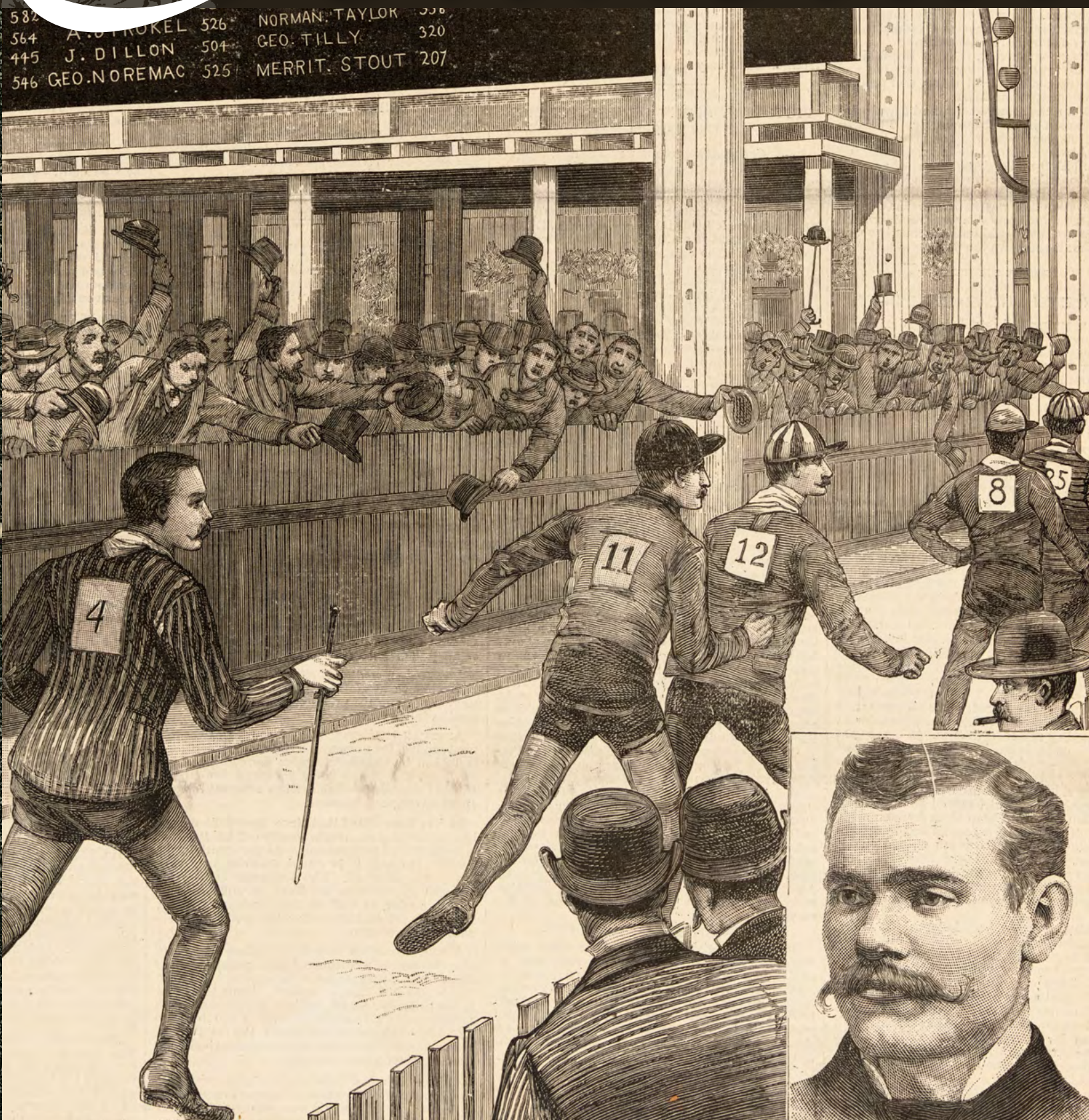


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2025

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The *Bulletin* is included as a membership benefit to Foundation members. Membership rates are:

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**Front & Back Cover:** Illustration of a pedestrian race from the February 18, 1882 issue of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine, from the California History Section. Front cover of "In His Shoes," an anthology of poems, California History Room, California State Library, Sacramento, California.

**Illustration and Photo Credits:** Courtesy of the California State Library Collections and the Smithsonian Institute.

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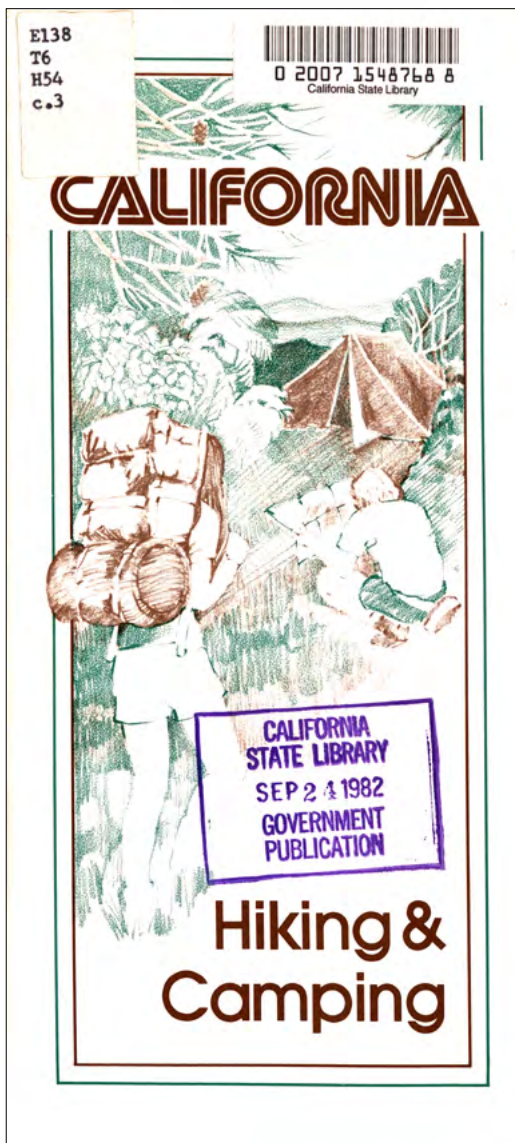
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# Take a Hike

## *How Governments Promote Outdoor Nature Recreation*

*By: Emily Blodget, Government Publications Librarian*

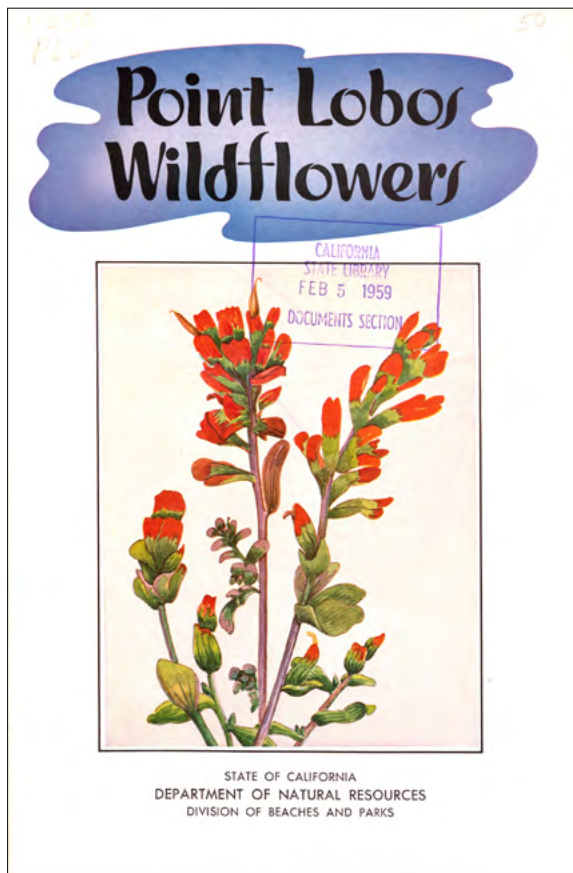


The California Office of Tourism issued this pamphlet promoting hiking and camping in California in 1982.

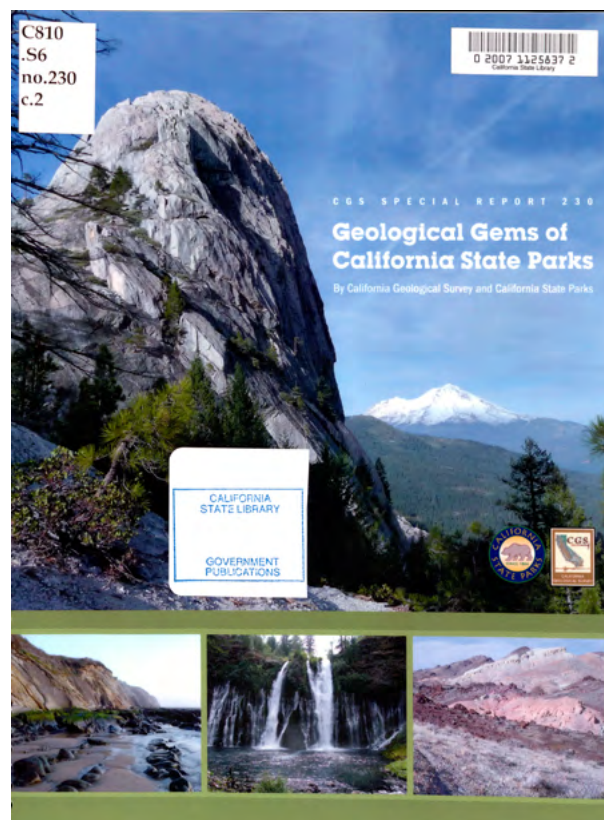
With warm weather's arrival, Californians are planning outdoor excursions: birdwatching, wildflower viewing, fishing, picnicking, hiking, camping, horseback riding, boating, canoeing, water skiing, cycling, and more. Some of the best places for these activities are state and federal public lands, those managed and promoted by government agencies such as the National Park Service, California State Parks, and the Forest Service. Other agencies, like the Army Corps of Engineers, create and maintain large projects such as dams and levees that shape the land and waterways available for recreation, while still others, like the California Department of Boating and Waterways, make regulations to promote recreation safety. These efforts are recorded in official government publications, offering a colorful window into the workings and motives of governments over the years.

*Emily Blodget is a California State Documents Librarian in the California State Library's Government Publications Section. She enjoys helping people find all sorts of information in government documents, from historical rabies statistics to zombie apocalypse survival tips (really).*



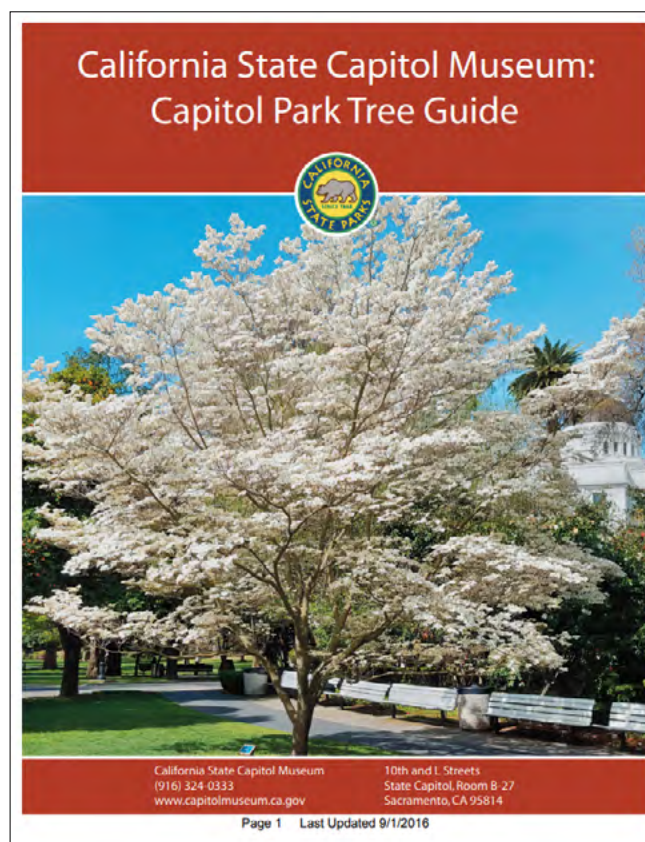


Publications showing off wildflowers, fascinating rocks, and remarkable trees.

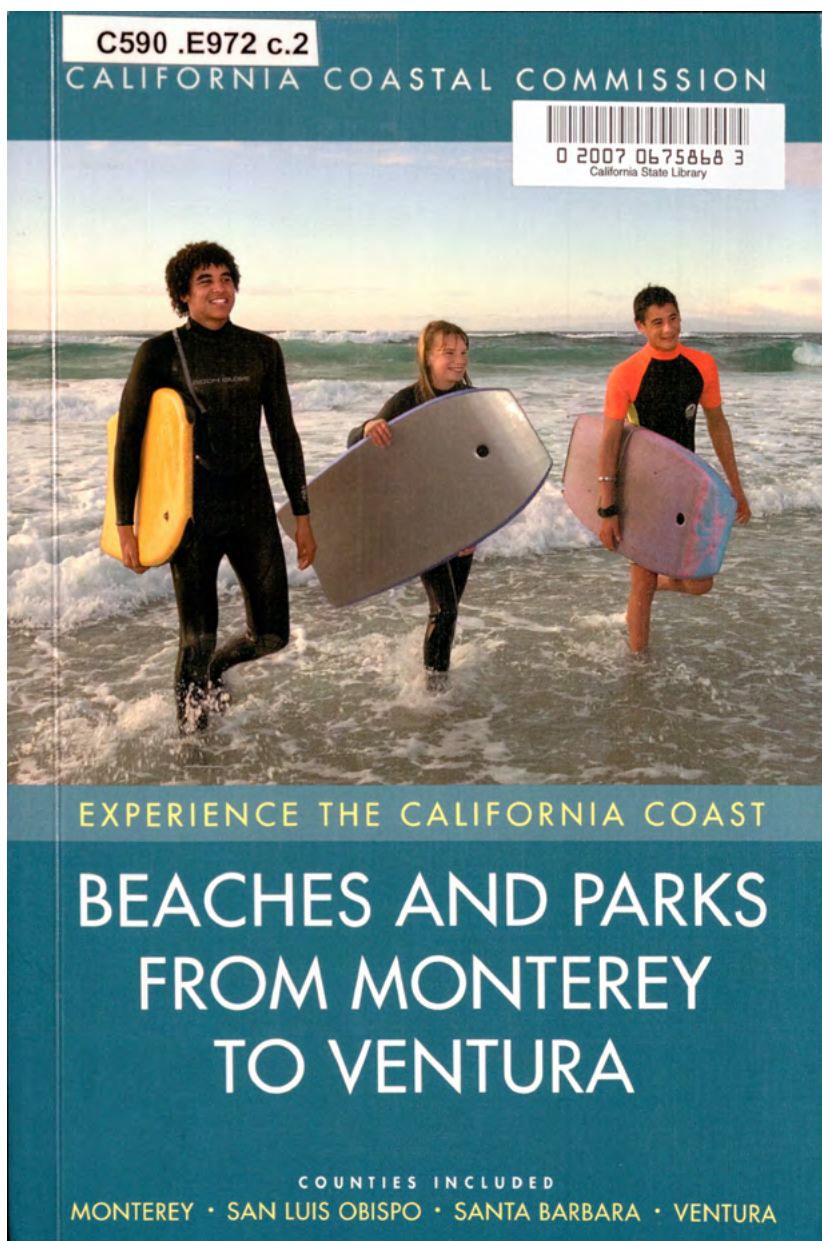


Some of the most eye-catching publications showcase attractive features of an area to entice the public to use it. For example, the Forest Service guide *Common Birds of the Sierras* provides color images and brief descriptions of the birds visitors are most likely to spot,<sup>1</sup> and the vintage California Division of Beaches and Parks guide *Point Lobos Wildflowers* contains descriptions and beautiful illustrations of flowers characteristic of the area.<sup>2</sup> For rock hounds, the State Parks and California Geological Survey teamed up to create *Geological Gems of California State Parks* so visitors can better understand and admire the most notable geological features in California State Parks.<sup>3</sup>

These segue into another type of publication, the how-to. The 1980 Forest Service publication *Pacific Crest Trail: The California Section* includes maps and color photos of attractions such as Mount Lassen, Castle Rock, and Sixty Lakes Basin and descriptions of interesting geology,







The California Coastal Commission's *Beaches and Parks from Monterey to Ventura* includes gorgeous color photographs and practical advice on how to enjoy the state's coastline.

*California Citrus State Historic Park General Plan* covers many aspects of park management relevant to recreation and historical and environmental conservation, while the Army Corps of Engineers studied the wild, scenic, and recreational characteristics of the Sacramento River.



flora, fauna, and the “unique cross section of the splendor, vitality, and mystery of the American West, past and present.” It also contains practical notes on specific trail segments: elevations, access points, temperatures, when each segment is open and free of snow, whether pets and guns are permitted, and which agency to contact for any necessary permits. Special sections add more detail about when permits are necessary and how to practice no-trace camping.<sup>4</sup>

The National Park Service offers many pamphlets, brochures, and guides with maps, notes on access and amenities,

and images and descriptions of the parks’ cultural and natural history and attractions. For example, the publications page for Redwood National and State Parks includes a current visitor guide in multiple languages, park brochures, a trip planning brochure, campground maps, maps of designated bike trails and pack animal camps and trails, safety tips, information about iconic species like elk and redwood trees, and more.<sup>5</sup> They produce many of these in print, and offer even more online.

California State Parks also offers a wealth of publications combining infor-

mation about attractions and practical how-to tips. Their “Travel Ideas” web page includes publications on topics such as discovering art in parks, where to go birdwatching or stargazing, which parks have bicycle-accessible trails, famous writers and their ties to state parks, and even how to hold an office retreat or get married at a state park.<sup>6</sup> The Department of Boating and Waterways also offers useful guides, such as canoeing and boating guides and maps for the American, Colorado, Kern, Merced, Sacramento, Smith, and Tuolumne Rivers.<sup>7</sup>

Then there are more specialized publi-



cations concerning management strategies and past or planned improvements for particular areas of public land. Most obviously, there are documents like general plans for state parks and environmental impact reports for trail construction, visitor center and parking lot construction, and other modifications to make the spaces more usable and enjoyable for the public.

Some plans focus on particular aspects of management, like *15 Years of Better Fishing; The Result of Federal-State Cooperation Under the Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Program*, a 1967 report concerning sport fishery management. *Better Fishing* documents such efforts as removing excessive weeds choking waterways, improving water quality by keeping livestock away from streambanks, removing barriers and building fish ladders, and constructing and stocking entire lakes for fishing. Some historical practices, like poisoning lakes full of “scrap fish” and restocking with “desirable fish,” might be considered reckless and destructive today.

Another special-focus publication, the 2010 *Redwood State and National Parks Fire Management Plan*, covers a topic of perennial interest to Californians. The Redwood State and National Parks adjoin both residential and commercial properties, so managing wildfires there is important to protect human lives and livelihoods. While the plan aims to keep fires from harming humans or from growing into extreme blazes which incinerate every form of life in their paths, it does not recommend suppressing all fires. On the contrary: the plan states that the former policy of complete fire suppression had profoundly negative effects on the natural and cultural ecology of the land. As if allowing the buildup of fuels to create mega-fires weren't dangerous enough, it disrupted land management strategies which had worked for millennia to allow both

Many publications focus on specific aspects of public land and recreation area management, like fishing and fire.



humans and nature to thrive. Controlled burns can reduce fuel loads (including invasive plants), create better conditions for species which evolved to need occasional low-intensity fires, promote new grass growth to support deer and elk, encourage strong new growth in plants used for basketry, and increase acorn production. The National Park Service has increasingly been collaborating with Native nations such as the Yurok Tribe to better understand and implement these traditional fire management methods.<sup>8</sup>

Some publications focus on a particular type of outdoor recreation infra-

structure, such as trails. Many trails (and the documents concerning them) were improved or created thanks to the National Trails System Act of 1968. This act defines four different types of trails. National scenic trails and national historic trails are long-distance routes designated for either their beauty and distinctive natural setting or their history as a significant travel or migration route. National recreation trails are shorter local or regional trails, usually in or easily accessible from urban areas. Finally, side trails and connecting trails give access to the larger trails