

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CALIFORNIA DESERT

Protecting Our Legacy, Strengthening Our Future

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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REMINDER: UPCOMING DESERT EVENTS CELEBRATE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE AND ALL PUBLIC LANDS

Series of Fall community events shines spotlight on region's protected public lands

Joshua Tree, CA – October 10, 2016 – Today local groups issued a reminder regarding upcoming desert events designed to celebrate the National Park Service Centennial and highlight the region's protected public lands. These activities are being held throughout the desert to encourage local families and residents to explore these special places.

"The National Park Service Centennial is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our desert, its cultural significance, and what it adds to our lives," said Tanya Henderson, Interim Executive Director of the Amargosa Conservancy. "Public lands in the California Desert contribute significantly to our quality of life, offering places to hike, camp, fish and more."

The series of events, which kicked off Oct. 1 and will include six additional events from Oct. 15 through the first week of November, provides opportunities to learn about our California Desert history, birding expeditions, overnight hiking and camping trips, stargazing events, and many more. As these celebrations take place, these communities are renewing their commitment to protect California Desert public lands for the next century and beyond.

"We have a lot to celebrate this year in the California Desert," said Monica Mahoney, Director of Education and Public Engagement for the Mojave Desert Land Trust. "We are so grateful that President Obama designated three new California Desert National Monuments this year, adding to the wonders of our region. These are places where you can experience plants and animals not found anywhere else on our planet."

After urging from Senator Feinstein, President Obama designated the Mojave Trails, Sand to Snow, and Castle Mountains National Monuments in the California Desert in early 2016. These public lands are now permanently protected for generations to explore and enjoy.

"In recognition of all that our public lands contribute to our way of life, now is the time to recommit ourselves to protecting these places," said Maite Arce, president and CEO of Hispanic Access

Foundation. “Whether you regularly hike and camp or have yet to experience the wonder of these lands – come join us to learn, explore and delight in all the California Desert offers to us.”

Saturday, October 15 to Sunday, October 16 – CENTENNIAL EXCURSION AND FULL MOON OVERNIGHT CAMPING TRIP - A Community Celebration of Mojave National Preserve and Castle Mountains National Monument in honor of the NPS 100-year Anniversary

10:00 am - Mojave Desert Land Trust hosts the Centennial Excursion and Full Moon Campout, an overnight tour of significant cultural and biological treasures within the Mojave National Preserve and the Castle Mountains National Monument. The Centennial Excursion and Full Moon Campout is an overnight tour of significant cultural and biological treasures within the Mojave National Preserve and the Castle Mountains National Monument. The program celebrates the NPS Centennial by gathering community leaders and members together for a journey to some of the most remote, newest and perhaps least understood NPS lands in the California Desert. Attendees will learn about and celebrate the new California Desert Monuments and MDLT’s role in achieving these protections, visit a Native American cultural site, and enjoy a full moon interpretive program and hike at the base of the newly protected Castle Mountains. Goffs, CA. While **RSVPs for this event are at capacity**, reporters are invited to attend and cover the excursion. **For press inquiries contact Shauna Tucker, Creative Services & Media Advisor Mojave Desert Land Trust shauna@mdlt.org (760) 366-5440. For program inquiries contact Monica Mahoney, Director of Education and Public Engagement for Mojave Desert Land Trust monica@mdlt.org (760) 366-5440**

Saturday, October 15 - HAPPY 100 NPS: BACKPACKING TRIP IN JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

12:00 pm - There’s no better way to celebrate the 100th birthday of the National Park Service than to pack your tent into the Joshua Tree National Park wilderness. Attendees will learn backpacking basics like safety and logistical planning, as well as the history, culture and nature that is so abundant in Joshua Tree National Park. Campers will hike between 3 and 5 miles each day over rough terrain with a heavy pack (approximately 30 pounds) and camp beneath the star-studded, pristine night skies away from civilization. Along the way they may spot wildlife, interesting desert plants and geologic formations. Participants will also learn about federally-designated wilderness and what they can do to protect the national parks for the next 100 years. Attendance limited, please RSVP. FREE admission.

Contact: Seth Shteir, National Parks Conservation Association – 760-332-9776

Friday-Sunday, October 28-30 - JOSHUA TREE 2016 NIGHT SKY FESTIVAL

[Schedule of Events](#) - The National Park Service, steward of Joshua Tree National Park and over 400 other park sites around the country, celebrated its 100th birthday in August, 2016. At Joshua Tree, we will continue our celebration of the NPS Centennial in October by bringing together astronomers, scientists, night-sky enthusiasts, artists, junior rangers, and members of nearby communities to celebrate the night skies of Joshua Tree National Park. This event is free of charge. Park entrance fees apply. **Contact: Kevin Wong, Program Coordinator, Desert Institute – 760-267-5535**

Saturday, October 29 - HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH AT WHITEWATER PRESERVE: AWARENESS, APPRECIATION AND ADVOCACY

The Wildlands Conservancy invites Hispanic community leaders from various organizations for dinner and a tour of the Whitewater Preserve to learn about access problems facing the Latino community in Sand to Snow National Monument. This event will help educate and empower Latino community leaders to develop and advocate for equitable solutions. The discussion will focus on current management policies in Whitewater Canyon that disadvantage the Latino community, and how Latino leaders can educate and activate their communities to push for improved access. Whitewater Preserve, 9160 Whitewater Canyon Rd., Whitewater, CA 92282. Attendance by invitation only. **Contact: Jack Thompson, The Wildlands Conservancy – 760-325-7222 – jack.t@twc-ca.org**

Saturday, November 4 & Sunday, November 5 - JOSHUA TREE WORKSHOP

9:00 am - This two-day workshop will explore the natural history of Joshua trees and their plant communities. The workshop will train attendees to conduct community science fieldwork on research being conducted within Joshua Tree National Park. Speakers will include Cameron Barrows, Chris Smith, Todd Esque and others. The workshop and community science fieldwork will directly contribute to data on existing Joshua tree sites, their health, their age, associated plant communities and migration trends. Participants will leave with newfound knowledge of these unique species and understanding of the intricate fragility of desert ecosystems. [Black Rock Visitor Center](#), 9800 Black Rock Canyon Rd, Yucca Valley, CA. Online Registration is required at [JT Workshop Registration](#). FREE admission. **Contact: Kevin Wong, Program Coordinator, Desert Institute – 760-267-5535**

Saturday, November 5 - MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE STAR PARTY

5:00 p.m. - The Mojave Star Party is a signature Mojave Desert event that has taken place twice annually since 2008. The event has developed a following due to the incredibly dark night skies found in the Eastern Mojave National Preserve, the excellent night sky education provided by the Pasadena Olde Town Astronomers, and the gigantic telescopes (some homemade) that the astronomers bring to the event for public use. The Star Party offers free camping at the Black Canyon Group camp, and dinner is potluck. The event will provide snacks, drinks, hikes the following day led by the Superintendent of the Mojave National Preserve, and interpretation by the National Park Service. This event draws a broad array of desert lovers including scientists, National Park Service employees, community leaders, media, students, and a diverse array of community members. Open to public. FREE admission. **Contact: David Lamfrom – 760-957-7887 – dlamfrom@npca.org**

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About the California Desert Centennial Celebration Events:

These celebrations are being organized by the Campaign for the California Desert, a coalition of community leaders, business organizations and conservation groups dedicated to protecting our desert landscapes and celebrating them for their contributions to America's natural and cultural heritage and regional economy. The series of events will celebrate the National Park Service Centennial and highlight all the region's protected public lands. Activities are being held throughout the desert to encourage local families and residents to explore these special places, and highlight communities' commitment to

protect California Desert public lands for the next century and beyond. To learn about the California Desert Centennial events, visit <http://3monuments.org/centennial/> for more information.