



Volume 62

Issue 3

TELESCOPE

The Official Newsletter of the Death Valley Natural History Association

Summer 2017

New Outdoor Exhibits

By Linda Slater, Chief of Interpretation
National Park Service, Death Valley National Park

Over the past several months, work crews have been replacing old, faded, and outdated exhibits at Death Valley National Park, and have also installed additional exhibits at a few new locations. The outdoor exhibits were designed and fabricated several years ago, but installation was not completed because the shrinking park maintenance staff was busy attending to critical maintenance needs. With financial assistance from The Fund for People in Parks and Death Valley Natural History Association, 37 new exhibits have been installed over the past several months.

The first exhibits to be changed out were at Dantes View. Four new full-color exhibit panels replaced faded two-color exhibits dating back decades. Printing technology has vastly improved over the last decade, so the panels are expected to hold up well in Death Valley's searing heat.

Many of the panels feature historic photos that allow visitors a glimpse into Death Valley's past. The exhibit at the old Emigrant Ranger Station on State Route 190 west of Stovepipe Wells features a photo of Ranger Stan Jones on the porch of the ranger station. Jones wrote the popular tune "Ghost Riders in the Sky" while working there in the 1940s. A new exhibit at Journigan's Mill on Emigrant Canyon Road will help visitors understand why there are huge concrete pads and tanks along this scenic route in a National Park, and provide insights into the importance of mining here during the first half of the last century.

Two new exhibits at the Racetrack provide up-to-date information on the mysterious moving rocks. A group of scientists led by Jim Norris completed a study at the Racetrack in 2013, finally resolving the mystery of the moving rocks. The attractive signs also contain information about why the dry lake bed is closed to vehicles, which might help discourage those who are tempted to drive on this special playa.

This \$10,000 grant from The Fund for People in Parks provided the funding needed to pay for the labor required to install the signs. This work is an important part of interpreting Death Valley to over a million visitors a year for many years to come.



Emigrant Ranger Station



Dantes View



Father Crowley Point

Photos courtesy of NPS.

Adopt-a-Pupfish

Feel good about assisting Ash Meadows and show off how much you love the Refuge, the pupfish, and all the other endemic species that live in this precious habitat.

We can't let you have an actual pupfish, but we will mail you this sturdy newly designed canvas bag as our gift to you for helping.

**Your \$50 tax deductible contribution
will be set aside for
Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge's
greatest need!**

Visit us online at: dvnha.org/donate
or call **1-800-478-8564** ext. 10
to adopt a pupfish today!



Meet Skip Newhall.

"Somehow, excessive heat has never bothered me. When I go [to Death Valley] in the summer, I can go wherever I want without encountering even ONE traffic jam! I have walked across the salt flat from Shorty's Well to Badwater in the summer a few times and have never had any problems."

The heat fascinates Skip so much he even presented his research "Summer Temperatures in Death Valley" at our 2013 Science Conference.

To stay in touch with others that love Death Valley, Skip became a member in 2013 and renewed at the Lifetime level the following year. He loves Death Valley so much he's even adorned his car with "DTHVLLY" custom license plates!

Member Highlight



Skip (age 13), two brothers (both age 10), and their father at Bad Water [sic] on July 3, 1951. The temperature was 120°. Skip is now 79!



DEATH VALLEY
NATURAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

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It's all the little things. I'm sure you all know we work very hard to support what we consider to be the most incredible places on earth. You have seen how the support we give to Death Valley National Park and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge has made a real difference. It was recently pointed out to me, however, that it's not just the big projects we help with, but the small things that have a huge impact as well.

To my knowledge, DVNHA is the only National Park Cooperating Association that runs a radio station! That's right, DVNHA has been responsible for re-broadcasting National Public Radio (NPR) into Death Valley National Park for more than 15 years. We have had several challenges over the last few years—from broken antennas to radio frequency problems—that left us with the worry that we would not be able to keep it going. Thanks to the hard work of Park staff and generous donations we were able to find a solution and once again have NPR in Death Valley! Next time you're visiting, tune your radio to 88.7 for national news and information.

Work continues at Scotty's Castle. As several projects involving a great deal of compliance have been completed, many construction projects can begin shortly. One snag the Park had was the only way to communicate at Scotty's Castle was by radio. DVNHA jumped in and arranged for satellite internet at Scotty's so now NPS staff can work more efficiently and safely. When Scotty's reopens, we may even be able to offer wi-fi!

DVNHA just signed a Cooperative Agreement with Death Valley National Park to manage the funds for a series of short videos about Scotty's Castle, funded by the National Park Service. The eight episodes will be released over the next two years and we will be sure to share them over all of our social media platforms and website. Stay tuned!

Grants are another way we assist our partners. In the past, we have helped manage grants, but this year we accepted a grant for over \$230,000 from The Fund For People In Parks to fund half of a project to make improvements to the Dantes View parking area. We are also managing a grant from the National Park Foundation to assist with the Death Valley R.O.C.K.S. program. Check your mailbox for more information on how YOU will also be able to help this amazing education program.



DVNHA Executive Director, David Blacker, presents a check to Death Valley National Park Superintendent, Mike Reynolds. This joint funding effort between The Fund For People In Parks and Death Valley National Park is an example of the major cooperative undertaking needed to provide the site restoration at Dantes View.

The weekend of October 7th & 8th Death Valley NP will commemorate the 2nd anniversary of the Scotty's Castle Flood. There will be patio talks, a special Scotty's Castle display in the Visitor Center, and the debut of a new Scotty's Castle Virtual Reality Tour by Ted Faye. So, make your plans to come and join the fun at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center!

Every day DVNHA works to help Death Valley National Park and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and ultimately the people who visit here. Nothing we can do is too small or too big. Of course, we could not do any of this without the support of our members and other contributors.

Thank you!

David

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Would you like to share your story in upcoming issues?

Here's a reminder of how members can submit.

E-mail: memberships@dvnha.org, Subject Line: "Member Highlight"

Please remember to include:

- 1—high resolution photo of yourself in Death Valley or Ash Meadows
- 1—quote about your love for the Death Valley area
- Year of your first visit
- Why you became a member

You're invited

Scotty's Castle Days

October 7-8, 2017

Furnace Creek Visitor Center

Two years after a flash flood destroyed the road and utilities at Scotty's Castle and damaged several buildings, the National Park Service is repairing and rebuilding in preparation for a grand reopening in 2019.

This free public event will offer an opportunity to remember the beauty and the story of Scotty's Castle through a virtual reality experience, new Scotty's Castle exhibits, and other programming!

Patio talks will include costumed interpreters. Subject matter may include: life at the castle, renovation discussions regarding work completed and plans for Visitor Center, a curatorial discussion of conservation work of collection items, an underground tour revisited describing historic utilities, the challenges of upgrading, and much more!

For more information, please contact Death Valley National Park Public Affairs at (760) 786-3221 or visit the park website: nps.gov/deva.

