

*Mt. San Jacinto Natural History Association
A Non-Profit Corporation
Serving Mount San Jacinto State Park and
Wilderness since 1979*



What's Inside

President's
Message
page 2

Treasurer's
Report
page 3

Wilderness
Rescue
page 3

Hidden Divide
Nature
Preserve
page 4

Junior Ranger
Days page 5

Important
Dates page 6

Annual
General
Meeting and
Awards page 7

MSJNHA Is Now On-Line!

By Russ Andersen

You can now find information about the NHA on the World Wide Web. In August the NHA Board of Directors decided to fund a website and authorized Volunteer Russ Andersen to create one. So, last month the organization launched its very own website. We hope you will find the website interesting and informative.

The website contains the following:

- Information of interest to people visiting the park including hiking and camping information.
- Volunteer opportunities in the state park.
- Descriptions and pictures of plants, animals and the geology of the park.
- Information about the NHA including events and a membership application.
- Links to other related

organizations.

The website contains much of the information included in the handbook given to state park volunteers. However, the information on the web is supplemented by color photographs and will be updated as needed.

Of particular interest to volunteers is the calendar for the visitor center. The online calendar is only for general information. The "official" calendar is still maintained in the visitor center and you should continue to call the visitor center to sign-up for a shift. At some time in the future, you may be able to sign-up for shifts online--but we do not have the necessary software at this time.

Although the website currently contains over 100

pages of information, we intend to continually expand it. Also, the site will be frequently updated to include information about upcoming NHA events. So, direct your web browser to: www.msinha.org to view the new website. You can also find the site by using one of the popular search engines such as Google. We hope the website will be an effective means of communicating with NHA members and a way for you to increase your knowledge about our state park.

**Holiday Party
Wednesday
December 10**
See details
page 6



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On October 4th we had our annual NHA General Meeting, Picnic and Awards Day. The weather was a bit cool and windy, but a beautiful Fall day on Mt. San Jacinto. Our favorite chef, Ranger Jerry, manned the grills turning out delicious hamburgers and hot dogs which supplemented the wonderful side dishes and desserts supplied by members. The Tram Restaurant provided ample coffee for the group. About thirty people attended the event including the rangers, which were well represented. The General Meeting featured each board member describing his or her function on the board. An important item of the meeting was the approval of changes in our bi-laws. The most significant change was increasing the number of board members to provide more flexibility in carrying

out our duties. In this regard, any individual interested in becoming a board member should contact us for consideration.

The NHA and VIPs (Volunteers in Park) work hand-in-hand to achieve common goals for the State Park. Many of you are confused about how the VIPs fit into the scheme of things. Simply stated, the VIPs work for the Park Rangers and are overseen by the Park Interpreter. They may or may not be NHA members, but we encourage them to join. Our Visitor Center is staffed only by VIPs and they provide helpful information and sell a variety of items all of which have to do with our unique Park. VIPs play an extremely important role; often they are the only Park representative a visitor will meet while in the Park. We have

worldwide visitors at the top of the Tram and every day our VIPs help to make their visit more informed and enjoyable. Funds received from Visitor Center sales are used by the NHA to assist Park Rangers in purchasing equipment and developing programs to better educate the public. NHA membership dues and VC sales are the only two sources of funding we have, so please maintain your membership and encourage your friends to join. We also encourage any of you not now a VIP to become one, we really need help manning our VC, too often we do not have enough VIPs available to even keep it open.

Hope to see you at the top of the Tram.



“Often [VIPs] are the only Park representative a visitor will meet while in the Park.”



Top Sales Performers

Jul 26 th	\$517	Iona Scapple and Marsha Hansen Toni Laura and Jenny Rechel
Aug 3rd	\$667	Iona Scapple & Marsha Hansen Shawne Johnson
Sep 1st	\$360	Lucy Brown and Renee Bohm Kris Leasher

Congratulations for a job well done!



Wilderness Rescue by Garrat Aitchison, Sector

I wanted to share a rescue that was conducted by our amazing park aide staff at Mt. San Jacinto State Park. Although these rescues/medical aides are a common occurrence for the State Park staff and volunteers atop the Tram and throughout the state wilderness, it often goes without much attention.

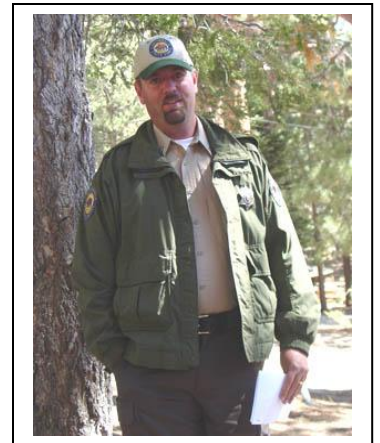
While enjoying a leisurely afternoon walk along the Desert View trail, recently a solo hiker decided to wander below the rim of the trail. The steep terrain and slippery slope was too much for her to overcome. Now she was several

hundred feet below the trail, exhausted, and unable to find a safe route back up. She began yelling for help. Several hours had passed before a visitor was able to hear her cries for help.

Receiving the call were state park aides Justin Sowell, Kris Leasher, and Chris Woolling. After a brief search, they located the desperate hiker. They determined that the hiker was not injured, but too exhausted to climb out of the ravine. Sowell and Woolling remained with the hiker, while Leasher returned to the mountain station to radio for additional help.

It was now dark and knowing that a county search and rescue response could take several more hours, the threesome decided to use their skills and equipment to perform the rescue. The rescue was a success and although perhaps suffering a bruised ego, the hiker was able to return home, grateful for the professional response. The woman called me the next day to express her sincerest thanks for our amazing staff. When she asked if she could write a letter, I explained that I would be disappointed if she didn't.

Thank you to all of the wilderness staff for your exceptional efforts!



Garrat Aitchinson, Sector Superintendent at NHA Annual General Meeting

Treasurer's Report by John Beringer

HOW WE STACK UP IN TOTAL

Our sales still remain slow this year, running behind both 2006 and 2007 to date. See the financial statements in the Visitor Center for more details on our financial status.

All three of our certificates of deposit matured in September. Considering the current financial situation, I elected to transfer the proceeds from all three into our interest maximizer account at Bank of America. When the dust settles and it's clear who is financially solvent, I'll reinvest those funds in CD's yielding a higher rate.

HOW WE'RE MEETING OUR MISSION OF PROMOTING EDUCATIONAL AND INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITIES IN MT. SAN JACINTO STATE PARK

To date we have provided over \$5,100 in funding for the state park, including the seasonal interpreter in Idyllwild, a copy/fax/printer machine, a paper shredder and various other items for Long Valley.



Hidden Divide Natural Preserve Monitoring Program

By Russ Anderson

“State Park Volunteers have been asked to assist by conducting surveys in the preserve.”

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has established 255 acres within Mt. San Jacinto State Park as the “Hidden Divide Natural Preserve” (see Mt. San Jacinto State Park General Plan 2002, page 62). Natural preserves are managed for a number of purposes; one such purpose is the preservation of rare and endangered plants and animals and their supporting ecosystems. The Natural Preserve is the most restrictive designation the State Park system offers for the protection of natural resources.

Interpretive signs have been posted to notify visitors of the boundaries of the natural preserve. In addition, the NHA has

included the preserve on new trail maps which will be sold in the visitor center. Hiking in a Natural Preserve is permitted only on designated trails in order to minimize human impact on the preserve’s unique biodiversity. State park employees and volunteers should not enter or patrol the preserve until they have been trained in how to enter without significant impact on the sensitive species that live there.

The DPR will be monitoring the preserve to determine the impact of visitor activity on the plant life. State park volunteers have been asked to assist by conducting surveys in the preserve. On June 21st the first group of 8 volunteers met with Ken

Kietzer of DPR and hiked to the preserve. After lunching at the Desert View Overlook, Ken distributed sample monitoring data sheets with instructions. He then demonstrated what to look for and taught the group how to complete the data sheets.

The survey is designed to assist state park managers to attain a level of understanding of the ecology of the preserve so park visitors can eventually be allowed access to the area without threatening the existence of rare plants or the ecosystem.

Any volunteer who is interested in assisting with the survey should contact Rob Howard for more information about the next orientation hike.



“Natural preserves are managed . . . (for) the preservation of rare and endangered plants. . .”



Junior Ranger and Family Day Program

by Kathleen Herring

The Junior Ranger/Family Day activities reached an average of 100 people, both children and adults, on each of the four Saturdays that they were conducted. For three hours on each of these Saturdays, the State Park visitors had an opportunity to learn more about a specific area of nature. They did this through demonstrations, exhibits, quizzes, word-searches and various craft activities.

The first Junior Ranger/Family Day was conducted over Labor Day weekend. What was planned for an outdoor activity in Long Valley had to quickly be changed to indoors when the weather turned snowy and cold. Fortunately the Tram made the Crocker Room available. That was more pleasant for visitors and volunteers alike as they worked on activities that explored the mammals found in the San Jacinto Mountains.

On the Fourth of

July weekend, the second Junior Ranger/Family Day was held. This time the weather was cooperative and it was a lovely day for learning about trees and plants of the Long Valley area. Many of the adults and children passed the "tree quiz" and were able to identify the four conifers that grow in Long Valley.

The third topic for Junior Ranger Day/Family Day was insects and other creepy crawlies and was held on the first Saturday in August. The difference between spiders and insects was explained, the life cycle of the butterfly was demonstrated, moths and butterflies were compared and everyone got to take home their own insect antennae headband.

Labor Day week-end was our last Junior Ranger/Family Day of the 2008 summer season. Once again the Tram allowed the use of the Crocker Room since the weather was cold and threatening rain. While it would have been nice to conduct our bird activities in

Long Valley, the inclement weather made the Mountain Station a more comfortable venue. The volunteers helped our young birders to imagine that the photos of the birds they saw through their binoculars were actual birds in the wilderness.

All these days were very successful as reflected in the comments that were given by the visitors. It is a great way to instill not only information but an enjoyment of nature in children and adults alike. This success was due in a large part to the volunteers who came out each time to work with the State Park visitors.

In 2009, Rob Howard, State Park Interpreter, would like to see the Junior Ranger/Family Day activities be expanded on a smaller scale to every weekend. To do this, that small group of volunteers needs to be extended and expanded. Each weekend one or two activities based on a given topic would be set up around the tram building to be manned by one or two volunteers. The activities would be prepared for the volunteers and training will be done in the early part of 2009 so that those volunteers who would like to earn volunteer hours in this delightful way would truly feel prepared. Watch for more information in Calendar Notes or PEAKS or contact Rob to express your interest. We are looking for more volunteers to join the ranks of our dedicated Junior Ranger/Family Day volunteers.



"Junior Ranger Days are a great way to instill . . . an enjoyment of nature in children and adults alike."



Construction and History of the Tram

Saturday, November 15 – 10am

Tim Jones, Lead Supervisor at the Tram, will present a training on the construction and history of the Tram. This will include information on recent improvements which were done during the September shutdown. There will be a PowerPoint presentation and a behind-the-scenes tour. This is a great opportunity to get current and interesting information to share with park visitors. Please RSVP by e-mailing Rob Howard, Park Interpreter, at rhoward at parks.ca.gov or signing up in the VC.

“Join a behind-the-scenes tour of the Tram.”

NHA Board Meetings

NHA Board meetings are usually held on the first Sunday of the month at 2pm in the Valley Tram Station. For more information contact a Board

SAVE THE DATE – Wednesday, December 10

Nha holiday Dinner

Dinner will be Wed., Dec. 10 at the top of the tram. NHA may bring one guest who will be allowed a free ride on the tram.

Guest Speaker: Kurt Leuschner
Birds of the San Jacinto Mountains
Watch for your invitation in the mail!



BOARD ELECTIONS

Ballot for Board Elections for 2009 – 2011 are enclosed in your copy of PEAKS. Each adult member of NHA is entitled to vote. Members with a Family

Membership are entitled to up to two votes (one for each adult member of the family). Please send your marked ballot to the MSJNHA postal box or return it at the Holiday Party.

Cast your vote for Board Members for the 2009-2011 term TODAY.

By-Law Changes

At the Annual General Meeting on October 4, the NHA members present approved the proposed bi-law changes. These changes are included in this edition of PEAKS.



2008 NHA Board Members

Iona Scapple
President 2007-2009

Kurt Leuschner
Vice President 2006-2008

Regina Landry
Secretary 2006-2008

Dennis Schirmer
Director 2006-2008

Jim Absher
Director 2007-2009

Marsha Hansen
Membership 2007-2009

John Beringer
Treasurer 2007-2009

Mt. San Jacinto State Park
Liaison --

VISITOR CENTER
(760) 323-3107

Annual General Meeting and Picnic



Rob Howard, Park Interpreter, presented four special awards to volunteers at the end of the Annual General Meeting. Mary Wilson (*to the right with Rob Howard*), Kathleen Herring, Marsha Hansen (*both below*), and



Deanna Ryan were presented with a certificate and a summit marker paper weight in recognition of their work for the State Park.





Mount San Jacinto Natural History
Association
255 N. El Cielo Rd. Suite 140, #141
Palm Springs, CA 92262-6974

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Palm Springs, CA
Permit No. 034

is the quarterly newsletter of the Mt. San Jacinto Natural History Association. It is sent free of charge to members and other interested parties.

Newsletter Editor:

Kathleen Herring

Contributors:

Iona Scapple, John Beringer, Section Superintendent
Garrat Aichinson

Photos: Kathy Herring

MEMBERSHIP NEW OR RENEWAL APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIPCODE** _____

PHONE NO. _____ **E-MAIL** _____

DUES _____ **Senior/Student \$15** _____ **Individual \$20** _____ **Family \$25**

_____ **Supporting \$30** _____ **Life \$150** _____ **Endowment Fund**

Check the type of membership you would like to join or renew at, fill in your mailing information and return from with your dues. Check or money order is payable to: MT. SAN JACINTO NHA

**Send to: Mt. San Jacinto NHA
255 N. El Cielo Road, Suite 140, #141
Palm Springs, CA 92262**

(or drop in the bank at the VC)

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.msjnha.org