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## **REGISTRATION OPENS APRIL 1 FOR KIDS2PARKS, A FIELD TRIP PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ STATE PARKS AND CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

*Program works to increase access to parks for elementary school students in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties*

**MARCH 20, 2019—SANTA CRUZ, CA**—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) today announced that registration for Kids2Parks, an innovative park-equity program to bring students from Title 1 schools on State Park field trips, will open Monday, April 1 at 10 a.m. at [www.thatsmypark.org/k2p](http://www.thatsmypark.org/k2p).

Registration will run April 1-30 for field trips during the 2019/20 academic year.

Kids2Parks offers free educational field trips in local State Parks to select Title 1 elementary schools in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Teachers apply online for the free field trips and will be informed by May 8 if their application was selected. Title 1 is a designation by the US Department of Education that primarily indicates a high percentage of students from low-income families.

The program, a partnership between California State Parks and nonprofit Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, was field-tested in 2016 and 2017, and successfully rolled out in 2018. Kids2Parks increases the number of students who have visited a state park or beach by reducing barriers to access. This school year, Kids2Parks will serve 2,820 elementary school students, many visiting a State Park for the first time. It is funded through grants and donations.

New this year — field trips will be offered at The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park and Natural Bridges State Beach. Teachers can apply at [www.thatsmypark.org/k2p](http://www.thatsmypark.org/k2p).

“Increasing access to state parks and beaches creates long-term positive impacts for students, their families and our cherished parks and beaches,” Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks Executive Director Bonny Hawley said. “We’re proud to be working with State Parks on this program and extremely thankful to our donors who help make it possible.”

“This partnership with Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks has been a great success,” said Elizabeth Hammack, Santa Cruz District State Park Interpreter III. “We love welcoming schoolchildren into the parks and sharing our state’s precious natural and cultural resources, and we are excited to see the Kids2Parks program continue to grow.”

Following analysis by Friends and California State Parks, the cost of transportation was identified as the most-often noted barrier to park access and the hardest to overcome. The Kids2Parks program funds transportation costs to the parks, which is approximately \$300-550 per trip. Donations to the program are gratefully accepted at [www.thatsmypark.org/donate/support-a-project](http://www.thatsmypark.org/donate/support-a-project).

Applications are accepted online at [www.thatsmypark.org/k2p](http://www.thatsmypark.org/k2p) once a year for transportation. The application window opens at 10 a.m. Monday, April 1. State Parks staff will schedule field trips for the 2019/20 academic year based on availability. Schools not selected for Kids2Parks transportation-funded field trips are always welcome to schedule field trips to state parks and beaches by visiting [www.thatsmypark.org/visit/field-trips](http://www.thatsmypark.org/visit/field-trips).

### **About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks**

Established in 1976, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) is a vital partner with California State Parks, creatively working to ensure our cherished local parks and beaches are thriving and available to all. Friends' innovative and collaborative community partnership provides support and investment for education, equity and inclusion, conservation, facilities improvements, historic preservation and cultural events. 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](http://ThatsMyPark.org) or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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