



74485 National Park Drive, Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

www.joshuatree.org ▪ 760-367-5525 ▪ 760-367-5583 fax

For Immediate Release: March 11, 2019

Contact: Jacqueline Guevara, Executive Director
Joshua Tree National Park Association
Jacqueline@joshuatree.org 760-361-9359

Robin Kobaly named Recipient of the 2018 Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award

Twentynine Palms, CA, March 11, 2019 – The Joshua Tree National Park Association is pleased to announce Robin Kobaly, a professional biologist with over twenty years of experience as an interpretive specialist, as the recipient of the 2018 Minerva Hoyt Conservation Award.

The purpose of this award is to recognize individuals or organizations that have made notable achievements in the areas of leadership, protection, preservation, research, education, and stewardship leading to a significant and lasting contribution on behalf of the deserts of California, and Robin certainly fits the bill.

After receiving her Masters' Degree in Biology from the University of California Riverside, Robin traveled the world continuing her lifelong fascination with plants, birds and wildlife. She worked as the Curator of Botany at the Riverside Municipal Museum and then began a twenty-year career with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a botanist, wildlife biologist and natural history interpreter. Robin also served as Acting Chief of Public Affairs for BLM and has prepared and presented programs for television and radio broadcast as well as appearing as spokesperson for many different programs focused on natural history. Robin co-founded and helped to develop The Wildlands Conservancy, one of the largest non-profit land conservancies in the United States. There, she instituted the Sand-to-Snow Wilderness Project, a 21-year effort which eventually led to the federal campaign responsible for the Sand to Snow National Monument.

She was the first preserve manager of the Big Morongo Canyon Preserve and developed and implemented the environmental outreach program there, which in 2000 received the highest public approval rating of any BLM site in the nation. She was also the driving force behind the installation of the boardwalk system in the wetlands of the Preserve.

Robin has worked with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory to train scientists from NASA and BLM in new techniques for vegetation and soils mapping from aerial photographs and satellite imagery. She has interpreted aerial photography to determine plant species composition, cover, biomass, and productivity desert-wide in California, and integrated satellite imagery, aerial photography, and ground data to help produce the vegetation map for the California Desert Conservation Area. Robin has conducted inventories and monitored impacts to rare, threatened, and endangered plant species, and resolved conflicts between resource protection and human activities within "Watchable Wildlife Areas", wildlife preserves, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Recently, Robin served on the Independent Science Panel to provide science-based input to the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) planning process and to develop recommendations to state and federal Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) agencies for renewable energy development in the California Desert.

After a lifetime of work which spans both conservation and education milestones, Robin is currently the Founder and Executive Director of the Summertree Institute, where she continues to impact young citizen scientists through her "Discovering the Ancients" and "Saving the Ancients" programs. Additionally, she designs and presents popular and highly-requested events and programs for adults and children through her organization, The Power of Plants. We are pleased to bestow this honor upon Robin Kobaly and are sure that Minerva Hoyt would indeed feel the same way.

Previous recipients of *Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award* are:

2004 Susan Luckie Reilly

2005 Larry & Donna Charpied

2006 David Myers and The Wildlands Conservancy

2007 John Wohlmuth and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments

2008 Mark Jorgenson, Superintendent of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park

2009 United States Senator Dianne Feinstein

2010 Owens Valley Committee

2011 Elden E. Hughes

2012 Steven L. & Ruth Rieman

2013 Dee & Betty Zeller

2014 Terry Weiner and The Desert Protective Council

2015 Nancy Karl

2016 Cindy Zacks

2017 Pat Flanagan

###