



February 2009

Huge Crowd Attends Grand Reopening for U.S. Immigration Station at Angel Island State Park



Angel Island State Park—Hundreds of people jammed into the grand reopening celebration tent to listen to the comments from various speakers. At the microphone welcoming the crowd is Dave Matthews, Superintendent of Angel Island State Park.

New HD Cameras at Año Nuevo

By Alan Friedman
Chief Information Officer
Information Technology

It is a cold blustery day at Año Nuevo State Reserve as Ranger Gary Strachan prepares for the annual Christmas bird count. Instead of donning a wetsuit and taking the zodiac boat out to Año Nuevo Island, Strachan comfortably sits in the Año Nuevo Visitor Center. From his computer, he operates a high definition webcam on the island 1 ½ miles away. He pans the horizon, snapping images of bird colonies as he goes. The

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Shawn Brown of Information Technology and Deputy Director for Administrative Services Manuel Lopez examine the new SealCam.

It seemed like the weather could not have been much worse. But while the monsoon-like rain drenched everything in sight, it did not seem to dampen the spirit of the hundreds who went to Angel Island State Park to witness first-hand the grand reopening of the newly restored United States Immigration Station. About 800 were anticipated, more than 1,600 showed up.

Angel Island Superintendent Dave Matthews said that perhaps the size of the crowd on such a bad weather day tells of the real significance of this restoration and grand reopening. Said Matthews, there are thousands of people who have a strong attachment to the Immigration Station through friends and family members and no amount of bad weather was going to keep them away.

In planning for more than a year, the grand reopening of phase one, \$15 million in restoration work, was held on February 15. The restoration made it possible for the first time ever for visitors to have access to all floors and all rooms containing the nearly 200 poems carved into the walls by the immigrants

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Director Ruth Coleman

A Tough Budget, But We are Moving Forward

At long last we have a budget. It appears that compared to many General Funded programs, we have largely been spared any additional deep cuts. We expect some level of furlough to continue, but that will be determined by collective bargaining. The reduction in staff time and seasonal funding will hurt us and we are already hurting from past cuts.

This economic downturn continues to eat away at all of us, and it causes a great deal of stress and pain for everyone. The best we can do is try to help each other by finding better ways to serve each other, and having patience with each other. Despite the challenges, staff in our department continues to move forward. I want to share three examples of how we are thriving in bad times.

Our department has nearly completed a \$15 million renovation of the Angel Island Immigration Station. Unfortunately, with only a few hundred thousand dollars outstanding, the bond freeze prevented us from finishing the interpretive panels. However, most of the excellent interpretive displays inside the barracks building were already in

place. Our Grand Reopening was held February 15, and it had to have been the rainiest day in the history of the Bay Area, yet over 1,600 people made the trip. The park looked great, the staff managed the crowds, and the media loved it. We had coverage across the nation and in China and all of it was positive. As one of our partners from the tourism industry put it: "Doing this was a home run that allowed State Parks to again demonstrate it is a can-do agency that overcomes adversity with creativity, determination and commitment to its mission."

About the same time we were re-opening Angel Island, Ocotillo Wells SVRA was rolling out a new and extensive line-up of nature-based interpretive activities for the visitors over Presidents' Day weekend. Programs included daily junior ranger programs, live animal exhibits, tours of the Freeman property, ATV geology tours of Ocotillo Wells, wildflower walks and star gazing. Over 400 adults and children participated. Ocotillo Wells staff and visitors are excited about the many opportunities for education and interpretation in the park this season.

Finally, we recently saw the fruits of our investment in urban

kids through our Outdoor Youth Connections (OYC) program. Deputy Director Sedrick Mitchell walked into a meeting of park professionals in Richmond to discuss opportunities to engage youth in a leadership program in our state parks. Two of the staff who greeted him had previously worked with our program graduates in their previous jobs in Stockton and Sacramento. Because of the positive impact the program brought to their communities, they enthusiastically embraced bringing the program to Richmond. OYC, which is entirely funded by private donations, trains urban teens to lead their peers and community in outdoor recreation activities and community service projects. Over the past two years, OYC has trained 280 youth who have served nearly 5,000 people from some of California's most impoverished, park-poor communities.

These examples are merely the tip of the iceberg of the multitude of ways we continue to improve the lives of Californians, even in the toughest of times. We have not turned back, we face forward.

Sunrise Powerlink Avoids Anza-Borrego Desert State Park



A packed house voiced their disapproval for a power line through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park during a 2007 Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

On December 18, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) voted 4 to 1 in favor of San Diego Gas & Electric Company's (SDG&E) Sunrise Powerlink. However, in approving the transmission line, they chose the southern route that does not go through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. SDG&E had initially proposed a northern route as their favored alternative. It would have gone through the middle of the park and would have required that the State Park and Recreation Commission de-list wilderness, something that has never occurred.

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger issued a statement expressing strong support for the line. In a letter to the CPUC, the Governor said: "I'm pleased that the CPUC approved a route that will not only help the state meet our 33 percent renewable energy and greenhouse gas reduction goals, but also avoids Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and all tribal lands."

Toll Road: Feds Uphold State Rejection

On the same day that the Sunrise Powerlink transmission line through Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was rejected, the announcement came that the proposed Foothill-South Toll Road through San Onofre State Beach was likewise being rejected.

The U.S. Department of Commerce on December 18, 2008, upheld the California Coastal Commission's rejection of a proposed 16-mile toll road extension that would have cut through San Onofre State Beach. According to the Commerce Department, federal officials could only override the state's decision if they found the project had no reasonable alternatives or was necessary to national security. They said neither criteria was met.



Over 1,000 people attended a 2005 meeting of the Park and Recreation Commission, most opposing the proposed toll road through the park.

The toll road agency can appeal the decision in federal court. However, a January 9 news release from the toll road agency stated that the Toll road board had opted not to make a

decision regarding litigation at this time and instead directed staff to reach out to stakeholders to seek common ground on a solution for the traffic problem in South Orange County.

HD Cameras

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Año Nuevo State Reserve's elephant seal colony can be seen live on the Internet courtesy of the new HD SealCam. It replaces a low-resolution camera that operated from the island for seven years .

annual bird count is completed quickly.

Strachan is working with a new High Definition camera, the HD SealCam.

It provides live, high definition video (720p) of the elephant seal colony on a 58-inch plasma screen in the visitor center. A video stream from the camera is also available on the Internet, enabling anyone to follow the activities of elephant seals and other wildlife from any computer.

The HD SealCam replaces a old low resolution webcam that was concessionaire-operated from the island for seven years. The original webcam added ambiance to the visitor center, was one of the most popular features of



SealCam images can be viewed from visitor center or online.

the State Park Web site, and was an important component of the PORTS program (Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students).

In looking for a replacement, the team wanted to upgrade the video from standard definition to high definition. High Definition video would dramatically improve the quality of the new the new Año Nuevo State Reserve Marine Education Center exhibit.

The upgrade proved to be a difficult task. HD webcams are not yet available off-the-shelf at a reasonable price. So, working together, park staff, the Northern Service Center and the Information Technology Division developed a solution to their camera dilemma. They engineered their own webcam by combining components from several vendors. Incorporating a Cool Parks theme in the Exhibit, they also installed a four panel photovoltaic array for solar power to the camera.

The webcam can be viewed at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/523/video/AñoNuevo2008.asx>.



Above: Shawn Brown of Information Technology discusses the functions of the new HD webcam control panel to Lynn Black of Administrative Services , Ranger Ziad Bawarshi, and Deputy Director for Administrative Services Manuel Lopez. Below: The new camera aids bird counts.



Above and Below: The new HD SealCam can pan around Año Nuevo State Reserve for wildlife counts without leaving shore.



Angel Island Draws a Crowd in Spite of Rainy Weather

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detained here between 1910 and 1940.

People filled several boats, crowded the buses and trams and headed straight for the barracks building. Their faces told the story. They looked around in awe. They stood silent and reverent as they listened to the history of the building from guides with California State Parks and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. There was an outpouring of questions and a heartfelt public reaction that indicated there was a new understanding of what it had been like for those who had been detained at Angel Island.

The Angel Island Immigration Station became a detention facility, because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that was enacted to keep Chinese immigrants out of the country. The newly-created and dramatic displays give visitors a sense of what life was like for thousands of men, women and children who were held captive behind barbed wire, barred windows and locked doors for weeks and months.

In the reopening ceremony, State Parks Director Ruth Coleman told the audience that we need to be honest about our immigration history, because if we cannot, we cannot function as a democracy. She said that in the toughest of economic times, those who supported this restoration persevered, saving this building when others wanted it destroyed. The Consul General of the People's



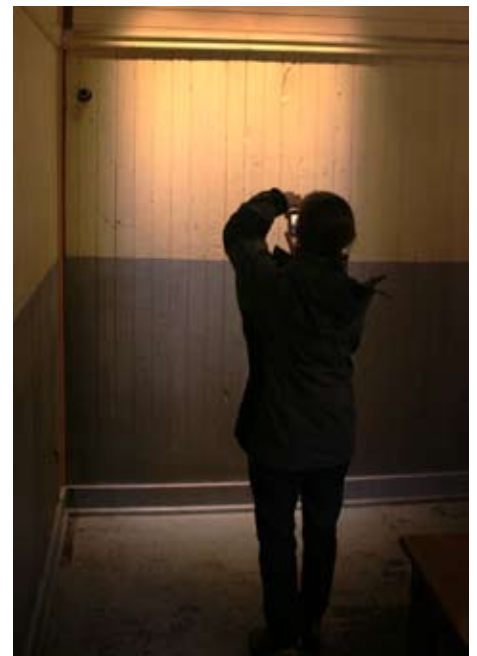
At the grand reopening, Retired California State Park Ranger Alexander Weiss told the story of how he came across the poems on the walls by accident back in 1970 while walking through the barracks with a flashlight. The barracks building had been scheduled for demolition, but the discovery led community groups and individuals to urge that the historic building be saved.



State Parks Museum Curator Katie Metraux helped make the living area of the barracks come alive with the personal items and fixtures. Metraux said more than 2,000 items were found in antique shops and elsewhere or designed and built to replicate what was seen in old pictures, to include the bunks and light fixtures. "I wanted it to look and feel like it was when these people were here," said Metraux.



The prominent feature of the U.S. Immigration Station is the barracks building. The covered stairway was part of the phase one restoration. It was built to match the original that new immigrants used.



New lighting has been installed in the Immigration Station barracks building to better highlight some of the nearly 200 poems carved into the walls by those detained here between 1910 and 1940.

Republic of China, Gao Zangshen, told the assembled crowd that the people who came here were interrogated and some stayed for months, but they persevered and helped build the United States into what it is today. Cynthia Garrett, the National Park Service Superintendent of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty, told the audience that by opening this barracks, you have opened this story to the world. Kathy Lim Ko, President of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, the organization that partnered with State Parks to fundraise and restore the station, said, "Today is literally a dream come true." She said the station represents a compelling story that is an important part of our American experience.



California State Parks Interpreter Casey Lee explains the history of the poems found carved into many of the barracks walls. In this room, some of the poems are highlighted by the painted area behind Lee.

Celebrating 75 years of Mountain Adventure



Acting Chief Deputy Director Michael Harris speaks at the closing ceremony as District Superintendent Mike Wells looks on.

**By Heidi K. Addison-Bier
Ranger**

Cuyamaca Rancho State Park

When Cuyamaca Rancho and Palomar Mountain announced they were going to celebrate their 75th anniversary, visitors immediately began asking for the details. We heard from a variety of visitors, including those who grew up playing in the Sweetwater River and those who picked apples from the Doane Pond apple trees.

Once the event began, more than 200 visitors attended. Many reminisced with staff and volunteers, sharing childhood memories, favorite trails, summer camping escapes, and other treasured personal stories about “their mountains.”

Cuyamaca Rancho and Palomar Mountain history were shared by an oral presentation, a multimedia photo gallery, and the roving retired park employees.

Park Maintenance Supervisor Dave Robarts delighted visitors with his famous pressed apple cider from Palomar Mountain apples.

There were three special appearances from the department to honor the celebration. Acting Chief Deputy Director Michael Harris introduced the reforestation project. This is an ongoing project that addresses the future of our parks under the “Cool Parks” program. Southern Division Chief Tony Perez did a walking tour of the event and shared a personal congratulations to all of the parks’ volunteers and staff. District Superintendent Mike Wells welcomed the visitors and spoke of the magic in the two parks.

Four people made the celebration a reality: Montane Sector Superintendent Nedra Martinez, Supervising Ranger Bob Hillis of Cuyamaca Rancho,

Park Aide Kim Marinelli and Treasurer Jeri O’Keefe of the Cuyamaca Rancho State Park Interpretive Association (CRSPIA). Raucous applause and wolf whistles for their success.

We also had the amazing energy of CRSPIA Vice President Dave Hernandez and Board Member Michele Hernandez who orchestrated the people and the schedules throughout the celebration.

CRSPIA donated all the funds to hold the anniversary celebration at the Cuyamaca Outdoor School.

So here’s to the next celebration, in 2033, when Cuyamaca Rancho and Palomar Mountain can proudly announce 100 years of Mountain Adventure!



District Superintendent Mike Wells and Montane Sector Superintendent Nedra Martinez.

Kelly Cabin Canyon Burning Completed



The Kelly Cabin Canyon Complex controlled burn will improve the wildlife habitat.

**By Tim Reilly
Environmental Scientist
Gavilan Sector**

State Park resource staff from the Monterey, Santa Cruz and Central Valley districts, along with local CAL FIRE personnel, recently completed a controlled burn of the Kelly Cabin Canyon Complex project area totaling about 4,680 acres in Henry Coe State Park.

This project was planned and organized as a VMP (vegetation management program) controlled burn between California State Parks and CAL FIRE. It was aimed at reducing heavy fuel loads in both oak woodland and chaparral

habitats and decreasing the potential intensity of future wildfires. Ecological objectives included improving wildlife habitat by doing three things: 1) encouraging the growth of forbs and grasses, 2) regenerating chamise, ceanothus, and manzanita, and 3) thinning out (eliminate) some of the smaller, weaker trees and shrubs.

Because of its large size, the project area was divided into three separate burn units. The first (980 acres) burned in a prescribed burn in the early months of 2007. The second (2,050 acres) burned during the recent Lick Wildfire

in September of 2007. On November 21, 2008, we burned the third and final plot (1,650 acres).

The recent burn was successful, not just because it went off without a hitch or any dramatic surprises, but also because it fully achieved our stated objectives. For example, in the oak woodland habitat, we allowed the fire to slowly back through the grass into the oaks, creating a low-intensity burn that cleared away the high fuel loads under many of the oaks while preventing severe scorching that often kills oaks and other larger trees and shrubs during a wildfire.

Supervising State Park Ranger Jason De Wall provided this picture of the cabins at McArthur-Burney Falls State Park, taken on December 17. Despite temperatures reaching negative 8 degrees fahrenheit, this picture is a reminder that our parks are spectacular year-round.



Photo by Ranger Andrew Urtie, McArthur-Burney Falls SP

LA Sector's Innovative Ways To Connect With Urban Audience

By Kristen Perry
State Park Interpreter I
Angeles Sector

Los Angeles Sector staff has been filling gaps in recreational and educational opportunities for visitors in this area's urban parks. Their new interpretive programs and eagerness to participate in statewide and local campaigns have helped them bring a state park experience to the urban core.

Monthly campfire programs and weekly discovery and adventure programs for families are now being offered at downtown's Los Angeles SHP. Rangers and staff are visiting local schools on a traveling "Virtual Campfire" program which focuses on urban wildlife, protection and preservation of the State Park System, and park careers.

In the sector's effort to support the Children in Nature campaign, State Parks partnered with city, county and national parks, as well as conservation agencies to facilitate "Children Outdoors!" It gave children an opportunity to participate in the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights. The event provided outdoor opportunities for 150 local inner city children, including 25 who also spent the night in the "wild" of a local county park, thanks to Fam Camp and the California State Parks Foundation. For most, this was their first taste of camping.

To bring unexpected sights to the city, Los Encinos State Historic Park's Stagecoach Day became a rest stop for a real stage coach pulled by four mules that traveled more than 17 miles of former stage line, today called Ventura Boulevard. Visitors were invited to sit in a mockup of a stage to experience the tight fit, and all were treated to period music, games and activities while waiting for the real stagecoach.

Former visions of what could be are now being realized, and the staff is honored with its new role of bringing nature into the city. This is only the start for this area once called the "most park-poor" in the state.



Karma Graham and King Richard visited a local school as part of a "Virtual Campfire" program.



Park Interpretive Specialist Jennifer Dandurand and several reenactors pose after a living history event.



A stagecoach traveled more than 17 miles of what used to be a stage line during Los Encinos State Historic Park's Stagecoach Day.

Topanga State Park Volunteers Help Restore Streambank

By Rosi Dagit

Senior Conservation Biologist

Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains

Topanga State Park staff and volunteers planted hundreds of trees, shrubs and other riparian vegetation in lower Topanga Canyon in December. It was part of an ongoing effort to restore one of only two creeks in the Santa Monica Bay that support a reproducing population of the federally endangered southern steelhead trout.

Earlier in the year, the park removed a berm that for decades had been hindering the ability of steelhead trout to migrate in the creek and kept the water from a 12-acre floodplain. Once the Rodeo Grounds Berm was removed, and its 1,334 truck loads of fill material were hauled away, the area was bare and needed vegetation.

More than 60 volunteers gathered at the site to initiate the restoration planting on December 13.

The Morales Brothers, representatives of the Gabrielino-Tongva Tribe, started the day with a beautiful blessing. Volunteers from 11 organizations then spent the day weeding, planting, and hauling. Although the skies threatened rain, and a few sprinkles fell, we managed to plant more than 200 cottonwoods, sycamores, oaks and other riparian species.

Later that week, four inches of rain fell. It was enough to reconnect the creek, as well as water the new plants. The creek channel is already starting to find its natural path!



Ken Wheeland

Volunteers plant berm at Topanga State Park.

Thank you to all who contributed
Weeding and Planting
State Park Environmental Scientists:

Suzanne Goode

Nat Cox

Kristi Birney

RCDSMM Biologists:

Sandra Albers

Steve Williams

Residents:

Jayni Shuman

Dennis King

Scott King

Cut Mulefat and Willows

Biologist Casey Burns

of the Natural Resources Conservation Services
Students from Our Lady of Malibu Catholic School

Planted Acorns

Mountain Restoration Trust
Jo Kitz and volunteers
TreePeople

Removed Arundo

Sierra Club Trails Crew
Temescal Canyon Association

Hauled Arundo

Residents:

Sean Denny

Jenny Balmagia

Rangers:

Carlos Matamoros

Andrew Bampton

State Parks Maintenance

Worker Mark Swinkles

The Jesepho Team

Dumpster

Temescal Canyon Association
Topanga Hauling

Promotions: November and December



Dave Gould Superintendent Diablo Vista District

Dave Gould has been a park professional for 35 years. Prior to starting his career with State Parks as a Ranger at Carpinteria State Beach in the Channel Coast District, he worked seasonally as a firefighter for the US Forest Service and as an interpreter with the National Park Service. Dave

then spent eight years at Mt. Tamalpais State Park before taking on the duties as Supervising Ranger in the South Sector of the North Coast Redwoods District. This was followed with an assignment as the Chief Ranger of the Four Rivers District. Dave then served as the Superintendent of the Calaveras Sector. Most recently Dave has worked as the Marin District Superintendent. Dave grew up in suburban Los Angeles and has a BS degree in Natural Resources Management from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

Ron Krueper Superintendent Inland Empire District

Ron Krueper's career has spanned over 25 years with California State Parks. He first started as a seasonal lifeguard at Silverwood Lake in 1975, later becoming a permanent lifeguard at Huntington Beach State Beach. Returning to the San Bernardino Mountains, he worked as a Supervising Ranger at Silverwood Lake for over 11 years until 1999 when he accepted the Chino Hills/Citrus Park Superintendent position. This was followed with an assignment as the Lake Perris Sector Superintendent from 2004 until 2006. His most recent assignment has been the Tehachapi District Superintendent for the last 2 years. He is a graduate of San Francisco State University with degrees in Health Science and Physical Education.



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Lake Oroville Sector
12/8/2008

Jared T. Mingle
Santa Cruz Mountains Sector
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12/2/2008

Peter J. Monahan
Redwood Coast Sector
12/15/2008

Park Maintenance Worker I
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Mendocino Sector
11/1/2008



John Arnold's Mailbag

James L. Swisher
Sierra Gold Sector
12/2/2008

Personnel Specialist

Isabel Rodriguez
Personnel Services Section
12/22/2008

Senior Park & Recreation Specialist

Gail K. Sevrens
Colorado Desert District
12/2/2008

Skilled Laborer

Helen R. Henkelman
North Coast Redwoods District
12/16/2008

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Angel Island Sector
12/2/2008

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Santa Cruz Mountains Sector
12/2/2008

Peter Stewart
Santa Barbara Sector
12/2/2008

We just read your news release of October 2 announcing the closure of Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park campground until Memorial Day 2009. Although this is unfortunate, we applaud what you are doing to preserve and protect this wonderful site in the wake of the terrible Basin Complex fires this past summer. Over the years my family and I have camped there many times, and we have appreciated the rich variety of things to see and do at Pfeiffer Big Sur. We wish you well as you remove and replace the bridges, and take other preventive measures to benefit the park. We look forward to returning sometime in the future.



Close encounters of the pelican kind: this photo by park visitor Luis Meija was taken at San Onofre State Beach in early January.

to the assistance of Ranger Mac. We took her tour of the park and she provided us with a lot of great information. Please know that she is doing a great job and that we really enjoyed the park, the school house, and the cemetery.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of going to the Empire Mine site and fell in love with the grounds.

My family and I camp at your El Capitan State Park every year. We enjoy it immensely. We like the campsites in your upper loop but the bathroom/shower facilities there are beyond subpar. We have noticed that these facilities in the middle loop have been redone and are very clean and user friendly.

We just returned from our visit of the Columbia State Historic Park. I wanted to let you know that we really enjoyed our visit, mostly due

Transitioning to Accessibility

By Wendy Martin

Accessibility Unit

A Transition Plan is a document that public entities are required to produce by the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is a plan that identifies physical barriers to accessibility along with a timeline for removal of those barriers. California State Parks' plan contains a separate appendix called the work plan, which lists thousands of projects that must be accomplished, from minor parking modifications to replacement of entire use areas. It will take until 2016 to be fully implemented. You are encouraged to view the work plan on the share drive in the accessibility folder to see the specific projects that are listed for the parks in your district.

For several years now the department's Accessibility Program has been funding and executing these projects all over the state based upon park unit levels identified in the plan. Projects are being completed by field staff, private contractors, California Conservation Corps crews,



Adding accessible elements to parks allow a larger portion of the population to enjoy our parks.

and by the Department's Accessibility Construction Unit crews. To date, Accessibility Program projects have modified or replaced nearly 200 restroom/combination buildings, more than 500 picnic and camp sites and untold numbers of parking spaces, routes and trails. When it is all said and done, the department will have spent more than \$100 million toward making our parks accessible to all visitors. But it doesn't end there.

Your role as a State Parks employee is to ensure that any construction projects you are

planning, including alterations to existing facilities, include the proper application of accessible features. Consult the California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines when planning your projects and make sure that PEFs get sent to the Accessibility Section for review. The turnaround for project review is usually less than two weeks and in cases where accessibility seems difficult to accomplish, the Accessibility Section specialists can help you determine how best to provide it.

News & Views

2009

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Submit articles to newsandviews@parks.ca.gov

Please include captions and a photographer's name with all photographs.

Photographs must be TIFF or JPEG format. We cannot use pictures embedded in Microsoft Word documents.

NEW: Please limit article length to 300 words. Articles may be edited for clarity and length.

The deadline for the June issue is April 20.

Andre Family Ranch Preserved to Protect Pristine Coast Area



California State Parks staff, members of The Nature Conservancy, and members of the Andre family listen to a presentation on the preservation of the land donated by the Andre family.

The Nature Conservancy, California State Parks and the Andre Family came together on a hillside in San Luis Obispo County on December 5 to celebrate the preservation of 1,902 acres of ranch lands and surrounding habitat. In this preservation agreement, the Nature Conservancy purchased a conservation easement on approximately 1,172 acres and California State Parks acquired the remaining 730 acres to be added to Montaña de Oro State Park.

“From a statewide perspective, this addition to Montaña de Oro adds a great and special landscape to the California Coastal Trail, one of the finest trails of our nation,” said Ruth Coleman, director of California State Parks. “The Andre Family has loved this property for years and is now asking us to preserve and protect it for all generations to come. We gladly honor that commitment.”

The Andre ranch has been the home of the family’s ranching operations for more than 100 years. “The family wanted to keep the land for our continued use and enjoyment,” said Bill Wall, Andre family member and spokesperson. “We all agreed that conservation was the best future for the ranch and that the family and the ranching heritage were too important to sacrifice to development.”

“It’s a thrill to know that, together with State Parks, we did what we set out to do when Proposition 12 passed in 2000,” said Tom Maloney, acting central and north coast regional director for The Nature Conservancy. “We’ve safeguarded thousands of vital acres of globally significant habitat, we’ve expanded recreational opportunities for all Californians, and we’ve helped the Andre’s protect the land they’ve loved and ranched for more than three generations.”

Sam Blakeslee, the Republican assemblyman from San Luis Obispo County, attended the celebration, telling the gathering:

“Countless generations will benefit from Montaña de Oro State Park’s inclusion of this exceptionally scenic Irish Hills property.”

The Andre Family will continue ranching operations. This is the latest in a series of joint projects between The Nature Conservancy and State Parks that have conserved more than 3,200 acres. More than 2,000 acres have been added to Montaña de Oro State Park. An additional 1,500 acres jointly owned by The Nature Conservancy and the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is currently proposed to be acquired by State Parks.

Tracy Hurtig: Telecommunications Analyst

By Valerie Laam

Staff Services Manager

Business Management Services

The Business Management Services (BMS) Section, Asset Management Telecommunications Unit at Sacramento Headquarters (HQ) plays an integral part in connecting State Park offices together so they communicate effectively with the outside world. BMS Telecommunications Analyst Tracy Hurtig is the guiding force behind that effort!

State Park staff haven't always had reliable resources to turn to for advice on how to "build a telephone system" at their locations. That wasn't until 2002 when the Asset Management Unit hired Tracy as a Business Services Officer for the Telecommunications Unit. The unit was introduced to various State Park offices throughout the state in dire need of updated telephone systems, cable repairs, and cabling infrastructure for new, existing and re-constructed buildings. Since then, Tracy has become the expert on all things telecommunications. She keeps telephone lines repaired and in service, relocates phone



Tracy Hurtig poses with the inner workings of the headquarters phone lines.

equipment during office moves, helps design new phone systems, and reduces costs by monitoring the review of all telephone bills, among other telecommunications services.

Tracy has been with DPR for 23 years, serving in various capacities, including a stint as a communications supervisor with NORCOM. She is currently managing several telephone system installations, assisting districts with the many details involved in completing these crucial projects. Success requires staying current on the latest technology, something few districts have the staff time to do. Tracy was instrumental in replacing telephone cable in 10 State Parks offices, as part of the deferred maintenance program. In some offices, the cable was so badly deteriorated it was literally taped together like a jigsaw puzzle! In other cases (like Angel Island), the existing cable dated back to the 1950s.

"Bringing new telephone cables into historic buildings, such as Sutter's Fort or Angel Island can be extremely sensitive," said Tracy.

To date, Tracy has upgraded telephone systems for approximately 50 State Park locations. She has an ongoing project list, with new projects being added by the Service Centers each month.

"I enjoy giving our State Park offices dependable communication systems that assist them in their day-to-day activities," said Tracy. "I'm especially grateful for all of the wonderful feedback from our customers."



Tracy Hurtig tests phone lines.