Shared Mission, Shared Success

We have it all! Death Valley National Park is the largest national park in the lower 48 states with the largest contiguous designated Wilderness. From the high peaks often covered in snow, to the lowest spot in North America and the hottest spot in the world, Death Valley has more ecosystems than you can count. There isn’t a place better than Death Valley National Park! To top it off, we have a strong and enduring partnership with the Death Valley Natural History Association!

Such a unique place needs the help of many people and organizations. DVNHA is our chief partner and one that rallies the support of many others. It is a mutual relationship, and we rely on each other to survive in this vast desert, just like the symbiotic relationships carved out by the many plants and animals found here. The National Park Service protects the amazing landscape, which captivates millions of visitors, and DVNHA mobilizes those visitors to give back to help us protect the landscape.

Without DVNHA, we would not be able to put donations and bookstore profits to use in creative ways. Much of what DVNHA has given Death Valley has been doubled by federal matching funds. Local school children are able to visit Death Valley for field trips that help create stewards in our own backyard. Scotty’s Castle is recovering from devastating flooding stronger with the support of DVNHA.

Death Valley National Park and DVNHA have been through a lot together these past few years. From government shutdowns and frightening COVID-19 pandemics to exciting record visitation, the park and DVNHA are collaborating to overcome these challenges. We have not been experiencing business as usual! Even when no money is coming in, DVNHA has stood by us with support. A true partner who shares the National Park Service mission and is always by our side, we really do have it all!

The National Park Service (NPS) mission is to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. NPS cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.
A Special Place, a Special Partnership

By Corey Lee, Refuge Manager
Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, USFWS

Hiking down the boardwalk on a summer day at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge can be a unique experience. While you can have an exciting encounter with some playful pupfish in a spring pool or a phainopepla munching on mistletoe in a nearby mesquite tree, this trip will also likely give you an appreciation for a tall glass of ice water and the modern convenience of air conditioning!

Ash Meadows is certainly a unique place. This National Wildlife Refuge, dedicated in 1984 and managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, is an island of diversity in the middle of the Mojave Desert. This area is a lifeline for plant and animal species because of the springs and seeps that bubble up over 10,000 gallons of water per minute, making it the largest oasis left in the Mojave. Home to at least 26 species of plants, fish, and invertebrates that live nowhere else in the world, Ash Meadows has more endemic species than any other location in the continental United States, second most in all of North America. Of the plants, fish and insects that permanently call Ash Meadows “home,” 12 species are either federally threatened or endangered, and another three federally endangered birds occasionally reside at Ash Meadows as well. The springs and seeps cause this area to teem with life in the middle of the desert where most people are surprised to see any life at all.

These are just some of the things that make Ash Meadows a special place worth protecting. The Refuge’s partnership with Death Valley Natural History Association is crucial to helping us conserve Ash Meadows and educating the public about all the exciting experiences and opportunities at the refuge. From sponsoring volunteers and volunteer work days, to working alongside refuge staff at outreach and special events, DVNHA has been a devoted partner of Ash Meadows since 2009. If you have stopped in our Visitor Center or walked by our table at a local event, you have likely encountered one of their staff members. They even have a part in conducting annual surveys of threatened and endangered species on the refuge through their support of volunteers. DVNHA has been dedicated to preserving Ash Meadows and letting the world know about the beauty and importance of this hidden gem in the middle of the desert.

Next time you visit Ash Meadows, be thankful for the dedication and partnership of DVNHA—I know I am.
It Takes a Village to Protect Public Lands

Public-private partnerships that benefit public lands have been the most effective partnerships in the history of our country. They are not easy. Relationships developed with frontline supervisors and staff are difficult to maintain when park superintendents or division chiefs retire or move on; rules and directives come down from regional and national offices very far removed from the people they effect; funding changes with political whims—so, how do we keep building trust in this ever-changing landscape we operate in? We do this by demonstrating on a day-to-day basis that we have only the best interest of the visiting public, Death Valley National Park, and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in mind. Through time and shared challenges we come together as a whole, stronger than its parts. Today, I am proud to say that the state of our two agency partnerships are the strongest you will find in the public land arena. I cannot think of better people to work with.

That said, we would not be able to achieve all we can without other partners. In the past few years these additional partnerships have included the Death Valley ‘49ers, Xanterra, Death Valley & Lone Pine Chambers of Commerce, San Jose State University Field Studies in Natural History, Rio Tinto Minerals, Southern California Edison, the Death Valley Conservancy, and many others. Together we have raised money, put on History Conferences, a Science Conference, published books and videos, and advocated for our public lands.

Of course, there is still so much to do. The short list includes: our second Science Conference, Scotty’s Castle reconstruction, new publishing projects, new programs for our Field Institute, finding funding and actualizing a future Night Sky Viewing Area. The possibilities are endless, but before we move forward with new projects we need to get through our current pandemic issues. Partnerships have never been more important than they are now. Recovery will take all of us pulling our weight and doing the little things. For NPS, that meant allowing us to reopen our bookstore while the visitor center lobby remains closed; for USFWS, that means continuing to push their regional office to open the Ash Meadows Visitor Center; for you, we hope it means shopping our new webstore, renewing your membership, or making a new recurring donation at dvnha.org. For us, we will continue to fight every day for the visiting public, preserving the incredible resources found here, and doing all we can with all of our partners to keep Death Valley and Ash Meadows the truly special places they are.

Continue to take care and see you all soon!
Guest Lodging Donation Program

A new partnership between the Oasis and DVNHA launched in January. The agreement allows the Oasis to collect voluntary donations from guests at both the Ranch and Inn at Death Valley. 100% of the proceeds to DVNHA will provide unrestricted support for education, preservation and research in Death Valley National Park.