

MBCA News

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

I hope you can clear your schedules to take in the conservation-oriented events coming our way in coming days. Several critically important meetings for projects MBCA has been monitoring now require our attention. Of course, we can't do "it all," but hopefully you can find time to participate. We DO make a difference. Our presence and vigilance are being called on this spring to educate the community and decision makers!

Joshua Tree Airport Solar Farm: Planning Commission hearing - April 21st

After much anticipation the JT Airport Solar Farm will come to the County Planning Commission. Read [MBCA's comment letter on the proposed Joshua Tree Airport Solar Field](#). We represent many in the Community opposing the project, including the Morongo Basin Municipal Advisory Council that unanimously passed a resolution against it on March 14, 2016.

FREE TRANSPORTATION TO ATTEND PLANNING COMMISSION – RSVP!

Mark Lundquist, Morongo Basin MAC Chair has announced: *I have a charter bus reserved for the April 21st Planning Commission meeting in San Bernardino. NextEra will be seeking approval for the Joshua Tree Solar project. This is an opportunity for up to 35 people to attend in person the Commission meeting & voice their opinion. If we get a decent response the bus will leave the county building parking lot at 6:15 that morning & travel straight to San Bernardino for the meeting. The meeting starts at 9am. The bus ride is free. People wanting to sign up can call my office (760 366-1488) & reserve a seat. Spread the word!!*

Call or e-mail for reservations: 760 366-1488; mark.lundquist@bos.sbcounty.gov

For those of you unable to make the trip to San Bernardino, you may attend the Planning Commission meeting remotely via video conference at the County Building in Joshua Tree, 63665 Twentynine Palms Hwy., 9AM, April 21st.

Reminders and Updates:

Alta Mira Gated Community Housing Project: 248 homes on 105.24 acres

The San Bernardino County Planning Commission voted 4-1 on April 7th to approve the Alta Mira housing development (near the Friendly Hills School in Joshua Tree.) Morongo Basin Commissioner Paul Smith was the lone objecting voice to echo Basin residents' concerns that the project applicants should be made to conduct an Environmental Impact Report. Impacts noted included traffic, flood control, wild fires, water, tortoise and other species. Smith argued that the traffic study and the tortoise study were outdated. Further and importantly, that the project violates the spirit and intent of the Joshua Tree Community Plan.

Unless an appeal is filed with the County Board of Supervisors, the decision to approve the project is binding. (For the history of the Alta Mira housing project, see [MBCA website](#).)

Bonnie Kopp, a resident of Joshua Tree notes: *One of the positive things to come out of the planning commission was the admission that Joshua Tree's zoning does not conform to the Community Plan. When the last Community Plan update was done in 2007, the*

County refused to consider any zoning changes. We should now be pressing for the County to rezone Joshua Tree as a part of the Community Plan update. That would go a long way in preventing future Alta Miras and turning our town into Orange County.

National Park Service completes Eagle Mountain Boundary Study

Show support for securing 32,000 acres of land in the Eagle Mountains and the Chuckwalla Valley in Riverside County for Joshua Tree National Park!

The NPS's *Eagle Mountain Boundary Study Including Possible Withdrawal Environmental Assessment* is now available on the [study website](#).

Attend a public meeting where the NPS study team will explain the Study findings, answer questions & gather comments. NOTE: *The format is not a formal hearing. Participants are encouraged to submit comments in writing.*

Local meeting: Joshua Tree, CA - May 4, 2016, 6-8 pm
Joshua Tree Community Center, 6171 Sunburst Street

Online Meeting (via Webex): April 29, 2016, 1-2:30 pm
Listen via telephone conference to view a presentation and submit questions thru a conferencing website. For information: see "meeting notices" on [study website](#).

Submit comment by mail, e-mail, online at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/eaglemountain>, or during public meetings.
Comments are due by May 27, 2016.

MBCA Events Calendar

Check the Community Events Calendar on the MBCA web-site [Home Page](#) regularly - for a list of the events in the Basin and beyond that we think our members and supporters will want to know about. Coming up:

Earth Day /Yucca Valley Community Center, Sat., April 16th, 9AM-2PM
NOTE: Landscape Tour registration will be available at Earth Day!

Mojave Desert Land Trust, [Open House](#), April 16th, 60124 29 Palms Hwy., JT

And of course, not to be missed:

MBCA Landscape Tour, April 23 & 24: [tickets online](#); [YV Earth Day](#); [Tour](#) details.

Thanks for your interest in these issues, your activism & support for MBCA!

Sincerely,
Sarah Kennington, President

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that nurtures our rural character, cultural wealth
and economic well-being.*