

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Divisions of Boating and Waterways, Historic Preservation and Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation

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California State Parks Graduates 28 Peace Officers from Law Enforcement Academy in Paradise

Newest Class to “Live the Parks Life” Across California

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California State Parks today announced the addition of 28 new peace officers that will “Live the Parks Life” as rangers and lifeguards in the nation’s largest state park system. Yesterday, family members, friends and department staff applauded the class of cadets as they received their badges. As peace officers, they will serve, protect and educate visitors to California’s 280 state parks, while protecting the state’s most significant natural and cultural resources.

During the ceremony, graduates were congratulated for their achievement and reminded of the important role they will serve as ambassadors to California’s amazing park units.

“You have chosen a career of serving others and the significance is not lost on us,” said Liz McGuirk, State Parks Chief Deputy Director. “You are willing to run toward danger--coming to the aid of people who may be in their most desperate moments. We admire your courage.”

The graduates were also commended for enduring the devastating Camp Fire. Cadets had to evacuate their classroom at Butte Community College, which was used as a command center for the fire incident. Four cadets and a training officer lost their homes. Through the chaos, loss and struggle, this academy class maintained its motto, “Forged by fire, California strong!”

“We’re constantly pushed and tested throughout our lives. Although we may face many hardships, it is how we react and meet these hardships that make us who we are,” said David Wilson, this year’s Cadet Academy Valedictorian. “We have been forged in a remarkable way to serve a calling that so many great men and women have served before us.”

This year’s class of 28 cadets were chosen from a field of approximately 800 applicants. For eight months, cadets participated in Basic Visitor Services Training. Their training included

lessons in making physical arrests, conducting investigations, performing search and rescue activities, defensive tactics and firearms use. Cadets were also trained in visitor assistance, public education and interpretation, and park resource protection and management. Academy instruction prepares the students mentally, morally, emotionally and physically to enter and successfully complete the Field Training Officer's Program, which is composed of 13 more weeks of on-the-job training.

The following is a list of the graduates and the state park unit or sector each will join:

Ranger Cadets	Park District	Sector
Bakke	Inland Empire District	Chino Sector
Barry	North Coast Redwoods District	Redwood Coast Sector
Baxter	Diablo Range District	Contra-Solano Sector
Bliese	Ocotillo Wells District	Herber/Picacho Sector
Burden	Inland Empire District	Silverwood Sector
Damron	San Diego Coast District	North Sector
Duft	Oceano Dunes District	Oceano Dunes SVRA
Gunvaldson	North Coast Redwoods District	Eel River Sector
Hausner	Monterey District	Asilomar Sector
Heitzmann	Bay Area District	Sonoma Sector (Trione-Anadel)
Johnson IV	Oceano Dunes District	Oceano Dunes SVRA
Kuhnhofer	Channel Coast District	Ventura Sector
Lubben	Tehachapi District	Tejon Sector
Mauk	Monterey District	Big Sur Sector
Meier	Oceano Dunes District	Oceano Dunes SVRA
Pompa	Central Valley District	San Joaquin Sector
Schneider	San Luis Obispo Coast District	Costal Sector
Weseloh	Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District	Mendocino Sector
Wheeler	Inland Empire District	Chino Sector
Williams	Santa Cruz District	Pajaro Sector
Lifeguard Cadets	Park District	Sector
Beardlsey	Orange Coast District	North Coast Sector
Hamilton	Central Valley District	San Joaquin Sector
Helble	Gold Fields District	Folsom Sector
Petersen	Monterey District	Monterey Sector
Pior	Central Valley District	Four Rivers Sector
Sanchez	San Diego Coast District	Aquatics
Valdez	Orange Coast District	North Coast Sector
Wilson	Angeles District	Malibu Sector

For more than 150 years, rangers and lifeguards have worked closely with the state's network of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to protect visitors to California's parks. Rangers and lifeguards also protect the natural, cultural and historic resources for future

generations. Whether patrolling in desert landscapes, lakes, among wildlife and wildflowers, museums or in historic landmarks, it is truly a unique experience to work for California State Parks.

With more than 340 miles of coastline, 970 miles of lake and river frontage, 15,000 campsites and 4,500 miles of trails, California State Parks provides for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. Off-highway motor vehicle recreation, boating activities, horseback riding, on- and off-road cycling, hiking, camping and rock climbing are some of the recreational activities enjoyed in 280 state parks.

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California State Parks provides 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. Learn more at www.parks.ca.gov.

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