



# News Release

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Contact: John Arnold

Phone: (916) 653-7090

*Spectacular views and hidden features*

## Discover State Parks in the Big Sur Area

Monterey County's Big Sur area is home to California State Parks that offer some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. There are rocky cliffs with pounding surf below, a winding trail that leads to a waterfall, long stretches of sand for beachcombers – and more. Many of these parks have special features that visitors may not discover on their own.

“The Big Sur coast is one of the most beautiful coastal areas in the world. The parks here provide a variety of recreational activities, including hiking, swimming, camping, wildlife watching, as well as spectacular scenery and varied plant communities in this unique area. Spend some extra time here and you will find a number of hidden treasures visitors may overlook,” said Supervising Ranger Linda Rath.

Here are some tips on making the most of your visit to state parks in the area.

**Point Sur State Historic Park**, 19 miles south of Monterey off Highway 1, is home of the Point Sur Light Station, located 361 feet above the surf on a large rock formation made of Franciscan greenstone. The light station was lit on August 1, 1889 and has remained in continuous operation. Lighthouse keepers and their families lived at the site from 1889 until 1974 when the lighthouse was automated. Today the lightstation buildings are being restored through the efforts of park staff, state park volunteers and the non-profit Central Coast Lighthouse Keepers.

The light station is open to the public only through docent-led tours. Three hour walking tours of the facilities are available on weekends year-round and seasonally on Wednesdays. For tour information call the park at (831) 625-4419. The park web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=565](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=565)

Located 21 miles south of Carmel on Highway 1, **Andrew Molera State Park** is still relatively undeveloped and offers visitors great hiking, fishing and beachcombing. The park is named for the brother of Frances Molera who sold the property to the Nature Conservancy in 1968 to become a state park. Prior to that, the Moleras operated the property as a working ranch.

Miles of trails in the park wind through meadows, beaches and hilltops. Two of the park's lesser known features are the Spring Trail and purple sand. The trail is reached by the Bluff Trail and is accessible only when the footbridges are in, from June 15 to the end of October. (They're removed for the steelhead run.) It's a bit of a hike, approximately 2.7 miles from the parking area, but well worth it. The short trail follows a spring that ends on large rocks at the base of a steep canyon, then on to a small sandy beach between two rocky points. When it's not washed away by the surf, purple sand made up of a form of garnet called Almandite covers this remote, seldom visited beach.

The park has a primitive walk-in trail camp, popular with hikers and bikers, located approximately one third mile from the parking area. Campsites can accommodate up to four people and have a picnic table and fire ring. Water in the park is currently nonpotable, so visitors are advised to bring drinking water. The park phone number is (831) 667-2315 and web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=582](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=582)

**Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park**, 26 miles south of Carmel on Highway 1, features redwoods, conifers, oaks, sycamores, cottonwoods, maples, alders and willows, plus open meadows. Wildlife includes black-tail deer, gray squirrels, raccoons, skunks, and birds, such as water ouzels and belted kingfishers. Hikers can enjoy the many scenic trails, including a self-guided nature trail. Some campsites are along the Big Sur River. The park is named after Michael and Barbara Pfeiffer who homesteaded the property and later sold it to the state for a park.

Big Sur Lodge is located in the park .The lodge has 61 guest rooms, a conference center, cafe, and a grocery store. Meeting rooms have space for groups of 10 to 125. Other rooms are available for smaller meetings and workshops, some with fireplaces and kitchens.

The park contains the Proboscis Grove, a small redwood grove directly across from the Big Sur Lodge restaurant next to the Big Sur River. The site is one of the most spectacular small groves of giant redwoods in the park. One of the large trees in the grove is called the Proboscis Tree, named for a partial limb that juts out of the side of the tree and looks like a nose.

The park phone number is (831) 667-2315 and the web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=570](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=570)

**Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park** is 37 miles south of Carmel on Highway 1. The park is named for Julia Pfeiffer Burns, a well respected Big Sur pioneer woman and sister of Michael Pfeiffer. The park stretches from the Big Sur coastline into nearby 3,000-foot ridges, featuring redwood, tan oak, madrone, chaparral, and the 80-foot McWay Falls, dropping from granite cliffs into the ocean from the Overlook Trail. A panoramic view of the ocean and miles of rugged coastline is available from the higher elevations along the trails east of Highway 1. The park offers whale watching (in the winter) and an underwater area for scuba diving at Partington Cove. Dive permits are required.

Few visitors to the park visit another easily accessible waterfall located up the redwood canyon east of the parking lot. The waterfall can be found by taking the Ewoldsen Trail to the Canyon Trail to its end, approximately .34 miles from parking lot. A wooden bench is located at the base of the waterfall where visitors can relax and enjoy the view.

The park phone number is (831) 667-2315 and the web page is

[http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=578](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=578)

**Garrapata State Park**, 6.7 miles south of Rio Road in Carmel on Highway 1, has two miles of beach front, with coastal hiking and a 50-foot climb to a view of the Pacific Ocean. The park offers diverse coastal vegetation with trails running from ocean beaches into redwood groves. The park also features outstanding coastal headlands at Soberanes Point, which is a fairly easy, short walk from Highway 1. The hike leads to great views of the coast. Most visitors hike on the east side of the highway. Garrapata means “tick” in Spanish and the park is named for the abundance of ticks found here. Visitors are advised to be careful while hiking in the area.

Sea lions, harbor seals and sea otters frequent the coastal waters near the park and California gray whales pass close by during their yearly winter migration.

The park phone number is (831) 624-4909 and the web page is [http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page\\_id=579](http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page_id=579)

For more information about California State Parks, visit us at [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

To make a reservation or check availability or see campsite locations visit ReserveAmerica at

<http://ra2.reserveamerica.com/campgroundDirectoryList.do?agency=ca>

The reservation system will be closed for upgrades November 3 – 15, so make your reservations now.

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