



SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

& SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST/GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

SPRING GUIDE 2011



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Healthy Parks, Healthy People

You knew that amazing scenery awaited you in these parks. But did you consider the possible health benefits of your visit?

Across the country, people are making the connection between outdoor activity and their health. Enjoy that activity in the inspirational setting of a national park, and your benefits grow:

"Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees," said naturalist John Muir back in 1898. "The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like autumn leaves."

Not only that, Muir might have added, you'll feel healthier!

"Studies are showing there are unique benefits in getting outside and getting active," says John Jarvis, director of the National Park Service. "Being outdoors can have a positive effect on everything from stress to attention disorders to healing."

Some doctors are even writing "park prescriptions" to get their patients out and active in nature.

Let Sequoia and Kings Canyon remind you of how good it feels to move outside. You don't have to go far or go fast. Ask any ranger about the range of trails here, from paved and level to rugged and steep.



Does the word "exercise" sound unappealing? Find a hobby that gets you out and in motion. Try photography, bird watching, finding the latest wildflower in bloom.... © J. Warner

A huge variety of options await you. Stroll in the shade of a sequoia grove. Amble around a sunny meadow. Climb to the open spaces above treeline or walk a foothills trail along the river. Try a bike ride below the granite walls of the Kings Canyon.

You can have your choice of temperature, as well. The elevational range of these parks creates a spectrum of conditions. In general, if it's too hot for you, go uphill. Too cold? Head down to the foothills. Visit in different seasons for the full park experience.

Whether you are walking, bike riding, or jogging, tune your senses to the natural world around you. In the open, feel the wind in your face and the sun on your skin. Let the deep quiet of the forest become part of your walk. You may notice

how the smells and sounds change with each environment.

As you go, some aspect of this special place is likely to stir your interest. Stop at any visitor center, where rangers will be happy to help find answers to questions you may have. As Director Jarvis says, "National parks are amazing places where exercise is disguised as adventure, and we sneak in some learning too."

Here's to your health!