



January 2018



NEWSLETTER

Providing members a variety of hiking, social and stewardship opportunities

Council members 2017-18

Dianne Delong
Rich Jarvinen
Dave Luckwell
Dave McGuire
Mike Ovesen
Bernard Rochet
Herbie Rochet
Gary Ward

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Feb 6th Social @ Woody's Palm House

March 3rd - Wildflower Festival

Volunteer at the Desert Trails Coalition booth.
Contact Council members Rich, Gary,
Dave L or Dave Mc to participate.

March 6th - Annual Dinner

Register on the DTHC website!

March 23rd-26th - THE GETAWAY!!

Agoura Hills & Santa Monica Mts.
See DTHC website for details & registration

December 2nd - Hike-4-Hope (20th year!)

(please note NEW date!)



Citizen Science Project Volunteers needed!

Our Club received the following letter recently about this project:

"We at The Wildlands Conservancy's Pioneertown Mountains Preserve are setting up a climate change study plot at Mission Creek Preserve (near Desert Hot Springs in the Sand to Snow National Monument), in conjunction with JTNP, UCR, and Great Basin Institute. The plots are used to measure plant communities and their response to climate change over time, and we also have one here in Pioneertown.

The plots are 300 meter squares, with 25 transects to be recorded during the spring, late Feb - April. Participants will navigate to the transects with GPS, record plant species based on size and phenology, and record data on tablets in the field. Specific training will be provided in person prior to participation. Docents and field books will be on site to assist during data collection.

I have begun looking for interested volunteers to assist with data collection. If you know of anyone interested in spending a couple hours this spring collecting data, please let me know. ** I'm also able to answer any questions you may have. We are excited to continue this data collection and enjoy sharing the process with desert locals."

Thank you,
Lucas Wilgers, Preserve Ranger, Pioneertown Mountains & Mission Creek Preserves

****Club members: If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact Rich Jarvinen (rich@kanaloha1302.com)****

Waging the War on Desert Graffiti!



Graffiti busters are restoring our desert spaces to their natural state!

This photo is a great example of their work in the Indio Badlands on a new trail being developed by the Friends of the Desert Mountains Trail Ambassadors. Graffiti busters included Rich Jarvinen, Dave Luckwell & 2 others from the Coachella Valley Hiking Club.

More information about that new trail follows....

What's in a Name...?

The new trail in the East Indio Hills is in the process of being named, and one moniker in strong contention is: "Savannah Storm Trail in the Indio Badlands." Here is a bit of the history and sentiment behind that name:

In its vision for existing and future components of the trail network within the Coachella Valley, the Desert Trails Coalition hopes to tie together the Valley's northern/eastern trail system (Indio, Desert Hot Springs, Thousand Palms, Coachella & Mecca) with the southern/western trail system. The latter network already bears many trail names originally proposed by the Desert Riders (a member group of the Desert Trails Coalition) that reflect a tradition of titles with western and equestrian themes or namesakes (e.g., Hopalong Cassidy, Art Smith, Boo Hoff, Clara Burgess). Christening the entire northern/eastern trail sector as the "Indio Badlands," and naming this new trail "Savannah Storm" would continue that tradition, and the use of both names is endorsed by the Desert Trails Coalition, which represents over 2,000 trail users in the Coachella Valley.

The "Indio Badlands" name was a recommendation of the Northern Coachella Valley Trail Study Group. Coachella Valley Horse Rescue of Indio is the proponent of the "Savannah Storm" name. Formerly known as the Indio Mounted Rangers and then as the Coachella Valley Mounted Rangers, this group has supported the Indio Police and other local authorities on mounted patrol and search and rescue missions for over 50 years. And in 2008, the Rangers' mission expanded to rescuing abandoned horses. "Savannah" and "Storm" were their first two and much-loved rescue horses. Naming this new trail after them would continue the equestrian association with trail names in the area and also acknowledge the long-standing commitment of the Rangers and their mounts to safeguarding Valley trails for all to enjoy.

Trail Maintenance in our DNA by Dave McGuire

As part of the DNA of Desert Trails Hiking Club, trail stewardship ranks right up there with socializing with like-minded hikers and hiking the trails of Coachella Valley. Sharing the pristine beauty of the hiking trails up-close with Mother Nature is a true blessing. When trail accessibility and usability are threatened, restricted or closed, Mother Nature demonstrates that we should never take her for granted.

Desert Trails Hiking Club members realized early that all good things require some effort to continue enjoying our great hiking experiences. I know nothing about DNA or the real story before 2008 when I joined the Club. After a couple of hikes led by Rich and Vera Pringle, workdays with the Club became a natural extension of the hiking experience.

Rich and Vera introduced me to 'experts' who brought the tools we needed beyond our own work gloves. I learned new skills, learned how to properly use tools like the Pulaski and McLeod and became proficient enough to share my knowledge with newer volunteers. The 'circle of death' became an awareness with real life consequences. I learned to 'think like water'. With each workday, I returned home bone-tired with a good feeling of accomplishment for my contribution and the difference made on the trail. The smile on my face lasted into the next day. Today, these workdays are, to me, more enjoyable than regular hiking.

These 'experts' that brought the tools and helped the volunteers of Desert Trails Hiking Club were more than good stewards of the earth. This was part of their job. The Bureau of Land Management [BLM] was their employer. Later, the Wildlands Conservancy 'experts' brought the tools and helped the Club volunteers when Whitewater Preserve got on our schedule. Different 'experts' served the same role at the Coachella Valley Preserve.

On my workdays, no volunteers had any physical accidents. I am not aware of any accidents before or after my first involvement. Safety was always a concern and the 'circle of death' story was vividly explained before any work began. Liability and who is at fault for accidents never entered my mind. Fortunately, there are people that do think about liability and make sure naïve volunteers like me are protected. Sometime

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before 2008, leaders at Desert Trails Hiking Club also thought about liability. Whether the land was public or private, the landowners certainly thought about their liability having volunteers working on their property.

Over time, the BLM 'experts' disappeared as budgets were squeezed and personnel reassigned. Friends of the Desert Mountains [FODM] acts as an agent for the BLM and became our new 'expert' on public land plus land owned by FODM. The FODM program has flourished under the excellent guidance of Gordon Fidler. Gordie's personality and skill in organizing the trail maintenance program have certainly taken trail maintenance to a new level of excellence.

Many Desert Trails Hiking Club members have wondered if the Club is straying away from its DNA on volunteer trail maintenance efforts or have we already stopped.

Let's set the record straight. Desert Trails Hiking Club and the 'experts' need each other. We are equal partners. Members of Desert Trails Hiking Club should never have an identity crisis.

The 'expert' that brings the tools and provides the liability insurance is a necessary means-to-an-end for the Desert Trails Hiking Club volunteer trail maintenance effort. The 'expert' needs the muscle and effort that volunteers bring to trail maintenance. Without the volunteers, trail maintenance in the valley would take a major step backwards. Fortunately, this is not US VS THEM. We need each other and together achieve a win-win-win situation. The 'expert' wins in keeping their trails at a top level. This Club wins with its members enjoying the trails and knowing we are a major part of their stewardship. The Coachella Valley wins with an excellent trail system for all hikers to enjoy.

Desert Trails Hiking Club is the major contributor for volunteers for trail maintenance. Toward this end, all Club members who volunteer their time for trail maintenance and stewardship through our 'expert' partners should feel proud that Desert Trails Hiking Club fulfills our role as stewards of the trails through our volunteering efforts and insuring our Club DNA is still intact.

Again, it is fortunate that we have good partners. Each 'expert' organization is not only a partner on trail maintenance. They offer our members the opportunity to broaden your horizons as all of us wonder what to do in retirement.

Desert Trails Hiking Club Coordinating Council Summary of latest meeting

Our second Coordinating Council meeting of the season was held January 12, 2018. In attendance were Dianne Delong, Rich Jarvinen, Dave Luckwell, Dave McGuire, Bernard and Herbie Rochet and Gary Ward.

Treasurer's/Membership Report: Gary shared the financial status of the Club as of 12/31/17. Membership is currently at 437. Our bank balance stands at \$4114.08 as of 1/10/18. Managing the membership records has been tremendously simplified with the help of Dave Luckwell's efforts with the website.

Social Report: Dianne announced that plans for the February Social are set for Woody's in Palm Springs. Details will be emailed to you from Evite soon.

Our Annual Appreciation Dinner is set for Tuesday, March 6, at Woodhaven Golf & Country Club. At this dinner, a hearty 'thank you' is given to our Hike Leaders, our Coordinating Council members and our Club's Founding Members. Registration to attend is required on our [Club website](#). Join in the fun to celebrate our Club. This is also our March Social.

Hike Leaders Report: Mike was out of town for our meeting but shared his thoughts on holding a Hike Leader training session in early February. Mike will be sending invitations for this meeting. He shared two documents - 'Hike Leader Protocol' and the new 'Hike Scheduling Process for Hike Leaders' using the Club website.

Bernard polled the Council members about adding overnight hikes to the Club schedule. He was encouraged to see total support from the Council. He said he would start working on needed parameters and potential hikes.

Workdays Report: Rich said that most upcoming workdays in the short term are planned through Friends of the Desert Mountains [FODM]. Under Gordon Fidler's guidance of FODM workdays, the need for DTHC-only workdays is greatly reduced. The majority of the volunteers involved in Gordie's workdays are DTHC members. This is likely to continue into the future. Scheduling of any future DTHC-only workdays will focus on locations and organizations where FODM does not participate. Working with Wildlands

Conservancy [WC] on trail maintenance in Whitewater, Mission Creek and Pioneertown is a logical place to focus outside of FODM. With a somewhat fixed supply of DTHC volunteer resources, prioritizing the needs will be a friendly process with our partners at FODM and WC.

2018 Getaway: Hotel and group dinner arrangements have been established. Details are on the website under the 'Socials, Dinners and Getaway' menu tab. Interest has been brisk on the hotel reservations. Dinner reservations need more communication to stir action. Hikes and hike leader plans will be crystallized once we get closer to March.

Hike Scheduler and Website Report: Website is functioning well and Hike Leader input has been positive. A planned demo at the upcoming Hike Leader meeting should improve expanded use by all Leaders. Emphasizing the need for signing up for hikes a maximum of seven days in advance on the site has won praise from several Hike Leaders.

Communications Report: Herbie is gathering articles for the Newsletter and committed to keep our members informed. All time sensitive communication will be on the Website in the Breaking News section. It is a good place to check frequently.

Desert Trails Coalition [DTC] Report: Rich reported that the Land Exchange decision is still imminent. Volunteers are needed for the FODM Wildflower Festival. DTHC members can participate at the DTC booth which represents all trail user clubs in the Valley.

ONGOING BUSINESS: Club donation discussion will be the main topic at the next meeting. Potential new members for the Coordinating Council is also on that same agenda.

Meeting lasted 2 hours 20 minutes.

UPCOMING COUNCIL MEETING: Friday, Mar 16, 2018 from 3-5 at Bernard & Herbie's home

Remembering founders and leaders

Happy Trails, Ragene!

It is always sad to see good folks leave this world.

In June 2017, Ragene Bruner departed to be with her husband, Rick Bruner who passed away in 2008. Rick was an early leader of our Club serving many years as Treasurer. Rick and Ragene were a great couple sharing their upbeat happy personalities with all they met.

Ragene is remembered as a petite woman with a big contagious smile, warm spirit and perfect companion for Rick. In addition to the Hiking Club, tennis and golf kept her active and involved in the community.

Next time on trail, look up and smile back at Ragene.

