



## Hispanic Heritage Month

**A**s our American story continues to be written, we have the opportunity to tell a more inclusive story. National parks can help tell that story, but to do so they must reflect the diversity of all Americans. Every year from September 15th to October 15th, Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the contributions of the Hispanic/Latino community, which were not appropriately recognized in mainstream American culture. As the Latino population continues to grow, the need to reflect our diverse cultures at our national parks only becomes more important.



For example, a National Historical Park for Cesar Chavez and the Farm Labor movement, one of NPCA's key campaigns in southern California, is worthy of inclusion in the National Park System. Farm labor is an integral part of California's economy, and the labor

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## Photo Exhibit Displays the Beauty of Nevada's Federal Lands

**A** dramatic image of gnarled bristlecone set against a pink-dappled sky was one of 17 striking photographs recently displayed in the U.S. Senate Russell Rotunda. Kelley Carroll's photograph was part of an exhibit organized by NPCA's Nevada Field Office to educate lawmakers about the unique aspects of national parks and other federally managed lands within Nevada. Selections for the exhibit centered around Nevada's "bragging rights" to the oldest living tree species, the rarest fish, the first-ever national recreation area, the most wilderness acreage and the darkest night skies in the lower 48 states.

The images—printed in highly saturated colors and displayed among the rotunda's marble columns—were selected for their artistry and their ability to convey something little known about the state, said NPCA's Nevada senior program manager, Lynn Davis. "A photograph of Lake Mead, for instance, presented an uncommon view of layered ridgelines to inform viewers that the 1.5 million-acre national recreation area is far more than the lake," she said.

The other images included a sunset silhouette during the Perseids meteor showers, a stark black-and-white photo of the historic Pony Express Trail, a photograph of an immense

The images...were selected for their artistry and their ability to convey something little known about the state.

— Lynn Davis, NPCA's Nevada Senior Program Manager

panel of petroglyphs that seem to dwarf a solitary visitor, and an underwater close-up photo of the world's rarest fish, the Devils Hole pupfish. Selected photographers included well-known contemporary art photographers, a noted documentarian of the American West, an honored wildlife photographer and talented hobbyists.

The idea for the exhibit was inspired by the historical use of visual resources to engage public interest and stewardship. Early photos and artwork of Yellowstone, Yosemite and Grand Canyon were significant in the creation of the National Park Service and in protecting these remarkable places, according to Davis. "In Nevada, where approximately 80 percent of the land is managed by federal agencies,

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# FIELD REPORT

Winter 2016-2017

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## LETTER FROM THE SENIOR REGIONAL DIRECTOR

# Protecting Our Parks Requires Vigilance

The images featured in this Field Report from the Nevada public lands photo exhibit that we sponsored on Capitol Hill are a visual reminder of the beauty of our federal lands. While enjoying these images, let us not forget that there are elected officials who are actively working to undermine these public lands in Nevada and across the West.



encourage state residents to take greater pride in these places. We hope that more and more Nevada residents join us in protecting these landscapes.

A second article on Eagle Mountain, right outside the current border of Joshua Tree National Park, is a reminder of what happens when we fail to stop legislation that would harm our parks. Since the 1950s a large section of Joshua Tree

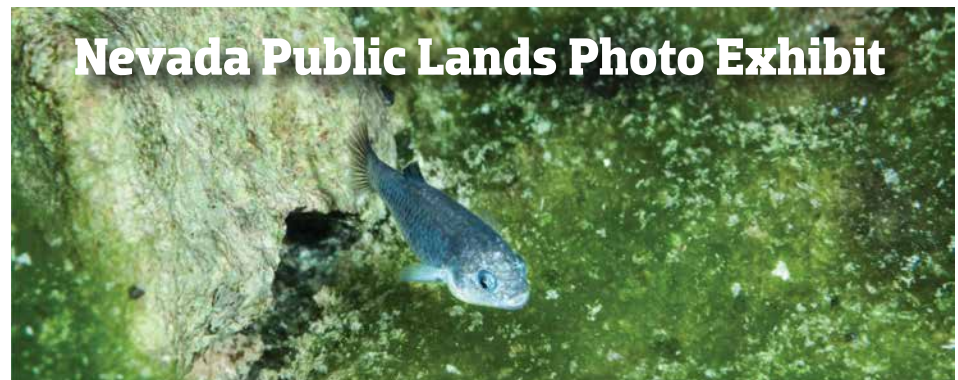
Currently there is a bill in Congress (H.R. 1484) that would turn over large areas of federal land in Nevada to the state. NPCA opposes this legislation and stated to Congress that “relinquishing lands that border national parks to state control could have devastating consequences for our national treasures preserved on national park land.”

I am pleased that this exhibit will now be touring throughout Nevada. That tour will

National Park has been missing from the park as a result of Congressional action to remove over 20,000 acres for mining.

This is a prime example of how long it can take to overturn harmful legislation. We've long fought to bring that piece of Joshua Tree back where it belongs. As you can see, we might soon finally repatriate the Eagle Mountain area. We are looking forward to that celebration.

Above: Ron Sundergill



## Nevada Public Lands Photo Exhibit

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it also is important to showcase why these lands are held in the public trust and managed by federal agencies,” she said.

Eleven of the photographers flew to Washington, D.C. for the exhibit opening. Nevada's congressional members toured the exhibit, and met with photographers, and thoughtfully discussed topics that included drought and shrinking habitat for Nevada's bighorn sheep. An evening reception honored the conservation legacy of Nevada Sen. Harry Reid. Funding for the exhibit, the reception and a commemorative booklet was provided by MGM Resorts and Barrick. The collection of photographs was recently selected by the Nevada Arts Council for a two-year tour through Nevada.

Above: Devils Hole Pupfish ©Olin Feuerbache  
Below: An evening reception to open the exhibit honored the conservation legacy of Senator Harry Reid (Left). NPCA CEO Theresa Pierno (Center) and former Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar (Right) were part of the evening's presentations. ©Alan O'Neill



# Joshua Tree National Park Youth Centennial Backpacking

Recently, NPCA staff led several youth from the Coachella Valley on a backpack trip into the remote Malapai Hill area of Joshua Tree National Park. The trip was in celebration of the National Park Service Centennial and the participants' first backpack trip ever!

Coachella Valley backpackers Ray, Evelin, Josue and Lorenzo learned about back-country logistics, safety and the National Park Service Centennial, and they camped beneath the stars and a full, beautiful orange moon!

NPCA provided important items for a good backpacking trip including.....dark chocolate and steaming hot cocoa and participants were able to bring home their new backpack and other equipment thanks to Adventure 16—Southern California's premier outdoor retailer ([www.adventure16.com/](http://www.adventure16.com/)).



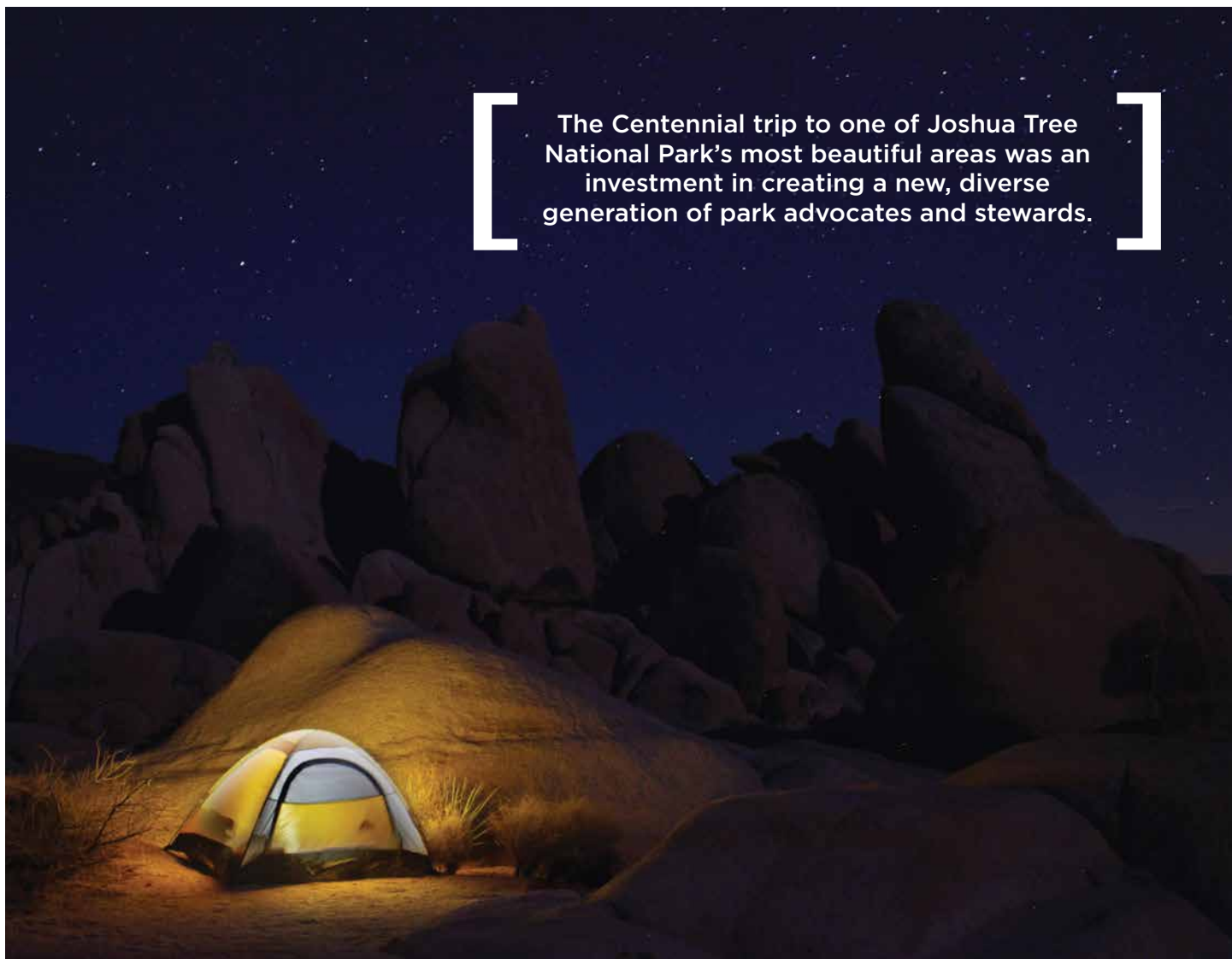
After the trip, the group visited the community of Joshua Tree, and thanks to Joshua Tree Art Gallery owner Fred Fulmer, they were able to see some wonderful paintings—some of which were inspired by the park they had just visited. ([www.joshuatreeartgallery.com/](http://www.joshuatreeartgallery.com/)).

Many of the youth who participated in the backpack had advocated for the protection of the newly created desert national monuments, and the Centennial trip to one of Joshua Tree National Park's most beautiful areas was an investment in creating a new, diverse generation of park advocates and stewards.

A huge thank you to the Hispanic Access Foundation, Por La Creacion and Coachella Valley backpackers extraordinaire Ray Machorro, Evelin Mendoza, Josue Mendoza Zepeda and Lorenzo Cruz for making the trip possible!

**Left:** Several youth from the Coachella Valley on a backpack trip into the remote Malapai Hill area of Joshua Tree National Park. Photo courtesy of Seth Shteir | NPCA **Below:** Night Camping in Joshua Tree National Park ©Katrina Brown | Dreamstime.com

The Centennial trip to one of Joshua Tree National Park's most beautiful areas was an investment in creating a new, diverse generation of park advocates and stewards.







## Eagle Mountain Boundary Study

**I**n early 2016, the National Park Service initiated the Eagle Mountain Boundary Study, which considers returning the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Eagle Mountain lands—more than 20,000 acres—back to Joshua Tree National Park. The Eagle Mountain area was once part of Joshua Tree National Monument but was removed for mineral exploration by Congress in 1950.

NPCA worked throughout the Coachella Valley to build support from important elected officials such as Assemblyman Eduardo Garcia, the Palm Springs City Council and the mayor of Cathedral City. We also engaged

important economic entities, such as the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitor Bureau, that recognized the need to add the Eagle Mountain lands to Joshua Tree National Park, understanding its value to the regional tourism economy.

The Eagle Mountain area was once the location of the Kaiser Mine, which provided iron ore for steel foundries in Fontana, California, from 1948 to 1983. Since the closing of the mine, the area has been the site of some of the most harmful proposals in the entire California desert, including the Eagle Mountain Landfill. The Eagle

Mountain mega dump, which would have been the nation's largest, would have dumped up to 20,000 tons of trash daily in the abandoned mine pits and remote canyons and hillsides that are surrounded on three sides by Joshua Tree National Park. Thanks to the work of NPCA and other desert activists, it was defeated in 2013.

Today, the Eagle Mountain area is home to golden eagle, desert tortoise and bighorn sheep, as well as many significant archaeological and historical mining features. Returning these lands to Joshua Tree National Park would enhance the park's ecological and historical values, as well as provide new recreational opportunities for visitors. When the public comment period closed on May 27, 2016, the National Park Service had received more than 8,000 comments, the majority of them favoring the return of these lands to Joshua Tree National Park.

In early November, after a visit to Joshua Tree National Park, Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael L. Connor approved the beginning of a process that will withdraw the BLM's Eagle Mountain lands from further development, yet another step toward returning these lands permanently to Joshua Tree National Park.



**Top:** Hiker in Joshua Tree National Park  
©Galyna Andrushko | Dreamstime.com  
**Left:** Tortoise ©Pixy2000 | Dreamstime.com



# Re-wilding, American Citizenship and our National Parks



By Keiko Takioto Miller

**A**s a former Japanese national, I could have become a naturalized U.S. citizen by simply signing a form after the third year of marriage to my now-former husband. However, I kept asking to myself, “What part of ‘naturalization’ is going to make me so ‘naturally American?’” The truth is, the feeling did not come to me until I took a journey into our national parks.

In the summer of 1976, we decided to spend two months and what little savings we had on a cross-country road trip. We camped under lush green canopies in Great Smoky Mountains, Olympic and Yellowstone National Parks, fought unforgiving heat by soaking ourselves in cool emerald pools amid the desolate beauty of the desert Southwest, and learned to appreciate our co-existence with the diverse flora and fauna in the mountains of the Rockies, the Sierras, the Cascades, and Appalachia.

Many years later, we signed up to clear trails and assist an anthropologist in collecting data in Utah’s Cedar Breaks National Monument. During an archaeological outing, I veered off from the group and found myself before a sacred mountain peak. I knelt in awe of the timelessness, the stillness. The next day, our family visited Zion National Park, where iridescent rock walls thrust themselves upward from the glistening stream. At our next destination, we followed a path that led to the edge of a great dry seabed, where we were met with a great silence. We were at the Grand Canyon. While this was my second time around, I could feel something even more profound than what I had felt when I first saw it in 1976.

Upon my return from that trip, the word “naturalization” finally came to my senses more fully. I realized that I needed to let nature “re-wild” my whole person. By returning to nature, I could truly appreciate the deeper meaning of our democratic rights. Nature allows us to come to terms with ourselves, and national parks resonate with the original practice of indigenous people: public lands accessible to all. But to truly reclaim this connection we also have the responsibility to care for the land during our time on this planet, to learn about it and pay homage to it. To paraphrase Chinese author Feng Jicai, the health of a culture depends on the health of “its carrier—the people and their living environment.”

*Keiko Takioto Miller is an NPCA member living in Los Angeles. She gained her citizenship in 1998.*



**Top:** Keiko Takioto Miller. Photo courtesy of Keiko Takioto Miller

**Above:** Naturalization Ceremony at Channel Islands National Park, November 10th, 2016 ©NPCA



## NPS 100 “Give Back Day” June 11, 2016

**I**n celebration of the National Park Service Centennial, NPCA partnered with the Sierra Club and the Environmental Media Association to organize a community service project with members of the Hollywood community. The event took place at Franklin Canyon Park in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, where celebrities helped to restore the park’s habitat by planting native vegetation.



**Top:** Lake at the bottom of Franklin Canyon, Los Angeles ©divanov | shutterstock.com **Middle:** Actors Karrueche Tran and Darby Stanchfield help restore native habitat in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. Photo courtesy of NPCA/Sierra Club **Above:** Amanda Crew and Thomas Middleditch of HBO’s Silicon Valley arrive at the NPS 100 Give Back Day. Photo courtesy of NPCA/Sierra Club.

# Soda Mountain Solar Victory

**F**or more than 20 years, people from around the nation have visited Mojave National Preserve to experience some of the California desert's wildest and most beautiful places. The 1.6 million-acre Preserve is home to wildlife such as bighorn sheep, mountain lion and mule deer that live on its rocky slopes and beautiful canyons.

**...more than 70 nationally recognized scientists signed letters opposing the [Soda Mountain Solar] project, citing its harm to the fragile desert ecosystem.**

Luckily for all Americans, visitors will continue to enjoy the unique characteristics of Mojave National Preserve, thanks to a critical San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors vote to reject key permits for the Soda Mountain Solar Project. The project would have done irreparable harm to Mojave National Preserve, disrupting the restoration of a critical bighorn sheep corridor, degrading air quality and night sky resources and depleting groundwater supplies.

National Parks Conservation Association educated and engaged communities across the desert to fight the Soda Mountain Solar project—from the Morongo Basin to Barstow to San Bernardino—and their voices were heard. Leading up to the Supervisors' decision, more than 70 nationally recognized scientists signed letters opposing the project, citing its harm to the fragile desert ecosystem.



**Above:** Emeritus Cal State San Bernardino Art Professor Sant Khalsa speaking at the Supervisor's meeting regarding Soda Mountain. Photo courtesy of Seth Shteir | NPCA **Right:** Desert Bighorn Ram ©Twildlife | Dreamstime.com





# Hispanic Heritage Month

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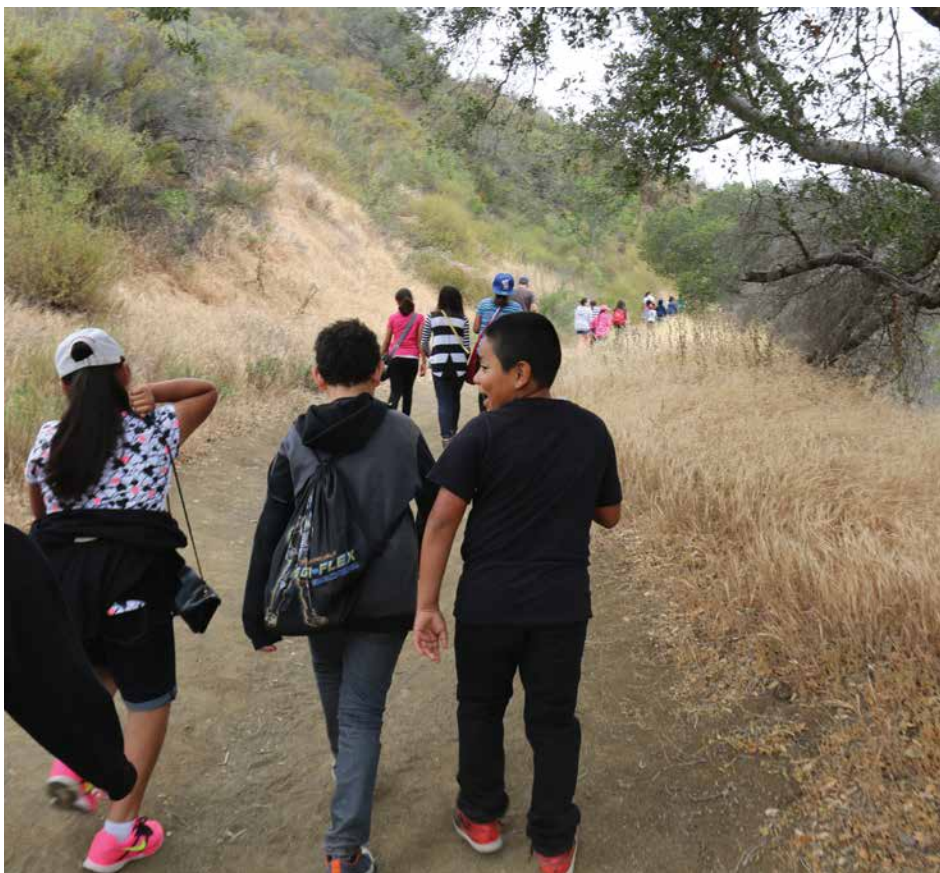
movement has promoted improved pay and safe working conditions for workers.

The proposed “Rim of the Valley” expansion of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is another park initiative that would incorporate numerous sites significant to Latino heritage, such as El Pueblo de Los Angeles, Los Encinos State Historic Park and others. In the process, it will also make the park system closer and more accessible to urban Los Angeles, which

has a large Latino population.

Hispanic Heritage Month is also an opportunity to engage the community in our national parks and build a new generation of Americans who will visit, connect with, and protect them for future generations.

In an opinion editorial for National Parks Traveler, NPCA’s Laura Torres discusses why we must bridge the gaps in the park system to better connect with a new, diverse generation of park enthusiasts, including the need to protect sites of cultural and historic significance: <http://parkb.it/2dGY9hL>



## Re-cap of ROTV Bike Ride



In July, more than 70 cyclists joined NPCA, Bike San Gabriel Valley, the Arroyo Seco Foundation, and Audubon Center at Debs Park for the Rim of the Valley Family Bike Ride sponsored by Subaru of America, Inc. and Travelodge USA. Along the way, cyclists stopped to learn about native habitat found within the #RimOfTheValley corridor and hidden in plain sight in urban Los Angeles. Rim of the Valley is a proposed expansion of the Santa Monica National Recreation Area that will bring the Park Service closer to Urban Los Angeles. Pasadena Mayor Terry Tornek, greeted the riders and served as the starter. Additionally, the staff of Rep. Adam Schiff and Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis attended to show their support. This ride was part of NPCA’s #FindYourVoice initiative, which inspires people to speak up for and protect national parks.



**Top:** NPCA staff, partners from the Audubon Center, Bike SGV, the Arroyo Seco Foundation, staff from Congressman Adam Schiff’s office and Travelodge staff ©Armando Ruiz **Above:** Participants ready to start the ride to the Audubon Center at Debs Park. ©Armando Ruiz **Below:** Family time on bikes! Sharing the love for the outdoors with the next generation. ©Armando Ruiz



**Top Left:** Michelle Magalong from Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHip), Laura Torres, and DOI Secretary Sally Jewell at the centennial celebration at the Cesar Chavez Monument. Photo courtesy of Laura Torres. **Top Right:** Entrance to the Cesar Chavez Monument. Photo courtesy of Laura Torres. **Above:** Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area ©NPS





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We are grateful to the community of donors who helped make this a memorable year for NPCA and the national parks. As we celebrate all we achieved, we need to remember our work continues. Please consider making an end of the year tax-deductible gift to help ensure the national parks can continue to thrive for generations to come. For more information, please call Shelli Goldzband toll-free at 1-800-NAT-PARK (ext. 241)



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## 'Starlight Express' Leads the Way to Gateway Planning

Community leaders in Ely, Nevada were transported to and from Great Basin's annual Astronomy Festival aboard a bus christened the "Starlight Express," complete with party hats, snacks, trivia contests and "night-themed" music. The bus trip, which followed a donor-sponsored tailgate pizza party, was organized to build community dialogue on how the

small Nevada city, located 60 miles from the national park, can better position itself as a gateway community. NPCA has been working with the Ely Mayor and the city's tourism committee, and will participate in four planning workshops in 2017.

**Above:** Great Basin National Park ©Kelly Carroll