

# CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS



## Willow Creek Docent Program

### Sonoma Coast State Beach Orientation Packet

A program developed in partnership with California State Parks,  
Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, and LandPaths.

# Willow Creek Docent Program



## California State Parks/Russian River Sector

25381 Steelhead Blvd, PO Box 123, Duncans Mills, CA 95430  
(707) 865-2391, (707) 865-2046 (FAX)



### *Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods*

P.O. Box 2, Duncans Mills, CA 95430  
(707) 869-9177, (707) 869-8252 (FAX)  
stewards@mcn.org  
www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org

### *LandPaths*

P.O. Box 4648, Santa Rosa, CA 95402  
(707) 544-7284, (707) 544-7242 (FAX)  
willowcreek@landpaths.org  
www.landpaths.org

This program is funded by the California Coastal Conservancy  
and the Dean Witter Foundation.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Volunteer Welcome**

### **PART I**

#### **The California State Park System and Volunteers**

- The California State Park System
- Role and Function of Volunteers in the State Park System
- Volunteerism Defined
- Volunteer Standards

### **PART II**

#### **Sonoma Coast State Beach**

- Willow Creek Docent Duty Statement
- State Park Rules and Regulations

### **PART III**

#### **Program Logistics**

### **PART IV**

#### **Emergency and Information Contacts**

- Willow Creek Contact List
- What to do in case of an Emergency

### **PART V**

#### **Willow Creek History**

### **PART VI**

#### **Interpretive Information**

- Why do People Participate in Interpretive Activities?
- How do People Learn?
- Interpretive Principles
- Six Principles of Interpretation - Freeman Tilden
- Some Interpretive Objectives
- Guided Walks and Talks
- Delivering a Walk
- Suggestions for Teaching Children

### **PART VII**

#### **Additional Resources**



---

Dear Volunteers and Docents,

We are very pleased to welcome you to our newly expanded Willow Creek Public Access, Interpretive, and Stewardship programs.

On May 6, 2005 3,373 acres were added to Sonoma Coast State Beach. An additional 515 acres are protect through two conservation easements perserving a total of nearly 3,900 acres of the Willow Creek property.

This landmark purchase was made possible by the diligence of many public agencies and in particular the Trust for Public Lands, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, the California Coastal Conservancy, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, and California State Parks.

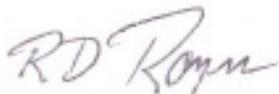
In addition, the California Coastal Conservancy and the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District have each granted funds to assist State Parks and LandPaths in planning, managing, and maintaining the new park over the first 5 years of operation.

LandPaths, a Santa Rosa based non-profit, will work with State Parks, community groups, neighbors, and other local organizations to provide public access to Willow Creek. LandPaths has been asked by State Parks to oversee the continuation of a day-use permit program. This program allows anyone who applies to obtain a permit to hike, bike or horseback ride on the property much as they would do any other State Park. In addition to the permit program, LandPaths is partnering with Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods to provide docent led hikes on many Saturdays throughout the year. These hikes give the public a chance to visit the property with an experienced docent and without a permit. Volunteers also play an essential role in public access at Willow Creek. LandPaths has many opportunities for the public to get involved as trail stewards, docents, or office volunteers.

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods has been working in partnership with State Parks since 1985 and will be expanding their Willow Creek Education program with school groups and the Citizen Action Team on the newly acquired park land. They will also help coordinate docent-led hikes as well as work with State Parks to develop new programs appropriate for the property in the future.

We welcome your feedback and are grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,



Rick Royer, District Volunteer Coordinator





PART I

THE CALIFORNIA STATE PARK SYSTEM  
AND VOLUNTEERS



## INTRODUCTION

The State Park concept is generally believed to have started in California in 1864 when President Abraham Lincoln signed an Act of Congress transferring the areas then known as the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove of Sierra Redwoods to California. In 1905, however, the lands were returned to the federal government.

Three years earlier, in 1902, the present California State Park System was begun with the establishment of the California Redwood Park at Big Basin in Santa Cruz County. It is only fitting that one of our state's proudest possessions - the magnificent coast redwoods - should have provided the inspiration for the creation of California's first permanent park.

Today, with nearly 300 units, California has the most diversified and one of the largest park systems in the nation. Represented in those units are outstanding examples of the state's unique scenery, including redwoods, deserts, historical units, scenic reserves, recreation areas and mountain parks for the public to enjoy.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation acquires, designs, develops, operates and maintains units of the State Park System. These activities are directed toward the accomplishment of eight principle objectives:

1. Secure and preserve elements of the State's out-standing landscape, cultural, and historical features.
2. Provide the facilities and resources which are required to fulfill the recreational demands of the people of California.
3. Provide a meaningful environment in which the people of California are given the opportunity to understand and appreciate the state's cultural, historical, and natural heritage.
4. Maintain and improve the quality of California's environment.
5. Prepare and maintain a statewide recreational plan that includes an analysis of the continuing need for recreational areas and facilities, and a determination of the levels of public and private responsibility required to meet those needs.
6. Encourage all levels of government and private enterprise throughout the state to participate in the planning, development, and operation of recreational facilities.
7. Meet the recreational demands of a highly accelerated, urban-centered population growth, through the acquisition, development, and operation of urban parks.
8. Encourage volunteer service in the State Park System.

## **ROLE AND FUNCTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE STATE PARK SYSTEM**

Volunteers are trained but unpaid employees of the State Park System who perform a valuable function by augmenting park staff in providing increased services for the visiting public. Volunteers perform a variety of tasks and assignments throughout the state Park System, including giving tours, assisting with fund raising, working in sales booths, and giving demonstrations.

Many of our volunteers are also members of Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, the cooperating association for the Russian River Sector. Membership in the Stewards is a personal choice and is not required in order to volunteer; however, many volunteers find a great deal of satisfaction in their involvement.

Occasionally there is some confusion between the division of the association and the State Parks' role. Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods is a support group for Sonoma Coast State Beach. They do not operate the park nor 'run' the interpretive programs; they support the mission of the State Park System by providing the additional services to the parks. So, as a volunteer, you are not working for the association but for the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

### **VOLUNTEERISM...defined**

1. You are an unpaid employee of the state, and will not receive pay or goods for work performed.
2. All of your service will be on a strictly voluntary basis, and you cannot be required by any of the park staff or anyone else to do any work which you do not wish to do.
3. You will be covered by Worker's Compensation Insurance in the event you are injured while working in the park. For this condition to be valid, you must first complete and submit to your district superintendent two forms: A Volunteer Record and Service Agreement (DPR 208), and an Oath of Allegiance (Form 689). You will be covered by the same policies as regular employees regarding liability.
4. A number of state and federal tax benefits are available for volunteers. You may be able to deduct some unreimbursed expenditures made while serving the department, such as automobile mileage, bus and cab fare, parking and toll fees, cost of meals and lodging if away overnight, travel expenses above per diem allowance, and expenditures for special uniforms or costumes.

## VOLUNTEER STANDARDS

State park volunteers are members of the park staff within the Russian River Sector. As a volunteer, you are expected to conduct yourself in a manner that reflects pride in yourself and in the State Park System. In order to operate the Interpretive program efficiently, all volunteer staff members must adhere to certain rules, procedures, and standards. The following information is intended to give you some guidance along these lines. Volunteers who display an unwillingness to conform to these standards will be asked to leave the program.

### 1. PUNCTUALITY

Plan to arrive at your committed shift location on time.

### 2. DEPENDABILITY

You will be asked to make a voluntary commitment of time so a reliable schedule can be followed. If an unforeseen emergency arises, notify the volunteer coordinator at once. If you were committed to a shift requiring a replacement, attempt to find a replacement from the alternate list and notify the volunteer coordinator of any changes. Remember, promptness and reliability are crucial! Teamwork and co-operation keep our volunteer program alive!

### 3. APPEARANCE

You must be neat and clean in appearance when acting in a public function. Wear the approved volunteer badge or vest when identifying yourself as a volunteer with the State Park System.

### 4. ATTITUDE

A pleasant and professional attitude is all-important. All visitors are guests, and it is a primary responsibility to see that their visit is pleasant, enjoyable, and safe. Sincere concern and friendly interest should characterize staff dealings with all visitors. The public expects and deserves always to be treated in a courteous and professional manner. If a visitor comes to you with a complaint, explain to her/him what action you can or cannot take, and report the matter promptly to a ranger or lifeguard. If a visitor asks you to identify yourself, do so.

Above all, never give false or misleading information to the public. If you do not know the answer, do not be afraid to say so, but try to be well-informed and helpful. Avoid any public criticism of the State Parks Department, staff, or policies when performing volunteer duties. If there is something you disagree with, discuss it with the volunteer coordinator or the supervising ranger.

When dealing with visitors to Sonoma Coast State Beach, please remember that:

- A park visitor is our guest, and should be treated as such.
- A park visitor is the most important person in any park.
- A park visitor is dependent on us for a better understanding of the philosophy of the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- A park visitor is not an interruption of our work, but one of the purposes of it.

- A park visitor does us a favor when visiting a park. Serving the visitor is the service we perform.
- A park visitor is not a cold statistic, but a flesh-and-blood human being with feelings and emotions like our own.
- A park visitor is someone who brings us his/her needs for the outdoors. It is our job to help satisfy those needs.
- A park visitor is deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment we can give.
- A park visitor expects good manners from all park employees.

Your pleasant and professional attitude must also extend to your fellow volunteers. You must have a willingness to work as a team member with other volunteers, as well as the park staff. Special privileges or separatism should not be expected and will not be tolerated.

## 5. BEHAVIOR

Immoral conduct, the illegal use of drugs, reporting to work with alcohol on the breath, being drunk or drinking alcohol on duty, or commission of a serious crime are all expressly prohibited, and will result in your being asked to leave the program.

It is your responsibility to treat your co-workers and park staff with courtesy and respect; to obey all lawful orders; to report to the park on time and ready to work; and to remain alert while on duty. It is not proper to listen to radios or cassettes, play cards, or perform other such activities in view of the public. Keep private visiting to a minimum when the public is present. Do not use public contacts as a soap box for your private views.

## 6. AUTHORITY

As a volunteer, you do not have peace officer authority. You should be familiar with park rules and regulations and, using your best judgment, you should caution park visitors if you witness a violation of these regulations. You are to report all violations of law or park rules that you witness to a ranger. You are, of course, expected to personally comply with all park rules and regulations.

## 7. CONFIDENTIALITY

Certain information of which you may become aware is confidential and must not be discussed outside the organization. Confidential information includes such things as crime and incidents, rescue and accident reports, disciplinary actions, employee grievances, budget proposals, and proposed policy changes. If you are questioned on these matters, politely but firmly refer the questioner to Park staff.

## 8. INTERPRETATION

You are required to read this manual in order to become familiar with the basic information. It is important that all volunteers know and adhere to a certain "standardization of facts" for a consistent interpretive program. A fact, stated as a fact, must be a fact! A story, legend, or conjecture may be included in your presentation, but it must be clearly identified as such. Admit "I don't know" rather

than relate misinformation. Don't change from interpreting facts to personal showboating. Let your visitor be your guide to the direction of your interpreting.

A satisfactory speaking voice and the ability to communicate well are basic requirements for effective interpretation. Park staff will assist you in your interpretive efforts. It is important that you possess the ability to accept constructive criticism for reasons of self-improvement. All volunteers are encouraged to repeat training sessions as a refresher, and to assist in sharing information and experiences as a volunteer.

We encourage volunteers to make use of any resources available to them to enhance their experience, including staff members, veteran volunteers, written materials and library information. The District Office and unit offices each have a variety of materials to offer.

Further, to enhance interpretation in the District, we would like to encourage all volunteers to become members in the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods. Membership is not required, but it is desired in order to share information and keep updated in current activities in the Russian River Sector.



## PART II

### Sonoma Coast State Beach





## Sonoma Coast State Beach Volunteer Program

- Title:** Willow Creek Docent
- Purpose:** To promote and interpret the natural and cultural history of the Willow Creek unit as part of Sonoma Coast State Beach for park visitors of all ages.
- Duties:** Docents may interpret the natural and cultural history of the Willow Creek unit within Sonoma Coast State Beach by conducting tours, staffing information and sales areas, and assisting with special programs and events.
- Skills/  
Qualifications:** Docents must be friendly, courteous and possess good communication skills. They must be willing to learn and share their knowledge of the parks resources with visitors. They must be willing to make a serious time commitment to attend training and meetings.
- Reports to:** District Interpretive Specialist/Designee
- Time:** Dates and hours to be arranged.
- Training:** Attend Willow Creek training provided by State Parks and demonstrate competence in leading interpretive activities.
- Benefits:** Learn about the natural and cultural history of the Willow Creek Watershed. Eligible for a District or a Statewide Volunteers in Parks Day Use Pass.

## STATE PARK RULES AND REGULATIONS

“THE BEST OF CALIFORNIA FOREVER” - with your help and cooperation. It is very important that the park visitor is given this message. Parks are for people to use and enjoy - not abuse and destroy. Without protection, the highly perishable values of the areas preserved in the California State Park System could soon be destroyed.

In many cases, park protection can be accomplished, by interpretation of park philosophy, policies, and rules and regulations. Enforcement becomes necessary if and when other means prove insufficient. Many people who misuse or abuse a park area or facility do so only through thoughtlessness or ignorance. It is usually sufficient to bring to their attention the permanent nature of the damage resulting from improper use.

Though some may resist compliance because of lack of understanding, it isn't often that a simple explanation of the reasons behind the rules will fail to obtain willing cooperation. However, there is a small percentage of visitors who, once they understand the “why”, will continue to resent or resist the regulations. They will require special attention and probable enforcement action.

As a volunteer, you may encounter situations where you must decide whether a visitor's actions merit only an explanation of a rule or more formal action. If enforcement action is indicated, or a public relations problem seems imminent, remember that State Park Rangers have peace officer authority. Do not threaten or try to bluff a visitor. Never hesitate to call upon a ranger for guidance or assistance in any situation which threatens to become a problem.

Every volunteer is charged with the responsibility of observing and recognizing any acts which may constitute potential hazards to the safety of people or property. Such acts should be reported promptly to the dispatch office or any ranger. This will permit effective action to eliminate the hazard. It will also help forestall or minimize any liability in case of an accident.

It is important that each volunteer read and become familiar with rules and regulations of the State Park System, specifically those that apply to Sonoma Coast State Beach. The following is a summary of some of the more commonly seen violations:

ANIMALS: No person is allowed to hunt, injure or otherwise disturb any animal within the park's boundaries. State Fish and Game regulations govern all activities from the average (mean) high tide area and beyond. Within this authority, tidepool creatures are protected from molestation and injury. Regarding marine mammals, the Federal government has also placed protective measures re-garding their safety.

COLLECTING: Living and non-living things are pro-ected within state parks, including all plant life and driftwood. Permits must be obtained from the district's superintendent for any exceptions.

GEOLOGICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES: Such features are protected from activities including removal, disturbance, injury, disfigurement, defacement, destruction or mutilation.

PETS: Animals must be kept leashed and under control at all times within a state park unit. Certain areas are closed to dogs on Sonoma Coast, includ-ing the bluffs on Bodega Head and the mouth of the Russian River, both south and north.

FIRES: Fires are allowed on the beaches, as long as they are controlled. Fires amongst the dunes or dune grasses are prohibited, as well as fires in an area with any type of vegetation.

FIREARMS & WEAPONS: Regardless of the intention of their possession, it is illegal to possess or carry any weapon capable of causing injury.

LITTER: Disposal of any item, other than in a proper trash receptacle, is prohibited.

CLOSED AREAS: Because of significant dangers to the public, certain areas may be closed to public access at the discretion of the district super-intendent. On Sonoma Coast, two locations have specifically lead to the deaths of a number of park visitors. Goat Rock proper is completely closed to any kind of hiking or climbing activity, and the rock outcropping at Duncan's Landing, known as Death Rock, is restricted to any type of entry.

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES: No vehicles are allowed off-road in a state park, and all vehicles must be registered through DMV for use on roads.

HORSES: Generally, horses may not be ridden on beaches. Certain areas are exceptions, including the beach south of the Bodega Dunes day use area.

CAMPING: Camping is allowed only in designated camp-grounds, which include the two state-operated campgrounds at Wright's Beach and Bodega Dunes.

CURFEW: Juveniles (under 18 years of age) may not be on Sonoma Coast State Beaches after sunset, un-less accompanied by their parent or guardian.

VEHICLE OPERATION: All rules of the road, as defined by the California Vehicle Code, apply in State Parks.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES: Any activity which is defined as criminal, through the California Penal Code, is illegal within a State Park unit. Other viola-tions which also apply include all alcohol-related regulations.

PUBLIC RESOURCES CODE: The Department shall protect the state park system from damage and preserve the peace therein. Any person who violates the rules and regulations established by the Department is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail for a time not to exceed 90 days, or by a fine not ex-ceeding \$500, or by both such fine and imprisonment.



## PART III

### Willow Creek Logistics



# Public Access at the Willow Creek Unit, Sonoma Coast State Beach

## Program details for volunteer docents

**Overview:** Because of tight budgets at State Parks, LandPaths and Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods are partnering to offer three ways for the public to access Willow Creek (“the property”):

1. Docent led hikes: Docent led hikes will be available on many Saturday’s throughout the year. Please contact LandPaths or Stewards for a current schedule.
2. State Parks Use Permit: LandPaths will oversee a permit program that will allow you to hike, bike and horseback ride on the property at your leisure as you would any other State Park. Permits are available to anyone who applies by contacting LandPaths (see details below).
3. Volunteering: Community participation is key to successful public access on the Willow Creek property. If you are interested in becoming a hike docent, helping to build trails, working as a volunteer patroller, or helping in one of our offices, please contact LandPaths or Stewards.

**Contacts:** For program questions or comments, please call or email:

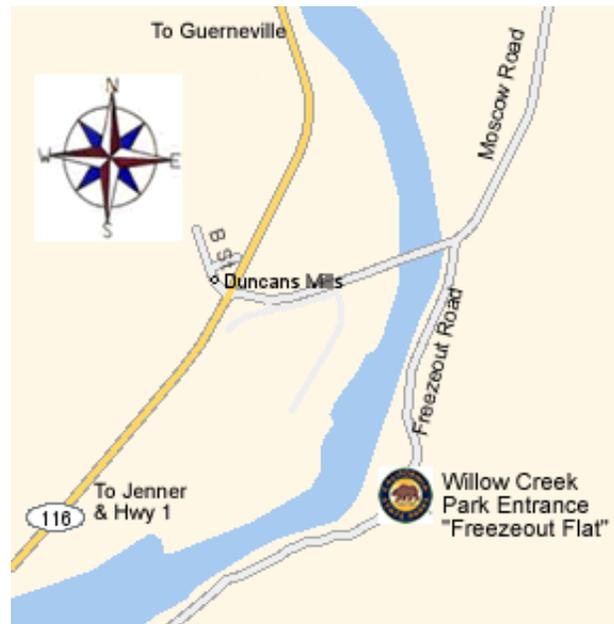
- LandPaths: 707.524.9318 or [willowcreek@landpaths.org](mailto:willowcreek@landpaths.org), [www.landpaths.org](http://www.landpaths.org)
- Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods: 707.869.9177 or [stewards@mcn.org](mailto:stewards@mcn.org), [www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org](http://www.stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org)

### Emergency Protocol – Refer to Part IV for more details.

- For life threatening emergency, call 911.
- For non-emergency that requires a ranger response, call State Parks dispatch 916.358.1300.
- NOTE: Cell phones will probably not work on the property. The nearest pay phone is located in Duncans Mills.

### Parking and access:

- Parking area and primary access will be at Freezeout Flat park entrance off Freezeout Road, just outside and southeast of the town of Duncans Mills off Moscow Road (see map).
- The parking area at Upper Willow Creek Road is now closed. Parking is not permitted at Willow Creek Road or Coleman Valley Road.
- All permitted users and docents will be provided with combination to open gate on right of driveway.
- Please close and lock gate and spin combo barrels each time you leave the property.
- Park cars on north side of lot, parallel to fence.
- Park horse trailers on south side of lot, allowing room for trailers to turn around.
- When parking area is full, overflow parking is available on Freezeout Road near gate. Please park parallel on east side of road only, do not block traffic.
- Only emergency and staff vehicles are allowed beyond the parking area.



### **State Parks Use-Permits**

- Permit program will be administered by LandPaths.
- Permits are available to anyone who wishes to apply and attend an orientation.
  - Contact LandPaths at: 707.524.9318 or willowcreek@landpaths.org and indicate you are interested in a Willow Creek permit.
  - Leave your full name, phone, mailing address, email address if you have one, and let us know how you heard about the program
  - We will then send you an application and program information by “snail mail.”
  - Fill out the application and send it back to us.
  - We’ll call or email you with an orientation schedule.
  - Attend a brief orientation where you will learn about gate combos, parking, etc. and will be issued a permit to use the property.
- Permits allow users to hike, bike, and horseback ride on the property subject to State Parks regulations.
- Permits must be renewed each year starting in 2007 by contacting LandPaths.
- Parking permit must be displayed in vehicle window (one pass per vehicle).
- Use permit must be carried at all times while on property (one per vehicle).
- Users are encouraged to submit a Willow Creek Outing Report after each visit. A copy will be provided during the orientation and is also available by contacting LandPaths.
- Permit is revocable at any time.

### **Maps**

- A map with trail description and park overview is available free of charge.

### **Trails**

- Islands in the Sky Vista Loop Trail is the best trail for views of the surrounding hills. You can see to the ocean on a clear day.
  - Approximately 3.5 mile loop; allow about 2-3 hours.
  - See map for detailed trail description.
- Respect all private property – fences, signs, and maps. Neighbors and private landowners are key to continued public access at Willow Creek.
- Some of the Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) property formerly open to public use has been retained by MRC. The current map reflects these boundary changes. Please respect private property.

### **Safety**

- Ticks are present on the property.
- Mountain lions may be present on the property.
- Snakes may be present on the property.
- Poison oak is present on the property.

### **Park Rules and Regulations**

- By participating in the public access opportunities at Willow Creek, users agree to adhere to all program and State Parks guidelines.
- During the winter season, use may be limited. Current conditions will be posted at the property and on partner websites.
- Dogs are not permitted on trails at Willow Creek (statewide State Parks policy).
- Hours of use are 8 am to sunset, daily.
- Fires, firearms, overnight camping & smoking strictly prohibited.
- No motor vehicles except in designated parking areas & access roads.
- Permit holders must display and carry permits on each visit.



## PART IV

### Emergency and Information Contacts





## WILLOW CREEK CONTACT LIST

### TO REPORT EMERGENCIES:

**Fire, Medical Aid & Life Threatening Situations**

**911**

### STATE PARK DISPATCH

**(916) 358-1300**

(If you need a Ranger immediately or for law enforcement issues)

#### LandPaths

Jonathan Glass  
Craig Anderson

Field Programs Coordinator  
Executive Director

#### Docent-led hikes, Public Access Permits

(707) 544.7284 X 1  
(707) 544.7284

outings@landpaths.org  
director@landpaths.org

#### Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods office:

Annie Cresswell  
Michele Luna

Stewards Executive Assistant  
Stewards Executive Director

#### Docent paperwork, Hikes, Education and CAT

(707) 869-9177  
(707) 869-9177

ace@mcn.org  
mluna@mcn.org

#### For State Park related questions:

Sonoma Coast General (Dunes Campground)  
(to check on campfire programs and camping questions)

(707) 875-3483

Sonoma Coast Supervising Ranger

(707) 875-3907

Ranger Jeff Mecchi Sonoma Coast Vol. Ranger

(707) 875-3483

jmecchi@parks.ca.gov

Lifeguard Brit Horn Sonoma Coast Lifeguard

(707) 875-3627

bhorn@parks.ca.gov

Denise Alexander Sonoma Coast Maintenance  
(For maintenance and supplies)

(707) 875-2473

denisea@mcn.org

#### Other Contacts:

Russian River Sector Office

(707) 865-2391

Rick Royer

District Volunteer Coordinator

(707) 865-3138

rroye@parks.ca.gov

# What to do in case of an Emergency

IN CASE OF ANY TYPE OF EMERGENCY, REPORT OF ACCIDENT,  
CRIME, FIRE, MISSING/LOST PERSONS OR REQUEST  
FOR FIRST AID/MEDICAL TREATMENT

**CALL 911.**

We have centralized dispatch through 911, which will contact a ranger by radio who will respond to whatever situation exists. This is the best and most effective way for you to help us to help others in case of emergencies.

In the case of a non-emergency call State Park Dispatch at **(916) 358-1300.**

They will be able to contact a Ranger and relay your message quickly.

As a volunteer you are not expected nor should you attempt to take any enforcement action. It is your job to interpret or gently remind folks. You may encounter situations where you must decide whether a visitor's actions merit only an explanation of a rule or more formal action. If enforcement action is indicated, or a public relations problem seems imminent, remember that State Park Rangers have peace officer authority. Do not threaten or try to bluff a visitor. Never hesitate to call upon a ranger for guidance or assistance in any situation which threatens to become a problem.

Every volunteer is charged with the responsibility of observing and recognizing any acts which may constitute potential hazards to the safety of people or property. Such acts should be reported promptly to the dispatch office or any ranger. This will permit effective action to eliminate the hazard. It will also help forestall or minimize any liability in case of an accident.



PART V

Willow Creek History





## PART VI

### Interpretive Information



## WHY DO PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES?

While the reasons vary considerably, some would undoubtedly include the following:

- To learn something they otherwise wouldn't.
- To be with someone who will communicate with them – you.
- To make the unfamiliar, the familiar.
- To have an encore to a previous interpretive experience that was good.
- To satisfy one's curiosity.
- To experience bodily exercise while learning.
- To learn how to learn more.
- To meet other park visitors in a relatively intimate setting.
- To find new insights, relationships, relevancies.
- To relax.
- To have an aesthetically pleasing experience.
- To be touched, moved, inspired.
- To experience provocation as well as instruction.
- To appreciate the uniqueness of the park site.
- To find someone else to amuse the kids for awhile.
- To have their pictures taken with the interpreter to show folks back home how they spent their vacation.
- To be amused.

## HOW DO PEOPLE LEARN?

- People learn better when they're actively involved in the learning process.
- People learn better when they're using as many senses as appropriate. It is generally recognized that people retain about:

10% of what they hear  
30% of what they read  
50% of what they see  
90% of what they do

- Each person has unique and valid ways of processing information and experience. New learning is built on a foundation of previous knowledge.
- People prefer to learn that which is of the most value to them at the present moment.
- That which people discover for themselves generates a special and vital excitement and satisfaction.
- Learning requires activity on the part of the listener.
- Friendly competition stimulates learning.
- Knowing the usefulness of the knowledge being acquired makes learning more effective.
- People learn best from first-hand experience.
- People learn best from an experience that is close to them in time and space.
- An organized presentation is more memorable than an unorganized one.
- Increasing the ways in which the same thing can be perceived helps people derive meanings.
- Questions can be effectively used to help visitors derive meanings.
- Giving visitors expectations at the beginning of an interpretive activity will focus attention and thus improve learning.
- Using a variety of approaches will enhance learning.
- The ways in which interpreters respond to people will affect their learning.

Interpreting for Park Visitors, by William J. Lewis

## INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES

**Interdependence**: Emphasize the interdependence between people and nature, between any one bit of nature and all the other bits and pieces, and between historic facts and current interpretations thereof. John Muir said, “When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.” This is called ecology. Historical events did not happen in isolation, but were linked to other events which the visitor may know about and relate to.

**Relate**: The interpreter must relate the subject (ecology, a particular plant, an historic event) to the personality or experience of the visitor. Therefore, interpreter and audience must inter-relate (connect their personalities and experiences) as soon as possible.

**Information**: Volunteers must have at least as good a command of the facts they are explaining as the average visitor. Paren-thetically, knowing the facts does not in itself insure good interpreting.

**Sensory Awareness**: Having visitors describe what they see, hear, taste, smell, sense, and feel emotionally about an item interprets better than just asking them to see it, hear it, or feel it. We absorb information about the environment through our senses. Determine sensory awareness by eliciting responses and participation.

**Values Awareness**: The values we hold influence how we treat the environment and each other. Why are trees important? What would happen if all the buildings along Sonoma Coast were allowed to decay away into oblivion? Searching for and discovering the answers promotes understanding.

**Involvement**: A Chinese proverb, quoted in the DPR Interpreter’s Handbook says, “What I hear I forget, what I see I remember, what I do I understand.” Get the visitor to join you in doing things, not just listening and looking.

**Historical Perspective**: Everything in the environment, including us, has come from somewhere and has changed over time. How do these changes relate to the visitor? History in proper chronological order has no perspective!

**Stewardship**: When we begin to understand the environment and its relationship to us, we develop a sense of proprietary caring and desire to take care of it. Stewardship is not for nature alone, but is equally applicable to interpreting history, i.e. humans taking care of or destroying humans.

**Children**: Interpretation addressed to children up to the age of twelve should not be a dilution of that appropriate for adults. It should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

**Enjoyment**: Having fun facilitates learning. This is a scientifically established fact! Have fun and be sure the visitors do, too!

## **SIX PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION**

**BY FREEMAN TILDEN**

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
2. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
6. Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to twelve years of age) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

## SOME INTERPRETIVE OBJECTIVES

An interpretive program should contribute to a visitor's experience in three major ways: it should provide essential information and orientation services; facilitate the physical interaction of the visitor with the environment; and, foster an intellectual involvement of the visitor through a meaningful revelation of park values.

Major objectives of a program are to:

1. Provide essential recreation-related information necessary for the safe and enjoyable utilization of park resources and facilities.
2. Interpret the various elements of the story in a way which will emphasize the composite nature of environments and the importance of natural complexity and diversity.
3. Introduce visitors to the concept of nature as a dynamic process producing real and measurable by-products of importance to man, and that man's well-being is inexplicably tied to the health of the environment.
4. Develop imaginative approaches to interpretation that will encourage visitors to spend some time reflecting about meanings, values, and relationships.
5. Build "bridges of understanding" over which visitors – particularly young people – may freely move between the natural environment represented by the park and the synthetic environments represented by the school, the city and community, and the home.

Among the things that interpretive facilities and services should be designed to do are the following:

- Introduce visitors to the major ecosystems that comprise the park, and to communicate an understanding of their components and how they function.
- To begin to develop an appreciation for the natural complexity, diversity, and interrelationships that exist within those systems.
- Convey the idea that the real fascination of a park often lies concealed in its subtleties, and that it is outside, away from the insulation of the automobile and other human artifacts that a virtually endless array of interesting and meaningful discoveries can be made.
- Suggest that to more fully experience a park one should try to expand his awareness of the environment by being more openly receptive to the sensory impressions continually emanating from it – the sights, the sounds, the odors, the textures: to try to respond with the uninhibited and sharpened sensitivities of the child.

Ideally, interpretation of essentially intangible concepts should be approached through personal contacts with skilled field interpreters. Realistically, this cannot be expected to happen for the large majority of visitors. Interpretive facilities and services should at least begin a process of provocation and personal revelation.

Too often, interpretation of natural history relates to the rare and extraordinary, or involves the visitor with esoteric detail, not within his personal experience. The visitors' interest may be sparked by the display of things, which in spite of their prevalence, he may have little real opportunity of seeing. Indeed, the inference that he may see the same things "in-the-wild" may be quite strong. A certain animal or other subject of interest may well be common in the park; but by habit, choice of habitat, or location, it may be infrequently observed even by trained personnel. Interpretation ought to focus instead on the commonplace and unspectacular. Further, it should suggest that there are many other ways to "observe" things than by seeing them. It should do more than identify and instruct. It should encourage reasoned inquiry about fundamental concepts, and foster informed concern about environmental quality.

The effectiveness of an interpretive program will, in large numbers, be determined by the extent to which it is:

- **Intriguing** – does it excite interest and curiosity? Does it capture the visitor's attention?
- **Imaginative** – does it communicate in innovative ways, and does it stimulate new and different ideas or concepts? Does it cause the visitor to look at familiar things in different ways?
- **Involving** – does it invite or encourage visitor participation? Does it draw the visitor into intimate contact with things so that he is more than a spectator?
- **Informative** – does it convey meaningful information or new knowledge about the park and the kinds of places and things it represents?
- **Influential** – does it effect significant changes in visitor attitudes, and generate new ones?

While the magnitude and primitive character of the park may be formidable barriers to the passage of most visitors, it is always accessible at the expense of a little time and individual effort. An interpretive program should be designed to slow the pace of the visitor to encourage them to get away from roads and cars and into more intimate physical contact with the environment. It should cause the visitor to consider his inalienability from the rhythmic ebb and flow of nature – his relation to and dependence on the complex biogeochemical cycles which comprise his world. Finally, interpretation must establish obvious ties between the park and the contemporary life and times of the visitor. Lacking relevance, interpretation will be little more than an empty gesture.

## GUIDED WALKS AND TOURS

1. Always start on time! Don't penalize those who arrive on time by forcing them to wait for late arrivals. Arrive 5 minutes before.
2. Take Charge. Your voice and physical demeanor can effectively establish the proper relationship between you and your group. It can also lead to utter chaos. Don't be authoritative, but also avoid the appearance of timidity. Relax, but assume your rightful role as leader of the group.
3. During your warm-up, you met them individually. Now greet the group. Introduce yourself by name. Ask them to call you by your first name. Tell them what the walk will include and how long it will take.
4. Encourage introductions within the group. Try to get things on a first-name basis.
5. Invite everyone to join the trip.
6. Move out briskly to your first stop. This, again, helps to set your position as leader of the group. Try to make your first stop in sight of the starting point. In this way, late-comers may see you and still join you.
7. Then...set a moderate pace. An old rule of thumb says "adjust your pace to that of the slowest member of your group". However, don't permit someone to deliberately drag their feet to the dismay of your group.
8. Stay ahead of your group. This refers primarily to between stops. Obviously, there are times when you will want to walk back into the midst of your group in order to share discoveries with them.
9. Assemble your group before speaking. Allow everyone the benefit of your interpretation.
10. Be conversational...but, be heard. Try to establish an air of informality and sharing. Certain conditions may require you to shout. But, try to avoid these situations. It is difficult to shout and not sound authoritative.
11. Repeat questions, so all can hear. Nothing is so frustrating as trying to put an answer into context without the benefit of the question.
12. End your talk with a conclusion.

## Example: Developing a Walk (In Brief)

### Inventory

Mushrooms  
Shade  
Redwood Orchid  
Spider Hole  
Douglas-fir  
Fir Needles  
Banana Slug

### Facts

Mushroom	The decomposers, a parasite or saprophyte, doesn't manufacture chlorophyll, this is the fruiting body of the plant (that lives underground).
Shade	There are tall trees all around, a north-facing slope so not much sun reaches here, things staying cool and moist.
Redwood Orchid	One of the few wildflowers here, a perennial with bulblike rootstock, some orchids use scent to attract pollinating insects (to insure survival of their species).
Spider hole	The Turret Spider is a relative of the Trapdoor Spider, with a web-lined hole more than a foot deep, the "turret" keeps rain water from rushing inside the hole.
Douglas-fir	Named after the Scottish botanist David Douglas who explored in North America in the early 1800's. Note the 3-pronged bract on the cone or "mouse tail". Squirrels eat immature cones like we eat corn-on-the-cob.
Fir Needles	Known as forest litter or duff, like your cooling garden mulch in varying states of decay, a protective seed bed.
Banana Slugs	Are shell-less snails, eat veggies, including mushrooms, are eaten by snakes, raccoons, shrews and even some birds.

### Outline

1. Shady here, little sun, few plants growing on the forest floor.
2. The Douglas-fir, towering trees, providing the shade.
3. Mushrooms need little sunlight as they help to decompose the vegetation.
4. A Banana Slug has been chewing on this mushroom.
5. Fallen Fir Needles make up most of the forest floor.
6. Cool and moist, a perfect seedbed for Redwood Orchids to germinate.
7. And this Spider Hole, the "turret" is lined with fir needles.

## A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING CHILDREN

1. Teach less, share more.

Children respond more to observation than just textbook explanations. When we share our own ideas and feelings, it encourages a child to explore, respectfully, his own feelings and perceptions.

2. Be receptive

This means listening, and being aware. It is one of the most richly rewarding attitudes you can cultivate while working with children. The new surroundings bring out a spontaneous enthusiasm in the child that you can skillfully direct toward learning.

3. Focus the child's attention without delay.

Involve everyone as much as you can, by asking questions and pointing out interesting sights and sounds.

4. Look and experience first; talk later.

Children have a marvelous capacity for absorbing themselves in whatever they're looking at. Children seldom forget a direct experience. Look. Ask questions. Guess. Have fun!!

5. A sense of joy should permeate the experience.

Whether in the form of gaiety or calm attentiveness. Children are naturally drawn to learning if you can keep the spirit of the occasion happy and enthusiastic. Remember that your own enthusiasm is contagious, and that it is perhaps your greatest asset as an interpreter.

From Sharing Nature with Children, by Joseph Cornell.

---

PART VII

Other Resources

---