



BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

NEWSLETTER

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Winter, 2020/2021

State Declares Joshua Trees and Desert Tortoises 'Endangered'...for Now

Two iconic species of the Mojave Desert recently were designated as 'endangered' species by the State of California under the State's Endangered Species Act. In identical 4-0 votes, the California Fish and Game Commission voted on September 22 to give legal protection to the western Joshua tree, *Yucca brevifolia brevifolia*. Just a few weeks later on October 14, the Commission elevated the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*, from threatened status to endangered. Both designations confer only a one-year temporary protected status for the two species allowing the Commission further time to study whether Joshua trees and desert tortoises should be given permanent protection as endangered species within California. The Joshua tree vote came with a big caveat, however, as the Commission also voted to allow 15 solar projects planned in Joshua tree habitat to proceed under an emergency exemption meaning hundreds of trees will be removed during the construction.

While the desert tortoise is already listed as 'threatened' under the federal Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has so far declined to provide federal protection for the western Joshua tree despite receiving petitions from conservation groups to do so.



The western Joshua tree is an important ecological and scenic component of the higher portions of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Photo by Joe Zarki

The decision to give the western Joshua tree state endangered status in California was prompted by a petition filed by the Center for Biological Diversity in October, 2019. Climate change, growth of desert communities, development of powerlines, solar farms, and pipelines, illegal OHV use, and cattle grazing have all exerted a toll on Joshua tree populations and reduced their range. According to Brendan Cummings, the Center's conservation director, "Joshua trees are uprooted or bulldozed on a daily basis to make way for roads, strip malls, and vacation rentals...If these beautiful plants are to have any hope of surviving the difficult decades ahead, we have to stop killing them."

Public support for the listing of the western Joshua tree has been strong. Several weeks before the September 22 decision, more than 200 people signed up for a Zoom meeting held by the Commission, and 93 made public comments on the proposal. Only nine spoke against the listing proposal, mostly trade group representatives. Both San Bernardino County and the Town of Yucca Valley were among those opposing the designation with Yucca Valley claiming it would hurt the town's prospects for growth and development. Recently, a group of economic interests filed a lawsuit against the listing claiming that the Commission did not follow State proper procedures for the listing of endangered species.

Desert tortoises have received federal protection since 1989, but a 1994 recovery plan has failed to stop steep declines in tortoise numbers in some of the designated recovery areas. In a 2018 study, it was found that desert tortoise populations have decreased over 50% in many tortoise conservation areas between 2004 and 2014 with juvenile tortoises experiencing some of the most dramatic declines. The Western Mojave Desert



A desert tortoise munches spring wildflowers along the upper Canyon Trail. Photo by Joe Zarki

tortoise populations have experienced some of the most severe reductions in numbers. Reasons for the continued decline in tortoise numbers include renewable energy development, road, pipeline, housing, and other construction activities, military base expansions, poaching and illegal collecting, ORV use, livestock grazing, disease, and predation of juveniles.

Pamela Flick, the California program director for Defenders of Wildlife, one of several groups that petitioned for the state listing, cheered the Commission's decision to elevate the desert tortoise from threatened to endangered in California; "The Fish and Game Commission made the right decision...to move forward with the uplisting process for the Agassiz's desert tortoise. Our state reptile desperately needs strengthened protections if it is to survive the barrage of threats the species faces..."

Desert tortoises and western Joshua trees are two signature species at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Joshua trees occur in the northern and western areas of the preserve on hillside slopes and alluvial valleys. The desert tortoise is found in both the Mojave and Colorado Desert areas of BMCP favoring desert foothills and valleys where it finds succulent annual wildflowers and deeper desert soils where suitable burrows can be dug.

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Christmas Bird Count

Saturday, December 19

7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

This year’s Christmas Bird Count, the 121st for Audubon and the 40th count for Morongo Valley, will, by necessity, be done quite differently due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

We will be using a smaller number of people in teams comprised of household members or friends in close COVID social groups. This year’s count is not open to the general public. Participation must be arranged in advance.

There will be no pre-count gathering or post count dinner this year. Count results will be posted on the BMCP website.

If you have questions, contact Joe Zarki at 760-366-8913, or jwzarki@gmail.com.

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

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NEWSLETTER

Editor: Joe Zarki

Winter, 2020/2021

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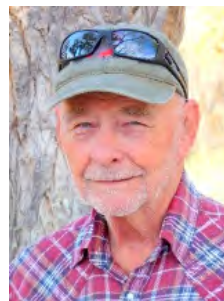
CHATting WITH DEE... by Donna Thomas

On a warm and beautiful October day, it’s delightful to be enjoying the cool shade on the Marsh Trail boardwalk with Dee. But wait, this isn’t the same marsh as just a few years back. Climate change has reared its ugly head at our preserve, drying up our historically perennial water. Water is key to everything says Dee, and without it, the character of our marsh is changing.

In historic times, water was present at BMCP year round, flowing underground from high up in the mountains until it met the fault line at BMCP that forced it to the surface. But with less snowfall in the mountains, less water traveled underground, and 2016 became the first year that BMCP dried up in summer, which it has done in each summer since. And in spring, water levels are lower, and water doesn’t spread out on the ground as it used to do.

Raccoons, delightful creatures who used to march past Dee’s trailer, often a mom with many young, are now missing. It has been two years since Dee last saw a raccoon, and a year since he even saw any raccoon tracks. He calls the raccoon a “used to/was” animal. Other “used to/was” fauna of the marsh include the Virginia rail, now quite rare.

Many plants that love a marsh environment are also reduced in numbers or no longer occur. Most noticeable are the



many red willow trees that have fallen in place, leaving heaps of dead limbs. Also a sedge, Olney bulrush, that was formerly widespread throughout the marsh, has died off leaving expanses of fallen, decaying sedges.

The sedge is a favorite food plant of bighorn sheep, so along with its die-off and the unavailability of summer water, bighorn sheep rarely come into the main area of the preserve.

Choruses of Baja California treefrogs are no longer heard; their population is threatened because their offspring can’t survive the tadpole stage without standing water. Actually, there is a very small bit of surface water available even in the summer. It can’t be seen from the trails, but it’s there below the foliage near the Helmkamp Deck. A treefrog may occasionally still be heard there.

Yes, much has changed in the 25 years Dee has been resident at BMCP. And yet the preserve is still a refuge to cherish, with ample opportunities for visitors to experience the natural world. Dee quotes Robin Kobaly in saying, “Big

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Meet Tori Reiser, BMCP’s Student Intern... by Cindy VonHalle

Tori Reiser volunteered as Big Morongo Preserve’s sustainability intern for the fall semester. A student from Arizona State University, Tori is completing a Capstone internship from the School of Sustainability prior to graduation. She is a High Desert native who loves the outdoors, especially geology. While growing up, her family spent vacations in Utah, but luckily, Tori chose Big Morongo Canyon Preserve for her internship over those red rock national parks! She has fond memories of walking the Marsh Trail as a youngster and credits her time in the Preserve to opening her eyes to the wonders of nature. We are fortunate to have



Tori volunteering on several projects including education outreach and prepping for ‘shovel ready’ projects. Among these projects are documenting and researching information needed to secure grants for boardwalk repair, updating preserve signage, rehabbing the entry kiosk, and the living seed bank. Tori helped launch the newest e-newsletter, *The Big Morongo Bulletin*, which showcases different stories from around the Preserve. After completing her internship, Tori will have developed transferable skills such as market analysis on stakeholders and what tangible and intangible assets are, familiarity with the pillars of sustainability (environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability), language and communication, resource management, hospitality, marketing and promotion, and visitor management.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Looking Back at 2020... by Meg Foley

Dee's "Chat" contains many observations of changes during his 25-year tenure at the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. As a visitor to the preserve for over 35 years, I've seen many of the same changes and really received an 'inside' glimpse the last three years while being at BMCP at least five days a week.

Some of the changes we grapple with are because of the increasing constraints applied to the Bureau of Land Management. The staff at the Palm Springs Field Office is less than a third of what it was 25 years ago. Ever changing federal regulations make their "do more with less staff" mandates even tougher to navigate. For example, permissions like advertising for the volunteer co-host position, (formerly stationed near the Education Center) now must be sought at higher levels. As a result, the position has been unfilled for nearly three years since the last co-hosts moved.

BLM's challenges are part of the reason why the Friends Board of Directors took the step to seek grant funding for some staff funding. Increased visitation is one

of the reasons Friends saw the need to have an onsite presence to assist Dee and visitors. Our audience has changed in conjunction with doubled visitation in the past four years, when we first crested the 100,000 mark. Many of our visitors are making their first trip to an outdoor space. Desert landscapes are better appreciated and safer with an introduction, so we've increased our outreach and interpretive efforts to meet the changing usage.

This year, especially since the coronavirus struck, we've seen a noticeable increase in families and daily walkers. As the Father of Western Medicine, Hippocrates, said, "*Nature itself is the best physician.*" The experience of being outdoors can be likened to a mental eraser – a perspective is imparted, often unconsciously, that we are a small part of the universe when gazing across wide-open vistas. Two years ago, I worked with an urban teen trail crew. As we trekked up the Yucca Ridge Trail we took a moment to look down on the Marsh Trail and enjoy the view of the Morongo Valley and distant Mt. San Geronio. One of the

teens exclaimed, "I've never felt peace like this... I want to bring my family here so they can feel the peace!"

A look at the past and the present makes it hard to imagine how many variables will impact our future, especially given the pandemic. One thing is certain, places like the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve are needed more than ever, not only to preserve habitat for increasingly threatened flora and fauna, for offering recreation and wildlife opportunities, but simply for being a place to "feel the peace."

Although State COVID regulations prohibit the resumption of bird walks and tours, the bird walk leaders have continued their essential research and log species seen every week. The list of recently seen birds can be found here at: bigmorongo.org/birds. Outdoor exhibits and activities are available every Saturday at the Education Center.

We wish you and yours a happy and healthy holiday season and New Year and hope to see you soon!

Chatting With Dee... (cont. from p. 2)

Morongo Canyon Preserve is the usual place to find the unusual," which is just as true today.

Dee has seen large increases in visitation at BMCP, almost doubling in recent years. Many visitors to our local area now stop in to see the new Sand to Snow National Monument. Since the preserve reopened in June following this spring's COVID closure, it's delightful to see many more young families visiting again.

During the first 10 years Dee was here, much more scientific work was conducted at the preserve, often by agencies such as the BLM, U. S. Geological Survey, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). One study of three turkey vultures banded at the preserve tracked their movement to other locations. In those years, when a deer died, the CDFW would do a necropsy to identify the cause of death. Also, hummingbird banding was conducted at BMCP for 13 years.

Dee's "porch" with its bird feeders and saucers of water is delightful this fall. Visitors enjoy many species of birds, and now with water unavailable naturally, deer come here to enjoy a cool drink.

It's fun to watch the fawns, initially with their spots, mature and start leaping over the rail fence, and to see juvenile bucks begin to sprout little stub antlers.



"My, what big ears you have!"
Photo by Joe Zarki

While public bird walks are not happening this fall, Dee and a few volunteers are continuing to count birds weekly, and it has been an exciting fall for bird watchers. On November 6, 44 bird species were observed. Flocks of Western bluebirds adorned the tops of trees, with males, especially colorful, sporting brilliant blue heads, wings, and tails and rust-orange breasts. The colorful red-breasted sapsucker, red-naped sapsucker, and red-shafted flicker were all here, having returned for the winter. An irruption

of pine siskins this fall brought 30 to 40 of these birds to the bird feeders. Pine siskin irruptions aren't completely understood. Perhaps this forest dweller has been driven lower due to the many California forest fires this year. Two eastern birds made rare appearances at BMCP this fall, the ovenbird and the white-throated sparrow, which was a tan-striped form of this sparrow species.

Migrants that didn't make it to the preserve this fall were of the human type. Many long-time Canadian birder friends were unable to come south due to the pandemic. They are in Dee's thoughts, as are the birders Dee misses due to the suspended Wednesday bird walks.



Pine siskins showed up in good numbers this fall.
Photo by Matt Grube

Voles in the Pantry... by Jane Olson

There should have been waving flags and a parade to greet the little mammal when he was sighted on August 26, 2020 at Big Morongo. It was really a special event. The presence of the California vole (*Microtus californicus*) that lives at the preserve has been documented only a few times in the past. And that documentation was based on finding vole skulls in owl pellets found at BMCP. So, this may be our only live documented sighting.

It is no wonder that voles are rarely seen. They live in burrows and they slightly conceal the opening with grass and twigs. Grasses are listed as the staple of their mostly herbivorous diet. They also make a network of connected runways covered with grasses that further protect them from the eyes of their many predators. They are at the bottom of the food chain and any carnivorous animal will find them a tasty morsel. The vole's defense to all this predation is fecundity. They breed at any time of year. They rear their young in grass nests in a chamber in their burrows. Litters range from four to ten tiny voles. Females are fertile within a month of birth. If it were not for



California voles are a rare sight at BMCP.

Photo by Donna Thomas

their short lifespan, we might be overrun with voles, but they only live a year.

If you see a small mammal and are wondering if it is a mouse or a vole, check the relative length of the tail. A mouse tail is about three-fourths the length of its body. A vole's tail is a little less than a third the length of its body. Pocket gophers (*Thomomys bottae*) might be mistaken to be a vole, although gophers are quite a bit larger. They are frequently seen at the preserve associated with their large dirt mounds at the entrance to their burrows. However, it would be very unlikely to see a vole in that habitat.

Voles are a widespread mammal, and there are many subspecies just in California. Some people may know the vole as meadow mouse. They live in many different habitats. As desert dwellers, it is hard to think of an animal that shares our environment that is also able to live in snowy mountain meadows or marshes. There are numerous observations of voles swimming very well. Sometimes they even build the opening to their burrow under water.

For a mammal that we rarely see and seldom think of, it is quite a remarkable little creature. So, thank you, Donna Thomas for sharing your sighting of the vole. It reminds us that when we preserve a section of natural land, we do not always know the extent of all of the species preserved. Thanks, too, to the generations of people that have valued the setting of the habitat this vole uses. Their support and work to create Big Morongo Canyon Preserve has made the voles possible. A fact that, no doubt, the foxes, bobcats, owls, and other predators are happy for, too. They have voles in their pantry!

Two Faults Are Better Than One... Elize VanZandt

From a distance the bright spring green of the cottonwoods and willows of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve seem to shimmer and dance mirage-like over the landscape, moved by a west wind funneling up the narrow pass leading from the Coachella Valley. By late fall, when the green has been transformed into a mass of brilliant gold, it's like striking it rich in a desert landscape, whose hues are mostly brown, gray-green, and dull ochre.

The Morongo Valley is a small blip in a large landscape, a widening of a rift caused by the Pinto Fault that cuts through the western end of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. Like a sinuous snake tunneling through the earth, the Pinto Fault arises in the San Gorgonio Pass to the west, bends towards the north when it reaches the Coachella Valley, continues northward through Morongo Valley, and eventually curves east across the Mojave Desert along the northern edge of Joshua Tree National



The trace of the Morongo Fault can be seen along this stretch of the Mesquite Trail.

Photo courtesy of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Park, leaving uplifted mountains and small oases in its wake.

What are the underpinnings of Big Morongo Canyon? It took two earthquake faults, the Pinto and the Morongo, to produce this shallow basin. The Morongo Fault begins somewhere to the west, crosses the Morongo Valley and the Pinto Fault, and terminates in the Coachella Valley around Desert Hot Springs. Tectonic forces along these fractures gradually uplifted some areas and dropped others, in the process widening and deepening the topography. Many crisscrossing fissures are part of the larger San Andreas system, and a number of springs and oases are located at the intersections of fault lines, places where underground movement caused the weakened rocks to move and break, then rebound into new positions, grinding and crushing each other in the process.

Water that originated as snow in the San Bernardino Mountains feeds a series of perennial springs in Big Morongo

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BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

2020, the Year in Review ... by Meg Foley

Despite a year greatly impacted by COVID 19 constraints, preserve volunteers and Friends staff managed to expand interpretive offerings and keep up with many needed maintenance and repair items. We were ordered to cease all education programs, bird walks, on-site volunteer activities for much of the year. Nonetheless,

Education & Outreach

School Tours

- Hosted Docent training/refresher course & school tour orientation.
- Hosted fall school tours, between October 1- November 15th for the first time. Six classes of nearly 200 students and 27 adults toured the preserve during the fall period.
- April is the most requested month for tours, followed by March and May. Slots are reserved on a first come, first served basis. COVID-19 caused cancellation of 12 bookings of almost 580 students and caused us to stop taking requests in mid-Feb when schools began prohibiting sports and field trips. We anticipated hosting over 800 students in the spring.
- Transformed our education tours into a virtual experience so students can visit with their families and receive information in advance of their visit.

Bird Walks

- Twenty-three weekly bird walks hosted 596 attendees from October 2019 thru March 11, 2020 when activities were cancelled. Bird walk volunteers contributed 437 hours during that period resulting in 2,131.50 visitor contact hours including hours for the Christmas Bird Count. During the December 14 Christmas Count, 26 birders put in 216 activity hours, and 12 volunteers stayed until 8:00 p.m. to tally the results and help with clean up following the pizza dinner.

Education/Interpretation

- Opened the Nature Education Center every Saturday through March 7, resulting in an estimated 1,250 visitor contacts.

- Starting in mid-December, the Ambassador "Meet & Greet" program was open Friday, Saturday, Sunday and some holidays. Volunteers interacted with an average of 60 people per day for 42 days for a total of 2,520 visitor contacts between December 15, 2019 and March 7, 2020.
- Developed a new, very popular "Big Morongo Canyon Bingo" bilingual game to engage children in the landscape.
- Published a bilingual "Track Guide."
- Developed a bilingual trail guide that will be published soon.
- Launched the "Big Morongo Canyon Bulletin," a monthly electronic newsletter.
- Developed the Checklist for Amphibians & Reptiles for publication on the website.
- Published the Butterflies of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Checklist on the website (two species new to the preserve were added to the checklist).

Trail Work and General Maintenance:

- Trimmed 2.04 miles of overgrown trails and the entry road.
- Removed more than two acres of invasive plants.
- Designated three trails "One Way" to comply with safe distance requirements.
- Removed 24 large limbs and trees blocking trails and roadways.
- Chipped a large (bus-size) pile of limbs and spread mulch for weed control.
- Made boardwalk repairs on the Mesquite Trail and deck corner.
- Propped fallen split rail posts.
- Cleared service roads to meet minimum emergency vehicle clearance requirements.

A number of talented and devoted volunteers worked from home to expand our education, outreach, and interpretive

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Two Faults... (cont. from p. 4)

Canyon. An underground dam, created by the pulverizing of rock as the fault shifted and moved, forces this groundwater intermittently to the surface for about three miles along the Morongo Fault. The result is a wetland, a riparian paradise in a valley that gets about eight inches of rain a year.

The Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is quite high in natural diversity, due to its location in a transition zone between the Mojave and Sonoran/Colorado Deserts, and is one of the ten largest cottonwood and willow riparian habitats in California. The preserve had its beginnings back in 1968 when The Nature Conservancy

purchased 80 acres of the core wetlands. It has been enlarged over the years to its present size and is now administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Big Morongo is also now part of the Sand to Snow National Monument, a linkage of designated wilderness areas with wildlife corridors that reach from the desert floor to the cedar and ponderosa forests of the San Bernardino Mountains, and from Joshua Tree NP west to the headwaters of the Whitewater River on Mt. San Geronio. It seems fitting to have the source of the snow that feeds the Big Morongo Canyon wetlands linked to the preserve by way of a national monument.

In the long run, it is the unusual geology of this area that makes oases like Big Morongo Canyon possible. Without the fault lines running invisibly beneath the land, grinding the stone to clay, creating dams, water would still flow slowly deep beneath the rocks and sand but never surface to provide for the trees and the wildlife that depend on it. The desert-adapted plants would still flourish, but this would be a poorer place without the magic shimmer and shine of those bright green leaves and the surprise of water in an arid land.

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Big Morongo Gets a New Board Member... by Cindy VonHalle

The Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve have a new board member. Evan Hoffman Jastermsky moved to Morongo Valley from Orange County two years ago. As a college student, he is pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering. He hopes to transfer to Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo after a few more classes at Copper Mountain College. He has worked as a tutor in both math and chemistry.

The preserve is the first place Evan explored in Morongo Valley. The native

plants piqued his curiosity. "Time spent out there on the trails led me to a deeper understanding of the scenery," said Evan in a recent interview. In his free time, Evan hikes several times a week and enjoys the solitude afforded by the Canyon Trail. You won't see him strolling meditatively on the trail. Instead, expect to see Evan working. He'll likely have trimmers in his hand, clearing overgrown brush that he describes as "part work-out and part-sauna."

Since his early childhood, he's been interested in learning and caring about wildlife and their habitat. One day while hiking, Evan was lucky to see a few desert bighorn sheep. He's observed bobcats calmly trotting across Yucca Ridge Trail and leaping across the Desert Willow Trail.

He brings a youthful perspective and admirable dedication to our mission of preservation and stewardship. Welcome Aboard, Evan!



Evan Hoffman Jastermsky is BMCP's newest board member.

Ray York, *In Memoriam*

Long term volunteer Ray York passed away on November 1st.

Ray worked many, "frontline" positions, at the BMCP,

for a remarkable 26 years. His local volunteer efforts include: Yucca Valley Library, post-Sawtooth Fire re-vegetation projects in Pipes Canyon and Gamma Gulch, Morongo Basin Coalition for Adult Literacy, and Hippotherapy programs for children with disabilities. A retired Sunline bus driver, Ray said, "I get much more satisfaction from volunteering than I ever did when working full time." Ray was a truly authentic person. His generosity, shaded by humility, and sense of humor drew friends no matter where he worked. Ray was a man of many interests and passions and will be missed by all of us.



Birds below, clockwise from top left: Black-headed grosbeak, Costa's hummingbird, summer tanager, Bewick's wren, ovenbird, black-throated gray warbler.



Birds of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, 2020. Photo credits: Ovenbird by Stephanie Stragier, all others by Gene Cardiff.

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

'State Declares Joshua Trees and Desert Tortoises Endangered' (cont. from p. 1)

Though the Commission's decisions confer only temporary, one-year endangered status for Joshua trees and desert tortoises, they come with the full protection provided by California's Endangered Species law. On state and private lands within California, it will be illegal to cut down, damage, or remove a Joshua tree without a valid permit or state exemption. Similarly, desert tortoises cannot be 'taken' (killed), captured, possessed, purchased, sold, or exported without specific authorization from the State. These protections do not apply to federal lands within BMCP or the larger Sand to Snow National Monument, however desert tortoises do have protected status as a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The State's action to give endangered species status to the western Joshua Tree and the Agassiz's desert tortoise is an important, albeit perhaps temporary,

step. It shines a significant beacon on the plight of the troubled species and may lead to increased attention, more funding, and perhaps a more hopeful future for these two charismatic symbols of California's deserts. article by Joe Zarki

The Year in Review... (cont. from p. 5)

materials. Many others returned as soon as we were authorized to perform extremely limited trail work and ambassador duties. Even though we were on such limited duty, approximately 50 volunteers contributed almost 5,100 hours. California assesses a value of \$25.43 per hour for volunteers for a total value of \$129,438.00 contributed to BMCP!

We consistently receive positive comments about our trails and education programs thanks to the unwavering support of such a talented team. Thank you so much for all that you do!



Gene Cardiff has been walking Morongo's trails for many years now, pursuing his studies of the preserve's birds—most notably the endangered least Bell's vireo. Photo by Dori Myers



FRIENDS OF BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

PLEASE RETURN YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO:

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P.O. Box 780
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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35.00 |
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NEWSLETTER (WINTER, SPRING/SUMMER, FALL)

- EMAIL MAIL NEITHER

SUPPORT

FRIENDS OF BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) association organized for the support of programs at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

We are dedicated to the exploration, preservation, and stewardship of the preserve by protecting and managing its resources, and by providing educational programs, access for wildlife viewing, and recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of its visitors.

Credit card donations can be made at www.bigmorongo.org. Donations may also be tax deductible. As a special thank you, new Friends receive a BMCP embroidered patch.

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE



NEWSLETTER

is published by

Friends of BMCP

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Morongo Valley, CA 92256

GO GREEN...to choose the digital option
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bmcp@bigmorongo.org.



CALENDAR

AT BMCP

DECEMBER – MARCH

Gate open 7:30 a.m. to Sunset

365 days a year

WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS

All bird walks have been cancelled during the pandemic and will not be rescheduled until permitted by state and county regulations. Please stay tuned for announcements concerning the resumption of activities as soon as conditions allow. Recently seen bird lists are updated weekly and may be viewed at: www.bigmorongo.org/birds

NATURE CENTER

Outdoor Education Station: Saturdays, 9am-1pm. Volunteers and staff will be on hand to share displays and to answer questions. Caps, shirts, and pins are available for sale.

Friday, Saturday & Sunday: Ambassadors will be at the kiosk to provide information on the latest BMCP happenings. They are very happy to make recommendations for walks based upon weather, fitness and time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteer Trail Crew– scheduled on occasional Saturday or Sunday mornings. COVID-compliant work situations, limited to small numbers. Work may entail hauling brush, pruning, weeding, and/or raking. Contact Meg for dates or to enroll as a volunteer at: bmcp@bigmorongo.org

Check www.bigmorongo.org for information
and updates on future events.