

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Today's California State Park Volunteers (including Docents) follow a proud tradition of direct citizen support for public parks that dates back to the mid-19th century. Volunteer support for public parks began in the 1860s when concerned citizens helped to establish Yosemite as California's first state park; it has since become a national park. From then on, California's volunteer forces have never wavered from serving the needs of visitors.

The mission of California State Parks is: To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

Today Californians enjoy one of the largest and most popular park systems in the world. California has 280 state parks; the diversity and beauty of these parks attracts more than 70 million visitors annually. More than 30,000 volunteers contribute over one million hours of service each year, at an estimated equivalent value of over \$20 million in support of state park programs and projects. The San Luis Obispo Coast District alone has over 1000 volunteers.

State park volunteers at Hearst San Simeon State Park are covered by Workers Compensation while on assignment, and are eligible for a number of state park benefits including recognition pins, Hearst Castle tours, the holiday open house at the Castle, and, for certain hours of service, swims in the Neptune Pool and complimentary passes for day use at all state parks.