



The CSPRA

# Wave

*Newsletter*

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 3

CALIFORNIA STATE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2015

"...to support, protect, and defend the integrity of State Parks for present and future generations."

## ***Año Nuevo Haven for Seals and Seabirds***





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**Cover: Northern Elephant Seals** by  
retired Ranger Frank Balthis

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



by **Victor Bjelajac**, CSPRA President

Our board and members have been keeping CSPRA members informed of CSPRA activities through CSPRAnet. I have been relying heavily on board members and committees to do the heavy lifting of late: membership outreach, Park Advocacy Day participation, analysis and support of park related legislation, support of resource protection in our parks, support of world and national park organizations, and planning for our upcoming training events. The Retirees' Rendezvous is planned for October at Big Sur. An opportunity exists to partner for an event in May and we are planning a symposium on partnerships later in 2016.

This all sounds vague and it is not done as a teaser but as a status update. Firm plans, dates and event announcements will be coming soon. We are finalizing dates, venue and focus for a joint training conference with California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) and California League of Parks Association (CALPA), probably in the Sacramento area. The co-mingling of CSPF, CSPRA and CALPA membership and boards fits well with the partnership models that we as California State Park staff and supporters are encouraged to explore. We are also in the early planning stages for a partnership-focused symposium in the San Francisco Bay Area, an event where park staff and supporters can learn about and discuss partnerships (broad focus) for

managing lands and resources within Parks based on working relationships with co-operating associations, federal, state and local governments, and other non-profit organizations. Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, Golden Gate National Recreation Area and other Tamalpais Lands Collaborative partners and supporters will work with CSPRA to host this symposium, sharing information about successful partnership models that have been implemented in some of our State Park districts. This symposium will be supported from philanthropic grant monies and CSPRA subsidies for members.

I encourage members to stay engaged and lend assistance, with ideas and supportive actions, to the Department's Transformation Team. We have the opportunity to assist in the development of land management models for the protection of the resources we are entrusted to preserve for future generations.

We are entering into a new paradigm to guide the management of our park lands, challenged to be more resourceful, continue to reach out to park users reflecting the rich cultural diversity of our state, and continue to engage youth and utilize the outreach tools that are reflective of new and instantaneous communication. We are challenged with staff and funding shortages, are challenged to be resourceful, to develop new methods and relationships for taking care of our parks, and we continue to rise to these realities.

I am proud of the level of professionalism exhibited within our ranks and through our management, and encourage you to preserve and protect our park resources and to be present and helpful in developing the system that will keep the importance and value of our park lands to the fore for many generations to come.





# Año Nuevo State Park

## Elephant Seals - Back from the Brink

by **Joseph Carr Ritchie**

Seasonal Interpreter/Docent Coordinator

*Editor's note: Año Nuevo, for many years a State Reserve, was enlarged and re-classified as a State Park that includes areas of Natural Preserve.*

The elephant seals of Año Nuevo have drawn visitors from all corners of the world for over thirty years. The seals themselves have also come a long way: back from the brink of extinction on a remnant rookery on a tiny Mexican island, not just from the latest forays of today's population far into the northern Pacific Ocean.

Northern Elephant Seals reach weights greater than 5,000 pounds/2,000 kg and lengths greater than 13 feet/4 m. That makes them more massive than most modern automobiles, and much of that weight consists of the fat needed to stay warm in the frigid waters where they spend most of their lives. In the 1800s, this fat was a high-quality raw material for machine oil, and the animals proved particularly easy to hunt. Hunting led to the apparent extinction of the Northern Elephant Seal early in the 20th century; but upon the discovery of a small population on Isla de Guadalupe off the coast of Baja California in 1922, the seals became a protected species under Mexican law. In less than a century, those few dozen animals expanded to a population of over 200,000 with multiple rookeries in both Baja and "Alta" California. Año Nuevo remains the best known of these rookeries for the moment, though shifting population dynamics could result in a new "capital" as their recovery begins a second century.

Now protected from hunting in



both the United States and Mexico, elephant seals have only sharks, orcas, and all the unpredictability of one of the planet's longest migrations to fear. They visit the shores of Año Nuevo twice per year: once for breeding and birthing in winter, and once for molting (the total shedding of skin) outside of winter. Any individual may stay on shore for a period of a few weeks or a few months, and the staggering of individuals' arrivals and departures ensures that we have some part of the population on shore virtually every day of the year. By far, these animals spend most of their time foraging in the ocean. Twice per year, they venture as far as the Aleutian Islands, diving deep for their food nearly the entire

time. However far a human visitor has traveled to visit Año Nuevo, you can bet any elephant seal they see has traveled farther!

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### NEW CSPRA OFFICE MANAGER



**Betsy Anderson**

## Año Nuevo Island, a Seabird Haven

by **Ryan Carle**  
*Oikonos Ecosystem  
Knowledge Project Mgr.*

Año Nuevo is a noisy place. Located about half a mile offshore, within Año Nuevo Natural Preserve on the central coast, the island seems a world away from the mainland, and the sounds and smells of wildlife dominate the senses. During the day California Sea Lions bark, Northern Elephant Seals snort, Western Gulls scream, and Brandt's Cormorants grunt. At night another set of sounds appears—the low mooring call of Rhinoceros Auklets, and a sound like an insane chirping cricket—the call of the Cassin's Auklet.

Rhinoceros and Cassin's Auklets, lesser-known relatives of the colorful Puffins, are seabirds that nest on Año Nuevo Island in burrows that they excavate with their sharp toes. Rhinoceros Auklets may also dig using their "rhino" horn—this unique namesake horn grows at the base of their bill during the breeding season. Both species are active above ground only under cover of darkness. Rhinoceros Auklets are about the size of a small chicken and nest in significant numbers on only three islands in California—the Farallones, Castle Rock (near Crescent City), and Año Nuevo Island. Cassin's Auklets are about the size of a blackbird, and nest on the same islands in California as Rhinoceros Auklets, and also on the Channel Islands in Southern California. The secretive nature of Auklets makes them hard to see from shore, but these seabirds are a unique feature of our California coast and an indicator of the ecological health and wildness of our coastal parks.



*Rhinoceros Auklet adult at nesting colony on Año Nuevo Island*

In 2014, about 300 Rhinoceros Auklets and 130 Cassin's Auklets nested on Año Nuevo Island. Rhinoceros Auklets went extinct as a breeding species in California in the 1800s due to disturbance associated with lighthouse operations on their nesting islands. Rhinoceros Auklets naturally colonized Año Nuevo Island in the 1980s, after non-native rabbits were removed—the rabbits had out-competed the Auklets for burrow space. All seemed well for the new Auklet colony, but the specter of the rabbits remained—they had contributed to the degradation of the native plant community at Año Nuevo Island by eating most of the native plants. The legacy of the rabbits, habitat manipulations during the lighthouse operation days, and a rapidly growing number of plant-trampling California sea lions visiting the island all combined to cause a virtually complete loss of Año Nuevo Island's native vegetation in the 1990s.

This was problematic for the bur-

row-nesting Auklets. The soil at Año Nuevo Island is sandy, and without plants to hold it together, erosion became a major issue. Burrows started collapsing, sometimes killing chicks or adults, and nesting habitat was literally blowing away on the wind. As one of only three significant Rhinoceros Auklet breeding colonies in California (and with no other predator-free island available), the loss of the colony at Año Nuevo would have been a major blow to the species' recovery in the state. In the early 1990s monitoring of the Auklets and their habitat began, in large part due to encouragement and support from Supervising Ranger **Gary Strachan** (Gary was the supervising ranger at Año Nuevo for 25 years). In the late 2000s, after nearly two-decades of monitoring the island's seabirds, State Parks, together with scientists at the non-profits Oikonos Ecosystem Knowledge and Point Blue Conservation Science, knew that something needed to be done to save the colony. Oikonos, a non-profit that works



# Año Nuevo State Park



worldwide to research and conserve imperiled ecosystems, worked with Año Nuevo State Park staff and a diverse set of other partners to devise a restoration plan, which was implemented in 2010. The project was paid for with funds allotted for restoring damages from the S.S. Jacob Luckenbach oil spill. The S.S. Luckenbach is a ship that sunk off Half Moon Bay in the 1950s and periodically spewed oil until the 1990s. The spills killed thousands of seabirds, including Rhinoceros Auklets and Cassin's Auklets from Año Nuevo Island.

Auklet nesting habitat on the island was protected from sea lion trampling by installing a "habitat ridge" structure around the breeding colony that excludes sea lions from the core Auklet nesting area (about 1 acre of the 14 acre island). Art students from the California College of the Arts helped design clay nest "modules" that mimic natural auklet burrows—specialized bird houses installed underground that provide Auklets with safe nest sites. To address the fundamental problem—erosion—Oikonos, State Parks, and partners installed tens of thousands of native plants, which slow erosion with extensive root networks. The drought-tolerant native plants responded well to the high levels of nutrients on the island (think bird guano), and native salt grass and American dune grass now hold the

## *Old lighthouse station, Año Nuevo Island*

soil together throughout the breeding colony. Burrow erosion has dropped dramatically since the restoration began, and the Auklets' future is looking more secure.

Other benefits came from the restoration project. Cassin's Auklets had colonized the island in the 1990s and small numbers had nested there ever since. Since 2010, however, the population has grown rapidly, and doubled from around 50 birds in 2011 to over 130 birds in 2014. The smaller Cassin's Auklets have been utilizing the ceramic nest modules and moving into areas of the island with tall grass that provides protective cover.

Western Gulls have also enjoyed the new vegetation, using it for nesting material and protective cover for their vulnerable chicks.

The new vegetation has already successfully withstood the tests of severe weather, unusual numbers of roosting pelicans last fall, and our current extreme drought. Oikonos continues to monitor the restoration's success and seabird populations on the island, and continues to plant small numbers of native plants each fall. When you're out at Año Nuevo State Park enjoying the elephant seals, make sure to appreciate the island as well—it's a jewel of our central coast, a rare safe haven for seals and seabirds alike.



*Ryan Carle and Jessie Beck monitoring vegetation in the restored area*

# Año Nuevo State Park

## *Volunteering for Wildlife*

by **Rosanna Petralia**

*Seasonal Interpreter/Docent Coordinator*

Año Nuevo State Park is known for one of the largest mainland colonies of Northern Elephant Seals and has one of the oldest and largest docent programs within California State Parks. Docents lead guided walks to the elephant seal rookery during the seals' winter breeding season, and act as roving naturalists during other seasons. Año Nuevo Docents greatly contribute to the inspiration, education and enjoyment of park visitors.

The elephant seal guided walks began in 1975 and have acquired great popularity, creating an on-going need for enthusiastic and well-informed volunteer guides. Today, 40 years later, the elephant seal tours continue with a team of 180 active volunteers in their bright red jackets. Guided walks have expanded into other subjects as well, including geology and history walks.

Docent training is extensive, held over 12 full Sundays, with a new class of 25 participants. Docents are trained to interpret the natural and cultural history of Año Nuevo through state-of-the-art lectures and field trips led by park staff and field researchers. The commitment is to work 2 days a month during the seal breeding season, and 1 day a month the rest of the year. Docents provide an invaluable service in monitoring the viewing of the park's marine megafauna while at the same time educating visitors about wildlife conservation.

State Park Interpreter I **Mike Merritt** and two Seasonal Park Interpreters and Docent Coordinators, **Rosanna Petralia** (pictured with puppet) and **Joseph Ritchie**, run the program. The park is looking for prospective docents to enroll in the comprehensive training starting Sunday, September 20th. The main requirements are a willingness to learn, time commitment for a 12-week

training course, and ability to hike for 3 to 5 miles in all kinds of terrain and weather.

Therefore, if you enjoy nature and being outdoors, if you feel a strong sense of giving to the community, **p r o m o t i n g** conservation and stewardship, and sharing knowledge with others, you might be a good fit in becoming a docent at Año Nuevo State Park! Visit the park website to know more and fill out an application ([http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=25259](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25259)) or call at the Año Nuevo Docent Coordination Office (650-879-2032).



*Rosanna Petralia and elephant seal friend.*



*Docent Ed Laming discusses marine mammals with a park visitor.  
photo by Mike Merritt*



# Año Nuevo State Park

## Accessibility at Año

by **Janet Carle**  
with **Portia Halbert**

Thousands of visitors come each year to Año Nuevo State Park to view the magnificent elephant seal colony. The main access is on foot via the Point Trail, to the viewing area. During the winter which sees the highest use, visitors had been walking in mud and skirting puddles to access the dunes where they could see the seals. To fix this issue the park is in the midst of a major 3 year long rehabilitation project that will remove barriers, improve the route, build retaining walls, and provide a scenic lake overlook and picnic area. The trail will also be shaped and filled in for improved drainage. When the project is completed in the fall of 2016, the public will enjoy an enhanced, safer and more enjoyable and accessible walk out to the seal viewing area.

It took five years of planning and required six permits to allow the work to move forward. To protect sensitive species, some interesting challenges arise working in this area. When trucks move, a bicycle must go in front looking out for the endangered San Francisco garter snakes and threatened California red-legged frogs in the roads. The entire project site was fenced to keep the snakes and other animals from wandering into the work zone.

The CCC crew from the Monterey Bay Center is actively involved in the project, along with State Parks Roads and Trails staff and Environmental Scientist **Portia Halbert**.



Environmental Scientist **Portia Halbert** and Roads and Trails Supervisor **Chris Pereira** measure the distance for a new bridge. Equipment Operators **Cecil Booker** and **Ethan Harmon** are at work in the background.



CCC Crew members (L to R) **Martin Lobato**, **Jerry Leon** and **Paul Gannon** at work on the 1 1/2 mile accessibility project.

*A boardwalk provides wheelchair access to the beach. Park visitor **Al Broughton** appreciated the chance to get close to the views of elephant seals.*



# International Ranger Federation

## WORLD CONGRESS 2016

### *Fundraising for Mongolian Rangers to Attend*



by Lynn Rhodes

In anticipation of the 2016 World Ranger Congress of the International Ranger Federation in Colorado, we are raising funds to bring over 1 or 2 rangers from California State Parks' only formal Sister Park, the Ikh Nart Nature Reserve in Mongolia, to participate in the conference.

We anticipate the cost per Mongolian Ranger to attend is approximately \$3,000 including registration, travel, lodging and meals at the conference. We are partnering with the Anza Borrego Foundation to receive donations. There are currently two grant proposals being submitted with the Trust for Mutual Understanding to assist with these costs and we hope to hire the services of a translator for the Rangers to be able to fully participate. Our fund raising goal is \$8,000.

CSPRA formally endorsed our Sister Park several years ago and provided a donation to cover a Mongolian Ranger's salary for one year (\$2,500).

Donations in support of our Mongolian Sister Park Rangers to attend the World Ranger Congress in 2016 can

*Mongolian Rangers with State Park friends **Lynn Rhodes, Mike Wells, Steve Bier and Mark Jorgensen***

be made online at <http://theabf.org>. Or mail a check to: The Anza Borrego Foundation, PO Box 2001, Borrego Springs, CA 92004

Follow the steps for tax deductible donations and in the comment section (or with a notation on your check) please put "IKH NART Fund for WRC."

#### CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

The World Ranger Congress Organizing Committee is soliciting proposals for oral presentations and poster displays to be given during the Congress, May 21-27, 2016 in Estes Park, Colorado. Proposals are due by Sept. 15.

The Congress theme is **Connecting Parks, Rangers, and Communities**. Presentations on this theme or on any issue that is important to the protection of parks, wildlife, and cultural sites around the world are welcome.

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There are still a few spaces available for CSPRA members to attend the World Congress in May, 2016. Please contact **Mike Lynch** if you are interested: [mikelynch@cspira.com](mailto:mikelynch@cspira.com)  
More information at:  
[www.worldrangercongressusa.com](http://www.worldrangercongressusa.com)



**Anandpurew Tumurbaatar**  
Head Ranger  
Ikh Nart Nature Reserve



# 23rd Annual Retirees' Rendezvous October at Pfeiffer-Big Sur

by Jeff Price



Since its inception 1992, the Retiree's Rendezvous has been dedicated to enjoying the camaraderie of old and new friends in retirement. It is an informal gathering of friends and acquaintances with a common tie through State Parks as Active or Retired Employees, family and friends.

Once again, there is NO registration or fee required. Just show up! The Strickler Road Kill Grille is on Tuesday evening, Oct. 6, and a grand potluck dinner on Wednesday Oct. 7. A full breakfast will be served on Wednesday morning only, but we may have coffee, juice and pastries on Tuesday morning. One of the highlights will be "Dining on the Big Sur Coast." We hope to informally schedule and travel for lunch on both Tuesday 10/6 and Wednesday 10/7, with staggered arrivals and separate checks. According to Ann Meneguzzi, who is guiding this activity, we will splurge at two famous restaurants in the area, Nepenthe and The River Inn. Details will be provided at the event.

Our block of \$92 cabins for this event have all been reserved. As of late July there were still a few rooms at the standard \$207 rate. You might check back, as sometimes rooms come available last minute, or find a reasonable room nearby. There is still plenty of room in the large group area parking lot for pickup truck campers, trailers and RVs. We still have a few tent sites available in the main campground. Contact Jeff Price (jeff@cspira.com) to reserve a tent space. RV and tent camping are available starting Monday through Thursday nights, so arrive when it suits your needs.

The 2015 Retirees Rendezvous at Pfeiffer Big Sur will run from Monday 10/5 early arrivals through Friday morning 10/9, as latest campground departure. Most activities are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday. Also, the quarterly CSPRA Board meeting will be held early Thursday morning 10/8.

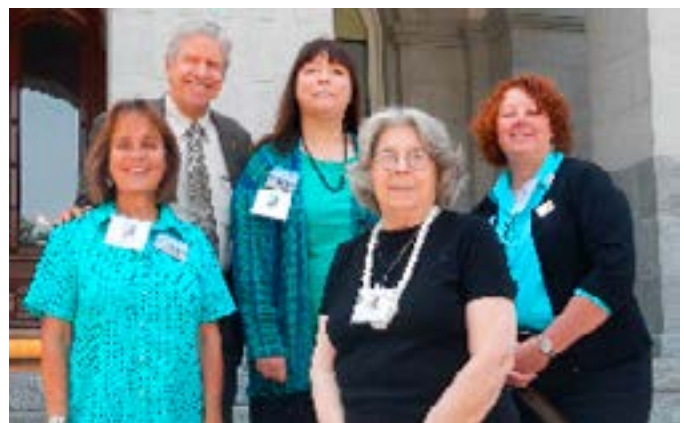
If you have questions, write to Jeff, Mike (mikelynych@cspira.com) or Ann (ann@cspira.com). Hope to see many of you there!



*Mike Lynch and Rodi Lee will do a presentation at the Rendezvous based on the making of their upcoming book, California State Parks in Vintage Postcards A-Z.*

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## Park Advocacy Day



*Park Advocacy Day was held in Sacramento in May. CSPRA members L to R Nina Gordon, John Mott, Donna Pozzi, Ann Meneguzzi and Angy Nowicki attended, meeting with legislators and encouraging their support on park issues. Nina, John and Angy are CSPRA Past Presidents and Donna and Ann are current Board members.*

**PROMOTING PROFESSIONALISM IN  
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

**Membership Mail to: CSPRA,**  
**Mike Lynch, P.O. Box 3212,**  
**Bowman, CA 95604-3212. Or join**  
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*For all except "Active" or "Active*  
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*include check for 1 year's dues.*

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Membership type (Circle one):

Active \$10/month

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Supporting \$36/year

Organization \$50/year

Benefactor \$1,000/life

Check one: I prefer getting the WAVE  
\_\_\_\_\_ as a PDF file by email;  
\_\_\_\_\_ by postal mail (hard copy)

May we print your name as a new member in  
the WAVE? \_\_\_\_\_ I hereby authorize  
the State Controller to deduct from my salary  
and transmit as designated an amount for  
membership dues in the California State Park  
Rangers Association. This authorization will  
remain in effect until cancelled by myself or  
by the organization. I certify I am a member  
of the above organization and understand that  
termination of my membership will cancel all  
deductions made under this organization.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## A WAVE Goodbye

**JACK SCHLOTTER 1926- 2015**



Jack passed away recently at the age of 88. Born in the East Bay Area, he joined the US Navy at age 17 and served on a troop transport ship. He later re-joined the Navy for the Korean War on a destroyer escort. After graduating with a Master's degree from Cal Poly, he got his first job with State Parks as a seasonal naturalist at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park. He worked for Parks for 31 years, serving at 8 parks and 4 District Headquarters in a variety of positions, including District Interpretive Specialist and Area Manager. He retired in 1987 as the Cascade District Superintendent. Jack was instrumental in forming the Humboldt County Timber Heritage Society and the Weaverville Joss House Association. He was active in the Lions Club, Boy Scouts and amateur radio operation, as well as being a driving and first aide instructor. Jack is survived by his wife Virginia and their 5 children.

**GEORGE STAMMERJOHAN**

**1939- 2015**

George passed away in April. A native Californian, he served in the 251st Infantry Division "Tropic Lightning" during the 1960s. After graduating with his Master's degree from CSU Sacramento, George began work for State Parks in the Cultural Heritage Division. Always a history buff, George and other employees began the Living History program at Sacramento's Sutter's Fort in the 1980s. George portrayed Captain John Sutter for the next 17 years and inspired many others to join in creating historical magic for park visitors by recreating the days of the Bear Flag Rebellion. George is survived by his wife Judy.



## Director's Awards 2014



*Above: The Pfeiffer-Big Sur Campfire Center Renovation team with the Ingenuity Award. L to R: Pat Clark Gray, Sara Arnett, Christopher Fridrich and Mike Zuccaro.*

*Left: Mike Lynch receives the Hill Award from Dir. Lisa Mangat for his work on the 150th Celebration.*





## Mixed Metaphors and Malaprops



by Jeff Price  
Retired

Here is another mixed up batch of overheard slips of the tongue and misfires of the brain. Sometimes people get so excited they mix comparisons and come up with some very funny concoctions. Feel free to send along any you hear: [malaprops@cspra.com](mailto:malaprops@cspra.com)

### Ditch that effort?

*The college championship team will be the one who wins the battle of the trenches.*

### Volcanic beverage

*... cookies and hot cinder were served in the Empire Cottage Kitchen.*

### Potāto or Potāto

*Watch what you are doing, don't get caught by the old "banana in the tailpipe" trick.*

### Like herding cattle, maybe?

*The facts are now so prodded apart that no one is sure of the truth.*

### Makes no sense at all . . .

*It is easy to find a needle in a haystack when every straw is computerized.*

## Are You Retiring?

by Jeff Price, Membership Secretary

CSPRA members are eligible to receive a commemorative plaque acknowledging their years of state service and membership at retirement. If you or a co-worker will be retiring soon, please contact Membership Services coordinator, **Betsy Anderson** with the date of plaque presentation, where and to whom the plaque should be shipped, along with the member's full name and years of state service at [betsy@cspra.com](mailto:betsy@cspra.com). She can help retirees coordinate switching between the State Controller and CalPERS after retirement.

*Above: Lanny Waggoner receives his plaque from Mike Whitehead in 1998.*



### Attention retired members!

Want to keep in touch after you leave DPR? Join GrayBears email ListServ. FREE and EASY  
[graybears@cspra.com](mailto:graybears@cspra.com)

## GET CONNECTED

### CSPRA Online

Catch up on CSPRA activities  
Contact Board or Officers  
catch the *WAVE*  
[www.cspra.com](http://www.cspra.com)

### Find us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/CSPRA](http://www.facebook.com/CSPRA)

## Are you traveling soon?

Want to find out what's going on in the State Parks around you? Visit the events page on the California State Parks website to find out what's happening in parks around the state:  
[www.parks.ca.gov/events](http://www.parks.ca.gov/events)



## Super Trivia Book New Updated and Expanded Version in the Works

In 1985, CSPRA published the original *Super Trivia about the California State Park System* by Jim Woodward. The CSPRA Board will publish an updated, revised and expanded version. Dave Van Cleve has volunteered to do the work. Have any trivia information you think might be good for *Super Trivia II*? Send it to **Dave Van Cleve** at [davidvancleve@yahoo.com](mailto:davidvancleve@yahoo.com).



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## CALIFORNIA STATE PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION

**Mission Statement:** The California State Park Rangers Association is an organization of park professionals dedicated to advancement of the highest principles of public service, and established to support, protect, and defend the integrity of State Parks for present and future generations.

*Founded 1964*