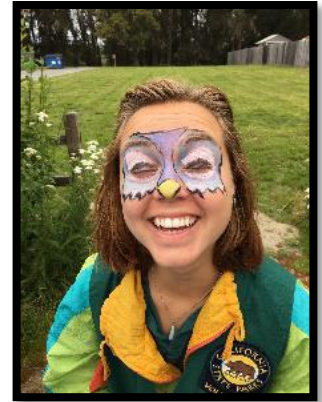


Volunteers in Parks Program

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



California State Parks
Partnerships Division





Junior Lifeguards Program, Monterey District

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Sea Life Stewards – Graduating class of 2018 along with program staff

California State Parks
Partnerships Division
Sacramento, California
2019





2018 ACTIVITY REPORT VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM

Summary

Volunteers are vital partners in the operation of California State Parks. Without the passionate and dedicated service of volunteers in the Volunteers in Parks Program (VIPPP) supporting critical functions, State Parks would not be able to successfully execute its mission.

In 2018, **44,394 volunteers** provided a total of **1,133,064 service hours**, surpassing the 1 million-hour benchmark for the 11th consecutive year. These hours represent an equivalent value of more than **\$33.9 million*** to California State Parks. Volunteers enabled the state parks to enhance outreach and community engagement activities, services to visitors, public safety, and the stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

A whopping 80% of volunteers—**35,461 individuals**—participated as short-term (three days or less) volunteers, while **8,931** people made long-term commitments. This is an increase of nearly 21% of total volunteers both long-term and short-term over 2017.

Although the total number of volunteers has increased, each volunteer's **average number of hours contributed was 25.5 hours, a decrease of 18.5%**. This is one indicator that more Californians are choosing to help out at state parks through short-term programs such as corporate-sponsored volunteer days, high school and college service hours, and special activities such as Coastal Clean-up Day or Earth Day.

Interpretation continued to represent the largest category of volunteer service, comprising 27% of all volunteer hours. Combined, hours donated working as campground hosts and public contacts, as well as performing maintenance/housekeeping tasks, account for 43% of total volunteer hours.

A pie chart providing a visual representation of volunteer hours in each service category follows; program statistics and graphs that give a five-year look at trends in volunteer activity are also included in this report.

**\$29.95 per hour as provided by www.independentsector.org. This rate is indexed for California and includes fringe benefits estimated at 12%.*

Staff Support and Training

In 2018, **every State Parks staff hour invested in the Volunteers in Parks Program yielded nearly five hours of volunteer service.** The total number of staff involved in the program reached a five-year low of 626, but conversely a five-year high of 229,404 staff-support hours. This means fewer staff are providing more hours managing volunteers.

A total of 24 staff involved in working with volunteers attended the annual Volunteer Coordination training in 2018. This training was designed for staff new to volunteer coordination and as a refresher for veteran coordinators. The course included basic background knowledge such as legal issues, as well as human rights and accessibility to State Parks matters. There were also segments on volunteer registration, public safety, risk management, and working with cooperating associations.

Volunteer Recognition

Poppy Awards are bestowed by district superintendents on volunteers who contribute significantly to the betterment of California State Parks. Volunteer Medallion Awards are the department's highest volunteer honor and are awarded to volunteers who make a significant contribution to the mission and goals of the department.

Department staff presented 87 Poppy Awards and 24 Volunteer Medallions to outstanding volunteers meriting statewide recognition during 2018. This was an all-time high of number of awardees and 40% increase from the previous year.

Additionally, more than 4,800 volunteers earned district passes and over 2,800 volunteers contributed 200 hours or more in 2018, thereby earning a statewide park pass providing free day-use access to parks as a gesture of gratitude for their service.

Volunteer Program Highlights

Throughout the state, volunteers continued to support parks through their work in visitor centers and museums; leading tours and hikes; running campfire and Junior Ranger programs; devoting hours to research; providing information to park visitors from around the world; monitoring local wildlife populations; interpreting history; maintaining grounds, gardens, beaches, and trails; helping

campers; and so much more!

Although it would be impossible to include all of the contributions volunteers made to our parks in 2018, here is a small sampling of the highlights:

Interpretation

- During their busy winter season, docents at Año Nuevo State Park (SP) gave 22 guided walks per day, contributing over 6,800 hours to park interpretation.
- At Point Lobos State Natural Reserve (SNR), the [Easy Access Adventure Program](#) allowed visitors of all abilities to experience the park. At each Easy Access event, docents interpreted the park to an average of 200 visitors per day.
- At Henry Cowell Redwoods SP, they welcomed back one of their longest-serving volunteers, who at 98-years young is still going strong.
- Volunteers helped put on more than 180 living history activities at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park (SHP).
- At Seacliff State Beach (SB), volunteers helped the [First Day Hike](#) event go off without a hitch, when an unprecedented 150 visitors showed up to participate.
- Costumed volunteers brought history to life as they interacted with and inspired park visitors at dozens of historic parks.

Visitor Services

- Seventy-five visitor center volunteers contributed over 5,000 hours and interacted with nearly 100,000 visitors at Anza-Borrego Desert SP.
- With an increase in the number of volunteers, Pigeon Point Light Station SHP was able to extend its operational hours to seven days per week during its busy summer season.
- Dedicated camp hosts throughout the state answered questions, held campfire programs, sold firewood, assisted with campground maintenance, and so much more to make camping in state parks a positive and memorable experience for thousands of visitors.

Facility Maintenance

- A team of dedicated garden volunteers contributed approximately 800 hours of service to maintain the garden at Benicia SRA.
- Volunteers completed restoration work at the Assistant Keepers' Quarters at Point Sur SHP.
- Volunteers refurbished the outside of the visitor center at Henry W. Coe SP.
- At Rancho del Oso in Big Basin Redwoods SP, volunteers improved trail infrastructure by creating a 120-foot footpath, installing a 12-foot wooden bridge, and building wooden steps up to the nature center.

Natural Stewardship

- At Half Moon Bay SB, students from the local high school volunteered their time to the native plant nursery, weeding and planting native plants at Francis Beach.
- At Pescadero SB, a team of volunteers completed their sixth year of monitoring the great blue heron rookery in Pescadero Marsh, and provided the data they collected to the San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory to further ongoing research.
- At Anza-Borrego Desert SP, the Volunteer Paleontology Society curated 175 specimens, discovered 64 new localities, and conducted a field excavation on Rock Mammoth.

Education

Program Contact

If you have questions about this report, please contact **Dennis Weber** at (916) 651-8724 or Dennis.Weber@parks.ca.gov.

- Ninety-three volunteers provided boater education to visitors through the Division of Boating and Waterways' [Dockwalker](#) volunteer program.
- With the help of Living History Docents at Shasta SHP, the park expanded its school group program, which provided more than 1,000 students the opportunity to participate in 2018.
- Sea Life Stewards at Morro Bay SP educated more than 2,000 visitors about marine wildlife and safe interactions. One Sea Life Steward spoke on behalf of the Stewards at the 2018 Wildlife Disturbance

Symposium at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Safety

- Nine Mounted Assistance Unit volunteers logged over 602 hours patrolling the back country at Mount Diablo SP.
- Volunteers in the Wilderness Patrol and Horse Patrol programs in the Santa Cruz District patrolled nearly 50,000 acres of land on foot, horseback, and mountain bike, and added two more parks to their program in 2018.

Miscellaneous

- The Team Castro program was created at Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe Park Property, which allowed local high school students to fulfill their community service requirements through volunteer work at the park.
- Volunteers were celebrated and honored at dozens of volunteer appreciation events that took place across the state throughout the year.

VIPP Operational Improvements

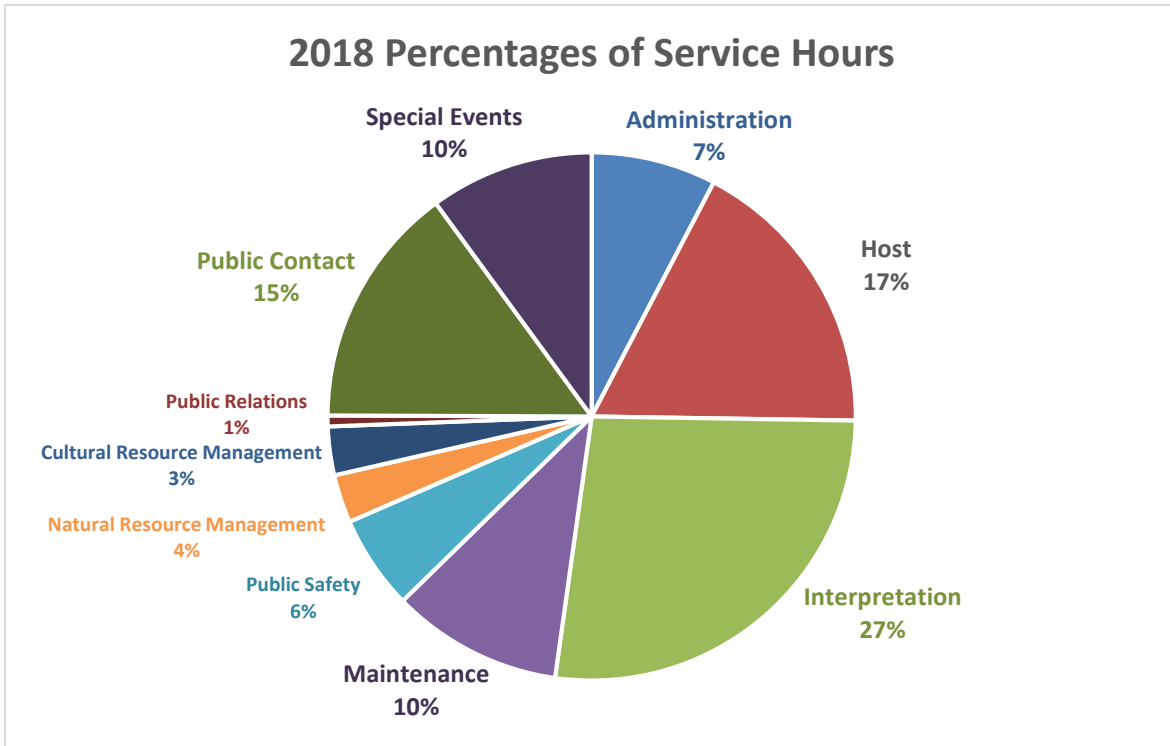
2018 also saw the official launch of California State Parks' new statewide volunteer management database, Better Impact. In 2017, the Transformation Team's Assessment and Recommendations for the Volunteers in Parks Program outlined the need for a single volunteer management database to replace the various volunteer management programs and methods being used in parks previously.

This software is being used to track volunteers and their activities and hours. Volunteer coordinators are able to run reports capturing their volunteers' data, and volunteers are able to use the software to sign up for activities, view their schedule, log their hours, and access their hour reports. Volunteers are also able to log data and notes about their volunteer shifts, which coordinators can then access as needed.

The Better Impact software was acquired in 2018, and parks have started rolling it out in their volunteer programs. It is expected for all parks to have fully implemented Better Impact by the end of 2019, and that all 2019 VIPP hours will be logged in the database.

This database is expected to streamline volunteer coordination and management in the field, provide real-time information, and improve data collection on volunteers and their contributions.

2018 VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM
Distribution of Volunteer Hours Per Service Category



Category	Examples	Hours
Administration	Office and computer work, training	86,730
Campground/Park Host	Day/night operations	199,373
Cultural Resource Management	Archaeological/curatorial assistance, research	33,734
Interpretation	Nature walks, campfire programs, museum tours, school group tours	305,561
Maintenance/ Housekeeping	Trail work, litter removal, painting, construction	118,701
Public Contact	Visitor center, fee collection	168,719
Natural Resource Management	Habitat restoration and monitoring, wildlife surveys	33,391
Public Relations	Media contacts and marketing	7,536
Public Safety	Mounted assistance units, search and rescue, bike patrol, first aid	65,462
Special Events, Park Champion Events, and Other	Special Events, Park Champion events, other duties	113,857
Total Donated Hours		1,133,064

2018 by the Numbers: VIPP Spreadsheets and Five-year Comparisons



Mountain Men at Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

2018 Service Categories and Hours

District	Admin.	Host	Interp.	Maint.	Public Safety	Nat. Res. Mgmt.	Cult. Res. Mgmt.	Public Relations	Public Contact	Special Events	Total Hours
Angeles	6,106	2,500	14,087	1,698	16,811	240	1,244	853	5,130	1,070	49,739
Bay Area	5,885	6,500	8,999	7,451	9,221	2,484	733	905	14,164	6,822	63,164
Capital	8,568	1,599	99,189	25,248	96	0	12,259	75	17,414	19,550	183,998
Central Valley	4,349	8,480	8,201	4,914	0	664	1,146	224	7,474	4,759	40,211
Channel Coast	331	11,398	12,828	11,558	90	275	0	24	13,079	260	49,843
Colorado Desert	8,292	3,442	6,740	4,117	4,262	2,805	8,875	138	14,399	952	54,022
Division of Boating and Waterways	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,415	0	2,415
Gold Fields	2,842	3,700	7,704	6,048	5,023	108	607	139	4,067	5,378	35,616
Headquarters and Office of Historic Preservation	1,524	0	0	401	0	0	692	0	40	0	2,657
Inland Empire	1,443	2,521	4,012	1,698	1,682	422	70	71	8,439	3,932	24,290
Monterey	12,089	7,536	23,966	16,210	2,782	6,562	890	899	14,595	9,072	94,601
North Coast Redwoods	519	15,436	961	2,337	1,174	1,598	1,275	185	6,201	380	30,066
Northern Buttes	2,767	10,292	3,041	2,612	1,142	42	198	167	4,206	2,303	26,770
Oceano Dunes	783	3,719	4,755	0	2,240	832	0	46	0	475	12,850
Ocotillo Wells	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	376	383
Orange Coast	594	19,846	7,788	7,012	7,179	573	300	425	4,842	40,488	89,047
San Andreas	164	0	0	396	2,230	0	16	0	767	277	3,850
San Diego Coast	8,146	31,729	19,499	8,429	99	3,548	1,830	1,484	9,720	1,148	85,632
San Luis Obispo Coast	6,275	15,327	16,627	2,448	1,142	1,177	0	531	13,033	2,106	58,666

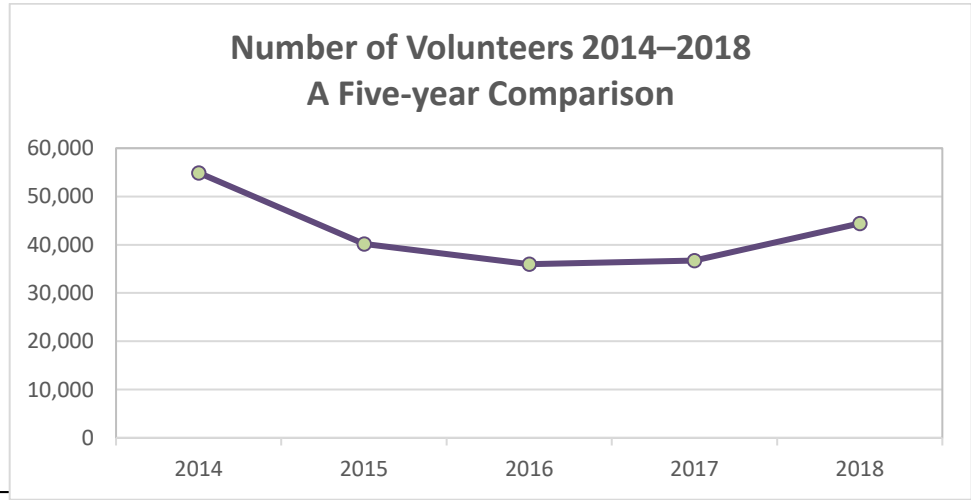
Santa Cruz	4,665	27,808	44,650	7,784	8,947	7,428	1,000	1,028	9,690	9,241	122,241
Sierra	5,918	2,990	16,320	3,083	685	2,480	1,690	149	5,778	1,677	40,769
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast	4,483	23,921	3,305	3,980	445	1,344	808	163	11,684	3,149	53,280
Tehachapi	987	629	2,889	1,277	0	501	66	30	1,575	430	8,383
Twin Cities	0	0	0	0	212	308	35	0	0	12	567
Total Hours	86,730	199,373	305,561	118,701	65,462	33,391	33,734	7,536	168,719	113,857	1,133,064

	Volunteers in Parks Numbers			Staff Hours	
District/Program	Total # Volunteers	Long Term	Short Term	Staff Hours	# Staff
Angeles	1,041	604	437	2,716	30
Bay Area	2,415	788	1627	4,704	42
Capital	983	862	121	22,043	49
Central Valley	798	488	310	9,612	38
Channel Coast	293	273	20	474	13
Colorado Desert	534	450	84	2,348	25
Division of Boating and Waterways	93	93	0	40	1
Gold Fields	778	332	446	2,600	11
Headquarters and Office of Historic Preservation	14	14	0	94	11
Inland Empire	442	123	319	2,610	9
Monterey	1,144	672	472	131,201	72
North Coast Redwoods	252	202	50	2,000	50
Northern Buttes	377	167	210	2,251	23
Oceano Dunes	7817	126	7691	2,790	4
Ocotillo Wells	53	1	52	181	3
Orange Coast	19,594	435	19,159	4,330	17
San Andreas	113	51	62	484	7
San Diego Coast	1,496	545	951	7,385	57
San Luis Obispo Coast	941	619	322	5,575	48
Santa Cruz	3,657	914	2,743	19,784	71
Sierra	946	717	229	5,450	19
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast	343	285	58	Not reported	1
Tehachapi	212	150	62	687	19
Twin Cities	56	20	36	45	6
Totals	44,392	8,931	35,461	229,404	626

A Five-year Look at the Volunteers In Parks Program: 2014–2018

Note: The year 2014 marked the 150th anniversary of California State Parks; the increase in events and interpretive programming, and a Headquarters-supplied activity toolkit likely created the increase in volunteer participation for that year.

Year	Number of Volunteers
2014	54,898
2015	40,195
2016	35,977
2017	36,741
2018	44,392



Year	Volunteer Hours Contributed
2014	1,454,704
2015	1,266,695
2016	1,203,992
2017	1,150,086
2018	1,133,052

