

# MOUNTAIN VIEWS



## FRIENDS OF THE DESERT MOUNTAINS

OUR MISSION IS  
TO ACQUIRE  
AND PRESERVE  
LANDS WITHIN THE  
COACHELLA VALLEY  
AND THE  
SURROUNDING  
MOUNTAINS  
AND TO SERVE  
AS THE SUPPORT  
ORGANIZATION  
FOR EDUCATION,  
CONSERVATION  
AND RESEARCH  
FOR THE  
SANTA ROSA  
AND SAN JACINTO  
MOUNTAINS  
NATIONAL MONUMENT.




## Local Conservationists Receive \$50,000 Challenge

**The Friends of the Desert Mountains has been notified of a \$50,000 challenge grant from the Michael W. McCarthy Foundation.** According to a letter received from Brian McCarthy, a trustee of the Foundation, "The funds will be awarded only after matching funds of \$50,000 are raised for land acquisition from other private sources. The Friends of the Desert Mountains must raise these matching funds by April 30".

Another McCarthy Foundation trustee, Patrick M. McCarthy observed, "We don't normally give to environmental or land conservation projects but the natural environment of the Coachella Valley is so unique that we felt compelled to lend a hand. Another factor in our decision was the quality of the strategic plan the Friends of the Desert Mountains has developed to guide this undertaking."

According to Friends President Ted Lennon, "The Friends accomplishes its mission by seeking donated land and cash donations to purchase land from willing sellers at fair market value." Lennon also noted that the Friends of the Desert Mountains is the support group for the 272,000 acre Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. "The Monument is the only one in the country that was created because people in a local area organized and succeeded in having their congressional representative carry a bill through Congress. Local member of Congress, Mary Bono, championed the creation of the Monument in 2000," Lennon said.

We are asking each person who cares about saving the most precious parts of


our valley and mountainsides to make a donation now so it will count toward the match. Tax deductible donations in all amounts are needed. Send in your check or call us at **760.568.9918** to use your credit card. All donations will be acknowledged by mail and listed in the next newsletter. We also have special plans for major donors. 

## WHERE NATURE LOVERS LOVE TO SHOP

**The Bobcat Bookstore & Gift Shop** is located in the Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitors Center on Highway 74 in Palm Desert.

The shop has an excellent selection of books on desert wildflowers, wildlife, geology, recreational opportunities and cultural and local history. We sell maps, guides, and unique gift items, such as Audubon™ Birds with authentic bird calls provided by Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Monument Poster by the famed artist, Charlie Harper. We have items for all ages.

Take Hwy. III to Hwy. 74 and go south about three miles. You'll see the Visitors Center on your left just before the road begins to wind up the mountain. And while you're there, enjoy the interesting indoor and outdoor displays provided by the National Monument staff. There is no admission. A donation box is available that helps support the National Monument.

The store is non-profit and Friends members receive a 20% discount. It's open seven days a week. For further information call the Bookstore Manager, Vic Scott at **760.862.9084**. 



FRIENDS OF THE DESERT MOUNTAINS

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## NEWSLETTER MAKEOVER

We have given our newsletter, a face-lift and redesign. Local Plein Air Artist, Terry Masters, has been kind enough to create and donate original art for the masthead used in this issue. And you can bid on it! Half the proceeds from the sale will go to the Friends of the Desert Mountains. To place your bid, call **760.568.9918**.

Terry Masters' strongest influence was the work of Paul Grimm. Since picking up the brush he has studied with Ken Auster, Daniel Gerhartz, Jeremy Lipking, Mark Kerckhoff and Matt Smith.

An artist member of the California Art Club and Laguna Plein Air Painters Association, Masters' work can be seen at Stewart Galleries in Palm Springs, Smith Gallery in Sacramento and soon at Gallery III in La Quinta. You can also see Terry's work on the web at [www.desertpainter.com](http://www.desertpainter.com). 



**There's a Monument in Your Backyard** - The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitors Center is on Highway 74 in Palm Desert. Admission is free. Here you can learn about the geology, plants, animals, birds and cultural history of the 272,000 acres of the Monument. The Monument is a fabulous area for enjoying breathtaking views, catching sight of wildlife and wildflowers, hiking, photography, horseback riding and more. The Visitor's Center also boasts an educational bookstore and gift shop specializing in items related to the Monument and the surrounding natural areas.

Photo by BLM

## MAKING CONNECTIONS by Katie Barrows

Over the past two decades, scientists have made the case that the long-term survival of many wildlife species depends on making connections – linking larger protected areas together. To ensure survival of wide-ranging species like mountain lions and bobcats – predators that are critical to a healthy ecosystem – we need to ensure that we are making connections, protecting wildlife linkages.

Making connections – ensuring that wildlife have room to roam, to find food, to mate, to survive – is part of the acquisition strategy for the Friends. As more and more of our desert open spaces are lost to development, habitat for desert critters is being fractured by roads, highways, urbanization and other barriers to movement. Securing wildlife linkages now before they disappear is evermore important.

One focus of our current Partnership for Preservation is to secure a critical wildlife linkage between the San Jacinto and the San Bernardino Mountains in the San Gorgonio Pass area. Nationally recognized conservation biologists have identified this link between mountain ranges as critical. Making connections in this area involves protecting river corridors, riparian habitat, freeway underpasses, and culverts. River channels including Stubbe Creek and the Whitewater River cross under the I-10 freeway, providing avenues for wildlife – a critical link for black bear, mountain lion, kit fox, bobcat, coyote, desert tortoise, and many smaller wildlife species.

**Do wildlife move under I-10?** Desert Tortoise have been observed just south of I-10 near the Stubbe Canyon undercrossing. **Did they move from occupied habitat north of the freeway near Whitewater Canyon?** Since 1997, black bears have become established in the San Jacinto Mountains. Interstate 10 was thought to be a barrier to the southern

expansion of black bears in California, and perhaps to the movement of other large mammals.

To fill in the unprotected pieces of these key linkages, the Friends just acquired 217 acres of land along the Whitewater River.

The desert critters that depend on these wildlife linkages are those not often seen by most desert residents. Biologists have documented bobcats, mountain lions, badgers, and bighorn sheep using the newly protected linkage between Joshua Tree National Park and the Coachella Valley Preserve.

Other areas where we are trying to make connections are in Chino Canyon, a corridor including Mission Creek, Big Morongo Canyon and Willow Hole, and along Highway 74, the Palms to Pines Corridor.

Making connections ensures conservation of a community of interdependent species. Protection of watersheds and flood plains, management of water resources, and maintenance of sand transport processes are other benefits. These wildlife linkages provide other benefits as well in protecting scenic vistas, potential trail linkages, and open space corridors that enhance our quality of life along with protecting our fellow species. 🦋

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**You can be part of our team** to provide for the enjoyment, appreciation, and preservation of the Desert Mountains and the Santa Rosa & San Jacinto National Monument.

Your time so generously given would be appreciated and a valued help for us to provide services to the desert community. Whether on a regular or occasional basis your help is needed.

- Serve in the Bobcat Bookstore and Gift Shop at the National Monument Visitors Center. You will be trained by the Bookstore Manager.
- Assist with special events. Volunteer Fairs, Presentations, Earth Day events!
- Assist with administrative, office tasks and our *Mountain Views* Newsletter.
- Help with invasive plant cleanup, habitat restoration and trail projects.
- Assist with environmental education programs. We will train you.

Contact **Vic Scott** for more information at **760.862.9084** or email: **bobcatbookstore@earthlink.net**

**The Mountains and the Desert Need You!**



**Snow Creek** - This is near the Windy Point area of Hwy III as you approach Interstate 10, looking up at Mt. San Jacinto. Water from the mountains comes into the Coachella Valley here. The area forms part of the critical intermountain range linkage for plants and animals.

Photo by Bill Havert

## CREDITS

*Mountain Views*

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Gene L. House

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The Creative Bunch

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Vic Scott

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## CONSERVATIVES AND LIBERALS HAVE SOMETHING IN COMMON


**The Left and the Right often times agree on ends, such as peace and prosperity,** but rarely on the means to be used for achieving those ends (strong military, tax cuts vs. increased benefits, etc.). This is true in the area of environmental concerns as well.

The extraordinary exception to this rule is the Friends of the Desert Mountains. The Friends' unique approach to land conservation has the full support of liberals and conservatives. The Friends is not anti-growth. It does not battle with developers. It does not get involved in politics, elections or lawsuits. **"But isn't that the job of a conservation group?"** you might ask. **"How can you call yourselves protectors of the environment?"**

The Friends of the Desert Mountains believes in partnering with conservationists, developers, donors and government agencies to blend planned growth with conservation. We are a private, non-profit

organization that operates with an entrepreneurial spirit. We seek donated land and we seek tax-deductible donations that are used to buy land in targeted areas from willing sellers at fair market value. Simple, fair, effective.

Our mission is to help preserve some of the natural beauty and inspiring landscapes that make this valley and its mountains special to all of us. We not only do this by conserving unique natural areas but also by providing support for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. That's the 272,000 acres of pristine mountains that border the Coachella Valley on the south and the west.

So regardless of your politics, philosophy or economic interests, you can help keep this valley beautiful and stay true to your beliefs when supporting the Friends of the Desert Mountains. 

### Sand Dunes in Danger

Here is another example of a critical area that the Friends of the Desert Mountains is hoping to save. These are the dunes just northeast of the community of Thousand Palms. It is in the direct

path of development. Its conservation is needed to 1) ensure the water and wind borne sand transport essential to maintaining sand dune habitat, 2) provide new outdoor recreational opportunities in a natural environment, 3) conserve habitat for an array of threatened, endangered, rare and endemic species of plants and animals, and 4) protect the scenic backdrop of the Indio Hills.



Photo by Cameron Barrows



**Joshua Hills** - The single largest land conservation acquisition ever to occur in the Coachella Valley was accomplished recently. Nine thousand acres of critical habitat and desert views were saved. This is the area on the north side of Interstate 10 that links Joshua Tree

National Park with the Coachella Valley Preserve via a key wildlife corridor. The acquisition also conserves the watershed for the Thousand Palms native fan palm oases. In addition, new trail opportunities and the Valley's first campgrounds will be established here. Photo by Robert Taylor

## ALPHABET SOUP.... CONSERVATION STYLE

It may be a bit confusing to try and understand who's who in the local conservation zoo. We thought it might be helpful to clarify things with a list of the different groups.

### **Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument**

This is the 272,000 acre mountain landscape on the southern and western sides of the Coachella Valley. It is managed by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, in cooperation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, California State Parks, Winter Park Authority, County of Riverside and local jurisdictions. Visitor Center **862.9984**

### **Friends of the Desert Mountains**

That's us, a private, non-profit group that seeks donated land and donations to buy and conserve land from willing sellers at fair market value. We also provide volunteers and support for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. **568.9918**.

### **Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy**

This is a state agency located in Palm Desert. It researches natural areas and uses state bond money for the acquisition of land in need of conservation. This group has made numerous grants to the Friends of the Desert Mountains to acquire land. **776.5026**.

### **Coachella Valley Preserve**

The 21,000 acre palm oasis and sand dune area in Thousand Palms. It is operated by the Center for Natural Lands Management. No admission fee. **343.2733**.

### **Friends of Palm Springs Mountains**

This is a local non-profit corporation that was created to protect the mountains through education and legal action. Email: [info@friendsofpalmspringsmountains.org](mailto:info@friendsofpalmspringsmountains.org).

### **Sierra Club**

National non-profit organization with a local chapter that advocates against development and other

All phone #'s shown below have 760 area codes

conditions it considers detrimental to the natural environment. **321.5778**.


### **The Living Desert**

This is a private, non-profit facility in Palm Desert that exhibits hundreds of species of plants and animals native to the Coachella Valley and other parts of the world, and provides education programs. Admission fee. **346.5694**.

### **Bighorn Institute**

This is a local, non-profit organization located in Palm Desert that is dedicated to the conservation of the Peninsular bighorn sheep in our mountains. It uses a variety of captive breeding, research and field monitoring activities. **346.7334**.

### **Joshua Tree National Park**

This is the national park that borders the north side of the Coachella Valley in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. It includes campsites, backcountry hiking, rock climbing, education programs and more. Admission fee. **367.5500**. 

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