

2020 PARKS UPDATE RESILIENCE • RESTORATION • HOPE

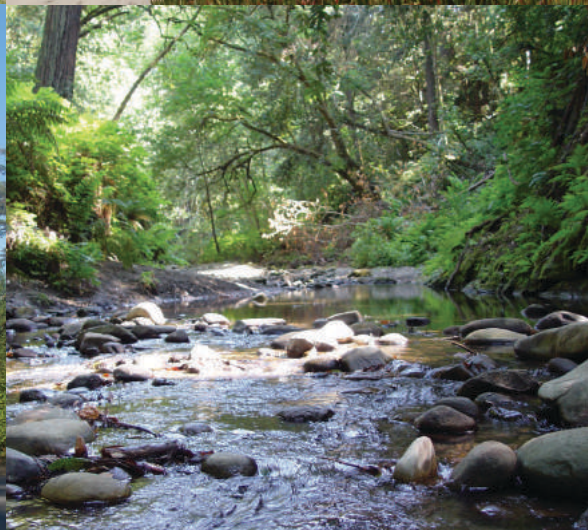


ThatsMyPark.org
f t i n



PARKS & BEACHES

- Año Nuevo State Park
- Bean Hollow State Beach
- Big Basin Redwoods State Park
- Burleigh Murray Ranch State Park
- Butano State Park
- Castle Rock State Park
- Castro Adobe State Historic Park
- Coast Dairies State Park
- Fall Creek State Park
- Gazos Creek State Beach
- Half Moon Bay State Beach
- Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
- Lighthouse Field State Beach
- Manresa State Beach
- Manresa Uplands State Beach
- Montara State Beach
- Natural Bridges State Beach
- New Brighton State Beach
- Palm State Beach
- Pebble State Beach
- Pescadero State Beach
- Pigeon Point Light Station
- State Historic Park
- Pomponio State Beach
- Portola Redwoods State Park
- Rancho del Oso
- Rio Del Mar State Beach
- San Gregorio State Beach
- Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park
- Seabright State Beach
- Seacliff State Beach
- Sunset State Beach
- The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park
- Twin Lakes State Beach
- Wilder Ranch State Park



DEAR PARK SUPPORTER,

What a year it's been.

This time last year we were busily gearing up for the annual ParkStore Holiday Sale, planning a year's worth of public events, enjoying stable revenue and the new investments it would make possible, and transitioning field operations to winter mode. Little did we know what lay ahead.

After two months of normal operations, we found ourselves on a roller coaster of coronavirus, economic uncertainty and, later, devastating wildfire – all playing out against a background of political angst and instability. Fortunately for Friends, we started 2020 from a position of strength. Our chief assets were a strong and resilient team of staff, board members and state park colleagues. Our team was further strengthened by a solid network of community volunteers, consultants and supporters. We knew who we were and what we stood for. We were up for the challenge of living by our values. It turns out we sure needed those assets and values to meet the monumental test presented by the circumstances of 2020.

This year turned out to be all about switching gears and staying on top of shifting conditions and mandates at the federal, state and local levels. It was an exercise in adaptation and creativity. Ensuring the safety of the public and our staff was always our guiding principle. In spite of all of the many obstacles served up by 2020, by pulling together we managed to survive and thrive. We take great pride in the role our local state parks and beaches play to support the mental and physical health of our community during these challenging times.

Looking ahead to 2021, we are hopeful there will be dramatic improvements to the local and national outlook for both the pandemic and economy. In the meantime, we will continue to adapt and innovate to help maintain connections between people and the nature, history and culture offered by our local state parks and beaches. We need your support now more than ever. You can show your love for state parks by visiting, donating, becoming a member, paying your park entry fees and shopping at Friends' ParkStore Online. Thank you!



Bonny Hawley, Executive Director

Face covering
required
when paying
entrance fee.



VISA DISCOVER

WELCOME!

Face covering
required when
paying your fee.

VISA DISCOVER
Parking fee supports this park.



FRESH AIR, GREAT SPACES, CLOSE TO HOME

**STAY
CATION
2020** **REDISCOVER**
LOCAL STATE PARKS
& BEACHES
THATSMYPARK.ORG

Take the **Parks Pledge** to **#FlattenTheCurve!**

**Pledge to help #FlattenTheCurve and keep our parks
and beaches open by practicing physical distancing.**

Let's protect our community:

- Stay home if sick.
- Wear a mask.
- Use parks and beaches for exercise only and avoid gathering in groups.
- Keep close to home.
- Maintain a physical distance of 6 feet or more.
- Leave space between others when passing on trails.

If we fail, parks may close again and the health of our community will be at risk.



**PARKS
PLEDGE**

Please join us in this effort!

THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Before the local shelter-in-place orders, as COVID was spreading, Friends moved quickly to secure and deploy personal protective equipment and sanitizing supplies, while researching best practices and putting protocols into place.

The first round of park closures orders forced us to reinvent the way we operate. We made an early commitment to retain our field staff, both to protect them from economic distress and to be ready to redeploy them as conditions changed in the field. In our Downtown Santa Cruz office, we moved to a work-from-home model.

Field staff began meeting and training at home. Over time, most returned to the field to greet visitors and explain new park rules and COVID-safe practices. As soon as it was allowed, staff assisted with safe park re-openings, implementing a contactless payment process behind plexiglass shields or in pop-ups outside of kiosks. With the ups and downs of COVID conditions, parks closed, opened, closed and opened again. Through it all, staff worked hard, stayed safe and set aside fear.

Friends launched a Parks Pledge campaign, urging visitors to be safe in the parks. We also developed and promoted safe-at-home activities and resources to bring nature home, including:

- publicizing live-stream virtual park programming
- providing downloadable coloring pages
- creating a nature reading List
- providing resources to learn bird calls
- creating local state park Zoom backgrounds
- offering links to online learning information

As park access increased, we launched Friends' Staycation 2020 campaign to urge locals to enjoy parks close to home. The campaign was unfortunately cut short by the CZU Lightning Complex wildfire.

High-tech damage assessment in action at Big Basin



WILDFIRE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY



The CZU Lightning Complex Fire caused heartbreaking devastation and disruption for our whole community, including our beloved state parks, as well as those who work in them. In addition to the extensive and tragic damage at Big Basin Redwoods State Park, a number of other local state parks have sustained damage including parts of Año Nuevo State Park, Butano State Park, the Fall Creek section of Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, and the Rancho Del Oso and Little Basin sections of Big Basin.

Before the fire had even been contained, Friends stepped up to assist with the response and prepare for the recovery effort. Through our unique position as co-management partners with California State Parks, we established the Friends Fire Fund to provide direct, short-term assistance for those most affected by the fire, followed by investments to be made in long-term recovery work for parks that have been damaged.

The Friends Fire Fund raised over \$116,000 from individual donors from across the country and around the world, as well as from grants from the California State Parks Foundation, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, Mountain Parks Foundation, and Stewards of the Coast & Redwoods.

Recovery from this climate disaster will happen in phases – for both parks and people. Many staff members from Friends and California State Parks were personally impacted by the fire, including dozens who tragically suffered catastrophic losses. Friends is committed to taking care of the dedicated people who work hard to steward our beautiful local state parks, including staff of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks and State Parks. Thanks to our generous community Friends Fire Fund grants were quickly distributed to 28 individuals and their families.

The fire also set the stage for innovation. While firefighting crews were still battling the flames, Friends staff introduced State Parks staff to Codifi, Inc, an innovative, high-tech damage assessment and documentation tool. Funding for the system was put together by Friends in partnership with State Parks, additionally supported by a generous grant from Community Foundation Santa Cruz County. Friends worked with the Codifi team and State Parks cultural resources staff to prepare for fieldwork. The system was quickly deployed at Big Basin, Cascade Ranch (Año Nuevo), and a camp in Butano, enabling us to move the recovery process forward.

We look forward to partnering even more with our generous community in 2021 to help our parks and people recover.

2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Despite the challenges of 2020, a wide variety of important accomplishments were achieved to support our beloved parks and beaches! Friends-funded or managed projects, programs and initiatives:

- Pigeon Point fog signal building restoration in partnership with California State Parks Foundation, Maritime Heritage Foundation, and State Parks Santa Cruz District
- Management of Kids2Parks field trip sign-ups, now completely online and as popular as ever
- Nisene Marks' Buzzard Lagoon gate and security project
- Año Nuevo fog signal building reroofing in partnership with OIKONOS, UC Santa Cruz, and State Parks Santa Cruz District
- Provided leadership in support of a community reconciliation process which emerged out of vandalism at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park
- Co-hosted, with Bookshop Santa Cruz, a virtual book talk with Jennifer Ackerman, author of *The Bird Way*, with recognition of the #blackbirdermovement
- Organized a COVID-safe Feed-the-Force event to support State Parks and other members of allied agencies who were working on the 4th of July
- Worked with Cabrillo College to help connect local students and graduates to California State Parks jobs, and participated in online recruitment event with 150 job seekers.
- Supported expansion of the online PORTS education program, including programming at the Castro Adobe
- Provided materials for Nisene Marks road repairs, Castle Rock legacy parking lot restriping and Big Basin water treatment
- Funded equipment and technology to move interpretive programs online
- Helped increase docent recruitment for Wilder Ranch and Natural Bridges



Photo: Devon Hawley-Schaller



Substantial progress was made in 2020 at Castro Adobe State Historic Park:

Restoration Successes:

- Installation of a fire suppression system, including water storage tank
- Repair and whitewash of all walls
- Completion of the upstairs ceiling
- Alarm system and electrical system installation
- Reroof planning

Interpretive planning successes:

- Design of floor plans and exhibit drawings
- Creation of interpretive text and innovative exhibit concepts





Friends Tribute Table Program

Kids2Parks field trip photo taken pre-COVID



In 2020 family and friends honored Christian Cooper, and the memories of Peggy Butler, Geri Crosby, Karen Dempsey, Mary Elaine Dinger, Bijan Farzan, James Earl Fredricksen, Sgt. Damon Gutzwiller, Donna Hutchinson, Barbara Johnson, Hanna Kirby, Betty Loveland, Tim Menge, Ruth M. Barber Neaves, Forrest Pascal-List, Fran & Jody Ruso, Paul Swing, Nyla Wells, Dick & Leslie Wenzel

YOUR SUPPORT MADE THE DIFFERENCE IN 2020

- Friends earned the 2020 Guidestar Platinum Seal of Transparency and Top-Rated Nonprofit status from Great Nonprofits.
- Friends ParkStore Online was refreshed and relaunched with an expanded array of products, to provide a safe shopping experience while our five traditional ParkStores were closed due to COVID-19. Hundreds of science and nature-themed items are available online, and all proceeds benefit local state parks and beaches.
- A Donate Your Vehicle program was launched.
- Kids2Parks, the park equity program bringing students from Title 1 schools on state park field trips, received grants from Parks California, Santa Cruz Elks, the Sempervirens Fund and generous community donors. This tremendous support enabled 1,575 students to visit a state park or beach during the 2019/20 school year.
- The Friends Tribute Tables program was launched with tremendous success, with 19 picnic tables dedicated to friends and loved ones, including one that will be dedicated at Henry Cowell in memory of the late Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Sergeant Damon Gutzwiller.

Your ongoing support is critical to our success – now more than ever before. To give today, please visit us online at ThatsMyPark.org/donate or mail to 1543 Pacific Ave., Suite 206, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. As always, all donated funds stay local and are tax-deductible as allowed by law.
Tax ID# 51-0183410.





Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is a vital partner with California State Parks, creatively working to ensure our cherished local parks and beaches are thriving and available to all.

ThatsMyPark.org
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Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

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