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SANTA CRUZ MISSION STATE HISTORIC PARK SAVED FROM CLOSURE

Non-profit Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks Signs Three-Year Agreement with California State Parks to Fund Park Operations

APRIL 14, 2012—SANTA CRUZ—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the legacy of our local state parks and beaches, today announced it has signed a three-year agreement with California State Parks to fund maintenance and operations of Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park (SHP). The agreement prevents the closure of the park, which was set to take place July 1, 2012.

“We are thrilled and relieved that this agreement to keep the Mission open has been reached,” said Bonny Hawley, executive director of Friends. “The Mission has been saved for the time being from closure thanks to a high level of collaboration between State Parks and Friends, and thanks to our passionate local community. In the months ahead we will continue to turn to the community for help raising funds in support of the new agreement. While we’re looking forward to our expanded role in support of the park, we strongly believe the agreement should be viewed as a temporary, rather than permanent, solution to the state’s funding crisis for parks.”

At Santa Cruz Mission SHP, Friends currently funds:

- State Park Interpretive Staff, who provide the following programming:
 - Mission Day Field Trips for thousands of 3rd and 4th graders
 - Mission Campfires
 - Junior Rangers
 - Interpretive Special Events
- All material support for field trip activities, including crafting adobe bricks, candles and tortillas
- UCSC Work-Study Student Staff
- The Mission ParkStore

Under the terms of the agreement, Friends will continue to provide the services and programming above, as well as also providing funding to maintain and operate the park, including state salaries and benefits for portions of three maintenance staff and one ranger.

“This agreement is a model for the state,” said John Laird, California Secretary for Natural Resources. “In today’s state funding climate, it’s gratifying to know that historic preservation, heritage education and tourism promotion will continue at Santa Cruz Mission SHP. Today is a great day to be home in Santa Cruz.”

“Here in Santa Cruz we’re seeing what’s possible in California when the focus is on innovation,” said State Parks Director Ruth Coleman. “State Parks is thankful for this opportunity and is looking forward to collaborating with Friends to keep Santa Cruz Mission SHP open.”

Ongoing Fundraising Needed

While the new agreement enables Friends to provide funds to keep Santa Cruz Mission SHP open, ongoing and generous contributions from supporters and community members will be needed. Friends' website has been updated to provide donors the ability to direct funds specifically to keeping Santa Cruz Mission SHP open. To learn more about donating to the park, go here: <http://www.thatsmypark.org/donate/membership/>

About Santa Cruz Mission SHP

The Santa Cruz Mission SHP is home to the oldest building in Santa Cruz County. Built between 1822 and 1824 by local Ohlonean and Yokuts Indians, the park's signature adobe is the only remaining structure from Mission Santa Cruz, founded in 1791. One of just four adobe buildings left in Santa Cruz County—and sometimes confused with the nearby replica mission chapel—it is the only building of its kind preserved as a museum in the State of California. The adobe served as housing for Neophyte families who lived and worked at the Mission, which operated until 1834 when it was secularized. After decades of private ownership, the adobe was sold to the State of California, extensively restored and finally opened in 1991 to the public as the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park. The park is one of 70 parks and beaches slated for closure on July 1 2012 as a result of a state budget shortfall. To learn more about Friends' campaign to save the Santa Cruz Mission SHP, visit the Mission information page here: <http://www.thatsmypark.org/projects/santa-cruz-mission/>

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks was founded in 1976 to support the interpretive programs of coastal state parks in Santa Cruz County. Friends –a non-profit park partner– strives to ensure that the history, traditions and natural beauty of Santa Cruz County State Parks are enjoyed today and by future generations. Each year more than 327,601 visitors—including thousands of school children—participate in over 4,328 free educational programs funded by Friends.

For more about Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks:

www.ThatsMyPark.org

<https://www.facebook.com/FriendsOfSantaCruzStateParks>

<http://www.youtube.com/user/FriendsSCStateParks>

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