



California State Parks Video Transcript



Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve Orientation Video

A priceless natural heritage is preserved in California's parklands. Some areas are dedicated to the spectacular beauty of mountains, coastlines, and deserts. Others protect majestic trees, or commemorate great geologic upheavals.

This place is set aside to celebrate the gentle beauty of a flower.

The Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve is located in one of the finest wildflower areas in the state. Most often, though, its special bounty is hidden from view. For six months out of every year the land appears barren and dry, its life forced into a long dormancy by the relentless summer sun.

When at last the rains return, their moisture combines with seeds and soil, signaling the start of a new biological year. A reawakening commences, and as winter passes into spring, the straw-colored landscape is slowly transformed, first into shades of living green, then finally into a vast, fragrant flower garden of enchanting beauty.

For a few brief weeks the hills and flatlands alike are awash with a rainbow of color. At the heart of this grand spectacle is, of course, the California Poppy, but dozens of other kinds of wildflowers are also found on or near the Reserve. From indigo lupines, to golden carpets of coriopsis, to magenta splashes of owl's clover, the blossoms seem to go on forever.

At a time when hundreds of flowers may be pressed beneath the foot at every step, it's hard to focus one's attention on any single bloom. And yet, many of the wonders of springtime are revealed only at such close range. Up close even a seemingly ordinary wildflower becomes a source of endless fascination, a thing ornate and intricate, delightful but strange.

Each kind of blossom offers a unique solution to the problem of survival, its parts and patterns cleverly designed to attract the right type of pollinator at exactly the right time.

And just as flowers may serve as a destination for wandering insects, they can be the starting point for many journeys of your own. For instance, you could trace the progress of a single poppy from bud to blossom to a slender seed pod, holding the promise of flowers for some future spring. Or you might follow invisible food webs outward to meet some of the animals who depend, directly or otherwise, upon the flowering vegetation.

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You could venture, with your imagination, into the neighboring universe of the grasslands. On one scale, these open fields are storehouses of human history, while at the same time they are jungles in miniature; their secrets reserved for those who bend down and take the time to look.

Still other pathways of exploration might lead you into the soil, or the sky, or through the changing seasons.

Regardless of when you come, there is much for you to see, enjoy, and understand; and this visitor center is a good place to begin. Its exhibits can show you an entirely new realm waiting to be discovered, an intriguing micro-world that reaches far beyond these flowering hills and into our everyday lives. Perhaps you too will find that the Antelope Valley State Poppy Reserve is a place to broaden one's horizons; even a place where one can learn, in the words of a poet, to see a world in a grain of sand and a heaven in a wildflower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.

Running Time: 8 minutes
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