Desert Trails Coordinating Council

From our last council meeting the DTHC coordinating council is looking for the following from our membership. Think about the opportunity to volunteer and continue having the club be an important part of the Coachella Valley.

1. Ideas for 2017 Getaway were tossed about. How about Death Valley, Las Vegas, San Diego or Santa Monica? Is there an interested volunteer(s) out there willing to head the next getaway? Interested volunteers with any other ideas for sites to pick from?

You can email your name and ideas to info@deserttrailshiking.com by June 30, 2016.

2. Dave Luckwell’s looking for support from any tech-savvy kids of DTHC members who desire the opportunity to help maintain and improve our existing website. Contact Dave by email to dluckwell@cciwireless.ca.

Hike for Hope

Thanks to all the Desert Trail Hiking Club volunteers for another Hike 4 Hope fundraiser on March 6, 2016 in beautiful Indian Canyons. Rainbows followed us as we guided hikers to help raise funds to find a cure to cancers unique to women. Also, a huge thank you as well to Jonelle Dedrick, our Hike for Hope co-ordinator for the DTHC club. Mark the date on your calendar for next year as March 5, 2017.

Trail Updates

On February 27th, 11 DTHC volunteers and 2 rangers from Pioneertown Preserve worked on the West Fork trail (how many trails in the valley are called “West Fork” - “East, North, and South Forks” certainly get short-changed) in Mission Creek Preserve. We put in a few water bars, raked and lopped. The new ranger, Adam Willet, was pleased with the work and hoped DTHC can help them work at Pioneertown on the trail to Chaparossa Peak in the near future. So another prospective club workday. Thank you to Rich and Nancy for help with the March 10 workday.

Mark your Calendars

- **April 8**—Talk—Jack Thompson, of The Wildlands Conservancy, will be talking about our 3 new NATIONAL MONUMENTS at the Rancho Mirage Library. Seating is limited so get there early.
- **March 5, 2017**—Hike 4 Hope
- **March 2017**—Getaway—details will appear on website in the near future

Council Members 2015/16

- Charlene Hope
- Jack Hope
- Rich Jarvinen
- Cathy Luckwell
- Dave Luckwell
- Dave McGuire
- Mike Ovesen
- Gary Ward
What a Getaway !!!!!!

Tucson Arizona was the destination of the getaway for 2016, and what a getaway it was. The hotel was the La Posada Lodge and Casitas which was a convenient location for hiking, and any other activity you decided to partake in.

Our first item on the agenda was the Sunday dinner as the kick off to our days in Tucson. It provided everyone with a chance to sign up for hikes, and socialize.

Monday included hikes to Blackett's Ridge (John Green/Christy Anderson-Leaders), Seven Falls—morning (Jane Udall-Leader), Sabino Lake/Dam Loop (Carl Goretta/Jonelle Dedrick-Leaders), Seven Falls—afternoon (Elwyn Mandry-Leader). Our evening was the appetizer/libation gathering at the back patios of Carl/Jonelle plus Dave/Cathy casitas. Participants provided the appetizers and beverages, and visited back and forth. Fun.

Tuesday—Finger Rock Trail to Linda Vista (Rich Jarvinen/Leader), Romero Pools—morning (Carl Goretta/Leader), Canyon Loop + Nature Trail (Cathy & Dave Luckwell-Leaders), Arizona/Sonora Desert Museum (Mary Barlow/Leader), Romero Pools—afternoon (Nancy Bone/Leader) with a Sunset Tailgate Party at Catalina State Park with wieners, beans and s'mores. Yum.

Wednesday—Hugh Norris Trail to Wasson Peak (Rich Peregrin/Leader), Ventana Canyon to Maiden Pools (Jonelle Dedrick/Leader), Linda Vista Loop (Sydney Brown/Leader), Arizona/Sonora Desert Museum (Dave & Karin McGuire-Leaders). Dinner was on your own that night.

Thursday—Organized Bike Ride (Mary Settle/Leader) had only 2 participants, however heard it was a great ride on awesome bike paths in Tucson. A lot of hikers left for home that day, after 3 days of spectacular hiking and socializing. Can’t thank Jonelle Dedrick and Carl Goretta enough for all their hard work in planning and putting together this Getaway, along with the DTHC hike leaders who did an awesome job. On three of the getaway hikes we were accompanied by local Saddlebrook Hiking Club members—Dave Sorenson, Larry Linderman and Tim Butler.
Hiking is Good for the Brain

You have always known that hiking is good exercise. Now you can feel extra good that it is also good for your brain!

In a 2016 study done at Stanford, spending time walking or hiking in a natural environment for 90 minutes reduced neural activity in the subgenual prefrontal cortex of the brain. This is the brain area associated with mental illness. The study also indicated that walking or hiking 90 minutes in nature showed a reduction in rumination. Rumination means focusing too much on negative thoughts about yourself. Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and binge eating are symptoms of rumination.

A 2013 University of British Columbia study showed that aerobic exercise is a promising strategy for combating decline by improving brain structure and memory function. Mild cognitive impairment is a recognized risk factor for dementia in brains. Resistance training and aerobic training improved verbal memory and learning.

Going back to a 2012 study done at the University of London, hiking in nature was shown to increase the creative reasoning of the brain. Selective attention, problem solving and multitasking are improved after immersing ourselves on nature hikes. It was unclear if these changes were actually from the immersion in nature hiking or just a decreased exposure to technology and social media.

If your Doctor has not told you to ‘take a hike’, tell them about ‘nature prescriptions’ and ‘ecotherapy’. Hikers have already figured out that hiking is fun and great physical exercise. Now you know you can get smarter by just taking a hike. Whether you want to improve your stress control, your binge eating, fighting dementia or improving your problem solving skills, hiking in nature is the right choice.

Next time you are at a crest on the PCT or any other resting place, tell yourself to stay hydrated and enjoy the mind expanding experience.

Written by Dave McGuire
Summary of DTHC Coordinating Council Meeting—March 21, 2016

Without the presence of three of your eight-member Coordinating Council, the final meeting of the season still had a quorum so we called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. Our Treasurer, Gary Ward and his wife, Audrey, were cruising on some ocean but dreaming of our desert trails.

Our Secretary and Work Day Coordinator, Charlene and Jack Hope, returned to their Canadian home earlier than normal to insure their health was in the best of hands after an unexpected medical interruption of their time in our Valley. Char and Jack have reported all news is excellent and hiking is still on their agenda. In their absence, Dave McGuire is attempting to handle Char’s secretarial responsibilities and Rich is coordinating workdays for Jack.

Before Gary’s departure, he provided a written update on our financial and membership status. Our Club is solvent with reserves available to pay all scheduled expenses. Membership at the end of February was 389 which is nearly a 20% increase from last month.

Last year’s matching grant pledge to Desert Trails Coalition [DTC] was not used. Your Council decided to leave the pledge intact with DTC for future use. There are currently four proposed trails being considered for development through the efforts of DTC where these funds could be the catalyst for action. Although last year’s grant was not used, it served as a convenient incentive for progress with the ongoing development of the East Indio Trail network.

Our Socials for the season have been well attended and generally given a ‘thumbs up’ for the venues, food, drinks and service. Maybe Mexican cuisine has been overdone but who is complaining? It tastes good, is affordable, filling and generally healthy. Rich’s Social Venue Search Team has already begun their search for next season. If our sneak preview was any indicator, you are in for a surprise with some exciting events.

Webmaster Dave Luckwell says that the website and, specifically, our Hiking Scheduler, are working well. Proactively, Dave is looking for support from any tech-savvy kids of DTHC members who desire the opportunity to help maintain and improve our existing website. In addition to adding real experience to their resume, they also will learn about value of pro bono volunteering.

Mike Ovesen, Hike Leader Coordinator, is settling into his new role this season. Filling the boots of Carl Gorretta was considered an enormous task but the boots fit well both with the Hike Leader coordinating responsibilities and participation on the Coordinating Council. Looking forward, Mike will be soliciting interest from current Hike Leaders to join him on the Council. Beyond the obvious tasks of current Council members, there is great value in Members-at-large to address new challenges and opportunities.

Cathy noted in her Communication update that she is expanding her social media influence with more contributions on our Facebook page. Suzanne Jarvinen is no longer the Facebook Lone Ranger. Cathy brought to Councils attention that a reminder may be due to Hike Leaders that want their hikes posted in the Desert Sun. Our policy on hikes listed in the Desert Sun Newspaper needs some further definition. Immediately, our policy is that once a hike is listed in the paper, it cannot be removed. For Hike Leaders, this means that you should consider this position taken when wanting your hikes listed. Mike Ovesen will field questions on this for our Hike Leaders, and Dave Luckwell will remind leaders for the new schedule session, to ensure they want their hikes listed in newspaper.
Rich updated the Council on the activities of the Desert Trails Coalition [DTC]. The land swap between the BLM and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians should, hopefully, be announced in June. Fingers are crossed that the hiking community will be pleased.

A DTHC member forwarded a request for the Council to formally protest a new housing development in Palm Springs. Rich informed the Council that DTC has been working with the City and the developer to not only protect the adjacent trails but to improve the trail network overall. This project has been on the radar of DTC for some time. Win-Win-Win is better than gridlock and confrontation. The Coordinating Council agrees with the DTC position on this project and will be following the progress carefully. As a footnote, the DTHC member and the writer of the proposal to object were sent a letter from our Council explaining our logic and position on this ongoing development.

Jack Hope sent us a written update on workdays for the Club. Activity is slowing as the temperature rises but the regular volunteers keep coming to help.

Our Tucson Getaway was the only topic of Old Business.

**Applause! Applause! to Carl and Jonelle for the wonder job of organizing the multi-day event.** If it were a musical event, compare it to the Boston Pops on the Fourth of July or the Vancouver Symphony on Canada Day. The venue, the hikes, the dinner, the appetizer night, the gourmet hot dog night and the orchestra conductors who pulled it all together: our own Carl and Jonelle. **Thank you for a superb performance!**

Before we left the Getaway idea, ideas for 2017 were floated. How about Death Valley, Las Vegas, San Diego or Santa Monica? Carl and Jonelle are looking around to pass the torch. **Are there any interested volunteers out there to pick from these sites or any other?**

Our only new business topic evolved into a strategy to grow the membership of our Club. Making it more convenient for our Hike Leaders to encourage Guest Hikers to join the Club rather than pay our standard Guest Fee of $5 is viewed as a no brainer decision. With our annual membership fees being so affordable at $10 for Singles and $15 for Families, the cost/benefit ways heavy on the benefits of a full year’s membership for only $5.

With our website already capable of accepting credit card payment via PayPal, the Hike Leaders will be supplied with ‘business’ cards having our website address, email address and mailing address to distribute to Guest Hikers…and any other prospective member. Hike Leaders have the freedom to pass on the Guest Fee and encourage the membership option. Of course, our Guest Fee is still available for hikers being in the Coachella Valley once in a lifetime. We think that most will want to repeat the experience again and again.

Meeting adjourned at 3:19 PM

**Happy Trails to You …** Whether you are a full time or part time resident of this beautiful Coachella valley, a great deal of appreciation to all members of the DTHC who give of their time to volunteer in some capacity to make DTHC such a great club. **Have a great summer and see you in the fall.**