

NEWS RELEASE



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Labor Day Weekend 2004

First-Come, First-Served May Be Only Option for State Park Camping

SACRAMENTO -- From the California-Mexico border to Mendocino, it's no surprise to veteran travelers that California State Park campsites along California's 1,100 miles of scenic coastline are always the first to fill up.

And, this year's Labor Day holiday weekend that begins Friday, September 3 is no exception.

If you don't want to pitch a tent in your own backyard, these veteran travelers also know that the smart thing to do is to make reservations in advance. State Park camping history has shown that coastal campgrounds, particularly in Southern California, fill up long before parks that are located inland and north of Santa Cruz.

As an alternative at this late date for the last three-day holiday weekend of the summer, wannabe travelers might try this alternative:

There are 15,000 campsites in the California State Park system, including about 5,000 camping spots in 38 state parks that are available to travelers on a first-come, first-served basis. Some of these parks include Plumas-Eureka State Park, Emma Wood State Beach and Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park. State Park officials suggest that visitors arrive either Wednesday or Thursday night, if possible, to maximize your chance to get a campsite. Friday arrivals might find the "Sorry, campground full" sign displayed.

A full listing of the first-come, first-served locations and telephone numbers may be found under Reservations and Fees on the State Parks website at www.parks.ca.gov

If you would like to try your luck, there are a very limited number of campsites, some for only one night, which may be available for reservation if people act immediately, according to State Parks' reservation system computers. But be forewarned, the availability can change daily, or even hourly.

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These parks include:

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
Lake Perris SRA
San Luis Reservoir SRA
Lake Oroville SRA
Richardson Grove State Park

Millerton Lake State Recreation Area
Salton Sea SRA
Fremont Peak State Park
Mount Diablo State Park
Donner Memorial State Park

Telephone toll-free 800-444-PARK (7275) if you want to make a California State Park reservation, or go online [to www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

Here are some other helpful camping tips:

- Determine where you want to camp and be flexible. Have alternative parks in mind in case your first choice is booked.
- Consider cancellations. Check the ReserveAmerica website, or call 800-444-7275. Cancellations are rare, but they do occur.
- Consider a day visit to one of the state's fine parks for a picnic, hike or enjoy other outdoor recreation.
- The "shoulder season" of April, May, September and October is a good time to enjoy California State Parks. The weather is usually good during these months, and they are generally less crowded.

The annual State Park day-use pass, which is good for 12 months from the date of purchase, costs \$125 and provides access to more than 230 state parks.

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