

WINTER 2024

DESERT SURVIVORS TRIPS & EVENTS

All trips and events and itineraries are subject to change.
More trips may be added to this schedule and announce via email.
Also, please refer to the Desert Survivors website for updates.

Ratings: (E) EASY (M) MODERATE (S) STRENUOUS

January 19 -21, 2024 (Fri – Sun)

NIGHTMARE GULCH – LAST CHANCE CANYON CAR CAMP (M)

Red Rock Canyon State Park, CA

This January we are headed back to one of our favorite places for winter desert camping, Red Rock Canyon State Park. Located in the west Mojave, the park features scenic desert cliffs, buttes and spectacular rock formations. Each tributary canyon is unique, with dramatic shapes and vivid colors.

On Friday we will car pool in high-clearance vehicles to Last Chance Canyon where we will venture through the Burro Schmidt Tunnel (a strange passageway burrowed through 2,087 feet of solid rock), check out the remnants of the Bickel Camp gold mine, and hike across beautiful desert terrain. On Saturday we will set up camp at the Ricardo Campground, then trek into the El Paso Mountains, up an arroyo called “Nightmare Gulch”. Sunday morning, we will break camp and travel to the “living ghost town” of Randsburg, CA—where gold was discovered 1896, and 70 people still inhabit.

This promises to be a fascinating weekend in some of the most curious and exquisite places in the Mojave. Limit: 16. **Contact leader: Nick Blake** nblake5@sbcglobal.net

Saturday Evening, February 3, 2024

GROUNDHOG DAY PARTY (E) Berkeley, CA

A long-time Desert Survivors tradition returns this year as we celebrate Punxsutawney Phil seeing or not seeing his shadow—foretelling a long winter if he sees it, or an early Spring if an overcast sky makes it indistinct. Either way Desert Survivors will celebrate the event with a party.

Bring a potluck dish and drinks to share. All Desert Survivors members, their friends and family are welcome. Connect with old and new members and share our love of the desert. Details for the event will be forthcoming via email.

February 10 -11, 2024 (Sat – Sun)

SIERRA CLUB DESERT COMMITTEE MEETING (E) – Shoshone, CA

The Sierra Club Wilderness Committee and Desert Committee hold their annual joint meeting in the Mojave Desert town of Shoshone, CA— just south of Death Valley. See presentations on a wide variety of desert conservation issues. You will go away much better informed and more prepared for the fight to protect our wild lands. The meeting is open to everyone. Contact **Nick Blake** nblake5@sbcglobal.net

On Friday (Feb 9) from 12-4pm there will be a work/service project at nearby China Ranch doing trail work and removing brush. Gloves and tools will be provided. If you wish to join this work, RSVP to: jora@conservationslands.org | 360-259-4275

February 21 – 25, 2024 (Wed-Sun)

EXPLORE ANZA-BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK CAR CAMP (M) Borrego Springs, CA

We will venture into the northern part of Anza-Borrego Park, along highway S-22 and beyond. The first two nights we camp at a primitive site in Sheep Canyon and hike to the springs and Lower Willows in Coyote Canyon. We will then move to another primitive camp for two nights and hike to the oasis in Borrego Palm Canyon and to Maidenhair Falls. We'll also spend a day hiking through some slots near Calcite Mine, check out Truckhaven Rocks, visit the Pumpkin Patch, and enjoy sunset at Fonts Point.

Itinerary is dependent on road and weather conditions. Primitive camping. 4WD, high clearance required. Be prepared for strong, gusty winds; it can be challenging if sleeping in a tent. There will be park entrance and campsite fees. Limit 10 participants and 6 vehicles. Contact trip leader Marisa Seaman at seaman@desert-survivors.org

Friday February 23, 2024, 7:00PM

A HISTORY OF DIRT BIKES ON PUBLIC LANDS

An Online Presentation by Julia Sizek, Ph.D

Julia Sizek is a writer and anthropologist who studies the California desert. She currently a postdoctoral scholar at U.C.Berkeley's Social Science Matrix, where she writing a book on the today's consequences, of railroad checkerboard land grants in the eastern Mojave.

She's also at work on a history of dirt bikes, and in this Zoom presentation, she will share her research on the motorcycles that can cross desert terrain at amazing speeds and prowess, but often leave scars that can last for decades, if not centuries.

Details on this event will be forthcoming by an email announcement.

**In celebration of the 30th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act,
in which Joshua Tree National Monument was designated a National Park:**

February 27 - March 1, 2024 (Tue-Fri)

CALIFORNIA RIDING AND HIKING TRAIL BACKPACK (S) - Joshua Tree N.P.

We'll spend four days backpacking through Joshua Tree National Park on this 37-mile mini-through hike—travelling amongst spectacular Mojave scenery, and surrounding ourselves in the park's unique rock formations. One day we will do a side hike up Quail Mountain. There will be short days and chilly nights. Although there are no natural water sources on the route, we will have several water caches set up which will reduce our pack weight. Shuttle required. Limit 6. **Contact trip-leader: Stacy Goss 510-206-3760**

March 9-11, 2024 (Sat-Mon)

CONGLOMERATE MESA BACKPACK (S) Inyo County

We will be joined by Jaime Lopez Wolters of Friends of the Inyo as we survey the site of a gold mining exploration at the southern end of the Inyo Mountains. We will backpack to set up a camp in a flat high on the mesa, then hike south along the site of a proposed road and exploratory drilling pads. Surrounded on three sides by wilderness areas and a national park, the yet unprotected area could become an enormous open pit mine - or could be saved for its biodiversity, cultural resources, and wilderness characteristics. We may be able to help by documenting some of the now protected Joshua trees that a mine would destroy. Expect fantastic views from the top, and some early spring growth. By carpooling to the end of the road in high clearance 4WD vehicles, we will reduce the distance and elevation gain, but we will have to carry all water to our camp.

Limit: 12. **Contact leader: Dave Oline olined@sou.edu (458) 658-7307**

March 13-16, 2024 (Wed-Sat)

BEYOND THE RACETRACK CAR CAMP (M/S) Death Valley N.P.

While we will visit the famous site of playa with the mysterious moving rocks, we'll spend most of our time exploring the valleys and playas beyond. We will hike to a spectacular view on the ridge between the Racetrack and Hidden Valley, explore the lonely world of Sand Flat with its stunning geological backdrop, scattered Joshua trees, and an interesting petroglyph site, and visit some historic mining sites. A longer hike will lead us down the bizarre narrows and U-turns of Corridor Canyon below the Ubehebe mine. This is a little visited area, as few travel along the Hunter Mountain Road, and even fewer venture off it to explore these fascinating features.

National Park regulations limit us to 4 vehicles and 12 people.

Contact leader: Dave Oline olined@sou.edu (458) 658-7307

March 22-24, 2024 (Fri – Sun)

OUR OWN PERSONAL PLAYA PARTY BACKPACK (S) – Death Valley N.P.

While hiking the Inyo Mountains last Fall, Eric Rorer gazed down into Saline Valley and saw a small dry lake bed tucked into the base of the Saline Range. According to Google Maps, it is about five miles east of Saline Valley Road at G.P.S. coordinates: 36.880, -117.846.

We will backpack from the road to the playa, and set up a basecamp. From there we will explore the surrounding terrain, and figure out who we are. On Sunday we will hike back to the cars. The trip is strenuous because we will carry all water, but can leave a small cache half-way between the playa and the cars for our return trip. Limit 8. **Contact trip co-leader Eric Rorer - eric@ericrorer.com** Other co-lead – Stacy Goss