

Natural and Cultural History of the Mojave National Preserve –Clark Mountain to Mitchell Caverns – The High Country

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: October 2, 3, 4, 2009 beginning Friday at 8 P.M. and ending Sunday at 3 P.M.

INSTRUCTOR: Robert Fulton

The Mojave National Preserve encompasses a region of remarkable landscape diversity. This class will explore those areas of the Preserve between 3,500 and 5,000 feet.

Class begins Friday evening with an introductory lecture and slide presentation on the Preserve's diversity. Saturday we will begin our exploration in Shadow Valley (4,000 feet), visiting the Valley Wells mill and smelter site, Copper World Mine in Clark Mountain. We will travel through a portion of the world's largest Joshua Tree forest flanking the famous Cima Dome, en route to the Cow Cove petroglyph site, one of the richest cultural sites in the eastern Mojave (an easy 2 mile round trip hike).

Sunday we will pass by Cima Volcanic Field, the historic Kelso Depot and the nearby Kelso Dunes, eventually arriving at beautiful Round Valley. Here the Mojave ecosystem gives way to an island of Great Basin Desert at about 5,000 feet. We will then cross the divide between the Great Basin of North America, and the Colorado River drainage. Here one can descend the "Rings Trail" of Banshee canyon to the bottom of this unique volcanic formation. Our final stop will be a guided tour of the Mitchell Caverns in the majestic Providence Mountains.

High clearance or 4WD vehicles are desirable but not required. Carpools can be organized for those brief spots where such vehicles are needed.

Birds of the Mojave Desert: Natural History & Conservation

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: October 9, 10, 11, 2009 beginning Friday at 8 P.M. and ending Sunday at 3 P.M.

INSTRUCTOR: Kurt Leuschner

Oases in the Mojave Desert are used by a wide variety of bird species every fall as stopping points during their southward migration. You will be amazed by the numbers and kinds of species we will encounter at this time of year. Beginning on Friday evening we will examine the important role of these stopover areas in the conservation of neotropical migrant birds and learn the techniques used to identify the common families of birds found in the vicinity of the Desert Studies Center. As we observe both migrant and resident birds in their natural habitats, we will learn about their ecology, natural history and special adaptations to the harsh desert environment.

Exploring the East Mojave: The Afton Canyon Area

DATES AND TIMES OF MEETING: November 6, 7, 8, 2009 beginning Friday at 8 P.M. and ending Sunday at 3 P.M.

INSTRUCTORS: Norman Meek and Joan Schneider

The Afton Canyon area has everything: a year-round flowing river; Bighorn sheep; spectacular multicolored rock layers that some call The Grand Canyon of the Mojave; remnants of unique prehistoric settlements; historic caves; shorelines of ancient Lake Manix and much more. Join an archaeologist and a geographer, intimately familiar with this unique area, and examine the geological evidence for the rapid formation of the canyon, explore caves and mines, learn where

aboriginal groups found stone to make tools, see evidence of prehistoric and historic floods, visit archaeological sites, discuss the uses of plant and animal resources by prehistoric groups, and see the importance of the canyon as a trade and transportation corridor between the Colorado River and the Pacific Ocean from prehistoric times to present. The class will tour the canyon and adjacent areas by carpooling using personal vehicles. Bring a high clearance vehicle if you have one. There will also be optional strenuous hikes of not more than four miles round-trip. Be prepared to get your feet wet. Bring a flashlight and a camera if you have one.