

State of New Mexico
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Sarah Cottrell Propst
Cabinet Secretary

Todd E. Leahy, J.D., PhD.
Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Christy Tafoya, Division Director
State Parks Division



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 6, 2019

Contact: Christina Cordova, 505-476-3363 E-mail: Christina.cordova@state.nm.us

Susan Torres, 505-476-3226 E-mail: susan.torres@state.nm.us

State Park Ranger Receives Top Honors at Law Enforcement Academy

HOBBS, NM: The New Mexico Junior College's Southern NM Law Enforcement Basic Police Officer Training Academy named State Park Ranger Kandace Padilla as one of the top graduates of Class A-19-42 at its May 31st graduation ceremony. Padilla, a Ranger at Ute Lake State Park, received the Academic Excellence Award and Physical Fitness Award.

Padilla is one of five park officers to receive their law enforcement certification in May at the academy in Hobbs. Padilla was joined by her fellow classmates and colleagues, Ranger Mark Maloney from Conchas Lake State Park, Ranger Shea Henthorn from Ute Lake State Park, Ranger Jeremy Gonzales from Storrie Lake State Park and Ranger Jasen Kershaw from Elephant Butte Lake State Park.

So far this year, New Mexico State Parks has added seven new officers and are awaiting the graduation of another four graduates on June 15th for a total of 11 new officers out in the field.

"Ranger Padilla worked very hard at the academy and achieved the outstanding student award for both her academic and physical fitness accomplishments during her extensive law enforcement training at the academy. We are extremely proud of Ranger Padilla's accomplishments and she will continue to be a valuable employee at New Mexico State Parks and make an outstanding addition to our Law Enforcement team," said Barry Lucero, NM State Parks Law Enforcement and Boating Safety Bureau Chief.

Ranger Padilla hails from Saint Johns, Arizona and graduated from Saint Johns High School in 2007 where she played softball (lettered varsity four years, team MVP three years, All-State team, Region MVP, Captain three years) and soccer (Team MVP, All-State team, Captain lettered varsity four years). She received academic and athletic scholarships to Eastern New Mexico University.

She graduated from Eastern New Mexico University with a BBA in Business Administration with an emphasis in Marketing in spring 2011. Padilla played for the university

soccer team for four years and worked as a seasonal employee at Ute Lake State Park in the summer of 2011 while attending ENMU online working towards her graduate degree in Business. She started working for Ute Lake State Park as a Ranger in the summer of 2018.



Park Ranger Kandace Padilla is photographed with her grandfather, George Córdova Sr. Mr. Córdova is a retiree from NM State Parks (Ute Lake) and proudly pinned Park Ranger Padilla with her badge at the graduation ceremony.



New Mexico State Parks Law Enforcement Officers proudly stand with the new cadets at the graduation ceremony. Front row L-R: Sal Gonzales, Assistant Superintendent, Elephant Butte Lake State Park; Randy Bates, Park Superintendent, Hyde Memorial State Park; Evaristo Giron, Southwest Regional Manager; Barry Lucero, LE Bureau Chief; Ranger Kandace Padilla, Ute Lake State Park; Ranger Mark Maloney, Conchas Lake State Park; Ranger Shea Henthorn, Ute Lake State Park; Ranger Jeremy Gonzales, Storrie Lake State Park; and Ranger Jasen Kershaw, Elephant Butte Lake State Park. Back row L-R: Shawn Fisher, Park Superintendent; Conchas Lake State Park; Rick Martin, Park Manager, Ute Lake State Park; and Michael Brazel, Park Manager, Ute Lake State Park.

###

The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.