

FAQ on the Public Park Project

Are the public parks going to replace the RV resorts we currently go to?

Not at all. These are meant to be an addition to the calendar. At this point we are still planning 12 rallies that are in private RV parks (which we call 'resorts' to better clarify the differences between the locations.) In addition, for 2025 we hope to add four or five events that are held in public parks.

Are the public park rallies always dry camping?

No. Some of them have water and electric hookups. The Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, for example, has electric and water hookups in an area a little away from the group area, and the group area has water. Many of these events will be dry camping, however.

Why are these events so small? Having just 16-18 places is much smaller than our usual rallies.

Actually, there's room for everyone. While there are 16 to 18 places within the group site, the park always allows up to 40 and sometimes 100 people to use the group site as a gathering place. In almost all situations there are nearby individual camping sites in the park that can be booked so everyone who wants to can attend.

What happens if I can't get into the group site?

If the group site is full, just go to Reservecalifornia.com or in some cases to Recreation.gov and book an individual site. The event page on our website will tell you which one. Check the campground map to see which sites are closest to the group site and book one of those. (We will attempt to make these clearer on our website.) The disadvantage is that you are perhaps slightly farther away from the gathering point and in some cases it costs more than if you had been in the group site, but the advantage is that you have an individual site with a picnic table, like in a regular RV park, and in some cases, like Clear Lake, you can get a spot that is lakeside. When you register for Day Use you will be included in all of the email communications re: agenda, site list etc.

Are these rallies just for Class B RVs?

So far we have only encountered one event that is suitable for rigs under 30 feet, which is Van Damme State Park, because of the size of the parking lot. All others have been open to rigs of all sizes. If there is a size restriction on rigs that will fit in the group site for an event, then we will ensure that there are individual sites nearby that can accommodate any size rig that is within the park's restrictions (usually 35').

Who can come to these public park rallies that don't come to the resort rallies?

Some RV resorts will not allow rigs that are not self-contained so our members who camp in vans or A-frames are in a gray area when they attend these events. While we have rarely encountered any objections from a park, we also can't assure members with these rigs that there will never be an objection since the park is entitled to enforce the rule any time. Also, the resorts have become very expensive, so our members who are on a budget, or who are unwilling to spend up to \$400.00 a month on our events, may decide not to attend the RV Resort rallies. We hope that the combination of RV resorts and cheaper public parks will service our membership well.

Why are these events midweek?

Most of our members are retired and available midweek. Having events in the middle of the week also gets us out of weekend traffic and makes it much easier to book spots. We have heard that gals who are still working feel left out by this so we will try to book a few of these events on the weekend as well.

Why are there no refunds?

The club has to pay the full cost of the group site regardless of how many people show up so we can't give refunds, or the club will lose money and that's not fair to other members. Also, the cost of these events is approximately \$50.00 for a total of 3 or 4 nights and so not as much of a burden to walk away from. As always, we encourage everyone to confirm the dates on your calendar before booking.

Why is there no waitlist?

There are two reasons there's no wait list for the public parks. First, if you can't get into the group site, it makes most sense to immediately book a spot nearby through Reservecalifornia.com. If you wait until someone cancels in the public group site, you may be too late to get an individual site. The second reason is that juggling the wait list and moving campers from site to site is one of the most onerous tasks for hosts. Removing the waitlist lifts a huge burden from the host. However, as we've said before, this is a new program, and we'll see whether we want to continue this.

Why can't we pay per day?

The club has to pay the full cost of the group site regardless of how many nights people stay so we can't charge per day.

Why do these events open so much earlier than the resort events?

Resort events open for registration in the first week, two months before the event. They are booked by the Activities Director nearly ten months ahead of time. With the public park rallies, though, campers outside of the group site need to book their own site and sometimes the demand is very high. You can book an individual site six months ahead of a public park event, so the team decided to open the group site for registration at that point as well. To reiterate: resort events open two months before the event and public park events open six months before the event.

So far these events have been called “host light” or DIY events. What does that mean?

We're always trying to find a way to make it easier to be a host so we're trying a different format. These events are all BYOF (bring your own food) so no potlucks, though we have had a communal BBQ grill going in the gathering spot at mealtimes. And because we're in a park with trails, beaches etc right within the park, we haven't scheduled events. Show up, do your own thing, make your own plans either on your own or with others who are attending. We will still plan to have a whiteboard at these events so people can collaborate on activities and carpooling during the rally. Hopefully this is easier for the hosts. It's not set in stone, though, and this is a brand-new program so it might change if there's demand.

How have these sites been chosen?

Members of the public park project researched 50 of the California State parks to find ones that would allow us to park our RV's either in a parking lot or in group sites. Several of us have driven to the sites to make sure that they are appropriate in size, amenities and privacy. The team has put in more than 80 hours of work into selecting these parks. So far there are eight state parks that meet our criteria. We have since moved on to national parks in the hopes of finding more. If you know of a great place, [please describe it via this form](#) so we can check it out.

Why are there only public park events between March and October?

Many of the smaller parks close at the end of October and parks that are at a higher elevation close because of snow. Many do not open again until April and this has also slowed down our research since we can't investigate parks until they open again in the spring. Rest assured, however, that the entire Activities team is always on the lookout for a great place for us.