

## Deserts, Oases, and a Gigantic Orange

# California State Parks in Riverside County

Some of California's finest natural wonders can be found in California State Parks in Riverside County.

**Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**, with portions in Riverside and Imperial counties, is on the eastern side of San Diego County. The park has over 600,000 acres and is the largest state park in the United States – except for Alaska. There are 500 miles of dirt roads, 12 wilderness areas, and miles of hiking trails for visitors to explore the Colorado Desert.

Named after the Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza and the Spanish name borrego, meaning bighorn sheep, is home for these distinctive animals. Other wildlife that can be found in the park includes roadrunners, golden eagles, kit foxes, mule deer and bighorn sheep as well as iguanas, chuckwallas and the red diamond rattlesnake. The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.  Park vegetation includes seasonal wildflowers, palm groves, and cacti.

Assistive listening devices are available in the park visitor center, and a nearby short nature trail is also accessible. Just down the road from the visitor center, Borrego Palm Canyon Campground offers accessible campsites with hook-ups, restrooms with showers, and picnicking.

The park is approximately a two-hour drive from San Diego, Riverside, and Palm Springs. For more information, call (760) 767-5311 or (760) 767-4037. The park wildflower hotline phone number is (760) 767-4684.

**California Citrus State Historic Park**, one mile east of Highway 91 in the Arlington Heights area of Riverside, recaptures the time when "Citrus was King" and hundreds of would-be citrus barons came to California for the "second Gold Rush."

Designed to resemble a 1900s-era city park, this historic park shows the importance of the citrus industry in southern California history. Demonstration groves, an activity center, interpretive structure, amphitheater, a picnic area, and a re-creation of a giant orange roadside drink stand that used to be found along the state's roadways are featured in the park. The groves in the park still produce a variety of high-quality oranges, lemons, grapefruit and tangerines. In early summer the park features a free concert series.

The park has many accessible features including the Sunkist Center, restrooms, parking, picnicking, two short trails and most connecting paths between facilities. A small visitor center and gift shop open weekends only is entered via stairs or a usable ramp. On September 20, the park will celebrate the grand opening of a 5,000-square-foot, fully compliant visitor center/museum/gift shop.

For more information, call the park at (909) 780-6222.

**Chino Hills State Park**, located 10 miles northwest of Corona in the hills of Santa Ana Canyon near Riverside, has 12,452 acres.

Vegetation in the park includes stands of oaks, sycamores and rolling hills that stretch from the Santa Ana Mountains to the Whittier Hills. The park is also home to many animals.

Trails in the park offer hiker, bicyclists and equestrians a trip through valleys and woodlands, and along scenic ridges. Sixty miles of trails and fire roads provide visitors with a chance to see the park's wildlife and native plants. Some trails in the park are designated for hiking only.

The park has a picnic area, equestrian staging area, corrals, a historic barn, water spigots, restrooms, and limited camping.

For more information, call (909) 780-6222.

**Indio Hills Palms**, east of Palm Springs on Thousand Palms Road, is home to groves of Native California fan palms. Along a line where the San Andreas Fault captures groundwater, the 2,206-acre parkland contains grove of

palms, including Hidden, Pushawalla, Briska, Macomber and Horseshoe. The nearest groves are relatively easy to reach from the trailhead and parking area four miles north of Indio.

For more information call The Nature Conservancy (at 760-343-1234), which operates this park and the adjacent 13,000-acre Coachella Valley Preserve, as well as the thousand Palms Oasis and McCallum Grove.

**Lake Perris State Recreation Area**, a 2,200 surface area reservoir, 11 miles south of Riverside via Highway 60 or I-215, is popular for water recreation, including boating, sailing, fishing (boat and shore - for rainbow trout, catfish, bluegill and largemouth bass), swimming, waterskiing, and a special area for scuba diving. Wildlife in the park includes a variety of waterfowl, birds of prey and many small mammals. The park is also popular with hikers, bikers and, equestrians and rock climbers. It also features the largest state campground facility and one of the most popular in southern California – providing over 200 hook-up sites, an equal amount of tent sites, group camps, and 21 accessible campsites with generally accessible restrooms and usable showers nearby. Assistive listening devices are available in the park office for park programs. A wheelchair accessible fishing dock and beach provides fishing opportunities and beach wheel chairs can be reserved.

For more information, call the park at (909) 940-5600.

**Mount San Jacinto State Park's** summit stands 10,804 feet above sea level, the highest point in the San Jacinto Range and second highest in Southern California. The park is accessible by tram\* from Palm Springs and or via Highway 243 from Idyllwild. Most of the park is wilderness with three mountain peaks offering spectacular views of the nearby desert and mountain ranges.

About a two hour drive from Los Angeles or San Diego, the mountain offers visitors a chance to enjoy a scenic, high-country wilderness area with forests, meadows and granite peaks. The Pacific Crest Trail, which spans 2,650

miles from Mexico to Canada, passes through five California State Parks, including Mount San Jacinto.

Hikers and backpackers need wilderness permits.

The park offers two drive-in campgrounds near the town of Idyllwild.

\* The tram operates year-round except for a maintenance closure in August. The Mountain Station at the top of the tram line has a restaurant, gift shop, snack bar, and visitor center. A short walk from the station is the Long Valley Ranger Station, a picnic area with barbecue stoves and restrooms, a ski center, a self-guiding nature trail, and Desert View Trail which offers views of the high country. Visitors can also enter the hiking trail system from this area.

The park is a Watchable Wildlife site. 

For more information, call the park at (909) 659-2607 or (760) 767-4037.

**Salton Sea State Recreation Area** is on the northeastern side one of the world's largest inland seas, which was created by accident when a dike broke during construction of the All-American Canal in 1905. Located about a three hour drive from Los Angeles, the area covers 360 square-miles, is 35 miles long with 110 miles of shoreline. The park is a popular site for boating, fishing (for ocean corvina, gulf croaker, tilapia and sargo), swimming, water-skiing. and birdwatching.

The park is a Watchable Wildlife site. 

For more information, call the park at (760) 393-3059.

**San Timoteo Canyon State Park**, one of the most recent acquisitions to California State Parks, is located at the foot of the Badlands in Riverside County. The 1,200 acre+ park features a variety of day-use activities including picnicking, hiking, biking and horseback riding. The park will remain undeveloped as it serves as a valuable open space and wildlife corridor linking San Bernardino Valley, the San Gorgonio Pass to the north, the Colorado Desert to the south, and the San Jacinto Wildlife Preserve to the west. The corridor contains fragile

wetlands, riparian areas, oak groves, and, for birding enthusiasts, invites one of the most diverse avian populations in the entire United States.

For more information, call the Inland Empire District Headquarters at (909) 940-5600.

The park is a Watchable Wildlife site.



For camping reservations call ReserveAmerica at 800-444-7275 or go online to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

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