



FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ STATE PARKS OPERATIONS REPORT

July 1, 2020 — June 30, 2021



Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) is a vital partner with California State Parks (CSP), 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. This is the second year of our Operating Agreement (Agreement) with CSP for Co-Management of the Santa Cruz District State Parks.

Exhibit A attached hereto is a list of all park units supported by Friends under the Agreement, the types of fees collected at each unit and the category of services which Friends provides at the unit. The park units which show revenue collections have entrance stations staffed by Friends' Senior Visitor Service Aides (SVSAs) and Visitor Service Aides (VSAs). This document also defines the fee splits between Friends and CSP in the various fee types.

This Operations Report is submitted as required for the period of July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, and will provide the results of our 2020-2021 Operations Plan. That plan clearly stated our intention to continue to respond nimbly to changing conditions and the needs of our park partner. We offered the plan as a snapshot of our intentions, not a rigid statement that would prevent us from responding to our partner's requests for assistance with unforeseen and unbudgeted items.

As we moved into fiscal year 2020-2021, we were still struggling with the deep impacts of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic on park operations. As stated in our Operations Plan for the year, we did not develop a budget for the entire year but chose to move forward month-to-month, with staff and the Friends board working closely with Santa Cruz District (District) staff to respond to the rapidly evolving situation. While our expectation was that in most areas, we would continue to operate as we did in 2019-2020, we found ourselves on a rollercoaster of coronavirus and the further devastation of August's CZU wildfire complex. Our commitment to nimble response allowed us to focus primarily on minimizing the impacts of the continuing pandemic, keeping staff (both Friends' and State Parks') and the public safe in the face of rapidly changing conditions, while recovering from the summer's devastating fire. As the year went on, we saw the beginning of a slow return to the familiar.

Roles and Responsibilities

With approval from the District Superintendent, Friends agrees to undertake the following responsibilities in carrying out the objectives of this Agreement:

OVER-ARCHING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1. Provided visitor services, facilitated public access to park resources, improved park facilities, support and provided interpretive and educational services, provided protection of and stewardship of natural, cultural and historical lands and resources.
- 2. Assisted with the care, maintenance, operation, administration, restoration, improvement and development of parks.

SPECIFIC ROLES:

3. Worked with the District staff to plan, design, and implement innovative projects, programs and initiatives for Unit Parks.

• CASTLE ROCK ENTRANCE STATION: Friends continued to operate the Robert C. Kirkland entrance station at Castle Rock State Park under the Lease Agreement between the Sempervirens Fund and CSP with Friends as Co-Manager. Revenues were impacted by both COVID related closures of the campground, and closures due to the CZU fire.

» Friends funded:

- 1. CSP staff positions, including:
 - Park maintenance positions 2
 - State park interpreter 1
- 2. Friends staff positions, including:
 - Visitor Service Aides (VSAs) 3
 - Senior Visitor Service Aide (SVSAs) 1
- 3. Supplies, including:
 - Educational & interpretive supplies
 - Operational equipment

Castle Rock was a field trip site for the Kids2Parks program benefiting Title 1 Schools (See below). This year, all field trip programs were held remotely, so no transportation costs were incurred.

- 4. Marketing for the new entrance, including:
 - Signage
 - Paid, owned and earned media
 - Social media
- 5. Administrative costs directly attributed to the unit, including:
 - Administrative personnel
 - Bank charges
 - Payroll processing
 - Benefits administration
 - Office supplies and equipment
 - Technology and utilities
- » **Fees related to Castle Rock:** Per Exhibit A of the agreement, Friends retained the following fees for support of the park:
 - 1. Day Use 100%
 - 2. Special Events 100%
 - 3. Regular Camping 80%
 - 4. Park Passes 25%
 - 5. Reserved Camping 15%
- **KIDS2PARKS:** The Kids2Parks (K2P) is an innovative park equity program to bring students from Title 1 schools on state park field trips. The program was created as a collaboration between CSP and Friends. The Kids2Parks Committee, made up of representatives of Friends staff and board members and CSP staff met as needed throughout the year to manage and monitor the program. Field trips throughout the 2020-2021 school year were offered on-line, and we served over 2,238 students.
 - » Friends funded:
 - State Park interpretive staff to provide the program
 - Interpretive supplies

- Transportation
- Marketing and collateral
- » Friends provided:
 - Friends staff to help coordinate the program
 - Community fundraising assistance to support the program
 - Website for field trip applications
- **COMMEMORATIVE PICNIC TABLE PROGRAM:** Friends administered our Tribute Table Program throughout the District. The program is a collaborative project between Friends and State Parks which allows individuals, for a \$2,500 donation, to honor a loved one or celebrate a milestone with the lasting gift of a high-quality, redwood picnic table placed in a local state park. The tables are engraved with an inscription chosen by the donor and provide a place of respite to park lovers and enhance the scenic beauty of our local parks and beaches. State Parks staff approve the inscriptions and set the tables in place once they're delivered from the manufacturer. In addition to administering all other aspects of the program, Friends manages a maintenance fund.

This program grew from 6 tables in 2019/2020 to 23 in 2020/2021, largely due to increased marketing efforts.

- CALIFORNIA STATE PARK BACKPACKING ADVENTURES (CASPBA): The CASPBA program remained on hiatus this fiscal year, both due to COVID and the impacts of the CZU fire. We did fund training to keep First Responder Certification up to date so that we would be prepared in the event we were able to reopen a portion of the trail camp system.
- **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS:** Friends staff has continued to refine and enhance service improvements including on-line timecards, additional upgrades to the trail camp reservation software, and staff scheduling modules.
- 4. Worked with District to identify and prioritize projects and provided financial and other resources to complete those projects.
 - Prospective projects and programs are identified through a wide variety of sources, including:
 - » Members of the public
 - » CSP staff
 - » Friends board members and staff
 - » The ongoing work of Friends park advisory committees; and
 - » Existing and evolving inventories of projects such as the Parks Infrastructure Database (PID)
 - Vetting and prioritization of projects is a collaborative process between CSP and Friends through Friends board and committees, where inclusion of CSP personnel is ensured on the:
 - » Board of Directors (ex officio member)
 - » Finance Committee
 - » Sustainable Unified Revenue Funding (SURF) Committee
 - » Castro Adobe SHP Advisory Committee
 - In response to the challenges presented by COVID and the CZU fire, our budget this year was analyzed month to month. Sustainable funding has been top-of-mind this year. We have been committed to building track out in front of the train, so to speak, so that we could survive as an organization.

- Work to further this effort included:
 - » Staff moved quickly to cut operating expenses and look for ways to enhance revenue.
 - » Cuts were identified through an ongoing collaborative staff process. Basic operating expenses were slashed 34%. A reduction in monthly rent was in place this fiscal year and staff moved outside storage in-house, creating ongoing savings. A 10% furlough for program staff was implemented July 1 through April 1.
 - » Collaborative budgeting with state parks staff, who worked creatively with us to cut expenses, defer payments and reimagine billing processes, was key to our success.
 - » The Board and the Finance Committee met more frequently to make decisions and course-correct in real time.
 - » A Finance Working Group was created to focus on the organization's fiscal health.
 - » Action on previously funded projects (Mission Flooring, Headquarters Storage Shed) was frozen to maintain flexibility should the money need to be redirected to basic operations.
 - » The reserve was doubled by deallocating district-wide funds.
 - » A Paycheck Protection Program loan of \$722,138 was secured, giving us significant breathing room in our cashflow. A loan forgiveness application is in process.
- These decisions were all made in a collaborative process, working through consultation between the Friends and CSP senior staff, to the SURF Committee, to the Finance Committee and lastly to final adoption by the Board of Directors.
- Discussions regarding process improvements were ongoing and included senior State Park staff.
- Finally, Friends and CSP have continued to work together to provide financial and other resources through:
 - » Maximizing fee collection
 - » Implementing the Reservation Dynamics system throughout the district, and providing supplemental equipment to ensure smooth processes
 - » Pursuit of public and private grant funding. This year, we have moved several Proposition 68 projects, including the Castro Roof and north coast restrooms, and improvements at the Venice Beach restrooms and parking lot, forward.
 - » Organizing public events, which raise funds for the parks. The pandemic impacted our ability to host and organize public events, but there were a couple of notable exceptions, including the first ever drive-through Gerbera-N-Go! Festival, which raised over \$6,000 to benefit Friends and the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau's vaccination program, and a virtual book talk in partnership with Bookshop Santa Cruz, featuring author Helen McDonald, talking about her book Vesper Flights
 - » Sales in Friends' ParkStore Online were very strong. Once the park visitor centers were able to reopen in May, sales in the brick-and-mortar ParkStores at Natural Bridges, Santa Cruz Mission, New Brighton, Wilder Ranch, and Seacliff were also quite brisk, featuring many new educational and locally made products
 - » Community financial support through Friends memberships, business sponsors, planned giving and in-kind support
 - » The CARS Donate Your Vehicle program raised \$4,523 from the sale of 6 vehicles generously donated by community members
- 5. Planned, designed, constructed, staffed, improved and managed facilities to enhance community use, enjoyment and understanding of the parks, including but not limited to exhibit areas, visitor centers, educational and meeting facilities and adaptive reuse of historic structures for visitor programs and services.

CASTRO ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK:

- » Project managed and funded adobe restoration project
- » Final Installation of a fire suppression system including approval by State Fire Marshal
- » Completion of the upstairs ceiling
- » Repair and whitewash of all walls
- » Paint scheme process
- » Fire monitoring and burglary system installed
- » Reroof planning
- » Continued coordination with State Parks staff and the Sibbett Group to develop an interactive house museum
- » ADA accessible floor plans for the historically accurate furnishings
- » Exhibit drawings
- » Ongoing research
- » Exhibit text review
- » Providing regular gardening volunteers
- » Managing and improving adjacent facilities at the Kimbro House and McClune Properties for park purposes

6. Collaborate on strategic planning, marketing and revenue development planning.

- Ensured continued CSP participation in Friends' Real-time Strategic Planning related to identified "Big Questions" and ongoing Working Groups.
- Provided marketing assistance as outlined in #7 below.
- Revenue development planning:
 - » Worked closely with state parks staff to explore and maximize revenue generation opportunities, such as installation of Automatic Payment Machines

7. Assist District with marketing and outreach efforts.

- In concert with a professional marketing firm, Friends provided marketing services in support of our local state parks, including public outreach activities such as, but not limited to: messaging and strategy; development of collateral materials; advertising; media relations; website development and maintenance; publishing; email communication; social media; and community event support.
- Friends launched the Find New Adventure campaign to encourage visitation during off-peak days and hours. People were encouraged to check out less-popular parks, beaches and trails, promoting positive mental health and self-care.

8. Supported District special events through planning, funding and staff assistance.

- Special events were on hold due to the pandemic. As opportunities arose, Friends was available to provide assistance as requested.
- 9. Provided community outreach services to engage current and potential park users with the goal of expanding the use of the State Park system by people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
 - Friends staff:
 - » Undertook outreach activities at public events to engage with community members to:
 - Promote visitation to state parks

- Consider careers with Friends and CSP and to apply for available jobs
- Participate in activities to encourage young people to visit state parks through Kids2Parks, special field trips, aquatic safety awareness and other programs
- Recruit docents and other volunteers
- » Administered the Beach Wheelchair Program, funded by the Coastal Conservancy, doubling the number of chairs at local beaches.
- » Participated in long-term planning to increase community engagement

10. Engaged in environmental and historic restoration projects, conservation and related programs.

- Friends continued to engage in environmental and historic restoration projects and conservation, such as:
 - » Castro Adobe:
 - The project was under the supervision of CSP staff, with daily management and collaboration by the Friends Historic Preservation Project Manager. See section 5.1 for 2020-21 activities.
 - Friends continued to fund and manage small projects on the Castro Adobe property such as minor maintenance, tree-trimming, orchard care and garden improvements. In addition, Friends cares for the jointly-held water well and funds annual road maintenance fees, fire district fees and the park's porta-potty and handwashing station.
 - » Kimbro & McClune Properties
 - Friends continued to fund and manage operation and development of the Friends-owned properties adjacent to the Castro Adobe for state park purposes. Parking for the park is provided on the Kimbro property. Work will continue to maintain the well and septic systems as well as conserve habitat lands and gardens.
 - An emergency planning committee formed to create a disaster response plan.
 - » Big Basin & Fire Recovery
 - The 2020 CZU fire devastated Big Basin, as well as other local parks, and Friends participated in the Reimagining Big Basin committee to support long-term recovery and plans for the future.
 - Friends established the Friends Fire Fund to provide direct, immediate assistance to 29 state parks and families who suffered catastrophic losses.
 - Friends helped save 15 old-growth redwood trees and funded hazard removal, also with the support of the Sempervirens Fund.
 - Friends supported the publishing and release of Big Basin Redwood Forest, California's Oldest State Park by Traci Bliss. Friends' Executive Director wrote the Introduction. Proceeds from the sales of the book through Friends benefit the Fire Fund.
 - Friends collaborated with State Parks to create an award-winning short film and 3-D Virtual tour, marking the one-year anniversary of the CZU fire.
 - » Wilder Ranch
 - Projects as requested
 - » Forest of Nisene Marks
 - Projects as requested
 - » Other projects as requested

11. Operate Park Units in a manner that protects their natural, historic, and cultural resources.

• In all activities and at all times, Friends continued to strive to protect the natural, historic, and cultural resources of all district parks.

12. Conducted scientific, architectural, and engineering functions that require special expertise or professional training by or under the supervision of qualified persons with applicable expertise or training and subject to oversight of the Department.

• For new and ongoing projects, Friends engaged professionals as needed such as: engineers, architects, historians, environmental scientists, interpretive planners and others.

13. Provided skills and expertise which are uniquely available to Friends to enhance and improve the Park Units.

- In order to carry out the responsibilities of this agreement, Friends will:
 - » Employed necessary positions who supported education, equity and inclusion, conservation, facilities improvements, historic preservation and cultural events:
 - Executive Director,
 - Operations Director, Field Operations Director, Human Resources Assistant
 - Finance Director, Senior Accountant, Bookkeeper
 - Sales Director, Retail Sales Assistant
 - Historic Preservation Project Manager, Project Manager
 - Parks Philanthropy Director
 - Events Manager
 - Community Outreach Director
 - IT Director
 - Office Manager
 - » Funded 102 field staff who supported park operations
 - » Provide volunteers, including:
 - Friends Board of Directors
 - Committee members
 - Event volunteers
 - Garden volunteers
 - » Engaged consultants such as marketing consultants and other professionals as listed in #12 above.

14. Funded Park Unit Department staff positions across all program areas.

- Friends funded the following CSP staff positions:
 - » 35 State Park interpreters who provided educational programs at local parks and beaches
 - » 12 State Park positions including an historian, maintenance aides, park aides, and road and trails staff

15. Funded supplies, services, projects and programs.

- Friends funded the following:
 - » Supplies:
 - Kiosk operations: computers, safes, blinds, refrigerators, microwaves, chairs, uniforms
 - Office equipment: laptops, internet, phone lines, cell phones, copiers for Visitor Service and interpretive locations
 - Radios

- Wilderness patrol supplies
- Office supplies
- General supplies to the District as requested
- Lumber and other materials
- Interpretive program supplies such as candle wax, art supplies, corn masa and propane
- Farm Animal Program supplies at Wilder Ranch, such as animal feed and veterinary supplies
- Gardening supplies

» Services

- Portable toilets and wash station rentals
- Security system installations, upgrades and monitoring
- Farm Animal Program services, including veterinary care
- Maintenance of the aquariums at the Seacliff Visitor Center
- North coast beaches dumpster service
- Taxidermy of specimens for public education

» Projects

- Facilities improvements: upgrades to kiosks, repairs and maintenance, including window maintenance
- Small projects (under \$1,000), such as plantings and sign posts for trails
- Park and interpretive signage
- Campground maintenance and repairs
- Interpretive displays
- Trail enhancements and repairs

» Programs

- Friends organized the annual Feed-the-Force event to appreciate State Parks and other allied agencies that protect our local parks and beaches on the 4th of July.
- Annual Volunteer Celebration thanking the hundreds of individuals who volunteer in the District, in partnership with Mountain Parks Foundation and Coastside State Parks Association
- Training for Interpreters and District Staff
- Hospitality program for District events and trainings

16. Contributed in-kind services and funds raised from outside entities for the care and maintenance, operation, administration, improvement, or development of the unit.

• Friends worked to raise funds and solicit in-kind contributions for ongoing and special projects and programs from individuals, organizations, businesses, grantors, governmental agencies and others. In addition, Friends applied proceeds from the sale of merchandise in the ParkStores to these purposes.

17. Provided and managed staff, including Friends' Visitor Service Aides and Senior Visitor Service Aides who collect fees and assist with park operations.

- Hours of Park Operations throughout the District are set by CSP.
- Friends provided up to 90 Visitor Service Aide (VSA) staff for each park unit at levels determined by operational need as defined by District staff, which fluctuates with the seasons.
- Friends provided 12 full-time, benefitted, Senior Visitor Service Aides (SVSAs), who worked closely with staff at the various parks to act as leads for the Visitor Service Aides and provide a higher level of support for the visitor services program.

- 18. Acquired and managed property for the benefit of State Parks.
 - Friends:
 - » Managed and improved facilities at the Friends-owned Kimbro and McClune properties, which are adjacent to the Castro Adobe State Historic Park, for State Park purposes.
 - » Co-Managed the Castle Rock Kirkwood Entrance Station in collaboration with CSP and Sempervirens Fund.
 - » In consultation with District Staff, explored additional opportunities as they arose to acquire and manage property for the benefit of State Parks.
- 19. Accepted and administered funds obtained from governmental and non-governmental entities and expended them in accordance with State Park goals and objectives; Friends deposited and accounted for these funds separate from Revenues and Fees collected for use of the Park Units.
 - Friends has a fund-based accounting system in place to manage all funding sources.
 - Ongoing revenue and expenditures are regularly monitored by the SURF Committee, Finance Committee and Friends Board.
 - Friends is audited annually by a professional firm under the auspices of the Friends Audit Committee, with final acceptance of the audit by the Friends Board.
- 20. Collected all Fees, set forth in Exhibit A, which included, but is not limited to, Day Use Fees, Annual Day Use Fees, Senior Day Use Discount, Walk-up Interpretive Tours, Regular Camping, Senior Camping, Reserved Camping, Extra Vehicle Camping Fees, and Shower Fees. In addition, Friends was authorized to sell the "California Explorer," "Golden Poppy," "Oversized Vehicle Pass," and "Historian Passport," at all applicable Park Units, at Friends' office location, and online at www.thatsmypark.org, according to the schedule in Exhibit A.
 - Friends collected all fees as set forth in Exhibit A and outlined above.
 - All park fees are set by CSP. This model continued throughout the term of the Agreement.
 - Friends visitor services staff collected all fees in accordance with policies and procedures as determined by CSP.

EXHIBIT A

CO-MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Park Unit	Fee Collection Split*	Prospective Programs & Projects**
Año Nuevo SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Walk-up Tours: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration, Trails, Historic Restoration
Bean Hollow SB		Project Stewardship and Support, Trails, Ecological Restoration, Restroom Upgrades
Big Basin Redwoods SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Trails & Bridges
Burleigh Murray Ranch SP		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Historic Restoration
Butano SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
Castle Rock SP	Standard: 100% Friends Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
Castro Adobe SHP		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Historic Restoration
Coast Dairies SP		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
Half Moon Bay SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
Henry Cowell Redwoods SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration, Trails
Lighthouse Field SB		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
Manresa SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
Montara SB		Project Stewardship and Support, Ecological Restoration, Trails
Natural Bridges SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
New Brighton SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration, Trails
Pescadero SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
Pigeon Point Light Station SHP		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Historic Restoration

Park Unit	Fee Collection Split*	Prospective Programs & Projects**
Pomponio SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Ecological Restoration, Trails
Portola Redwoods SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
San Bruno Mountain		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration
San Gregorio SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
Santa Cruz Mission SHP		Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Historic Restoration
Seacliff SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Restoration
Sunset SB	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department Shower: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
The Forest of Nisene Marks SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department Regular: 80% Friends, 20% Department Reserved: 20% Friends, 80% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs
Twin Lakes SB		Project Stewardship and Support, Ecological Restoration, Trails
Wilder Ranch SP	Standard: 80% Friends, 20% Department	Project Stewardship and Support, Interpretive Programs, Ecological Restoration, Trails, Historic Restoration

^{*}Fee Collection Split Key: "Standard" refers to day use fees, walk-up tour fees, senior day use discount fees and bus fees, "Shower" refers to shower fees, "Reserved" refers to fees from reserved camping and any additional reserved fees, and "Regular" refers to regular camping fees, senior camping fees, and extra vehicle camping fees

All Park Unit standard day use fee collection splits shall be Twenty Percent (20%) to the Department and Eighty Percent (80%) to Friends, which represents the cost to operate the fee collection service. In Park Units where there are opportunities and the operational need for Friends to fully fund operational positions and to create innovative pilot projects for park operations, such as at Castle Rock State Park, up to One Hundred Percent (100%) of the fees collected in that Park Unit may be paid to Friends to fund such positions and operations at the discretion of the District Superintendent.

^{**}Prospective Programs & Projects may include any item outlined under 4.) Duties of Friends, A.) Roles & Responsibilities, items 1 - 18.