



For Immediate Release

July 23, 2014

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**20th Anniversary Celebrations of the California Desert Protection Act Launched
by Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts**

Organization will coordinate, support, and promote desert-wide events and activities that mark an important milestone for California desert residents and visitors

Twentynine Palms, CA – Today, the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts launched an initiative to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994. Today’s announcement comes 100 days out from the anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act, which became law on October 31, 1994.

The California Desert Protection Act enlarged and re-designated Joshua Tree and Death Valley as national parks, established the Mojave National Preserve, and established 69 wilderness areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the California desert. In total, the California Desert Protection Act increased protection for 8.6 million acres of the California desert.

“The 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act is an opportunity to celebrate our region and encourage support for continued efforts to protect the California desert,” said Vickie Waite, Executive Director of the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts. “We are honored to work with communities throughout the desert to mark this important milestone. Thanks to the California Desert Protection Act, we enjoy the beauty of Joshua Tree, Death Valley, and the Mojave National Preserve. These lands are the backbone of our tourism economy and make this region a great place to live and visit.”

As part of this initiative, the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts will coordinate, support, and promote 20th anniversary events throughout the region. The Council for the Arts also launched a new website (www.caldesert20.org) which will house a calendar of events, background information about the California Desert Protection Act, maps, photos, and more. As events are scheduled for fall of 2014, the website will be updated regularly with new information for the community.

“We encourage local organizations and community members to join in this celebration of the California desert,” continued Waite. “There are many ways to get involved, from attending events to organizing your own. In 2004, more than a dozen events were held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act. We’re looking forward to building on these activities for the 20th anniversary celebration.”

“The City of Twentynine Palms serves as a gateway community to Joshua Tree National Park and, in general, the California desert. As we plan special events this fall for the 20th anniversary, we look forward to visitors coming to our community to join the celebration,” said Cynthia Truitt, Twentynine Palms Chamber of Commerce Executive Director. “Visitors and residents alike enjoy our clear skies, brilliant star-filled nights, and desert and mountain vistas that the California Desert Protection Act helped to protect.”

“The 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act is a perfect opportunity for Ridgecrest to welcome visitors to the Death Valley region. For new and returning visitors alike, coming to the other side of California, east of the Sierras, is always a memorable experience,” said Doug Lueck, Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director. “This fall, during the anniversary celebrations, visitors will have an opportunity to experience the past in the first Ridgecrest Petroglyph and Heritage Festival in November, which will highlight Native American rock art in our desert mountains and the history of the Indian Wells Valley.”

Organizations and community members interested in getting involved with the 20th anniversary events should contact Vickie Waite, Executive Director of the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, at (760) 217-8839 or director@caldesert20.org. Members of the media should contact Sarah Hersh, Full Court Press Communications, at 510-550-8170 or sarah@fcpccommunications.com. Downloadable photos of the California desert are available to media [here](#).

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About the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts

The Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts is dedicated to fostering the spirit of artistic expression inspired by the park, celebrating the park's majestic landscape and precious wildlife, preserving the park's cultural history, and supporting the preservation, enhancement, and sustainability of the entire California desert region. Learn more at www.jtnparts.org and follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/JTNPArts) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/JTNPArts).