

MT. SAN JACINTO NEWS



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WINTER 2016

MT. SAN JACINTO STATE PARK VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Blustery Winter Days on the Mountain

Winter came in like a freight train with the first official snowfall on the night of November 20th and it has certainly made the Mountain very picturesque! We have had some pleasantly warm days where one can have a comfortable snow ball fight in the afternoon sunshine...

But with that in mind, we also have endured some blustery, bone-chilling days. The trail conditions report will likely be ever-changing until the spring melt-off, but thankfully, we have a dedicated staff of volunteers that brave the wintry conditions to give us the best trail information possible. We appreciate their detailed reports because they help keep us and our visitors safe. Thank you!

I hope you enjoy at least one of the Mountain's winter days; they truly are unique to Southern California. But if not, see you in the not-too-distant spring.

If you have stories or photos to add to the next issue, please submit them to my email:

allison.barnes@parks.ca.gov

Happy Trails,
Ali Barnes, Park Interpreter

The Long Valley Ranger Station with fresh snow.
Photo by Teresa Gaulin.



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Ranger Station Trainings:

Long Valley Ranger Station trainings are held every Saturday at 1:00 PM. Some are more technical than others, so your level of participation may vary.

- ♦ **January 7:** Pack/med kit, knots & harness
- ♦ **January 14:** Radio, rescue equipment locations
- ♦ **January 21:** Litter set-up
- ♦ **January 28:** Med/CPR, environmental concerns
- ♦ **February 4:** Map & compass, UTM, GPS
- ♦ **February 11:** Anchors, lowering, belaying
- ♦ **February 18:** Z-line
- ♦ **February 25:** Rappelling
- ♦ **March 4:** Ascending
- ♦ **Refer to schedule for March-April**

What's New at the Visitor Center?

MUSEUM ADVENTURE GUIDE

In lieu of the Nature Trail Junior Ranger book this winter, I have created an indoor museum activity book. The kids are to answer the questions about the museum animals and plants on exhibit (example on next page) and then return it to whomever is at the Visitor Center desk. I have stashed an answer key in the Junior Ranger desk drawer. For completing their activity book, please reward the participants a Junior Ranger sticker and pencil, preferably not the metal badges at this time. Once the weather and trail conditions improve, we will reinstate the Nature Trail Junior Ranger book again. A shout out goes to volunteer **Deanna Ryan** who created the original edition of this activity book years back - I used much of the same content in this 2nd edition, so again, thank you!

KIDS' ACTIVITY TABLE

As a little experiment, I found a kid-height plastic table in storage and decided to put it to use for the little ones that come through the museum. On the table there are some park appropriate animal finger puppets, a paper rubbing station, and some paper crafts and activities available. I will resupply the scrap paper and the activity pages as best I can; all I ask from those staffing the Visitor Center is to make sure the table stays relatively tidy. So far, it has been a BIG HIT with visitors of all ages and makes me wonder if we could create something more permanent in the future. A shout out to volunteer **Suzanne Tracy** for planting this idea in my head way back when I first started!

NEW MUSEUM DESCRIPTION TILES

Thanks to volunteer **Jim Forneris** and funding from the NHA, the temporary paper descriptions in the museum cases have been replaced with newly minted tiles. Jim did much of the research for a tile that matched the preexisting ones and also found an engraver to do the etching. Again, thank you Jim!

A Call For...

SCRAP PAPER

The new kids' activity table could use whatever scrap paper you may have lying around the house. Printing on one side is perfectly acceptable as long as it does not have any personal information on it. If you have some, drop it off at the Visitor Center or the Interpretation Office.

PHOTOS!

If you have some favorite park photos, particularly of volunteers in action, submit them to my email: allison.barnes@parks.ca.gov

Let's Run the Numbers

I love crunching numbers, watching trends, and finding patterns in our park stats, so enjoy these number nuggets.



V.C. CONTACTS

October: 8,889 visitors

November: 10,681 visitors

December: 10,582 visitors

JUNIOR RANGERS

October: 38 kids

November: 40 kids

December: 34 kids

ROVING

October: 294 visitors

November: 264 visitors

December: 308 visitors

NATURE WALKS

October: 143 visitors

November: 102 visitors

December: N/A

The more consistent we are with recording our stats, the better idea we have of how we reach out to our visitors. This information also helps us with long-term planning like budgets, programs, and supplies (particularly Junior Ranger badges). Keep up the good work!

Back Cover

4. Find the **Snakes**. Name two of the snakes and tell one interesting fact about each: _____

5. Find the **Pine Cones** and **Tree Bark**. Which tree grows the largest cone? _____
6. Now compare the **Bird Nests**. Which bird do you think is the largest given the size of its nest? _____
7. Now find the **Great Horned Owl**. Look at its huge eyes! Why do you think its eyes are so big? _____

8. What is the largest animal you see in the Museum?

9. If you could be one of the animals you see in the Museum, which one would YOU be? _____
Why? _____

10. The movie about our park tells us why it is important for us to NOT feed wildlife. Why should we not feed the wildlife?

Museum Adventure Guide



Earn a Junior Ranger sticker by exploring the State Park Museum and completing the activities in this booklet!



Front Cover

1. Find the **Red-shouldered Hawk** that is getting ready to eat. What does it have in its talons? _____
2. Look carefully at the **Ground Squirrel** and **Gray Squirrel**. Tell two ways they are different: _____

3. Now find the **Merriam's Chipmunk**. In the wild, some people do not notice the difference between chipmunks and squirrels. What would you tell them? _____

Inside

Winter Adaptations

Draw a line from the adaptation on the left to the plant or animal on the right that relies on it to survive the winter in Mount San Jacinto State Park.

I grow an undercoat in my fur for an extra layer.

I curl into a tight coil underneath some rocks and wait for warmer weather.

I fluff up my down feathers to trap warm air close to my body since I stay here in the winter.

I gather and store food in caches to munch on all winter long unlike my cousin who hibernates.

I fly away to warmer places in the winter but return in the summer to show off my bright colors.

I pack on the pounds during the summer and then hibernate the winter away.

I have hollow hairs in my fur to trap warm air close to my body since I stay here in the winter.

I keep my branches short so that heavy snow does not break them.



Clark's Nutcracker



Western Gray Squirrel



Gray Fox



White Fir



Mule Deer



Mountain Kingsnake



California Ground Squirrel



Western Tanager

Goodbye & Congratulations Volunteer Nick Nixon!

Wilderness Patroller Nick Nixon will be leaving California for a new chapter in Texas at the end of the year. At volunteer Carl Maple's holiday party, the Park staff presented Nick with the *Volunteer Medallion for Superior Achievement*, the highest volunteer award in California State Parks. Please join me in congratulating Nick and thanking him for his dedication and service to the Park. Below is his award nomination written by Ranger Bill Solylo:

Nick began volunteering at Mount San Jacinto in Idyllwild in 2001 and later transferred to the Wilderness (Tram) side in 2003. He has over 15 years and over 10,000 hours of time that he donated to California State Parks. He has spent countless hours preventing park visitors from getting lost and injured by sharing his knowledge. He has responded from home at all hours of the day and night on numerous occasions after being called to assist park personnel in Search & Rescue operations. He has volunteered as a Nature Guide teaching an untold number of park visitors about the park.

Nick has been involved in over 300 rescues during the past 15 years including: carrying injured hikers out; searching for lost hikers; being first on scene of a visitor death in the back country of the park and having to control the area and scene for over 2 hours while waiting for Rangers to respond; treating injuries such as frost bite, hypothermia, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, broken bones, sprained joints, as well as a multitude of minor injuries.

On two separate occasions, he was an instrumental part of evacuating the park while the park was on fire, ensuring no visitors were left behind or injured within park boundaries.

For the past 10 years, he has been instrumental working as a trainer for new park staff and volunteers in the following areas: park knowledge, map and compass, trails and routes within park boundaries, technical rescue techniques, litter handling skills, cold and hot weather injuries, emergency wilderness first aid.

While the saying "No one is irreplaceable" may be true, the knowledge Nick has shared with so many is. The dedication, professionalism, and willingness to respond when called day or night that Nick has given to Mount San Jacinto State Park & Wilderness for all these years will be missed.



Volunteer Nick Nixon being presented with the *Volunteer Medallion for Superior Achievement* at the Maple's holiday party. Pictured from left to right: Superintendent Mark Hudgens, Ranger Todd Friedman, Nick Nixon, Ranger Bill Solylo, and Ranger Jed Reghanti.

Welcome Tristan (T.J.) McHenry, State Park Ranger

Please join me in welcoming our newest State Park Peace Officer, Tristan McHenry. He is stationed over at the Idyllwild Office, but has already become a familiar face in Long Valley while attending Saturday trainings. To learn a little more about him, read on.



Tristan McHenry started his state parks career as a Ranger Cadet at Butte College near Chico, CA in 2015. He recently finished his field training program at Lake Perris State Recreation Area and is now working full time as a State Park Ranger at Mt. San Jacinto State Park in Idyllwild. Tristan went to college at San Jose State in 2004 where he earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in Industrial Design. He was also recently awarded an Associate of Science degree in Law Enforcement which he earned while attending the Butte College Police Academy.

Tristan grew up exploring state and national parks across the country and was inspired by his experiences to protect the resources of the parks. Prior to joining California State Parks, Tristan has worked for various resource management agencies who focused on educating communities on how to reduce their carbon footprint. He enjoys spending time with his family and friends. He enjoys hiking, camping, swimming, bike riding, and reading.



Left: Volunteers Royce Jones, Rebecca Neuren, and Craig Martinez practice stabilization on Will Solylo's "injured leg." Photo by Teresa Gaulin.



Above: Volunteer Vince Llacer tames a red-tailed hawk! Just kidding, taxidermies can be fun to take silly photos with! Photo by Teresa Gaulin.

Right: Inland Empire District employees and Superintendent Kelly Elliot enjoy a bluebird-day hike to San Jacinto Peak with their trusty guides, Park Aides Sam Aguilar (right) and Justin Jimenez (left).



Interpretation & Education Report

Things on the Interpretation & Education front have definitely quieted down as the colder weather has set in. Although I presumed that the fall would bring lots of school programming, it seems that I have talked to more teachers about scheduling in the spring than anything else. Regardless, this prospect has me excited about the spring semester. Let the preparations begin!

Many of the teachers I have spoken with are eager to immerse their students in the park resources as a part of their Life and Physical Sciences curriculum. And speaking of curriculum, many science classrooms will be transitioning from what is known as the "Common Core" science curriculum standards to the newly approved Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). I have had the pleasure to attend a few workshops offered by the Palm Spring Unified School District to get myself caught up on this transition.

INTERPRETATION TRAININGS

For those of you who attended the November 12th volunteer meeting, I mentioned that I will be scheduling some interpretation trainings this calendar year. As of now, I have tentatively set the following dates:

Introduction to Interpretation: February 25 and March 11

Nature Walk Interpretation: April 1 and 29

Each training will have 2 identical sessions so if you cannot make it on one date, try for the other. I will send out more details and definitive dates later this winter.

NATURE WALKS

Nature Walks continued throughout the fall since the weather cooperated (it was gorgeous!) and there was plenty of interest from our visitors. However, with the recent snow accumulation, they are now at a dead-stop. The Long Valley trails are still mostly covered in hard-pack snow and ice and will likely be so for the remainder of the winter. Thank you to all of you who led these walks over the course of the spring, summer, and fall.

MUSEUM ADVENTURE GUIDE

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, we introduced the Museum Adventure Guide to supplement the summer Junior Ranger booklet. With proper advertising, this program has been fairly popular and really fun for me at least. But don't get discouraged if the kids only have sledding on their minds, though... remember that SNOW trumps all.

CULTURAL RESOURCES INTERPRETATION TRAINING

In October, I attended a cultural resources interpretation training as part of my position-required training regiment. Although cultural resources may not be the most obvious thing Mount San Jacinto State Park is known for, we really do have quite a bit of history to share with the public. I hope to shed more light on this come the spring so that we may incorporate more cultural history into our interpretive programming.



CULTURAL RESOURCES INTERPRETATION GROUP 9
October 17-21, 2016

¡FANDANGO! All dressed up for the evening's festivities at Monterey State Historic Park's Custom House. We were all thrown into what a Living History program was all about, literally into a real-life program to try out our newly-learned skills. Although the mujeres (ladies) outnumbered the hombres (men), a few passing U.S. Army Dragoons from Ft. Tejon were quickly whisked into the celebration for a few extra dance partners. ;) Thank goodness park interpreters aren't shy! I'm featured a row ahead and to the right of the hombre with the sombrero. Maybe some of you even recognize the Dragoon with the jaunty hat on the far right.

White-headed Woodpecker and White-breasted Nuthatch hanging out on neighboring trees
Photo credit: Ali Barnes



View of impending storm from Notch 5 on the Desert View Trail with Salton Sea reflecting the early morning sunshine
Photo credit: Ali Barnes



Sunshine spilling through the tree tops
Photo credit: Teresa Gaulin



Mountain Chickadee
Photo credit: Teresa Gaulin

Important Dates

Please see the following timeline for upcoming calendar events and stay tuned for email updates.

Important PARK EVENTS are bolded, but please note that they are not yet set in stone. As each event approaches, I will confirm the date, time, and location.

January

16: Martin Luther King Day (First tram @ 8:00)

February

13: Lincoln's Birthday (some local schools off)

14: Valentines Day

17: Lincoln's Birthday (observed, some local schools off)

20: Presidents' Day (First tram @ 8:00)

25: ***Intro to Interpretation Training (TBD)***

28: Mardi Gras

March

4: ***SRSJM National Monument Wildflower Festival (MSJSP participation likely)***

11: ***Intro to Interpretation Training (TBD)***

12: Daylight Savings Time begins

17: St. Patrick's Day

20: Spring Equinox

25: ***Ranger Station Tour and Training for Visitor Services Volunteers***

April: ***National Volunteer Month***

1: ***Nature Walk Interp Training (TBD)***

16: Easter Sunday (First tram @ 5:00 AM)

22: Earth Day, ***1st Junior Ranger Day (TBD)***

28: Arbor Day

29: ***Nature Walk Interp Training (TBD)***

8-23: SPRING BREAK FOR C.V. SCHOOLS

23-29: ***National Volunteer Appreciation Week, MSJSP Volunteer Potluck Picnic (TBD)***

Can You See What I See?

Cell phone photos... maybe not the best quality but sometimes the handiest when dealing with this quick little critter. Do you see what I see?



It's one of the park's resident gray squirrels as it munches on a pine cone. It pays to be the first on the trail in the morning for both the squirrel and the wildlife observer! Photo by Ali Barnes.

