

# MacKerricher State Park



## Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(707) 937-5804**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact [interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov).

### CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

For information call: (800) 777-0369

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### MacKerricher State Park

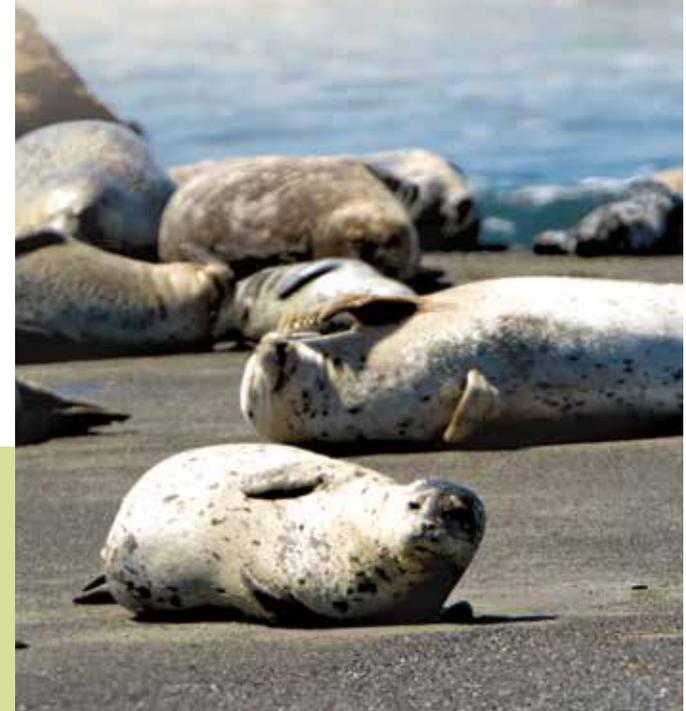
24100 MacKerricher Park Road (off Hwy. 1)

Fort Bragg, CA 95437

(707) 937-5804

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*Wild harbor seals  
sun offshore while  
scores of shorebirds  
forage in mounds of  
beached kelp at these  
pristine beaches and  
secluded coves.*



**M**acKerricher State Park's wild beauty, diverse habitats, and moderate climate make this special place on the Mendocino Coast a gem among California's state parks. Watch harbor seals and migrating gray whales, stroll on secluded beaches, bicycle along an old seaside logging road, and find solitude on one of Northern California's most pristine stretches of sand dunes.

### PARK HISTORY

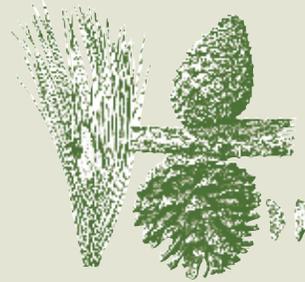
For thousands of years, the Northern Pomo and the Coast Yuki thrived on the natural riches of this area. The resources were so plentiful that other local native groups were routinely permitted to travel through Pomo and Yuki lands to fish and to collect seaweed, shellfish, acorns, and other foods. Today Native American descendants still gather foods and other resources in the practice of their tribal traditions.

Duncan MacKerricher and his wife moved to this area from Canada in 1864. A few years

### PLANT COMMUNITIES

The lake area and campgrounds host a forest of Bishop and shore pine, Douglas-fir, and other types of vegetation that thrive in the favorable soil and climate. Dunes topped with sand verbena, sea rocket, sand primrose, beach morning-glory, and grasses produce a palette of yellows, reds, and greens rolling gently across the sand hills.

Alongside an isolated stretch of beach, the Inglebrook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Natural Preserve—an unusual sand dune complex—contains several terrestrial, wetland, and freshwater ecosystems. At their widest point, the dunes extend three-quarters of a mile from the beach to Highway 1. Walk on the beach, rather than the dunes and plants, to avoid harming a number of sensitive, threatened, or endangered dune species.



*Bishop pine*

The headlands leading to Laguna Point are blanketed with a thick mat of non-native grasses, a result of past livestock grazing. Remnants of native plant communities, including sensitive species such as Mendocino Coast Indian paintbrush, Howell's spineflower, Menzies' wallflower, and other native wildflowers can be found along the headlands that extend to Pudding Creek, site of a popular beach and the Pudding Creek Trestle.



*Inglebrook Fen-Ten Mile Dunes Natural Preserve*

later, he bought 1,000 acres and named the land Rancho de la Laguna. He raised cattle, hogs, and draft horses. After a wharf was built at Laguna Point, MacKerricher allowed a gravity-fed railway to be built on his land from Cleone to Laguna Point. MacKerricher's holdings became the core of the park when his heirs sold the property to the State in 1949.

### MAJOR FEATURES

The park extends approximately nine miles along the coast. The shoreline of its southern portion consists of rocky headlands, separated by sandy beaches and coves, while miles of gently sloping beach make up the northern half.

Three miles north of Fort Bragg on Highway 1, the entrance road leading to the Laguna Point boardwalk passes three campgrounds and Lake Cleone. The picturesque overpass near Lake



*Pudding Creek Trestle*



Lake Cleone

Cleone once carried steam-driven trains to the former Union Lumber Company mill in Fort Bragg. Today, walkers, joggers, equestrians, and bicyclists use the haul road, as it is historically called. This road once extended from Fort Bragg to the Ten Mile River watershed. Thirty-acre Lake Cleone, formerly a brackish water marsh, received high-tide doses of salt water. When the haul road was built, it blocked off incoming seawater and created the present freshwater lake.

In 2014, 2.7 miles of the old Haul Road and invasive beachgrass were removed.

### WILDLIFE

Rocky shorelines are home to tide pool organisms that have adapted to their specific intertidal homes. They can die if moved or overturned, so please don't endanger these protected resources. Kelp forests line the water along the north side of the point.



Snowy plover

On the beaches, you may see shorebirds foraging amid kelp on shore.

The ocean, offshore rocks, headlands, shoreline, lake, wetlands, woods, and sand dunes attract more than 280 bird species. The Western snowy plover, a threatened species, inhabits sandy beaches year-round.

Harbor seals sun themselves on the rocks near Laguna Point. From mid-December to early April, crowds are drawn to the overlooks as gray whales migrate between the Bering Sea and Baja California. Black-tailed deer are often seen near the lake, as are raccoons and gray foxes. Great blue herons, mallard ducks, and double-crested cormorants are found year-round at the lake, which also serves as a resting place for migratory waterfowl. Though rare, mountain lions have also been sighted in the area.

### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Scheduled or guided activities—including hikes, Junior Rangers, and campfire programs—are posted on bulletin boards throughout the park. During gray whale

migration seasons, docent-led whale watch groups meet near the gray whale skeleton at the visitor center. Staffed by volunteers, the center features interpretive displays and publications. A private concession near the park offers horse rides in designated areas of the park.

### CAMPING AND PICNICKING

More than 140 campsites accommodate tents and recreational vehicles. Family campsites have restrooms nearby, tables, food storage lockers, and fire rings. Two group tent-only sites can accommodate up to 40 and 60 campers. To reserve between March and September, call (800) 444-7275 or visit [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).

Ten walk-in campsites offer a pack-in experience without a long hike. Walk-in campers park in a designated area at the south edge of Surfwood Campground and carry supplies about 50 yards to campsites.

The Lake Cleone picnic area has tables, barbecues, running water, and a great view of the 30-acre lake. A 1.3-mile trail circles the lake; licensed anglers may fish from shore or non-motorized boats for bass.



## NEARBY STATE PARKS

All parks listed are along Highway 1.

- Westport-Union Landing State Beach  
2 miles north of Westport 95488  
(707) 937-5804
- Russian Gulch State Park  
2 miles north of Mendocino 95460  
(707) 937-5804
- Point Cabrillo Light Station SHP  
13800 Point Cabrillo Dr. off Hwy. 1  
Mendocino 95460 (707) 937-5804

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The visitor center, boardwalk at Laguna Point, the Haul Road, some picnic tables, all restrooms, and several paved campsites are accessible. A beach wheelchair is available for loan at the kiosk. Call (707) 937-5804 for details. Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## PLEASE REMEMBER

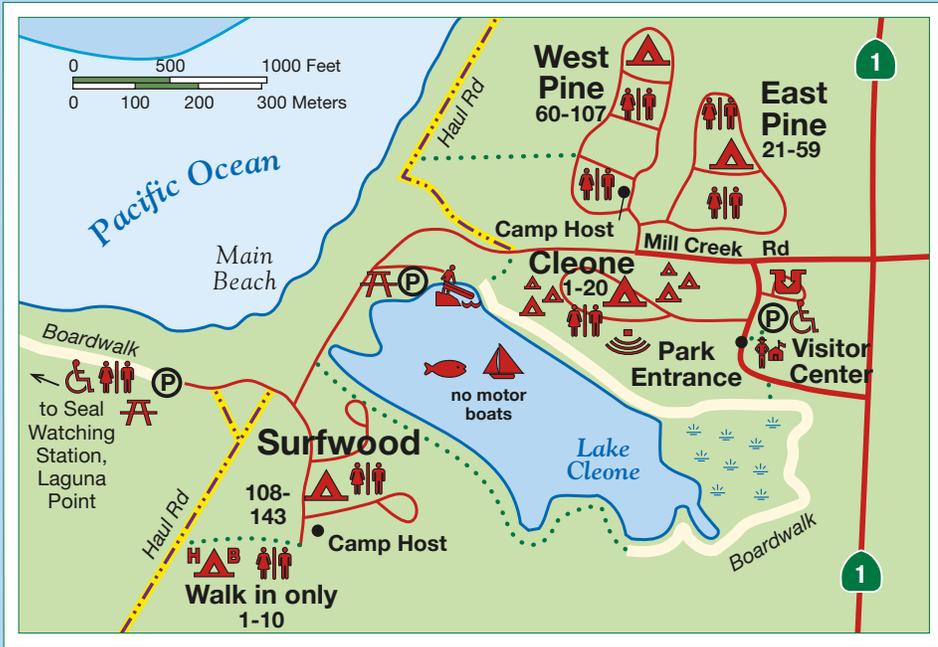
- The ocean can be very dangerous. Never turn your back on the ocean.
- All park natural and cultural features are protected by law and may not be removed or disturbed, including glass found at Glass Beach.
- Keep dogs under control and on a leash no longer than six feet. Dogs must be enclosed in a tent or vehicle at night.
- Bicyclists under age 18 must wear helmets. Do not ride bikes or horses on the boardwalks. Horses are allowed only on designated trails, and riders must ride on wet sand on beach trails.
- Keep campfires in the rings provided. Purchase firewood at the park entrance and at camp host sites. Do not collect dead or down wood; it provides important soil nutrients.



This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact: Mendocino Area Parks Association, P.O. Box 1387, Mendocino, CA 95460 • (707) 937-4700  
<http://mendoparks.org>



*Tide pools*



### Legend

-  Paved Road
-  Trail: Accessible Multi-Use
-  Trail: Hiking
-  Trail: Hike & Horse
-  Marine Conservation Area
-  Accessible Feature
-  Boating
-  Boat Launch: Hand
-  Campfire Center
-  Campground
-  Campground: Group
-  Fishing
-  Marsh
-  No Dogs Allowed
-  Parking
-  Picnic Area
-  Ranger Station
-  Restrooms
-  RV Sanitation Station
-  Viewpoint

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