



Seasons Greetings to all from the National Monument!

Well the winter season has finally come to our National Monument, along with our hopes for some wet stuff, rain in the desert and snow in the mountains.

This has been quite a year for the National Monument and the work never seems to stop. With all we accomplished over the past year we want to pause and say thank you to all of our staff and partners. Special thanks goes out to *Palm Springs Life* magazine and International Mapping for their awesome article "A Monumental Treasure" along with the spectacular pull-out map (you can get your very own copy from the Visitor Center).

In October we celebrated the third anniversary of the National Monument with help from Friends of the Desert Mountains, and our La Quinta Arts Foundation partners. Gathering together 25 October, at the Visitor Center on Highway 74, the Foundation brought together a group of very talented *plein air* (painting in outdoor light) artists and sponsored a variety of activities. Children were able to participate in a Scrap Gallery, and enjoyed visits from Smokey the Bear and Gamby the Quail.

Jim Deforge and Alexander Sheldon of *Path of the Bighorn*, were on-hand to unveil the Visitor Center Ram *Spikehorn*. Later in the afternoon the celebration moved over to Indian Canyons where the focus was placed on the Cahuilla.

Agua Caliente Tribal Chairman Richard Milanovich and Tony Andreas and the Birdsingers kicked off the afternoon celebration. Karen Kupman, from the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mountain Indians, was the keynote speaker and shared the Ramona's vision for their future of eco-tourism and environmental education.

After viewing several outstanding paintings we voted to select the painting to be used for next year's poster. David Musser's painting depicting a hiker on one of the National Monument's trails was selected. The painting offers a symbolic balance of our Trails Plan and sheep recovery.

This past season weather has been great for hiking during the non-voluntary closure period. However, with the coming of the New Year and lambing season, we will once again find some voluntary closures on key trail areas used by Peninsular ranges bighorn sheep. Our plan is to work with our many partners and associates to come up with a final trails plans by this time next year.

In the meantime in order to avoid any confusion about what trails are open or closed I strongly recommend everyone contact the Visitor Center, 760 862-9984, on Highway 74, for the latest news on voluntary closures and/or alternatives available for hiking. We will be posting this information on our Web site [w]

www.ca.blm.gov/palmsprings/santarosa/santa_rosa_national_monument.html as it becomes available.

The New Year promises to be interesting and full of activities. In January we will be installing two new National Monument portal signs one each on Highways 74 and 111. In my view this is a major accomplishment, as now we are able to greet visitors and let them know they are entering the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.

January has also been designated Palm Oases month and you'll be able to find out about all the many special events we have planned by visiting our Web site, and you can always pick up one of the monthly flyers at the Visitor Center.

Getting back to business, our first goal for 2004 will be completion of the Record of Decision for the National Monument Plan, which is being coordinated between the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and our many partners, with inputs from the public and members of the National Monument Advisory Committee.

Speaking of the Advisory Committee, our next meeting is scheduled for 7 February at 9 a.m. in Palm Desert City Council building. Our focus is on the future of the National Monument Foundation/Non-profit to assist us with National Monument Plan commitments. I'm sure the day will prove rewarding for us all.

That's all I have for now, let's hope for rain and snow for our watersheds and look forward to both a great season of wildflowers and no wild fires.

Danella George
Santa Rosa & San Jacinto Mountains
National Monument Manager



Frank Bogert, Palm Springs National Monument Advisory Committee Member, Congresswoman Mary Bono and Monument Manager Danella George relax at the third anniversary celebration.

From desert oases to granite peaks, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument contains lands of contrast and stories of adaptations.