

Jack London Park Partners facing financial challenges after litigation forces Transcendence Theatre Company to change venues for the summer.

The California State Park Rangers Association's lawsuit against California State Parks results in major loss for non-profit that operates Jack London State Historic Park



Matt Leffert is Executive Director of Jack London Park Partners.

For the first time since its inception 11 years ago (with the exception of pandemic year 2020), [Transcendence Theatre Company](#) will not present their summertime shows at [Jack London State Historic Park](#).

The transition, though temporary, means a significant loss in operational budget for Jack London Park Partners, the non-profit organization that funds and operates the park. Working with a small staff of 10 paid employees and a corps of 250 volunteers, the park receives no funding from California State Parks.

Without the revenue the theatre provides, there may be difficult decisions ahead for this beloved landmark that welcomed over 100,000 visitors from around the world in 2022.

The need to rise to the challenge feels familiar for those who rallied for the park's survival once before.

“Back in 2011-2012, California State Parks determined that it did not have the financial resources to keep this and several other State Parks open. Rather than see it close, the community came together to essentially save the park and provide a path to keep it open and accessible in the future. I'm proud to state that we were the first such non-profit and last year we signed a new agreement with California State Parks to carry on for the next 10 years,” said Matt Leffert, executive director of Jack London Park Partners.

The theatre company's change in venue is a consequence of a lawsuit filed in 2019 by the [California State Park Rangers Association](#) against California State Parks, questioning resource

protection and whether [California Environmental Quality Act](#) (CEQA) compliance requirements were being met.

As a result, the park was required to undergo CEQA compliance before any new event permits could be awarded. Those surveys are being completed and the reports will be available for public comment soon.

As time ran out to complete the environmental review, the Transcendence team had to find alternate venues for this season's shows.

"We're so thankful that Transcendence Theatre Company can continue to provide their outstanding entertainment for the public and we look forward to welcoming them back in the future," Leffert said.

"In the meantime, this leaves us with a huge hole in revenue for the year and could affect staffing and programming."

"There aren't a lot of ways that we can make up for it in such a short period of time. We receive no public funding for park operations and there are limits on the types of retail and services that we can offer inside the park. Just like in 2012, we are again relying on the generous support of the community to keep us whole," he added.

One opportunity to recoup lost revenue is Jack London Park Partners' annual fundraising gala. This year's event, titled "Jack's Bohemian Groove," will be held on September 23 at the park. Jack London and his wife Charmian loved to entertain other writers, artists, musicians, and like-minded "bohemians" at their home – now Jack London State Historic Park. The gala will celebrate their unconventional spirit as attendees experience what a visit to their "Beauty Ranch" might have been like for guests of the Londons. Tickets are available at <https://jacklondonpark.com/events/jack-london-gala-2023/>.

"In spite of what's happened, we remain optimistic and true to our mission, 'To rigorously protect the historic and natural character of the park while creating inclusive opportunities for education, recreation, discovery, and joy, leaving future generations a park that would make Jack London proud.'" Leffert concluded.

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About Jack London State Historic Park:

Jack London State Historic Park, in the heart of the Sonoma Valley, is operated and funded by Jack London Park Partners, one of the first non-profit organizations to be entrusted with management of a state park on behalf of the people of California. Funding to keep the park going strong is generated from visitors, members and generous donors. Learn more about the park at <https://jacklondonpark.com/> and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

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