

Remembering Our National Parks' Diverse Histories

By Dennis Arguelles

Did you know that the earliest and highest roads in Yosemite were built by Chinese laborers? This is just one of the lesser-known stories the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California works with the NPS to interpret and preserve.

Another is the story of Tie Sing, the ingenious chef who supported the historic 1915 Mather Mountain Party during their expedition to Sequoia National Park. The party's participants would go on to be the driving force behind the establishment of the National Park Service the following year.

Today, Sing's contributions are remembered during the annual Yosemite-Sing Peak Pilgrimage, which celebrates the important history of Chinese Americans in Yosemite and the Sierra Nevada. It takes place in July and includes lectures, tours, a potluck and social activities, culminating in a backpacking trip to the eponymous Sing Peak.

This year's Ferguson fire caused the Pilgrimage to cancel most of its activities,

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New Study Calls into Question Cadiz Claims

By Chris Clarke

The fight against the devastating proposed Cadiz water mining project has been an NPCA priority for many years. The Trump administration-backed project would suck 16 billion gallons of water each year from beneath Mojave Trails National Monument and sell it to southern California suburbs. NPCA and our partners have long believed that the Cadiz project could jeopardize the crucial springs and seeps that dot the Mojave landscape, depriving wildlife of critical water sources in one of the driest places on earth.

This September, a new study published in the journal *Hydrology* by two expert hydrologists confirmed our greatest fears. According to the authors, at least five important springs in Mojave Trails are fed by the same ancient aquifer Cadiz would tap, meaning that the project does indeed threaten the springs and the wildlife that depend on them. Cadiz claims the springs are not connected to the aquifer.

The hydrologists also confirmed that Cadiz has wildly inflated its estimates of the amount of water the company can sustainably remove from the aquifer. Cadiz claims that more than 32,000 acre-feet of rainwater replenish the aquifer each year and plans to pump 50,000 acre-feet of water annually. However, the study's authors

place the actual recharge rate between 4,000 and 12,000 acre-feet per year, advising that water managers must use these lower figures to protect the desert ecosystem.



The study's publishing came just days after a bill by California state Senator Richard Roth failed to pass at the end of the legislative session. The bill, which enjoyed broad support in both the Senate and Assembly, would have subjected Cadiz to environmental review by State agencies in response to the Federal administration deciding it would abandon protocol and not review the project. This new study underscores the need to closely review all of Cadiz's scientific claims, and highlights just how urgent it is that California act to safeguard its irreplaceable desert parks and monuments.

FIELD REPORT

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Hispanic Heritage Month at Paramount Ranch



By Laura Torres

For generations, parents have aimed to provide their children with a better life than the one they had. Giving them the best for the future often includes handing down an appreciation and understanding of their past. In a multicultural city like Los Angeles, there are ample opportunities for the large Latino community to pass down their cultural heritage through food, music and other traditions.

Those of us at NPCA believe connecting communities to local NPS sites is also a valuable practice as the parks' natural and cultural resources provide a multitude of enriching experiences, from new recreational opportunities to celebrations of untold stories. Unfortunately, many Latinos grow up disconnected from their local public lands. Helping to bridge that gap is Paramount Ranch's bilingual ranger, Joana. She made

our group of 48 San Fernando residents feel welcome as she shared the history of the ranch and how she became a park ranger.

Our group toured Western Town, a popular film set for Old West scenes. We also enjoyed a nature walk which provided an opportunity for parents and grandparents to share their own memories of nature with their children and grandchildren.

Timing our visit to align with Hispanic Heritage Month reminded us of the richness of our public lands and of our heritage. This was our first event with the residents of San Fernando Valley, and we look forward to more opportunities to support their development as park advocates.

Above: San Fernando Valley residents enjoy connecting with their backyard and learning about the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area ©Laura Torres

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but a small group of intrepid hikers managed to reach the summit of Sing Peak. They were led by one of the pilgrimage's founders, Jack Shu, a retired California state park superintendent who currently serves as a member of NPCA's Pacific Regional Council. "For too many generations we have limited our stories about the people who were involved with special places like Yosemite," says Shu. "Now, I hope the young explorers to the Sierra Nevada will learn that its history is full of people with diverse backgrounds and relevant lessons."

Despite the cancellation, pilgrimage organizers and NPCA succeeded in securing recognition from the California State Legislature, which passed Assembly Concurrent Resolution 262 in August.



The resolution "recognizes the legacy of California's pioneer Chinese Americans" and "honors their contributions and the important role they played in the history of Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada."

Above: Backpackers on the summit of 10,552 ft. Sing Peak, August 2018. The participants, left to right: Jack Shu, Kyle Nakayama, Greg Kimura, Tennyson Kwok, Calvin Wong, Dennis Arguelles and Paul Lee. ©Jack Shu.

Airport Sale Puts Tule Lake Japanese American Historic Site in Peril

By Mark Rose

Northern California's Tule Lake Segregation Center was once the largest Japanese American concentration camp in the nation, imprisoning nearly 19,000 people during World War II. Nowadays, the fragments of the center that remain tell one of the most tragic, yet significant stories of American prejudice. While a portion of this historic civil rights site was set aside as a unit of WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument, most of the camp exists on land that falls outside of the monument. In fact, large parts of what were once prisoners' barracks now reside on Tulelake Municipal Airport property.

For years, NPCA has worked with allies in the Japanese American community to

protect the entire site, even engaging in critical negotiations to prevent a 3-mile-long fence from being built around the airport. Unfortunately, a recent sale of the airport may jeopardize efforts to preserve this land from future development. Moving forward, NPCA will continue to work with parties on both sides to find an amicable solution

and ensure that the stories of those who suffered through one of America's darkest chapters will not be forgotten and that the barracks site will be protected from further degradation.

Below: Tule Lake segregation center, Newell, California ©Pete O'Crotty | Library of Congress



Rim of the Valley Gains Momentum

By Dennis Argueles

NPCA's Rim of the Valley campaign to expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area continues to gain momentum. The expansion would more than double the size of the park, expand hiking, biking and other recreational opportunities, and help protect habitat for threatened species like our local mountain lion population. Earlier this year, Santa Clarita Rep. Steve Knight (R) joined Rep. Adam Schiff (D) as co-sponsor of the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (H.R. 4086), demonstrating the widespread and bipartisan support for the legislation. The Senate version of the bill received a hearing in the Energy and Natural Resources Committee in August, and in September the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a motion calling for members of the local congressional delegation to support the initiative. The campaign remains a top priority for NPCA's Los Angeles Field Office, and support is building across the region for the legislation..

Left: Mountain biker in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area ©Russ Bishop | Alamy

UPCOMING EVENT

SAN FRANCISCO CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 2019

**February 7, 2019
6:30pm**

Letterman Digital Arts Center
Open to NPCA supporters & members

This reception is an opportunity for those in the conservation and environmental communities to learn about our national parks, celebrate NPCA's 100 years of success protecting these places and hear how we will continue to stand up for the places that make us who we are, for the next century.

Contact Chris Boone at cboone@npca.org.





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NPCA Brings Lawsuit Against EPA over Air Quality in Sierra Nevada Parks

By Mark Rose

This September, NPCA filed a lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over its failure to enforce Clean Air Act deadlines for fine particulate

air pollution in California's San Joaquin Valley and nearby Yosemite, Sequoia, and Kings Canyon National Parks. Joining in the suit are local public health and community groups Medical Advocates for Healthy Air,

Committee for a Better Arvin, and Committee for a Better Shafter, with representation from attorneys at Earthjustice.

The intent of this lawsuit is to compel EPA to enforce planning deadlines in order to meet health standards set as far back as 1997. A plan to meet these health standards will require polluters to significantly reduce fine particulate air pollution in the San Joaquin Valley by 2025. Unfortunately, the local agencies charged with drafting a plan, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District and the California Air Resources Board, are nearly two years past the statutory deadline to submit a finalized plan, and EPA is yet to hold them accountable.

The San Joaquin Valley is well known for having the dirtiest air in the nation, and this same polluted air often flows up into the neighboring Sierra Nevada national parks. NPCA works to ensure clean air of all of our parks and their neighboring communities, and we will keep the pressure on EPA and local agencies to see to it that they fulfill their duties.

Left: Haze in Sequoia National Park. ©Mark Rose

