



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks Host Naturalization Ceremony During Citizenship Week

Kings Canyon National Park, CA – Today, twenty-nine candidates became new citizens during a ceremony beneath the General Grant sequoia tree in Kings Canyon National Park.

The new citizens come from 13 nations: Mexico, India, the Philippines, Hong Kong, El Salvador, Lebanon, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Japan, Iran, Guatemala, and New Zealand.

The park hosted the event in partnership with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). “The General Grant Tree served as a wonderful backdrop for a momentous occasion,” said Colleen Bathe, acting superintendent of the parks, who spoke at the ceremony. Other speakers included Susan Curda, director of District 22 of the USCIS, and Don Riding, director of the USCIS Fresno Field Office.

This is one of more than 20 naturalization ceremonies taking place in national parks during Citizenship Week. The theme is “Embrace Citizenship – Experience America through your National Parks.”

“I can’t think of places more appropriate to welcome a new generation of American citizens than national parks,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “These parks, which are owned by all Americans, are not only places of stunning natural beauty and abundant wildlife, but across this country the nearly 400 national parks preserve our nation’s fascinating history and protect our rich cultural heritage. From the Aztec Ruins National Monument in New Mexico to Ellis Island in New York City, national parks ensure our nation’s artifacts and records are protected for generations to come.”

The National Park Service and USCIS recently renewed a formal [partnership](#) to enhance citizenship ceremonies by holding them in national parks throughout the country. The agreement helps introduce new citizens to some of the nation’s most significant natural resources and cultural heritage sites. These historic and picturesque sites provide an ideal backdrop for citizenship ceremonies, where new citizens can learn about and reflect on American identity and the responsibilities of citizenship.

“Each year we recognize Constitution Day and Citizenship Day on September 17 to commemorate the signing of the U.S. Constitution and to reflect on what it means to be a citizen of this nation,” said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. “While we continue to be enriched by our cultural and ethnic diversity, we remain united in our respect for the Constitution and to the foundational rights and responsibilities it represents.”

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.