

FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ STATE PARKS ANNOUNCES 2016 OPEN HOUSE DAYS AT THE CASTRO ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK

SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), a local non-profit supporting 32 state parks and beaches in Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties today announced the Castro Adobe State Historic Park will be open to the public six Saturdays in 2016. Admission is free with donations to support the park gratefully accepted.

Located in Larkin Valley, near Watsonville, the two-story Castro Adobe, built between 1848-49, is one of the finest examples of a rancho hacienda in the Monterey Bay area. Open House visitors will be able to tour the property including the restored *cocina* (kitchen) and the Potter-Church Garden. The garden is a unique outdoor space originally created by then-owners Elizabeth and David Potter (1968-72), in consultation with noted landscape architect Thomas Church.

Each open house will be themed to highlight an aspect of the historic property. The Open House Days begin Feb. 20 with "Romance on the Rancho." Enjoy traditional hot chocolate, make tortillas, stroll through the historic garden while exploring romance during the Rancho period. Learn about courting and marriage during that era — including the Bolcoff-Castro marriage and the Castro Adobe-Wilder Ranch historical connection — as well as concepts of race and intermarriage in Alta California, the perception of the Rancho Period as a "golden age" compared to what historical and archaeological record show, and the loving relationship between a vaquero and his horse.

Future dates include:

- April 23: Vaqueros y Banditos (Cowboys and Bandits)
- June 11: Castro Adobe in the 20th Century
- Aug. 13: Evening at the Adobe
- Oct. 22: Earthquakes and the Adobe
- Dec. 10: Festivos en el Rancho (Holidays at the Rancho)

The open houses will be 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., with the exception of the August evening event. Interpretive Rangers and Friends' volunteers will be on hand to offer a "sneak peak" into the restoration process and to assist visitors who would like to enjoy handmade tortillas cooked on the recently reconstructed *brasero* (stove).

The Castro Adobe is located at 184 Old Adobe Road, north of Watsonville. Parking is extremely limited, so carpooling is encouraged.

Friends is leading a multi-year restoration effort to preserve and interpret the new as a State Historic Park in partnership with California State Parks. It is Santa Cruz County's

second State Historic Park and the first non-beach state park in the Pajaro Valley. The Castro Adobe is open on a limited basis for special events, such as Open House Days. To follow progress on the restoration effort, visit www.ThatsMyPark.org/projects/castro-adobe.

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends has provided millions of dollars of funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Founded in 1976, Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates six ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch and Online. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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