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REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR KIDS2PARKS 2021/2022 SCHOOL YEAR, A FIELD TRIP PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ STATE PARKS AND CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Program will offer free virtual field trips for elementary school students in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties

APRIL 5, 2021—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 to State Parks, is open now through April 30. Teachers can apply online at www.thatsmypark.org/k2p and will be informed by June if their application was selected.

Virtual field trips are planned for the 2021/22 academic year while in-person field trips are on hiatus due to COVID-19. In-person trips may be offered when safe to do so.

Virtual programs explore a variety of subjects for students to study, such as coastal redwood life in Henry Cowell, diverse marine life in Seacliff, the Mexican Rancho Era at the Castro Adobe, and much more! Visit www.thatsmypark.org/k2p for more information on virtual field trips offered this year.

Kids2Parks offers free educational field trips in local State Parks to eligible Title 1 elementary schools in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Santa Clara counties. Title 1 is a designation by the U.S. 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 developed in 2016. Kids2Parks increases the number of students who have visited a state park or beach by reducing barriers to access.

“Teachers, students and State Parks staff have shown incredible adaptability during the pandemic and we are impressed with their passion to continue to engage with nature, history, and culture during this time,” Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks Executive Director Bonny Hawley said. “Increasing access to state parks and beaches — even virtually — has long-term positive impacts for students, their families and the community.”

“We are dedicated to offering a way to connect what students are learning in the classroom, whether virtual or in-person, to real world experiences in a State Park despite COVID-19’s challenges,” California State Parks Santa Cruz District Interpreter II Rhiannon Sims said.

Last school year, a total of 91 classes participated in Kids2Parks virtual field trips through interactive videoconferencing, allowing 2,238 students to interact with the California State Parks interpreter in real-time. All field trips continue to meet the Common Core state standards for the subject being studied.

Kids2Parks is funded through grants and donations. Donations to the program are gratefully accepted at www.thatsmypark.org/donate/support-a-project.

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 currently operates a robust online Park Store offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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