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REGISTRATION OPENS JULY 29 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 16, 2024—SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) announced today that online registration for Kids2Parks will open Monday, July 29, 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 29 to Aug. 18, 2024.

Kids2Parks, a partnership between nonprofit Friends and California State Parks, offers transportation funding for field trips to 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. More than 16,000 students have participated in field trips since the program's inception in 2016.

"An adventure at a state park or beach can be life changing for kids," Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks Program Coordinator Lauren Kitayama said. "We hope students' experiences inspire them to return with their family and create a lifelong connection with nature."

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, 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.

"Kids2Parks makes it possible for students to expand their knowledge of the natural, cultural and historic resources of our parks," said Rhiannon Sims, California State Parks' Santa Cruz District Interpreter II. "K2P programs are an integral part of our efforts to increase equitable and sustainable access to California State Parks in the Santa Cruz District."

Kids2Parks is funded through grants and donations from individuals and businesses. It costs an average of \$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, X and YouTube.

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