

## Three Words Equal a World of Safe Outdoor Adventures

What do stranded hikers, a motorists injured on a remote highway and a lost kayaker all have in common? They all were helped by a new smartphone app called **what3words**. This new app is being used by diverse organizations including Domino's Pizza, the Los Angeles County Fire Department and now our own California Department of Parks and Recreation. What is it? According to the California State Parks:

*“California State Parks is excited to announce its partnership with innovative location technology, **what3words**. A new tool in the State Parks toolkit, what3words provides dispatchers with state-of-the-art technology to assist visitors in the event they become lost, stranded or who otherwise need help from emergency services. Using this revolutionary technology, State Parks dispatchers will now be able to pinpoint the precise locations of individuals who become lost with just three dictionary words, so that help can be sent quickly to exactly where it is needed. The app is available in over 50 languages to date, and is free to download for both iOS and Android devices.”*  
(<https://www.parks.ca.gov/WhatsNew>)

What3words is an easy way to identify precise locations. Every 10-foot square in the entire world has been given a unique combination of three words: a **what3words address**. Now you can find, share and navigate to precise locations using three simple words. Before such precision was available only by using complicated alphanumeric GPS coordinates that give latitude and longitude.

It is more accurate than street addresses and simpler than GPS coordinates, it's also a more accessible way to communicate location information than latitude/longitude coordinates or GPS - in short, it's a simple “geocode.”

For instance, if you wanted to let someone know to meet you at the Poppy Reserve entrance, you could simply give them the street address on Lancaster Road. But what if you wanted them to meet you at a specific spot on a park trail that was perfect for watching the sunset or a reliable location to view the bloom of an intriguing wildflower?

In the past, you could send the GPS coordinates that give exact latitude and longitude, such as 34.73408578152156, -118.39619124806275. This is the specific location to view evening snow, *Linanthus dichotomus*, a funnel shaped snow-white flower with some purple in its lobes, which begins blooming at the Poppy Reserve in the late afternoon and closes with the first rays of the morning sun, generally from April through June. Now there is an easier way, instead of the long alphanumeric, use these three words: **wildest.robs.achieving**. Go to the what3words app or the website [what3words.com](https://www.what3words.com), and type in those three words on the top left to find the location (in the maps choice, top right, I chose Google maps and bottom right, round icon, toggle to the satellite view).

For a great place to watch the sunset try **straddle.cuteness.vine** and for a great picnic spot (at Ripley Desert Woodland) type in **marathon.concierge.tummy**. Yes, the words are strange but were assigned randomly with no attempt to relate them to the location, just to find a simple way to communicate a location, anywhere on earth that avoids a complicated alphanumeric.

For more information visit [www.parks.ca.gov/WhatsNew](http://www.parks.ca.gov/WhatsNew). Be sure to click on the link to **learn more**. Links are given to download the app (free!) and to videos that show how to use what3words. For a linked version of this president's message visit [www.prmia.org/news/newsletters](http://www.prmia.org/news/newsletters).