FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Castle Rock State Park, Santa Cruz County, California

On May 4, 2014, at approximately 1400 hours, CHP Helicopter 32 (H-32) received a request from California State Parks for assistance with the rescue of a lost hiker in Castle Rock State Park of rural Santa Cruz County. H-32 responded from the Napa County Airport with a crew of two (Pilot Scott Ellison and Flight Officer Ben Schmidt). H-32 arrived on scene and utilized its satellite phone to call the lost hiker on her cell phone. The rescue location was extremely rugged and steep. The hiker was located down a steep ravine and could not be seen by H-32 through the heavily forested area. Utilizing her cell phone, the hiker was able to guide H-32 over her general location. H-32 located a rock outcropping on a nearby ridgeline approximately 1/4 mile from the hikers location. H-32 did a hover operation and Flight Officer Schmidt exited the helicopter onto the rock. Flight Officer Schmidt hiked down into the ravine to the lost hiker and brought her back up to the ridgeline. Flight Officer Schmidt then called H-32 back to the location where they were picked up during a hover and flown to a landing zone a few miles away. The hiker was transferred to an awaiting State Parks Ranger and safely returned to her vehicle.

The California Highway Patrol Golden Gate Division Air Operations unit, based at the Napa County Airport, operates four aircraft (two airplanes and two helicopters) which patrol approximately 6,923 square miles that incorporates a residential population of more than 7 million people. The helicopter is routinely staffed with a CHP Officer/Pilot and a CHP Officer/Paramedic. The helicopter is equipped with a rescue hoist that has 165 feet of rescue cable that can lift patients and/or rescuers, that can weigh up to 450 pounds, into the helicopter.

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