



Volume 59
Issue 4

TELESCOPE

The Official Newsletter of the Death Valley Natural History Association

Fall 2014

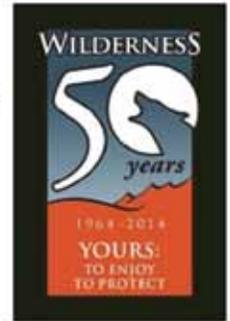
Death Valley NP's 20th Anniversary & Wilderness 50th

October 26th through November 2nd was *Wilderness Week* here in Death Valley National Park. The week commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA). The Wilderness Act created a national system of wilderness, places retaining "primeval character and influence, protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions," for future generations. The CDPA legislation of 1994, expanded the boundaries of Death Valley National Monument, creating Death Valley National Park as we know it today, comprised of 3,372,402 acres. Death Valley is now 91% designated wilderness and the largest national park in the lower 48 states!

During the week there were multiple activities including speakers, workshops, wilderness hikes, and other festivities. Did you know that Death Valley NP is the largest International Dark Sky Park in the world? Visitors who attended the Night Sky program, *The Vanishing Milky Way*, do. Photography by NPS Staff was also on exhibit at the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. On October 31, the actual 20th anniversary date of CDPA, Ed Rothfuss, former Superintendent of Death Valley NP, shared his experience leading up to the California Desert Protection Act. On November 1, former Western Director of the Wilderness Society, Patricia Schifferle, who coordinated much of the citizen advocacy efforts of this legislation, recognized CDPA's unsung heroes.

DVNHA helped with the week's festivities by facilitating grants from the National Park Foundation and the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, covering expenditures.

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Above: Author David Lam from autographed his new book, *Tortoises Through the Lens* for eager readers.

Right: An NPS volunteer assisted participants in an activity illustrating the awesome power of the sun and how we depend on it for survival.



Above: Youth used molds to make mock animal tracks in the sand so they will be able to identify real tracks in the wild.



Below: Solar telescopes were available within the courtyard of the Furnace Creek Visitor Center for safe, up close viewing of our sun.

We did it—another summer in the books. We are now in full swing for 2015. November 15th was our Fall Board of Directors Meeting and we have also met with our agency partners to develop a strategic plan! I would like to thank all of our members and donors who responded to our survey. We know you are a valued part of this organization and your responses have helped us strategize on improvements we can make. Changes will be coming to the membership program. Stay tuned for more to come in our next issue.

We are sad to pass along to you that Kathy Billings, our Death Valley National Park Superintendent, will be retiring at the end of December. We wish her all the best. We are pleased to pass along the news that DVNP has hired Linda Slater to be the new Chief of Interpretation starting around the first of December. Also new to Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge is Refuge Manager Annji Bagozzi. We look forward to working with them both and continuing the close partnerships with both of our agencies.

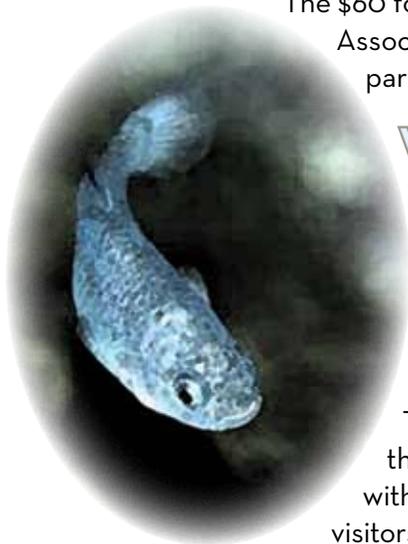
October 31st was the 20th anniversary of Death Valley becoming a National Park, and to celebrate we have a new 20th anniversary tee shirt. You can order this, and other keepsake products, from our webstore and keep an eye out for more new products including more shirts and books by visiting us online at dvnha.org.

We wish you all a happy holiday season and don't forget we are only a short plane ride away. See you soon!

David

Update: 60 Years of Service

The \$60 for 60 Years Campaign was launched in May as a way for Death Valley Natural History Association supporters to help celebrate our 60th Anniversary as Death Valley's non-profit partner!



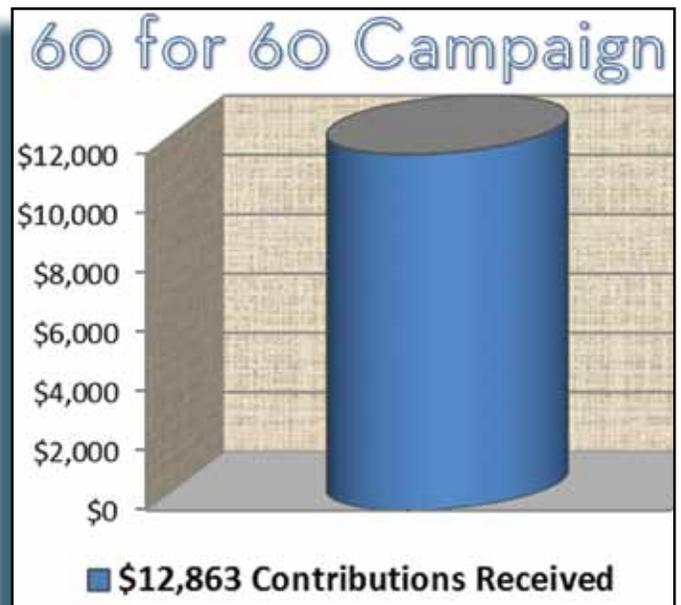
What's the Project?

It is estimated that \$12,000 is needed to help display this live feed in the Furnace Creek Visitor Center. Few people have had the opportunity to observe the endangered Devils Hole pupfish. Cameras have already been installed at Devils Hole as part of the Park's monitoring program. One underwater camera overlooks the rock shelf where the pupfish can be seen swimming about freely.

This is a wonderful way to share the secret lives of the pupfish with all Death Valley National Park visitors, while continuing to protect them in their natural habitat.

Goal Attained!

Now that we've raised the money, Death Valley National Park can begin a contract bidding process for displaying the live video feed, complete with interpretive panels. Our sincerest thanks go out to all of the Death Valley lovers who have contributed to this campaign. What a way to celebrate! We couldn't have done it without you. We'll be sure to spread the news as this project progresses, and update you to know when visitors can view the pupfish in action.



DVNHA—A Lot More Than a Bookstore

By Terry Feinberg, Board Chair

My first trip to Death Valley was in 1984. Like many others, I fell in love with the stark beauty and have been back over 30 times. At first, I didn't even know Death Valley Natural History Association (DVNHA) existed, and when I originally joined, it was to get the member discount in the store, with a vague awareness of the support DVNHA provides to the National Park. Now that I know about all we do, I couldn't be prouder or more supportive of DVNHA.

When I was first a member, I'd read the Telescope newsletters when they came, but more from a wanderlust to return to Death Valley, than from an interest in the operations of DVNHA. Then several years ago, I read a nominations call for the DVNHA Board of Directors in the Telescope. At the time, I had been CEO of a couple of non-profits, and served on a few boards, so I threw my desert-rat hat into the ring. I had hoped to learn more about DVNHA, have an excuse to visit the Park more often, and be able to contribute my nonprofit management and marketing experience to the board. I've achieved all that, and then some.

I initially had no idea most national parks have an affiliation with a non-profit "cooperating" association. In the case of DVNHA, "partnering" association is probably a more appropriate term to describe us. DVNHA board members come from all over the country. What we share is a love for the Death Valley area, an interest in improving and protecting the Park, and sharing its history and beauty with others. Since the board only meets semi-annually, we rely on our professional (and talented) staff to oversee day-to-day operations. In addition to our volunteer support for DVNHA, we also support the organization financially. While many of us are already lifetime DVNHA members, 100% of the board has provided additional donations to DVNHA this year.

When speaking of DVNHA to those who don't know of us, I talk about "parks," not "park," since we also support Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. I had not heard of Ash Meadows before joining the DVNHA board; wow, what a gem! My wife, Carla, and I now visit Ash Meadows on every trip to Death Valley, and are hoping to catch the big horns again at Point of Rocks this year.



DVNHA Board Chair Terry Feinberg and his wife Carla enjoy the view from deep in the Funeral Mountains.

Proceeds from DVNHA's bookstore sales, Road Scholar educational travel programs, AmazonSmile, and all our other activities are used to supplement government funding to Death Valley National Park and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. We work with management of the public land agencies to identify how we can provide the most help. In recent years, we have provided support to help restore the springs at Ash Meadows NWR, preserve the Scotty's Castle historic house, organ and collection, finance transportation and provide supplies for students to take part in the Death Valley R.O.C.K.S. education program, and make thousands of copies of free interpretive literature available for visitors.

As 2014 comes to an end, the future of DVNHA is just beginning. The board and staff are developing a comprehensive strategic plan to direct the future of DVNHA, and maximize our support for DVNHA and Ash Meadows for years to come. Thank you, members and friends, for being a part of all we do here in the area.



TELESCOPE

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CALL FOR PAPERS ANNOUNCEMENT
INCLUDED IN THIS ISSUE

November 2015
10th Death Valley
History Conference
Deadline for Submission:
January 30, 2015



Located in upper Wildrose Canyon in the Panamint Mountains, ten beehive shaped stone structures survive today as the best preserved kilns known to be found in the western United States. The Wildrose Charcoal Kilns were completed in 1877 by the Modock Consolidated Mining Company to provide a source of fuel suitable for use in two smelters adjacent to their group of lead-silver mines in the Argus Range west of Panamint Valley. Charcoal was used for a furnace fuel because it burned more slowly than wood and burned at higher temperatures needed for refining ore.