



Volume 60  
Issue 1

# TELESCOPE

The Official Newsletter of the Death Valley Natural History Association

Winter/Spring 2015



*A few miles in, traveling through Greenwater Valley, this breathtaking shot was taken by DVNHA's, Christine Mikiel, on February 21st. These 1-3 foot patches of green and purple (Phacelia fremontii) with the occasional yellow blooms (Eschscholzia glyptosperma) were scattered along the desert floor. Winter 2015 sure seems like spring here in Death Valley.*

## Greetings from Death Valley National Park's New Chief of Interpretation

By Linda Slater, NPS

**H**ello! Although I've been working at Death Valley for just a few months, I have camped and hiked in the park's remote canyons many times over the years. On these trips, I was always amazed by the sunrise light show, as the sun illuminates the high peaks of the Panamint Mountains, then sweeps down across the bajada to the valley floor. Now I get to see it every morning on my way to the office! It's still breath-taking.

I've worked at a number of other National Park Service units, most recently at Mojave National Preserve, another of the California desert's wonderlands. As Chief of Interpretation, I'm responsible for the information centers, indoor and outdoor exhibits, ranger programs, and tours at Scotty's Castle. We are fortunate to have a talented staff of experienced rangers leading our programs, and I encourage all to check the schedule on our website, [nps.gov/deva](http://nps.gov/deva), as you plan your next visit.



At Death Valley, as at all parks across the country, we are preparing to celebrate the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016. The goal of the Centennial is "to connect with and create the next generation of park visitors, supporters and advocates," so we are experimenting with reaching

out in new ways. Rangers recently launched the Hike Death Valley program, which encourages visitors to enrich their experience by getting out of their cars to take a hike. Participants earn points by hiking certain trails. After earning 4 points, they bring selfies and group photos to the visitor center, share their experience with the ranger, and receive a limited edition Hike Death Valley decal. Participants can post photos to #HikeDeathValley. More Centennial events for 2016 are in the planning stages, and DVNHA will be partnering with us on these...more details to come!

Beyond events, DVNHA supports many of our outreach efforts. I am currently partnering with DVNHA to develop a "live feed" video exhibit, so that visitors at Furnace Creek will be able to see the Devils Hole pupfish in their natural habitat. Long term, I will be looking for ways to provide more educational programming to local and regional schools. A field trip to a national park provides youth with an unforgettable experience that can develop into a life-long passion for parks. DVNHA has supported education programming in the past, and the DVNHA Board of Directors expressed an interest in reinvigorating this program at their strategic planning session I attended in November.

During my first few months here, we've had several rains that resulted in a colorful wildflower display. I look forward to experiencing all the changes of season here and meeting the challenge of living through summers in the hottest place on earth!

# DVNHA Launches Strategic Plan

In November of 2014, we surveyed our staff, Board of Directors, agency partners, and our dedicated members and friends. After careful consideration of these survey results, and with the help of an Association of Partners for Public Lands (APPL) facilitator, we came up with a comprehensive strategic plan to be implemented during the next 3-5 years. We could not have completed such a far-reaching plan without your suggestions. Thank you to everyone who participated! We are very excited about this plan and will be referring to it for measuring future successes. You may have already noticed some of these changes being incorporated in our communications. This serves as an ever-present reminder of who we are, where we wish to go, and why we do everything we do.

**Our Vision:** *Inspiring a passion for Death Valley and Ash Meadows*

**Our Mission:** *Preserving and interpreting the natural and cultural resources of the Death Valley region in cooperation with our government partners*

**Our Values:** Education • Preservation • Partnership • Accountability

**Our Strategies:**

- Maintain and Grow a Strong Business Model
- Strengthen Marketing, Communications, & Outreach
- Maintain and Enhance Partnerships
- Advance Educational Programming

\*DVNHA's full strategic plan is available as a PDF download available via our website: [dvnha.org/about-us/strategic-plan](http://dvnha.org/about-us/strategic-plan)

Part of this implementation includes changes to our member levels. At our November Board Meeting, our Board of Directors voted to increase membership dues for the first time in over a decade. This new pricing was effective for those joining after January 1, 2014:

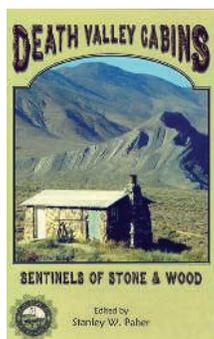
## NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Basic, \$35 to be renewed annually  
Sustaining, \$100 to be renewed annually  
Sponsor, \$250 to be renewed annually  
Lifetime Membership, \$1000 remains unchanged

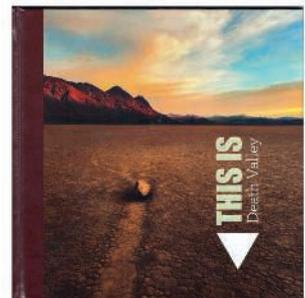
What does it all mean? All current members will be asked to renew at new levels when your current membership expires. These membership price increases still offer low cost membership options while offering higher levels to those who wish to contribute more annually, helping us maximize effectiveness with our partnerships. The name of our previous "Individual" level was misleading. Many members thought that only one name could be attached to a membership. By mailing only once per household, your dollars can go further and we know that's what you want. Upon renewal, please feel free to add an additional name, or family name to your membership for no additional cost. TOPO CD ROM and DVNHA field bags are still being offered, but look for these new gift options in your renewal request!

If you have any questions about your membership, please call our development office at 775 537-0787 ext. 208 or e-mail us at [memberships@dvnha.org](mailto:memberships@dvnha.org).

SUSTAINING



SPONSOR



# Fiscal Year 2014 IN REVIEW

DVNHA provided \$163,011 in aid to our agency partners during the fiscal period of October 1, 2013 - September 31, 2014. We printed 2,000 Trail Guides and 178,500 Visitor Guides, funded seven internships, provided 8,640 hours of educational programming, 700 hours of wilderness restoration, and held a science conference with over 150 people in attendance. We also provided 5,840 hours of visitor service assistance to 68,201 visitors in Death Valley National Park and Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. It was a busy year!

Here's the breakdown:

- \$5,670 - Ash Meadows book expenditures
- \$1,685 - Staff time in Ash Meadows
- \$768 - Ash Meadows volunteer stipends
- \$741 - Connect People to Nature Grant expenditure
- \$353 - Additional Ash Meadows aid
- \$92,390 - Staff time in Death Valley
- \$14,556 - Free publications
- \$8,256 - Payroll taxes on donated staff time
- \$8,178 - Tuning and maintenance of Scotty's Castle organ and associated instruments
- \$8,060 - Scotty's Castle curatorial interns
- \$5,621 - KNPR radio tower repair assessment
- \$3,403 - Search and rescue
- \$3,396 - Scotty's Castle interpretive interns
- \$3,221 - Wilderness restoration
- \$2,403 - NPF Wilderness Grant expenditures
- \$1,500 - NPF Music in the Parks Grant expenditures
- \$1,260 - Death Valley Natural History book expenditures
- \$1,127 - Miscellaneous aid to NPS
- \$423 - Donations of inventory

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

By David Blacker, Executive Director

Flowers, flowers, and more flowers! In case you haven't heard, we are going to have a great wildflower season. Big green patches are appearing with flowers coming out here and there. March should be amazing.

As you have already read in this issue, 2014 was a year of changes. I can't begin to express my happiness with our new strategic plan and with the additions of Linda Slater as Chief of Interpretation and Josh Hoines the new Chief of Resources here in Death Valley National Park. We are also creating two new donor-designated accounts. First, the "Scotty's Castle Curation Fund" will be used by the Scotty's Castle Curator to fund projects to protect and preserve the thousands of artifacts at Scotty's Castle as well as the castle itself. The second is the "Death Valley Science Fund" and it will be used by the Park's Division of Resources to help fund research, restoration, and monitoring of all the wild stuff here in the largest National Park in the Continental United States. The advantages of funds like this are the flexibility it gives us to respond to emergencies and take advantage of opportunities, swiftly. As always, if you have questions about our strategic plan or our new designated funds, please feel free to call me at 800-478-8564 ext. 11.

Be sure to check us out at [facebook.com/DVNHA](https://facebook.com/DVNHA) for the latest on new products, programs, and events like the Scotty's Castle Organ Concert and the 10th Death Valley History Conference. Also, don't forget that 2016 is the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service, so you know we will have even more great stuff next year!

*David*



DEATH VALLEY  
NATURAL HISTORY  
ASSOCIATION

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## TELESCOPE

Volume 60, Issue 1

### WHO WE ARE:

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*Save the Date!*

**FOR HISTORY CONFERENCE**

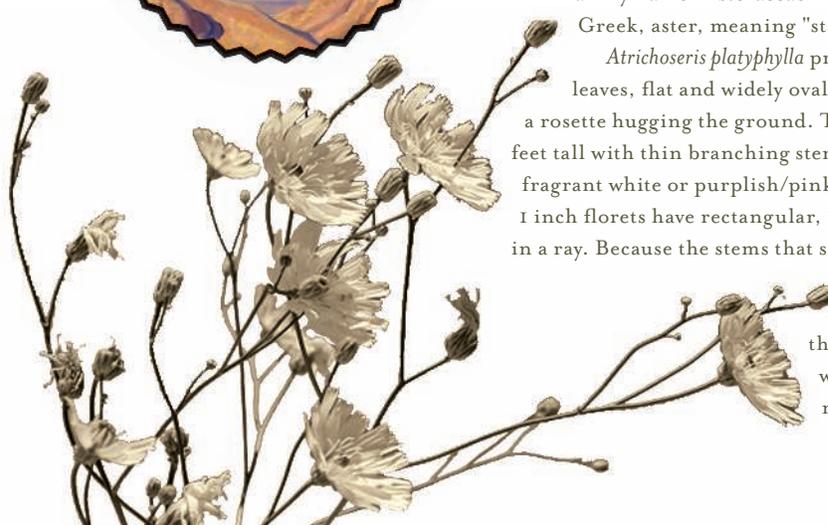
**UPDATES PLEASE VISIT:**

[dvnha.org/programs-events/history-conference](http://dvnha.org/programs-events/history-conference)



*Atrichoseris platyphylla* has been chosen as DVNHA's highlighted flower for 2015. This whimsical looking desert wildflower lives in the desert valleys and washes. Commonly known as the gravel ghost, it belongs to *Atrichoseris*, a genus of plants in the daisy family containing only this one known species. The family name "Asteraceae" is derived from the Greek, aster, meaning "star".

*Atrichoseris platyphylla* produces brown spotted leaves, flat and widely oval in shape, that grow in a rosette hugging the ground. This plant grows 1-2.5 feet tall with thin branching stems topped with rather fragrant white or purplish/pink-tinged flowers. The 1 inch florets have rectangular, toothed petals layered in a ray. Because the stems that support the flowers are tall and thin, they appear to hover in the air. Gravel ghost, what an appropriate name!



**SCOTTY'S CASTLE ORGAN CONCERT**

The Welte-Mignon Theatre Organ at Scotty's Castle is played by human hands only once a year, for this special fund-raising event!

Featuring concert organist:  
 Ty Woodward

July 17 & 18, 2015  
 5:00 & 7:00 pm nightly.  
 \$50 per seat.

Call 800-478-8564 ext 10 to reserve your seat today!

All proceeds benefit the Scotty's Castle Organ & Chimes Tower Maintenance Fund. Donations of \$1000 or more can be acknowledged on the Furnace Creek Visitor Center Donor Wall.

For more information about this recognition opportunity please call (775) 537-0787 ext 208.