

NEWS & VIEWS

Celebrating 65 Years as the Employee Newsletter of California State Parks



October 2008

Allensworth Celebrates 100th Anniversary

An estimated 5,000 people from across California made the journey to Allensworth State Historic Park to enjoy the Centennial Celebration of this historic township on October 11 and 12. It was nearly standing-room-only at the main stage, where actor William Allen Young, from “CSI: Miami,” kept the crowd enthused, smiling, laughing and enjoying every minute of a program packed full of rousing speeches, foot-stomping music and passionate living history presentations.



Russell Collins Stiger

Shelton Johnson educates and entertains a packed house with stories of the Buffalo Soldiers.

► ALLENSWORTH, Page 4

LASHP Dig Reveals Railroad Ruins



Television and newspaper reporters gathered around the seven-foot deep hole to hear James Newland, Cultural Resources Manager for State Parks, and Director Ruth Coleman, explain the discovery of the massive redwood beams that were a part of the Southern Pacific Railroad River Station, the city’s first rail depot from the year 1875.

California State Parks offered a rare glimpse of significant archaeological resources from one of the most bustling and active industrial sites in the city, circa 1875 to the 1920s. A team of state park scientists spent many months researching findings at several excavation sites located on the grounds of downtown’s Los Angeles State Historic Park (LASHP). These sites show the city’s first transcontinental rail yard that connected Los Angeles to the eastern United States.

Beneath Los Angeles State Historic Park, archaeologists have been investigating historic building remnants and cultural artifacts

► DIG, Page 6

October is Accessibility Month! See page 8 for history, DPR contributions, and the winner of our first Universal Access Award!



Director Ruth Coleman

September and October is the season for special events. On October 11, we held significant events at Locke, Marshall Gold, Cuyamaca, and Allensworth. I would have liked to attend every one of them.

I went to Allensworth for the centennial celebration of the founding of that town. Our staff put on an incredible event for over 5,000 people in a park with virtually no services. That is to say, we had to import

the bathrooms, the food, the drink, the booths, the tents... in short, everything. We worked in very close cooperation with staff from the Legislative Black Caucus and nearly all the members of the Black Caucus attended the event.

Allensworth represents so many firsts for the African American community. The stories of the founders and their struggle as told by Lonnie Bunch, the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture

at the Smithsonian, made a powerful impact on everyone who heard them. Countless other speakers pointed out the significance of celebrating the centennial of a town founded by former slaves on the same year as the possible election of the first African American president. Watching 5,000 people respond to the park, and to see first-hand the powerful emotional impact it had on them, is something that I will never forget. This was State Parks at its best.

Jorgensen Receives Minerva Hoyt Desert Conservation Award

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park Superintendent Mark Jorgensen, was awarded the 2008 Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award for his more than 34 years work to further the conservation and protection of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and the surrounding Colorado Desert region of Southern California. Jorgensen received the award from Huell Howser during a ceremony on October 23.

The Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award was created by the Joshua Tree National Park Association in 2004 to honor Minerva Hoyt and others who have made notable achievements in the areas of leadership, protection, preservation, research, education, and/or stewardship on behalf of California deserts.



Sam Webb, Anza-Borrego Volunteer

Fire Rips through Angel Island, Historic Structures Saved



California State Parks got a heart-pounding scare on October 12, as fire threatened campers, park families and some of the most significant historic places in the entire San Francisco Bay region. Walls of flame and rolling clouds of smoke bore down on park staff as they worked to evacuate 29 campers and get their own families to safety.

Our mechanized landing craft worked to get fire trucks to the island, one at a time. When the first trucks arrived, the quarry's old rock crusher was beginning to burn, with the 1863 Civil War camp just a short distance away. Although half of the 740-acre island was engulfed in flames, not one of the 120 historic structures was damaged. Resource experts

say the natural resources will also be fine as wildlife ran out of the way and the plant life burned was mostly low underbrush that can regenerate quickly. Yes, a heart-pounding scare, but our parks employees and state and local firemen throughout the Marin County area saved the day. To all of them, we say thanks!!!

News & Views

2008

Ruth Coleman
Director

Communications Office

- Roy Stearns, Deputy Director
- Sheryl Watson, Editor
- John Arnold, Assistant Editor
- Lindsay Oxford, Associate Editor
- Carol Cullens, Proofreader*

*Interpretation and Education Division

Submit articles to newsandviews@parks.ca.gov

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

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

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

The next deadline is December 1 for the February Issue.

Allensworth Celebrates 100th Anniversary with Two-Day Event

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Above left: Crowds extended beyond the canopies during a weekend full of music and speakers. Right: William Allen Young energizes the crowd. Below: Alice Royal (in white), former Allensworth resident and author of *Allensworth, the Freedom Colony* and Josephine Blodgett-Smith, granddaughter of Colonel Allensworth and Josephine Allensworth. Bottom: The Guys and Dolls Square Dance Club.

As noted in many news media outlets, this was a celebration that honored a struggle and a triumph over adversity. Allensworth was founded by former slaves, the only town in California to be founded, financed and governed solely by African Americans.

Attending the festivities were numerous descendants of the founding family, with even greater numbers of local, state and national leaders. For instance, Lonnie G. Bunch III, the founding director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, made the trip from Washington, D.C. Alice Royal, born in Allensworth and the author of the book, "Allensworth, The Freedom Colony," was present and spoke during the children's portion of the program. Also attending were Josephine Blodgett-Smith, granddaughter of Lieutenant Colonel Allen and Josephine Allensworth; and, Gemelia Hall Herring, the oldest living resident from the community, who turned 100 in February.

The world-renowned Crenshaw High School Elite Choir, under the direction of Professor Iris Stevenson, had the audience on their feet stomping and clapping. It was one of several featured acts that rocked the crowd.



Russell Collins Stiger



Above : Los Angeles’s Crenshaw High School Elite Choir, directed by Iris Stephenson, entertained the crowd. Below left: Gemelia Hall Herring, Allensworth’s oldest resident, with Lonnie Bunch, Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Below right: Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas presents Director Ruth Coleman with a copy of the Allensworth Centennial Resolution.



Russell Collins Stiger

Dig Unearths Buried Treasure

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At this location, television reporters interviewed Erin Smith, at left, and Mike “Bucky” Buxton, right, archeological Team Leaders for California State Parks. Please note the two rows of bricks coming from the bottom of the picture. It is thought this structure might have been a grease pit for locomotives, the center having been an open space for workers underneath, but filled in by tumbling bricks when the facility was destroyed.

associated with the original 1875 operation of Southern Pacific’s Railroad River Station. Uncovered findings at the three archaeological excavations feature artifacts from the River Station’s Roundhouse, the train turntable with massive redwood beams, and the original and completely intact foundation. The rail station began operating in 1875 initially as a passenger train destination and then as freight line center that spurred the industrialization of Los Angeles.

“This original transcontinental railroad line and other archaeological findings discovered (here), underscore the historical significance of this downtown park in the industrial development of this city,” said Director Ruth Coleman. “The ongoing work of our State Park’s scientific team will allow for a better

understanding of the full history of the site and offer educational opportunities for visitors as we plan the future design of a premiere park facility for Los Angeles.”

The excavation is part of the department’s ongoing research and planning for the park’s future build-out. It is necessary to unearth, map and inspect historic sites like this so as to determine their significance. Having this helps decide how best to incorporate them into the final design of educational and interpretive exhibits.

The 32-acre state park is the largest park in downtown Los Angeles. It is located next to the Los Angeles River and directly adjacent to the Metro Gold Line Chinatown station. For more information, visit the website at www.parks.ca.gov/LASHP.

State Parks and Sacramento Win National Award

At a ceremony at Stanford Mansion State Historic Park on August 11, the Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Lynn Scarlett, presented an award to the City of Sacramento, designating it as a Preserve America Community. Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo accepted the award in partnership with State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. Also present was Steve Mikesell, Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer within the State Office of Historic Preservation, which recommended the award for the city. State Parks is a partner in this endeavor because most of the major historic venues in Sacramento are owned and operated by State Parks, including such places as the State Capitol Museum, the State Railroad Museum, the State Indian Museum, Sutter's Fort, the Governor's Mansion, Leland Stanford Mansion and Old Sacramento State Historic Park. It was pointed out that all of these are important to the City because they are major attractions which pump significant tourism dollars into the City's private sector economy. The Preserve America Community designation



Deputy Historic Preservation Officer Steve Mikesell, Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo, Director Ruth Coleman and Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett.

provides national recognition for a community's achievements in preserving its historic and cultural resources. It indicates that the community is working to preserve and use its heritage assets as building blocks for the future, enhancing tourism and other economic development strategies.

Lifeguards' Efforts Save Teenager from Drowning



Lifeguards Kelly Zylman and Jeff Gouailhardou.

**By Tom Gunther, Supervising Ranger
Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area**

The radio crackled "Any available Ranger, Tower four, we have a drowning!" I raced to the scene with lights & siren blaring. When I arrived at Cleghorn Beach (Silverwood Lake SRA), a 16-year-old boy was sitting with an oxygen mask affixed to his face.

He had first been spotted by young girls who were playing on the shore. When they realized he was struggling, they ran to get lifeguards Kelly Zylman and Jeff Gouailhardou. They pointed to the area where he went under water and the lifeguards went into action. It took five dives to locate him. Once on-shore, they started CPR. After the third cycle of CPR the boy revived.

These Lifeguards train hard, as I had witnessed earlier this year. Their training paid off on June 22 by saving a young man's life. The Lifeguards who responded are to be commended for their valiant effort and successful rescue.

State Parks Makes System-wide Accessibility Changes

By Joyce Sathre, Manager
Human Rights Office

One of the goals of California State Parks is to make sure that everyone, including visitors with disabilities, has access to the natural and cultural wonders that make up California State Parks.

October is National Disability Awareness Month. It promotes awareness, sensitivity, and understanding for those with both hidden and visible disabilities. While the focus during the month is on disability awareness, respect for all visitors with varying abilities should be every day, not just one month during the year. Efforts to improve access have been evolving over the years.

In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was established. The ADA provides comprehensive civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities in areas of employment, public accommodations, state and local government services and telecommunications.

Even before the passage of the ADA, the department had been working to make its parks and programs accessible to all visitors. Extensive efforts began in the early 1980s with the creation of the State Parks Disabled Advisory Committee (DAC) comprised of people with disabilities, including state park employees, members of the public and accessibility advocates.



Camping



Picnic Areas



Trails



Beach/Shore
Access



Exhibits/
Programs



Fishing

The department has recognized the need for universal accessibility and has been a leader in our nation for the development and improvements for the disabled community. In fact, our very own trails experts, Don Beers and Karl Knapp have been recognized na-

tionally for their efforts to incorporate universal design into trail projects.

In January 1994, the department created a resource manual for interpretive techniques titled "All Visitors Welcome," developed for universal access. Also that year, the department established the first set of written, statewide guidelines for enhancing accessibility in the State Parks System. They were based on the most stringent federal and state codes that apply to the built environment. The guidelines were renamed the "California State Parks Accessibility Guidelines (CSPAG)" in 1995 and have been updated ever since, to keep current with state and federal codes.

California State Parks prepared a Self-Evaluation Plan in May of 2001 and The "Transition Plan for Accessibility in CSP" four months later. The plan serves as the framework and guide for removing barriers to accessibility and increases opportunities for people with disabilities to enjoy and participate in the State Park System.

The Right Thing to Do

By Wendy Martin
Accessibility Section

Did you know that the civil rights movement for people with disabilities started when wounded soldiers began returning home from World War II? Many veterans who fought for freedom came home to find that barriers to accessibility prevented them from participating in American society. It was not until 1968 that the Architectural Barriers Act became the first U.S. law to address accessibility. Since then, many more laws and regulations have been established to secure equal

opportunities for people with disabilities. The most sweeping is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), which made equal access to people with disabilities a civil right.

You may not have not paid much attention to the changes in the man-made or "built" environment that have resulted from the ADA. Yet, chances are you have benefited from them. Each time you smoothly push your shopping cart up a curb ramp you can thank the ADA for making your life a little easier. But for some people, curb ramps and other

accessible elements are about a lot more than making life easier. These features make independent access possible.

California State Parks has a duty to uphold the rights of people with disabilities by making the recreational opportunities that we provide accessible. What's more, because accessibility to outdoor recreation is a relatively new concept, we have the honor of being on the cutting edge of extending those rights beyond the parking lots and rest rooms into the picnic areas, campgrounds, trails and natural areas.

Engineer Earns Department's First Universal Access Award

In October, the Disabled Advisory Committee (DAC) selected Matt Teague, Associate Civil Engineer of the Northern Buttes District, for the first California State Parks Universal Access Award.

"The department is committed to increasing access," said Director Ruth Coleman. "Matt's projects are a functional, attractive and permanent reminder of that commitment."

Coleman presented the award at a ceremony on October 28 at the William P. Ide Adobe State Historic Park, one of the many parks where Teague increased universal access.

The award was created to recognize outstanding efforts among park employees who increase access within the State Park System. Teague was nominated based on his many projects that have improved universal access.

"Matt has shown exceptional skill and dedication to



Tiffany Aubel, Human Rights

Director Ruth Coleman, Associate Civil Engineer Matt Teague, and Northern Buttes District Superintendent Bob Foster.

increasing universal access," said Gary Nelson, DAC executive director and maintenance chief in the Central Valley District.

Teague's most notable accomplishment was a \$300,000 project that he designed and managed at Clear Lake State Park in Lake County. He turned a gravel parking area into an asphalt parking lot complete with

several accessible amenities. It now offers a perimeter pavement sidewalk with paved trails that provide visitors in wheelchairs with a choice of easily accessing restrooms, shaded park benches with a view, water faucets, and a bridge that connects to other improved areas.

He also designed paved paths to help people with disabilities

►TEAGUE, Page 14



A path leading to restrooms from the main parking lot at Castle Crags State Park gets two paved switchbacks. Shown before (left) and after renovations for universal access.

Promotions: May and June 2008

Civil Engineering Associate

Terry R. Harper
Northern Service Center
5/1/2008

Exhibit Design Coordinator

Paul R. Brown
Capital/Sacramento History &
Railroad Sector
5/1/2008

Guide II (Supervisor)

Sharon L. Anderson
SLO Coast/Museum Sector
5/1/2008

Museum Curator II

Rebecca A. Carruthers
Archeology History and Museum
Division/Museum Services
5/28/2008

Office Technician (Typing)

Jennifer L. Calder
San Diego Coast District
5/15/2008

Linda K. Rodriguez
Park Operations/Law Enforcement/
Emergency Services
5/1/2008

Park Maintenance Supervisor

Nathan A. Harper
OHMVR/Twin Cities
6/1/2008

Brenda M. Garten
Sierra/Sierra Gold Sector
6/1/2008

Christopher J. Pereira
Santa Cruz District
6/1/2008

Park Maintenance Worker I

Alfredo Jacob
OHMVR/Ocotillo Wells
5/1/2008

James H. Behring
Santa Cruz/Mountain Sector
5/5/2008

Matt T. Hill
Marin/Marin Sector
5/1/2008

Michelle M. Smith
Channel Coast/Santa Barbara
Sector
5/13/2008

Susan L. Kramer-Freese
Santa Cruz/San Mateo Coast
Sector
5/15/2008

Timothy W. Bryant
A & D/Accessibility Section
5/1/2008

Charles A. Harper
Russian River/Russian River
Sector
6/1/2008

Terry L. Brewer
Inland Empire/Perris Sector
6/15/2008

Steven A. Wilcox
Tehachapi/Silverwood Sector
6/16/2008

Senior Environmental Scientist

Kim R. Matthews
OHMVR/Hungry Valley
5/1/2008

Senior State Archaeologist

David L. Felton
Archeology History and Museum
Division/Cultural Heritage
5/5/2008

Supervising Lifeguard II

Terry M. Murphy
Orange Coast/South Sector
6/1/2008

Supervising Ranger

Jeanne E. Sisson
Sierra/Grover Hot Springs
5/1/2008

Niall A. Gow
Santa Cruz/Mountain Sector
5/1/2008

Scott H. Cramolini
Channel Coast/Carpinteria
5/1/2008

Vincent W. Anibale
OHMVR Division
5/16/2008

Gilbert A. Alvarez
San Diego Coast/North Sector
6/15/2008

Staff Park & Rec Specialist

Patricia A. Dumont
Northern Service Center
5/1/2008

Staff Services Manager I

Audre R. Velazquez
Administration/Workers'
Compensation Unit
6/11/2008

Staff Services Manager II

Jason T. Summers
Administration/Personnel
Services
6/12/2008

State Park Interpreter I

Berndt G. Stolfi
Capital/State Capital &
Governor's Mansion
5/1/2008

State Park Interpreter II

Robert A. Russo
Capital/Sacramento History &
Railroad Sector
5/1/2008

Ranger Earns Silver Award



Cherished memories of staring up at the stars, roasting marshmallows over the campfire and listening to the wildlife at night, were all made possible under the protection and management of the American park ranger.

This is why ReserveAmerica hosts the annual America's Ranger of the Year recognition. This year, Kelly Elliott, State Park Peace Officer Supervisor at Lake Perris earned a Silver Award in ReserveAmerica's annual poll of camping enthusiasts from across the nation.

Elliott was one of five silver medal winners, selected as runners up to the ranger of the year that went to Joseph Aniskiewicz of Darien Lakes State Park, in New York.

The awards are bestowed on the country's top rangers who dedicate their careers

to serving park visitors while preserving the country's public lands for future generations.

For six years, Elliott worked as a ranger at California Citrus State Historic Park, Chino Hills State Park and Silverwood Lake State Recreation Area. She began her career with the department as a seasonal park aid at Folsom Lake State Recreation Area where she worked while attending California State University, Sacramento. She graduated in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in Recreation Administration and was awarded the Governor Employee Safety Award for her service in the 2003 Old Fire. She prides herself in being a true Generalist Ranger, and looks forward to continuing her career as a steward of parks for the seventh generation.

Testimonials from campers who nominated the winners are available at ReserveAmerica.com. ReserveAmerica is accepting nominations for the



Supervising Ranger Kelly Elliott
2009 "America's Ranger of the Year." Camping enthusiasts submit their vote for "America's Ranger of the Year" while planning their family camping trips online at ReserveAmerica.com.

State Park Superintendent I

Gary K. Lyons
Gold Fields/Delta Sector
5/21/2008

Maureen C. Brack
OHMVR/Hungry Valley
5/1/2008

State Park Superintendent II

Heidi V. Horvitz
Northern Buttes/Cascade Sector
6/30/2008

Mark P. Hada
Law Enforcement/Emergency Services
6/1/2008

Michelle A. Gardner
North Coast Redwoods/Eel River
5/1/2008

State Park Superintendent III

Robert J. Williamson
OHMVR/Twin Cities
5/1/2008

Danita M. Rodriguez
Marin/Marin Sector
6/15/2008

Water & Sewage Plant Supervisor

Steven E. Houghton
Park Operations/Technical Services
5/1/2008



John Arnold's Mailbag

On 9/14/08 I was rescued from Mt San Jacinto by two of your park aides, Justin Sowell and Chris Wooling. I want to let you know that these two young men are a credit to your organization.

I had wandered off the trail and found myself stuck on a small ledge on the side of the mountain. After calling for help for two hours, hikers heard me and notified the ranger station. Justin and C.W were at my location in about 20 minutes. Also assisting was park aide Kris Leasher. Leasher began to work on a search and rescue call-out. Justin and C.W. stayed with me and kept me calm. It started getting dark and they could see how uncomfortable I was on this tiny ledge and they decided that they could get me out by themselves.

Once they told me they could rescue me, I had complete confidence in them. It was very scary for me (it was completely dark by now), but they stayed very professional, cheerful and encouraging. We even had a few laughs on the way!

I cannot praise the two men enough; they pulled and pushed an overweight and out of shape woman out of a dangerous situation with great composure and humanity Please let Justin, C.W. and Kris Leasher know that they will always be my heroes.

I am writing this letter to your attention to express my

sincere appreciation and deep respect of your employee Ranger Robert Theriault. On Saturday, June 7th, my friend and I were on our way to go hiking at the "Mud Caves" in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. We were not properly prepared with a detailed map of the area & sure enough – we took the wrong road and our vehicle became totally stuck in the partially washed out/sand-filled very narrow roadway.

We tried to dig our way out only to become further buried in the sand. With water bottles and cell phones in hand we walked approximately three miles all the while attempting to get thru to a "911" operator. After what seemed to be approximately 100 attempts we finally got through and out enough information for them to put it all together before we once again got cut off. Our last attempt the operator told us to stay put help was on its way.

After half an hour or so the Astrea 1 appeared overhead. I was so delighted I couldn't hold back the tears. At this point we were both so exhausted from the heat. The Sheriff's Astrea 1 told us to stay where we were that the Sheriff was in route. Then appeared (what looked like a "God") Ranger Robert! I was so overwhelmed and happy, I planted a "Big Kiss" on Ranger Robert's cheek! He was very professional & genuinely concerned that we were both okay and offered us more water – which we both eagerly

accepted. We then jumped into his truck and went back to my friend's truck – upon arrival at the scene, there was another couple in a 4-Wheel Drive Jeep awaiting to get through, since we were blocking the roadway.

At that time Deputy Sheriff Andy (Badge #80R5) arrived and offered his assistance to Ranger Robert. After exchanging license information etc. we were able to get pulled out and turned around. I could go on in more details, nonetheless, Ranger Robert & the Deputy Sheriff escorted all of us out of this "Hell Hole!" I was never so delighted to see "Blacktop" again!!

Please pass this letter on to your superior in recognition and admiration of Ranger Robert and Deputy Sheriff Andy and the Astrea 1 Crew. I am sure you people go unnoticed for all the good work you provide more than not -- well, that isn't the case here! Many Many Thanks for all the work your people provide and for what could have been a "Life Threatening Event" a very happy ending (and life lesson for two gringos!) Best Regards, Keep up the Excellent Work!

Five stars to the camp host at Point Mugu.

My wife and I took our great nieces for the weekend of August 8 through 10. We met up with camp host Ed. What a pleasant and informational man. When we first got there

he stopped by our camp to let us know that he was having a show Saturday night at 8:30. Something about wire shapes looking like animals. We went to the show and what a great time we had. Not only his talent in metal sculpture but his enthusiasm of art, drawing and history. Also his positive messages of life for all the kids to benefit from. The next morning he was out on his tricycle picking up trash. Later after our hike we saw him showing 2 small boys with their mother something with pipe cleaners. Well before we left on Sunday he came by and to make little pipe cleaner dogs and panda's for the girls and their little sister who couldn't come on this trip. We all really enjoyed Ed and hope to see him on our next camping trip to Point Mugu.

I would like to let park management know two positive thoughts about Sycamore Canyon at Point Mugu (where we camp at least twice per year). First, this season's campground host is a great addition. "Ed" was wonderful with both kids and adults, helped enforce campground rules with a sense of humor, and was pleasantly social overall. His evening program was one of the best I've seen at any park. We hope to see him again next year! Second, the afternoon maintenance of the bathrooms is much appreciated (for all the

reasons that you can imagine). Recently, I stayed at Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park. What a beautiful park, and the staff was friendly and helpful.

We just spent a wonderful week at New Brighton State Park. Even with the decrease in monies available the park was well maintained. The park personnel were real friendly, polite and helpful.

My family and I just returned from a very enjoyable stay at El Capitan State Beach. I just wanted you to know how pleased we were with the facilities and staff....What really prompted me to contact you was the individual who ran the Jr. Ranger program. Karen was fun, energetic and really into the kids. My seven-year-old son, Tyler, had a great time, learned a lot and hasn't let go of his Jr. Ranger book yet! Karen had mentioned that not all State parks provide this program.... Such a shame! Please know that this is a very valuable program for our youth. All of the 10-12 kids who participated on 7-11-08 at 11 a.m. seemed to not only be having fun but really learned a lot! The chatter as the parents arrived to retrieve the kids was filled with new facts and information. Tyler now wants to be a ranger when he grows up; as long as he can still be a photographer, magician and a puppeteer! Thanks for the program

and Kudos to Karen. I'm writing to compliment the staff at Calaveras for their assistance when my 82-year-old mother caught her foot and fell, on rock steps outside the visitor center stairs at Big Trees. The docents, park medics, ranger and staff were instantaneously on the spot to assist her and keep her safe and comfortable. My great thanks to all of them.

Dear Ranger Probst,

I wanted to thank you and your colleague for allowing me to ride along with you while you were patrolling the Sonoma Coast State Parks. I was very impressed by the high levels of professionalism, tact and diplomacy you displayed and the courtesy shown by you to each and every visitor to the park. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn more about the California State Parks from you and to observe, first-hand, how hard you work to ensure that these special places are available to visitors for recreation, while potentially dangerous situations are de-escalated. I also appreciate the time you spent explaining your role and responsibilities and I feel I now have a better understanding of the diversity of efforts required to preserve and protect California's beautiful natural resources.

11th Annual Beach Play Day Gets Kids Outdoors

By Terry Gerson

Office of Community Involvement

Kids in nature. That's the buzz phrase going around these days as our society struggles with a childhood obesity epidemic. Studies and statistics are saying that American kids need more exercise and that getting them outdoors is a great way to get started.

Kids were certainly in nature at the 11th annual Beach Play Day at Huntington State Beach this past July. Beach Play Day is one of many events that the Office of Community Involvement offers in partnership with Districts to get kids outdoors. Director Ruth Coleman was there to give her support of initiatives that get kids outdoors and active.

More than 700 youth ages 8 to 17 not only got the opportunity to play on the beach and in the ocean, they were able to camp out there too! Residents and regulars that visit this very popular Southern California beach expressed amazement at the number of tents that



Terry Gerson, Office of Community Involvement

Kids have fun in the sun at the 11th annual Beach Play Day.

sprang up the morning of July 22. The Office of Community Involvement staff was supported by the Orange Coast District and a literal army of volunteers that included the California National Guard Drug Demand Reduction Team. They spent most of the day setting up tents and designating locations for the California Police Activities League's youth groups that represented over 30 regions from throughout the state.

But kids can only listen for so long. As the speakers ex-

claimed, "What are you here to do?...Have fun and play!!!" And play they did as groups with brightly colored coded wrist bands made their way through rotations of activities that included swimming in the surf, boogie boarding, beach flags competition, a giant slip n' slide, a six lane rock climbing wall, Hoop-A-Pa-Loo-Za, skate and bike demonstrations by the Gale Webb riders, and beach ATV riding sponsored by the OHMVR Division.

Matt Teague Wins Universal Access Award

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get from the day use parking lots to the restrooms at William B. Ide Adobe State Park in Tehama County, McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial State Park in Shasta County and at his district office in Oroville.

At Castle Crags State Park, Teague upgraded two campsites at the Riverside campground with a new, longer table top, asphalt on the dirt ground, and a barbecue at ADA height.

Teague designed and produced plans that upgraded the restroom at his district's

headquarters by having it completely remodeled to accommodate two wheelchair accessible restrooms.

Teague has been with the Northern Buttes District since March 2001. He previously served three years at Caltrans, and worked briefly as a civil engineer for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland, OR, as well as with small private firms. He earned his bachelors degree in Civil Engineering at California State University, Chico and Colorado State University.

Indian Heritage Center Location Chosen



Left: An artist's rendering of the finished California Indian Heritage Center. The CIHC will be world-class in both content and design. The design will reflect Indian values in form, materials and the center's placement on the land. The center will house the state's extensive collections of California Indian baskets and other cultural treasures. The grounds will be restored to their natural state and will accommodate seasonal outdoor programs and ceremonial areas for special events and traditional gatherings, as well as becoming an asset to the local community in which the center is located.

Right: A map showing the center's location in blue.

**By Cathy Taylor,
Superintendent
Capital District**

The West Sacramento City Council unanimously approved an agreement with California State Parks for the development of the California Indian Heritage Center (CIHC) and State park in West Sacramento.

The agreement, reached in June, was for east riverfront property, a 43 acre site, located along the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers. Phase 1 of the project is estimated to be completed by 2014 at a cost of \$50 million.

The CIHC facility will include a library, archives, Tribal Treasures, exhibits,

resident artist space, offices, classrooms, a café, museum store, amphitheater, event space, indigenous gardens, trails and public access to the Sacramento River. The location is set in a natural landscape, where people of all origins can learn about and honor the past, present and future of the California Indian people and their culture.

"The West Sacramento site is a place of significance to California Indian people. This beautiful and distinctive location honors our heritage by placing the CIHC within California's state capital region. We are honored to partner with the City of West Sacramento, California State

Parks and the California Indian community on this exciting opportunity to create a home befitting the important contribution of California Indian culture to our state," explained Larry Myers, chairman of the California Indian Heritage Task Force and Foundation.

The CIHC represents collaborative partnerships among the CIHC Task Force, California State Parks, the Native American Heritage Commission, California Indian people, the City of West Sacramento, the City and County of Sacramento and the CIHC foundation.

Tough Job Reaps Rewards



By E.J. Fogel
State Park Equipment Operator
Inland Empire District

A State Park Equipment Operator utilizes machines that can kill, maim and do major damage to property when used improperly. This is a great responsibility, one which I take very seriously. My job is dangerous and takes skill and forethought. Being an equipment operator for California State Parks is really a multi-functional position. It is about

digging a ditch with a backhoe or picking up a pile of rubble with a front end loader. I may use a road grader to clean up a rough road or a bulldozer to rebuild a trail.

Many times I have been in “my” front end loader going in for the day and have stopped to assist a crew; the workers appreciate the relief from hand efforts!

Operating can be very tedious. Facing the excavation of miles of wind blown sand deposited

against beach parks sand walls or the clean up of tons of storm debris can be relentless... the sand returning with each windy day and storm debris returning with each subsequent tide.

Operating is also difficult on the body. Heavy equipment is not outfitted with shock absorbers, hitting ruts is bone jarring. Low back pain comes with the job.

However, there is the satisfaction of looking back on a

completed job. It is in seeing how much material I’ve moved in a day or when I look back over a freshly graded road. Being able to help others by using equipment is also very satisfying. Many times the SPEO is the “go to” person in an emergency. I’ve rescued vehicles trapped in the high tide line, rebuilt damaged access roads and excavated massive holes to bury whale carcasses.

I have had the opportunity to travel to different parks, working in some of California’s pristine areas. I can take in the fresh mountain sky one day, and the sights and sounds of the ocean the next. The people I work with are easygoing, offering friendships which can last a career and beyond.

During my twenty-five years working with parks as an SPEO, a resounding message has always been, “Family comes first.” This outlook has been a blessing for me personally now that my wife and I have a child with a life-threatening illness. I am very thankful to be working with such a gracious agency, one that appreciates and truly cares about its employees. For more information about the plight of my child, please see: www.caringbridge.org/visit/taryn.

Share Your Story! Let News & Views know what your job means to you. Send text and pictures to newsandviews@parks.ca.gov. Submission guidelines are on page 3.