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## **BEACH WHEELCHAIR AVAILABILITY DOUBLES AT LOCAL STATE BEACHES, THANKS TO GRANT FUNDING**

*Equipment is available for use at eight beaches, reservations recommended*

**MARCH 4, 2021—SANTA CRUZ, CA**—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) today announced it is deploying five new beach wheelchairs funded by a \$13,762 grant from the California Coastal Conservancy to improve access for visitors at local state beaches.

"Our goal is to make our beloved state parks and beaches accessible to all," said Bonny Hawley, executive director of Friends. "Doubling the number of available beach wheelchairs is one way we can help more people and their families explore the beautiful coast in a comfortable, safe way."

The new beach wheelchairs are a valuable contribution to State Parks' mandate of improving park access to all residents, as well as Friends' mission of equity and inclusion for all. They add to the five beach wheelchairs already in service. Wheelchairs can be used at any of eight state beaches in Santa Cruz County, including Natural Bridges, Seabright, Twin Lakes, New Brighton, Seacliff, Manresa, Sunset and Palm.

"We are pleased to help facilitate the expansion of the beach wheelchair program at state beaches in Santa Cruz County," said Eddie Rhee-Pizano, State Parks Lifeguard Supervisor. "This is a great way for individuals and families to safely experience these special places."

Friends will provide support to State Parks for public outreach about the program, management and maintenance. Friends also is partnering with [Shared Adventures](#), a local nonprofit organization that provides year-round opportunities for social and recreational interaction for community members with disabilities, to provide additional access including multiday beach wheelchair use and beach wheelchairs for children.

"We believe in getting people outdoors and moving beyond limitation," said Foster Andersen, executive director of Shared Adventures. "Our new partnership with Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, along with this addition of beach wheelchairs available locally at no cost to visitors, will make our state beaches more accessible to individuals and families."

Supplied by Deming Designs Inc., the new wheelchairs are a standard fixed-frame, all-terrain, stainless steel model, with removable swing-away armrests. The wheelchairs can get wet, but do not float.

Reservations can be made by emailing [SCD.specialevents@parks.ca.gov](mailto:SCD.specialevents@parks.ca.gov) or calling 831-335-8487 Monday to Thursday (excluding holidays), between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Email is preferred. Learn more: [www.thatsmypark.org/visit/beachwheelchairs](http://www.thatsmypark.org/visit/beachwheelchairs)

### **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 [www.ThatsMyPark.org](http://www.ThatsMyPark.org) or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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