



**An important new voice at a critical time
for California's Parks.**

PARKS NOW 2017 PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

California needs new policies to ensure access to parks, provide outdoor recreation for urban communities that lack green space, and create greater accountability for public funds. The following recommendations provide insight into policies that should be considered by legislators:

Statewide Parks Select Committee | Create a Legislative Select Committee comprised of legislators with diverse interests in parks, to provide a space for ongoing dialogue and policy development regarding park needs throughout the state.

Statewide Needs Assessment | Utilizing the 2015 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as a guide, develop and implement a needs assessment of parks in California, specifically identifying needs in park poor areas, and specifying that the assessment will be used to set priorities for state funding of parks.

Action Plan | Develop an action plan to guide how the state park system will increase its presence in urban communities, including through park expansion, cross-agency collaboration (i.e., transportation, public health, social services), programming, and increased access to existing resources.

Jobs | Promote workforce training and recruitment for state, regional, and local park systems for low-income and underserved communities.

FUNDING

- Support investment in parks through bonds, fees, or other financing mechanisms that will create significant and sustainable investment in urban parks, with priority given to high-need communities.
- Ensure that state parks operations and stewardship funding is a priority in the allocation of Proposition 64 Environmental Restoration and Protection Account revenues, with a reasonable allocation of those funds invested in projects that advance Parks Now priorities.
- Define priorities for all state conservation and parks-related spending more clearly and set specific criteria to operationalize those values and specific goals to measure success. If necessary, use implementing legislation to establish more specific criteria and a process for prioritizing and selecting projects.
- Influence implementation of the millions of newly created dollars for parks and urban greening from the Green House Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF), Proposition 64, etc.

ACCESS

- Provide a “Low Income Pass” for state and regional parks that allows individuals earning below the federal poverty line free entry.
- Create incentives to increase access to state and regional parks for specific populations (i.e., reduced or waived fees for veterans, Native Americans, etc.)
- Provide community-based organizations with grants to assist with culturally appropriate interpretation and transportation to state, regional, and local parks.
- Incentivize local jurisdictions to include parks in transportation planning, to provide accessible transit connections between low-income, park-poor communities and state parks, state beaches, and other public lands.
- Require state, regional, and local parks to modernize signage and guide activities, and make them accessible online to help draw and inform potential first-time users with all the information needed to get the most out of their park experiences.
- Improve amenities that will increase the number and variety of lower-cost overnight accommodations at state, regional, and local parks, and other suitable public lands.

ACCOUNTABILITY and IMPLEMENTATION

- Develop better guidance for spending by public agencies and regional conservancies. Require agencies and conservancies to adopt strategic plans that include defined priorities and specific criteria for selecting projects. Require that actual bond spending is justified, accounted for, and reported in relation to those priorities and criteria.
- Improve and standardize data reporting requirements so data is more readily available, easily accessible, reliable, and usable for accountability and research.
- Increase investments in park planning in underserved communities, including provisions for community engagement and participatory design, and deeper technical assistance to provide underserved communities the resources, capacity, and expertise needed to compete for public conservation funds.