

Ecology of Joshua Tree National Park

Information

Date/ Time: Saturday, March 23, 8 am – 5 pm

Sunday, March 24, 7:45 am – 4:45 pm

Meet at: [Oasis Visitor Center](#) (click on link for a map of the meeting site)

74485 National Park Dr, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Instructor: Allan Schoenherr, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus, Ecology, Fullerton College

Overview

Join Allan Schoenherr, Ph.D. and author of *A Natural History of California*, to learn about the Desert environment and the unique plants and animals that define Joshua Tree National Park during this two-day field class. Schoenherr will begin with an overview of the North American deserts and then focus on desert ecology in Joshua Tree National Park. Presentations, illustrations and inter-active demonstrations will explain the relationships between living organisms as well as the adaptations that allow life to survive in arid landscapes. The class will visit multiple sites in the park where the two major ecosystems, the Mojave and Colorado Deserts, will be discussed. Participants will learn the distinctive qualities of these ecosystems and what plants and animals call them home. The class will also have opportunities to identify wildflowers, birds, and other animals in the field. Schoenherr makes ecology approachable and fun; just bring your lunch, water, and hat and learn about the fascinating flora and fauna of Joshua Tree National Park!

Itinerary

Saturday, March 23, 8 am – 5 pm

Oasis Visitor Center

- Multi-media presentation
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Field class

Sunday, March 24, 7:45 am – 4:45 pm

- Field class
- Lunch/snack break, **bring your own food**
- Continuation of field class
- Quiz for those taking the course for college credit

What to Bring to the Course

Optional Class Materials

- Magnifying glass to look at flowers

The 10 Essentials: Every day in the Desert

- Day pack
- 4 quarts of water
- Closed toe hiking shoes
- Lunch and snacks
- Clothing layers
- Hat
- Sun glasses
- Sunscreen
- Notebook and pencil/pen
- Whistle

Fitness Requirements

Participants must be in good physical condition for courses/activities in a desert that may be hot, dry, windy, and sometimes surprisingly cold.

Hike Level

Easy

Guidelines

- You are responsible for your safety.
- Park your car in designated areas only. Parking along the side of the road is dangerous to you and the environment.
- Rattlesnakes are present in the desert. Avoid contact with wildlife. Put your hands and feet only where you can see them.
- Stay with the group. If you get lost, stay put.
- Drink plenty of water. If you run out, notify the instructor or the Desert Institute Representative.
- Before leaving the class, check out with the Desert Institute Representative.

College Credit

If taking this course for 2 units of Biology (X412.4) credit through the University of California Riverside Extension, participation (50%) and assigned work/quiz (50%) will determine the grade.

Suggested Reading

**Mojave Desert Wildflowers*, Falcon Guide by Pam MacKay

**A Natural History of California* by A.A. Schoenherr

Instructor Biography

Allan Schoenherr, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Ecology, Fullerton College, is an expert on California flora and fauna, as exemplified by two major books he has authored, *A Natural History of California* and *A Natural History of the Islands of California*. He is also the lead author of the chapter on the Colorado Desert which is in the Third Edition of *Terrestrial Vegetation of California* of which is also a co-editor. Schoenherr has been doing research, traveling, and photographing the southwestern desert for many years. In addition to teaching ecology at several universities, he has led many field courses throughout California's deserts.

* The Desert Institute staff/instructors will attempt to accommodate participant's needs; however we reserve the right to deny a student participation in the course due to concerns regarding health and safety issues.