



Why Stay on Trails?

Over 80 million people visit California's state parks each year. Many of them take advantage of more than 4,200 miles of trails designated for non-motorized recreation.

Trails are Carefully Planned

Land management agencies construct and maintain trails to provide easily identifiable routes for walking and hiking. Trails are designed to give visitors maximum exposure to special park features with minimal damage to the environment. Some areas in parks do not have many restrictions and visitors are free to explore, while other areas have posted restrictions that must be followed.

Preserve California's Wildlands

While enjoying state park trails, please avoid damaging our precious natural and cultural resources. When you stay on the marked trails, you help preserve these beautiful areas for future generations to appreciate. Understanding how our actions impact the land can help us reach that goal.

What Can Happen by Going Off the Trails?

- Surface vegetation, animal habitat, fragile soils,



and/or entire communities of life can be trampled beyond recovery. **Stay on the trail.**

- Organic matter, such as leaves and even the soil itself, helps protect land from the erosive forces of rainfall and wind. Walking, biking, or riding your horse off trail disturbs the protective cover and can accelerate erosion. **Do not use shortcuts.**
- Damage to surface vegetation can disrupt natural processes and may destroy a food source or otherwise harm wildlife habitat. **Be careful where you step.**
- In some areas, disturbing rocks can leave a visible impact for hundreds of years. Lichen-coated and time-varnished rocks are irreplaceable. **Leave rocks where they lay.**
- Generally, wildlife will leave you alone if left undisturbed, and animals are safer and healthier when they haven't become accustomed to people. Wildlife should be viewed only from trails and other designated areas. **Do not approach wildlife or attract them to you.**

The Solution

Many of us have veered off a trail, come too close to wildlife, picked up a small souvenir, or tossed an apple core into the woods. These actions seem harmless but can have lasting effects. When we reduce our impact on our resources, we take care of our parks while enriching our future outdoor experiences. The solution is simple. Do your part by staying on trails. Protect our resources for future visitors to enjoy.

**Take only pictures—
leave only footprints.**