



# The Desert Sage

**OUR 76th SEASON**

**MARCH-APRIL 2017**

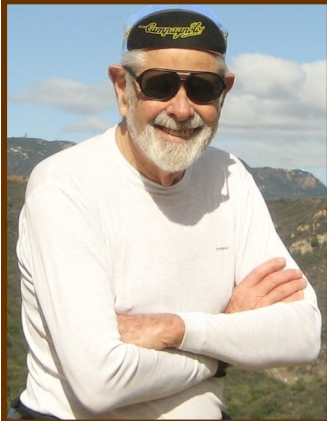
**ISSUE NO. 368**



<http://desertpeaks.org/>

# Chair's Corner

by Paul Cooley



On a Saturday, walk up the alluvial fan, past the sign that says "Closed Area" - because your guide, Torrey Nyborg, has a permit. Proceed to an area called the Barnyard, and see fossil bird and camel tracks in mudstone, along with cat tracks, fossil ripple patterns from pond or lake surfaces, and

even - as the day's high point, for most of us - five fossil mastodon footprints. All of these are between 3 and 4 million years old, dated by the geologic formations nearby.

On the way back to the cars, look at the six to twelve foot high walls of the streambed you are walking down and you can almost see some of the history of the whole area unfolding for you: layers of stream deposits, some primarily of sand - indicating a relatively slow flow, or series of flows, of water and debris after a storm. Alternating with these are layers containing pebbles; and now and then, a layer with large stones, indicative of a true flash flood able to carry these stones with it. Some of the history - because we also learn that there have been volcanic eruptions in Death Valley, and as far away as Yellowstone, that have left layers of ash as evidence.

All this, and a shorter hike Sunday to a location just north of Cow Creek which is not into a closed area, for a nominal fee of \$75, if you are a member of the Death Valley Natural History Association, which arranged this trip. I'm a life member and strongly recommend supporting it if you are so inclined. There were two such trips this year, in February, and probably will be two next year as well.

This year's DPS banquet will be at The Castaway restaurant, in Burbank, on May 21. Please see the information in this issue of the Sage.

Nominations so far for the Management Committee are as follows:

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Vice Chair / Outings / Safety: Sandy Lara

Secretary: Diana Neff Estrada

Treasurer: Laura Newman

Program / Banquet: Tracey Thomerson

The DPS still need members to run for the Chair position. Please contact any current Management Committee member if you're interested in serving as Chair. Also, we plan to conduct elections this year electronically using SurveyMonkey, but if anyone is unable to do that we can make accommodation for them to vote by mail if necessary.

Death Valley Natural History Association website:  
<https://dvnha.org/>

The story of the fossil beds appeared in the Los Angeles Times on November 16, 2016, here:

<http://www.latimes.com/local/california/la-me-death-valley-fossils-20161116-story.html>

## **THE NEXT SAGE SUBMISSION DEADLINE** **IS APRIL 9, 2017.**

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# Desert Peaks Section Leadership for the 2016 - 2017 Season

## Elected Positions

### **Chair**

Paul Cooley  
4061 Van Buren Place  
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### **Vice Chair / Outings / Safety**

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### **Secretary**

Diana Neff Estrada  
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### **Treasurer**

Laura Newman  
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### **Program / Banquet**

Tracey Thomerson  
6808 Falconview Lane  
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(805) 901-1330  
[tthomerson@roadrunner.com](mailto:tthomerson@roadrunner.com)

## Cover Photo Credit...

goes to Shurovi Masud. The photo is a group shot on the summit of Palen Mountains High Point, which was taken on February 5, 2017 on a scheduled DPS trip led by Mat Kelliher and Jeremy Netka. Back row, from the left to right, Jeremy Netka, Sridhar Gullapalli, Josef Nuernberger, Mat Kelliher, and Dan Graef; front row, from left to right, Phil Virden and Miriam Khamis.

## Appointed Positions

### **Archives**

Barbara Reber  
PO Box 1911  
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(949) 640-7821

### **Conservation Chair**

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### **Guidebook Editor**

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### **Membership Records Chair**

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### **Merchandising**

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### **Mountaineering Committee Chair**

Leo Logacho  
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### **Mountaineering Committee**

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Tina Bowman  
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### **Mountain Records (Summit Registers)**

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## The Desert Peaks Section

explores the desert mountain ranges of California and the Southwest, stimulates the interest of Sierra Club membership in climbing these ranges and aids in the conservation and preservation of desert wilderness areas.



## Trips & Events March 2017 — December 2017

**DPS member James Barlow scoping out the 5th class route on Weavers Needle (photo by James Barlow).**

MAR 4-5	SAT-SUN	DPS, HPS, WTC	Nopah Range High Point and Brown Peak
MAR 12	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
MAR 18-19	SAT-SUN	DPS	Pahrump Point and Stewart Point
MAR 19	SUN	HPS	Sheep Mountain and Martinez Mountain
APR 8	SAT	LTC, SPS, DPS	Snow: Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice
APR 9	SUN	HPS	Sombrero Peak
APR 9	SUN	DPS	DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck
APR 19	WED	LTC, WTC, DPS, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering: Basic Safety Systems
APR 22	SAT	LTC, WTC, DPS, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering: Belaying
APR 22-23	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Navigation: Mission Creek Navigation Noodle
APR 29	SAT	LTC, WTC, DPS, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering: Rappelling
MAY 6-7	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, DPS, SPS	Advanced Mountaineering: Anchors
MAY 20	SAT	LTC, WTC, HPS	Navigation: Beginning Clinic
MAY 21	SUN	DPS	The Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet
JUNE 3-4	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
SEPT 17	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle
NOV 18	SAT	LTC, WTC	Navigation Workshop on 3rd Class Terrain
NOV 18-19	SAT-SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle
DEC 10	SUN	LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS	Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle

◆ **MARCH 4-5**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **DPS, HPS, WTC**

**I: Nopah Range High Point (6,394') and Brown Peak (4,947'):** Come join us for a strenuous but fun weekend of desert peak bagging out near Death Valley National Park high above the Chicago Valley north-northeast of Shoshone, California. Both climbs require strenuous effort, which we'll exert at a moderate pace, and will require comfort on rocky, thorny, steep, and loose class 2 desert terrain. Saturday morning we'll head out just before first light from our camp at the trailhead into the Nopah Range Wilderness Area to ascend the western flank of the Nopah Range to its high point. After thoroughly enjoying the reportedly exquisite views up there, we'll return the way we came in for a day's total of about 10 round trip miles with 4,200' gain. We'll make camp where we're parked and will celebrate the weekend around a roaring campfire under waxing crescent night skies with a traditional DPS Potluck Happy Hour. Sunday we'll drive into Death Valley via Shoshone over high clearance vehicles and 4WD required dirt roads to the trailhead for the west side approach to Brown Peak in the Greenwater Range. A mere 3 miles with 2,100' of gain will get us up to the summit, where we'll eat a little lunch and enjoy the views before heading back down to our cars via the same route we came up. High Clearance, 4WD vehicles required. This DPS Outing is co-sponsored by WTC and HPS. Email Mat Kelliher at [mkelliher746@gmail.com](mailto:mkelliher746@gmail.com) with contact, vehicle type and carpool info, recent conditioning, and experience for trip status and details. Leaders: Mat Kelliher and Bill Simpson.

◆ **MARCH 12**                      **SUN**                      **DPS**

**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck:** Join us at the home of Tom Sumner in Sylmar for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Tom at [locornnr@aol.com](mailto:locornnr@aol.com).

♦ **MARCH 18-19**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **DPS**  
**I: Pahrump Point (5,740') and Stewart Point (5,265')**: Saturday climb Pahrump Point, 8 miles round trip with 3,400' gain. Sunday climb Stewart Point, 6.5 miles round trip with 2,600' gain. Car camp and optional potluck Saturday night. Moderate pace. Send email or sase with resume, conditioning, carpool info to Leader: Gary Schenk ([gary@hbfun.org](mailto:gary@hbfun.org)). Co-Leader: Tina Bowman.

♦ **MARCH 19**                      **SUN**                      **HPS**  
**I: Sheep Mountain (5141') and Martinez Mountain (6560'+)**: Experience the beauty of the Santa Rosa Wilderness desert terrain as we climb Sheep and Martinez, the second being on both the HPS and DPS lists. We'll follow the Cactus Spring Trail, past Horsethief Creek, and leave it to go cross-country, accompanied by impressive views of the surrounding mountains, pretty La Quinta Cove, Palm Desert and the expansive Coachella Valley. This strenuous 20 miles, 5,300' gain hike is not for beginners. Please bring liquids, lugsoles, layers, lunch, hat and headlamp. Contact [peterdoggett@aol.com](mailto:peterdoggett@aol.com) for trip details. Leaders Peter and Ignacia Doggett.

♦ **APRIL 8**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, SPS, DPS**  
**M/E-R: Snow: Sierra Snow Checkoff and Practice**: For M & E candidates wanting to check off leadership ratings. We welcome others who wish to practice new techniques. Restricted to Sierra Club members with some prior basic training with the ice axe. Send SC#, climbing resume, email, home and work phones to Leader: Nile Sorenson ([nsorenso@pacbell.net](mailto:nsorenso@pacbell.net)). Co-Leader: Neal Robbins.

♦ **APRIL 9**                      **SUN**                      **HPS**  
**I: Sombrero Peak (4,229')**: VISIT A REALLY COOL DPS PEAK AND PARTICIPATE IN THE HPS HOLIDAY HOOPLAH (see HPS schedule for additional information)!! On Sunday, we will visit Sombrero Peak, which at 4,229' does not qualify for the HPS list. However, it is on the Desert Peak Section's list and is a fun one! Travel will be cross-country through gorgeous -- but rocky, brushy and thorny -- desert terrain. This will be a slow-paced hike, designed to accommodate hikers who need -- or want -- more time to get to a DPS peak. Total distance should be around 3 miles, and total gain should be about 2,100 feet. Bring food, water, hiking footwear, layers, hat and sunblock. Contact Leader for status and details. Leader: Bill Simpson ([simphome@yahoo.com](mailto:simphome@yahoo.com)). Co-Leaders: Virginia Simpson and Dave Endres.

♦ **APRIL 9**                      **SUN**                      **DPS**  
**O: DPS Management Committee Meeting and Potluck**: Join us at the home of Larry and Barbee Tidball in Long Beach for the DPS Management Committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. and potluck at 6:00 p.m. Please bring a beverage of your choice and a potluck item to share. RSVP to Larry and Barbee at [lbtidball@verizon.net](mailto:lbtidball@verizon.net).

♦ **APRIL 19**                      **WED**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP15): Basic Safety System**: First of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This will be an indoor workshop held in the evening reviewing ropes, harnesses, helmets, basic climbing gear, and knots in preparation for later workshops. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter ([dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)); Patrick McKusky ([pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)); and, Matthew Hengst ([matthew.hengst@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.hengst@gmail.com)).

♦ **APRIL 22**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP15): Belaying**: Second of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will be held at Stoney Point in Chatsworth and will focus on belaying and related principles starting with standard sports climbing all the way up to advanced techniques to move large groups across dangerous terrain. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter ([dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)); Patrick McKusky ([pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)); and, Matthew Hengst ([matthew.hengst@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.hengst@gmail.com)).

♦ **APRIL 22-23**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**  
**I: Navigation: Mission Creek Navigation Noodle:** Navigation noodle at Mission Creek Preserve to satisfy the basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday for practice, skills refresher, altimeter, homework, campfire. Sunday checkout. Send email/sase, contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leadership Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **APRIL 29**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP15): Rappelling:** Third of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This workshop will be held at Stoney Point in Chatsworth and will focus on rappelling using a variety of techniques with heavy emphasis on redundancy, safety, and efficiency. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter ([dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)); Patrick McKusky ([pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)); and, Matthew Hengst ([matthew.hengst@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.hengst@gmail.com)).

♦ **MAY 6-7**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, DPS, WTC, SPS**  
**M/E-R: Advanced Mountaineering Program (AMP15): Anchors and Real World Application:** Fourth of four climbing workshops aimed at developing skills for 3rd, 4th, and 5th class climbing, both as a participant or a future Sierra Club M and E leader. This weekend completes the series of AMP workshops at Joshua Tree National Park and focuses on building anchors and applying previously learned skills in real world climbing situations and multiple participants. All participants must have prior roped climbing experience and commit to all four classes. To register, please see: <http://www.advancedmountainprogram.org>. Leaders: Dan Richter ([dan@danrichter.com](mailto:dan@danrichter.com)); Patrick McKusky ([pamckusky@att.net](mailto:pamckusky@att.net)); and, Matthew Hengst ([matthew.hengst@gmail.com](mailto:matthew.hengst@gmail.com)).

♦ **MAY 20**                      **SAT**                      **LTC, WTC, HPS**  
**I: Navigation: Beginning Clinic:** Spend the day one-on-one with an instructor learning and practicing map and compass skills in our local mountains. Beginners to rusty old-timers are welcome and practice is available at all skill levels. Not a checkout, but it will help you prepare. Many expert leaders will attend; many I-rated leaders started here in the past. 4 miles and 500' of elevation gain. Send sase, phones, rideshare info, \$25 deposit (refunded at trailhead, check made payable to the Sierra Club) to Leader: Diane Dunbar (818-248-0455, [dianedunbar@charter.net](mailto:dianedunbar@charter.net)) Co-Leader: Richard Boardman.

♦ **MAY 21**                      **SUN**                      **DPS**  
**O: Desert Peaks Section Annual Banquet:** Join your fellow DPS members and friends for a wonderful evening at the Castaway Restaurant in Burbank (\*\* please note that this is a new venue \*\*). The Social Hour and No Host Bar starts at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 7:00 p.m. and awards. Please see the banquet flyer on page 8 of this issue of the Sage for more information, or to sign up for the banquet.

♦ **JUNE 3-4**                      **SAT-SUN**                      **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**  
**I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle:** Navigation Noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice; Sunday is for checkoff or additional practice. Send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leadership Reference Book

for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **SEPTEMBER 17**                      **SUN**    **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Mount Pinos Navigation Noodle:** Navigation Noodle in Los Padres National Forest for either checkout or practice to satisfy Basic (I/M) or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice; Sunday is for checkoff or additional practice. Send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leadership Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **NOVEMBER 18**                      **SAT**    **LTC, WTC**

**I: Navigation Workshop on 3rd Class Terrain:** This navigation workshop is limited to individuals participating in the Indian Cove Navigation Noodle and is intended to explore special navigation issues that arise on 3rd class terrain. Class 3 rock travel experience required. Restricted to Sierra Club members. Helmets and medical forms required, and group size is limited. Send email/sase, Sierra Club #, class 3 experience, conditioning, contact info to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Co-Leader: Jack Kieffer.

♦ **NOVEMBER 18-19**                      **SAT-SUN**    **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Indian Cove Navigation Noodle:** Navigation Noodle in Joshua Tree National Park to satisfy Basic (I/M) level navigation requirements. Saturday is for practice, skills, refresher, altimeter, homework and campfire. Sunday is for checkoff. Send email/sase with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare, to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com)). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leadership Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

♦ **DECEMBER 10**                      **SUN**    **LTC, WTC, HPS, DPS, SPS**

**I: Navigation: Warren Point Navigation Noodle:** Navigation Noodle at Joshua Tree National Park for either checkoff or practice to satisfy the basic (I/M) level or Advanced (E) level navigation requirements. To participate, send email with contact info, navigation experience/training, any WTC, leader rating, rideshare to Leader: Robert Myers (310-829-3177, [rmmyers@ix.netcom.com](mailto:rmmyers@ix.netcom.com) ). Assistant: Ann Pedreschi. Note: Early (at least two weeks prior to the event) sign-up for all navigation checkoffs and practices is recommended. These outings require substantial pre-outing preparation work, including completion of both a comprehensive written exam and a route planning assignment that will be mailed to you prior to the checkoff. See Chapter 6 of the Leaders Reference Book for more information. Send contact information (including mailing address) and your qualifications to the leader as soon as possible.

In order to participate in one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms> or call 415-977-5528.

In the interest of facilitating the logistics of some outings, it is customary that participants make carpooling arrangements. The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Carpooling, ride sharing or anything similar is strictly a private arrangement among the participants. Participants assume the risks associated with this travel. CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

# DPS ANNUAL BANQUET

## Sunday May 21

**Where:** Castaway Restaurant  
1250 E. Harvard Rd.  
Burbank, CA

**Time:** 5:30 pm Social Hour  
7:00 pm Dinner  
*Includes complimentary  
wine at each table*



*Swaney on rappel in Sand Witch Canyon. May 23, 2016 Photo: Ian Tuttle*



**Scott Swaney presents:**

## Death Valley Canyoneering Exploration

In Ian Tuttle's Outside Online article Scott Swaney is described as a former oilman and current badass a couple years shy of 70. Scott has more first descents in Death Valley National Park than anyone on earth. He spent the past decade looking for everything from tight canyons to massive drop-offs and is believed to have led or been involved with 203 of the 258 first descents in the park.

Death Valley has provided a select group of canyoneers the opportunity to rack up hundreds of spectacular first descents through the park's dramatic canyons. Of these first descenders, Scott Swaney, has distinguished himself as particularly committed to exploring, logging, and naming all of Death Valley's numerous canyons. At this year's banquet, Scott will share these experiences with us.

### SILENT AUCTION

We continue our silent auction of donated items. Please contact Tracey Thomerson for more info. We wish to thank the following companies for their generous donations:



**CLASSIC WILDERNESS and CLIMBERS CHEAP BOOK SALE**

(Be sure to bring books to donate to the sale)

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ phone or email \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate number of each

Dinner selection: Prime Rib \_\_\_\_\_ Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ Vegan \_\_\_\_\_

Number of reservations:

\$45/\$40 if DPS List finisher until May 1 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 after May 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve by May 1. Mail check, payable to DPS, and completed form to DPS Banquet Chair:

Tracey Thomerson, 6808 Falconview Lane, Oak Park, CA 91377. Tickets will be held at the door.

For Questions email: Tracey Thomerson at [tthomerson@roadrunner.com](mailto:tthomerson@roadrunner.com)



# DPS Membership Report

by Ron Bartell

## Membership Summary

<u>Type</u>	<u>Regular</u>	<u>Sustaining</u>
Member	113	24
Household	29	
Subscriber	24	2
Totals:	166	26

Ron Hudson	1 year
Gary Hughes	1 year
Frederick O. Johnson	1 year
Carl Johnson	1 year
Ron & Leora Jones	2 years
Wasim Khan	1 year
Patty Kline	1 year
Barbara Lilley	1 year
Gordon MacLeod	1 year
Doug Mantle & Marcelo Altamirano	2 years

## Activity Report

### Sustaining Renewals

Henry A. Arnebold	1 year
Jan Brahms & David Reneric	1 year
David Comerzan	1 year
Burton A. Falk	1 year
Jim Fujimoto	5 years
Stacy Goss	3 years
Gail W. Hanna	3 years
John Hooper	3 years
Robert M. Myers	5 years
Jim Prichard	2 years
Maura Raffensperger & David Beymer	1 year

Linda M. McDermott	2 years
Mary McMannes	1 year
Robert Michael	1 year
James Morehouse	1 year
Rayne & Mary Motheral	1 year
Paul & Pat Nelson	1 year
Wayne Norman	1 year
Ken D. Olson	1 year
John Palka	1 year
George Quinn	1 year
Barbara Reber	3 years
John Ripley	1 year
Shelley Rogers	1 year
Gary Schenk	2 years
Chris Schmandt	3 years
Carleton Shay	1 year
Elena Sherman & Scott Sullivan	1 year
Brian Smith	1 year
Joan & Ed Steiner	1 year
Alvin Walter	3 years
Roger Weingaertner	2 years

### Renewals

Ron Bartell & Christine Mitchell	2 years
Doug Bear	1 year
Mark Butski	1 year
Fred & Marianna Camphausen	1 year
Mark Conover	1 year
Gary Craig	1 year
Edna Erspamer	3 years
John Fisanotti	1 year
Terry Flood	1 year
Ron & Ellen Grau	1 year
Edward Herrman	1 year

### Donations

Gail W. Hanna	\$15.00
Robert M. Myers	\$100.00
Jim Prichard	\$24.00

THE DESERT PEAKS SECTION NEEDS MEMBERS TO RUN FOR THE DPS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S CHAIR POSITION.

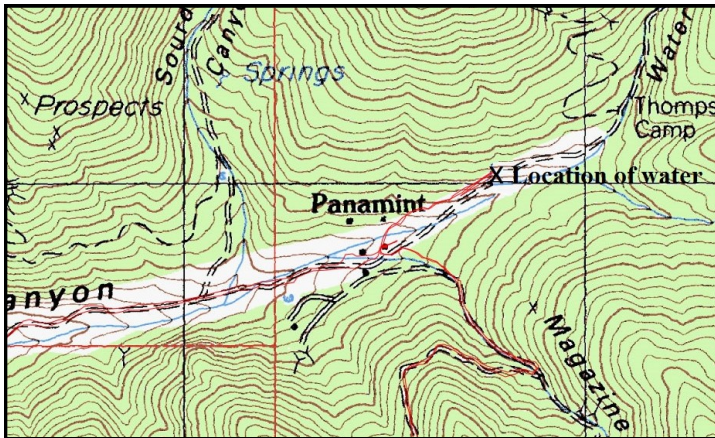
Please contact any Management Committee member if you're interested in serving on the DPS Management Committee.

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update (selected peaks)

By Jim Morehouse

As some of you may know, I finished the DPS list on Big Picacho last June 6. I'm now well on my way to finishing it a second time, and as I've gone along, I've taken more interest in the routes and driving directions in order to update the DPS Road and Peak Guide. I'm nearly finished, only needing to clean up some details and add some additional maps, etc. In the meantime, here are some highlights from some of my recent trips that had notable changes.

**Sentinel Peak** – The pipes that fed the faucets in Panamint City have been vandalized. The tank itself is full of debris and doesn't seem to be holding water at all. The spring that feeds it is running at



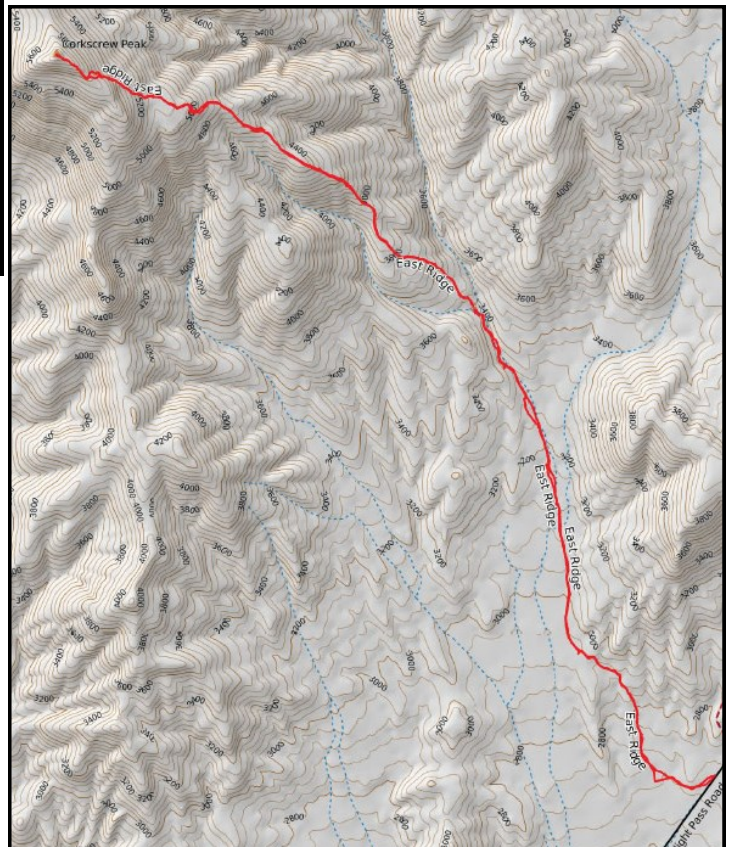
The water source at Panamint City is located between 1,000-1,500' east of the main cabin, as indicated in the above map.

approximately one liter per minute. Although clear, we purified it anyway. The water location is at N36° 07' 11.3" W117° 05' 31.5", which is about 1,000-1,500' east of the main cabin. Take the road leading north from the main cabin about 100 yards, then take another road heading easterly to the above coordinate. The tank will be above you and to your left.

**Corkscrew Peak** – New DPS East Ridge Route: We parked at the "Corkscrew Peak" sign located along Daylight Pass Road (please see the photo in the next column) and hiked a little west before heading into the wash, where we found cairns and a well worn use



The trailhead parking for the new DPS East Ridge Route to Corkscrew Peak is located next to the "Corkscrew Peak" sign along Daylight Pass Road.



The new DPS East Ridge Route to Corkscrew Peak.

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update ... continued. (selected peaks)

trail. Our group followed this across the desert, heading NNE to a narrowing of the wash. Shortly thereafter, we came across a well-marked exit from the wash leading up and out onto the east ridge. From there it was a simple matter of following the ridge all the way to the summit. This appears to be a highly popular route and I plan to add it to the Guide.

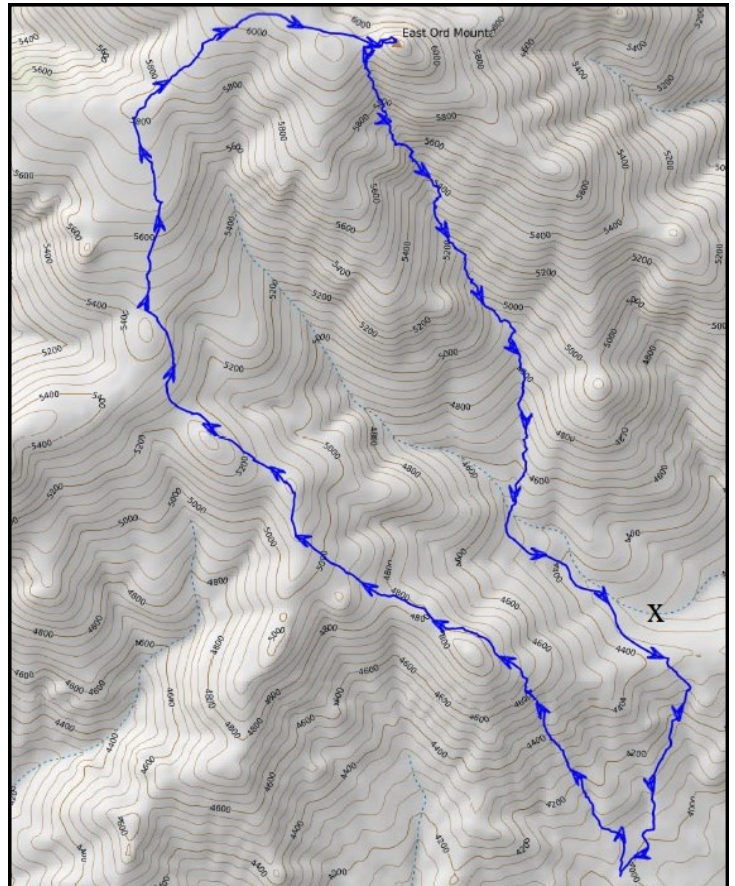
**Tin Mountain** – Parking has changed: The spot I parked at a couple of years ago is gone. I had to park nearly a half mile below the usual starting point and hike up the road to get onto the DPS route. Also, high on the ridge there was a line of cairns heading down into the gorge on my left. I followed them and forced a route through here, but it was a mistake. I don't know why anyone would put a line of cairns going that way. It's better to try to stay right on or near the ridge all the way up to the 8,500' level specified in the guide.

**Old Woman Mountain** – Driving corrections to the DPS Routes A and B trailhead: All mileages to the trailhead seem to be accurate except the last one. I was able to drive approximately 5.5 miles to the locked gate at the wilderness boundary. The DPS Guide says 3.5 miles past the rail way line to the wilderness boundary.

**East Ord Mountain** – Corrections to driving directions and alternate route to the summit: The previous trailhead described in the guide doesn't seem to be accessible. Also, other roads that show up on the topo map are no longer accessible due to the blading of the main road, which left a high berm where the roads used to intersect. Instead, aim for the power lines and the high clearance road leading to the west across a sandy wash that intersects a road that is taken to the Grandview Mine, the beginning of the alternate route to the summit. You can also reach the current East Ord trailhead on this road by turning right at a fork at approximately one mile from the main road and taking it to the road leading into the canyon to the standard trailhead.

Alternate route to East Ord's summit: From the Grandview Mine (room for several vehicles to park

on two, or more, flat spots suitable for camping), gain the ridge immediately to the west and follow it all the way to the summit as it winds its way in a clockwise direction to the summit ridge. Game trails may be



**The new DPS alternate route to the summit of East Ord Mountain is indicated by the arrows on the map that point upward. The arrows that point in a downward direction show the route that I descended using the DPS standard route to the point where I crossed the ridge, as shown in the lower right hand corner of the map, in order to get back to where my truck was parked. The DPS 4 wheel drive trailhead for the standard route begins at the "X" on the map.**

followed on the right hand side of ridge bumps, making contouring around the ridge bumps easier, without side hilling. Round trip is approximately 4.5 miles.

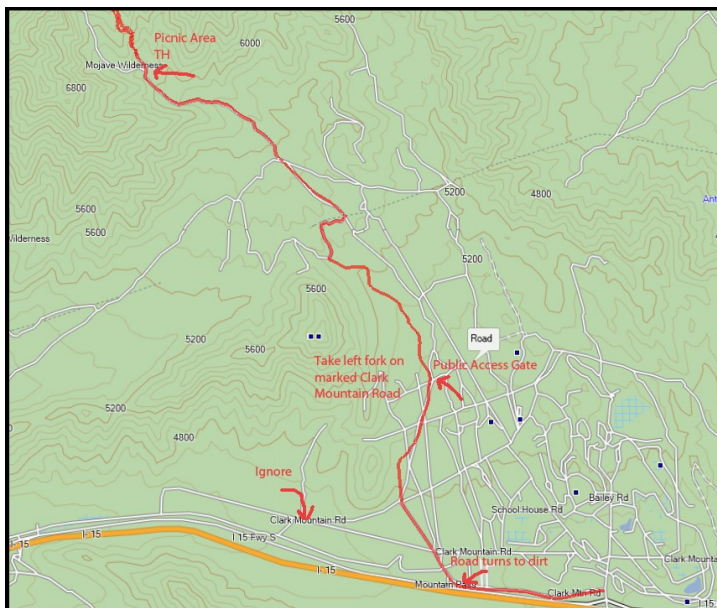
**Clark Mountain** – Corrections to driving directions: Take the DPS Guide route in to the gate, open gate

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update ... continued. (selected peaks)

and reclose it, then take the left fork onto a rough, sometimes all wheel or 4 wheel drive BLM road clearly marked “Clark Mountain Road,” following it



**The current DPS guide for Clark Mountain specifies that the driving route to the trailhead goes to the right, which belongs to the mine. Do not go this way; take the left hand fork.**



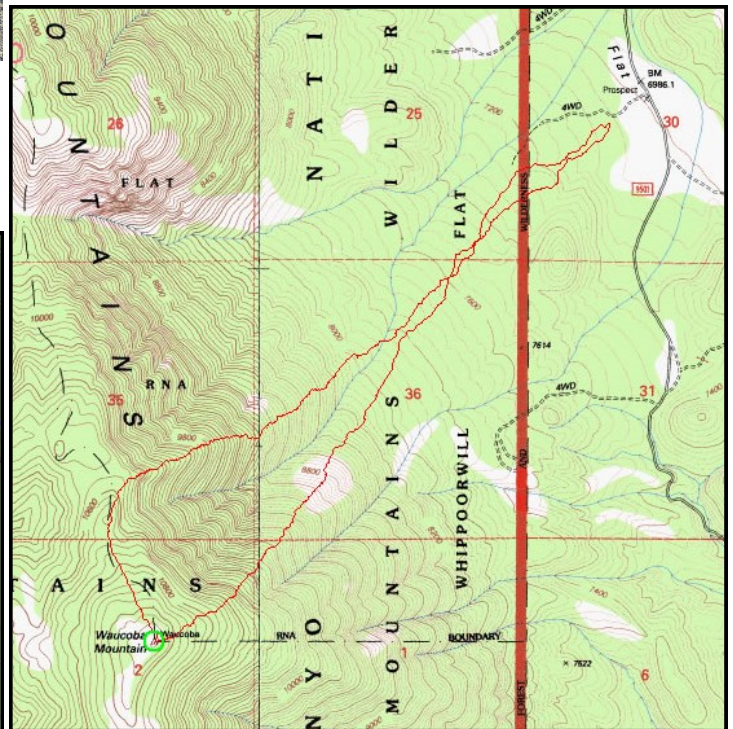
**The above map shows the new driving route to the Clark Mountain trailhead from Interstate 15.**

at all forks. It will intersect the previous road in outside the mining property. Turn left and continue to the DPS standard route trail head. The only other

item worth mention is the existence of a fixed rope at the class 3 section of the climb.

**Arc Dome** – DPS Routes B and C are over grown and nearly gone. DPS route A is still good, and for a loop, one can continue past the fork on the summit ridge and take the pack trail down. This is a good route, especially if one is going to bag Arc Dome’s North Summit and/or Cirque Peak.

**Waucoba Mountain** – Alternate camping and climbing route: There is another road spur to an area that is suitable for camping similar to the one described in the guide, which is located about one mile before the standard DPS trailhead for Waucoba Mountain. I ascended the ridge to the right of the



**Alternate camping and climbing route for Waucoba Mountain – please see text for description.**

gully (instead of the usual left ridge), where I reached a large saddle below the summit, which is an easy walk from there to the high point. I descended the DPS standard route down the ridge, then cut left to intersect my out bound route back to the car. You’ll note on the above topo map that the spur off the main

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update ... continued. (selected peaks)

road is a little further up (near the number 31 in red). This is the usual starting point for Waucoba Mountain.

**Pleasant Point** – DPS Route A is no longer accessible due to a locked gate with “No Trespassing” signs posted at the road specified in the guide. I drove out some ways on the Swansea Road past the private property and found a pull out suitable for my Tacoma, then climbed the peaks from there. If a larger group is going, suitable high clearance vehicles can make it past where I parked to a larger area for parking and camping, which is a little over a mile from the start of the Swansea Grade road and is also near the start of DPS Route B.

**Mount Tipton** – Alternate route which bypasses most of the brush: Hike up the road about 1 mile to a point just east of Hill 4,288. From here head ESE up a wash, staying in the wash as much as you can to avoid the brushy terrain on either side of it. Stay in the right hand channel. The route is lightly ducked to

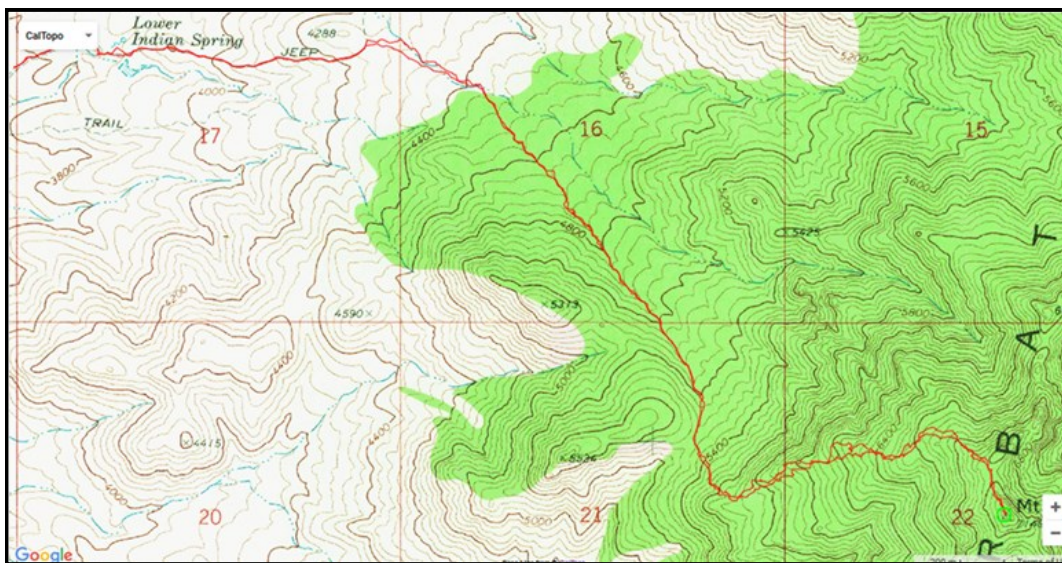
**Avawatz Mountain** – DPS Route B (north side route) may be the only feasible route to the summit. The road to the DPS Route A (east side route) 2 and 4 wheel drive trailheads through the deep drainage trough mentioned in the guide is mostly gone, and the road in the canyon is impassable per a trip report printed in the Sage in the past couple of years.

**Superstition Benchmark** – The drive to the DPS Route A trailhead is paved (no camping of any kind is allowed at the trailhead); also, the road to the DPS Route B trailhead is excellent dirt, and the route has an easy to follow trail to right below the summit. Further, the trailhead for Route B has been moved to the main road, and one now has to hike up the old 4x road to the start of the trail.

**Mount Ajo** – New trail to the summit: The DPS standard route now has a very easy trail from the end of the trail to Bull Pasture mentioned in the guide to the summit, but is somewhat longer than the usual route (I lost the GPS that had the track, but I believe

the hike came in at nine miles round trip), and it avoids the cactus fest.

**Turtle Mountains High Point** – The road into the trailhead has deteriorated significantly since I was last there in January 2013. I scraped bottom a couple of times with a 4 wheel drive Tacoma. While not as bad as the road, say, to Porter, I recommend either an all wheel or 4 wheel drive high clearance vehicle with good all



**Alternate route to Mount Tipton that bypasses most of the brush.**

terrain tires. Also, driving either in or out in the dark is not recommended because the route can be confusing, even in daylight, especially when crossing the wash that’s a couple of miles from the wilderness boundary. Although well cairned, seeing those cairns in the dark may be a problem. (Ask me how I know).

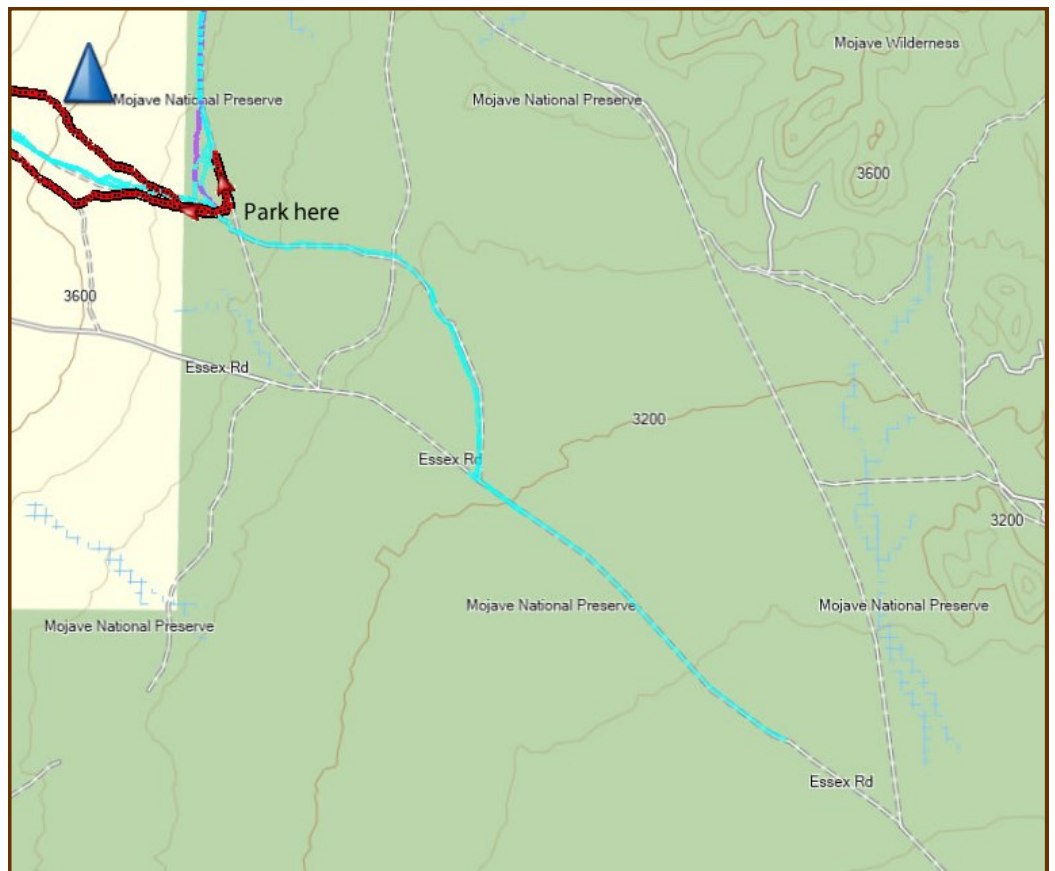
its end. Exit from the wash near the 5,300 foot level at a small saddle and continue SE up the east ridge of Tipton. Turning left (ENE), follow the ridge, staying to the left side of a knob at 6,600 feet elevation and then continuing on the ridge as it curves SE to the summit.

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update ... continued. (selected peaks)

**Whipple Mountains High Point** – The driving directions are still accurate to the DPS Route B and C trailheads; however, the condition of the road has changed. The first 6.8 miles of the drive is along a power line access road, but is heavily wash boarded in places, with ruts and sandy areas. From here, the road to the War Eagle #1 Mine has its challenging moments, and the last 1.8 miles to the mine and trailhead area (room for several vehicles and tents) is worse yet. The Guide indicates that any 2 wheel drive vehicle can make it there, but I don't recommend this anymore. High clearance is necessary, and having 4 wheel drive capability is useful. The road is exceptionally dusty, as well, so those who have camper shells on their trucks may have dusty sleeping quarters as well unless the back is well sealed.

**Mitchell Point and Edgar Peak** – This has to be considered unofficial since the Providence Mountains State Recreation Area is still closed, as far as I know. The DPS Route D trailhead is still accessible, but the DPS Route A trailhead is not, and the DPS Routes B and C trailheads are not easily reached. However, I climbed Edgar Peak on three occasions, twice from DPS Route B, and made an attempt and later a full climb of Mitchell Point from DPS Route C. Be warned that the route into the state recreation area requires jumping a barbed wire fence. From Interstate 40 (or from the north on Black Canyon Drive), head north on Essex Road to a faint dirt road leading north, which is located about a mile before the locked gate that leads into the state rec area (there

are other roads, but I don't recommend them). Follow this sometimes over grown and rutted, rocky road north until it begins to curve west all the way to a flat area, which is suitable for camping, and just prior to a large, impassible road wash out (please see Map 1). From here, hike west, crossing a barbed wire fence along the way, until you come to a faint 4 wheel drive road; follow the road as it bends north and finally west, where it will drop you off into the mouth of Gilroy Canyon, about three miles or so from the parking spot. Edgar Peak can be climbed by continuing up Gilroy Canyon to a saddle above, turning left there and following the ridge to the summit. Mitchell Point can be climbed by taking a west trending ridge to just below the high point on the ridge, where it is possible to drop down and contour around to a prominent saddle below the peak, then up steep slopes to the summit (please see map 2 on the next page).

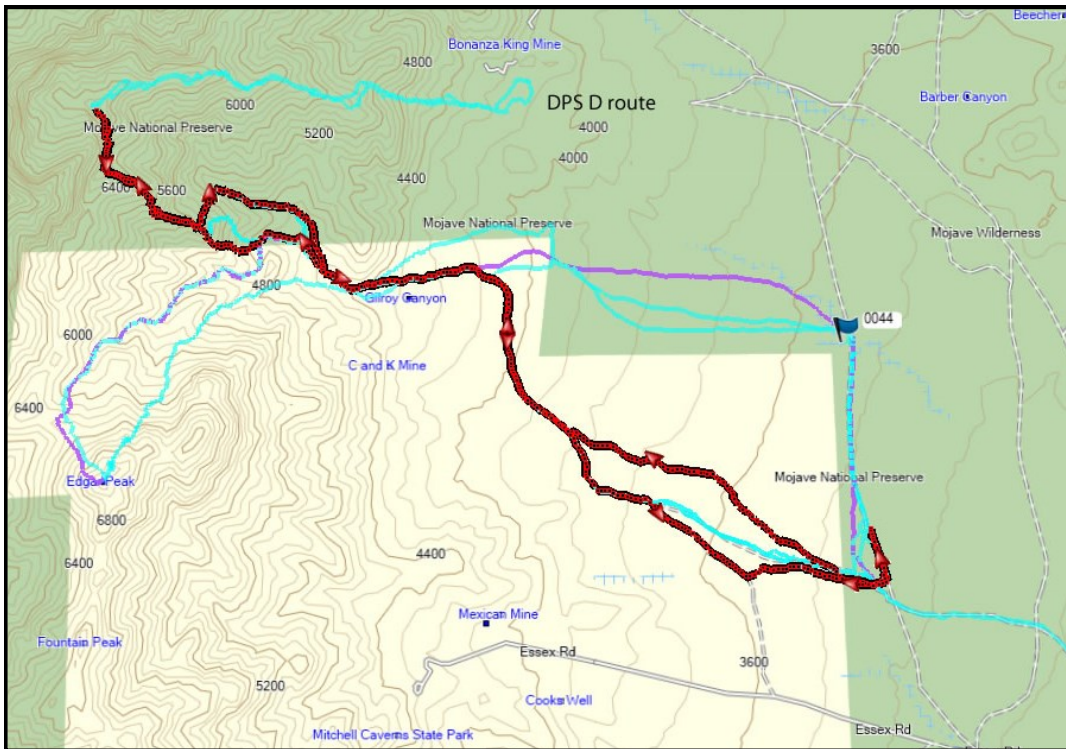


**Map 1: Edgar Peak and Mitchell Point. The light blue line shows the road to the DPS Route B trailhead to Edgar Peak and the DPS Route C trailhead to Mitchell Point from Essex Road.**

# DPS Road and Peak Guide Update ... continued. (selected peaks)

Notes: Mitchell Point from both the C and the D routes and Edgar Peak from the B route have more cactus per square yard than nearly any other DPS peaks. Also, keep in mind that the status of the state rec area and DPS Route A to Edgar Peak may change

*As noted by Bob Burd, the old cabin with metal sidings specified in the guide is no longer there to show where to park for the trailhead to Last Chance Mountain. The trailhead waypoints, per my GPS, are:*



*N 37degrees 16.775', W 117 degrees 39.818'*

*The road past the Last Chance trailhead deteriorates fast, and is not obvious until you are in the wash, I thought a waypoint might help others so they do not go past the trailhead.*

An alternate route to the summit of Last Chance Mountain via an old Sulphur mine, which will find its way into the guide, is well described in a Summitpost article by Dennis Poulin, and is available at the following link:

<http://www.summitpost.org/last-chance-mountain/399542>

**Map 2: Edgar Peak and Mitchell Point. The red line shows our recent ascent route to Mitchell Point (I was parked up the road from the recommended parking spot by mistake, so that's why there's a little hook there). The light blue line at the top of the map is my route from a few years ago following Route D. The purple route shows my route to Edgar Peak before I found the road that cuts across the diagonal (the red route), which saved me both time and distance.**

at any time, but currently the park area around Mitchell Caverns is closed, locked, and guarded (where all the buildings, etc., are). In addition, the rest of the area was sporting cattle from the nearby Blair Brothers' ranch. The cattle get into the state rec area through a cut section of fence; the cut area of the fence is located in the northeast corner of the rec area and was cut some time ago. I guess you have to climb this at your own risk until the park re-opens.

I took this route up there a few years ago, and we camped at a great flat spot near the start (and just inside Death Valley National Park, so Park rules apply if you camp here) suitable for several vehicles. Or, one could camp outside the park boundary if a camp fire is desired. It's a short distance, in any case.

**Last Chance Mountain** – Thanks to Ellen Feeney for this info:



# Conservation Chair

by Dave Perkins



## Restoration of Desert Ecosystems

Abstracted from: Scott R. Abella (Department of Environmental and Occupational Health, University of Nevada Las Vegas) *Nature Education* 4 (1):7 2012. (Do a google search on the above title).

When desert ecosystems have been damaged or destroyed, how do we restore ecological functions, including those directly benefiting humans? Desert restoration is difficult, but possible. The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) defines ecological restoration as "the process of assisting the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed" (SER 2004). Similar to other ecosystems, the general principles of desert restoration include:

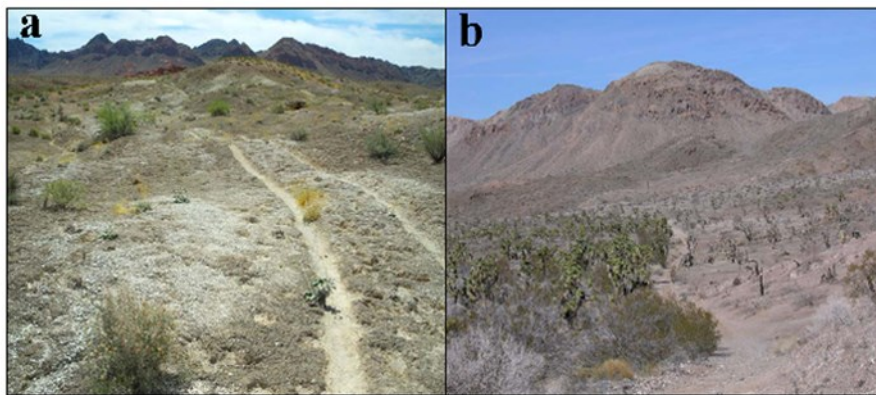
- Prioritizing areas for restoration (using criteria such as the degree of degradation of the ecosystem or the need to maintain water quality or soil productivity for human resource use).
- Determining reference conditions, representing models of what are considered natural, healthy conditions.
- Setting objectives or targets for restoration, often based on reference conditions and the degree to which current conditions differ from reference conditions.
- Understanding of ecological knowledge specific to

the ecosystem undergoing restoration and often drawing from fields such as engineering and design.

- Conducting monitoring and research to evaluate if restoration goals were met and to inform implementation of future projects.

A common misconception about ecological restoration is that it seeks to exactly replicate past conditions. While in rare cases projects may seek to do this, often it is not desirable or even feasible. For example, if a species has gone extinct from an ecosystem and no genetic material remains, that species will not be able to be reestablished. Climates also have changed and are changing, so replicas from different climatic time periods are unlikely to be able to persist in the same locations in a different climate.

A variety of approaches and techniques can be used for estimating reference conditions in deserts. In



**Disturbance from (a) unauthorized off-road vehicle use and (b) fire facilitated by fuel from non-native plants (unburned on left side of photo), are examples of the many disturbance types of deserts. Photos courtesy of (a) L. P. Chiquoine; (b) E. C. Engel in the Mojave Desert, USA. All rights reserved.**

some cases, reference conditions could be areas that are relatively undisturbed and located adjacent to a disturbed area. When suitable contemporary references do not exist, techniques that estimate past conditions can be employed to reconstruct what the pre-disturbance ecosystem may have

been like. Sources of this type include, but are not limited to: historical documents such as journals, old photographs, oral descriptions from long-time residents, land-use records, packrat middens and soil phytoliths (both techniques using plant fossils to reconstruct past vegetation conditions), and climate records.

The essence of restoration is reestablishing the evolutionary trajectories of ecosystems that were disrupted, such as reestablishing the cyclic pattern in deserts of perennial plant species, or facilitating the establishment of others by modifying the environment in small patches of soil. Often restoration can and

(Continued on page 17)



# Conservation Chair...continued

By Dave Perkins

(Continued from page 16)

does result in reestablishing desert ecosystems that are more productive, resilient, and able to supply higher quality resources (e.g., water) and benefits (e.g., air quality, recreation opportunities) to humans.

## Disturbances and Natural Recovery

Many types of human-caused disturbances have occurred in desert ecosystems. Failed agricultural attempts, clearing land, road building, off-road vehicle use, water diversion, grazing by non-native herbivores, and fires fueled by non-native plants are some of the many disturbance types of deserts. Depending on their type and severity, these disturbances reduce the abundance of indigenous species, alter soil properties, diminish ecosystem services for humans, and create hazards to humans such as blowing dust from erosion of devegetated soils.

Natural recovery from disturbance in deserts is typically slow. For example, the average time for the reestablishment of perennial plant cover following a variety of disturbances in North America's Mojave and Sonoran Deserts was 76 years, and even partial recovery of species composition required over two centuries. After severe disturbances, recovery through natural processes following disturbance is not necessarily possible, creating a need for restoration. Once reference conditions are estimated and project goals are established, restorationists design and implement techniques intended to accomplish project objectives. Major desert restoration techniques include: planting and seeding, managing water, manipulating soil properties, and providing cover. Controlling non-native species often also is part of restoration and subsequent maintenance management in the restored ecosystem.

Restoring desert ecosystems is challenged by extreme climates, dry soils, seed predation, herbivory, and generally slow rates of plant colonization and growth. Despite these difficulties, at least partial restoration of desert ecosystems is possible. There are examples where restoration techniques such as outplanting (transplanting from a greenhouse or nursery bed) initiated ecosystem recovery and accomplished project



## Treasurer's Report

by Laura Newman

DPS Account Summary from  
January 1, 2017 to  
January 31, 2017

### INCOME

Banquet Silent Auction	\$0.00
Banquet Ticket Sales	\$0.00
Donations	\$100.00
Membership/Subscriptions	\$650.00
Merchandise	<u>\$15.00</u>

**TOTAL INCOME** **\$765.00**

### EXPENSES

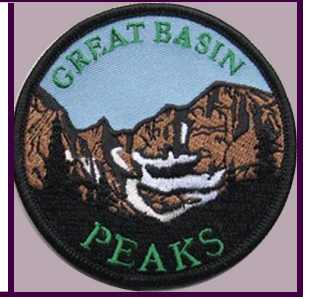
Banquet Expenses	\$0.00
Merchandise Expenses	\$1.15
Sage Mailing	\$484.73
Sage Printing	\$148.79
Sales Tax	\$6.80
Supplies	\$0.00
Web Page Expenses	<u>\$0.00</u>

**TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$641.47**

**PAY PAL BALANCE** **\$9.41**  
**CHECKING ACCOUNT**  
**BALANCE** **\$3,863.26**

objectives. Failed projects have illustrated that there is little room for error when implementing desert restoration techniques, underscoring the importance of using good practices (e.g., planting good-quality stock at appropriate times of the year). Future research in desert restoration may help improve restoration techniques, provide an understanding of under which conditions different techniques work best, and identify situations where restoration is most feasible and has the greatest probability of success.

# Great Basin Peaks Section News



**Utah Peak Adventure**  
**By Sharon Marie Wilcox**  
**October 4– 8, 2016**

On October 4, 2016, we headed to Utah on Larry Dwyer's Sierra Club trip to Black Crook Peak, Lewiston Peak, Flat Top Mountain, and Deseret Peak. First stop was the Sheepcreek Range near Dugway, Utah. We camped off of Erickson Pass in a recent burn area.

The next morning we hiked Black Crook Peak (9274'), the Sheepcreek Range highpoint named after Desert Bighorn Sheep. Though hoping to observe bighorn, our only evidence was scat. We did spot numerous deer and Ron found an old F-16 fighter jet wreckage on the peak's south face. A leisurely rest on the cool, rocky summit provided great 360-degree views.

After Black Crook Peak, we drove through Ophir with its old restored buildings, to camp at the trailhead for Lewiston Peak and Flat Top Mountain. Unfortunately, camping isn't allowed at the trailhead, so we continued up the road to a camping area before the road got too rocky. A freezing night delivered a dusting of snow.

The chilly morning hike up a road in a canyon greeted us with displays of autumn color. Dark, cloudy weather threatened all day. At roads end, we reached the trail and looked down at a large mining operation. Switch backing up trail we watched hunters on ATVs driving up the road. We summited Lewiston Peak (10,411'), where clouds obscured the view. Next, we climbed Flat Top Mountain (10,620'), the Oquirrh Mountain high point, to find our view still hidden by threatening clouds. Consequently, we quickly gobbled lunch and headed down the mountain. So much for the spectacular views we expected.

We opted for a warm hotel instead of camping in 20-degree weather again and spent the night in Toole.

The following afternoon we drove up South Willow Canyon to Loop Campground, the trailhead for Deseret Peak (11,031'), which is the highest point in the Stansbury Mountains.

Bundled up on another frosty morning, we followed the South trail up to the top of Deseret Peak, returning



**On top of Deseret Peak, from left to right, Larry Dwyer, Deborah Stevenson, Ron Moe and Sharon Marie Wilcox**

on the Loop Trail. Steep, icy and snowy sections of the trail required care as we reached higher elevations, but otherwise it was a decent trail. Clear weather on the summit allowed leisure time to photograph excellent views and enjoy lunch.

## SAGE PHOTOS AND REPORTS NEEDED !

The SAGE needs articles and photographs, including cover photos, that pertain to outdoor activities of interest to Desert Peak Sections members and subscribers. Please note that trip reports should include trip dates and identify trip participants and photos should indicate when and where the photo was taken, what it is of, who is in it, and who took it. Please email SAGE submissions to [gregg1955@verizon.net](mailto:gregg1955@verizon.net) no later than the second Sunday of even numbered months.

# DESERT BOOKS

By *Burton Falk*

## DESERT BOOKS RECENT VOLUMES, 2017

### CALIFORNIA SERENDIPITY: IN DESERT AND HIGH SIERRA (2012) , Andreas M. Cohrs

In March, 1958, Colin Fletcher (1922-2007), a thirty-six year old Englishman, began a six-month trek, beginning at the Mexican border stretching the entire length of California, and ending at the Oregon border. He immortalized his feat in 1994 by publishing his 210-page volume, *The Thousand-Mile Summer*.

In March, 2008, to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Fletcher's adventure, Andreas M. Cohrs, a forty-one year old German, set out to undertake the same trek. His 2012 volume, *California Serendipity*, relates the successful outcome of his undertaking.

Smart, energetic, and adventurous, Cohrs, by the 1990s, had become an executive for SONY Music Entertainment, and thus was fluent in English and familiar with California. In the summer of 2006, while reading a copy of *Thousand-Mile Summer* that he'd picked up at a flea market, he developed a sudden urge to replicate Fletcher's trip.

The 'serendipity' of Cohrs' title is apropos considering two events that occurred early on, both of which fortified his impulse to attempt the hike. First, on the last day of 2007, while on an exploratory trip in the Mojave desert to see firsthand the desert conditions he would encounter, he stumbled into a New Year's Eve party in Goffs, California, where he met most of the small community's residents, including desert historian Dennis Casebier, author of *Mojave Road Guide*.

Casebier, who had met Fletcher several years earlier while Fletcher was researching material for his 1981 volume, *The Man From the Cave*, turned out to be a source of additional motivation. He encouraged Cohrs to visit Carmel Valley, where Fletcher had retired and recently passed away, and do some detective work there.

Taking Casebier's advice to heart, Cohrs left Goffs two

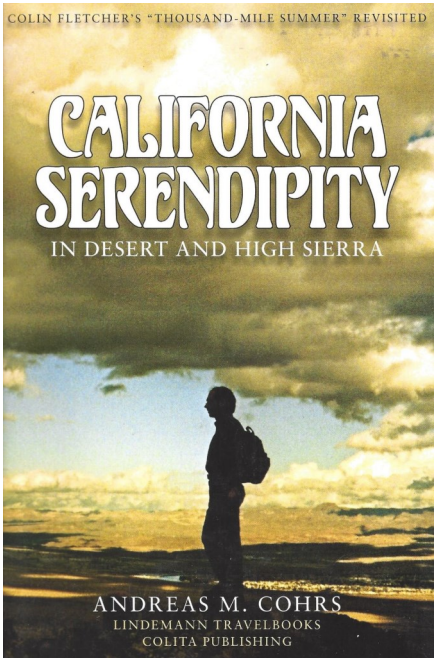
days later, heading for Fletcher's hometown, where, also serendipitously, he met the executor of Fletcher's will. That person, in turn, gave Cohrs permission to visit and use the contents of Fletcher's storage locker. "This was my Open Sesame, more than I ever could wish," Cohrs wrote. "I was now able to really follow his footsteps, guided by his maps and notes and photos taken during the walk. I even found his old boots, however, I did not plan to be that authentic."

Cohrs began his trek on March 15, 2008, in Andrade, California, by first placing one foot across the border in the Mexican town of Algodones. His pack, which contained a two-pound solar device, a two-pound MacBook, and an iPod, weighed seventy pounds, twenty pounds heavier than that of Fletcher's. That would soon change.

On his first day out, Cohrs hiked twenty miles, "paralleling the All American Canal (which) deprived the Colorado River of its lifeblood, making the once powerful river a vanquished almost anemic, mellifluent body...Late in the evening, I passed a large body of water...(then a) stand of cottonwood trees that whispered 'campsite.' There I concluded my first hiking day, too tired to eat, to make a fire, or even to remember. I just lay down and..."

On his 5th day out he passed the ruins of a one-time mining area near **Picacho Peak** (Little Picacho). In one of his many historical descriptions, he notes, "Due to the scarcity of water, regular gold panning was not possible in the mountains. Early prospectors during the 1860s had to shovel rocks and gravel on a blanket and shake it until only the heavier gold particles remained." A blanket? Seriously? Cohrs also comments that "Picacho Peak is a Spanish-English redundancy, literally meaning big peak. American settlers felt obliged to rename the peak since the original Spanish name had been *Tetas de cabra*, meaning goat tits."

Cohrs attempted to stay on Fletcher's original route as much as possible during his first thirty-one days of trekking. It's true that salt cedar thickets and the lack of trails along the mountains west of the Colorado occasionally threw him a bit off, but in general he didn't make a major deviation until he reached the south end of Death Valley. There, concerned



# Desert Books – continued...

about his water supply, rather than following Fletcher's route along the west side of the valley, he paralleled the road almost all the way from Saratoga Springs to Furnace Creek.

On April 19, while taking a break in the shade of a creosote bush a few miles south of Furnace Creek, "a good-looking, nice lady," with a French accent, stopped and offered Cohrs a bottle of cold water. After explaining his situation, the woman, Cécile, then offered to share her room at Furnace Creek Ranch, a proposition he couldn't turn down. Indeed, before she dropped him off at Old Stovepipe Wells, the couple enjoyed two days together visiting the local sights. Talk about serendipity!

After that interlude, Cohrs was off again, this time following Fletcher's route "through the untrodden wilderness of Lemoigne and Cottonwood Canyons," and continuing, via Saline Valley, Wacoba Springs, Marble Canyon, Soldier Pass, and Deep Springs Ranch and College, until, on May 5, he reached an icy campsite in the Bristlecone Pine Forest, below **White Mountain**.

That night, "the wind was howling in gusts, dark clouds hovered above, within my grasp if they had not moved so fast...Eventually, I abandoned the attempt to have dinner and...(crawled) into my sleeping bag (wearing) merino thermal underwear and jeans, a shirt, a fleece, and on top of all that a down-anorak. Guess what, I was still freezing. And this was not just the uncomfortable freezing of a cold desert night. This night, I was on the verge of despair."

The next day, May 6, he summited on White by kicking "stairs in the ice, balancing a totally jaded body. Step by step, breath by breath, second by second. It took an eternity to do the last one hundred feet. In a state between faint and victory, I fell down on the highest point of my Thousand-Mile Summer."

After spending a frigid night just below the summit, Cohrs descended into the Owens Valley via Silver Canyon, where in Big Pine he was--again, serendipitously--invited to spend two nights as the guest of a couple who owned a local art gallery. Not knowing Fletcher's exact route north to the ghost town of Bodie, Cohrs then decided to cross the still snow-bound Sierra Nevada, via Piute Pass and Hutchinson Meadow, heading for the Pacific Crest Trail. Once on the PCT, it took him six days, alternately postholing his way through snow up to three feet deep and skittering down icy slopes, to reach his next resupply stop at Mammoth Lakes.

Cohrs rested in Mammoth a full week, and then on May 25, set off again, via Minaret Summit, Glass Creek, Mono Craters and Mono Lake, until, five days later he reached the ghost town of Bodie. And because Bodie is pretty much the end of the DPS area of concern, we'll end this review at this point,

assuring the reader that on July 20, 2008, , fifty-six days later, Andreas Cohrs stepped across the California-Oregon border in the exact spot that Colin Fletcher had done so fifty years earlier.

My main complaint with *California Serendipity* is its length. While Fletcher was able to write his classic *The Thousand-Mile Summer* in a tidy 232 pages, it took Cohrs almost twice as long (426 pages) printed in a much smaller font to complete his opus. Although the author's energy and determination are applaudable, his lengthy personal reflections and historic interludes soon became a drag for this reviewer.

## **A CHEMEHUEVI SONG: THE RESILIENCE OF A SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRIBE (2015), Clifford E. Trafzer**

The first time the word Chemehuevi appeared on my radar was over twenty years ago just prior to my climb of the namesake **Chemehuevi Peak**. Pretty much all I knew about the original people of the area was what I read in the DPS's *Road and Peak Guide*, i.e., "The Chemehuevi are native Indians of the Eastern Mojave region. They were traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers who subsisted on deer, bighorn sheep, snakes, birds, rodents, lizards and a variety of desert plants including mesquite, agave and various cactus species."

What I learned while immersed in *A Chemehuevi Song*, by Clifford E. Trafzer, Distinguished Professor of History and Chair of American Indian Affairs at the University of California, Riverside, is that the history of the Chemehuevi, and, for that matter, the story of most of the indigenous people of the desert is complex and for the most part dark.

Trafzer begins his volume with the explanation of Salt Songs, which he describes as "ancient songs that the Creator had taught the people at the beginning of time and the people have passed down through the oral tradition throughout known time to the present." Sung at funerals, the songs explain the creation of the Southern Piute people, including the Chemehuevi, beginning with two sisters who received 'power' while in a cave on the Bill Williams River in Arizona. Both sisters then traveled throughout northern Arizona, southern Utah, and Nevada, until reaching the creation site of the Southern Piute people in the Spring Mountains, where the mountainous stone figure of (one of the women) lies facing heaven and the Milky Way." Undoubtedly, the unnamed peak is **Mummy Mountain**. The high point of the Spring Mountains, however, is the DPS Emblem Peak, 11,918' **Charleston Peak**.

The songs explain that although the people once lived near the Spring Mountains, they gradually moved down from the tree-covered slopes of their sacred mountain, until they met the Mojave people along the Colorado River. Sharing

## Desert Books - continued...

amicable relations with the Mojave for many years, the Chemehuevi cultivated corn, squash, beans, and melons along the river, sometimes intermarrying and sharing songs and ideas with the neighboring tribe.

The arrival of the white man, however, upset the balance of power between the Chemehuevi and the Mojave, "creating a hostile situation in which the two old friends became enemies." Indeed, during the 1860s, the increase in tension between the Chemehuevi and their Mojave neighbors resulted in several deadly skirmishes, most of which were recorded years later in oral histories and were thus subject to the memories and veracity of the tellers.

The conflicts destabilized the two peoples and caused a group of the Chemehuevi to move to the Oasis of Mara, later known as Twenty-Nine Palms, "where they settled in to peacefully share the mid-desert oasis with a group of Serrano Indians."

Those Chemehuevi who remained living along the Colorado River continued to struggle with the Mojave people, white bureaucrats, and soldiers, while those who moved to the Oasis of Mara--a group estimated to number forty-five to fifty--were determined "not to live on a reservation or become government Indians. They did not want to become Christians or follow the dictates of Indian agents."

Continuing their traditional ways of hunting, gathering and growing crops, the Twenty-Nine Palms contingent also began working as cowboys, miners, house cleaners, etc., keeping their families and cultures together.

Most of the band stayed at the oasis until 1909 at which time the Willie Boy incident occurred. Indeed, on September 26, 1909, Willie Boy, a hot-tempered 26-year old Indian, shot and killed William Mike--the band's civil and spiritual leader--during an argument regarding Willie Boy's interest in Mike's daughter, Carlota. After the murder, a long, nationally-sensationalized manhunt for the fugitive ensued. And because Willie Boy--who had grown up in the Chemehuevi Valley along the Lower Colorado River--had later lived at the Oasis of Mara with his grandmother and among other relatives, suspicion was cast on the Twenty-Nine Palms Chemehuevi.

The Office of Indian Affairs decided to relocate the Twenty-Nine Palms Band to an area where their activities could be more closely monitored, and in 1910 moved most of its members to the Morongo Indian Reservation in Banning Pass,

then later to the Cabazon Reservation near Indio. Trafzer notes, "The change from life in the desert to life in an ever-growing and changing agricultural valley controlled by non-natives proved a challenge for Chemehuevi people and families."

Because the Willie Boy event brought so much sorrow to the Twenty-Nine Palms Band, Trafzer allocates an entire chapter, "Willie, William, and Carlota," to describe the event. Agreeing that the circumstances regarding the event "cannot be unraveled with great certainty," Trafzer proposes a far different outcome for the story than that generally accepted.

Most accounts of the manhunt end with Willie Boy pinned down in a rock fortress near Ruby Mountain, 12 air miles north of current day Yucca Valley, California, wounded and/or disconsolate over the fact that his girlfriend Carlota had been killed, committing suicide by using his toe to trigger his rifle. The pursuing posse, which left the shoot-out scene to transport a wounded member into Banning for medical aid, returned eight days later,

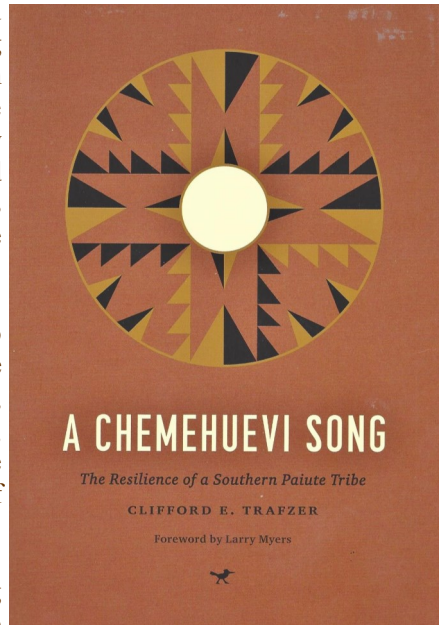
where, they claimed, they discovered Willie Boy's body swollen and rotting, and thus decided that "cremation was a better option than strapping his body onto a horse or using a lengthy lariat to bring in their prey." In other words, Willie Boy's death was never officially confirmed.

Trafzer contends that many Chemehuevi believed that Willie Boy was able to escape and to live several years longer. They argued that, because the posse was outmaneuvered by the young Indian, the embarrassed members made up the cremation story to quiet critics and satisfy a public hungry for the death of an upstart Indian. That Willie Boy escaped the white man is, even today, a commonly held belief among the Indians of the Great Basin

In 1976, finally, the Twenty-Nine Palms Band accepted a government-brokered proposal to take over a portion of the Cabazon Reservation and create their own formal reservation and tribal government. And in 1995, the band opened the Spotlight 29 Casino on their reservation, adjacent to the intersection of I-10 and Highway 86, in the city of Coachella.

*A Chemehuevi Song*, seems to be well-researched and properly sympathetic to the small band. To this reviewer, however, Trafzer's presentation was repetitive and a task to read. Writing history is not an easy job, but the finished product should be more approachable.

Comments? [Burtfalk@aol.com](mailto:Burtfalk@aol.com)

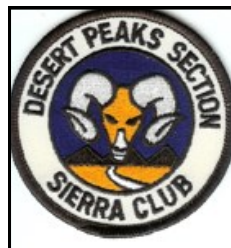
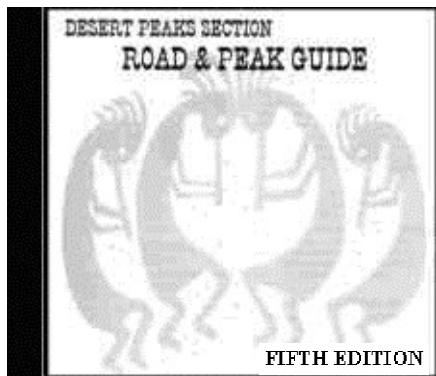


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