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March 2013

Dan Falat is superintendent of Colorado Desert District



Photo courtesy of Dan Falat

Colorado Desert District's Superintendent Dan Falat (left) is congratulated on his new assignment by Channel Coast District Superintendent V Rich Rozzelle during Dan's last staff meeting at Channel Coast.

Dan Falat was named the new superintendent of the Colorado Desert District January 31. Acting Deputy Director of Park Operations Ronilee Clark made the announcement January 25.

Dan began his career as a park interpretive specialist and visitor services park aide at Millerton Lake State Recreation Area. In 2001 he graduated in Basic Visitor Services Training, Ranger Academy 17. He started his career as a ranger at Millerton Lake where, in 2004, he promoted to supervising ranger.

From 2007 to 2009, he was the Park Operations Superintendent in the Coastal Sector of the San Luis Obispo Coast District. Since 2009 he has been the Santa Barbara Sector Superintendent in the Channel Coast District.

Dan graduated from Fresno State University and is one of only two members of California State Parks to graduate from North Carolina State University's National State Park Leadership School. In addition, he has been, and continues to be, part of multiple Department instructor programs and work teams, both

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LOG JAM: Notes from the District, sectors

Picacho State Recreation Area

From the desk of Ranger Sue Barney:

With Picacho being so remote, it is always interesting to ask our visitors how they heard about the Park—especially the out of state and international visitors. Many tell us they looked at a map, saw a dot with a State Park symbol next to it and headed that way.

One international visitor told me he loves to travel across the U.S. camping at state parks. He likes that we have protected such beautiful areas and said in his country the parks are very different. They are all private and developed. Many “Yumans” (locals from Yuma, Arizona) tell us they have always looked at the peak and wanted to drive out that way and finally decided to make the trip.

A number of visitors also come to pay respects to family members buried in the cemetery and many of them share stories of their family history.

Whatever the reason, it is this variety of visitors that continue to surprise and inspire us. One recent visitor gave us a glimpse into the past with stories about “Stewie.” He told us that, through a friend, he obtained a photograph of Stewie’s cabin. It was located on what is now the Stewart Lake Trail which is named after Stewie. As we work to update the self-guided trail brochures and rehabilitate the trail, this provides us a great opportunity for an interpretive panel to share the photograph and history with other visitors.

The Mendivil family precedes Stewie and the “Fish Camp” days of Picacho. The Mendivils have a deeply rooted history that began when Jose Maria Mendivil discovered rich ore veins near Picacho Peak in the early 1860s. During Picacho’s heyday, Mendivil sold his claims and homesteaded a section of land along the river bank where he laid out the town, naming the



Photo by Ivan Monroe

A young bighorn ram peers down at visitors at Picacho State Recreation Area. There have been two sightings near campsites recently, a rare occurrence at PSRA.

streets after his daughters.

The Mendivil family continues to be a part of Picacho history with regular visits to the Park and an annual family reunion during President’s Day weekend. Always willing to share family stories, photos (and great food), their visits keep the history of Picacho alive.

Two lucky campers reported separate bighorn sightings on the same day. One sighting was in White Wash about three quarters of a mile outside the main campground. The second sighting was in the main campground a few hours later. It is very rare at Picacho to see bighorn so close to camp.

Palomar Mountain State Park

The last edition of *Culturally Speaking* had an article about historic orchards by Historian III Jan Wooley of the Archaeology, History & Museums Division. She said a 2008 survey conducted by DPR determined that there are at least 44 parks that have historic fruit orchards.

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LOG JAM: District, sector notes (cont.)



Photos by Jessica Murany

The first waterfall PMSP's Ranger Jessica Murany and friends found during a strenuous hike recently feeds the pond below it.

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PMSP's historic apple orchard has been celebrated the past two years during the Apple Days festivals and they promise to draw more visitors each year. The *Culturally Speaking* article made some strong points in favor of working to keep the orchard in good shape.

"Historic orchards often contain rare or unusual fruit varieties that may be the only surviving examples of their type," Wooley stated.

In addition, the National Park Service's (NPS) Olmstead Center works with property managers throughout the country, including California State Parks, to protect and preserve these valuable resources.

DPR's Archaeology, History & Museums Division has partnered with the Pacific West Region Cultural Landscapes Program of NPS to produce the *Historic Orchard and Fruit Tree Stabilization Handbook*. It is designed to serve as a

guide for stabilizing the condition of potentially historic or known historic orchard and fruit trees within State Parks. It is aimed toward park managers, resource managers, maintenance staff, partners and volunteers who are responsible for planting, management or preservation maintenance of DPR's biotic cultural resources. Copies are available from Jan Wooley.

From the desk of Ranger Jessica Murany:

Nothing but the usual happenings at Palomar Mountain State Park, so I decided to write about a scenic hike that Rick Barclay, Dan Minshew, Ian Baquirin and I took recently. The hike was so beautiful that I had to share a little about the experience and some of the photographs that I took. The scenic part, however, was mostly at the end at our final destination to one of San Diego County's hidden beauties, Rainbow Falls.

The hike itself was no easy goin'. We were one on one with rugged wilderness and no trail. We hiked Doane Valley Creek all the way down to the Pauma Creek in the drainage, hopping rock to rock and scraping limb by limb. Three out of the four of us made an unin-

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Framed by tall trees, the second waterfall is almost hidden to Ranger Jessica Murany and friends Rick Barclay, Dan Minshew and Ian Baquirin.

LOG JAM: District, sector notes (cont.)



(Continued from Page 3)

tentional splash or two. The water was very cold with icicles hanging from tree limbs just above the splashing water, but after four hours of strenuous hiking, we made it to one of the most beautiful places. We enjoyed a series of waterfalls, one after another, with crystalline pools, each containing wild trout in its depths. We quit going further after the first three falls due to our tired bodies, but also to save something to see for next time. Enjoy the photos!

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

The Volunteer Gala is scheduled at 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 12, at the RoadRunner Club House.

This is State Parks staff's opportunity to wait on the volunteers and show them appreciation



Photos by Jessica Murany

A winter day on Palomar Mountain is perfect for hiking. Ranger Jessica Murany and friends made it to the top of Rainbow Falls (above) then hiked below it for the scene at left.

for all they do. This also takes the place of the monthly volunteer potluck.

Please reserve your space by emailing Abby Barker at Abby.Barker@parks.ca.gov and tell her whether you would like barbecued ribs, chicken marsala or chile cheese quiche. The deadline for reservations Friday, March 8.

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Photo by Jim Dascoulias

Icicles hang from roof edges and snow covers the ground at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park February 11.

LOG JAM: District, sector notes (cont.)



Photos by Heidi Addison-Bier
CRSP's Park Aide Sarah Reisman and Camp Host Ken Allen take a break during a hike with other staff and volunteers to Stonewall Peak in January.

(Continued from Page 4)

From the desk of Marilyn Dickson of the ABDSP Botany Society:

Once again you came through, as good volunteers do! We appreciate all of you who donated items for our booth we held February 2 at the Lions Club Swap Meet. It was our most profitable event so far, netting \$759 for our treasury. Thank you to all of you who gave your time and items to make this event such a successful one for us.

ABDSP Superintendent Kathy Dice recently announced changes in the Park's patrol area coverage. Beginning March 1, Nicole Van Doren will be in the Badlands Sector and Dennis Stephen will be the campground

ranger. Josh Heitzmann will go to Bow Willow, while Don Strampfer will be the new Coyote Canyon ranger. Everyone else remains the same—although some of the patrol boundaries will change to adjust for staffing shortages.

News just reached ABDSP that Park Volunteer Minnie Surles (class of 1981) passed away last fall. She was 93.

Salton Sea State Recreation Area

From the desk of Interpreter I Fredda Stephens:

It was amazing weather and the pelicans were exceptionally cooperative in helping us celebrate our first perfectly executed Pelican Days Birding Festival at the Salton Sea. This festival has been a dream project for us here at the Sea for more than five years and to see it all come together nearly perfectly was wonderful.

We all worked so hard; the staff, volunteers and community came together and credit is well

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The first real snowfall of the season makes it a little hard for Camp Host Ken Allen to work on his trailer at CRSP's Paso Picacho Campground.

LOG JAM: District, sector notes (cont.)



Photos by Fredda Stephens
Pelicans—the stars of the show—gather on the shore of the Salton Sea during SSSRA's Pelican Days January 18 through 20.

(Continued from Page 5)

deserved by all.

I want especially to thank College of the Desert Professor Kurt Leuschner for all that he has done for us at the Salton Sea in the form of education. He has been almost a private consultant, working with us to come up with an accurate bird list and constantly bringing down busloads of students to learn about the Sea. His birding class was a fun part of the festival and Saturday evening he presented an outstanding program on avian migration. And he also led an all-day birding tour around the Sea in conjunction with the Living Desert. This is a prime example of meeting our partnership goals. It is so valuable to see State Parks partnering with educational institutions and the private sector as well.

Thanks to Linda York from the Wild Bird Center who made it possible to treat our festival attendees with a “behind the scenes” tour of the center and wetland walk at the center in Indio. So, not only is she rescuing hundreds of birds, she frequently rescues us. She is always there when we need her help with an injured bird—another perfect partner helping us

preserve and protect of our resources.

Another big round of applause goes out to our birding partners. Thank you Karen Nelson, birder extraordinaire (from Whitewater Preserve and The Living Desert) for leading our “Salt Creek and South” field trip. She partnered up with our star birding Volunteer Bob Dwyer to make it a memorable trip.

Bob's early morning Armchair Birding and Saturday morning bird walk drew hordes of people and was a great success. Our partners to the south at the Sonny Bono Wildlife Refuge, led by Chris Schoneman, joined forces to make the trip an experience to remember. We are partnering to provide quality recreation.

Once again, Linda Beal, advocate for the Sea and volunteer for the Salton Sea History Museum, drew in the children of the community by promoting our Children's Chalk Art contest.

And thanks to Carl Greer, Sea & Desert Interpretive Association board member from Borrego Springs, for the camera class. We had several top notch little photographers in the Kid's Camera class and they are our future partners.

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Logan Brennan's chalk rendering of the Salton Sea State Recreation Area is as full of joy as the participants who attended the Pelican Days Birding festival in January.

LOG JAM: District, sector notes (cont.)



Photos by Fredda Stephens

Photographers Carson, Logan and Lauren have fun at the photography class with Volunteer Carl Greer.

(Continued from Page 6)

Our partners at District helped out by promoting our new festival. Thank you *Tracks* Editor Leslie Bellah for your help and we really appreciated Acting SSSRA Superintendent Ranger Paul Reisman and District Services Manager Gail Sevrens for their help in making this an “all hands” effort.



Volunteer Larry Brauer and Office Assistant (Typing) Yesenia (Jessie) Alfaro give information to visitors at SSSRA's Pelican Days.

The community also came out with tables and booths and food and boat rides. The Salton Sea History Museum, Sonny Bono Wildlife Refuge, Casey Park's Air Boat Tours, Bureau of Land Management, vendors and local artists joined in the festivities. An event like this will benefit us all and the local economy in the long run.

Where would we be without our Salton Sea volunteers? Our non-profit partner, the Sea & Desert Interpretive Association, stepped up. The members attended weekly meetings and planning sessions, and funded our endeavor



Serious artists, winners of the Chalk Art contest Faith, Daisy and Paola, wear their winners' medallions proudly.

with our new Association Management Consultant Connie Brooks leading the way. We had 350 to 400 people during the weekend and even made a little money—not too shabby for our first endeavor.

Saving the best partners for last, our State Park staff worked together with our SSSRA volunteers like a well-oiled machine. Together, we did it!!! Not only for this one weekend but we have managed to keep this place open and prospering for the future. Now that's a partnership.

Dan comes from Channel Coast (cont.)

(Continued from Page 1)

as a member and as the lead.

In an email to District staff, Dan said he was anticipating and excited about being a member of the Colorado Desert District.

“My professional career has been diverse and I have had the fortunate opportunity to work with some the most outstanding individuals both inside and outside of our Department,” he said.

“I view being part of the Colorado Desert District as the next chapter in this tradition. I feel privileged to be part of this District and am confident that together we will be able to continue and expand the great work that you have all been doing.

“I am currently in a transition period, but

hope to be in District within the next couple of weeks. In the meantime keep up the great work and I look forward to meeting all of you as I make my way through the District after I arrive.”

Ronilee also thanked District Services Manager Gail Sevrens who was acting District superintendent for the past three years.

“Gail is a wonderfully creative and intelligent manager that worked diligently in support of her staff, the parks and resources, park visitors and the many park partners that committed their time and resources to keep parks open,” Ronilee said. “The entire time, she also filled the role of the District Services Manager—two more than full-time jobs. She leaves a great legacy of commitment.”

Volunteers meet picnic table builder at potluck



Photos by Sam Webb

ABDSP Volunteers (above) line up at the food table during the monthly volunteer potluck, this one at the Senior Center. Volunteer Virginia Perrine (right) introduces Scott Curry (left of Virginia) who designed and built the picnic table for use at the Paroli Home Site. Kayle Amen made and attached the plaque on the table and helped transport it to the site.



What is NAGPRA? Why is it important?

An article in the last edition of *Culturally Speaking* defined and explained NAGPRA—something of importance for State Park employees who work in the field. NAGPRA (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) is a federal law that provides a process for museums and federal agencies to return certain Native American cultural items to lineal descendants and culturally affiliated Indian Tribes. The law includes provisions for intentional and inadvertent discovery of Native American cultural items on Federal and Tribal lands and penalties for non-compliance and illegal trafficking.

And the law authorizes Federal grants to assist with the documentation and repatriation of Native American cultural items as well as establishing the NAGPRA to monitor the process and facilitate the resolution of disputes that may arise concerning repatriation under NAGPRA.

So what does all this mean to us?

“NAGPRA applies to our District’s Native American cultural collections and over the past decade we have worked with Sacramento staff and Native Americans to ensure that we are properly complying with the requirements” reported Associate State Archaeologist Sue Wade. “California State Public Resources Code and Health and Safety Code provide protection for human remains and associated burial items found on non-federal lands. When finding cultural items in the field, they should always be left in place. We recommend taking plenty of photographs and a GPS location and forwarding them to the District Archaeologist.”

When suspected human remains are discovered, Sue said staff members should immediately telephone the ranger on duty. There is a Health and Safety Code-mandated process to be followed that starts with law enforcement personnel.

Barney Georgia Jamerson is growing up quickly



Photo by Lynn Jamerson



Photo by Donna Malloy

Barney Georgia Jamerson, the baby burro adopted by SSSRA Park Maintenance Assistant Lynn Jamerson (see November, 2012, *Tracks*), is growing fast. He loves to give kisses and follows Lynn everywhere. At four months and 150 pounds, he is now taller than his Rottweiler companion (above, right). He has adapted to his new home and is doing well, thanks to the loving care of his adoptive mother. He sneaks oranges off the tree for snacks and follows Lynn around like a puppy. She is working on getting him halter trained and has no regrets about her decision to adopt him, according to PSRA Ranger Sue Barney who, with Park Maintenance Assistant Georgia Schneider, rescued the little guy last fall.



Photo by Lynn Jamerson

Denver Zoo Foundation folks speak here



Above photos by Sam Webb

Dr. Richard Reading of the Denver Zoo Foundation (above) speaks to a group at ABDSP's Visitor Center February 8. Dr. Reading and Ganchimeg Wingard, a Mongolian wildlife researcher and Denver Zoo Foundation program coordinator, gave the program about ABDSP's Sister Park, Ikh Nart Nature Reserve. Dr. Reading and Ganchimeg conduct and oversee scientific research at Ikh Nart in the eastern Gobi. Park staff has been visiting Ikh Nart since 2006, assisting with Mongolian ranger training and support. Since 2010, retired Associated State Archaeologist Dr. Joan Schneider has been working to record archeological sites in Ikh Nart through the international EarthWatch program. Dr. Reading also has been conducting research throughout Mongolia on Argali sheep, Siberian ibex, wild Bactrian camels, wolves, hedgehogs and black vultures, and has been instrumental in setting aside Nature Reserves and protected areas throughout the Central Asian country. Retired ABDSP Superintendent Mark Jorgensen took the visitors and others on a tour of ABDSP's Sandstone Canyon where they paused for a photograph (below). They are (left to right) Mark, Dr. Reading, Ganchimeg, Steve Jorgensen, ABDSP Ranger Steve Bier, Retired District Superintendent Mike Wells, Emmy Gates and District Park Aide Jack Jorgensen.

Photo below by Mark Jorgensen



UCI Research Center has an elephant herd

*By Jim Dice
Reserve Manager
University of California, Irvine,
Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego
Desert Research Center*

Last June Tom Antel, a local rancher, photographer, world traveler, bon vivant and friend of the former Desert Club owner (John Scranton) provided the Research Center with an elephant tree and a white-flowered (albino) ocotillo from the ranch that he sold at the north end of Borrego Valley. Even though Bob Thériault, Mark Jorgensen and I all thought it was an iffy proposition, transplanting them in June, both have flourished in the front area near the gate.

Two weeks ago, with a few hours of advance warning, Tom arrived in his pickup pulling a trailer full of plants that he had just removed from his former ranch. Seems the Los Angeles CEO who bought the house and ranch isn't fond of desert plants and was going to rip them out and plant palm trees. Bottom line, Tom and his two gardeners installed four new elephant trees (*Bursera microphylla*) in about 20 minutes or about as long as it took me to decide where to plant them.

I offered Tom an acknowledgement letter for tax purposes, but he said it wasn't necessary. He said he just wanted to plant them here and give them a good home in memory of Terry

Hildebrand and Norm Roberts (both of whom participated in collecting the seeds and growing the plants), Paul Jorgensen (the late State Park biologist whose memorial reception was held here November 4) and in honor of his daughter Sita (formerly of Borrego Springs) who is now about 9 or 10 years old. Bob and I are thrilled to have an elephant tree herd that now numbers five individuals. Elaine Tulving is thrilled, not quite as much, but she's been busy keeping the interior of the building shipshape.

During the past couple of weeks, we've also adorned the hallway with art (with a huge assist from our Volunteer Art Consultant Kelley Jorgensen, Mark's wife). Kelley painted a background for a display of Bob Schepe's desert landscape watercolors (we have five currently on long-term loan from Paul and Kathy Jorgensen and Park volunteers Sam and Astrid Webb and Ann Nourse). Mark and Kelley provided me with biographical sketches to accompany the paintings and did the arrangement on the wall for all of it. Additionally, Kelley did the arrangements and installation for two Paul Johnson desert photographs (a California fan palm oasis and a diamond cholla) and two Wendy Hodgson botanical illustrations (an ocotillo and an agave)—all plants native to the property—that I've donated to the cause.

Site stewards have flint knapping workshop program



Photo by Sam Webb

On a beautiful February day at the ancient Wonderstone quarry overlooking the Salton Sea, volunteer site stewards participated in a flint knapping workshop with Archaeologists George Kline and Jim Eighmey. Site stewards were able to sharpen their eye and understanding of lithic artifacts and tool production by examining surface artifacts, watching Jim and George flint knapping various rock materials and by trying it themselves.

It is picturesque, peaceful on Palomar



Photos by Jessica Murany
Palomar Mountain State Park was covered in snow in January, making beautiful landscapes and delicate ice wands on plants. Footprints, from humans and other animals, decorated the white blanket. Visitors from all over San Diego County flock to the Park on snow days to play and enjoy the beauty. It's not all peaceful and perfect, however.

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PMSP's winter wonderland is tricky (cont.)

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Photos by Jessica Murany

A mountain lion left tracks in the snow which confirmed the three sightings of the cat at PMSP— one on the Boucher Loop, one near the Cedar Trail and the third near Residence I. With the picturesque snow came vehicular incidents. There were two vehicles that got stuck on the side of the road and three vehicles that slid off, requiring drivers to call for help to get back on the road. Luckily, there were no injuries or serious property damage. The storm left 4.5 inches of snow and temperatures dropped below 20 degrees.



CSPF donates to Picacho State Rec Area

California State Parks Foundation (CSPF)

From the desk of Picacho State Recreation Area Ranger Sue Barney:

Staff and volunteers are excited about being awarded an Earth Day 2013 grant from California State Parks Foundation (CSPF) in the amount of \$5,100. The grant money will be used to rehabilitate three campsites in the main campground.

Volunteers are being solicited to help with the project from 8 am to noon as part of CSPF's 16th Annual Earth Day Restoration and Cleanup set for Saturday, April 13. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up through CSPF's website at www.calparks.org/earthday. Registration is open to the public from Monday, March 4, through Monday, April 8.

Sea & Desert Interpretive Association (SDIA)

From the desk of SDIA Management Consultant Connie Brooks:

Hello from the Salton Sea! The what? The Salton Sea—you know that sometimes smelly place that's only one hour from Borrego Springs? It's where we fish, kayak, sail, water ski

and go birding. Yes we are still here and we have big new plans.

The Sea & Desert Interpretive Association (SDIA) has managed to raise almost all the money for this year to help keep our wonderful Salton Sea State Recreation Area open and we are confident that, through grant writing and activities at the Sea, that we will accomplish our goal.

Things are really starting to happen here. The last time the Salton Sea "burped," it gained the attention of a lot of very important people: the public. People called their neighbors, friends, relatives, mayors, congressman, senators and the Governor. The question was "Oh geeez ... what's that smell?"

We at the Salton Sea proudly raised our hands and said "it's us!" What a wonderful burp that was. We now have the right people looking at the beautiful, sad, misunderstood and under-used Salton Sea and saying "Okay, it's time to see what we can do."

I never thought that negativity would bring us good fortune, but it did.

I was Googling the Salton Sea one day, trying to keep track of what people are saying about our wonderful 33-mile long and 14-mile wide body of water and I ran across a horrible article written from someone who had nothing but bad things to say about the Salton Sea. Of course none of it was true including the part about our rangers wearing Daisy Dukes. The article was rather long and made me grimace.

I forwarded the article to all our volunteers and said, "This is one of the many things we are up against." The next day I was at our wonderful little cove where I have coffee with the pelicans at 6 a.m. every morning and I met a couple who were looking at the dead fish. We just started having a small fish die off from the water turning cold. I figured they had questions so I walked over to explain and they told me they had never



Photo by James Ongley

A pelican flies over the Salton Sea at sunset during Pelican Days at the Salton Sea State Recreation Area.

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Non-profits have plenty of ideas (cont.)



Photo by Bob Dwyer

Visitors look at geese and other waterfowl on the Salt Creek and South field trip during Pelican Days.

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been here before but they were Googling the Salton Sea the day before and came across this horrible article that someone had written and had to come and see for themselves.

I asked them if it talked about “Daisy Dukes” and they said yes—it was one and the same. Negativity again brought us good fortune. We now have two new dedicated visitors who joined and became supporters and have offered to do whatever they can to help. I invite people down to “experience” the Sea because even on bad days it is a wonderful place.

Our Spring Festival is Saturday, March 30, and features a spring egg hunt, kite flying and hot dogs. Saturday, April 6, we’ll see our very first Wind and Water Festival. It will be a sailing regatta and kite festival. One of our goals is to have 500 kites in the air at one time! What a sight that will be.

October will bring a Fiesta Fiesta Festival to the SSSRA and we also are hoping to participate in the Salton Sea Symposium in Palm Desert. We are going to take the sea to them! Also, watch for our new glass bottomed air-

boat that will be coming to the Sea.

So now that you know we are still here, we will be looking forward to seeing you soon.

The Anza-Borrego Foundation (ABF)

The Anza-Borrego Foundation (ABF) has announced that it has joined other backcountry conservation organizations in the new Backcountry Visitor Center in the Santa Ysabel General Store.

This new venture, in partnership with Save Our Heritage Organization, San Diego River Park Foundation, San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy, Volcan Mountain Foundation and the Wildlife Research Institute, will provide the public with information on public trails, birds and wildlife, recreational opportunities and cultural heritage sites.

ABF is looking for volunteer hosts at the historic general store. Volunteers will welcome visitors to the newly-opened center and will help orient visitors with information on nearby trails and recreational opportunities, while also highlighting the wonders of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. For further information or to sign up as a volunteer at the General Store, email Paige@theabf.org.

ABF also has committed to again work with the ABDSP Botany Society to host spring walks for the public. Its goal this year is to plan walks that will be interesting to the public whether or not there are flowers blooming. The events will be called “Spring Walks: More Than Just Flowers.”

Members of the Botany or Naturalist societies are encouraged to lead walks that will generally be from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. starting in late February and offered through March. Anza-Borrego Foundation Institute Manager Briana Puzzo said she would be happy to schedule earlier start times, if leaders so desire. She also encouraged people to sign up with a spouse, friend or another volunteer.

For further information or to volunteer, con-

Paleontology volunteers give 10,771 hours

**By Lou Bahar
Paleontology Society**

Midway through the season we have many Paleontology Society activities to report. The most exciting is the news of the number of hours the volunteers worked in calendar year 2012: 10,771. This compares with the all-time high of 11,255 hours in 2011; due that year, in part, to the largest training class to go through the program, plus the giant desert tortoise that took months to prepare for jacketing, prior to bringing it into the laboratory from the field. Volunteers worked long and hard that year. The 2012 class was only about one third the size and there were no very large fossils to be removed from the field. So a nearly equal number of hours throughout 2012 was due to higher overall activity by all volunteers working regularly in the field, laboratory and curation.

Volunteers processed a total of 160 vertebrate specimens through laboratory preparation and curation in 2012 and entered them into the paleontology database. Many of those specimens were brought in from the field the previous year and the rest were among those recovered from the 110 new localities discovered in 2012. Some of the latter specimens are still in the laboratory waiting for volunteers to prepare them.

Dr. Astrid Montiel and Scott Rugh have completed with the identification of the Kidwell invertebrate collection.

"The identification of bivalves has been completed ... I am calling it a 'first pass' because some groups need to be studied," Scott reported. "Specimens in the families Carditidae, Tellinidae, Veneridae, Corbulidae and in the genera *Argopecten* need to be compared and studied. Also a check must be done ... for oysters (*Pycnodonte* and *Dendostrea*) since ... Astrid's research did not [originally] include oysters ... But for all practical purposes, the goal of naming all the bivalves has been reached.

"We will just be fine-tuning the list of species.



Photo by Lou Bahar
Scott Rugh takes time out from bivalve shell identification to teach volunteers to recognize and how to describe the parts of invertebrate mollusks.

To the total list of about 60 species we found ... in December, we have added about 17 new species to the list ... for a total of approximately 77 species. Astrid and I are happy to share this news with you."

In addition to the identifications Scott and Astrid have done, volunteers have been assisting in any task that will speed the work. Scott took one morning to train the volunteers in recognizing and describing the parts of invertebrate mollusks. We learned the features that tell us left and right sides (of bivalves), completeness and size, and weathering and fracturing. We used these new skills to fill out data entry forms to add these specimens to the paleontology database and create the first ABDSP invertebrate catalogue.

Volunteers also learned how to recognize the "easy" gastropods which have distinct features that allow us to do a pre-identification review to prepare the Kidwell gastropods for Scott and Astrid's next phase of taxonomic identification. This pre-identification will allow our experts to concentrate on the more complex aspects of specimen identification.

Once specimens are identified to genus and

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Group find many new fossil sites (cont.)

(Continued from Page 16)

species and the shell is described as to condition and completeness, volunteers enter the information into the database. From these filled-in database tables, researchers can learn what genera and species are in the collection, how complete the specimens are, if they are shells or casts of shells and where they are located in the cabinets. They also can determine what other species were found in the same area and in which stratigraphic formation they were found. From this they can learn more about the paleo-communities that lived in this ecological framework.

Volunteers performing vertebrate curation also have their hands full as work in the field this season has been more productive than normal.



Photo by Hugh Vance
Scott Rugh works with Paleontology Society Volunteers Judy Smith and Linda Gilbert (in background).



Photo by Lou Bahar
Scott Rugh and Dr. Astrid Yuridia Montiel Boerhinger, a visiting researcher from Ensenada, Mexico, are in the process of identifying and cataloging invertebrates for the paleontology collection. Dr. Boerhinger is a post-doctoral fellow at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla.

One area in particular turned up 32 fossil vertebrate sites in three trips.

Most bones coming in from the field need preparation to remove the encasing sediment and to repair broken pieces and stabilize very fragile specimens using glues and consolidants. Once specimens are cleaned and stabilized they are sent to curation for identification, data recording and labeling. The cabinets holding the fossil bones waiting to be identified are full to overflowing.

There are only three vertebrate curation volunteers compared to an average of 25 volunteers searching for fossils in the field. It is no wonder that the curation process is backlogged.

A walk through the District Stout Research Center on any weekday will reveal work being done in the laboratory, curation and in data entry. Plan to visit the exciting Stout Research Center Saturday or Sunday, October 26 and 27 for the Open House, part of the annual celebration of Borrego Days.

Staff shows kids how to spot bighorn sheep



Photos by Jeri Zemon

ABDSP's Senior Park Aide Beau Boulding and Ranger Richard Duthaler show fourth graders how to look for bighorn sheep at Tamarisk Grove Campground. The youngsters spotted several ewes and yearlings on the hills above the Cactus Loop Trail across the street from the campground. The fourth graders were able to see the sheep without the aid of the spotting scope, making them great candidates for future sheep counts.

Have you seen these photographs?

Have you seen the photographs in Cactus and Succulent's journals? Where do you go when you want to check the latest news from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (formerly Fish and Game)? What about looking up newspaper or magazine clippings about an event in one of our parks?

You can see those photographs, check up on fish and Wildlife and find clippings in our District's library. There are collections of monthly publications on geology, astronomy, birds and plants. There are copies of *High Country*, *Explorers Journal* and *Southwestern Naturalist* waiting on the shelves.

In addition to periodicals, clippings and books, the library has a large, well-organized pamphlet collection on many of the subjects we need to know about so we can be better informed to share with our visitors.

Footprints

John Molina and **Jack Jorgensen** joined the District Resource Crew as Park Maintenance Aides in January.

Maintenance Aide Kyle Rickard left the District Roads and Trails Crew for another position.

Two new **Maintenance Aides, Garrett Butts** and **Cole Osuna**, began work with the District Roads and Trails Crew in February.

VALLECITO DAYS



Mapping the West

March 16 - 17, 2013
Saturday: 10 am - 4 pm
Sunday: 10 am - 2 pm



Join us for the seventh annual Vallecito Days, celebrating life on the 1860s frontier and the role of the Southern Overland trails in "Mapping the West."

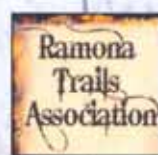
Visit with a 19th century surveyor, and the pioneer men and women dressed up in period attire. Watch trail riders on horse and mule, as they camp and host activities appropriate for that period in our history.



- Tour the Vallecito Stage Station
- Visit the Mountain Man camp for hands-on demonstrations
- Free exhibits
- Outdoor cooking
- Experience historic firearms, and frontier equipment
- 1850s and 1860s attire is encouraged

OPEN TO ALL AGES

37349 County Route S-2
(Mile Marker 34-35)
Vallecito Valley, CA 92036
760•765•1188



Rick Halsey speaks about desert wildfires

San Diego Writer/Photographer Richard W. Halsey will outline the threat of huge wildfires to California's deserts in a talk Monday, March 11, to ABDSP's Botany Society.

Halsey, director of the California Chaparral Institute, is a trained wildland firefighter and is the author of *Fire, Chaparral and Survival in Southern California*. The book was judged the best nonfiction-local interest book by the San Diego Book Awards Association.

His talk starts at 10 a.m. at ABDSP's Visitor Center. The public is invited to the free presentation.



Photo courtesy of Rick Halsey

**March 11
Author
Rick
Halsey
speaks on
the threat
of huge
wildfires
to the
state's
deserts.**

Botanists have already mounted 110 specimens

**By Volunteer Coordinator Judy Ramirez
ABDSP Botany Society**

The 2013 Botany certification course is in full swing with a robust enrollment of 32 volunteers.

During the first session, *The Desert Ecosystem*, which provides the context or framework for our botanizing, volunteers gained a "big picture" view of the desert through an interactive graphic that depicted the desert ecosystem.

Afternoon fieldwork gave them the opportunity to extend their learning in Borrego Palm Canyon.

The second session, *Introduction to Plant Families*, zoomed in on some of our desert's extraordinary wildflowers. Participants learned how to place them in their families by simply observing the corolla. We learned flower morphology and were introduced to the plant families included in the course.

Session three concentrated on pollination. Pat Flanagan was our guest lecturer and field trip leader for this session. But more than lecture us, she involved us in her discoveries and research about pollination.

For the afternoon fieldwork, we shifted gears as she demonstrated how to guide a plant walk

when the plants are dormant.

Herbarium Volunteers Mary Jo Churchwell and Ruth Ehly now are our experienced specimen mounters and are training others. Jary Riolo and Ruth Otis have joined the Friday afternoon specimen mounting sessions. Jary has begun training new volunteers Wednesday afternoons. Since October of 2012, we have mounted 110 specimens!

Are you feeling neglected, ignored or forgotten lately?

If you feel your accomplishments, transitions and/or actions have not been recognized and shared with the rest of the District in *Tracks*, please speak up now!

There is no way we can keep up with all that is going on throughout the District unless we hear from you.

So please don't feel neglected, ignored or forgotten. Email any news you'd like to share to Leslie.Bellah@parks.ca.gov and let the rest of the District know what you've been doing lately.

Adopt-A-Wash group cleans up dump site

**By Tony Feathers
ABDSP Volunteer**

Question ... How do you take a big, ugly and time-consuming job and make it manageable and fun? Answer ... With a little help from your friends. Our first Adopt-A-Wash group cleanup was a sweeping success (no pun intended) with 15 friends showing up January 23 to get the job done.

The job was a dump site, about three years old, up a side canyon across from the Hellhole Canyon parking lot. We still can't figure out how they got all that trash back there except to carry it by hand; never underestimate the dedication of a true litterbug. As a result, we had to bag, bucket and box said trash and carry it back out by hand. We could only get the truck to within about 200 yards of the site.

ABDSP Supervising Ranger Sue McLaughlin helped coordinate the project and arrived wearing hands-on work clothes and driving the two-ton maintenance truck. Ranger Don Strampfer also was there to help in any way he could, even down on hands and knees picking trash from underneath a creosote bush.

Volunteers Mike Medema, Sam and Astrid Webb, Jim Roller, Jack Mcquire, Joe Cormier, Ted Caragozian, Karen Delorenzo, Betty Freeman, Dick Ingwall, Bill and Linda Haneline and I rounded out the volunteer list. Thad and Molly McManus couldn't be there that day so they went up several days before and carried out several bucket loads. A big thanks to everyone and thanks to Sam for the photos.

The Adopt-A-Wash program has 29 participants covering 31 sites in the Park. We hope to have one group clean-up per month to tackle some of the bigger jobs. There are lots of washes and canyons left, so if you would like to adopt a site of your own, contact me at (423) 676-6233.

Thanks again to everyone for a fun and successful day.



Photos by Sam Webb
Adopt-A-Wash Volunteers and ABDSP rangers share the pride of a job well done after a long day of hauling trash from a dump site across from the Hellhole Canyon parking lot.

CDAS planning for Archaeology Weekend

Plans are underway for the tenth annual Archaeology Weekend Saturday and Sunday, April 6 and 7, hosted by the Colorado Desert Archaeological Society (CDAS). The event, with the theme *Site Stewardship—Helping Protect the Past*, will be held at ABDSP's Visitor Center.

There are currently more than 50 site steward volunteers working within the Colorado Desert District. The important work they do will be highlighted in displays and lectures during the weekend.

The group is looking for suitable items for the silent auction, the main fund-raising event for CDAS, which is held at the Begole Archaeo-

logical Research Center (BARC). The late Joann Ebright, a long-time member of CDAS and site steward, chose the Society to be the beneficiary of her collectibles.

CDAS Chairperson Carol Black said, "Her legacy continues with a donation of the many objects she collected over the years which represented her love of the desert."

Activities during the weekend include Native American crafts and demonstrations, displays, archaeology-themed lectures in the Discovery Room, tours of the BARC, the silent auction, pottery making demonstrations, hikes, a kids' fun table and a free ice cream social.



Electricity—From DPR's Tailgate Meetings

More than 1,000 people are killed and 30,000 are injured each year from electrical shock. Electricity is safe to use when you know what you're doing and take proper precautions. How you are affected by electric shock depends on the following factors:

⚡ The rate the current flows through your body. If you have dry hands and are standing on a non-conductive surface such as a rubber mat, you may not even feel a shock. If you are perspiring and are standing in water, you could be killed.

⚡ The length of time the current flows through your body. The longer the electric contact, the greater the current flow and the greater the shock.

⚡ The path the current takes through your body; the most dangerous path is through vital organs.

Your actions can protect your safety.

⚡ Read and follow instructions before handling anything electrical. If you don't understand the instructions, get qualified help.

⚡ Plugs should only be inserted in receptacle outlets with the same slot or blade pattern, unless proper adapters are used. Don't force or alter a plug by bending, twisting or removing blades to make it fit.

⚡ Water conducts electricity. Keep wet hands from touching electrical equipment or light switches.

⚡ Firmly grip the plug, not the cord, when disconnecting equipment. Yanking the cord can damage the cord, plug or receptacle outlet and result in a shock or fire.

⚡ Because electricity is present even when the switch is in the "off" position, unplug equipment, appliances and extension cords when not in use and before inspecting, cleaning or fixing them.

⚡ Recognize signs of overloaded circuits including flickering or dimming lights, blown fuses, warm wall plates or extension cords, and tripped circuit breakers.

⚡ Never paint or cover receptacle outlets with wallpaper paste.



Backpack, hike, take a puppet workshop

The annual **Photo Contest – Award Ceremony & Reception** starts the month for the Anza-Borrego Foundation (ABF) from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 2.

Photo Contest Judge Paul Johnson will present the winners of the 2013 Anza-Borrego Desert Photo Contest at the Borrego Springs Performing Arts Center. With every award, Paul will explain what made each photo a winner.



After the ceremony, there will be a reception and silent auction with wine and appetizers. The award ceremony is from 5 to 6 p.m. and the reception will be from 6 to 7 p.m. The silent auction ends at 7 pm.

Secrets of Desert Cahuilla is scheduled from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 9. Paul Johnson will lead a four-wheel-drive trip to explore the geologic wonders, rich plant life and pristine views of the Desert Cahuilla property, one of the newest additions to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

Daniel McCarthy will teach **Traditional Native Gathering and Processing Methods of Agave** Friday and Sunday, March 15 and 17. This is an opportunity to participate in the several-day process of traditional agave gathering, pit roasting and tasting.

Participants will learn about the cultural landscape and environment, as well as the specific uses of *Agave desertii* and other native plants.

Scot Martin and Janene Colby will lead the **Coyote Canyon Spring Backpack Adventure** Friday through Sunday, March 22 through 24. This three-day rugged backpack adventure will take you away from the valley's spring crowds into a diverse region of the Park with lush ri-

parian habitats, a wide-open valley and rocky canyons that beg to be explored.

The trip includes two nights of backcountry camping and hiking over rugged terrain. Participants will provide their own equipment and meals.

If Desert Animals Could Talk: A Puppet Workshop for Kids will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 23. A puppet show will be presented from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Roger Riolo will lead this interactive workshop where children will work collaboratively to create original, themed stories and bring them to life using desert-animal hand puppets.

A show that evening will provide participants the opportunity to present their puppet plays. The workshop is designed for children ages 6 to 12.

Everyone is invited to enjoy the evening puppet show for five dollars per person.

Paul Johnson will lead a **Culp Valley Exploration Hike** from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, March 31.

This moderately strenuous hike in the mountains along the western flank of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park offers outstanding scenery and excellent displays of chaparral plants, some of which may already be blooming, as well as a chance to look for bighorn sheep.

ABF is looking for volunteer hosts to work at the Backcountry Visitor Center in Santa Ysabel and for members of the ABDSP Botany or Naturalist societies who would be willing to lead *Spring Walks: More Than Just Flowers*. See page 15 for more information on these opportunities.

For more information on ABF programs or to register, call (760) 767-4063 or visit ABF at www.theabf.org.

TRACKS

Colorado Desert District
200 Palm Canyon Drive
Borrego Springs, CA 92004

TRACKS Colorado Desert District Newsletter

Dan Falat, District Superintendent
Leslie Bellah, TRACKS Editor



Colorado Desert District
Borrego Springs, CA 92004
(760) 767-4037 Fax: (760) 767-3427
E-mail: Leslie.Bellah@parks.ca.gov

Anza-Borrego Sector.....Kathy Dice, Superintendent
 Anza-Borrego Desert State Park®
Montane Sector.....Ray Lennox and Kent Miller, Management Team
 Cuyamaca Rancho State Park
 Palomar Mountain State Park
Salton Sea Sector.....Paul Reisman, Acting Superintendent
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