

MBCA Eblast

Sunday, November 29, 2015

Here we are in the Holiday Season! I hope you can slip some MBCA business into what I expect is a busy time for you otherwise. There are many things to bring to you with this E-Blast & items you may be able to add to your "to do" lists!

YOUR ACTION IS REQUESTED FOR ISSUES IMPACTING THE REGION

1) Defend Joshua Tree National Park from Massive Dewatering

JTNP is now threatened by a water-pumping scheme that will draw down ancient groundwater and leave wildlife out to dry -- all to fuel urban growth.

In the 1940s a sizable chunk of Joshua Tree National Park was set aside for a steel mine with the promise that, once mined out, the land would be restored to the park. The Kaiser mine closed several decades ago, but *the lands have yet to be returned*. The Eagle Mountain Pumped Storage Project, now permitted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), would pump more than 9 billion gallons from the region's aquifer.

This scheme not only squanders the precious water that took thousands of years to accrue, but to operate it will use more energy than it will produce. The rare desert plants and animals that survive here need this water. The National Park Service and Department of the Interior have opposed this project on these grounds throughout the permitting process.

MBCA joins the Center for Biological Diversity in urging The National Park Service and its parent agency the Department of the Interior to protect the Park from this ill-conceived water project at all costs. **These agencies must defend this national treasure by challenging the (FERC) flawed environmental review in court.**

Act now to urge Interior Secretary Sally Jewell and Park Service Director Jon Jarvis to stand strong, halt any negotiations and defend Joshua Tree from this destructive project. Click [here](#) to sign the petition & more info.

2) Public Information Meeting on BLM WEMO Plan, Dec. 5, 2:00-5:00 PM

Location: Community United Methodist Church, 6213 East Parkway, JT
(4 blocks north on Park Blvd. from Hwy 62)

The Alliance for Responsible Recreation is hosting a public meeting for a detailed explanation of the BLM's Western Mohave (WEMO) Route Management Plan and maps of the network of proposed ORV routes in the Morongo Basin. This is an opportunity to ask questions about the BLM's plan to dramatically increase access for off-road vehicles in our rural communities, allowing ORVs to ride on our public roads, private property and public lands. Law enforcement cannot deal

with existing problems with ORV trespass, and now the BLM wants to double the mileage of ORV routes in our communities. More info @ www.orvwatch.com. For an overview of issues and some maps you might want to view [Pat Flanagan's WEMO Power Point presentation](#) that was presented to the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council last April.

The public comment period for WEMO has been extended to Jan. 25, 2016. Submit your comments by email to cawemopa@blm.gov or by mail to: BLM, California Desert District, Attn.: WMRNP Plan Amendment 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553.

If you have already sent a comment please consider sending another! If you previously noted specific routes, a follow-up comment can be made in more general terms – or visa versa. Make BLM aware of conflicts OHVs are causing in your neighborhood or in a landscape you see damaged. BLM is required to designate every acre of BLM lands as open, closed, or limited for motorized access. It's up to residents to know what the BLM proposes in WEMO and to comment accordingly. Chances are you will be surprised by what you find on the maps – the number of routes and how they are designated for use. The Morongo Basin through Lucerne Valley is checker boarded with small BLM and private lands parcels. BLM parcels front onto community direct roads. BLM frontage routes connect to the CSA (Community Service Area) roads throughout the Basin. Checker boarded ownership leads to User Conflicts! Make sure you make substantive comments by Jan. 25th! Attend the public information meeting!

Time to Celebrate: It's Official - Statewide Ban on Bobcat Trapping!

Joshua Tree resident & activist Miriam Seger reports: *It's finally official...bobcat pelt trapping HAS been banned in time to close this year's season. Pop a cork, pass on the good word, and keep your eyes peeled for legholds.*

Miriam's article in KCET's [Rewire](#) tells of the mobilization of Basin activists after realizing local bobcats were being actively & legally trapped for pelts. In addition to reading a wonderful success story, you'll see some really cute bobcat pictures! Miriam makes a request: *If you have a moment, please leave a [comment](#) as a way of showing interest in predator issues. This will also express appreciation for all of the support that KCET has given us over the past three years.*

Social Media Activist in the High Desert: LaurenElloftheHiDesert.com

MBCA member Lauren Ell's website LaurenElloftheHiDesert.com actively covers events and news from groups in the Morongo Basin including the Mojave Desert Land Trust, Morongo Basin Conservation Association, Desert Institute, Yucca Mesa Community Center, Morongo Basin MAC, Campaign for the California Desert, and the Morongo Basin Historical Society.

Her guiding principles include: Environmental protection and conservation are critical; Information should flow within a community; Local community activity is

important for community unity; Shop locally and support local business. Very much in sync with MBCA's mission.

For the past year Lauren's website has spread the word through online mediums such as social media and website articles and received approximately 4,800 website visitors. MBCA appreciates Lauren's activism and support of our activities. She is a big help in us getting the word out to the wider audience through social media. Keep up the great work, Lauren!

El Nino Forecast from County Emergency Services: The County is preparing for flooding and mudslides that may result from unusually heavy rainfall predicted in coming months. A [website](#) is available for residents to obtain information about resources to prepare and respond to El Nino storms.

Campaign for California Deserts: Monuments: It's still a good time to communicate support for the creation of the three new national monuments in the California desert: Sand to Snow, Mojave Trails, and Castle Mountains - write an op-ed or send a letter to a newspaper (Hi-Desert Star, Desert Trail, Desert Sun, Los Angeles Times, etc.) - endorse the President's use of powers granted in the Antiquities Act to establish the monuments. In November five strong op-eds were published in the [Hi-Desert Star](#). Pat Flanagan, MBCA Director wrote on behalf of MBCA, "It's Cook's Bill that limits public input," Nov. 11. Cindy Zachs, Yucca Valley, wrote "Nature a critical component in children's healthy development," Nov. 13. Owen Gillick, Board member MDLT wrote, "The only time to protect the desert is before its destroyed," Nov. 4. I personally submitted, "California Dream is here in our unspoiled desert landscape," Nov. 20. Most recently, Victoria Fuller, Chairwoman of the Joshua Tree Community Association and Eva Soltes, Founder and Director of Harrison House Music, Arts & Ecology wrote "Cook's position of California desert conservation deserves closer scrutiny," 11/27. Bravo conservation community activists for articulating strong positions in defense of the Mojave desert!

Until the monuments are secured, we need to keep decision makers in Congress and the Administration aware of Basin residents' ongoing support for the protections of these federal lands in the vulnerable desert. For talking points and background information visit the [Campaign for California Deserts](#) website. MBCA also continues to support the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act.

Sincerely,
Sarah Kennington, President

Your 2015 MBCA Board

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www.mbconservation.org

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