



Department's Weekly Digest January 30, 2015

Quote of the Week

"You have to maintain a culture of transformation and stay true to your values."

Jeff Weiner, businessman (1970- present)

"Every successful organization has to make the transition from a world defined primarily by repetition to one primarily defined by change."

Bill Drayton, social entrepreneur (1943-present)

Updates

Final Parks Forward Commission Report Published

The Parks Forward Commission Final Report released today, January 30. You can find [the report here](#) and the [news release here](#). The final report will be reviewed at the Parks Forward Commission meeting, which will be held next Friday February 6, 2015 at the Railroad Museum. The Commission meeting will be streamed live and can be viewed at [Cal-SPAN](#).

Field Report

Flying High at the Third Annual Salton Sea Pelican Days Festival

Pelican Days Birding Festival at the Salton Sea State Recreation Area brought recreation to a new high with no world class birding and family fun. The two-day event January 24-25 drew more than 200 people participating in the festival and an additional two hundred enjoying our food, activities, and presenters all day long.

Deck Chair birding at the harbor and the morning birding walk spotted over 40 different species of birds in their two-hour walk on Saturday. The productive morning turned exciting with the

Living Deserts Wildlife show. "Wildlife on Wheels" educated about desert animals including a Great Horned Owl.

Children displayed their artistic skills with chalk art on the sidewalk, birdhouse painting, drawing birds, and playing the bird migration game to see how hard it is for our residents to make the journey each year. Mini-kayak tours were offered all day and there were many tables and displays to browse.

Visitors had three afternoon options. There was a Basic Birding Class in the visitor center to learn more about our bird populations. Our big North to South tour transported people on the six- hour tour to the very end of the Sea. Over 100 species were identified. The third offering was a trip to the Wild Bird Center focused on wetland habitats and waterfowl with some stops at the Banana Museum for a banana milkshake and the Oasis Date Garden to sample the local crop.

As the sun set in a panoramic burst over the sea, we enjoyed a scenic bird walk at the North Shore Yacht Club followed by a reception and evening program.

On Sunday, Yoga with the Pelicans was a peaceful interlude to the busy weekend. It was followed by a huge kayak tour and finally a Sand Dune Tour in the Coachella Preserve, home of the endangered Fringe-toed lizards. As a grand finale, visitors boarded the Covered Wagon tours to experience our little known outpost in the Indio Hills. There they feasted on an authentic cowboy dinner of steak and chicken with cowboy beans and slaw, complete with entertainment.



Festival namesake pelicans enjoy the sun by the shore of the Salton Sea.



State Park docents talk with visitors on a bird walk.



Birders scan the skies for varieties of birds at Salton Sea State Recreation Area's Pelican Days

Gold Discovery Day Celebrated at Marshal Gold Discovery State Historic Park

On January 24, 1848, an event occurred which would dramatically change the history of California and the United States. James Marshall discovered a gold nugget in the tail race of the sawmill that he was building for John Sutter, on the banks of the South Fork of the American River in the Coloma valley. Though he initially tried to keep it a secret, word got out and by 1849 thousands of people were migrating to California from all over the world to seek their fortunes.

Marshal gold Discovery State Historic Park celebrated the 167 years since the gold discovery with the annual Gold Discovery Day Celebration January 24. Approximately 1,000 people attended. The weather was perfect as attendees were treated to free tours and living history demonstrations. Visitors were also able to get a sneak peak at the new park improvements including the newly remodeled museum plaza, Sutter's Mill Replica and Gold Discovery Site overlook nearing completion. Other activities included a gold discovery reenactment on the banks of the American River, mill carpenter demonstrations, a Miwok Village, wagon, gold panning, and Gold Rush period music and entertainment.

This year also marks the 125th anniversary of the state's first historic monument Marshall Monument 1890. Celebrations will take place throughout the year to mark the mile stones for the park and history with a spring event mother's day weekend to rededicate the monument and our annual Gold Rush Live event second weekend in October and Christmas in Coloma.



Visitors gather at the monument marking the gold discovery site at Marshal Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



A costumed docent explains to visitors the new replica saw mill erected near the site of the discovery of gold in 1848.

OHMVR Division Participates at the California Native Plant Society Conference

The Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division provided an outreach booth at the California Native Plant Society Conference, recently in San Jose. In addition to ever popular State Parks and Off-Highway Adventure Maps, the outreach booth featured a Look Book of mini posters. The mini posters showcased six examples of resource projects that involve restoring or rehabilitating areas of native plants within the State Vehicular Recreation Areas (SVRAs). For example, Hollister Hills SVRA highlighted their native plant nursery program. Instead of relying on local nurseries, SVRA staff cultivates local seeds to plant thousands of native trees, shrubs, and grasses for projects within the park.

Many conference attendees were curious about off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation and the impact on native plant vegetation. Three environmental scientists, Nancy Lagrille from Oceano Dunes, Tara DeSilva from Carnegie, and Scott Soares from Hollister Hills took turns at the booth to explain management practices that protect natural resources and used the Look Book to highlight projects that ensure native plants in the SVRAs flourish. State Park Interpreter, Donna McGuire, explained the way in which interpretive programs help park visitors discover a meaningful connection with the great outdoors and protect California's flora and natural beauty.



The inviting display at the California Native Plant Society conference (Photo by Donna McGuire, OHMVR.)

Hollister Hills and Carnegie SVRAs at the Monster Energy Supercross Event

Carnegie and Hollister Hills SVRA employees partnered to host a display booth at the Monster Energy Supercross Event at the O.co Coliseum in Oakland. State Park interpreters and maintenance staff provided information about recreational opportunities in parks, including hiking, camping, and off-highway motor vehicle recreation. Kids were excited to receive stickers and DVDs with an OHV safety game. Hollister's interpreter provided interesting hands-on items

related to animals in parks, including a boar pelt. It was fun to see so many of Carnegie's regular visitors outside the park. Staff answered questions about park resource projects and the general plan process. The SVRA team contacted over 500 visitors in five hours.



OHV at Super Motocross event.

California State Parks Postcards

Pismo State Beach



Salt Sea State Recreation Area



Hungry Valley SVRA



News Releases

[January 30: Parks Forward Commission Report Calls for “Fundamental Transformation” of California State Parks -](#)

[January 29: Railroad Museum Announces Tuesday Train Rides on the Sacramento Southern Railroad](#)

News Clips

[January 30: LA Times: Panel urges transformation of California state parks system](#)

When visitors arrive at a state-run park these days, they may find disrepair after years of skipped maintenance and a crowd that doesn't reflect the state's growing diversity.

[January 30: The Sacramento Bee: Panel urges overhaul of California parks system](#)

A panel created by the Legislature to review state parks operations will report Friday that the Department of Parks and Recreation is underfunded and mired in outdated bureaucracy, and that the parks system is out of reach for many poor people in urban areas.

[January 30: San Jose Mercury News: California parks: New funding, better accountability needed to stop decline, new report says](#)

California's venerable state parks -- from sunny Los Angeles beaches to towering redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains -- are under "serious stress" and suffering from declining budgets, shorter hours, higher fees, a \$1.3 billion maintenance backlog and outdated technology.

[January 29: Capital Public Radio: Independent Commission Calls For Big Changes In State Parks Department](#)

An independent commission is calling for the “fundamental transformation” of California’s archaic State Parks system, including the creation of an outside organization to help raise money and coordinate volunteers.

[January 30: Contra Costa Times: East Bay's Park It: Mt. Diablo park's Castle Rocks closed to protect falcons](#)

Visitors to Castle Rock Regional Recreation Area and Diablo Foothills Regional Park in Walnut Creek should be aware that the Castle Rock formations themselves have been designated off-limits from Sunday through July 31 to protect nesting birds.

[January 28: Ventura County Star: Point Mugu State Park to reopen](#)

Much of Point Mugu State Park will reopen Thursday after a weeklong closure to repair storm damage.

[January 28: The Daily Journal: A pristine reserve: Elephant seal mating season heats up at Año Nuevo](#)

It's a sight unlike any other — thousands of elephant seals beached at Año Nuevo State Park to give birth, contend over potential mates and breed along the scenic coast

[January 27: Marin News: Miles of Shoreline Trail in San Rafael's China Camp gets revamp](#)

The divots are gone and erosion is under control along nearly half of the Shoreline Trail in China Camp State Park now that a cadre of volunteers and the California Conservation Corps workers have whipped it in shape over the last six months.

[January 27: BBC: Explore cinematic history in the Santa Monica Mountains](#)

When most visitors set out to explore movie and TV history around Los Angeles, they head for traffic-clogged Sunset Boulevard, the crowded [Hollywood Walk of Fame](#) or a sprawling studio lot offering behind-the-scenes tours.

[January 26: Monterey Herald: Monarchs on the move: Warm weather spurred butterfly activity](#)

Monarch Butterflies in the Monarch Grove Sanctuary in Pacific Grove on January 26, 2015. The last count of Monarchs has shown an increase in butterflies this year.

[January 24: Santa Cruz Sentinel: John Laird: A letter home from the state's natural resources chief](#)

This month I start my fifth year as California's Secretary for Natural Resources.

[January 24: The Eastsider LA: State park worker shares his love of the great outdoors with an urban audience](#)

Luis Rincon is surrounded by upturned mounds of earth. You wouldn't know it by looking at the scene, with views of downtown skyscrapers and warehouses, but this is a state park – [Los Angeles State Historic Park](#) just across the river from Lincoln Heights.

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Communications Request

If you have any stories or events at your park or unit that you would like us to profile in the Weekly Digest, or in other California State Park's Communications outlets (social media, News & Views, newsroom), please forward your entries to the department's Deputy Director of Public Affairs Vicky Waters at Vicky.Waters@parks.ca.gov.

Have a Wonderful and Safe Weekend!