

NATIONAL JUNIOR RANGER DAY

April 25th

Explore • Learn • Protect

By Ellen Anderson

Come to this year's annual National Junior Ranger Day, April 25 at Lake Mead National Recreation Area and meet one of the newest members of the park's education outreach team, Cooper, a teacup Yorkshire terrier. Weighing in at only three pounds, he might just be the smallest and cutest Jr Bark Ranger mascot you'll ever meet. The event takes place at Boulder Beach Picnic Area from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Kids of all ages are welcome.

After families check in at the event, they're encouraged to visit various stations. Once kids have visited at least nine stations, then they are eligible to become official Lake Mead Junior Rangers. They take the Junior Ranger Pledge and receive either a badge or patch (their choice), an official Junior Ranger card and a certificate. This year's certificate will be "pawtographed" by Cooper.

At this year's event you will also meet Charlotte, a golden retriever who is a friend of the cartoon character Bobber the Water Safety dog. Charlotte distributes free booklets about Bobber's adventures at Lake Mead. The booklets are bi-lingual. Charlotte's message is quite simple: "Wear Your Lifejacket!"

A third dog participating this year is Onyx, a German Shepherd. Onyx is a working K-9 and his handler will be conducting demonstrations to highlight the work he does on the law enforcement team.

These dogs are part of the annual event that will provide a mix of experiences for kids. Boulder City Library will join in the fun with a storytelling corner. Nevada Department of Wildlife will encourage everyone to practice their fishing skills with a rod casting activity.

The City of Henderson Parks and Recreation Aquatics Division with its youth lifeguarding program will team up with its mascot "Rad Tad" to teach about the A, B, C, Ds of drowning prevention. They are part of a broader water safety education team at the event that includes "Coastie," the talking robot boat sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Southern Nevada Sea Partners.

Joining "Rad Tad" and "Coastie" are two more mascots: "Smokey Bear" will be there to spread the word about wildland fire prevention, and "Mojave Max" will share his love for his fellow tortoises and the Mojave Desert.

Want to learn more about Mojave Desert reptiles? Visit this station to see and touch some reptiles up-close and personal. There will be other interactive tables, as well, making small nature journals, digging in an archeology "site," painting, nature writing, bird watching, identifying native plants and playing volunteer bingo. Also learn about Lake Mead as a "dog friendly park".

How about mixing in a little bit of kids music? A music station with percussion instruments should get kids dancing and moving to the sounds of recorded songs about nature. Toss in an inflatable earth ball and everyone gets involved.

National Junior Ranger Day at Lake Mead National Recreation Area falls at the end of National Park Week and is a kick-off for the National Park Service Centennial. It's a celebration of kids, the National Park Service and its partners, and a hopeful future for generations of families.

Come join the fun, April 25. For more information, call the Lake Mead Visitor Center at 702-293-8990. The event is free to the public.

Article Published in the Las Vegas Pet Scene Magazine - March/April 2015



Cooper



Charlotte



Onyx