

MBCA News
Friday, September 19, 2014

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

MBCA sponsored Candidates Virtual Forum

MBCA invited candidates in upcoming local elections to respond to three questions relating to MBCA's Mission. Responses will be posted at MBCA's website on Wednesday, October 1st.

Candidates for the California 42nd Assembly, Joshua Basin Water District, Hi-Desert Water District, Twentynine Palms City Council, Yucca Valley Town Council and the Morongo Unified School District will have the opportunity to participate.

Check the Virtual Forum prior to going to the polls on November 4th!

MBCA's Annual Desert Wise Living Workshop

Saturday, October 4th, 2014, 12:30-3:30 PM

Location: Joshua Tree Community Center, 6171 Sunburst Avenue

Fall is an ideal time for desert planting! Learn how to transform your home landscape into a desert-wise gardenscape, with guidance on plant selection and irrigation methods. This popular 3-hour, how-to workshop was developed and is presented by Robin Kobaly, Executive Director of The SummerTree Institute.

A registration donation of \$15 for MBCA members or \$20 for non-members includes the seminar, a workbook, and a DVD with nearly 4 hours of how-to bonus materials. Seating is limited – this workshop fills to capacity!

Register online now: MBconservation.org

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State Mining and Geology Board hearing: Eagle Mountain battle
Wednesday, October 1st, 2014

Location: Palm Desert Civic Center, 73-510 Fred Waring Drive

The Eagle Mountain mine was again granted active status. The Desert Protection Society (DPS) is challenging the ruling. Show your support of DPS and JTNP by attending the hearing to voice opposition.

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CONSERVATION NEWS:

Palen Project receives preliminary approval from CEC

In spite of wide-spread concern expressed by the public and conservation based organizations, the California Energy Commission last week granted BrightSource Energy approval to move ahead with the Palen solar project to be sited on the eastern edge of JTNP (between Indio and Blythe in Riverside County, near a migratory bird path between the Salton Sea and the Colorado River.)

Mark Butler, recently retired JTNP Superintendent expressed his deep objections in [The Desert Sun](#):

I have witnessed many threats to our national treasures, but they pale in comparison to the proposed Palen Solar Electric Generating System, which on Friday received preliminary decision approval by the California Energy Commission. The Palen project calls for building a 750-foot high tower and thousands of surrounding heliostats. Even in a modified form, the Palen project will irrevocably harm Joshua Tree National Park's sweeping scenic vistas, as well as migrating and protected bird species like the golden eagle that travel through the park.

The bottom line is that we should invest in renewable energy opportunities that unlike the Palen project protect species, viewsheds and communities. I call on the California Energy Commission to rethink and reverse its preliminary decision and deny approval of the Palen project due to its harmful impacts to our national heritage and to Joshua Tree National Park's biological, cultural and scenic resources.

In spite of intense objection such as Superintendent Butler's, Friday the commission approved one tower and 1,900 acres of mirrors and left open the possibility of future expansion to an additional 1,900 acres. The plan now has a [30-day comment period](#), after which the commission is expected to give final approval.

For those of you who were unable to attend the premier in Joshua Tree last week of the film *Who Are My People?*, clips from the documentary and information about the threatened ancient geo-glyphs are available [online](#). Filmmaker Robert Lundahl documents Native American culture in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts and the fight to protect sacred sites along the Colorado River. Several geo-glyphs located on BLM lands have been destroyed by solar energy development. Over twenty remaining ancient sites are endangered by projects such as Palen Solar.

A [move.org petition](#) directed to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell is one way to express opposition of the Palen project and others that

threaten to destroy our nation's cultural treasures in their paths.

Altamira Housing Project: COMMENT PERIOD EXTENDED to Oct. 13, 2014

Don't delay in sending comments as the cut-off date is not verified!

The Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council sent a resolution to the County of San Bernardino Board of Supervisors recommending a 30-day extension to October 13 to the public comment period for this proposed high-density walled housing project. See [MBCA's website](#) for project specific documents obtained from the County, assessments by MBCA, and information for submitting your comments.

Thanks for your continuing interest and support!

Sincerely,
Sarah Kennington, President

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*MBCA advocates for a healthy desert environment
that nurtures our rural character, cultural wealth,
and economic well-being.*