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- Special Reports
- Program Schedule
- Evening Magazine
- News Team Bios
- Health
- BusinessWatch
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- Sports
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- Community
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Bay City News Wire

STUDY: CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS ENDANGERED

02/24/05 1:55 PST

A new study released Wednesday by the California State Parks Foundation finds that California state parks are "endangered" due to a number of factors including road construction, development, park staffing and the environment.

The foundation's second annual "State of Our State Parks" report listed the top six threats to California's state park system. Threats are defined as projects that would negatively impact the purpose of the park.

The threats listed are road construction, a high-speed rail being developed between Northern and Southern California, housing development, a lack of funding for conservation or restoration projects, inadequate park staffing and environmental problems.

Endangered Bay Area parks include Candlestick Point State Recreation Area in San Francisco, San Onofre State Beach in San Mateo and Eastshore State Park in Oakland, according to the study. Candlestick Point and San Onofre beach are both threatened by road construction proposals, which may endanger wildlife and ruin the park experience.

Eastshore State Park in Oakland is threatened by the construction of a high-speed rail system from Northern to Southern California. The study lists potential impacts on the park as noise, construction and habitat fragmentation.

However, a survey conducted in addition to the study found that a majority of California residents want the state to do more to protect the parks. Eighty-two percent of those surveyed wanted the state to acquire more land for future state parks, 55 percent were willing to fund the acquisitions with bonds, 63 percent said that state parks were "very important" to the quality of life in California, and 78 percent supported preventing roads, highways and commercial developments in state parks, according to the survey.

A majority of those surveyed, 54 percent, also favored keeping the high-speed rail from going through state parks, the study reported.

The survey also asked Californians what their favorite state parks were. No clear winner was chosen but popular Bay Area parks include Big Sur and Point Lobos Ranch in Monterey County and Mt. Tamalpais in Marin County.

The survey was conducted online between Jan. 24 and Feb. 4, according to the foundation. Seven hundred and eighty California residents were interviewed during the survey.



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