

National Trails Day    Saturday, June 7, 2003

This year's theme for National Trails Day is "Healthy Trails, Healthy People" therefore The Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and the Employees of the Palm Springs Field Office invite you to leave your daily stress and come take a walk with us. Discover the Hidden Beauty of the Big Morongo Preserve and part-take in the many adventures this canyon holds.

There will be Docent led tours, involving aspects of plant and animal life within a desert marsh area. Along the trails you will travel through unique environmental zones, including wetlands, desert scrub and mesquite thickets. On the Marsh Trail, a wheelchair accessible boardwalk that meanders over and along the stream under a canopy of Fremont cottonwoods, red willows, and an occasional white alder. Marshes along the way support dwarf willow, mule fate, goldenrods, cattail, bulrush, Yerba mansa and other plants. Numerous Neotropical birds visit us during the summer months, bring you binoculars and view the colorful array of Tanagers, Orioles, and Warblers.

We will have two hikes one at 8 a.m. and another at 10 a.m. The 8 a.m. hike will be 3 hours long and approximately 4 miles round trip. Weather may vary greatly throughout the day so be prepared for morning lows in the 50's and afternoon highs in the 90's. Bring plenty of water. Hiking boots are recommended. Travel will be on a moderate trail with a few short steep up and downs. Bring a snack, water, sunscreen and a hat. The 10 a.m. hike will be on the Marsh Trail, and easy trail.

There will be bird walks at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. lead by our enthusiastic and informative volunteer staff. The bird walks will be lead along the easy trails of the preserve and within Covington Park next to the preserve. If you are unable to attend one of the appointed hikes ask upon arrival for additional interpretive walks, which may be offered. Visitors are also welcome to explore and walk the trails as individuals or self-guided groups.

Representatives from the many different departments of the Bureau of Land Management will be present on the site conducting trail restoration and maintenance, as well as being available to respond to questions from visitors. There will also be other community volunteer groups present during the day's events to assist the BLM with trail work. If a day of working in a preserve setting interests you, call the Palm Springs Volunteer Coordinator at 1-760-251-4800. So bring binoculars, food and water and enjoy a day in this Desert Oasis.