



THE HOMESTEADER

Palomar Mountain State Park

Newsletter

v.1 2018

Special Projects

State Parks staff has been hard at work making improvements to the park's infrastructure aimed at providing visitors a smoother and more positive experience while at the park. First, plans for a new water well are underway. Maintenance crews will install this new well to adhere to county standards since the old one does not. The new well will be 400 feet deep and will come with a telemetry system. This new system will allow maintenance crews to collect accurate readings on water resources and better control the flow of water to the rest of the park. Additionally, a new well shed will be installed that must be fully winterized to protect the pipes from freezing. There will be over 2,000 feet of piping installed by the end of the project. The budget for this is roughly \$720,000, however bids are coming in over \$1 million.

Restoration of rock walls that have become structurally unsafe in the campground will begin this year. A new Eagle Scout project is in the works to revamp the flagpole at the entrance station. A decrepit staircase leading up to the pole is due for repairs and scouts will install a reflection bench at the base of the flagpole. A prescribed burn took place in Doane Valley with Cal Fire, Cleveland National Forest, and California State Parks all cooperating. A little over 40 acres of meadow burned, which recycled nutrients into the soil, removed long dead plant matter, and allowed the growth of fresh grasses and forbs to take place. This was the first time the Doane Valley meadow experienced fire in over a century. We also plan to fill a 20,000-gallon tank from the World War II era as an extra supply of water in case of a wildfire in Doane Valley.

Historic Apple Orchard

Over 120 healthy, thriving, beautiful apple trees reside in the Palomar Mountain State Park historic orchard. We are constantly battling our friends of the rodentia family (squirrels and gophers) with irrigation repairs. We have made 25 repairs to irrigation pipes, and 13 of our grafted trees have perished due to dry conditions and broken irrigation.

Park Events

Palomar Mountain State Park recently celebrated Earth Day with a festival focused on mountain lion preservation. Mountain lion populations in Southern California are particularly at risk due to urban development, wildfires and large freeway systems that fragment their habitat and discourage migration. As a result, our mountain lions are unable to leave the region, which leads to inbreeding where offspring are often sterile. There are plans to implement wildlife bridges across the I-15 freeway that would allow mountain lions to migrate freely into and out of the region. We will continue to raise awareness for our feline friends now and long after they are no longer at risk.

Park Maintenance

The 1950's constructed maintenance shop is overdue for repairs due to a leaky roof and worn shingles. This project will be underway this year. A contractor repaired the Doane Valley Campground shower system and maintenance crews replaced toilets and faucets with water-wise fixtures, conserving water at every turn possible.



Meet John De Luca, our new Supervising Ranger!

John came on board with the Montane Sector in late 2017, immediately providing guidance and support to the Montane Sector Rangers as well as other park staff. We are very excited to have John with us. Welcome to Palomar Mountain, John!

Boucher Tower

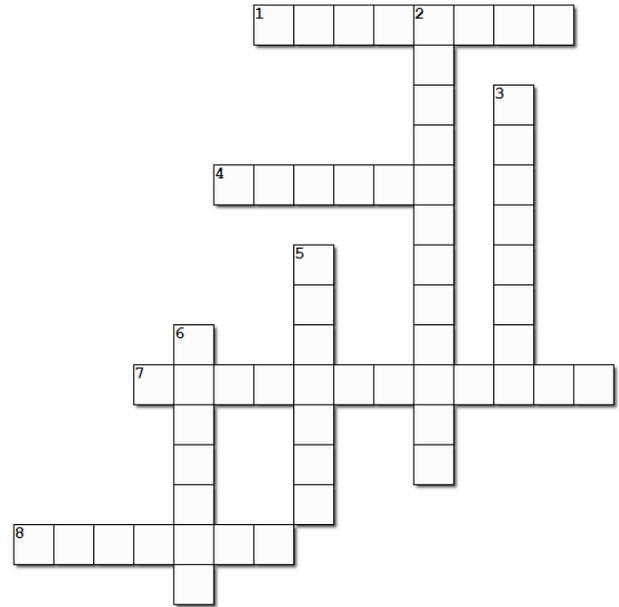
The Boucher Lookout Tower has its own list of improvements, namely, a leak in the sidewall. An independent contractor will handle this repair work. The Boucher Lookout deck will also receive improvements to make it more ADA compatible. The Boucher Trail trailhead will be receiving some much-needed attention due to highly erosive rains in 2016. Funding will come from FEMA monies. Running water will also be returning to Boucher Lookout in the near future. The pump station that once brought water up the point melted to the ground in the 2007 Poomacha Fire.

We Love our Volunteers!

The Park Champions are back in action and they have already begun to beautify and improve the quality of the park campgrounds and trails. We look forward to another fantastic season of volunteer work from the Park Champions. In 2017 alone, Palomar Mountain State Park had 234 volunteers. They contributed 940 hours of campground operations, 133 hours of special events, over 2,900 hours of interpretation, 68 hours of maintenance, 5,412 hours of public safety, 302 hours of resource management, 247 hours of cultural resource management, and 10,892 public contacts. In total, volunteers contributed over 10,000 hours to the park. The monetary value of all this work would be well over half a million dollars.

Furry Four Leggeds

Complete the crossword below



Across

1. small rodent with stripes on back
4. has a bobbed tail
7. tree climber with bushy tail
8. nocturnal, raids trash bins

Down

2. apex predator on the mountain
3. hoofed animal
5. plays dead when threatened
6. mostly nocturnal canine

Palomar's most wanted...



Jessica Murany,
Ranger



Mike Brown,
Park Aide



Brian Griffith,
Maintenance



Katie Michelmores,
Park Aide



Paul Newman,
Maintenance



Mike McPolin,
Park Aide



Will Meyst, Park
Interpreter

We have three new Park Aides working at the kiosk this season; Mike Brown, Katie Michelmores and Mike McPolin. Mike Brown is a twenty-year Marine Corps veteran who enjoys spending time outdoors so much so that he takes an annual trip to Montana to hunt and fish. Mike started working at the park in the summer of 2017 and returns this summer for the 2018 season. Katie is an HR professional who lives on the mountain. She has three dogs and helps run a non-profit dog rescue. Mike McPolin is a student from Lancaster and wanted to get involved with State Parks. He discovered the opportunity to work as a Park Aide when he visited Palomar Mountain State Park. He enjoys spending his free time going on extended hikes and fishing. We also have two new members of our maintenance crew, Brian Griffith and Paul Newman. Paul is a retired 20-year Marine veteran. He lives in Fallbrook with his loving family and is interested in a career with State Parks. Brian hails from Lake Tahoe and enjoys outdoor activities. Brian is a resident on Palomar Mountain and is also seeking a long-term career with State Parks. Will Meyst is from Valley Center and this is his second season at Palomar Mountain State Park. Ranger Jessica has been with State Parks for over thirteen years, seven of which she has spent here at Palomar. She is excited for what 2018 brings!