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REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 31 FOR KIDS2PARKS FREE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP PROGRAM IN LOCAL STATE PARKS

Field trips offered to students at select Title 1 elementary schools in Santa Cruz, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties

JULY 13, 2023—SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) announced today that online registration for Kids2Parks will open Monday, July 31, at www.thatsmypark.org/k2p. Kids2Parks is an innovative park-equity program to bring students from Title 1 schools to state parks. The registration period for field trips planned for the 2023-24 academic year will run from July 31 to Aug. 27, 2023.

Kids2Parks, a partnership between nonprofit Friends and California State Parks, 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. Teachers apply online for free and will be notified by early September if their application was selected.

The program increases the number of students who can visit a state park or beach by reducing barriers to access. Kids2Parks funds the field trip transportation costs, including bus rental, driver time and fuel, and also pays State Parks' staff time to support the field trips. Nearly 13,000 students have participated in field trips since the program's inception in 2016.

"Introducing students to state parks and beaches helps to create a lifelong connection to nature and outdoor recreation," Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks Executive Director Bonny Hawley said. "We are dedicated to increasing access to state parks and beaches, which has long-term positive impacts for students, their families and the community."

The program currently includes Castle Rock State Park, Castro Adobe State Historic Park, Half Moon Bay State Beach, Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, Natural Bridges State Beach, The Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, the Rancho Del Oso Unit of Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Seacliff State Beach, Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park and Wilder Ranch State Park. At this time schools are eligible for specific parks based on their school's geographic distance to the park.

"Connecting virtually and in-person with California State Parks helps K-12 students to build a relationship with the people and places that make our parks special," said Scott Shepherd, California State Parks Interpreter I. "K2P programs are an integral part of our efforts to increase equitable and sustainable access to California State Parks in Santa Cruz and we look forward to the opportunity connect with students who may not have the opportunity to connect with us otherwise

Kids2Parks is funded through grants and donations from individuals and businesses. It costs \$10 to send a student on a Kids2Parks field trip. Donations to the program are gratefully accepted at <https://bit.ly/donatek2p>.

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 ParkStore offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. Friends also operates ParkStores at Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch. Learn more at www.ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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