

# Memo

**To:** Parks Forward Commission  
**From:** Kathryn Welch Howe  
**Date:** March 17, 2014  
**Re:** What We Can Do Now With State Parks' Historic Resources

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You have various materials in front of you summarizing the Adaptive Use and Community Partnerships Pilot Projects, prepared for the Department and the CA State Parks Foundation. These assessments show in a tangible way that significant historic properties in State Parks can be used as productive properties in the Parks, capable of covering ongoing costs. I recommend that the Commission urge State Parks to complete in the next 12 months, 3 of the Adaptive Use Pilot Projects, using partnerships.

The Pilot Projects show that several can be implemented immediately using local partners, with limited investment:

- The Historic Churches in Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park already are used for wedding and concerts and this use could be expanded using a local event manager.
- Two of the outbuildings at Ed Z'berg Sugar Pine Point—the Caretaker's Cottage and Children's Cottage, are currently in residential and event related use. Engaging a quality local property manager to market and manage the properties as historic vacation rentals, will reinforce the Park's special events program
- The use of the Monterey Custom House as a market center for produce and refreshments can be achieved by working with a local investor/ operator.

The Department can complete these projects in the next twelve months. It can employ investment tools already in use for hundreds of successful historic properties—triple net leases, the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, CA State Historical Building Codes, experienced rehabilitation professionals (architects, engineers, investors). These steps can demonstrate both the preservation leadership of State Parks and its merits as a Partner. As in all transactions, there will be details to be worked out. None of these will be deal breakers, just the normal problem solving.

The Commission can also urge the Department to complete a system-wide inventory of the Parks to identify historic buildings that can be reused. Developing a phased, prioritized strategy to use historic buildings will provide a coherent plan to use properties, to invest and to secure partners. It will provide the basis for a network of lodging, retail, event spaces and visitors services that will lead to a “Brand” for CA State Parks—innovative, ecologically sensitive property steward with dynamic, cool, affordable facilities—appealing to existing and new audiences.

The result of this will allow State Parks to change historic properties from being a burden for financially strapped State Parks into assets that attract visitors and generate revenue to support themselves.

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