

California State Parks Awards

Friends Of Santa Cruz State Parks & Local California State Park Staff Honored

SANTA CRUZ — Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) announced that a 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, allow campers to check campsite availability and make a reservation online. The new 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 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. ■



"World Wetlands Day" from page 14

This funding source is designed to ameliorate the impacts of climate change throughout the State.

Over the next two years we will be partnering with the City and other community partners to install a total of 300 new trees and hundreds of native plants on 10 park sites and 3 street corridors throughout Watsonville. We'll also be hosting many public volunteer events, school field trips, and job training programs for Watsonville youth.

It's an exciting new project that will improve water quality in the Watsonville wetlands and the Monterey Bay, improve Watsonville's air quality, streets, parks and trails for bicycling, walking and recreation, enhance native habitat throughout the City and sequester tons (literally!) of carbon from the atmosphere as the trees grow and mature.

Wetland Stewards Corner

WWW is starting a new series in which we highlight some of the Pajaro Valley High School students participating in our Wetland Stewards program.

Jesus joined Wetland Stewards because his sister was a part of the program last year and told him what a transformative experience she had. He even hopes to continue the legacy by inspiring his younger brother to join next year. Jesus is grateful for the skills he has gained in public speaking, communications and leadership and hopes to translate that into his next steps toward college after high school.

Karen is no stranger to protecting lands in Watsonville as she came to the Wetland Stewards program after spending a year



Wetland Stewards Jesus (from left), Karen and Nissa

in the Monterey Aquarium's WATCH program. While she plans to pursue a career in nursing, she feels that her time working to preserve local habitats has inspired her to always be an active member of her community.

Nissa joined Wetland Stewards because she feels passionate about youth education and the environment. She believes that kids need to be informed about how they can make a difference at a young age. She hopes to become a trauma surgeon in the future and greatly values the skills she has gained in multitasking and leadership as a mentor in the Wetland Stewards program.

Be sure to say hi to these amazing young people when you see them! ■

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