



Slab City Campout

Friday, March 25 to Sunday, March 27, 2016



A few miles east of Niland, California, is an area known as Slab City. Often called “the last free place on earth”, it is located on an abandoned U.S. Marine Corps base, Camp Dunlap. The camp was a World War II Marine Corps barracks training facility. Construction started in 1942 and the camp was dis-

mantled in 1956. All of the buildings were removed leaving just the slabs. The land was returned to the State of California in 1961. It was featured in the 2007 Sean Penn film, *Into the Wild*.

This is a trip for the **adventurous** and **curious**. It’s an exploratory trip and will be our first overnight adventure in Slab City.

What is now Slab City began when Riverside County and the BLM placed limits on the length of time allowed for a campground stay. The county tried to make Slab City a fee-based campground, but because it contains Salvation Mountain, a religious monument, it could not be legally be converted to a fee-based site.



This is a FREE camping trip with NO services. The community is a “colorful” group of people, many of whom are snowbirds during the winter months. There is no running water, power lines, sewage service or trash pickup. There are many slabs and campsite areas within Slab City. This event may be most suitable for RVs until we get the lay of the land, but tents are welcome. However, you need to consider the lack of restroom facilities in the area.

We plan to explore East Jesus, an experimental, sustainable, habitable, art installation located within the borders of Slab City. There is a church, an 18-hole golf course (in the desert, no grass), and the “Lizard

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Library”, where you can borrow, or donate/trade books and magazines. It also boasts a nightclub called The Range which is just a stage between two old buses with seats scrounged from old cars, buses and theatres, which has open mike nights and other scheduled entertainment there. We understand that some good talent plays there on a regular basis.

Click here for [trip notes](#)

Cottonwood Camp Joshua Tree Park Campout

Thursday, April 28 to Sunday, May 1, 2016

Get this on your calendar early. This trip will be popular.

Scenic Cottonwood campground offers a variety of nearby hiking and touring activities and cooler temperatures at the higher elevation with scenic views for stargazing and wildflower viewing. Bighorn sheep may be spotted. We have 2 spacious group sites for tents. RV sites are located just up the hill. RV sites are first come and you pay on arrival.

There are several nearby hikes: Coyote Mine, Sylvia Wash, Morton’s Mill and Mastadon Peak are easy to moderate and close by; or

the longer Lost Palms Oasis hike. Also travel up into the main part of the park and do Hidden Valley, Keys View, Skull Rock. Tour WWII desert training camp and General Patton Museum and dine at the historic Eagle Café. Click [here](#) for trip notes



Sunnylands and the Historic Annenberg House Tour

Wednesday, May 4th, 9:30 am to Noon

The Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands was estab-



lished by the late Ambassador Walter and Leonore Annenberg to host small, high-level retreats where the President of the United States can bring world leaders together to advance international peace and increase global understanding. President Obama recently met with Leaders of countries which belong to ASEAN at the Center. Many key figures of the 20th century enjoyed relaxing as guests at Sunnylands. The list includes seven U.S. presidents, the British royal

family, and Hollywood icons like Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Jimmy Stewart, Ginger Rogers, and many others. Now you can be included in the list of visitors.

On May 4th Great Outdoors Palm Springs will take a guided tour of the Sunnylands Center and Gardens. The tour will be limited to 35 people and will cost \$48.00 per person. This is a non-refundable trip. The 90 minute tour will start promptly at 9:30 in the morning. After the tour we will watch a 30 minute film, A Place Called Sunnylands then take a guided walk of the Sunnylands Center and Gardens. The center will be closed to the public on the day we visit. Put this on your calendar and watch for more details.



Day trip to REI Rancho Cucamonga Friday, March 18 for their *Member Appreciation Annual Sale.*

Meet at Hunters at 8:30 am for carpooling. Sport Chalet is also nearby. We have lunch at a local restaurant and return by 4:00 pm

Rainbow Rocks Canyon Hike

Thursday, March 31, 8:30 am

This hike is on the high end of moderate range. We will meet at Hunters on Arenas at 8:30 or at the Whitewater Preserve Visitor Center at 9:00. The trail head is at 2,400 feet. There is a gradual ascent for an

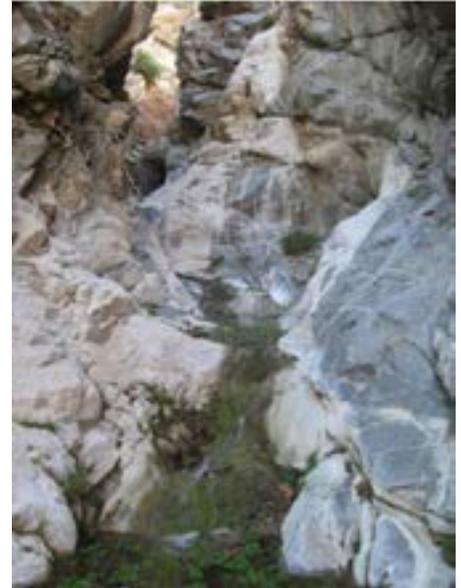


elevation gain of about 1,000 feet. There is a trail most of the way, but there is also some off trail, wash area hiking. Big horn sheep love this area which follows a wash into a narrow rock-walled canyon to a rock waterfall. Along the way, there are some unique rainbow colored rocks and boulders to be explored. We will hike up to the waterfall and then return via the same route back to the trailhead. The total distance

is about 7 miles and will take about four hours. Car-

pooling is encouraged, but to be arranged by the participants not the leader. Bad weather will cancel this trip.

Bring your 10 essentials, wear sturdy hiking footwear, lots of water (2 liters is recommended) and lunch or snacks. Wear protective clothing and sunscreen.



Contact [Scott](#) if you have any questions.

The Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival

9th Annual Festival: Saturday, March 5, 9:00am - 4:00 pm

The desert will soon come alive with the vibrancy of spring as the wildflowers bloom and transform the Coachella Valley into a colorful canvas. The best place to celebrate them is at the Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival, which is held on Saturday, March 5, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center in Palm Desert.

In addition to great wildflower viewing and beautiful art, the festival will feature sand sculpting, a Kid's Zone, a 5k trail run, mountain biking, and interpretive hikes. There will be raffles, vendors, exhibitors, and live music provided by The Arrangements in the beer and wine garden, as well as food and beverages available for purchase.

The Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival is hosted by the Friends of the Desert Mountains – a 501(c)3 nonprofit that, with volunteer and donor support, provides a variety of ways for valley residents and visitors alike to both enjoy and sustain the rugged, natural beauty of the National Monument and Coachella Valley. Programs include: guided hikes, adult and youth education, citizen science, trail maintenance,

and weed removal, habitat, scenic, and cultural resource preservation, and much, much, more.

The Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center is located off Highway 74 in Palm Desert. Admission and parking are free for the festival. Shuttles will run from St. Margaret's Church on Highway 74 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that day. There is no onsite parking.

Great Outdoors, Palm Springs will be hosting a booth at this festival



President Establishes New Desert Preserves

By Ritch

President Obama designated three new national monuments in the California desert on Thursday. The designation, requested by U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein, expands the 7.6 million acres protected by the 1994 California Desert Protection Act by another 1.8 million acres. The areas embrace volcanic spires, dunes, ribbons of wetlands wedged between steep canyon walls, grasslands, Joshua tree forests, historic roadways and petroglyphs. They are home to species that thrive despite withering heat and scant rainfall: bighorn sheep, tortoises, fringe-toed lizards and more than 250 types of birds.

“The effort to preserve the California desert has been a long one, and today is a major milestone,” Feinstein said. “This kind of landscape is so much a part of what the West once was, and these monuments are icons of our cultural heritage.” Concern over the long-term health of the de-



ceptively delicate terrain spurred Obama to designate the *Mojave Trails*, *Sand to Snow* and *Castle Mountains* monuments under the 1906 Antiquities Act. This legislation authorizes presidents to create national monuments on federal land to protect “objects of historic and scientific interest.”

Much of the land was donated to the U.S. Bureau of Land Management more than a decade ago, having been purchased by private citizens and the Wildlands Conservancy. The designations do not include funding and are supported by several groups including the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Assn., the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, The Center for Biological Diversity and the Mojave Desert Land Trust. The designations preserve unique natural and cultural resources and enhance the region’s economic activity by attracting visitors, increasing tourism and ensuring public access for hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, rock climbing and other outdoor recre-

ational activities.

Mojave Trails National Monument encompasses 1.6 million acres of federal land and former railroad property along a 105-mile stretch of old Route 66 between Ludlow and Needles. It



protects wildlife corridors linking Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave National Preserve. *Sand to Snow National*

Monument, about 45 miles east of Riverside, includes about 154,000 acres of federal land between Joshua Tree National Park and the San Bernardino National Forest. It includes 24 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, an estimated 1,700 petroglyphs and Big Morongo Canyon, a bird-watching destination along a perennial stream designated a federal Area of Critical Environmental Concern in 1982. *Castle Mountains National Monument* encompasses 20,920 acres featuring a row of jagged peaks rising above contorted Joshua trees and rare native desert grasslands between Interstates 15 and 40, about 100 miles south of Las Vegas. The area includes the historic mining camp of Hart, about 10 miles from the Nevada border.

David Lamfrom, director for the National Parks Conservation Assn., stopped on a ridge overlooking a prairie



of native grasses stretching for miles in all directions. He said, “A few centuries ago, Mexican wolves chased pronghorn antelope across this very landscape. We’re already in discussions with federal wildlife authorities, about taking the next step: reintroducing species of a bygone era, starting with pronghorn antelope.”

I look forward to exploring these new monuments and the hiking opportunities they offer.

Opportunities to Volunteer



The chapter is looking for a new Special Events Coordinator. This person will coordinate the Pool Parties, the Holiday Party and other occasional mixers as needed. Whoever volunteers for this position need not do all the work him/herself. The other officers and members usually jump in to support this person.

Outreach is very important to the Chapter. We need to constantly keep the community informed of our existence, so, we also need someone to volunteer to handle our Publicity and Outreach.

There are more details about these positions [here](#)

Membership Meeting

This last membership meeting featured Byron talking about RVing and what to consider when getting into Glamping. It was very well attended. The meeting before, our Outings Vice President talked about the Salton Sea, what there was to see and do in such an odd and sometimes forbidding place. We usually have snacks available.

We would like to have more speakers, but we aren't certain the types of things you'd like to learn about. We have invited speakers to talk of the various desert features and ecosystems. Perhaps you'd like to learn more about the history of Palm Springs, or Cathedral City. How did this desert get to be so famous. Perhaps you'd like to just hear the details of upcoming events or trips rather than just read about them in The Oasis. Please contact me at newsletter-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Impromptu Sky Watches

by Bob



The Astronomical Society of the Desert holds Impromptu Sky Watches to observe and share unusual astronomical events with others. Recently they have been watching Moonrise events and they hosted the rare viewing of the 5 bright planets. These sessions are open to the public and are held in several locations.

Our member, Bob Victor, is also a member of the Society and has given several talks on

aspects of the cosmos.

For example, on March 13, the Moon will be near two star clusters in the constellation Taurus and on March 21, the Moon will be near Jupiter in the evening sky.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Game Night at Joe and Mike's

Friday, March 11, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Game night this month will be at the home of Joe and Mike. They live at 962 Oceo Circle South in Palm Springs. Each person should bring a pot luck item that will serve 4 people and beverage of choice. (We've been short of entree's and vegetables lately, hint hint) The evening will start at 6:00 with a social time, then Pot Luck will begin at 6:15.



If you have a favorite game bring it along too. We start playing games at 7:00. Of course, not everyone plays games so if you want, you can just visit with the others there.

Please enter the Oceo complex from Camino Real (near the entrance to Koffi). Just after turning in, veer to the right on Oceo Circle South. Please do NOT park in the individual parking places between the homes on the south side of the property. Park ONLY in the "GUEST" parking spots on the east and north sides of the property

Welcome to our new members

A quick welcome to the three people who joined the Chapter this month:

John, Rich, and Trent

This club is a volunteer organization and it goes without saying that without volunteers there is no club. If you enjoy being with us and participating, volunteer for something. Maybe it's only serving drinks or snacks at a social hour, but it's a start.



In Memoriam

We as a community of friends and lovers want to honor those who have gone on. In the past month we lost one of our former members:

Chuck Hooper

There will be a Celebration of Life on March 6 from 4-6 pm. It will be held at 2735 Landau Blvd. Cathedral City. Chuck loved to tell stories, so bring your stories and celebrate his memory. RSVP before March 2 to [Jordan](#)

Who's in and Who's Out?

For the first time, the New York St Patrick's Day parade will allow an LGBT contingent to march under their own banner. The annual Catholic event had a long-held ban on allowing gay groups to march.



But in 2014, the parade faced a large commercial boycott because of the exclusion of LGBT groups, which finally led them to reconsider their stance. In 2015, they took an incremental step by allowing the LGBT group, *OUT@NBCUniversal*, to march as part of the NBC contingent. NBC was one of the parade's biggest sponsors.

Now, ahead of the 2016 event, the organizers have performed a huge turnaround and will drop the ban entirely. The Irish LGBT group the Lavender and Green Alliance will be marching in the parade under their own banner. "We celebrate the welcome! St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2016, will be a great day for hospitality and inclusion. . . . The decision to invite an Irish Gay organization. . . sends a positive message across the Irish Cultural landscape," wrote Brendan Fay, the group's founder.



While this is very good news, why do I bring it up? What does it have to do with Great Outdoors?

In the past we have had our own version of discrimination. Straight allies have attempted to be members and have found the welcome mat withdrawn. It seems to me that we should be more open and more accepting of those who are different from us. We hardly have a fair argument if we expect to be accepted just as we are and yet push people away



who are not like us. I don't think that this is not a large problem, particularly in the Palm Springs chapter, and I'm not advocating that we reach into the Sierra Club to find new members, but just the same, we shouldn't create our own little ghetto. We have many activities that we can share and inviting our straight friends should be OK. I welcome your [comments](#).

Our Phone: 760.282-GOPS

Palm Springs
Core Group

core-ps@greatoutdoors.org
[www.facebook.com/
groups/223204697703551](http://www.facebook.com/groups/223204697703551)

President
Newsletter Publisher/Editor
Ritch Barron
president-ps@greatoutdoors.org
newsletter-ps@greatoutdoors.org

V.P. Outings
Scott Connelly

vpo-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Treasurer
Bob Jaworski
treasurer-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Publicity Coordinator
Gary McGrath
outreach-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Game Night Coordinator
David Warren
[gamenightcoordinator-ps
@greatoutdoors.org](mailto:gamenightcoordinator-ps@greatoutdoors.org)

Social Events Coordinator
Position Currently is Vacent

Member-at-Large
Cliff Brown
memberatlarge-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Secretary
John Morrison
secretary-ps@greatoutdoors.org

Board Representative
Cliff Clue
boardrep-ps@greatoutdoors.org
760.365.3677

Webmaster
Membership Chair
Ed Emond
webmaster-ps@greatoutdoors.org
membership-ps@greatoutdoors.org



The Oasis
VOLUME 20 ISSUE 3 Mar., 2016

The Oasis is published monthly by the Palm Springs Chapter of Great Outdoors, Inc. The opinions expressed are those of the authors.

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Salton Sea: Great Times, Great Friends, Great Campout

By Byron

You're camping where? The Salton Sea? Isn't that a putrid, smelly place full of dead fish?

Actually, it's one of the best-kept secrets of Southern California: the Salton Sea is a great place to camp. From February 26 to the 28th, 14 members of GOPS camped at New Camp, on the east side of the Sea. We had seven RVs and three tents in stunningly perfect weather. An old friend and longtime member of the OC/LB chapter (now a member of our chapter), Mike Roth, traveled from his home in Arizona to camp with us. The all-night freight trains were, as always, a very special feature of the campsite.

On Friday, we did a tour of the mud "volcanoes", the Sonny Bono Wildlife Preserve,



Salvation Mountain and Slab City (the location for our next trip). The mud volcanoes were fascinating, bubbling and gurgling, fueled by underground geothermal discharges and covered with steam. "Mud volcano" is a misnomer: they really are "mudpots", similar to what is seen at Yosemite National Park.

We had lunch at the wildlife preserve under a canopy with picnic tables. Birds were everywhere, but more heard than seen. Our next stop was Slab City, a snowbird campsite, "The last free place on earth", the word "free"



referring to economics, not liberty. Salvation Mountain, a small hill covered with Bible verses, was interesting, as well as The Range, an informal open-air night club. We did not explore the area extensively because it will be the site of an upcoming camping trip this month.

Saturday was packed with activity. The day began with kayaking on the sea, followed by a double slot canyon hike in the Mecca foothills. Several campers did only one slot canyon and left early for the International Banana Museum, where they tried a chocolate banana milkshake (very sweet). The second group, who had hiked both canyons, visited the museum a half hour later. It was rumored that this group viewed the "private collection" of bananaphallic items. It was a memorable trip.

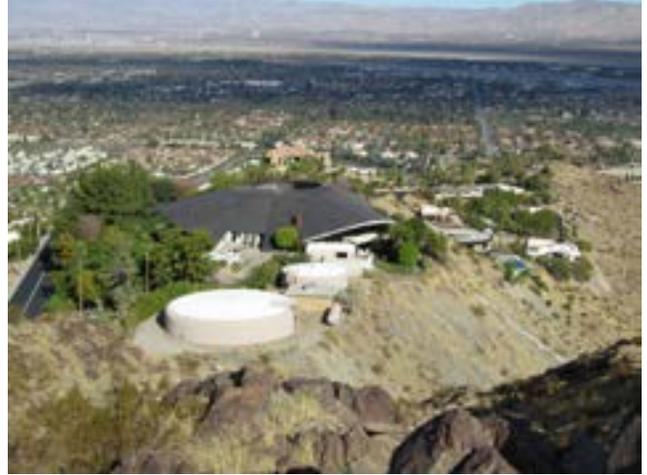


Araby Loop Trail Hike Report

by David



A few people joined me on the Araby hike, which is a popular trail in Palm Springs. Primarily, many are interested in seeing the futuristic designed home of the late Bob Hope. The large homes nearby were also owned by famous stars, too. This sort of challenging hike goes up about 800ft, and then at the top one is treated with wonderful views of the Coachella Valley, Palm Springs, San Jacinto Mountain, thrusting up to 10,834ft. Also, one can see the huge Wind Farm, and Desert Hot Springs. This loop hike goes down around the back side of Bob Hope's house winds down to the Palm Springs Wash. We saw some folks riding horses on the trail, before descending to the dry wash. Also, there were some hikers along the way throughout the hike. With interesting conversation, the hike was enjoyed by all.



Earl Henderson Trail Hike Report, a Walk in the Wash

by David

It was a cool, delightful and sunny morning for a hike on the very easy, 2-mile, Earl Henderson trail. I was very pleased to have 8 people with me. This South Palm Springs trail, is the perfect trail for those who do not normally hike. The views of area included South Palm Springs residences and golf course, the wide Palm Springs water control wash, an awesome view of San Jacinto Mountain thrusting up from the west side of Palm Canyon. Facing at a northeastern direction, are some large homes (near Bob Hope's house) lined up on top of a ridge. Along with some interesting conversation, this hike was enjoyed by all.



Silver Bell and El Dorado Mines Hike Report

by Scott



We entered Joshua Tree Park at the north entrance and continued on the Pinto Basin Road just northwest of Cholla Cactus Garden for the trail head. We headed across the wash and up the slope toward the old mine ore hopper that can be seen from the road. From the top of the ridge we descended to the wash below and over to the next wash to the location of the mine site. El Dorado Mine was the largest mine in the Hexie Mountains and unique in that it produced other minerals than gold. There were a number of artifacts and remnants of the former inhabitants present. After lunch we headed down the wash and around the hill and located the remains of an old homestead with a concrete slab hand dated: "Cactus Blossom 1933 M and M". Great weather for the February hike.

March Events Calendar

Looking Ahead
in Palm Springs

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																										
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Friday to Sunday
March 25-27, 2016
Slab City Campout

Friday to Sunday,
April 8-10, 2016 LA Chapter
Wind Wood Preserve Campout

Thursday to Sunday,
April 28-May 1, 2016
Cottonwood Campout

Thursday to Sunday
May 19-22, 2016
Bartlett Lake, AZ

Friday to Sunday
July 29-31, 2016
Hurkey Creek

Sunday to Monday
August 28-September 5, 2016
Burning Man

Friday to Sunday
October 14-16, 2016
38th Annual GO Conference

There is a new printable Corporate Calendar online. Check it out [here](#).

Other chapter events can be found on the Corporate Events Calendar. Find them [here](#)



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