

October 24, 2014

Ken Wiseman, Executive Director
Parks Forward Initiative
California Natural Resources Agency
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814



Dear Mr. Wiseman and Parks Forward Commissioners,

The Marin Conservation League has been closely involved with the state parks in Marin since its founding 80 years ago, even assisting with the funding of some. We have been monitoring the Parks Forward initiative with interest and genuine hope that this effort will yield productive improvements to the Parks Department and our treasured State Parks. The Draft Plan is on track in many respects.

We are disappointed that the recommendation to remove peace officer training for all park rangers was not in the final draft. **Creating a separate division for law enforcement** makes sense, opens the ranger position to people with varied skills, dramatically reduces the cost to the department and is more consistent with other park jurisdictions. We strongly support your recommendation to open advancement within the department to qualified people with diverse skills. Rewarding innovation and leadership should be encouraged.

In “meeting future recreational needs of the state,” we anticipate that there will be a public process which addresses recreational additions to the parks and the natural resources that may be compromised. **Our natural resources are irreplaceable** and should be protected for future generations. Expanding overnight options will create demand and put greater stress on popular parks. Establishing a carrying capacity should be included in the mission of each park.

The State Parks Foundation has done an outstanding job of raising funds during these troubled times to keep parks open, training volunteers as park guardians and organizing work parties. It is not clear how the proposed California Parks Conservancy will work with the Foundation.

We suggest that a **minimum level of staffing** should be established at each park so there is some “face” with the public and potential volunteer entities. State Parks needs to return to the helm. The volunteer efforts that have kept many parks open are not sustainable in the long run. It is appropriate to have volunteer or supplemental programs provided by outside sources, but the core operations should be handled by the Department.

We appreciate the work that the Parks Forward Commission has done and encourage any next steps to provide opportunity for **public involvement**.

Yours truly,



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