



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Peter Olsen / American Hiking Society
POlsen@AmericanHiking.org
301.565.6704 x205

Forest Service Officer's Quick Action Likely Saved Hikers

Silver Spring, MD – April 25, 2012 - The work that the U.S. Forest Service officers and other park rangers do on a daily basis goes unnoticed by most Americans, unless they get lost on a backpacking excursion or have questions about a campsite. However, the actions of a Forest Service officer in Utah last week served to remind us all that our public servants do much more than just protect the wilderness resources: they protect people.

While on duty in Provo Canyon, Utah last week, U.S. Forest Service Officer James Schoeffler, discovered two potentially life threatening booby traps on Big Springs hiking trail. These traps were set to go off if a fishing line wire trigger got tripped by someone or something. Fortunately, Officer Schoeffler identified the threat before any hikers encountered the dangerous traps. The booby traps were immediately assessed and carefully dismantled. Two suspects were arrested this past weekend in connection with this incident.

American Hiking Society lauds Officer Schoeffler for his keen observation, quick action and his dedication to duty. He is an example of the superior service rendered by those in the Forest Service, Park Service and all who serve in America's parks and wilderness areas.

"When park officials act to not only respond to emergency situations, but to prevent them from ever happening in the first place, it serves to remind us of the excellent value that American taxpayers are receiving," noted Gregory Miller, President of American Hiking Society. "In these times when federal spending is under review for efficiency, American Hiking Society believes actions such as Officer Schoeffler's demonstrate that the government saves money when parks are adequately staffed."

This incident can serve as a timely, cautionary tale for all who are taking to the trail this season. Since park and forest rangers cannot be everywhere, American Hiking Society strongly recommends following basic hiking safety techniques such as always hiking with another person and carrying a daypack containing the Ten Essentials of Hiking. It is also very important that hikers inform a friend or family member of the area they are trekking in and when they plan to return.

About American Hiking Society

Founded in 1976, American Hiking Society is the only national, recreation-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and protecting America's hiking trails, their surrounding natural areas and the hiking experience. To learn more about American Hiking Society and its mission and programs, visit www.AmericanHiking.org or call (301) 565-6704.