

## **Change is in the Air President's Message September 2018**

After a long and very hot summer, I am sure that you join me in looking forward to a change in the weather that autumn will bring. Change is also on the way for California State Parks and the statewide nonprofits that support its 280 parks. Many of these changes are due to recommendations by the Parks Forward Commission, a panel organized five years ago to address challenges faced by state parks. Problems addressed by the Commission were caused by many factors. Certainly the most alarming were critical problems created by years of underfunding state parks and the consequent backlog of over \$1 billion in unfunded infrastructure repairs.

Here is a quick summary of some of changes coming for California State Parks:  
(Links to organizations and articles below)

### **FUNDING**

The 2018-2019 budget for the State of California includes an \$80 million increase for state parks, some of which comes from the passage of Proposition 68 this past June. In addition, Proposition 68 provides \$725 million for new and expanded parks in underserved communities; \$270 million for local park rehabilitation and creation; and \$200 million to preserve, protect and restore state parks (source, Sacramento Bee, 7-16-18). This funding will certainly help address some of the backlog of neglected infrastructure issues.

### **STATEWIDE PARK NONPROFITS**

Funding from sources outside of government may be coming in the future due to the creation of a new statewide park nonprofit organization, "Parks California." This new organization will join the existing California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) as a statewide organization to support parks financially and politically. CSPF has long led the charge to support California State Parks, park volunteers and park partners like the Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Interpretive Association.

PRMDIA has benefited from the many facets of state park support provided by CSPF. We have received a number of grants from the foundation to fund interpretive programs and materials for the Poppy Reserve, Arthur B. Ripley State Park and Tomo-Kahni State Historic Park. Foundation money supported our efforts to stop the threatened closure of Saddleback Butte State Park. CSPF also helped in the successful effort to reopen Providence Mountain State Recreation Area, home of Mitchell Caverns. The Foundation also made it possible for me to speak directly to our legislative representatives in Sacramento on behalf of local state parks through my participation in their annual State Park Advocacy Day.

Now the Parks Foundation will be joined by another nonprofit working on a statewide basis. "Parks California" was formed as a direct result of recommendations made by the Parks Forward Committee (as discussed in a previous PRMDIA newsletter president's message). The organization describes its mission on their website ([www.parkscalifornia.org](http://www.parkscalifornia.org)):

*Parks California expands resources for parks from philanthropic and corporate partners and leverages public dollars to tackle projects that improve parks for all visitors. Collaborating with State Parks and other partners, Parks California will ensure protected lands remain resilient while meeting the evolving, lifelong needs of all Californians. With expanded programs, amenities, and resources, we will work to bring younger and more diverse visitors to parks and public lands.*

Rachel Norton, Executive Director of the California State Parks Foundation has welcomed the formation of Parks California stating:

*With 280 parks and nearly 57 million visitors, our state parks system is huge and its needs great. At California State Parks Foundation, our members, advocates and volunteers know that parks need a community of dedicated supporters to thrive.... After nearly 50 years as the only statewide nonprofit for our state parks, it's time for collective support for these precious parks to double, too. Welcome, Parks California. We're ready to work together to give Californians the best parks possible.*

### **SUPPORT FOR PARK PARTNERS**

The California League of Parks Association (CALPA) was formed in 1983 as an "umbrella" group for state park cooperating associations (like PRMDIA) supporting specific parks. Their mission is to "further support and provide networking among cooperating organizations linked with the California State Park System" ([www.calparksleague.org](http://www.calparksleague.org)).

CALPA has offered both statewide and regional conferences for associations serving state parks. Their next conference will be held in October near Sacramento. (PRMDIA is a member of CALPA and will be represented at the conference.)

Like the California State Parks Foundation, CALPA also will be joined by another nonprofit to help it in its mission to support park partners. CALPA has recently joined forces with the Public Lands Alliance. PLA is similar to CALPA in that it is a membership organization for nonprofit public lands partners. Members of PLA may be nonprofit partners of any of America's public lands.

I am pleased to be able to attend the CALPA conference in October and look forward to hearing more about the new nonprofits, PLA and Parks California, that will soon begin to work on behalf of our parks.

[California State Parks Foundation](#)

[Parks California](#)

[Public Lands Alliance](#)

[California State Parks Are on the Comeback Trail](#)

Sacramento Bee July 16, 2018

[Letter to the Editor by Rachel Norton](#)

Executive Director California State Parks Foundation

[State Parks' Turn Around Deserves Voter Support](#)

San Francisco Chronicle April 20, 2018

