

Now's the time to visit:

Wet Winter Strengthens Cascading Waterfalls in California State Parks

Now is a great time to see waterfalls in California State Parks.

State Park officials advise it's time to visit one or more of the 24 waterfalls in or near 16 of California's State Parks. Those falls range in size from a mere ten feet to more than 600 feet, from small streams of water to massive currents of more than 100 million gallons a day.

California State Parks features an incredible variety of waterfalls from one end of the state to the other. Some can be found by a short walk—and others can take a lengthy hike.

The highest waterfall is Feather Falls at Lake Oroville State Recreation Area in Butte County. It is the nation's 6th highest waterfall at more than 640 feet. One of the smallest is Kent Canyon Falls at Mount Tamalpais State Park in Marin County. It has a vertical drop of just 10 feet. The waterfall that pushes out more than 100 million gallons per day is McArthur-Burney Falls in Shasta County, which former President Teddy Roosevelt called the 8th wonder of the world.

It's always a good idea to call before you visit, because conditions can change.

Here's a sample of what visitors can discover:

Auburn State Recreation Area, (EL DORADO and PLACER COUNTIES) one mile south of Auburn on Highway 49, features Codfish Falls on a fairly easy hike along the north fork of the American River. Following the river approximately 1.2 miles, the hike takes visitors to Codfish Creek and upstream to the falls, a cascade of about 100 feet. The trail head is located off Ponderosa Road that runs between the towns of Weimar and Foresthill.

For more information, contact the park office at (530) 885-4527.

Big Basin Redwoods State Park, (SANTA CRUZ and SAN MATEO COUNTIES) 23 miles north of Santa Cruz, has several water falls. The first set of waterfalls is the most popular in the park. The group consists of Berry Creek, Silver, Cascade, and Golden Falls. The falls can be accessed by taking the Sunset/Skyline to the Sea Trail loop. The loop is almost 12 miles/six hours in its entirety and can be

strenuous in areas. Hikers should be warned that they will need water, snacks, and a park map. Also, hikers should start early in the day to ensure that they will have enough daylight to safely complete the hike.

The best time of the year is spring. After all of the winter rains, the falls are flowing at their peak. Also, by spring time the Big Basin Trail Crew has been able to clear any trees that may have fallen during the winter.

Berry Creek falls is probably one of the most photographed waterfalls in Northern California. It is approximately 70 feet high and there is a viewing platform so hikers can sit and appreciate the beauty. Hikers are reminded to respect the area and stay on designated trails.

The other waterfall in the park is Sempervirens Falls, easier to reach and accessible by vehicle or by hiking. There is limited parking on Sky Meadow Road near the falls and a newly constructed path, approximately 150 feet, that leads down to the falls. If visitors choose to hike to Sempervirens Falls, they are advised to take the Sequoia Trail which starts near Park Headquarters and is approximately one and a half miles to the falls. Best time to visit is either winter or the spring. Sempervirens Falls has a newly constructed viewing platform. Visitors are advised to stay on the platform and not go in the falls.

The park phone number is (831) 338-8860.

Castle Crags State Park, (SHASTA and SISKIYOU COUNTIES) six miles south of Dunsmuir on Highway I-5, does not contain a waterfall, but Burstarse Falls is in the adjacent Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Visitors to Castle Crags often make the trek to the falls. The trailhead is three miles west of the park entrance on Castle Creek Road. From the trailhead, hike uphill 1/2 mile on steep Dog Trail to its junction with the Pacific Crest Trail. Turn left and hike two more level miles to signed Burstarse Creek. Hike upstream 1/8 mile to the falls. This falls is fed by rainfall and snowmelt, and is best viewed in spring. It dwindles to a trickle in summer. The 40 foot falls is remote and wild, and is a stunning reward at the end of the scenic hike to reach it. Wildflowers can be viewed along the trail and near the falls in spring.

The phone number of Castle Crags State Park is (530) 235-2684.

Emerald Bay State Park, (EL DORADO COUNTY) 22 miles south of Tahoe City on Highway 89, features Eagle Falls. The falls are located in a designated National Natural Landmark area. Visitors park at the Emerald Bay/Vikingsholm parking lot area. From the parking lot trailheads visitors can hike to the top of the falls along a roadside trail or down to the bottom of the lower falls and across on a footbridge. One of the best times to visit the waterfall is in the spring.

The park phone number is (530) 525-7277.

Grover Hot Springs State Park, (ALPINE COUNTY) three miles west of Markleeville on Hot Springs Road, is near a waterfall located in the adjacent Toiyabe National Forest on Hot Springs Creek. To reach it, follow the Waterfalls Trail from the campground west 1-1/2 miles. The best times to see the waterfalls are in the spring during high water flow and during a cold winter when ice forms on the falls.

The park phone number is (530) 694-2248.

Limekiln State Park, (MONTEREY COUNTY) 55 miles south of Monterey on Highway One, has a waterfall, Limekiln Creek Falls that flows year round in Limekiln Creek. It's best visited in the spring. The water flows 100 feet over the face of a cliff encrusted with moss and limestone. It is a half-mile walk on a marked trail from the day use parking area up through the redwood canyon to the falls. The park has seasonal bridges, so visitors may have to ford the stream off-season.

The park phone number is (831) 667-2403.

Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park, (MONTEREY COUNTY) 26 miles south of Carmel on Highway 1, is home of Pfeiffer Falls. The falls can be accessed using the Valley View trail, making the hike to the falls approximately one mile each way. The 60-foot waterfall is a scenic highlight and the best time to see Pfeiffer Falls is in the spring.

The park phone number is (831) 667-2315.

Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park, (MONTEREY COUNTY) 37 miles south of Carmel on Highway One, has McWay Falls. The wheelchair accessible Overlook Trail leads from the park's day use and parking area to an observation deck with views of the falls and coast. This scenic waterfall drops 80 feet off a cliff onto the beach nestled in a picturesque little cove. Although there is no access trail to the bottom of the falls, the overlook view of the cove and the Pacific Ocean is stunning. McWay Falls flows throughout the year, so any sunny day is a great time to take in the view.

The Overlook Trail ends on the terrace of what once was the lower level of the Brown House built in the late 1930s. The foundation of the house remains as do the rail tracks of the "tram" that serviced the house and allowed access from the road to the house. The first electricity in Big Sur was generated from a pelton wheel which was housed in a building off the Overlook trail, near the beginning of the trail close to the parking lot. The wheel provided electrical service to the

residences here but was not distributed beyond the Brown property. The Pelton Wheel House now contains displays describing the Pelton Wheel and its uses.

The park phone number is (831) 667-2315.

Lake Oroville State Recreation Area (BUTTE COUNTY): Feather Falls, in the adjacent Plumas National Forest, is the nation's 6th highest waterfall, measuring more than 640 feet from the top to the canyon below.

To get there from Highway 70, exit Oro Dam Boulevard in Oroville and proceed on Highway 162 east for 8.3 miles to Forbestown Road and turn right. Continue 6.7 miles to Lumpkin Road and turn left. Continue 10.6 miles on Lumpkin Road, across the Oroville Reservoir Bridge continuing to Bryant Road. Turn left on Bryant and drive 1.5 miles to the Feather Falls National Recreation trail head.

There are two trails to the falls; one is 3.4 miles and the other 4.5 miles one-way to the falls. Visitors are advised to allow a minimum of four hours for the complete trip. The hike is considered moderately difficult, with a change in elevation of 1100 feet. The best time to visit is in the late spring when the falls are enhanced by spring run-off. There is a wonderful wild flower trail in the spring.

For current road and trail conditions contact the US Forest Service in Oroville at (530) 534-6500.

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park, (NEVADA COUNTY) 16 miles northeast of Nevada City, has the Humbug Creek Falls, which can be reached from the Humbug Creek Trail following Humbug Creek down to the South Yuba River. The falls can be viewed about 1.5 miles along the trail. The falls are small; however the pools and the canyon are very scenic. The best time to see the falls is in spring, especially April through June.

The park phone number is (530) 265-2740.

Malibu Creek State Park, (LOS ANGELES COUNTY) four miles south of Highway 101 on Las Virgenes/Malibu Canyon Road in Calabasas, has three waterfalls, all of them man-made. The first waterfall is in the heart of Malibu Canyon and is called the Rindge Dam Waterfall. This fall is approximately two walking miles south of the park and is next to the "Sheriffs Monument." The Rindge Fall cascades 85 feet and is best seen in winter. The second fall is up the canyon three walking miles and is called the Century Lake Dam. The fall cascades 60 feet and is usually flowing year-round. The Century Lake fall is located by walking west 1.2 miles on Crags Road. The starting point is the lower

parking lot at Malibu Creek State Park. Visitors can get a map at the entrance station. The third fall is reached by walking west from Century Falls another 2.3 miles to Malibu Lake Dam. The fall is approximately 40 feet and normally flows year-round.

The park phone number is (818) 880-0367.

Burney Falls in **McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park** (SHASTA COUNTY) is visible from the Falls Overlook, just 200 feet from the closest parking area. There is excellent viewing any time of year. Burney Falls is a 129 foot, spring fed waterfall that flows 100 million gallons of water per day, year round. It has been designated as a Natural National Landmark by the Department of the Interior. It is considered a scenic showpiece of northern California. Additional water comes from springs, joining to create a mist-filled basin. Burney Creek originates from the park's underground springs and flows to Lake Britton, getting larger along the way to the majestic falls. The park is located 11 miles northeast of Burney on Highway 89.

The park phone number is (530) 335-2777.

Mount Tamalpais State Park, (MARIN COUNTY), north of the Golden Gate, has Kent Canyon Falls, with a vertical drop of approximately 10 feet. The falls are located ½ mile west of Frank's Valley on Muir Woods Road. Peak flow of the waterfall is between December and March. There is no official trail that leads to the falls, just some "social" trails.

The park phone number is (415) 388-2070.

Plumas-Eureka State Park (PLUMAS COUNTY) features beautiful Jamison Falls, located on Lower Jamison Creek. The falls are located one mile up the Grass Lake Trail and fall over 70 feet. The trailhead is near the park campground. The falls are best visited spring thru fall.

The park phone number is (530) 836-2380.

Point Mugu State Park, (VENTURA COUNTY) 15 miles south of Oxnard on Highway One, has a natural (seasonal - winter months) and beautiful waterfall at La Jolla Valley. The fall cascades only 20 feet but the setting is pristine, with boulders and native vegetation. To get there, park in the La Jolla parking lot and take the easy 1.5 mile hike on the La Jolla Valley trailhead.

The phone number of the park is (805) 488-5223.

Topanga State Park (LOS ANGELES COUNTY) Directions: from Highway 101 in Woodland Hills, go south on Topanga Canyon Boulevard seven miles to Entrada Road, follow signs to the park; there are three waterfalls.

Temescal Canyon Water Falls is located in Temescal Canyon, from Sunset Boulevard and Temescal Canyon Road in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. It's approximately a mile hike to reach the falls, one way, from the parking lot on the Temescal Canyon Trail. Temescal Water Falls is a cascading type fall with two main drops. The Temescal Canyon Trail bridge crosses between the two main cascades, each about a 10-foot drop. The falls are year round - best in spring.

Santa Ynez Canyon Water Falls is approximately 18 feet in height. Best access is from Palisades Drive, off of Sunset Boulevard in the Pacific Palisades area of Los Angeles. It's a one and half mile hike, one way, from the trail head on Verda de la Montara. There is a longer and more demanding hike from Trippet Ranch in the community of Topanga. The trail end three hundred feet from the water fall. Rock hopping is required to reach the base of the falls. The falls are best in spring, with limited flow in late summer and fall.

Topanga Canyon Water Fall is a beautiful ribbon water fall that can be seen from Topanga Canyon Boulevard, Highway 27, after significant rainfall. The water fall drops 60 -70 feet into the sycamore tree tops from the canyon's east side. Access is difficult because there is no parking on the highway.

The park phone number is (310) 455-2465.

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