



# NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2016



## HISTORIC SIGNING CEREMONY



Friends of California Citrus Park Board President Ron Loveridge and Secretary of National Resources John Laird sign a historic agreement on Monday, July 11, 2016. Press Enterprise Columnist Cassie MacDuff covered the event <http://www.pe.com/articles/park-808355-citrus-state.html>

California Citrus State Historic Park was founded 23 years ago in order to preserve the lush history of citrus in Riverside, California. The agreement was signed between the Friends of California Citrus Park non-profit organization and the State Parks system.



The park spans across 400 acres in Arlington Heights, and originally held a twenty year partnership between the non-profit and State Parks, which was formed in the early 1990's. However, during the Great Recession, the park struggled with funding and State Parks demanded a new agreement. The renegotiation took almost five years. According to Loveridge, the amount of time it took is unimportant. "What's most important is what's going to happen in the future."



When Loveridge and Laird formally signed the agreement, California Citrus State Historic Park became the full responsibility of the non-profit, and the non-profit will be continually raising money for maintaining the orange groves, meeting hall, amphitheater, and picnic shelter, as well as holding fundraisers to support the park. Children regularly visit in school groups, and events bring out massive amounts of people from the community. More people are visiting the park than ever before. Friends of California Citrus Park plan on enhancing the future of the park, and with this agreement, the park's future has never looked brighter.

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Friends of California  
Citrus Park



preparing a first rate newsletter. And I should recognize, and thank, our new Executive Director, Cynthia Karimi.

This past year, the Board also appointed five Ex-Officio members: Jeff Greene (Supervisor Jeffries' Chief of Staff), Keith Herron (Riverside County Parks), Connie Librenjak (Keep Riverside Clean & Beautiful), Joyce Jong (Grow Riverside), and Ted Weggeland (Riverside Visitors and Convention Bureau). They likewise have made important contributions to varied conversations and new initiatives.

The two Agreements with State Parks required many conversations and lengthy negotiations over several years. I would like to call out Board member John Brown for his consistent engagement and legal tutoring. Our efforts were led by two of California's best park consultants: Pete Dangermond and Karin Winters. As you know, the Citrus Park happened when Dangermond was State Parks Director--it was his vision to preserve the rich heritage of the citrus industry in Southern California. Citrus was our gold rush.

Major improvements have been made to the Sunkist Center: new roof, refurbished floor, painting--inside and out, plantings, lighting, chairs and tables, inside rooms, et cetera. State Parks, Friends of California Citrus Park, and Classic Coordinating Event Management (CCEM) worked together to make good things happen. CCEM is our

subconcessionaire in charge of renting the Sunkist Center, gazebo, amphitheater, and picnic area. We are delighted with their energy and professionalism for an overview of CCEM's mission and services, go on line for Loft 84. The principal owners are Cindy Alden and Shelby Worthington.

To increase attention, visitors, and understanding of the Citrus Park, the Friends of California Citrus Park are working on a variety of initiatives: new web site, citrus heritage tourism, farmer's market, partnership with Norte Vista High School, enhanced gift shop, and seasonal events. In all these initiatives, we will be working closely with State Parks. Our 2016-17 Budget sets aside money for a study of the Growers Home Concourse (\$50,000) and a design and possible funding of an Interactive Interpretive Center (\$125,000). We have also increased our support of school tours (\$10,000).

Citrus is the centerpiece of the 400 acre California Historic State Citrus Park. As President and speaking for the Board, we very much appreciate the exceptional work and constant stewardship of John Gless in maintaining the Park's citrus groves I would also note that Gless is once again selling orange juice at his fruit stand at Van Buren and Dufferin.

Finally, I welcome any ideas, proposals, or support. Please make contact at [rol820@yahoo.com](mailto:rol820@yahoo.com).

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Ron Loveridge  
July 29, 2016

It has been my honor and opportunity to be the President of the Friends of California Citrus Park. In this past year we have set the framework for renewed interest and support for the Park. And I particularly celebrate the signing of two Agreements--Operating and Concession--with State Parks.

We eagerly join what State Parks calls a new and transformative approach: "Make fundamental change to succeed in the future. Work productively with new and existing partners to improve and expand facilities, programs, and garner more resources. Expand park access for all Californians. Garner stable and diversified funding, which is imperative for a vibrant park system."

I take pride in the diverse contributions of the Board of Directors, and especially the Executive Committee: Ron Smith (Vice President), Pati Weir (Secretary), Greg Neal (Treasurer), and Terry Nielsen (At-Large). Kudos to Allison Ellingson for developing/

## NOTE FROM THE PARK SUPERINTENDENT:

Greetings, and thank you for your support for California Citrus State Historic Park. 2016 has been an exciting year for our park. The addition of Interpretive staff at the Visitor Center and continued enthusiasm by dedicated State Park Volunteers has allowed us to provide more programming, family centered events, and opportunities for visitors to view, smell, touch, and taste fresh citrus right off our trees.

During the months of January - May, California Citrus SHP staff and docents, with the support of Friends of California Citrus Park, conducted nearly 40 school tours for public, private, international, and home-school students. California Citrus SHP also hosted free events and programming including expert speakers, public citrus tasting events, and hikes.

In the upcoming months, California Citrus

SHP is continuing to expand programming and opportunities to the public with the addition of Junior Ranger programs and campfire programs. We will also be kicking off our new "Groves on Wheels" tour, a guided wheelchair accessible citrus grove tour. For information on tours, events, and dates, please visit the California Citrus SHP website and like us on Facebook.

There are more exciting things to come in the future as well. A team of dedicated volunteer engine enthusiasts have completed the restoration of our Western Engine Water Pump, an antique 1930s engine donated to California Citrus SHP by the Riverside Highland Water Company. The engine was originally located in Highland and was used to pump water to citrus groves in Riverside County. Now that the engine is restored and can be run, California Citrus SHP will soon conduct special tours and demonstrations of



the operating engine display.

Your opinion is important to us! If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions please call our main office at (951)780-6222.

Sincerely,  
Ryann Gill, Park Superintendent

# CALIFORNIA'S GOLDEN AGE OF CITRUS: THE EARLY YEARS

By Tom Spellman

California's rich citrus history goes back to the last half of the 18th century. Known as the "Mission Era", it was a time when Spanish padres moved north from Mexico and developed a chain of missions in the hills and valleys of what was then known as Alta California. The padres planted vast gardens at the mission sites, including the first seeds of Spanish sweet and sour oranges and crude early citron like lemons. At the mission San Gabriel, the first true citrus orchard in Alta California was planted in 1804. This fledgling orchard thrived in the warm San Gabriel Valley climate. The trees were healthy and soon productive. The citrus fruits produced by these first orchards were a valuable asset to the missions. The fruits were traded for needed products and services throughout the valley. Within a few years, new plantings of citrus were popping up all around the southern portion of Alta California from the seeds of these bartered citrus fruits.

In 1831, a frontiersman named William Wolfskill entered Alta California to seek his fortune trapping sea otter along its vast pacific coast. With limited success at trapping, Wolfskill tried his hand at carpentry and saloon keeping. During his first few years in the west, Wolfskill made many visits to the Mission San Gabriel and was very intrigued with their citrus orchard and grape vineyards. In 1836, Wolfskill filed a petition with the Mexican government for a tract of land adjacent to his home for the purpose of farming. Within three weeks he was granted possession of a ranch on a hillside slope in what is now downtown Los Angeles.

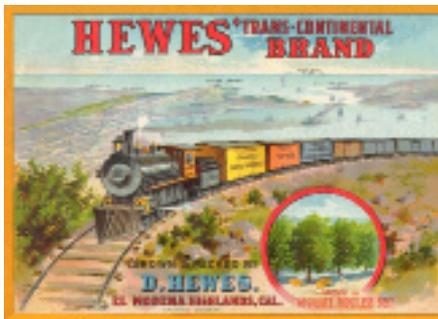
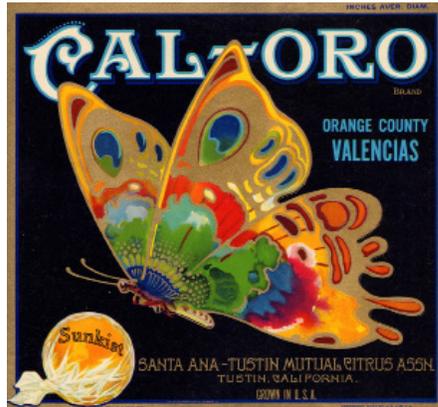
By 1841 Wolfskill was a fulltime farmer. His orchard and vineyard planted with citrus seeds and grape cuttings obtained from the Mission was healthy and fruitful. By the mid 1840's, Wolfskill owned the largest citrus farming operation in Alta California, estimated at just under 30 acres. His timing could not have been better. When gold fever struck California in 1849, fresh fruits and vegetables were a rare commodity on the west coast. Wolfskill was able to send his fruit north to San Francisco by ship, where it was re-distributed throughout the gold fields. The prospectors were willing to pay a premium price of \$1 each for his fruit, as it was the only reliable preventative for scurvy. With this new windfall income, Wolfskill worked diligently on improving his farming practices and methodologies. Due to his contributions and dedication, Wolfskill is considered the father of the early California citrus industry.

Then in 1873, an event took place that changed the California citrus industry forever. The Tibbets

family of Riverside, California received two experimental trees from the national arboretum in Washington D.C. These trees had originally been sent to Washington by a group of missionaries from Bahia, Brazil. The fruit was large, easy peeling, sweet and seedless. The fruit was marked with a unique inverted navel at the blossom end. This newly discovered orange was unlike anything the Riverside growers had ever experienced. The new orange variety was named the "Washington Navel Orange" in honor of its introduction through the national arboretum. Within a few years, the popularity of this exceptional variety had exploded. Growers were willing to pay as much as \$5 per bud for propagation material in order to grow this unique variety. To this day, the Washington Navel Orange is still one of the most popular fruit varieties on the world market.

Over the next few decades the California citrus industry expanded dramatically with tens of thousands of acres of citrus trees being planted. The expansion of irrigated lands was increased by harnessing the rivers and streams that flowed out of the local mountains and foothills. Transportation of the fresh fruit was improved by development of the transcontinental railroad system, allowing timely shipments to the midwest and east coast produce markets. Standardized wooden shipping boxes were developed to make maximum use of use of railcar space. Colorful labels were printed and affixed to the box ends, using catchy names and images to attract the eye of produce buyers. Marketing organizations like Sunkist and Mutual Orange Distributors were developing to bring the harvested fruit together and oversee issues like quality, grading, shipping and distribution. By 1925 the average California citrus farmer was growing on a mere seven acres and making five times the country's average annual income. California was the perfect climate for citrus as well as health, wealth and prosperity.

Today, much of the real estate that was California's pioneer citrus property has been re-purposed into vast residential, industrial and retail developments. Most of California's remaining citrus farming now takes place further north in California's San Joaquin Valley. The California State Citrus Park here in Riverside is a reminder of what was once a dominant and important stepping stone into the development of Southern California. The Citrus Park is here for all to enjoy. Please visit often and support this valuable heritage.





NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Permit No. 151  
Riverside, CA

**PARK HOURS:** OCTOBER - MARCH DAILY 8AM - 5PM  
APRIL - SEPTEMBER MON - FRI 8AM - 5PM  
AND SAT & SUN 8AM - 7PM

**VISITORS CENTER HOURS:** FRI, SAT & SUN 10AM - 4PM

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Please send correspondence & donations to:**  
CALIFORNIA CITRUS STATE HISTORIC PARK  
NON-PROFIT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION  
P.O. BOX 21292 RIVERSIDE, CA 92516

State Ranger Office 951.780.6222  
Non-Profit Executive Director 951.333.6786  
Visitor Center, Museum & Gift Shop 951.637.8045  
CCEM for Weddings & Events 951.515.6689  
[citrusparkweddingandevents@yahoo.com](mailto:citrusparkweddingandevents@yahoo.com)

[www.californiacitruspark.com](http://www.californiacitruspark.com)

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Cynthia Karimi, Executive Director  
Stephanie Breads, Gift Shop Manager

**WEDDINGS & EVENTS**

Cindy Alden, CCEM  
Shelby Worthington, CCEM

**CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**

Ryann Gill, State Park Superintendent  
Kelly Elliott, District Superintendent



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

We will be conducting our Urban Campfire programs on Saturday, August 27th & Saturday, September 24th at 6:30 pm in the park Amphitheater.

**AUGUST**

**27th: Bugs and Beetles!**

Understand the world of insects.

**SEPTEMBER**

**24th: Indigenous People!**

Join in and celebrate California Native American Weekend with Cahuilla Birdsingers.