The last of the three largest springs in the Upper Carson Slough will be restored this month. In 2009, Fairbanks and Soda Spring outflow channels were restored, and in 2014 Longstreet and Rogers spring channels were completed. This translates to almost eight miles of channel restored for desert fish; the Ash Meadows speckled dace and Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish. These fish as well as several other species of plants, snails, and aquatic bugs do not exist anywhere else on the planet. They are known as endemic species. In addition to preserving habitat for several species, the restoration will also help in the recovery of Carson Slough—once the largest wetland in southern Nevada. These wetlands are essential to the health of the Mojave Desert and also to the planet. Wetlands naturally filter and recharge the water that later comes out of our faucets; they slow the flow of surface water reducing the impacts of flooding, and they can remove greenhouse gases which slows the onset of global warming.

Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge receives visitors from around the world. Many come to catch a glimpse of the 26 known endemic species found at the refuge. Others come to view more common species.

Beginner, amateur, and serious birders flock to the refuge in anticipation of spotting some of the 275 bird species that have been recorded here. When was the last time you saw a pelican in the desert?

Students from around the world come to explore this desert oasis and the crystal clear water; so old it’s called fossil water. Environmental law students visit to learn more about this site of the historical landmark Supreme Court ruling (Cappaert v. United States) which limited ground water pumping to protect the Devils Hole pupfish. It was the Devils Hole pupfish that started the movement to protect the unique ecosystem of Ash Meadows. These small fish were one of the first species to be placed on the Endangered Species List.

If you like the unsolved and mysterious, Devils Hole is for you. The depth of Devils Hole is more than 450′ deep, the bottom has never been found nor have two divers who went missing in 1965. The rarest pupfish in the world lives here in 93°F water which is always calm until an earthquake occurs somewhere in the world. Approximately twenty minutes after the magnitude 9.0 earthquake happened off the coast of Honshu, Japan in March 2011, small waves began to slosh back and forth on the surface of Devils Hole.

Want more?

(Continued on page 2)
Ash Meadows—Continued

In 1896, a man by the name of Jack Longstreet built a cabin made of stone. The cabin was carefully constructed into the side of a mound, near a spring that still bears his name. The stones, water, and mound kept the cabin cool creating a crude form of refrigeration for the time. Today, visitors can still experience this cooling effect as they enter the cabin on a hot summer day.

Researchers stumbled on two new species of bees in 2010 when they were looking at the relationship between pollinators and rare desert plants. This created quite the ‘buzz’ in the scientific community especially when you consider that bees are disappearing at an alarming rate.

Are there any botanists out there wanting to make a new discovery? We are still waiting to find out why some of the Indian paintbrush grows 4’ tall.

Our visitors get here on 2 wheels, 4 wheels, 8 wheels, weird wheels, old wheels, and no wheels (walking their mule from Nevada to Arizona). Regardless of how you get here, just get here! Perhaps when you get here we’ll have new exhibits in a new visitor center, the perfect venue for showing our new Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge film.

60 Years of Service

This month, Death Valley Natural History Association celebrates its 60th Anniversary as Death Valley’s non-profit partner. Watch your mail for a special envelope announcing our $60 for 60 Years Campaign. The National Park Service is deciding on the project now, so I hope we can count on all of our members to show their support for Death Valley and the DVNHA by responding to the mailer.

So, what have we done in the last 60 years? In the beginning, Death Valley National Monument let us set up a display case of publications in the lobby of the Cow Creek Administration building and we had humble aspirations of bringing in 200 memberships. Since then, we’ve grown to over 1400 active members and donors and we’ve provided almost $3.5 million in aid to our partners, millions of pieces of free publications to our visitors, and the completion of dozens of resource and research projects. We’ve also funded the Death Valley R.O.C.K.S education program, organized quite a few Scotty’s Castle Organ Concerts, History and Natural History Conferences, and published a number of books. We’ve become the non-profit partner for Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and recently started providing interpretive hiking programs for adults as a Road Scholar affiliate. It’s never a dull moment filling the needs of our partners here in the Death Valley region.

So, what’s next? More of the same—only bigger and better. Remember we could not do all of this without you, so we look forward to a bright future working together to support the most incredible place on Earth.

From the Director

By David Blacker, Executive Director
Our first full season of Road Scholar is sadly over, but what a great season it was. We made 216 new friends, hiked almost 250 miles, and shared over 8,600 hours of education!

We had some great new staff join us this year. We’re lucky to bring on Jay Snow who worked for years as a park ranger, and full-time photographer, Mike Griffin.

This year, we added a few new hiking locations like Dantes View, Greenwater Valley, and Gnomes Workshop, and plan to add more next season. Some of our wildlife sightings included bighorn sheep, coyotes, roadrunners, ravens, insects, and flowers. We’ve also seen sidewinder tracks at the sand dunes. See what you’ve been missing?

We look forward to this next season and can’t wait to meet the new program participants. We’ve scheduled 12 programs this coming October-February, all based out of Furnace Creek. If you are interested in joining us, please visit: www.roadscholar.org for more information on the Hiking Death Valley program, #6120.

A Prehistory and History of the Death Valley Region’s Native Americans and the Environments In Which They Lived, by Kenneth Lengner is now available.

This book describes the historic and prehistoric environments (geology, climate, rivers and lakes, vegetation, and animals) from 28,500 years ago to present day. The intent of this publication is to foster an understanding of the region’s prehistoric and historic Native Americans by identifying the multiplicity of environments that challenged them during the Late Pleistocene - Late Holocene eras.

Chronological historic events and representative prominent Death Valley region Native Americans complete the book.

Available for purchase online at dvnha.org/ or call us: 1-800-478-8564 ext. 10

$27.95

Above and below, photo credit: road scholar, Pat Hammersmith
On the horizon—the new Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge visitor center is expected to be completed in December 2014 or early 2015. An artist’s rendering of the building design is shown, above. Upon completion, the visitor center will include an exhibit hall, an area for special events, and of course, our new bookstore. This project is paid for by funds from the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act. A new Ash Meadows film will be shown, introducing visitors to the refuge and the incredible ecosystem found nowhere else in the United States. The film will also be available for purchase.