April. The elephant seals return during the summer to molt. Females and juveniles return during April through May, sub-adult males during June through July, and adult males during July through August.

From December 1 through 14, the Wildlife Protection Area is closed to the public. From December 15 through March 31, the Wildlife Protection Area is open to visitors only by guided walks conducted daily by trained volunteer docents. This is to protect both seals and visitors alike during this sensitive season. Visitors must make advance reservations through The California State Parks Reservation Service to take part in a walk (call 800-444-4445). Walks are conducted daily. The Park is open during the rest of the year for general visitation with permits issued upon entrance to the Park.

Where can we go tidepooling?

Good tidepooling sites can be found anywhere between Pigeon Point and Pescadero State Beach. Remind visitors that all Fish and Game regulations are strictly enforced.

