



# 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL DIRECTOR'S RECOGNITION AWARDS

**Armando Quintero**  
CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS DIRECTOR

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**Thursday, March 26, 2026**  
**Starting at 9:30 a.m.**

**California Natural Resources**  
**Agency Auditorium**  
**715 P St., Sacramento**

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# ANNUAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

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## CLIMATE ADAPTATION AWARD

*Recognizes those who have taken remarkable steps in preparing for and protecting against the adverse and imminent consequences of climate change, including wildfires, flooding, erosion, air pollution and droughts, as well as threats to park habitats, ecosystems and people.*

### FUELS REDUCTION TEAM AT ARTHUR B. RIPLEY DESERT WOODLAND STATE PARK, GREAT BASIN DISTRICT

#### State Parks:

Jairo Avila	Justin Bahn	Brandon Beban
Jonathan Bechtel	Luis DeVera	Shan Drum
Julie Farkas	Patricia Farmer	Levi Freed
Arthur Heredia	Christopher Hon	Poya Kouchesfahani
Blake Larson	Peggy Ronning	Jessica Vannatta

#### Partners:

##### California State Parks Foundation

Sonya Hammons	Robert Hiem	Randy Widera
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##### Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Interpretive Association

Margaret Rhyne	Bob Waidner
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##### Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association

##### Transition Habitat Conservancy

Allie Anderson	Sarah Berryman	Vern Biehl
Sam Easley	Wesley Skelton	

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## COMPASS AWARD

*Recognizes remarkable long-term visioning, innovative thinking and mentorship that fosters talent and provides support to staff at all levels.*

**KEN KRAMER**  
Administrative Services Division

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## EQUITY AND DIVERSITY AWARD

*Recognizes those who have made an exceptional contribution to ensuring all Californians have access to the outdoors and cultural sites and have significantly contributed to the department's values of equity and inclusion.*

### OFFICE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DIVISION

Dolores Mejia	Sedrick Mitchell	Chinh Nguyen
Lovella Sein-Colon		

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## INNOVATION AWARD

*Recognizes those who have demonstrated the remarkable ability to complete tasks and projects or address park problems through creative and innovative means.*

### GOLDEN MUSSEL PREVENTION TEAM AT GOLD FIELDS DISTRICT

Mike Howard	Barry C. Smith	Meghan Sullivan
Kellie Weikle		

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## INSPIRATION AWARD

*Recognizes those who have achieved a major public objective while emphasizing community involvement.*

**WINTER BONNIN**  
Orange Coast District

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## LEADERSHIP AND VISION AWARD

*Recognizes staff with the ability to motivate and inspire others to positive action and who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the ideals and values of the department.*

**BARRY C. SMITH**  
Gold Fields District

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## **PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

*Recognizes partners who have demonstrated a high level of commitment over a substantial period toward accomplishing the department's mission.*

### **SANTA YNEZ CHUMASH FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Chris Borrayo	James Briely	Sabrina Bryant
Quintan Garcia	Bret Guisto	Gerald Guluarte
Nelson Palato	Frank Rodriguez	Gilbert Romero
Dylan Shugart	Anthony Zavalla	

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## **PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY AWARD**

*Recognizes employees who demonstrate a high degree of honesty, integrity and idealism in the face of adverse pressure.*

### **THOMAS VALTERRIA**

North Coast Redwoods District

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## **RESILIENCE AWARD**

*Honors an individual or team who tirelessly and valiantly rose to enormous challenges during an emergency response situation and/or recovery effort.*

### **WILL ROGERS STATE HISTORIC PARK COLLECTIONS EVACUATION TEAM, ANGELES DISTRICT**

Ana Chamul	Maria Garcia	Bill Hamm
Eugene Mendicelli	Michael Moss	Lupe Nichols
Noa Rishe Khalili	Damian Ruddy	Ann Stansell
Barbara Tejada		

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## **TRAILBLAZER AWARD**

*Recognizes those who have introduced new ideas or methods to accomplish the mission of State Parks or pioneered new ways to introduce the public to California's outdoors.*

### **SCOTT GREEN**

Sierra District

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## **TRIBAL PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

*This award recognizes exceptional and outstanding dedication for fostering meaningful relationships with California Native American tribes. It honors those who have gone beyond their regular duties to build trust and respect, value tribal knowledge and support tribes' right of self-determination.*

### **GREG COLLINS**

North Coast Redwoods District

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## **SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS**

*Recognizes employees who have made a significant contribution by going above and beyond the norm and making a substantial impact.*

### **CALIFORNIA BOATER CARD TEAM, INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION DIVISION**

Evan Becker	Daniel Bryant	David Klosinski
Melissa Miranda		

## SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS

(Continued)

### CRYSTAL COVE STATE PARK VISITOR OVERLOOK TEAM, ORANGE COAST DISTRICT

#### State Parks:

Paul Andrus	David Ball	Winter Bonnin
Brian Carlson	Joe Fayer	Martin Kansriddle
Constance Leong	Riley Pratt	

#### Partners:

##### California State Parks Foundation

Ashley Moore	Melissa Potts	Emi Ward
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##### Crystal Cove Conservancy

Hallie Jones	Jennifer Mendez	Kate Wheeler
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**JEREMY HARKLESS** — Angeles District

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### LAKE FIRE RESPONSE TEAM, INLAND EMPIRE DISTRICT

Jonathan Bristol	Dennis Burden	Cameron Cisek
Damien Dogherra	Aidan Gallegos	Nicholas Gonzalez
Shepard Greer	Nathan Macias	Michelle Maki
Josiah Neilsen	David Ogilvie	Leslie Piña
Ashley Reed	Sunray Robinson	Paulo Serna-Garcia
Suzette Ward	Conner Woods	

### LEES DIVISION TECH MODERNIZATION TEAM, MULTIPLE DIVISIONS

Scott Bayne	Jesse Bennett	John Bond
Peter Brandt	Josie Broussard	Josh Dixon
Scott Elliott	Peter Estes	Mary Garza
Michael Gleckler	Michael Kampmeinert	Matthew Khalar
Daniel Kraft	Alex Luscutoff	Scott Modeste
Lindsey Phillips	Zackary Reynolds	Kathy Searl
Christopher Townsend	Stephen Van Etten	Evan Walter
Sasha Wessitsh	Paul Wissler	

## SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS

(Continued)

### OCEANO DUNES ENDANGERED BIRDS CONSERVATION TEAM, OCEANO DUNES DISTRICT

Amber Clark	Joanna Iwanicha	Mattie Reddell
Sarah Robinson	Ryan Slack	

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### RESOURCE ADVISOR INCIDENT COMMAND TEAM FOR PALISADES FIRE, MULTIPLE DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS

Lisa Andreano	Portia Halbert	Kelly McFadden
Brooke Sheridan	Scott Soares	Mike Walgren
Nathanial Wigington		

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#### JAMIE STAMPS

Law Enforcement and Emergency Services Division

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### SUTTER'S FORT AND STATE INDIAN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC PARKS TEAM, MULTIPLE DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS

Ryan Bangs	Anthony Brown	Travis Carr
Ryan Disch	Betty Evans	Jason Finley
Kyle Floyd	Theresa Havelka	Heather Holm
Angela Howell	Nancy Jenner	Jared Jones
Theresa LaRose	Ileana Maestas	Devin McCutchen
Marcella McGill	Taylor Moore	Alison Parks
Marco Reyes	Channey Schaad	Michael Shanahan
Emma Silverman	Bernadette Soliz	Emily Stevens
Shyanne Sutton	Amber Thompson	Bethann Watson

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## SPECIAL COMMENDATION AWARDS

(Continued)

### TEAM S.H.I.E.L.D. (SANTA CRUZ HIGH-RISK INVESTIGATION & ENFORCEMENT LAW DETAIL), SANTA CRUZ DISTRICT

Benjamin Allan	Ron Friedman	Wyatt Hoogstede
Jacqueline Jurek	Tyler Knapp	Gabriel McKenna
Brian Menter	Trevor Morgan	Turner Roll
Scott Sipes	Alex Tabone	Kevin Ward
Brett Weber	David Williams	

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## SPECIAL ACT OR SERVICE AWARDS

*Recognizes employees who have performed an extraordinary act of heroism extending far above the normal call of duty or service and who performed at great risk to their own safety in an effort to save human life and/or property.*

**WILLIAM J. CARDINAL**  
Ocotillo Wells District

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### LAKE SECTOR FIRST RESPONDERS, SIERRA DISTRICT

Logan Connors	Brooke Fellers	Taylor Jackson
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**HAYDEN McDANIEL**  
North Coast Redwoods District

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## SPECIAL ACT OR SERVICE AWARDS

(Continued)

### NATURAL BRIDGES STATE BEACH FIRE RESPONSE TEAM, SANTA CRUZ DISTRICT

Joseph Connors	Don Crouthamel	Isaac Hatch
Trevor Morgan	Turner Roll	Michael Sakellis
Brett Weber		

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### SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT TEAM AT ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON STATE PARK, MULTIPLE DIVISIONS/DISTRICTS

#### State Parks:

Dylan Ayache	Michael Cueto	Christopher Gazzolo
Benjamin Jensen	Shane Scoggins	Bobby Scruggs
Christopher Sederquist	Jeremy Stinson	Alex Tabone
Evan Walter		

#### Partners:

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife**  
John Pengilly

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**TIM OVERBECK**  
Angeles District

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### TWIN LAKES STATE BEACH RESCUERS, SANTA CRUZ DISTRICT

Byran Kine	Kellen Noone
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## 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL DIRECTOR'S AWARD RECIPIENTS





## THANK YOU

Thank you to all the employees, partners and volunteers of California State Parks for your dedication and service to our mission.

Your extraordinary dedication and unwavering work ethic help create inclusive outdoor spaces that support the health and well-being of all Californians, while protecting the state's natural and cultural resources for future generations.

Your contributions show just how much we can accomplish together and how important state parks are for all to enjoy.

Your ability to lead with empathy, even under extreme pressure, makes you all true pillars of California State Parks.

This is a celebration of our shared mission, a moment to reflect on why we do what we do and the people who make it all happen.

A special thank you to Parks California for generously sponsoring the refreshments at the 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Director's Recognition Awards ceremony.

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## OUR MISSION

To provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.

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To view the recording of this event, please visit [parks.ca.gov/DirectorAwards](https://parks.ca.gov/DirectorAwards).

