

State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act

Audubon California is endorsing the State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010. The measure would provide stable funding to keep California State Parks open and protect wildlife.

Our starving parks

- Funding for California State Parks was nearly eliminated twice recently, and only saved at the last minute. Budget cuts have forced nearly 60 parks to reduce hours of operation. **More cuts are expected this year.**
- These cuts have created a \$1 billion backlog in needed maintenance and repairs. Roofs and sewage systems leak, restrooms are not cleaned, bridges have collapsed, and campgrounds and visitor centers are closed.

About the State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act

- The State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund would be funded by an \$18 annual State Park Access Pass surcharge on all California cars, motorcycles, and RVs that would be collected as part of the annual vehicle license fee. Larger commercial vehicles, mobile homes and permanent trailers would be exempt.
- **Vehicles subject to the surcharge and all occupants would have free day use admission to state parks.**
- The revenues could only be spent on state parks, wildlife, natural lands and ocean conservation programs.
- Trust Fund revenues would amount to approximately \$500 million each year. Eighty-five percent would be allocated to state parks and 15% to other state wildlife and ocean protection agencies.
- The approximately \$130 million of General Fund dollars that provide a portion of overall state parks funding would be available for other vital needs, such as schools, health care, social services, or public safety.
- The Trust Fund would be subject to an independent audit by the State Auditor, and a Citizens' Oversight Committee would be created to ensure funds are spent appropriately.

Preserving California State Parks is a major issue for Audubon

- California State Parks constitute a vital portion of conserved bird and wildlife habitat. Fifty state parks are designated Important Bird Areas.
- Our state parks offer invaluable opportunities for children and families to learn about birds and wildlife and, in many instances, make that first connection to nature that lasts a lifetime.
- The relationship between Audubon and California State Parks goes back to the 1960s when the state was beginning to identify and prioritize the protection of key natural areas for their scenic, natural, historical and recreational potential. The two organizations have partnered on many conservation and education projects, with Audubon contributing not just funding, but technical support and volunteers as well.
- Along with state parks, budget cuts have caused the state to lag on its commitments to wildlife refuges, marine conservation, habitat protection. Although the initiative focuses on parks, some of the revenue will go toward these vital areas as well.

Signatures needed

Audubon California is part of a broad coalition of conservation organizations that is actively working to get this measure passed. In order for this initiative can go before the voters, we have to gather 475,000 signatures by April 15, 2010.