

ROCKHOUNDING IN CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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During the last several months there have been several incidences where Rockhounds have had an encounter with an authority figure over the collecting of specimens in a California State Park or on a California State Beach.

After lengthy searches on the internet, hours of reading regulations and several trips to the local State Senator's office there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not the headlight of the approaching train.

Yes, Virginia, there really is rock collecting within the boundaries of California State Parks and California State Beaches. The collecting regulations are intermixed within several dozen California Code of Regulations documents, which give explicit collecting requirements and conditions.

This does not mean that collecting is allowed at all parks and beaches or does it exclude collecting from all parks and beaches. As it turns out each unit within the California State Parks System, through its own regulatory processes, may, can and will regulate rockhounding within its own boundaries within the regulations established at the state level.

During the search of the regulations covering Rockhounding it was discovered that there is no actual reference to the collecting of paleontological resources, such as fossils, petrified bone or petrified wood nor is there any exclusion for these. So, during visits to California State Parks and Beaches for rockhounding activities, just keep in mind their definition of Rockhounding as defined in the California Code of Regulations.

There are over 200 units within the California State Parks System and therefore there could be over 200 different collecting regulations. After surfing several State Park and State Beach Websites it was discovered there is no consistency in the published unit regulations.

For example, Hearst San Simeon State Park allows Rockhounding as published in the California Code of Regulations, Carpinteria, El Capitan and Gaviota State Beach Websites had no mention of Rockhound opportunities. Some of the State Park websites included Providence Mountains, which includes Mitchell Caverns, Silverwood Lake, which

borders the National Forrest, had no mention of Rockhound Collecting and Red Rock Canyon State Park states that "All plant, animal, natural and cultural features are protected. Collection is prohibited without a permit".

So to be on the safe side and to avoid any confrontation with that big guy with the gun, check at the entrance to the park for the bulletin board where there will be the "Posting of Notices" where special instructions pertaining to areas where activities are curtailed or restricted are to be found for the particular State Park or State beach. If there is no posting of restrictions then check with the Park Personnel before collecting to avoid loosing the collected specimens or worse yet, receiving a citation from a Park Ranger where the fine could be between \$10.00 and \$1000.00 or more.

Just remember to follow the California Code of Regulations for Rockhounding and you should be safe. "Check before you collect".

For more information pertaining to the California State Parks and Beaches, refer to the [California Code of Regulations, Title 14](#) (Natural Resources) to serve as a guide while on Rockhounding visits.

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