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## **FRIENDS OF SANTA CRUZ STATE PARKS & LOCAL CALIFORNIA STATE PARK STAFF HONORED WITH AWARDS**

*Commendations from California State Parks highlight innovation and heroism*

**JANUARY 31, 2018—SANTA CRUZ, CA**—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) today announced that one Friends' employee and three local State Parks employees have been honored by California State Parks for their contributions at a recent ceremony in Sacramento.

Dave Johnson, Friends Information Technology Director; Alex Tabone, State Parks Ranger; and Haidee Anderson, State Parks Senior Park Aid; received the Mott Award for Innovation for their work developing an Online Trail Camp System to connect eight trail camps within four State Park units in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The Mott Award, named after William Penn Mott, Jr., State Parks Director from 1967-85 and National Parks Director from 1985-87, was created to challenge park professionals to find new and exciting ways to respond to change and accomplish the mission of California State Parks. Because state funding was not available, Tabone and Anderson and California State Parks, partnered with Johnson and Friends to create a modern trail camp reservation system. The online reservation system provides prospective campers with information about the backcountry trail camps, allows campers to check campsite availability and make a reservation online. The system is estimated to assist thousands of park visitors annually.

Brett Reid, State Parks Ranger, was honored with the Director's Recognition for Special Act or Special Service for saving two lives at Sunset State Beach. Reid, a 16-year veteran State Parks ranger, responded to a water rescue at Sunset State Beach the afternoon of Feb. 21, 2016. Five people had been trapped in a rip current. Three made it to shore on their own and were being tended to by another ranger, but two were still struggling about 40 yards off shore. With lifeguards 20 minutes away, Reid put on a wetsuit and pulled both people to shore where waiting medical personnel provided care.

Reid was not trained as a lifeguard and was not expected to make water rescues. The Director's Recognition for Special Act or Special Service is awarded to those who perform an extraordinary act of heroism extending far above the normal call of duty.

Attending the ceremony was a proud moment for State Parks District Superintendent Chris Spohrer.

"I was humbly reminded that acts of heroism and brilliant innovation are all in a day's work for our Park employees and dedicated partners," Spoher said.

### **About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks**

Established in 1976, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends provides funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates six ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch and Online. Learn more at [ThatsMyPark.org](http://ThatsMyPark.org) or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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