



FRIENDS OF BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Letter from the President

9/2016

It has begun! For those of you who may not have noticed we have not published our usual Newsletter this summer. Let me explain.

Throughout this last year and over the summer your Board of Directors, Dee Zeller and the BLM have been very busy re-designing the very operating structure of Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. I have reported to you in past letters that the world of volunteering and charitable involvement has undergone a dramatic change since the 2008 financial crisis. Many people no longer have the time to give to organizations like ours and our very loyal base of volunteers and supporters has been aging, like us all. That includes me! Our original strategy was to bring along the youth from our respected Education Programs. We had intern positions on the Board and our Jr. Docent Program was soaring. This strategy has been grounded by recent conditions. Our promising up-comers have been consumed by continuing education and the stressful life they face in these challenging times. As a result we have instigated a new operating strategy.

We are now more actively involved in applying for individual grants, growing membership and expanding branded sales items. And we are hiring employees to manage our daily responsibilities to our mission, activities, and programs. One of these obligations; your Newsletter. And to Donna Thomas, we are all so grateful for your fine work publishing this excellent communication over the years. Donna, you have set a very high standard indeed! Also included in these developing needs is to build, service and sustain our volunteer base. Further, these responsibilities now include the increasing role we are playing in the formation of the Management Plan for our new National Monument status.

This is a trying transition for us all but also very good news. Through your generosity and additional grants we have funded this transition and are now actively assembling a team of managers and employees.

First, and very important to our successful transition is the hiring for our new Executive Director, Mr. Greg Hill. Greg will help us oversee the process and become actively involved with our employees and with your Board of Directors. Greg's acceptance was a big boost for us as he is completely familiar with our operation, our history, our mission and our interests. For several years Greg was the representative from our partner Bureau of Land Management (BLM). As a result we are taking great strides toward deepening our relationship with BLM and our role within the newly established Sand to Snow National Monument. If you would like to meet Greg or ask any of the board members questions about this transitional period please join us for our Annual Meeting Wednesday, October 12th at 1:00 pm in the Education Center at the preserve. We will have all financial records and official compliance information available for your review.

More positions are in the works which will complete our re-structuring assuring the continuing effectiveness of our Education efforts as well as the caring for, and sharing of our oasis in the desert. Over the next decade attendance at the Preserve is expected to dramatically increase. We want to make sure, despite this population increase our habitat and natural environment will not be damaged.

Some very big plans are in our future as we become the Sand to Snow National Monument. So as we get back online with your Newsletter we can share this exciting journey with you all. Thank you for your loyal and lasting support. Your continuing interest and support for Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is playing a most important role in our efforts to attract grants and partnerships as we move into Monument status: having you all on the team is making the difference. Please stay close, volunteer and contribute as you always have. Thank you.

David S. Miller
President, Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

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