

Busy Fall for State Parks, PRMDIA and Volunteers

December 2024 President's Message by Margaret Rhyne

Strengthening Partnerships: On September 13, PRMDIA's Governing Board participated in a regional training facilitated by the California State Park Partnership Office along with staff from the Great Basin District of California State Parks. We joined four other State Park Associations including Friends of Antelope Valley Indian Museum, Friends of Allensworth, Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association, and Fort Tejon Historical Association. Activities focused on building stronger partnerships through effective communication, understanding each partner's unique strengths, and collaborative planning between State Park partners. In addition, associations had the opportunity to network with each other. It was a long day but we enjoyed it tremendously. Many thanks to the Great Basin State Park staff members who planned the event and joined us for the training.

Cleaning Up: On October 26, 15 volunteers joined PRMDIA and State Park Staff at Saddleback Butte State Park for our annual cleanup event in honor of Public Lands Day. National Public Lands Day is celebrated annually at public lands in the United States on the fourth Saturday of September (in the desert we usually delay the celebration a couple of weeks to enjoy cooler weather). An event sponsored by National Environmental Education Foundation, Public Lands Day promotes both popular enjoyment and volunteer conservation of public lands. For this year's event at Saddleback, volunteers received Saddleback Butte water bottles courtesy of PRMDIA. Certificates were handed out for "most bags filled", "most unusual trash" (a hospital gown), and "most hydration containers". Thank you to the volunteers for your efforts!

Reducing Threats to Native Habitats:



On November 12 State Parks initiated a fuel reduction project at Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park. This project was made possible due to the successful participation by local state park staff in the "2024 Climate Resilient Parks" program funded by the California State Parks Foundation. Congratulations to our local state parks staff and especially to Luis De Vera, District Environmental Scientist, who, with support from PRMDIA, applied successfully for this funding that will be used to protect Ripley Desert Woodland.

From the California Department of Parks and Recreation Weekly Digest: "With the support from California State Parks Foundation, the Great Basin District was able to initiate their first fuels reduction project for Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland State Park, located in Lancaster, in the Antelope Valley. This unique California juniper-Joshua tree desert woodland is a sensitive community not otherwise represented in the State Park System. With the tremendous support from State Parks staff, Transition Habitat Conservancy (THC), and local volunteers from the Poppy Reserve/Mojave Desert Interpretive Association, we were able to remove piled tumbleweeds and invasive species crowding the juniper and Joshua trees and fill up two 40-yard bins—corresponding to 80 yards of potential fire fuels."

Ripley was a special place to renowned wildflower author, photographer and past PRMDIA president, Milt Stark. Milt would be delighted that so many others recognize the importance of protecting the unique and increasingly rare desert habitat preserved at Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland. PRMDIA is thankful to the many groups working together to protect it.

Upcoming: Save the date for another "First Day Hike" at Saddleback Butte State Park on January 1, 2025; Volunteer Training for the Poppy Reserve on February 1 and 8; and Volunteer Training for Tomo-Kahni State Park on February 15 and 22. For more information visit prmdia.org and/or follow us on FaceBook (facebook.com/PRMDIA).

