



# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

## NEWSLETTER

Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

Spring/Summer, 2023

### Volunteers Are Vital at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve...

by Kim McClinton

As a volunteer with Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, I value the work that we do. I come to the preserve almost every morning to walk the trails for my own pleasure. In doing so, I can observe the conditions of the trails and any overgrowth of the limbs that may be a hazard. In addition, I am a member of the Education Committee, and we work on a standardized curriculum for school programs that will begin in the spring for Morongo Unified School District and the tribal school on the Morongo reservation. While working on these projects, I was also recruited to join the Board of Directors of Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. All of my fellow board members are volunteers, too.

Volunteering is very important to me as I can "give back" to my beloved preserve. Every hour spent is an hour invested in the future of the preserve. I was very happy to see two very successful events in the last two months: our Volunteer Orientation in January and the Volunteer Appreciation event in February.

New volunteer orientation was conducted with 31 candidates and the



Jihadda Govan speaks at Volunteer Orientation on January 14. BMCP photo.

format was modeled like a "job fair" with tables manned by representatives of the five volunteer teams: Education, Native Plants and Pollinator Gardens, Weekly Bird Walk, Trails and Maintenance, and Kiosk Ambassadors and Visitor Experience. Using this layout, the potential volunteers could talk to each of the team representatives and decide where their passion and skills would be best served.

Beahta Davis, Director of San Bernardino County Regional Parks,

gave an overview of the Park's volunteer application process and that all of our volunteers will be covered by Workers Compensation Insurance. Jihadda Govan, Manager, Sand to Snow National Monument, talked on the relationship of Bureau of Land Management and Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

Jihadda spoke about the need for Boundary Monitoring for incursions onto BLM lands that adjoin the Preserve by off-road vehicles. Twenty-two members at the orientation signed up for this new team. Jihadda will conduct on-site orientations in March for the team that is now called, "BLM Boundary Monitoring and Land Stewardship" as the team members will perform light trail maintenance, resource monitoring (bird counts, water assessments, photo point monitoring, etc.), graffiti and trash abatement, invasive plant removal, environmental education/interpretation, and barrier patrol and repairs within the Big Morongo Area of Critical Concern and/or Sand to Snow National Monument. We welcome the partnerships with both the County of San

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### Getting to Know Tim Sizemore and LiMei Dunn, Our New Preserve Hosts

1. How long have you been living in your RV and what prompted you to travel to different sites as hosts?

About a year and a half, full time. We discovered hosting to be a great way to see and explore areas for longer periods of time, the changing seasons, also getting to experience some local "must see/ must do" treasures that are hard to find on your own.

2. What are the benefits of being hosts and tell me a little about the experiences?

You stay in the preserve or park while hosting, and you meet many wonderful

people and involve yourself in ways that remain a lasting memory. Our last hosting at an Oregon BLM recreation site involved large beautiful shelters allowing upwards of 200-300 persons for family events, from memorials to weddings, company parties and of course many birthdays. At season's end, we even hosted a future movie filming crew that involved over a hundred people for two days. The movie is a thriller, starring Willa Fitzgerald and Kyle Gallner, directed by Giovanni Ribisi, filmed along the Salmon River in the park. While LiMei was video recording the movie being filmed, we were asked not to release these recordings on social media until after the

film releases. These experiences would not have been possible without volunteering as hosts.

3. Since you have been here now for almost two months, what do you enjoy most about the preserve?

The unique environment in the high desert. We have seen and been made aware of the many animals and plants in the preserve by local experts and the many volunteers. We are enjoying the changing seasons while understanding the locals love for the winter and cool rainy (and occasional snowy) times here.

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## Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve Offers Adult Education Classes!

Fulfilling BMCP's mission statement to "provide educational programs," we are excited to offer five new classes in April and May. These classes will meet at the Natural Science Education Center at the Preserve. All courses will be taught by well qualified instructors and are from 3-4 hours long. Class sizes are limited to 8. 'Young people' can enroll with their parent/guardian. See p. 8, "Upcoming Events," for a list of class titles, instructors, and course fees.

For more information or to register, go to: [www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-big-morongo-canyon-preserve-61931405293](http://www.eventbrite.com/o/friends-of-big-morongo-canyon-preserve-61931405293), or call Kevin Wong at 760-792-1843.

### Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve

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#### NEWSLETTER

Editor: Joe Zarki

Spring/Summer, 2023

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## Meet Kaeliegh Watson...

### Welcome Kaeliegh...

*Two people who know her well discuss BMCP's newest employee, Kaeliegh Watson, followed by Kaeliegh, herself, sharing her thoughts on being a ranger at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.*

"In 2015, a vivacious, energetic, bouncy young woman walked into my classroom at Yucca Valley High School. Kaeliegh Watson was responsible, hardworking, and a joy to teach. Over the year, we developed a close bond that has endured for the past seven years.

At the beginning, she wasn't particularly passionate about the environment, but after graduation I watched her love of nature and wild places develop and become her passion. She is now outside all the time, taking pictures of her discoveries and sharing them with others. Whether the tiniest insect, a colorful bird, or a unique plant, Kaeliegh loves them with all her heart.

Over the years, she gave her energy and passion to many local agencies in pursuit of protecting wilderness, mostly on a volunteer basis. However, she was accepted for two paid internships through the Mojave Desert Land Trust and, most recently, through Joshua Tree National Park Association working with the Science and Resource Stewardship Division of Joshua Tree National Park. And she is the ranger for Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. I am so excited and proud to watch Kaeliegh continue to grow in knowledge and passion for wild places. Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is so very lucky to have her!!"  
*Cindy Zacks, Yucca Valley high school teacher*



BMCP photo

"This is a great opportunity for Kaeliegh to work and study with environmental professionals in Joshua Tree National Park," says Copper Mountain College biology professor, Dr. Paul Delaney. "The Minerva Hamilton Hoyt internship will be an amazing opportunity for me to further develop my skills as a scientist and prepare myself for a future career in the environmental field," stated Kaeliegh. "I'm eager to learn, hardworking, passionate about nature, and I am honored to be a part of the Minerva Hoyt

legacy." Minerva Hamilton Hoyt was one of Pasadena Garden Club's most esteemed members and was instrumental in the establishment of Joshua Tree National Park. The internship honors her legacy by promoting environmental quality through educational programs and actions in the fields of conservation and civic improvement.

*Prof. Paul Delaney, Copper Mountain College*

*And from Kaeliegh herself...*

"Working at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve has been a dream come true! Ever since my first visit to the preserve in elementary school it has been my favorite place in the desert and my love for the area continues to grow. I remember first coming here and being so amazed with the amount of flowing water and all the big leafy trees, it was hard to believe a place like this existed so close to my home. I still feel this sense of

amazement every day I come to the preserve. I've only been working here since the end of December, but prior to that I volunteered for over a year. As a volunteer I started learning so much about the preserve and with each new piece of information the more I fell in love. Now as an employee, I get to spend even more time in the preserve to help protect the beautiful lands I love and share this love with all the visitors and volunteers that come through. One of my favorite things about working here is being able to witness all the seasonal changes. It

brings me so much joy to watch as all the green leaves start to change color and then eventually drop and start to bud again. Walking through the preserve as golden leaves fall quietly to the ground is such a peaceful feeling. Then once the leaves fall and the rains begin, the water levels start to rise and the frogs come out to sing their beautiful tones. The frogs croak so loud and it always has such a calming effect on me. I can sit out there for hours and just listen to them. I also love the delightful aroma of all the desert plants, especially my favorite plant, yerba mansa. Yerba mansa has been lying dormant for months, but it is beginning to sprout again. I literally jumped for joy when I saw the first plants of the season

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# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

## Executive Director's Report: Moving Forward with Major Changes...

by Kevin Wong

In the last newsletter, Meg Foley described many of the challenges that Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve faced in the second half of 2022. She recalled the resignation and subsequent passing of Dee Zeller, our naturalist and Preserve host for over 25 years, the resignation of the Executive Director, and the restructuring of the Board of Directors. In addition, there was 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. This change severely impacted our budgeted income.

So, when I accepted the position of the new Executive Director in late October, I knew that there were many challenges to be faced. With an optimistic outlook, I planned for many changes that would focus on addressing these challenges which includes recruiting new Preserve hosts, adding an Education Ranger, increasing the size and skills sets of the volunteer team, correcting many of the infrastructure needs, and focusing on the "Year-End" donation campaign to make it more successful than ever.

In December, 2022, Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve hired our first Education Ranger, Kaeliegh Watson. Kaeliegh, as a college student studying environmental science, is our part-time ranger working on weekends with myself and on a mid-week day. Look for the article on Kaeliegh in this newsletter to know more about her experience, interests, and recent accolades.

On January 14, our first on-site Preserve Hosts arrived, Tim Sizemore and LiMei Dunn. Unlike Dee and Betty Zeller, who were BLM volunteers, Tim and LiMei are volunteers with San Bernardino County. Their maximum stay, by county rules, is six months. Tim and LiMei are tasked with opening and closing the gates to the Preserve and helping to keep the infrastructure clean and visually appealing. Their RV is located where Dee's trailer was sited. However, as they are not "birders", we took down the bird feeding stations as it would be unfair to them to be feel obligated to entertain the many birders who arrive looking for Dee's famous social interactions. Tim and LiMei also have an interview in this newsletter.



The Red Team from Americorps helped clear brush from the Marsh Trail on February 17. BMCP volunteers Spider Fawke and Lin Snyder accompanied the group. BMCP photo.

Also on January 14, we conducted new volunteer orientation with 31 candidates and the format was modeled like a "job fair" with tables manned by representatives of the five volunteer teams: Education, Native Plants and Pollinator Gardens, Weekly Bird Walk, Trails and Maintenance, and Kiosk Ambassadors and Visitor Experience. We added two more volunteer groups: social media contributors, and BLM Boundary Monitoring and Land Stewardship.

On February 11, we conducted our first volunteer appreciation event in over two years with 33 attendees. Six name plaques were mounted on the stone monument in the Preserve to recognize the work of our volunteers: Ann Garry, David Miller, Laura Sherrod, Patrick Casey, Meg Foley, and Jane Olson. More about these two volunteer events can be found in the article on volunteers on page 1.

One of our priorities in the Preserve is to reduce the "fuel load" before nesting season of birds, including the least Bell's vireo, an endangered species that nests close to the ground. Recently, we had a BLM Fire Team work to cut up the downed desert willow tree on the Marsh Trail and the big pine tree that was cut down in November that threatened the Education Center. Many of the pine rounds were placed at the Education Center as seats for the many birders that come to photograph the birds at the feeding stations. Other rounds were strategically placed as seats for the children for upcoming school programs. The BLM team chipped the desert willow tree "rounds" and the big brush pile at the Education Center along with clean-up of

downed timber piles that were scattered around the parking lot, along the access road to the Ed Center and a large cottonwood tree on the walkway to Covington Park. We have received many positive comments on the updated appearance of the Preserve by our daily visitors.

Speaking of the Education Center, we have made repairs to the facility along with a major cleaning. We anticipate re-opening the Center soon for new adult education programs and for our retail store. School field trips to the Preserve will begin in April and we have a great team of Education Docents who are being trained in interpreting nature to young audiences. Helping the next generation build relationships with nature is critical to ensure a more sustainable future. Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve works to engage and inspire diverse young people equitably with science, solutions and the wonder of nature.

So, how do we do all of this with such a limited staff of two? As a donation based non-profit organization, we depend on your generosity. Donations by visitors are received by the Kiosk Ambassadors and are also placed in our donation box, affectionately known as the "iron ranger". Recycle items are delivered to the Preserve by visitors and locals and they are sold to the local recycle center each month. And, besides our "year-end" appeal, we receive regular donations by supporters just like you. I would like to invite you to consider a Legacy Donation, which is when you leave a gift to Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve as part of your estate plans. A planned gift to Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve is a way to continue your support for conservation and preservation of your beloved riparian preserve and its many native animals. Such a gift can provide tax advantages to you and your estate and leave a lasting impact for future generations. If you wish to discuss how your gift could be managed, please contact me directly at 760-792-1843.

### Kevin

P.S. You can keep up-to-date with our activities and programs by following our Facebook and Instagram feeds:

<https://www.facebook.com/BigMorongoCanyonPreserve/> and [https://www.instagram.com/bigmorongo\\_canyon\\_preserve/?hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/bigmorongo_canyon_preserve/?hl=en)

## BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

### Big Morongo Canyon, An Oasis in Transition...

by Dr. Cameron Barrows

*"The grass and the vines and the willow trees were all so lush and vividly green that he slightly awed by them. Their location within an alcove of a cliff made all of it more remarkable. It was such an unexpected place for something so beautiful, like an oasis in the middle of a barren desert." - Katie Lynn Johnson*

Wander into Big Morongo Canyon or another desert oases and you might imagine that you have been transported to another world. You will find yourself surrounded by lush, leafy fan palms, cottonwoods, willows, and other water-loving trees. In an oasis, the desert's wide-open views and more sparsely vegetated landscapes give way to a thick tangle of leaves and branches. To be very clear though, deserts are not barren. Far from it. Still, there is an alluring quality of desert oases. Here, the promise of cooling shade, the concentration of plant and animal life, and a jungle-like character draws us to them. Each oasis is different, each offers something new to discover.

Water in a desert is an enigma. By definition deserts are places where little rain falls, yet desert oases exist due to an extravagance of water, sometime at the surface, sometimes hidden a few meters below the surface, the extravagance revealed by large leafy trees that make no effort to conserve this otherwise precious and limiting resource. Desert plants possess a myriad of adaptations to conserve water, ranging from small leaves covered with thick waxy coats or fine hairs, reduced leaves that are drought deciduous, only emerging again when rains soak the desert soils, to having no leaves at all (cacti, smoke trees) and photosynthesizing, converting carbon dioxide to sugars and proteins, at night when temperatures are cooler (cacti – using Crassulacean acid, or CAM metabolism). Palm trees, willows, cottonwoods, and mesquite have none of those adaptations. They sport larger leaves flaunting their access to year-round water.

To understand where that water comes from, we need to think deep in time. During the Pleistocene Epoch there were repeated cooler, wetter ice ages followed by warmer and drier intervals. Those wetter-cooler periods were times when water seeped into the ground, oozing into the porous desert sands, gravels, and fractured bedrock, filling the underground air pockets, and so banking that excess water in aquifers. That hidden wa-

ter slowly moves through cracks until it reaches an earthquake fault. Here the periodic but ongoing movement of the earth's crust along transverse earthquake faults grinds the bedrock into a fine powder (called fault gouge), too fine to allow water to move through it. Underground water can build up behind faults which act as dams, sometimes pushing the water to the surface. When that happens, an oasis is formed. Every oasis in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts is associated with an earthquake fault. Importantly, the water feeding oases should be thought of as "fossil-water," meaning it has an ancient source and is not currently being replenished.

There is another relictual - Pleistocene Epoch - character of oases. During the cold and wetter ice ages, species escaped the snow and ice and glaciers by heading south and down mountain slopes into our deserts. After the climate shifted back to warmer and drier conditions, many of those species retreated north and or back up into the mountains. Except some found these oases as perfectly suitable and so stayed. Evidence of the climate-refugial character of oases includes western fence lizards in 49 Palms Oasis (Joshua Tree National Park); fence lizards, Stebbins' legless lizards, Gilbert's skinks and Baja California tree frogs in the Big Morongo Canyon Oasis; and western skinks in the Murray Canyon Oasis (Palm Canyon – Coachella Valley). For each of these lizards and frogs, their closest conspecifics are found more toward the coast or higher up mountain slopes. The oases provide the cooler and wetter conditions they need, a refuge from the hotter and drier surrounding desert.



Baja California tree frogs can be heard singing along the Mesquite Trail this spring. Photo by Joe Zarki.



Cottonwood Spring Oasis. National Park Service photo.

Oases in the Colorado Desert are typically dominated by desert fan palms, *Washingtonia filifera*, with honey mesquite, *Prosopis glandulosa* var. *torreyana*, occupying the periphery of the oasis. When water is present here, it typically is saturated with dissolved minerals, often salts of boron and fluoride. 'Okay to drink if dying of thirst' is the only alternative, but otherwise to be avoided. Apparently, fluoride salts are difficult for our bodies to distinguish from calcium, so the fluoride is stored in places otherwise designated for calcium, such as teeth and bones. If consumed over some length of time your teeth will turn brown, become pitted, and then fall out, and your bones will become brittle. Salty crusts deposited on the soil beneath the palm trees are a giveaway that the water is not fit to drink. Yet the palm trees thrive; apparently their lack of teeth and bones allows them to avoid any deleterious effects! Unfortunately, with some notable exceptions - Thousand Palms Canyon and Palm/Andreas/Murray Canyons in the Coachella Valley, Borrego Palm Canyon in Anza Borrego Desert State Park, and 49 Palms, Colorado Desert oases are drying up. The aquifer water is no longer being pushed to the surface, and there are few if any baby palms germinating to replace the aging adult trees. Increased aridity, reduced snowpacks, and increasing heat, along with water extraction for human uses are the likely causes.

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# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

## Big Morongo Canyon's 'Birds of Winter'...

by Dan Ward



Wrentits are more often heard than seen at Morongo, but this one, found on February 2, almost appears determined to be noticed. And one could hardly miss a male red-naped sapsucker doing his best impersonation of a vermilion flycatcher. This has been the winter of the Townsend's solitaire, as this normally uncommon member of the thrush family has been seen widely cross the Morongo Basin since November.



An oak titmouse casts an inquisitive eye at Dan as if to say 'Dude?, what are you looking at?' A Steller's jay, more normally at home in the piney woods of the San Bernardino Mountains put in a rare appearance at Morongo on March 3. With its striking rusty, red back, the 'gray-headed' form of the dark-eyed junco, seen on February 28, seems oddly named. It's perhaps the rarest of the juncos regularly found at Big Morongo Canyon.



For sheer perkiness, it's hard to top a mountain chickadee, seen January 2. The classy and sophisticated cedar waxwing seems dressed for the runway at this year's Oscars. A number of large flocks have been seen this winter. And what about those Cassin's finches? Several of these pine forest dwellers have made a home at BMCP since December, due to the heavy mountain snow. Thanks to Dan Ward for sharing his excellent photos.

All photos above courtesy of Dan Ward Photography.

# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

## Volunteers are Vital (cont. from p. 1)

Bernardino and Bureau of Land Management as they are important to Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and to the preserve for support of the environment and the infrastructure.

On February 11 we conducted our first volunteer appreciation event in over two years with 33 attendees. Six

name plaques were mounted on the stone monument in the preserve to recognize the work of our volunteers: Ann Garry, David Miller, Laura Sherrod, Patrick Casey, Meg Foley, and Jane Olson. We were presented with small gift bags for all attendees and lunch was catered. Our volunteer team is greatly valued and appreciated as Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve could not perform the tasks of managing the preserve without them. Here is a review of the event by one participant...

*Thank you for inviting me to such a fun volunteer party yesterday. It was such fun seeing fellow volunteers again. The food was scrumptious, too.*



New donor wall honorees, minus Jane Olson, gather on Volunteer Appreciation Day. BMCP photo..

*I nearly ate the lovely soap thinking that it was a cookie!*

The new volunteers have been working in the preserve with their respective teams. Here is a quote from some of the preserve's newest helpers:

*Working on the Trail Crew has been a great opportunity to give back to BMCP. I really enjoy meeting our guests as they pass our work areas. Everyone is so friendly. It's very rewarding to see the difference our team is making.*



Colorful gift bags were handed out to attendees at Volunteer Appreciation Day. BMCP photo.

## New Camp Hosts Interview (cont. from p. 1)

And of course, our recent neighbor, a vermilion flycatcher, who hopefully finds a mate soon and settles down!

4. *And, how does this experience differ from your BLM experience in Oregon?*

Here at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, the hosts are mostly alone after the gate is locked. At first, we did miss the other staff and hosts, but have enjoyed the quiet times. The Morongo Preserve hosting is more personable, and the people you meet are more friendly and have time to share their experiences of the preserve with you.

5. *LiMei, please tell me a little about yourself.*

I'm very excited to be here and feel blessed to enjoy the preserve, its hiking

trails, wildlife and the people visiting the area. Everyone has been so friendly and helpful these past two months. Thank you all so very much!

6. *How about you, Tim?*

I'm a people person that enjoys a good story. I find interest in most things on a daily basis and try not to sweat the small stuff. Lately, I've been watching birds with binoculars (wonder where that idea came from) LOL, and I'm still wanting to learn to play the ukulele!

7. *Where do you plan on traveling after your time at the Preserve?*

We're looking to travel to California redwoods or Colorado.

## Meet Kaeliegh Watson (cont. from p. 2)

start to come up. Each day I come to work I excitedly watch as the yerba mansas continue to grow as well as all of the other plants in the preserve. I love being here to watch all the changes that seem to happen in a blink of the eye.



Slugs are one animal benefitting from this winter's cool, wet weather. BMCP photo.

I'm also very thankful to experience the preserve in all weather conditions from the intense heat, to cool days, to the cold windy and wet days. My favorite thing to do at the preserve on rainy days is look for slugs. My first time ever seeing a slug was on a rainy Saturday last month. It was the end of the work day so I decided to go for a quick hike in the rain before heading home and that's when I saw a slug! I shrieked with joy over my new discovery, it is always an exciting feeling to see something new! To most people slugs are not that exciting, but living in the desert that's not something you see on a typical day."

8. *Anything else?*

The story for us at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve has just begun and will last us a lifetime. We thank everyone for inviting us into your hidden 'gem' and being so supportive of us being here. Thank you all!



Tim Sizemore and LiMei Dunn are settling in as BMCP's new hosts. BMCP photo.

# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE

## Big Morongo Canyon, An Oasis in Transition... (cont. from p. 4)

In the Mojave Desert fan palms are mostly absent unless planted by people. Here cottonwoods, *Populus fremontii*, and willows (several species of *Salix*), are joined by honey mesquite. Where they occur, oases with cottonwoods and willows support a much more diverse insect and bird community compared to oases only populated with fan palms, especially for both northward and southward migrants. Many such migrant birds would perish without being able to “re-fuel” in these oases. The different compositions between typical Colorado Desert versus Mojave Desert oases might be explained by temperature and chemistry. Young palms may not be able to tolerate the freezing winter conditions in the Mojave Desert. Willows and cottonwoods may not be as able to tolerate the salinity of some of the Colorado Desert oases.

The Big Morongo Canyon desert oasis is among the most species-rich wetlands in California, perhaps even in all western



Cottonwoods form a graceful tree canopy at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. Photo by Joe Zarki.

North America. However, it is changing. Back in the 1980s when I first visited Morongo it was wet—really wet. There were sora and Virginia rails along what was then called the “marsh trail.” New cotton-

wood and willow sprouts were common. Except for planted palm trees, there were no palms in the oasis proper. Today the rails are gone, new willow or cottonwood seedlings are gone or exceedingly rare, and the adult tree mortality seems to increase every year. Palm trees and palm tree seedlings are common. This drying follows a trend common to so many other desert oases. The influx of palm trees may be an indication that a cold temperature barrier has been breached by modern climate change. The Big Morongo Canyon wetland is in a process of change, of re-calibrating to a new reality. Change can be uncomfortable for those of us who remember what it once was, but nature is not static. Rather change is part of nature. Think of what Morongo might have looked like during the last ice age. Wild camels and horses coming in for a drink. Mastodons and giant sloths foraging in the wetland. Saber-toothed cats waiting to pounce on unwary prey. Change is part of nature.



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) \_\_\_\_\_

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CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

[www.bigmorongo.org](http://www.bigmorongo.org)

**ENCLOSED GIFT:**

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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| <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](http://www.bigmorongo.org). Donations may also be tax deductible.

# BIG MORONGO CANYON PRESERVE



## NEWSLETTER

is published by

Friends of BMCP

P.O. Box 780

Morongo Valley, CA 92256

GO GREEN...to choose the digital option  
for receiving your newsletter, email:  
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## CALENDAR

AT BMCP

APRIL – AUGUST

Gate open 7:30 a.m. to Sunset

365 days a year

### WEDNESDAY BIRD WALKS

Bird walks are offered each Wednesday morning at 8:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Meet at the main preserve parking area. Recently seen bird lists are updated weekly and may be viewed at: [www.bigmorongo.org/birds](http://www.bigmorongo.org/birds).

### AMBASSADOR KIOSK

Friday, Saturday & Sunday: Ambassadors will be at the kiosk to provide information on the latest BMCP happenings. They are very happy to tell you about recent wildlife sightings, safety precautions, and make recommendations for walks based upon weather, fitness, and time. BMCP "branded" merchandise is available for sale at the kiosk. The kiosk also has educational displays including historic and geologic, fauna, and bird sightings of the preserve.

### UPCOMING EVENTS & COURSES (See p. 2 for more details)

April 9, 9 a.m. - Noon. "Geology of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve" with Prof. Bruce Bridenbecker.

April 22, 8 a.m. - Noon. Earth Day Invasive Weed Pull.

April 22, 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. "Capturing Big Morongo Preserve with Acrylics" with Janis Commentz.

April 29, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.. "Writing Your Way into Nature" with Caryn Davidson.

May 6, 8:30 a.m. - Noon. "Identifying Birds by Sight and Sound" with Robin Roberts.

May 13, 8:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. "Field Sketching for Non-Artists" with Fran Calvert.

Course fees are \$65 per person. Class size limited to 8 participants.