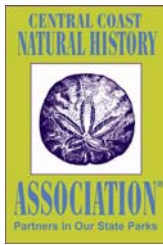




CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION



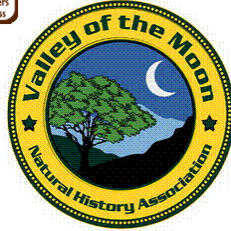
SMITH RIVER ALLIANCE



FORESTS FOREVER



Angel Island  
Immigration Station Foundation



Lake Perris  
Interpretive Association

TORREY PINES  
ASSOCIATION



Pasadena Audubon Society



Plumas Eureka State Park Association

June 22, 2009

Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Darrell Steinberg  
Senate President pro Tem  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Karen Bass  
Speaker of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Dennis Hollingsworth  
Senate Republican Leader  
State Capitol, Room 305  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Honorable Sam Blakeslee  
Assembly Republican Leader  
State Capitol, Room 3104  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SUPPORT State Park Access Pass and Keeping State Parks Open**

Dear Governor and Honorable Members,

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of California members represented by our organizations, we are writing to urge your support for keeping our state parks open and adopting the State Park Access Pass.

As you are aware, eliminating all General Fund support for our state park system will be devastating to the state – not simply in the loss of important natural, cultural and historic resources, but in the loss of critical revenues that are derived from park-related visitation. A recent report by California State University, Sacramento found that park users, on average, spent \$57.63 per visit. Across the system, this amounts to a more than \$4.2 billion in positive economic impacts – impacts that would be lost if state parks are closed. At a time when the state desperately needs to generate revenues for many other critical state services, it makes sense to keep state parks open and available for the public.

Closing state parks will cost the state dearly in other ways. Lack of public visitors to report incidents or suspicious activities, coupled with no regular ranger or park employee presence, will lead to increases in vandalism, poaching and other illegal activities. This will result in significant costs to deal with the ramifications of such activities. Without a regular presence in state parks, issues that could have otherwise been controlled may become catastrophes, such as fires, floods, or other calamities. California simply cannot afford to gamble on the myriad, disastrous consequences that will arise if parks are closed.

In these difficult economic times, we understand that there are no easy solutions to the budget problems facing the state. However, there are creative solutions that have strong fiscal benefits, policy merits, and public support.

The State Park Access Pass (SPAP) is such a measure.

The State Park Access Pass allows Californians to make a modest annual investment in their state parks, but receive a great return. By paying only \$15 annually on vehicle license fees, Californians will receive free day-use access to the state park system. This proposal provides a clear, tangible benefit that will more than pay for itself. Given that most day use fees are around \$6 or \$8 (or beaches in southern California are already \$10), after just a few visits to state parks, Californians will have gained the value of the pass and enjoyed their state parks.

Adopting the State Park Access Pass keeps the doors open to state parks for Californians and for the California economy. In addition to the overall economic impacts, instituting the State Park Access Pass provides a dedicated funding source for the state parks system that could replace General Fund support. By doing so, the state creates an annual General Fund savings of over \$143 million annually. This revenue can be redirected into other programs and services that are also facing dire cuts in this current budget crisis.

The State Park Access Pass provides an opportunity for legislative leaders to give the public a very real, desired benefit and still create General Fund savings to the state. We urge you to use your positions of leadership to support this proposal.

Sincerely,

Traci Verardo-Torres  
California State Parks Foundation

Mary Golden  
Central Coast Natural History  
Association

Jack Ellwanger  
Pelican Network

Traci Sheehan  
Planning & Conservation League

Carolyn Schoff  
Friends of Pio Pico & California  
League of Park Associations

James Absher, Ph.D.  
Lake Perris Interpretive  
Association

Dan Silver  
Endangered Habitats League

Pamela Horan  
California State Railroad Museum  
Foundation

Robert Lippert  
Friends of Columbia

Karen Wilson  
WildCare

Greg Bettencourt  
Central Coast Concerned  
Mountain Bikers

Geoffrey McQuilkin  
Mono Lake Committee

Gregory Hayes  
Valley of the Moon Natural  
History Association

Suzanne Badenhop  
Angel Island Association

Eric Amundson  
Mojave River Natural History  
Association

Neil Connolly  
Chino Hills State Park Interpretive  
Association

Eddie Wong  
Angel Island Immigration Station  
Foundation

Ron Brown  
Save Mount Diablo

Jim Dierberger  
Empire Mine Park Association

Jane H. Adams  
California Park & Recreation  
Society

Richard McDrew  
Mount Diablo Interpretive  
Association

Claire Schlotterbeck  
Hills for Everyone

Bettina Ring  
Bay Area Open Space Council

Rico Mastrodanado  
Trust for Public Land

Darla Guenzler  
CA Council of Land Trusts

Ray Mouton  
Anza-Borrego Foundation

Michele Luna  
Stewards of the Coast and  
Redwoods

Carolyn Jones  
Red Rock Canyon Interpretive  
Association

Carolyne Cathey  
Mendocino Area Parks  
Association

Steve Mata  
Fort Tejon Historical Association

Paul Metz  
Almaden Cycle Touring Club

Luke Breit  
Forests Forever

Lyn Nafzgar  
Plumas Eureka State Park  
Association

Karen Christensen  
Resource Conservation District of  
Santa Cruz County

Lyn Kalani  
Fort Ross Interpretive Association

Laura Garrett  
Pasadena Audubon Society

Natalie Sabelnik  
Russian American Cultural  
Foundation

Steve Ferry  
Santa Barbara Audubon Society

Scott Thomas  
Sea and Sage Audubon Society

Peter Brastow  
Nature in the City

Tim Gibbs  
National Parks Conservation  
Association

Peter T. Jensen  
Torrey Pines Association

Marguerite Sprague  
Sierra State Parks Foundation

Grant D. Werschull  
Smith River Alliance

Jim Metropulos  
Sierra Club California

cc: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Members of the California Legislature