

DESERT INSTITUTE

EXPLORE JOSHUA TREE FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE



SPRING 2023

DESERT INSTITUTE @

welcome to spring!

We're so excited to be able to say, "Spring is here!" Yes, I know, many of us are still bundling up and throwing logs in the wood stove--but here at Desert Institute, our minds are wandering towards wildflowers and dramatic night skies as we announce our new line-up of activities and adventures. I'm eager to witness the season unfold, my first full one at Desert Institute since joining the team in late Fall 2022. It's been a great pleasure to work side-by-side with such a talented group of instructors, guides, and staff in preparation of our spring season. All of us are committed to protecting and preserving the natural and cultural resources of our region, and it is my hope that by exploring the desert with us, we will inspire you to do the same. Photograph the night sky in our new milky way photography class, identify birds and reptiles in our classic ecology classes, craft arrow points in flintknapping, or take some deep mindful breaths in our new monthly community wellness program. Whether you're a long-rooted local or a first-time visitor, we hope you'll find something that brings the desert to life for you!

Sarah Witt
Director, Desert Institute



JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK ASSOCIATION



who we are

Desert Institute is the educational branch of **Joshua Tree National Park Association**, the **national park's primary non-profit partner**. JTNPA has provided support to the park for over 60 years through **educational programming, cash, and in-kind aid**. (And **visitor center operations**, yep, that's us too!) JTNPA works in partnership with Joshua Tree National Park to help in its achievement of programming goals in education and interpretation, along with scientific and historical research and activities. To learn more about our work, visit us at www.joshuatree.org

what we do

Desert Institute is not a school in itself; rather, we **contribute to the national park's education and interpretation** programming goals. Throughout the year, we offer **field classes, recreational adventures, and social events** that span a wide spectrum of disciplines and formats. Natural science courses such as geology, bird and wildflower identification, and nature photography make up the backbone of our programming--however, the desert also supports an abundance of cultural activities, which are just as much our identity and as valuable as the wild lands of the park. Our programming works to **articulate and animate the rich resources** of not only the national park, but of **our surrounding desert environs** and the **community of people** that make Joshua Tree the unique place it is. All **proceeds from courses and Desert Institute activities go right back into the park**.

Although most of our classes are geared towards adult learners, **our vision is to provide a rich, inclusive learning environment aimed at inspiring people of all ages and backgrounds**, and we are in the process of expanding our programming to include more family-friendly and children-centered activities. Stay tuned by following us on social **@jtdesertinstitute**

LEAVE NO TRACE

No matter who you go into the park with, we encourage the ethics of Leave No Trace, a set of ethics to ensure a sustainable future for the outdoors and the planet. Be a steward of the land and protect our natural resources so that all people--now and in future generations--may enjoy the peace and beauty of Joshua Tree. What we do today decides how we experience tomorrow.

LEAVE NO TRACE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

- **Plan Ahead and Prepare**
- **Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces**
- **Dispose of Waste Properly**
- **Leave What You Find**
- **Minimize Campfire Impacts**
- **Respect Wildlife**
- **Be Considerate of Other Visitors**

© Leave No Trace: www.LNT.org

Please note, no campfires in the JTNP backcountry; campfires allowed in designated firepits only, and may be restricted at anytime by the NPS. Make sure you take everything you bring, pack it in, pack it out! Try to reduce noise and light pollution, which disrupt wildlife habitats.

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turn to the back cover page for a list of Joshua Tree National Park visitor centers and stores



GENERAL INFORMATION

Class Details and Registration

Detailed information about meeting locations, times, class durations, and instructor biographies can be found on our website: joshuatree.org

Once you've decided on the perfect experience(s) for you, you can register online through our website, on eventbrite, or by phone. Please register early, as all of our activities have limited enrollment.

Activity Information Packet

Upon receipt of your registration, we will send you an activity itinerary, map, enrollment confirmation, and information on clothing and equipment needs. Local lodging and camping information is available upon request. For all activities taking place in the national park, admission fees are covered and you will receive an entrance fee waiver by email after registering.

Cancellation Policy

If you need to cancel, notify us **at least seven days prior to the start of the activity**, and we will process your refund minus the eventbrite processing fee. No refunds, transfers, or credits will be granted if cancellation occurs within the seven-day period. Please note that we cannot make any exceptions to this refund policy for any reason, including but not limited to illness, travel delays, personal situations, or emergencies. We are a non-profit organization, and this program depends on registration for its funding; each spot given up at the last minute was a potential spot for another guest. While inconvenient, please understand that this policy enables us to sustain our programs even with last-minute cancellations.

Waiver and Release of Claims

Before participating in any of the field activities provided by the Desert Institute, and as a condition to being accepted for such activities, you must sign, for yourself and for your minor who is participating, a waiver and release of claims, including of negligence, arising from your or the minor's enrollment or participation. Your information is confidential. Participants must provide their own health and accident insurance. Please obtain a doctor's clearance if you have any condition that may impact your ability to participate in an activity.

Safety, Insurance, and Physical Fitness

Every effort is made to ensure Desert Institute activities are safe. However, participants are responsible for their own safety and accident insurance. JTNPA does not accept responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged property or any bodily injury incurred during the activities. You must sign a liability waiver in order to participate in the courses. Participants must be in good physical condition for activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes frigidly cold.

Children and Pets

Unless otherwise noted, our activities are designed for adults. An adult must accompany children under 16; the minimum age is 14. Pets are not permitted on activities, on National Park trails, or unattended in vehicles.

Academic Credit

Credit is available from University of California Riverside Extension. Optional credit courses include the course number and eligible units underneath the description. Credit fees are listed separately from noncredit fees. Credit units are based on a quarter system. Credit students may be required to successfully complete assignments or exams. Teachers may apply for Professional Career Development through their school district.

Camping Information

Some of our courses include overnight camping in the park as part of the experience and are marked as such with a ▲ symbol. (Often we use Lost Horse, a private and highly scenic spot tucked away from crowds!) If the course is an overnight experience and you do not plan to camp, please email us before booking so we can confirm that this arrangement is suitable for the activity--some class activities might begin before dawn, and others like tracking require that all participants stay overnight to ensure the purity of the landscape investigation. Unless otherwise noted, participants are responsible for their own accommodations and food.

In the case that a course does not include camping, but you'd like to stay in the park overnight, some campgrounds are first come, first served but most require advance reservations through recreation.gov. Campground fees will apply. Visit the park website at [nps.gov/jotr](https://www.nps.gov/jotr) for more camping information.

Weather, Clothing, and Equipment

Courses are held rain or shine. We reserve the right to change the activity itinerary due to weather or any other conditions. Students should be prepared for a variety of desert weather conditions, including cold and windy days. Appropriate clothing, footwear, and sun protection are very important. Clothing and equipment needs will be identified in your course information packet. Please make sure you read through the lists in entirety so you are prepared!

Discounts

All current JTNPA members receive \$10 off Desert Institute activities. Discount is applied at checkout when you enter your membership code. To become a member, email membership@joshuatree.org

Free admission to park

For all activities taking place in the national park, you will receive an entrance fee waiver after registering.

spring 2023

february

- FEB 11** Star Trail Photography with Casey Kiernan
- FEB 11** Art and Culture of Bombay Beach with Sandi Wheaton
- FEB 12** Salton Sea Photography Workshop with Sandi Wheaton
- FEB 18** Walking Coachella's Pueblo Viejo with Steven Biller
- FEB 18-19** *Moss Ecology and Diversity* with Theresa Clark
- FEB 19** Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer
- FEB 20** Biocrust Wonder Walk with Theresa Clark
- FEB 25** Contemporary Art of Joshua Tree with Bernard Leibov
- FEB 24-26** *Art and Science of Flintknapping* with Jeanne Binning

march

- MARCH 3** Photographing Joshua Tree by Moonlight with Craig Fucile
- MARCH 4** Morning Light in the Park Photography Workshop with Craig Fucile
- MARCH 4** Explore the Golden Bee Mine with Pam Kersey and Tom Scanlan
- MARCH 11-12** *Flora of Joshua Tree National Park* with Kurt Leuschner*
- MARCH 11-12** How to Navigate with Map and Compass with Misha Askren
- MARCH 17-19** Fundamentals of Landscape Photography with Jon Norris
- MARCH 18** Wildflowers of the Mojave with Melanie Davis and Lynn Sweet
- MARCH 18-19** *Birds of Anza Borrego* with Kurt Leuschner*
- MARCH 25-26** Women's Getaway Weekend with Pam Kersey and Robin Balch
- MARCH 26** Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer

april

- APR 1-2** Family Camp-n-Cook weekend with Dirty Gourmet
- APR 6-8** Backpacking: Beyond the Boy Scout Trail with Sarah Witt
- APR 14-16** Advanced Landscape Photography with Jon Norris
- APR 15** Wildflowers of the Mojave with Melanie Davis and Lynn Sweet
- APR 22** Fossils of the Marble Mountains with Alessandro Grippo
- APRIL 23** Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer
- APRIL 29-30** *Birds of Joshua Tree National Park* with Kurt Leuschner*
- APRIL 26, APRIL 30, MAY 14** *Advanced Bird Banding* with Stephen Myer

may

MAY 5-7 *Birds of the Eastern Mojave with Kurt Leuschner**

MAY 6 JT Rocks! with Alessandro Grippo

MAY 6-7 Mammal Tracking with Jim Lowery

MAY 19-21 *Insects and Arthropods of the Eastern Mojave with Kurt Leuschner**

MAY 19-21 *Lizards and Snakes of the Eastern Mojave with Jason Wallace**

MAY 28 Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer

june - august

JUNE 10 Milky Way Photography with Casey Kiernan

JUNE 25 Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer

JULY 8 Milky Way Photography with Casey Kiernan

JULY 23 Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer

AUGUST 27 Community Wellness with Amanda B'Hymer

* indicates there is a preparatory zoom lecture on the Tuesday evening prior to the weekend course

Italicized listing indicates the course is offered for credit through the UCR Extension Program



photography

Please note that participants must supply their own photography equipment and each workshop will have unique equipment lists depending on the activity. Please refer to our website for detailed information about recommended cameras and accessories.

SALTON SEA PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Instructor: Sandi Wheaton, Tour Guide and Photography Instructor

Date: February 12, 10a-6p

Location: Bombay Beach, CA

Fee: \$140

Activity Level: Moderate

The Salton Sea, California's largest lake, was formed during an irrigation engineering accident in 1905. Over the last century, the sea has morphed from recreational oasis to a largely abandoned pool of inhospitable, brackish water. The sea's decaying ruins and plentiful birdlife, paired with intriguing off-the-grid culture and nearby artist projects like Salvation Mountain, have made it a mecca for photographers. You'll hit all the major sites in this full day excursion in the Coachella Valley, south of JTNP.

MORNING LIGHT IN THE PARK

Instructor: Craig Fucile, Photography Instructor

Date/Time: March 4, 7-11a

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$90

Activity Level: Moderate

This half-day class takes advantage of the early mornings, when the park isn't busy, and the light beautifully reveals shapes and textures of the high desert. We'll start the day capturing the massive rock formations and intimate details inside reclusive Hidden Valley. We'll hop over to Keys Ranch, an historic homestead of old buildings, mining machinery, abandoned cars, an array of artifacts from early ranch life—all this ringed by a backdrop of huge boulder piles. The workshop pace is relaxed and well-suited for photographic exploration and hands-on instructor guidance.

NIGHT

STAR TRAILS PHOTOGRAPHY

Instructor: Casey Kiernan, Photography Instructor

Date: Feb 11, 5-8p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$150

Activity Level: Easy

Joshua Tree National Park is world famous for its dark skies! The Park is one of the few places in Southern California where you can see the Night Sky. In this workshop I will show you how to use your DSLR or Mirrorless camera to create star-trail images—those centric rings that represent the movement of the earth over the course of the night. Participants are given an e-book to walk you through post-processing using Adobe Lightroom Class and Star Stax. All skill levels are welcome to attend!

JOSHUA TREE BY MOONLIGHT

Instructor: Craig Fucile, Photography Instructor

Date: March 3, 6-10p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$130

Activity Level: Easy

Seeing the desert illuminated by moonlight is an experience not to be missed. It's a chance to encounter a quiet world of deep shadows and pale highlights, perceived by the eye as a soft-edged, nearly black and white landscape, where a familiar scene in daytime takes on a mysterious quality. In this evening field class, you'll learn useful photographic techniques such as camera placement, focusing, exposure, lens settings, and composing the photograph.

SESSIONS

SUMMER MILKY WAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Instructor: Casey Kiernan, Photography Instructor

Date: June 10, 7p-midnight
July 8, 7p-midnight

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$200

Activity Level: Easy

Summer in the park? You bet. It may be the low season for the high desert, but it's prime time for Milky Way viewing. Temperatures at night are pleasant in the upper 70s and low 80s, and without mosquitos or humidity, you might find it's the perfect time to take in the night sky! Participants are given an e-book to walk you through post-processing using Adobe Lightroom Class. All skill levels are welcome to attend!

Please note this workshop is offered twice, so please double check that you've selected the correct date when registering.

FUNDAMENTALS OF LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP ▲

Instructor: Jon Norris, Photography Instructor and Guide

Date: Mar 17, 5p - Mar 19, 4p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$360

Activity Level: High

Are you new to landscape photography, or are looking for tips on how to improve your game? This weekend intensive will focus on the essential principles and skills needed to unlock creativity and capture the natural world. Students will learn techniques to capture the stunning geological features and diverse range of flora and fauna in a range of light, from blinding daylight to star-studded skies. *Camping is included, and encouraged, but not required.*

ADVANCED LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP ▲

Instructor: Jon Norris, Photography Instructor and Guide

Date: Apr 14, 5p - Apr 16, 4p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$360

Activity Level: High

If you've already got some experience under your belt but want to take your work to the next level, this workshop will be a chance to hone your craft and experiment with nuances in exposure and sharpness and conveying mood through composition or light. This weekend intensive will help you hone your craft and unlock the magic in both the field and the digital darkroom. *Camping is included, and encouraged, but not required.*

art in the desert: a trio of tours

Become a desert art historian! These three tours each visit distinct cultural enclaves within the greater desert area. Tours are led by resident artists and curators with an intimate knowledge of each area's art scene. Sign up for all three weekends and receive 10% off!

THE ART AND CULTURE OF BOMBAY BEACH

Instructor: Sandi Wheaton, Freelance Tour Director and Photography Instructor

Date: February 11, 1-5p

Location: Bombay Beach, CA

Fee: \$90

Activity Level: Moderate

During this ½ day tour you'll visit art sites in Bombay Beach, a community nearly forgotten after flooding in the 1970s/80s demolished its waterfront. Enchanted with this quirky post-apocalyptic-looking place, artists have since breathed new life into the community. Since 2016, the annual Bombay Beach Biennale attracts artists from around the globe, creating artworks, performances, pop-up galleries, and events in the vacant lots and empty buildings. As the Salton Sea shrinks, the open-air canvas grows, and new installations are constantly popping up on the increasingly exposed playa.

WALKING COACHELLA'S PUEBLO VIEJO

Instructor: Steven Biller, Editor in Chief of Palm Springs Life

Date/Time: February 18, 9a-1p

Location: Coachella Valley, CA

Fee: \$90

Activity Level: Easy-Moderate

Enjoy a guided walking tour of historic downtown Coachella, aka the Pueblo Viejo District, and learn about the colorful and meaningful variety of public art, including the Coachella Walls and Shady Lane mural projects, and other "placemaking" initiatives that celebrate the Mexican culture, heritage, and future of the community. This tour celebrates and honors Mexicans and Chicanos who have had a profound and lasting impact on the local community and reflect the innovation and progress-propelling contemporary art of the Coachella Valley and beyond.

CONTEMPORARY ART of JOSHUA TREE

Instructor: Bernard Leibov, Founder and Director of BoxoPROJECTS and Co-Founder/Co-Curator of Joshua Treenial

Date: February 25, 12.30-5p

Location: Joshua Tree, CA

Fee: \$90

Activity Level: Easy-Moderate

Joshua Tree and environs are well known for the burgeoning artist community that has been drawn here. The local contemporary art scene is vibrant and a healthy companion to the music community that has flourished in the area. Bernard Leibov, Director of BoxoPROJECTS, takes us through his highlights of the local cultural scene. We'll visit several of the interesting art sites in the area such as Krblin Jin Kabin, BoxoPROJECTS, Noah Purifoy outdoor art museum, and the pavilions at AZ West. Please note that this activity involves car caravanning from location to location.



community wellness

Our new Community Wellness Days are affordable, ongoing programs that bring people together in casual, but mindful, activities that celebrate the healing, grounding qualities of nature. We hope to build a stronger community by facilitating regular opportunities for wellness-minded people to meet in a safe, inclusive space that encourages personal growth, respect and appreciation for wild desert lands, and positive social interactions. We're starting 2023 off with a new monthly event, "connect to your senses." To learn about new activities as we develop this program, visit us on social: @jtdesertinstitute

CONNECT TO YOUR SENSES

Instructor: Amanda B'Hymer, E-RYT 200, RYT 500, Registered Optimal State Yoga Therapist
Amanda B'Hymer, Yoga Therapist

Location: Blackrock Nature Center

Fee: \$20

Activity Level: Easy

So much of modern life takes place in our minds ~ many of us are engaged in stationary work and drive hours in our cars. As a result, we disconnect our mind from our body experiences. Tune-in to your senses with this community meditation and movement class. Each month, we'll focus on one of the senses and one element of the desert environment: air, water, earth, sun, space. Yoga Therapist, Amanda B'Hymer, will lead accessible practices involving gentle breath and grounding exercises that help us to observe, without judgement, what we are experiencing in that moment as we connect and engage our senses to the desert environment.

Class meets the following Sundays from 1-4:30p:

February 19

March 26

April 23

May 28

June 25

July 23

August 27

Amanda's class is designed for all humans. There are no fitness requirements and no experience in yoga or meditation is required.

desert studies center at zzyzx

Sometimes we hold Desert Institute activities off-site in other desert regions, and one of our favorite destinations is the Desert Studies Center in Zzyzx, CA.

The Desert Studies Center is a field station operated by several of the southern California CSU campuses in partnership with the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management. DSC is located within the Mojave National Preserve on Chemehuevi territory. This part of the desert features diverse wildlife habitats and landscapes, including Joshua Tree forests, sand dunes, and volcanic lava flows.

The DSC provides instruction and research opportunities for students in CSU academic programs, and also hosts educational workshops and events for the greater public. Their work is similar to ours, in that we aim to develop an understanding of, and appreciation for, California desert lands. We have four

programs running at DSC this spring, so if you've always wanted to see what Zzyzx is about, this is a great time to do that!

WHAT'S WITH THE NAME?

Zzyzx is pronounced ZYE-zix

The story goes that a man named Curtis Howe Springer stumbled across the area and set up a mining claim. The nearby Soda Springs turned into a second gold mine, which became the centerpiece of his high-end mineral spa and resort and the concept behind his widely distributed healing beauty product line. (Which eventually crashed and burned when the public discovered the healing minerals were nothing more than mere Epsom salts.) He came up with the name so it would be the official last word in the English language. As far as we know, it still holds that title.

Note: DSC is not open to the public. Please refrain from entering the campus if you do not have a reservation for a class or event.



Students stay in a dormitory-style setting, and meals are provided for registered participants. Food, shelter, education. Your all-inclusive package deal is here. We've got you.

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FLINTKNAPPING

Instructors: Jeanne Binning, Ph.D., Senior Cultural Resource Specialist, Caltrans

Date: Feb. 24, 7p - Feb. 26, noon

Fee: \$340 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$470*)

Activity Level: Easy

What is flintknapping? It's the process of creating stone tools using ancient techniques. Think arrow points, darts, primitive knife blades. Students in this weekend course will survey stone varieties and practice basic skills from pressure flaking, to notching, to percussion reduction techniques. Each participant has the opportunity to haft what he or she manufactures (put a handle on it!)

UCR extension: ANTH x436.5-101 (2 units)

BIRDS OF THE EASTERN MOJAVE: SPRING MIGRATION

Instructor: Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert

Date: May 2, 7p zoom lecture

May 5, 5p - May 7, noon (field course)

Fee: \$340 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$440*)

Activity Level: Moderate

Oases in the Mojave Desert are used by a wide variety of bird species every fall as stopping points during their southward migration. This course examines the important role of these stopover areas in the conservation of neotropical migrant birds. Some of these sites are marshes—others are merely small islands of green in a sea of desert. We'll make short day trips to observe birds in these "migrant traps" and their natural habitats. This weekend course is appropriate for ornithology students of all levels, but also those interested in general desert ecology and natural history.

UCR extension: BIOL x404.21 (1.5 units)

LIZARDS AND SNAKES OF THE EASTERN MOJAVE

Instructor: Jason Wallace, Field Station Manager, CSU Desert Studies Center

Date: May 16, 7p zoom lecture

May 19, 7p - May 21, noon (field course)

Fee: \$340 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$470*)

Activity Level: Moderate-High

This course will familiarize students with the identification and natural history of common lizard and snake species found in the Eastern Mojave Desert. In this weekend class we will explore the Mojave National Preserve and visit several different ecological habitats including Sand dunes, Joshua tree woodland, Creosote scrub, and ancient Volcanic lava fields and flows. A must-do for reptile enthusiasts!

UCR extension: BIOL x414.5 (2 units)

INSECTS AND ARTHROPODS OF THE MOJAVE DESERT

Instructor: Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert

Date: May 16, 7p zoom lecture

May 19, 5p - May 21, noon (field course)

Fee: \$340 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$470*)

Activity Level: Moderate-High

This weekend course will cover basic anatomy of insects, how to tell them apart from other desert arthropods, and introduce students to the many insect orders and families found in the East Mojave Desert region. Mimicry, the use of pheromones, fluorescence, and other important survival traits will be discussed. We will spend time in the field both day and night to observe diurnal, crepuscular, and nocturnal insects, using a variety of different catch-and-release collecting methods to examine them up close. The fascinating world of insects awaits you!

UCR extension: ENTM x405 (2 units)

Fee includes lodging for both Friday and Saturday evenings, as well as three meals on Saturday, and breakfast and lunch Sunday. Participants should expect to arrive to DSC on Friday evenings in order to get settled and attend orientation.

flora

FLORA OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Instructor: Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Professor of Natural Resources, College of the Desert

Date: Mar 7, 7p zoom lecture
Mar 11, 7:30a-3:30p, field course
Mar 12, 8:30a-1p, field course

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$175 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$275*)

Activity Level: Moderate

Students in this casual but purposeful class will have the opportunity to observe many of the flowering plants in Joshua Tree National Park, learn their names, and identify their habitats within the Park's greater plant community. Our field portion will cover pollinators, plant families, and general natural history; the zoom session will preview annuals and flowering shrubs of the Sonoran and Mojave deserts expected in the weekend field outing, and prime students in the use of field guides, plant keys, and the tools necessary to identify plants on their own.

UCR extension: *BPSC x420.5 (1.5 units)*



WILDFLOWERS OF THE MOJAVE

Instructor: Melanie Davis, Field Biologist and Lynn Sweet, PhD Research Ecologist

Dates: March 18, 8a-2p
April 15, 8a-2p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$80

Activity Level: Moderate

Explore the diversity and colorful spring splendor of the Mojave Desert in bloom in this one-day field class. Participants will learn botanical characteristics of the flora while identifying plants by scientific and common names. This outing will provide an intimate setting for participants to get acquainted with these amazing plants up close, as well as tips on where to find some of the most unique plants in the desert.

Please note the dates listed are separate courses, and course location is subject to change based on flowering events in the high desert this spring.



birds

BIRDS OF ANZA BORREGO

Instructor: Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Professor of Natural Resources, College of the Desert

Date: March 14, 7p zoom lecture
 March 18, 7:30a-5p, field course
 March 19, 7:30a-noon, field course

Location: Anza Borrego State Park

Fee: \$175 (UCR extension credit fee: \$275)

Activity Level: Moderate

This two-day weekend field class explores the oases in and around the Anza Borrego Desert, which is home to a surprisingly wide variety of bird species. This habitat also provides the perfect resting place for migrants such as warblers, flycatchers, grosbeaks, sparrows, hawks and other tired travelers on their way south for the winter. After a zoom lecture on Tuesday night, the class spends Saturday and Sunday in the field, studying both migrant and resident bird species. Participants will learn about conservation, ecology, natural history and special adaptations to the harsh desert environment. *Please note that participants will be responsible for their own lodging and accommodations for this weekend course.*

UCR extension: BIOL x404.9 (1.5 units)



ADVANCED BIRD BANDING

Instructor: Stephen Myer

Date: Apr 26, 6-8p, lecture
 Apr 30, 7a-1p, banding session
 May 14, 7a-1p, banding session

Location: Whitewater Preserve

Fee: \$175 (UCR extension credit fee: \$275)

Activity Level: Easy-Moderate

This course builds on the information presented in Beginning Bird Banding. We'll focus on molt limits and other characteristics in North American birds that help determine age. Topics include plumage topography, molt terminology, and molt strategies among songbirds and their close relatives. Time will also be spent on banding ethics, safe handling of birds, prevention and treatment of stress and injuries, color banding, blood and feather sampling, and MAPS banding. *Prerequisites: Biology X404.4 (Introduction to Bird Banding), or prior approval from the instructor. Basic bird identification skills helpful.*

UCR extension: BIOL x404.4 (1.5 units)

BIRDS OF JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

Instructor: Kurt Leuschner, M.S., Professor of Natural Resources, College of the Desert

Date: Apr 25, 7p zoom lecture
 Apr 29, 7:30a-4:30p, field course
 Apr 30, 7:15a-1:15a, field course

Fee: \$175 (UCR extension credit fee: \$240)

Location: Various throughout Morongo Basin

Activity Level: Easy-Moderate

The deceptively barren Mojave Desert landscape is home and resting grounds for numerous endemic and migratory bird species. Despite the dry climate and sparse vegetation, over 240 species of birds have been recorded in Joshua Tree National Park! Participants in this two-day field course will learn about nesting and feeding habits, adaptive strategies, and better understand the role birds play in the high desert ecosystem. And maybe get the chance to sight rare species like the Pinyon Jay, Prairie Falcon, or Lawrence's Goldfinch, if we're lucky!

UCR extension: BIOL x404 (1 unit)

wilderness weekends

HOW TO NAVIGATE WITH MAP AND COMPASS

Instructor: Misha Askren, Hike leader, Sierra Club

Date: Mar 11, 8a-4p

Mar 12, 8a-1p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$125

Activity Level: Medium-high

Do you want the confidence to explore the desert without getting lost? (And without GPS?) Participants in this two-day field course will learn the basics of topography, map reading, using a compass, and the history of navigation. The course culminates with a route-finding adventure in the wilderness of Joshua Tree National Park, where students will find caches, explore the terrain, and eventually find their way back home.

Please note that participants will be responsible for their own lodging and accommodations for this weekend course.

BACKPACKING: BEYOND THE BOY SCOUT TRAIL ▲

Instructor: Sarah Witt, Director, Desert Institute Director

Date: Apr 6, 9a - Apr 8, noon

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$360

Activity Level: Extreme

Backpacking in the desert? Yes, it's possible! Spend a few days out in the backcountry with DI director Sarah Witt and learn how to plan your own dry-clim outing while traveling the picturesque boundary-lands of the Joshua Tree National Park wilderness. We'll trek 22.5 miles on this 3-day, 2-night trip that loops through the northwest corner of the park. This outing is great for all level of backpackers, but especially beginners who have a streak for adventure and aren't quite ready to go on their own.

WOMEN'S GETAWAY WEEKEND ▲

Instructor: Pam Kersey, EdD, MSN, RN

Robin Balch, JT Search and Rescue

Date: Mar 25, 8a - Mar 26, 4p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$210

Activity Level: Moderate-High

Get away with other women and unplug! Trade in your computers, cell phones, Instagram, clocks, and workplace jargon for an off-the-grid camping weekend with the girls. Participants will be introduced to the fundamentals of camping, camp cooking, and outdoor skills. The weekend will be rounded out with plenty of hiking, yoga, and time to reflect. Enjoy the company of like-minded ladies over two days of pure, unadulterated fun and education in Joshua Tree National Park.

FAMILY CAMP-N-COOK WEEKEND ▲

Instructor: Emily Neilson and Mai-Yan Kwan, Dirty Gourmet Owners and Chefs

Date: Apr 1, 9am - Apr 2, 11am

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$90/adult, \$60/child (12 and under)

Activity Level: Easy

If spring fever is catching you and the family, chase it outside! Join Dirty Gourmet for a quick and dirty weekend amongst the Joshua Trees, where they'll show you tips from their popular outdoor cookbooks to tighten up your camping food game when you've got mouths to feed but no kitchen for miles. They'll also help you navigate how to satisfy the full spectrum from picky to daring, and truly make outdoor cooking part of your family adventure.



MAMMAL TRACKING ▲

Instructor: Jim Lowery, Primitive Skills Teacher,

Author of *The Tracker's Field Guide*

Date: May 6, 8:15a - May 7, 2p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$210

Activity Level: Easy

Learn and refine fundamental tracking skills in this weekend-long field class full of “dirt time.” Students will learn to translate patterns in the sand into animal stories by following trails, interpreting tracks and signs, and reading the mood and body language of desert animals through their trails. Wildlife behavior, biology, and ecological relationships will also be examined. Feel the thrill of becoming an environmental detective!

geology

JT Rocks!

Instructor: Alessandro Grippo, PhD, Geology

Date: May 6, 10a-3p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park, CA

Fee: \$60

Activity Level: easy-medium

A variety of different rocks is present in Joshua Tree, and this class will allow you to recognize and identify the main types, while enjoying the fantastic and unique landscape of the park. This one-day class will start in the classroom by covering the basics of geology, from plate tectonics to major rock groups, with identification of some samples. We will then proceed to explore some of the most famous outcrops along Park Boulevard, finding out some of these rocks in the field and discussing their texture and composition.

FOSSILS of the MARBLE MOUNTAINS

Instructor: Alessandro Grippo, PhD, Geology

Date: April 22, 10a-3p

Location: Amboy, CA

Fee: \$80

Activity Level: High

The Marble Mountains are a rather small mountain range located in one of the harshest, driest parts of the Mojave Desert, in southeastern California near the tiny towns of Chambless and Cadiz. What makes the Marble Mountains especially attractive to paleontologists is the comparatively rich Cambrian fossil biota, dominated by one of earliest known groups of arthropods: trilobites. Slather on the sunscreen and join Alessandro for this one-day field class right of historic route 66 in the middle of the Mojave.

just added!

MOSS ECOLOGY AND DIVERSITY

Instructor: Theresa Clark, PhD, Biological Sciences

Dates: Feb 18, 9a-5p

Feb 19, 9a-4p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$175 (*UCR extension credit fee: \$240*)

Activity Level: Easy

Moss in the desert? Why yes! Come learn the many important roles mosses play in desert ecosystems! This mysterious and beautiful group of tiny, overlooked plants comprise over 200 species in the Mojave Desert and many survive by spending much of the year dry and dormant while continuing to stabilize soils and provide habitat to invertebrates. Students will learn about mosses' adaptation for "drying without dying" in desert ecosystems and how microhabitats help protect mosses from the extreme desert climate.

UCR extension: BIOL x425.1 (1 unit)

BIOCRUST WONDER WALK

Hike leader: Theresa Clark, PhD, Biological Sciences

Date: Feb 20, 9a-1p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park, CA

Fee: \$40

Activity Level: easy-medium

The desert floor may look like dirt and sand from afar, but with a trained eye and magnifying lens, you can find it covered by beautiful, tiny organisms composing biological soil crust communities vital to the desert ecosystem! Living in the upper inch of the soil surface, these "biocrust" communities include mosses, lichens, blue-green algae, green algae, water bears, diatoms, and bacteria, among other invertebrates. In this field walk, participants will view the secret life of these intricate organisms through hand and magnifying lenses as Theresa discusses how to distinguish the different organismal groups and types of biocrust, highlighting their unique ecological roles in desert ecosystems.

EXPLORE THE GOLDEN BEE MINE

Hike leaders: Pam Kersey and Tom Scanlan

Date: Mar 4, 7a-2p

Location: Joshua Tree National Park

Fee: \$55

Activity Level: High

What do honeybees have to do with gold mining? Find out the answer on our hike to the site of the Golden Bee Mine, located in the Hexie Mountains in Joshua Tree National Park. We'll see the mine entrance, as well as the remains of some equipment, mining camps, and the mine office area, and discuss the history of mining in JTNP and the Golden State at large. This hike is approximately 6 miles out and back with some cross-country hiking required. The last section follows a rocky old mining road with a steep, 800 ft. elevation gain at the end. It's worth the effort if you feel up to the challenge!

get out there with us



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want to get involved?



MAILING LIST

Join our mailing list to learn about DI events and experiences. We do some cool things besides field courses, like our summer concert series in the park, and the monthly Old Schoolhouse Lecture series co-curated with the 29 Palms Historical Society. Email desertinstitute@joshuatree.org to join the mailing list.

VOLUNTEER

Join our community of adventurous, kind, and conservation-driven volunteers! Volunteers are at the heart of what we do at DI—they accompany all field courses, help keep logistics in place, and most importantly, ensure the safety of our guests. If someone gets injured, falls ill, or can't complete the course, volunteers are the ones who step in to take care. They're our backup guides and a huge part of the DI team! If you'd like to learn more about upcoming volunteer training events, please drop us a line and we'll give you the scoop: desertinstitute@joshuatree.org.

MEMBERSHIP

Join the Joshua Tree National Park Association and you'll support park programs and projects while enjoying some great benefits. Our members are a committed group of supporters whose contributions each year help the park fulfill its educational, interpretive, and research plans. As a member you'll assist in providing aid for important projects and support future conservation and educational efforts to preserve the place we love most, Joshua Tree National Park! Visit our website at www.joshuatree.org to become a member today.

Send us an email with your ideas and feedback: desertinstitute@joshuatree.org




staying safe in the field

Those endless clear skies, the warmth of sun-kissed skin, the splendor of that sunset, the....oh wait, it's getting chilly. And...(my phone battery is at 5%)...dark....oh wait, my phone doesn't even have signal here in the park...

You can imagine the story unfolding like a cliché Hollywood drama. But cliché is cliché for a reason. Don't let this story become your truth! We often forget when we're basking on a warm rock, that the situation is about to shift, and quickly.

Deserts are defined by their lack of moisture, and with that comes inevitable stark differences between day and night, primarily in the form of temperature. A day in the desert might be a radiant 75, but temperatures at night could easily dip to near freezing. And if you're out for a hike in the wonderland of rocks and get turned around, which isn't too hard, you might be needing more than the 16oz bottle of water and travel-sized sunscreen. Exposure (to the elements) is the number one cause of death in the wilderness. And the most vulnerable people are day hikers. No, it's not that guy you saw at the diner this morning who looks like he just walked 200 miles across the desert for fun (because he might have.) He's got his tent for shelter, adequate clothing for cold nights, and extra food and water (if he's smart.) That's right, the group who needs to get rescued more than any other group is day hikers.

Seriously? You ask. Yep, and the main reason why is that day-hikers often don't come prepared because "it's just a short little walk, we'll be back in an hour." Besides, phones can save any day...right? Wrong.

Once you enter the park, you will lose signal, so it cannot be relied upon. (Turn into airplane mode to save battery)

Hikers can easily lose the trail, especially in the desert, where washes cut through swathes of land and intersect with the real trail. True, sometimes a wash is part of a trail for a segment, but often washes are just imposters, as they look and feel just like a trail to the untrained eye. Social trails, animal trails, and other paths also cut through desert lands, and can easily lead you off course. Combine that with the endless fields of boulders that seem to go on for miles and miles (because they do), and you can see just how easy it is to get lost. It can happen to anyone, even the experienced hiker.

If you plan to get out onto a trail, even a short one, make sure you (or someone in your party if you promise not to let each other out of your eyes) carry the following. And if you do stray from the group and feel lost, STAY PUT! It's much less likely two marbles

in a circle will hit one another if they're both moving. If you stay in one spot, it will be easier to be found. The second you think you might be off trail, stop. Don't keep going. If you're really lost, don't yell, as that will wear out your voice--blow a whistle (which is one of those things that you'll see on the "10 essentials".) Look around you and see if you can see the glint of cars--many areas in the park are within road shot.

Bottom line? **Come prepared**, because **nature is not forgiving**. If you do find yourself off course, don't panic. A calm mind is a clear mind. Use this list to get ready for your desert experience, so you can enjoy it safely!

What should you bring?

It might feel like overkill, but these things just might save your life (and definitely can make it more comfortable while you're in the elements.)

1. map and compass

it's not enough to carry it, know how to use it! (hint, take our map and compass class in March) Downloading a map of the area ahead of time is a good idea, but make sure you have a spare, charged power bank, and never just rely on your device to show you where you are.

2. FOUR QUARTS of WATER

at least! the desert is dry, and you sweat and respire a lot of your moisture without even realizing it. This is also great so that if a hiking buddy needs water, you've got extra.

3. close-toed shoes (and tweezers)

no, we're not plucking eyebrows. We're pulling out any stickers you might encounter from cacti--watch out for the jumping cholla, which can go right through the sole of a shoe if you step on it just right. And yes, wear proper shoes. No flip-flops, sandals, or open-toed-high-heeled shoes.

4. salty, high calorie snacks

hanging in a national park is not the time to count calories. Salty snacks are great to replenish lost sodium, as are electrolyte drinks. Extra snacks are always appreciated if you're out longer than expected.

5. WARM LAYERS

this one gets an all-caps. It gets anywhere from chilly to below freezing at night. Always bring an insulating layer, even if you're not planning to be out after the sun sets—our plans don't always work out. A waterproof shell is great to have as well, especially if the forecast is questionable.

6. SUN PROTECTION

this comes in many forms. Sunscreen, lip balm with spf, sun hat, neck gaiter, sunglasses, and long-sleeved shirts. A light-colored and lightweight long-sleeved shirt will often keep you cooler than having bare skin exposed.

7. First aid

like the first on this list, doesn't do you any good if you don't know how to use it. At a minimum, carry bandages and medications you might need.

8. headlamp or small light

this comes in handy if you end up out later than expected. If you end up using your phone flashlight, you'll drain that battery super fast, and if you're using it for GPS, well....

9. mirror

if you are truly lost and unsure of where you are or how to get back to a road, you can use it to signal aircraft.

10. whistle

if you're in danger or lost, a whistle is more effective than your vocal cords, which wear out quickly.

10 essentials for everyday in the desert, no matter what your plans are.

VISITOR CENTERS & PARK STORES

JTNPA West Park Store
55922 Twentynine Palms Hwy.
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Joshua Tree Cultural Center
6533 Freedom Way, Twentynine
Palms, CA 92277

Joshua Tree Visitor Center
6554 Park Blvd.
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

Oasis of Mara Park Store
74485 National Park Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Black Rock Nature Center
8900 Black Rock Canyon Road
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Cottonwood Visitor Center
Pinto Basin Road
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

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