

LA COUNTY PROBATION AT CALDOR FIRE

OFFICERS ASSIST WITH EVACUATIONS AND SECURITY EFFORTS



The Calder Fire was located 70 miles west of South Lake Tahoe and 65 miles east of Sacramento.

On August 30th, 2021, the Los Angeles County Probation Department received a request for mutual aid assistance from Chief Probation Officer Brian Richart of El Dorado County Probation. Chief Richart requested help with evacuation notifications and security of the area due to the Caldor fires. LA County Probation Sr. Director Frank Adams explained, "We had a great response of volunteers to assist, and DPO IIs Mario Padilla, Elizabeth Interrante, and Jesus Quinonez were selected and deployed to respond to this natural disaster."

Without hesitation, the three Deputy Probation Officers traveled to El Dorado County and served from August 31st to September 10th. They assisted with evacuation notifications, roadblocks, and community safety efforts in the El Dorado and South Lake Tahoe areas. In addition, the Deputies assisted by patrolling the perimeter of the city. They identified spot fires and reported them, helped residents who needed additional help evacuating, accompanied police officers in securing and clearing houses, and responded to calls regarding open doors and windows. They also conducted traffic and made sure looters didn't burglarize vacant homes and businesses.



DPO IIs Mario Padilla & Elizabeth Interrante

DPO IIs Jesus Quonoz & Elizabeth Interrante



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DPO Elizabeth Interrante shared, "It was really exciting, and something I had never done before. It was also nice to engage and network with other agencies. Aside from the firemen, we were the only agency from Los Angeles County. Being there felt good and gave us a sense of pride to represent our county."

The Deputies not only were tasked with assisting El Dorado County residents, but they found themselves also deterring wildlife. "We were organized in several teams. While patrolling, we were able to maintain a safe distance from the fires," DPO Quinonez shared. "Ironically, at times, we were more concerned with the bears that were roaming the city, opening car doors, and going inside houses. We responded to several calls and reported to various locations to steer bears away and direct them back into the woods."

The Deputies worked 12-hour shifts every day and contributed significantly to our partner county's evacuation and community safety efforts. At one point, they identified a spot fire that eventually grew. They immediately notified their lead, which in turn informed the Fire Department in that area. "In the midst of the fire, we were never scared, but more in awe. We always felt safe because there were so many agencies present," expressed DPO Interrante.



"Helping in the Caldor fires has thus far been the highlight of my career. It was very fulfilling to lend a helping hand, not only to the residents but to neighboring agencies alike. It felt great being a part of such a wonderful collaborative effort. I would definitely do it again."

-DPO II Mario Padilla



DPO IIs Padilla assists building evacuations

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"The people of the city were grateful, and the other law enforcement agencies were as well. They made us feel welcomed and a part of the team. Everything was organized, and everyone was willing to extend themselves to get the job done," said DPO Padilla.

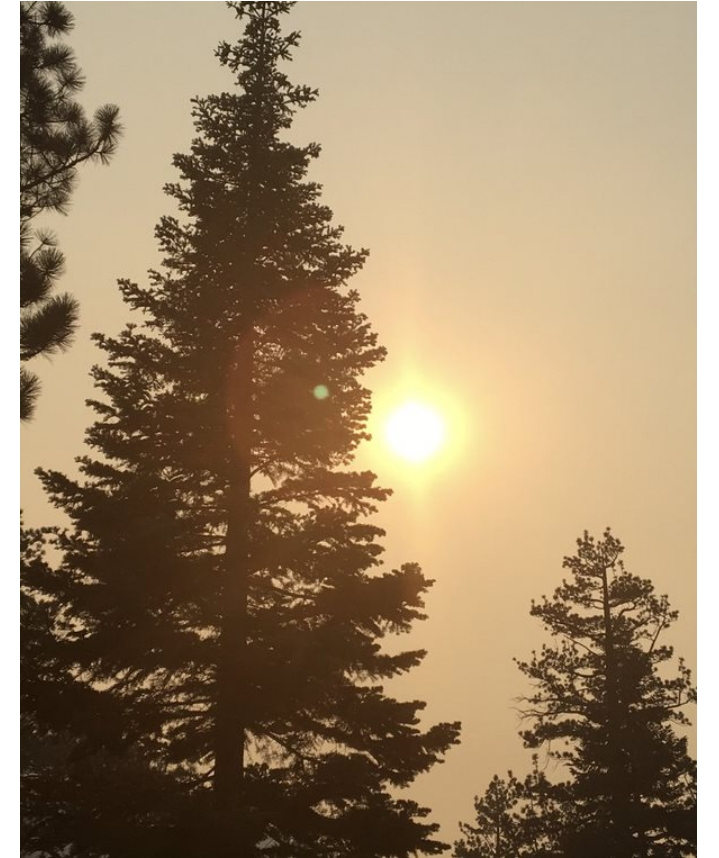
"It was great working with all the various agencies. If the opportunity presents itself, I'd do it again and encourage my colleagues also to volunteer. It was a great experience," expressed DPO Quinonez.

Before the Deputies left El Dorado County, the city started to repopulate, and Ms. Tamara Wallace, Mayor of South Lake Tahoe, personally thanked them for their service. Residents also waved them down to express their gratitude. "Everyone was so thankful. It felt really good," said DPO Interrante.

As essential workers and first responders, probation officers have vowed to be a service to those who find themselves in the most helpless and vulnerable circumstances. These Deputies did not waver when the call for help went out. Their humanitarian efforts have demonstrated dedication and commitment to their home county and our neighboring counties and communities as well.

On behalf of the Los Angeles County Probation Department, Deputy Probation Officers Padilla, Interrante, and Quinonez, we acknowledge and recognize your servant's heart and thank you for your bravery and service.

Probation News



Proud first responders pose with a grateful resident