



BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

NEWSLETTER

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Winter, 2022/2023

The Times Are A'Changing at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

It was a very challenging year at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, although many of the challenges have not been visible to visitors thanks to the efforts of stalwart, dedicated volunteers who lead bird walks, provide information as Ambassadors, and keep trails maintained. The most visible change is the hole in the landscape left by the removal of Dee's trailer, but less evident changes have been happening at a whirlwind pace.

As recapped in the last two issues of the newsletter, the Friends had a turnover of most of the Board of Directors. Pat Casey, Jane Olson, Ann Garry, Dave Miller, Laura Sherrod and Robin Kobaly elected not to renew their terms after decades, in some cases, of board service. New directors Maureen McCarty, Caroline Conway, Jan Anderson, Kim McClinton, Kathy Smith and Zoe Dagan joined Evan Hoffman-Jastermsky, Tish Miller and Jane Mootz to oversee the Friends operations. Kathy Smith had to resign for personal reasons and Jack Thompson agreed to fill the vacancy.

As also reported, the "new" Friends board undertook a Strategic Planning process. What was not anticipated during the strategic planning process was the resignation and subsequent passing of Dee Zeller and resignation of Executive Director, Jocelyn Silverlight, who accepted a new position with the Sierra Club. Their departures coincided with an operational change by the Bureau of Land Management that mandated the agency to restrict their operations to BLM lands. The preserve entry and most developed trails are located on San Bernardino County Park lands. Even though the County lands are intended to be transferred to BLM, BLM could no longer offer insurance coverage to volunteers working on 'County Lands.' Past agreements between County and BLM were terminated. The Friends' board was charged with ensuring continuity of operations (opening, closing, trash



Young and old alike are drawn to the quiet beauty of the Marsh Trail. Bureau of Land Management photo.

removal, recycling, trail maintenance, publications, and restroom cleaning) and serving the public, while making sure working volunteers were covered by insurance and interpretive and education messages were provided to visitors.

Until a search could be undertaken for a new Executive Director and the position refilled, I was asked to step in and serve in an interim capacity for the Friends to provide continuity during this time of transition and uncertainty.

As of this writing, the Friends are still in the process of negotiating an agreement with County to continue operating BMCP until the legislative process to allow the land transfer is completed. Coverage for volunteers, utility payments, "hiring" of an onsite volunteer host and division of roles and responsibilities are all points of discussion. The Friends faced dissolution if we had to assume the cost of providing workers' compensation coverage for our 60 volunteers. As soon as

County indicated they would offer coverage for volunteers, Friends stepped up to commit to funding of staff positions and assume responsibility for hiring a host. Even though we don't have a completed agreement, the board acted swiftly to advertise positions for an Education/ Outreach Ranger, Executive Director, and onsite host. The board has been a shining example of leadership in a time of organizational change. They deserve much credit for navigating challenges that were not in their job descriptions when they agreed to serve on the board.

When the land transfer is completed, the preserve will be eligible for increased funding through the Land & Water Conservation Fund and the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill. Replacement of the board walk, installation of kiosks at the 'porous' entries and directional and interpretive signage are just a few projects that are "shovel ready" and poised to submit for funding, when eligible. In the interim, we need your help to fund increased staff and volunteer presence at BMCP. Staff is charged with seeking grant funding, administering programs, enrolling volunteers, and increasing education efforts and now, for increased supply expenses, like toilet paper and trash services formerly funded by BLM. Staff wages are not competitive with similar non-profits – the rest of the budget is as lean. For example, the total 2022 maintenance budget was just over \$2,000– a replacement set of batteries for the golf cart, needed after the loss of the BLM truck, costs \$1,400.

As you visit and see the beautiful seasonal changes at BMCP, know there are many behind the scenes changes taking place to ensure a positive experience at the preserve and protect this valuable resource. We hope you can help during this time of transition by making a gift, signing up to volunteer, or both!

Article by Meg Foley.

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Christmas Bird Count Saturday, December 17 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

This year's Christmas Bird Count, the 123rd for Audubon and the 42nd count for Morongo Valley, will operate this year under relaxed COVID rules. We'll meet at the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve main parking lot at 7:30 a.m. to sign in, organize into groups, and take a group photo. Come prepared for a full day in the field— food, water, sunscreen, a hat, comfortable walking shoes, and binoculars are recommended.

Please let me know if you will be able to participate this year. The Christmas Bird Count is free to participants, although the Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve welcome donations in support of their activities.

Count results will be posted on the BMCP website.

If you have questions, contact Joe Zarki at 760-401-3903, or jwzarki@gmail.com.

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Board of Directors

Jan Anderson
Caroline Conway
Zoe Dagan
Evan Hoffman-Jastermsky
Maureen McCarty, President
Kim McClinton
Tish Miller
Jane Mootz
Jack Thompson

Staff

Kevin Wong, Executive Director

NEWSLETTER

Editor: Joe Zarki

Winter, 2022/2023

P.O. Box 780
Morongo Valley, CA 92256

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The Life of a Big Morongo Caretaker... by Linda Sheehan

I turn on the heat in my little house on wheels. It's getting colder now in the upper desert, 30 minutes away from Palm Springs and 2,000 feet higher. Deserts do that; fall comes, the sun rises later, and the cloudless skies at night suck up all the warmth from the ground below.

I was privileged to be an on-site host for the month of October at the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. BMCP is a premiere stopover for migratory birds seeking warmer climes. Tired, hungry avian bodies, exhausted by long nights flying long distances, gratefully land in this cottonwood oasis— an inviting marshland with greenery, bugs, seeds and water. Early each morning I hike the trails, trash bag in my pack and binos around my neck. I walk with a light step, so glad to be here.

The other volunteers have been so welcoming and appreciative (after all, I am cleaning the bathrooms!). The preserve is here because of them; good people with vision and determination. Putting



Linda often found herself on the go while performing her caretaker duties
Photo by Kevin Wong

the needs of wildlife paramount, folks here also do their utmost to make the place available to the public. Locals show up early to walk the trails, kids with parents in tow drink in the nature, and city-tired urbanites get their much-needed nature fix.

I push them all out at sunset and relish the peace. I sit quietly watching the deer and birds drawn to the basins of water available to them in this drought-stricken land.

It may be trite, but BMCP feeds the soul. Good feelings for me come from walking among the birds, watching them fledge, soar, or perch hooting in

the dark. I'm a kid again trying to figure out coyote scat, hear stories of elusive foxes and bears, and see the cold snakes and lizards warm up as the sun rises above the canyon walls.

I am happy to have immersed myself here and given something back to the preserve as it gives so much to me. A special thanks to Meg and others for helping me to settle in. I hate to leave, but real life beckons.

A Happy Volunteer... by Maureen McCarty

I came to the desert over 25 years ago. Arriving from corporate America and knowing very little about nature, I decided it was time to expand my horizons. Part of that journey was getting involved with the excitement that is known as bird watching. However, it was many years before I even began to consider myself a "birder." Watching birds and learning about them took up many happy hours.



Once you undertake to 'bird watch,' you need to find unique and wonderful places near home to watch for them. A friend, Jane Olson, introduced me to the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Once I visited, it became my go-to place for birding. What I found here, in addition to lots of birds, was a place that I call the hidden jewel of the desert.

Our preserve is the home of many plants and animals found in, what seems to me, to be a very natural environment. While looking for birds, what a joy to come across a doe and her fawn. How cool it is to hear the croaking of toads, not to speak of the quiet little corners where you can sit and just enjoy the solitude.

(continued on p. 7)

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Reaching Out to Out Tribal Neighbors... by Kim McClinton

The Malki Museum at the Morongo reservation invited us to join their annual Fall Gathering on October 22. The museum is the oldest non-profit museum founded by Native Americans on a California Indian reservation. It is committed to preserving the cultural traditions and history of the Cahuilla Indians and other southern California Indian tribes. Their permanent exhibits consist of various artifacts, which include baskets, pottery, and a variety of tools used by the native tribes of southern California. They also have a native plant garden exhibit—Temalpakh—which showcases a variety of California Native plants and how they were used as a food source, medicine and creating shelters. Each exhibit aims to open dialogue and inform visitors of the history, culture and lives of California Native Americans in the past, present and future.

As part of ongoing efforts to establish a working alliance between the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and local tribes, we were invited to set up an information table at the gathering. We brought mesquite beans, an early food staple for



Passing down traditional ceremonies from one generation to another is an important part of tribal culture. Photo by Kim McClinton

many desert tribes, from the preserve grove. Roadrunner and oriole nests were also on display, but the replica skulls of some of our local mammals were a favorite among the children. Visitors and tribal members seemed very interested

and asked in-depth questions about the preserve, our mission, and how it relates to Native American history. Many took brochures and maps and were encouraged to visit the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and see the natural desert environment that still exists much the way it did when their ancestors lived here in the Valley.

At noon, a delicious Native American lunch, prepared by tribal members, was served to all. The fare consisted of local native foods, such as squash, acorn, greens and herbs, turkey, a seed and honey dessert among other tasty dishes. A tribal leader brought all participants and visitors together for a blessing on the meal and then invited the elders to be served first. During the lunch, tribal members honored the gathering with a traditional Birdsong performance.

We are honored and grateful to have been part of the Malki Museum's Fall Gathering and hope to continue to grow our friendship.

Executive Director's Report... by Kevin Wong



It is with great pleasure to take the position of the Executive Director of the Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. For the

last eleven years, I have created outdoor educational programs at the Desert Institute where I recruited instructors and volunteers, marketed these programs and registered the participants and made sure that the classes ran "seamlessly". These classes were conducted in Joshua Tree National Park, the Morongo Basin and Coachella Valley, Death Valley National Park, Mojave National Preserve, and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. In addition, I created weekly email newsletters for volunteers and another weekly newsletter for course participants which

was read by over 1,300 individuals. Over many years, I ran several classes which took place in the Education Center at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve including Native American Plant Uses with Daniel McCarthy and Insects and Arthropods of the Morongo Basin with Kurt Leuschner.

I am not yet a "birder", but I have been on many of the weekly bird walks and I love to take pictures of the participants as they spot and identify the birds that they encounter. Recently, I read an article in the Guardian titled, "[Bird and Their Songs Boost Our Mental Health](#)". It is well known that regular exposure to natural environments, such as parks and wildlands, will provide a boost to well-being. Having an office in the midst of the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is exciting to me as I watch the mule deer walk through the meadow and when I spotted a barn owl perched on a tree limb. During my short tenure here at the preserve, I have been introduced to people from the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, and Edmonton, the

states of Washington and New York, plus Washington D.C. who were visiting our preserve. Locals of Morongo Valley visit daily to walk the trails enjoying the riparian habitat with all of its rare shade in the Mojave Desert. These local, national, and international visitors relish the wonders of the preserve while being immersed in nature with all of its health benefits.

The support of the members of the board of directors and the very dedicated preserve ambassadors have made me feel at home in this new job. I look forward to applying my organizational and communication skills, along with my fundraising experience to the advancement of the mission of the Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

Please stop and say hello when you are visiting the preserve!

The Meaning of 'Rare'... by Joe Zarki

In December, 1977, I was stationed as a park ranger in the Furnace Creek area of Death Valley National Monument when I had a memorable experience with a truly rare bird. A streak-backed oriole, *Icterus pustulatus*, showed up on the Furnace Creek golf course, and over the following weeks, several hundred birders arrived hoping to add this unexpected avian visitor to their North American life lists. It became part of my duties to keep tabs on the wandering stranger, not only to help birders find it, but also to urge them to treat Death Valley's tropical guest with courtesy and respect. Easier said than done. As remarkable as was the mere presence of this wayward oriole, the real eye-opener was the great lengths and energy shown by passionate 'listers' wanting to 'count coup' on the remarkable bird. Birders came from all over the United States, and I met one man who flew to California from Toronto, Canada just for the chance to see it. While the presence of the oriole remained a mystery, it succeeded in revealing a lot about birders themselves.

The lure of the rare and unusual has always been a strong motivator for bird-watchers and also for many other field naturalists with different interests.



Streak-backed oriole. Photo by Thomas A. Benson

There's something about finding the unexpected that provides a thrill that few other experiences in nature can match.

Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is no stranger to this phenomenon. With its presence of water, varied habitats, and a relative abundance of food resources, the preserve has long been known as an oasis that attracts migrant birds of many species, and the birding community is one of BMCP's most significant user groups. With the rise of social media and advances in digital photography, it's hard for even a drab, inconspicuous bird to remain unnoticed for long. This year Morongo has been visited by rarities such as worm-eating warbler (June 8), William-son's sapsucker (November 5), and amaz-



Thick-billed kingbird. Photo by Anthony Metcalf

ingly, a thick-billed kingbird (April 29). While these species vary in terms of how rare they are at Morongo, seeing one of these birds no doubt provided a thrill for the observer as well as valuable data points for these highly mobile creatures.

But how significant are 'once-in-a-blue-moon' sightings such as these? Do they play any role in ensuring the survival of the species? Do they tell us anything about the importance of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve as a protected area? Or, for birders, are they akin to the temporary high of the drug user, a short-term euphoria that, once over, leaves us waiting for our next avian fix? We already know that some birders will go to great lengths, both in time and expense, to find rarities, even in an era when we should all be concerned about our carbon footprint. But the drive to see it alive remains a strong motivator for many.

So what makes a bird rare? According to Kate St. John in her September 30, 2020 online column "Outside My Window" a bird is rare if it is very hard to find due to location, time of year, or a low population. It may be far out of its normal range or seen at a time of year when it shouldn't be present. In addition, some rare species are secretive in their habits and live in dense vegetation. They may also rarely vocalize making them even harder to detect.

Perhaps part of the attraction of rarities is the satisfaction that comes from mastering your birding skill well enough to know when, where, and how to look for rare species, whether resident birds or migrants. There's an element of luck involved as well. Of course, what's considered 'rare' can change over time. Bald eagles and peregrine falcons used to be exceedingly scarce and practically defined the term, 'endangered.' Thanks to hard-fought conservation efforts, seeing one is no longer guaranteed to bring out

the media. Even the nearly extirpated California condor can now be found without too much difficulty if you are in the right place. Does that make seeing one of these species any less special? I certainly hope not.

Exciting rarities are not limited to birds. This fall our local area saw an influx of out-of-range butterflies pushed into southern California by the occasional storms of late summer and fall. On October 14, I was lucky to find a white-patched skipper, *Chiothion georgina*, near Hidden Valley in Joshua Tree National Park— only the third ever seen in California. A week later, I had the embarrassing pleasure of misidentifying an equally rare butterfly seen by Tom Haworth, Cathy Wiley, and myself in a small canyon near Chiriaco Summit. I was convinced we had found a bordered patch, another southwest specialty that I had never seen in California. After posting a couple of photos on iNaturalist, I learned that the butterfly was an even rarer Texan crescent, *Anthanassa texana*, a first record Riverside County and for the national park. Texan crescent was not even on my radar screen as a species possible for the Morongo Basin. It is now.



White-patched skipper. Photo by Joe Zarki

So, think about your personal favorite rarity. What made it so special to you? Can you still recall the thrill you felt upon first seeing it? Did it change the way you felt about birding, or about enjoying nature? Finding rarities is part of the joy we experience by being in nature. Such pleasure doesn't have to be limited to things that are rare. We're lucky that, at BMCP, we're able to count as relatively common such wondrous birds as vermilion flycatcher, Lawrence's goldfinch, and even a drab skulker like the Least Bell's vireo.

My wish for you this Holiday Season is that may the joy of nature, whether rare or mundane, always burn bright in your soul.

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Remembering Dee and Betty...

With the loss of Dee Zeller this past June, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve marked the passing of an era. We wanted to take this opportunity in the newsletter to reflect on Dee and Betty, their impact at BMCP, their legacy, and the truly remarkable people they were. Presented here are a few remembrances of the Zellers from some who knew them...

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When I started the position as Preserve Manager of BMCP for the U.S. BLM in 1994, I really needed to find a capable Preserve Host to live on site. It was a grueling search. After much advertising and asking around, I found out that Dee & Betty, who came very highly recommended, were leaving another preserve host position and were looking for new pastures. Little did I know that Dee had just accepted a position at the Coachella Valley Wild Bird Center when I called him to check us out. I convinced him to come to the Preserve to see what it had to offer. Later, I clearly remember Betty telling me that she saw the gleam in Dee's eyes that day as I was walking him around the preserve, knowing that he was hooked, and that he was going to accept this position and decline the Wild Bird Center position. I'm sure our position resonated with Dee because Big Morongo offers world-class birding, and with his passion for birds, he just couldn't refuse (besides, I wanted him to be in charge with me). For decades, Dee led weekly birdwatching walks that became so popular he had to get assistance to help him with the overflow of people who wanted to join him every week. One of the happiest days of my time as Preserve Manager was the day that Dee and Betty decided to sell their truck – the only way they could tow the fifth-wheel trailer that they lived in out of the preserve. I knew then that they were going to stay. And to our delight, they stayed... for nearly 30 years.

Robin Kobaly

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Dee and Betty Zeller came to Big Morongo Canyon Preserve in 1996, lured by Robin Kobaly, the BLM Manager of the Preserve, to serve as onsite Host/Managers. They had just left their Host position at the Thousand Palms Preserve and were preparing to take their trailer "on the road again" touring the country. Such timing! Dee and Betty shared a lifelong interest in birding and natural history, even going birding on their honeymoon. They attended the Docent Training at the Living Desert, and soon Dee used that knowledge and self-study to further polish his skills as an expert birder and naturalist. Betty used her management skills honed as a former youth pastor to manage the many volunteers and docents and keep things running smoothly. They were both such welcoming figures that numbers of volunteers soon swelled and visitors enjoyed sitting in their front yard chatting and birding.... And enjoying Betty's coffee and sweet treats.

After Betty passed away in 2015 many of us noticed things undone and were told, "Oh, Betty did that!" Who knew? And after Dee's passing in June of this year, a big void quickly became obvious to all who visited and benefited by his presence.

Jane Mootz

* * * * *

I met Dee and Betty at my docent training about 20 years ago. I was blown away by their knowledge, their willingness to share that knowledge, and what a great sense of humor they both had. Their work ethic was undeniably over the top.

Betty was a power house who lived and breathed the preserve. She attended every committee meeting, and even if we said "It's OK Betty, we can handle this," she would show up with paper, pen and amazing ideas. After Betty passed, we had to try to divvy up her work load. We were flabbergasted to find out how much she did. It would take 20 people to do the work of one Betty Zeller. One of my favorite memories is of Betty racing around in her golf cart. If you heard her coming from behind, you better move out of her way. I can still hear her giggle if I mentioned her wild driving.



Dee was a man of many talents. He could fix just about anything that needed fixin'. His knowledge of the birds, plants, animals and history of the preserve can't be duplicated. His passions ran deep for music, books, and watching Jeopardy. Admiration came from all that met him. I will always value the privilege of knowing Dee with his impish smile and his way with people. He just had to give a wink or raise an eyebrow, and his wish was your command. Dee had a funny little quirk of giving folks nicknames, and I feel happy to know mine was "Apple Annie".

Ann Garry

* * * * *

Betty, the skillful organizer, built BMCP's volunteer program, where volunteers felt like family. I recall her happy laughter as she went about keeping everything running smoothly.

Dee, my hero and a naturalist extraordinaire, taught me volumes about nature--at least he tried to. I miss his delightful way of giving me a knowing slant of his eyes and tilt of his head as he corrected me when I got it wrong.

Donna Thomas

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On a recent bird walk, someone asked me to name a plant. I had forgotten, but I was about to say I knew who would know... ahhh! Another Dee Zeller moment. In my two decades at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, I had grown used to relying on Dee's encyclopedic knowledge. He was a dedicated teacher and advocate for the preserve, its wonderful wildlife, and outstanding bird walk program. Dee's bird feeders were enjoyed by visitors from throughout the U.S. and beyond. Dee and Betty were largely responsible for keeping the preserve running smoothly and well during their time with us. In September, 2021, Bob Cullen and I were seated near Dee's feeders working on bird walk data, when Dee said "There's a fox." It was the first time in my life I had seen a kit fox. Definitely not the first time in my years at BMCP that Dee had enabled a "first" for me. I am thankful to Dee for being my mentor and for giving me many happy moments learning about the natural world. (I miss you, my friend!).

Margaret Hoggan

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BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Life On Display at Big Morongo Canyon, 2022



Birdlife usually takes front and center at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, and this year was no exception. Besides helping keep the feeders full at the Education Center, volunteer Dan Ward is usually ready with his camera to document many of the preserve's best birds. Seen here (from left) are a rare female Williamson's sapsucker, a snazzy cedar waxwing, Covington Park's resident female barn owl, and a black-and-white warbler.

Photos by Dan Ward



It was a good year for the Pollinator Garden as a pipevine swallowtail (far left) on October 4 was the 40th butterfly species seen since the garden's creation in 2018. Evidence of the maturing garden's success are the desert black swallowtail larvae (center left) and several queen pupae (center right) found in October. A bumper crop of nettles along the Marsh Trail prompted numerous sightings of satyr commas (far right).

Photos by Joe Zarki



All manner of living things find BMCP an accommodating place– from a growing mule deer fawn, to a blossoming turpentine broom, to a colorful harlequin beetle nymph, to a pair of male Great Basin fence lizards battling over territory.

Photos by Joe Zarki

BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

Remembering Dee and Betty (cont. from p. 5)

One day when my wife, Robin, was managing the Preserve, and I was helping trim the trails, Dee scurried up to me and said, "There's two guys that I think are trying to collect snakes here. I saw they had a snake sticker on their truck bumper, and they had bags. Let's catch 'em." Dee said he'd go one way on the trail if I could go the other to confront them. I jogged down the trail until I saw a guy with a snake bag, and he ran back to the parking lot as I chased him. There I discovered Dee holding the other man at bay, and asking him to open his snake bag. A king snake and two gopher snakes wriggled inside. Dee grabbed the bag of snakes and said, "If I ever see you back here again, I'm calling the sheriff and the BLM ranger. I've got your license plate. This is a federal nature preserve, and you're not allowed to collect here, and you know that you are not allowed to collect here." Dee was a perfect combination of a world-class birder, incredible naturalist, amiable host, and a pretty damn good policeman. Dee loved that Preserve and he made sure

nothing went on that shouldn't be going on there. He especially wouldn't put up with hooligans. I witnessed that myself.

Doug Thompson

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Managing lands for the public is a calling, a commitment, and a service. As a manager of public lands, I am passionate about my job. It is a special thing to meet volunteers such as Dee and Betty, that have the same passion, commitment, and dedication to public service. The Bureau of Land Management thanks them both for sharing their time, knowledge, and love of public lands which has undoubtedly resulted in thousands of responsible public land stewards. Their public service was instrumental to the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and their dedication will resonate in the BLM and the Morongo Valley for years to come.

Jihadda Govan

* * * * *

A Happy Volunteer (cont. from p. 2)

Now I am hooked on the Preserve. That brings up the next question for me— is there a way to help this place that I so love and cherish? I enjoy sharing my love for this place with others, so it became a natural fit for me to take on shifts at the welcome kiosk. Greeting people and sharing is so much fun. You quickly learn to meet and greet the locals that walk the preserve weekly or in some cases daily. Year round you get visitors from all over the world. During the peak of bird migration season, you quickly learn from our visitors the worldwide appeal of the area and what draws people to it.

Next step in my volunteering voyage was seeing a notice filed at the kiosk. They were looking for board members. So, I applied and became a board member. As a board member I was first asked to take over recruiting and training volunteers for the welcome kiosk.

This is a happy place to volunteer, and whatever you do, large or small, it is greatly appreciated.



FRIENDS OF BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

PLEASE RETURN YOUR TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATION TO:

**FRIENDS OF BMCP
P.O. Box 780
MORONGO VALLEY, CA 92256**

Yes, I Want to Help!

NAME(S) _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

COUNTRY _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____

Secure Credit Card Donations and Monthly Gifts May Be Made at:

www.bigmorongo.org

ENCLOSED GIFT:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 35.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 250.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 750.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 1,000.00 | |

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.

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Friends of BMCP
P.O. Box 780
Morongo Valley, CA 92256

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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

Public bird walks are held each Wednesday starting at 8 a.m., except on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Meet at BMCP's main visitor parking area. Groups are limited to 10 in size, although multiple groups may be accommodated. Lists of recently seen birds are updated weekly and may be viewed at: www.bigmorongo.org/birds.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Friday, Saturday & Sunday: Ambassadors will be at the entry 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

Saturday, December 17, 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Morongo Valley Christmas Bird Count. See p. 2 of this issue for further details.

Saturday, January 14, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Volunteer Orientation, BMCP Education Center. Learn about volunteer opportunities at BMCP. Contact Kevin Wong for additional information or to enroll as a volunteer at 760-792-1843, or by email at bmcp@bigmorongo.org.

Saturday, February 11, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. Volunteer Appreciation Party, Covington Park. Contact Kevin Wong for additional information at 760-792-1843, or by email at bmcp@bigmorongo.org.

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