

Park Champions Program

The California State Parks Foundation's Park Champions Program completes volunteer projects year-round in parks across California. In partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Park Champions provide, consistent, sustainable volunteer support in the areas of park maintenance and beautification.

The program recruits and trains Core Leader volunteers to plan and lead workdays, promote park stewardship, and educate people about the unique offering of their local parks. Special skills based habitat restoration and trails maintenance training are also held to help committed volunteers gain confidence leading work crews. All projects are chosen and monitored by park staff, but the majority of project planning and coordination, and all volunteer recruitment and communications, are facilitated by Park Champions volunteers and staff to minimize the impact on park staff time. The program collaborates with local non-profits and community groups to recruit for projects and to assist with their goals. Many Park Champions volunteers recruited by CSPF have increased their engagement with parks by becoming Volunteer in Parks Program (VIPP) volunteers and docents, taking jobs as park maintenance aides, and joining other park supporting non-profits as members and board members.

The program began as a pilot project in 2010. Due to the tangible, long-term, positive impacts of Park Champion's workdays, and the program's popularity with both volunteers and park staff, CSPF has continuously expanded the program to assist more parks and complete more projects every year. In 2015, Park Champions held 160 volunteer workdays and skills trainings. 1135 Californians worked 2185 shifts to support 32 parks. Projects included trail repair, invasive plant removal, habitat restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of historic orchards, fence construction, boardwalk repair, campground clean-ups, outdoor classroom construction, and repainting park structures.

To find out more about the program please visit: [California State Parks Foundation](#)



Volunteers at Gaviota State Park, and neighboring El Capitan and Refugio state beaches, focus on clearing and repairing popular hiking trails. Some of these trails had been closed for up to ten years due to lack of maintenance. These projects are produced in partnership with the Santa Barbara Trails Council.



Our new team at Folsom Lake SRA assists a state park environmental scientist to remove invasive plants from Lake Natomah and the surrounding land areas. Their projects will improve boating experience for park visitors, and also will make way for native plants to return. They have planned 19 projects to date.
