

For Safety's Sake...

This is a remote area, and Emergency Fire and Ambulance services may take a significant amount of time (an hour or more). The nearest hospital is about an hour away in Henderson. Searchlight's small volunteer fire department receives over 300 calls a year on average. Frequent calls include car, motorcycle and boat accidents, as well as dehydration and heat exhaustion. Be cautious and aware of your surroundings at all times, so you do not need to call them for help!

Top 10 Tips for Safe Desert Exploring:

1. Plan and Communicate

If you take a drive, walk, stroll or hike by yourself, always tell others where you are headed, and when you plan to return. Print or download area maps, as internet and phone reception may be spotty. Travel with a friend whenever possible. Keep your phone with you and fully charged at all times. If your phone battery is low and you are out on a walk or drive, it's time to turn back.

2. Prepare for the Outdoors

Always wear proper attire for outdoor activities. For off trail hiking, thick-soled boots or shoes, long pants, hat, sunscreen, water and snacks are a must. Take your medications, a first aid kit, and emergency water and snacks with you -- don't leave them at home or in the hotel room. Pain reliever, allergy medication, antiseptic cream, and tweezers might also come in handy. Bring more provisions than you plan to consume.

3. Check the Weather

It can change quickly and drastically, so bring layers for temperature changes. The high elevation of this area can get below freezing in winter, and strong winds amplify temperature extremes. Flash floods and lightning strikes are real dangers here, so skip adventuring in these conditions. In summer, do avoid hiking or exploring back roads in the heat of the day.

4. Prepare your Vehicle for Adventure

Fill your gas tank, check the tires, pack your gear and phone charger. If you plan to drive down dirt roads, make sure you have a full-sized spare tire and the ability to put it on if needed.

5. Take Care on Desert Roads

Watch for BLM signs and stay on designated off-highway routes, which will always be at least one car-width wide. Smaller trails are illegal for vehicles, and harm plants and wildlife. Dirt roads may not be maintained, and some may be highly degraded or unpassable. Be willing to turn around at any point when a road looks unsafe. Roads often get worse as you go further in, and there is no AAA tow service away from the highway.

6. Stay Focused On Your Surroundings

Take your time and look around you with every step. We share this desert with rattlesnakes, scorpions, cone nose bugs, stinging ants and bees, spiders, rodents and many kinds of plants with sharp blade-like leaves, as well as slippery slopes, and uneven ground. And sharp, old metal things. Oh, yeah, and old mine-shafts. Be calm and cautious when exploring. Do not sit, stand, reach or walk anywhere that you cannot see first.

7. Keep Careful Watch Over Children and Pets

They are the most likely to get injured. Keep pets on leash outside -- they may go from being mellow to chasing animals across the landscape in an instant. Check regularly for cactus needles in dog's feet, and watch for snakes, because your dog won't. Snakebite is a rare occurrence among humans, but sadly much more common in dogs. Keep in mind that if your dog or child gets bit by a snake, you will need to carry them to your car.

8. Limit Distractions

Do not drink, smoke, or otherwise ingest mind-altering substances beyond a mild effect (including alcohol). You will need your wits about you to keep safe and healthy in this untamed environment! Do not hike or drive while intoxicated. Beautiful scenery, music, conversation, children and pets can also be distracting -- make sure you are watching where you are going and how to get back.

9. Quit While You're Ahead

Temperature extremes, lack of humidity, and elevation combine to dehydrate people more easily here. Sunstroke, windstroke, and exhaustion can happen quickly. Drink hydrating beverages that replenish electrolytes, eat snacks, and don't push yourself.

10. Do No Harm

Drive on designated routes, and walk on trails whenever possible. This will help preserve the fragile soil biocrust. Do not feed the wildlife. If you want to help them, water some of the plants that provide them with food and shelter. Please do not stack rocks or otherwise alter the natural environment. Pack it in, pack it out, and leave no trace. Even better, leave it better than when you found it. Future generations of humans and wildlife will thank you for keeping their home safe too.



CONGRATULATIONS, AVI KWA AME!



photo: KG Means

NEVADA'S FOURTH NATIONAL MONUMENT

by Kim Garrison Means

The Avi Kwa Ame National Monument has grown from the seed of an idea, to a proposal, to a bill in Congress, and now to a reality for the public through Presidential Proclamation. Over this multi-year process, citizens from the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe (the original stewards of this land) the eleven additional tribes that hold it sacred, the small rural communities here, like Searchlight, and the larger cities of Laughlin, Boulder City, and Henderson, have worked together to honor the ecological, cultural and historical treasures of this area, while safeguarding its integrity for the future.

For all of us who love it here, this process has been largely about trust. We have had to trust each other, trust our community advocates and conservation partners, trust our political representatives, the media, and the legislative process of the United States government. It has been a big ask and a big task, and one that has required much

listening, learning, reflection and discussion.

Remarkably, this process has also been fairly smooth, free of drama, and has resulted in the designation of a national monument that we can all be proud of. I credit this to the power and beauty of this landscape we all feel attached to in different ways. Our heartfelt connections to this place have fueled our conversations during every step of the journey.

We have also had to trust the process of sharing our special place with the outside world.

The natural wonders here at the tip of Southern Nevada have remained largely out of the public eye until now.

Sweeping scenic views, dense Joshua tree forests, Sonoran grasslands, granite spires and mountain junipers -- all have

been treasured by local outdoor enthusiasts, but largely overlooked by outsiders.

After the mining and ranching booms of the early 1900s, many parts of the Avi Kwa Ame public lands were afforded some protections, like the Wee Thump Wilderness and the Piute/El Dorado Area of Critical Environmental Concern for the desert tortoise. As a result, these 506,814 acres have remained relatively unmolested ecologically for millennia.

In 2007, the first large-scale industrial energy project was proposed for the unprotected public lands surrounding Searchlight. Since that time, tribal, rural and city community members have banded together to resist a number of large projects that would have transformed the heart of this landscape. These projects would have been completely surrounded by protected public lands.

The first protections for Avi Kwa Ame (Spirit Mountain) itself

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Inside our Inaugural Issue:

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Trail Guides and Maps

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Area History

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Plants and Animals

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Art and Culture

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Science and Discovery

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Wisdom and Advice

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Stories and Poems

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Recipes and Fun

Many thanks to the wonderful people and organizations making the Gold Beam possible!

Especially the National Parks Conservation Assoc, Searchlight Betterment Org, Conservation Lands Foundation, and all of you who have contributed to our first issue! We couldn't have done this without you.

Need to contact us?

Look for us at:
www.goldbeam.org
searchlightgoldbeaminfo@gmail.com

Join a local Off-Highway Vehicle Club and explore our backroads!



Check out these fine organizations on Facebook:

- ★ Vegas Toyota Offroad (VTO)
- ★ LV Trail Addicts
- ★ Big Rig Vegas Offroad
- ★ Battleborn Toyotas
- ★ Desert Overlanders
- ★ Vegas Valley Fourwheelers



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Welcome one and all to the Searchlight Gold Beam

We're thrilled to be bringing you this new, yearly publication, where we plan to investigate the cultural, ecological and historical treasures of the Searchlight area and beyond, to orient visitors and keep them safe and respectful while exploring the tip of Southern Nevada, and to build new connections within and between our local rural, tribal and urban communities.

Some of you reading this are new to the area, and some of you know more about this place than we do. It's our intention to make this an interesting and useful publication for everyone, no matter how much experience they have had with it. We hope to share our deep affection for this part of the world with you, through science, art, history, culture, advice and games -- all wrapped up with a double dose of desert humor.

Each year we will offer a free, black and white, newsletter version of the Gold Beam, and a deluxe, full-color, annual magazine with over twice the content -- well worth the price of admission. We also have bonus info and online issues available at www.goldbeam.org.

If you haven't met us yet, we are part of a collective of

curious folks who operate the Searchlight Mystery Ranch, a not-for-profit arts and ecology research station with a vague address and an entertaining sense of obscurity. While the ranch is not open to the public, our collaborators have been presenting their investigations around the world, in many forms over the last two decades, and we thought this was the perfect time to share our findings on a much more local scale.

We are also partnering with local Searchlight clubs and non-profits (The Searchlight Betterment Organization, Museum Guild, and Friends of Walking Box Ranch) and others more far afield (Red Rock Audubon, University of Nevada Las Vegas, and the National Parks Conservation Association) to bring you wonderful

articles, fun facts and features we hope you will enjoy year after year.

Our first issue is dedicated to the theme Treasures of Avi Kwa Ame, and in it we celebrate, not just the creation of a new national monument, but also the act of seeking, finding, and treasuring the many wonders, big and small, that make up our communities and our East Mojave landscape. Here our storytellers share insight into this area's origins, amazing plants and animals, and local favorites of what to see and do. We hope you enjoy these investigations as much as we have enjoyed putting them together for you.

Cheers!

*Kim Garrison Means and Steve Radosevich
Editors, Searchlight Gold Beam*



Visit
Searchlight
Museum

Monday - Thursday: 8:30 am-2:00 pm

200 Michael Wendell Way, Searchlight, NV 89046
searchlightmuseum.org

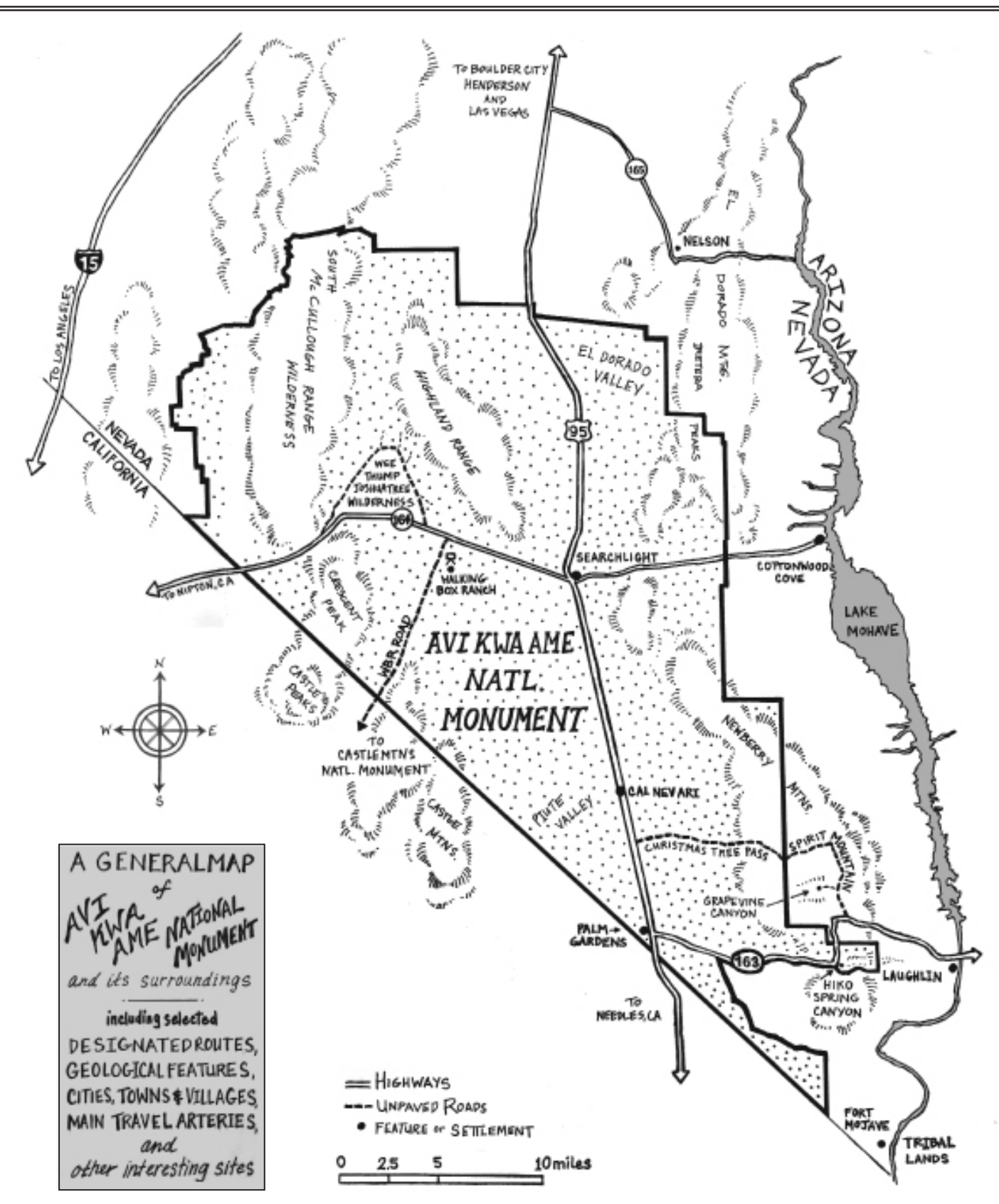
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came in 1999, when the eastern portion of the mountain was designated as a Traditional Cultural Property. The designation of Avi Kwa Ame National Monument completes the protections for the western side of the mountain, and protects the surrounding landscape, including those areas vulnerable to industrial development. It allows BLM management of the entire area as one entity, with input provided in col-

laboration with tribal members and local gateway communities.

The goal for all of us has been to keep this landscape the same as it always has been, continuing to honor the native cultural uses of the land, and the recreational enjoyment of it by rural residents and visitors alike, through hiking, trail riding, camping, and hunting. So congratulations Avi Kwa Ame, and many thanks to the thousands of people who helped make this happen.



This QR code links to an example of how to pronounce Avi Kwa Ame.



A GENERAL MAP
of
AVI KWA AME NATIONAL MONUMENT
and its surroundings

including selected
DESIGNATED ROUTES,
GEOLOGICAL FEATURES,
CITIES, TOWNS & VILLAGES,
MAIN TRAVEL ARTERIES,
and
other interesting sites

Legend:
 — HIGHWAYS
 - - - UNPAVED ROADS
 • FEATURE OR SETTLEMENT
 ▭ TRIBAL LANDS

Scale: 0 2.5 5 10 miles

THERE ARE MORE THAN 500 MILES OF UNPAVED DESIGNATED ROUTES WITHIN AVI KWA AME NATIONAL MONUMENT. MOST OF THESE ARE UNMAINTAINED OR RARELY MAINTAINED. USE CAUTION AND CARE ON ALL UNPAVED ROADS, AND WATCH FOR HAZARDS. MANY ROADS ARE NAVIGABLE TO SOME EXTENT WITHOUT 4-WHEEL DRIVE, BUT BE PREPARED TO TURN BACK AT ANY TIME. WALKING BOX, CHRISTMAS TREE PASS, GRAPEVINE & HIKO ROADS ARE GENERALLY PASSABLE WITH HIGH-CLEARANCE VEHICLES, EXCLUDING AFTER WASH OUTS.

Note: This map was created before the final boundaries were established by the Department of the Interior. The final boundaries now include all of Spirit Mountain, Grapevine Canyon, and part of the Ireteba Peaks Wilderness Area.

Local Gems

Favorite past-times and pleasures of our Southern Nevada community

Horseshoes on Sunday, I've been playing for over a decade. *Scott Pratt*

Boating is what got us to Searchlight, but we also love **off-road-ing**. You never end up the same place twice – there are so many back roads. I also enjoy the community art classes, and dominoes on Thursdays. *Ida Pratt*

I like **tooling around** the Highland Range and McCollough Ranges, some of the last homesteading areas. *Jim Stanger*

When I go to Denny's and they don't have the **salmon**, I raise hell. It's my favorite dish on the menu. *Ron Safran*

It's true, he really **flips his lid** when they're out! *Jim Stanger*

I like to dress up like Rex Bell and **give people tours of Walk-ing Box Ranch**. Then I go across the highway and drive around Wee Thump in search of giant Joshua Trees. I bought a car just for going there. *Ron Safran*

I enjoy **painting in the landscape**. I drive around and then hike and find places to paint, and then set up. When I'm painting, I feel at one with the whole space, and feel like I get to know every little piece – it really is special to me. *Maria Volborth*

If you go south on the 95, somewhere on left in the mountains to

the East, there are **feldspar crystals** there. To the north, I walk the trail that goes through the train tunnel near Lake Mead, and then go into Boulder City and either have **lunch at Milo's** wine bar, or get Chile Verde at the Southwest Diner. Also, everyone should go to **Hemingway Park** at least once and look for the Bighorn on the lawn. *Nancy Gentis*

I like the outdoors and **hiking in the Joshua Tree forest** at dusk, but it's really the people that make this place special. **The people** here are genuine. *Nattaly Jeter*

The night stars are the best! I also like watching the full moon rising through my kitchen window. I also like **hiking in the washes** through the Joshua Trees. *Sandy (Cricket) Bucklew*

I am very interested in **the history of this place** – the people who were here during the civil war, the miners in El Dorado – I'm passionate about learning more about the many aspects of this history. I also love **exploring and kayaking** in the canyons. I had wonderful experiences kayaking out of Nelson at night. All of the parts of this landscape are integrated into a whole. The integrity of this place is one of my favorite things. *Ellen Ross*

One of my favorite places here is **Hiko Springs Canyon**. I'd definitely recommend that as a must-see. *Bud Benneman*

Treasures of the Trail

Featured Area: Hiko Spring Canyon

By Alan O'Neill



Hiko Spring Canyon is a scenic, 3-mile long canyon that is easily accessible off Nevada State Route 163. Hiko Spring is a natural spring, and a hike through the canyon downstream takes you through some spectacular scenery, and Native American petroglyph sites. It is particularly beautiful in the spring with all the flowering yellow brittlebush and desert mallow flowers adorning the canyon walls and hillsides, along other wildflowers, trees and flowering cactus.

Hiko Spring is located at the trailhead, and there are a series of petroglyphs surrounding the spring. There are also petroglyphs at several locations in the canyon, the most prominent series located about a mile down the canyon. The petroglyphs here are pecked into vertical cliffs of granitic rock covered with a dark patina called desert varnish. Because the formation of desert varnish is a very slow process, it suggests that these images are quite old. There are also some historical writings, one from 1898.

You can see the power of the water that can run through this wash, in the way the rock has been carved and the amount of tangled up debris. In the spring, there is running water through much of the canyon. At other times of the year, the water disappears underground. Be still and listen. Look, observe, and

imagine. Let the rocks speak. And if you are lucky, you might see an eagle, a gila monster, or a desert bighorn sheep.

While visiting, please respect the traditions of the people who still consider this area to be sacred to their lives and history. Do not deface the petroglyphs in any way -- even touching them can cause damage. Archeological artifacts and sites are protected in all public lands. It is illegal to remove or damage archeological materials from their locations, as disturbance of these resources destroys our heritage. Please do not climb on the rocks and panels.

Warning: be sure to take plenty of drinking water. There is none available along the trail. Be prepared for summer temperatures that can be as high as 120 degrees F. These trails are not maintained, and contain the hazards of a remote, desert area, so come prepared.

From U.S.95, turn east on Nevada Highway 163 (Laughlin Hwy). After driving 8 miles on Highway 163, there is a fairly open four wheeling area on the right. About two miles beyond this area the road runs straight downhill. Just before the guard rails where the road makes a sharp left turn, there is an unmarked exit to the right that turns into a dirt road. Turn right and the Hiko Spring trail is about a half-mile down where the road ends.

The Mojave People's Connection to Avi Kwa Ame

By Paul Jackson, Fort Mojave Tribal Elder, Neolge Clan

Ka-ma-thuu (*how are you*)? **Ka-havk kee-theek ke-nak ka'avk** (*Come in, sit down, and listen*).

The world was a little different when I was a boy. In the evening time, after swimming all day and playing in the desert, we would go home, and after everything was done, we didn't have television sets or radios – a lot of us didn't have electricity or running water, so we'd sit outside, and the old people would come and sit in a circle and just talk, and listen to Eech-ka-nav, what we call the storyteller. I remember the old people, the way they talked, their words were very deep and direct and strong, because they spoke from the heart.

In the first times, we were many, free to roam the lands, free to practice our beliefs and traditional ways. When I was young, it was good to feel the earth beneath my bare feet, to swim and drink water straight from the mighty Colorado river. We ate the fruits and plants that grew throughout the land, we prayed and worshiped at our sacred sites. For the southwest tribes, the desert was like a paradise. To us, the desert plants were like a huge medicine cabinet.

To communicate with all living creatures, and protect and respect the earth, was and still is our tradition. Now the land is slowly being destroyed by illegal trash dumping, vandalism, and graffiti. Wind towers and solar panels are all over the place.

When I was young, I would listen to my elders, as the youngsters listen to me today, because I am their elder. If we don't teach kids our traditional ways, we will cease to exist. For the Aha Macav, we were put on this land and charged to protect our sacred sites – the air, mountains, river, desert plants and animals.

When I walk near Spirit Mountain, I am not just a person walking towards the mountain, I am part of it. This

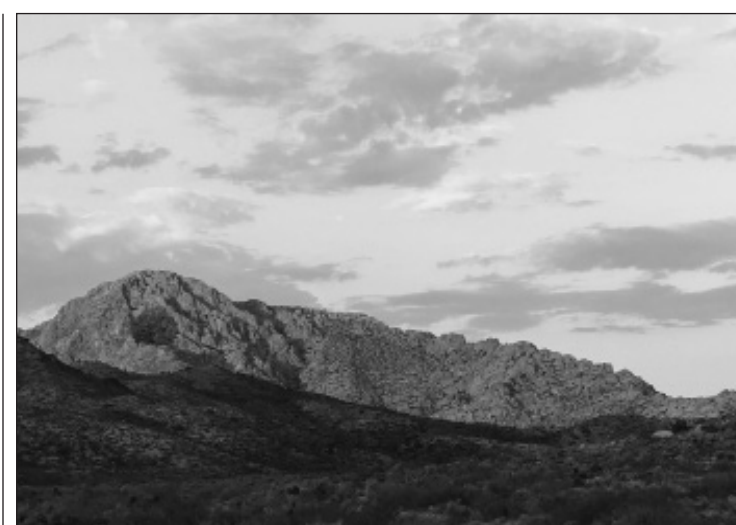
is the same for the river. Our elders say, if you sit by the river at sunset, the river will talk to you. If you sit by the mountain, it will talk to you, for you are one.

When I was a young boy, I would hear stories about the river. For us the river is spiritual, a living spirit. The river is who we are. When I first saw graffiti and trash dumping at our sacred sites, I had mixed emotions -- sad, angry, confused, but mostly it was that helpless feeling. It was like I had failed to protect the land, and I failed my ancestors. I couldn't understand how any one could do this. This place is our church, our place of worship, our place of creation.

For the Mojave people, every part of this earth is sacred. The wind is precious to us, the wind that gave life to all living animals when they received their first breath, is also there when they receive their last. It is like the trees. They are with us from the time we are born to the day we die. When we are babies, we are put in cradleboards made from the mesquite and willow trees. Going through life, we use the trees for food, clothing, tools, weapons, houses that we lived in, and lastly being cremated when our spirits leave our physical bodies.

In the first times, if a prophet had come to our village and foretold a future that said, in the coming years, we would not be able to swim and drink from the river, that our sacred sites would be blown up and become sand hills, that we would not be able to breathe the clean, fresh air, that we could not hunt and fish at our favorite fishing holes, could not to come and go where we please, and would not be able to communicate with the animals anymore, we would not have believed him.

We believe in animism, that all things are alive and have a spirit. Avi Kwa Ame was and continues to be one of the most, if not the most important landmark in Mojave territory. It is the site of many events in



Avi Kwa Ame

Photo by Mikayla Whitmore

the ancient times. Above the mountains, the stars told stories that we told our children. To us, the big dipper was the fisherman throwing a large net into the water to catch the fish. The Milky Way, to us, is a large amount of salmon travelling up the river going back to where they were born to reproduce. The stars also told the time and the directions to travel at night.

Avi Kwa Ame is also a place of learning, to this day we take our kids there to learn about our creation stories. They learn about the desert animals that live in the area, and how we use the desert plants for food, clothing and medicine. Avi Kwa Ame is also a place where

we would hide our kids when the government came around to take our children away, and force them into boarding schools. One of those schools was the Fort Mojave Boarding School. They would hide the kids way back in the trees of Grapevine Canyon. Avi Kwa Ame is our place of creation, and Mataviily, our creator. Mataviily made his house out of the Black Mountains near where Hoover Dam is today. I was told that it is still there but now it is underwater.

Avi Kwa Ame is the residence of Mastamho, the son of our creator. He is our version of Jesus. For us, Avi Kwa Ame is sacred, the land in which we were born is sacred. Our

graveyards are sacred, the ashes and dust of our ancestors are sacred. If I'm standing in the water, on the land, or flying through the sky somewhere, I am part of it. We are one. For native people, our sacred sites are very spiritual. That is who we are. That is the connection.

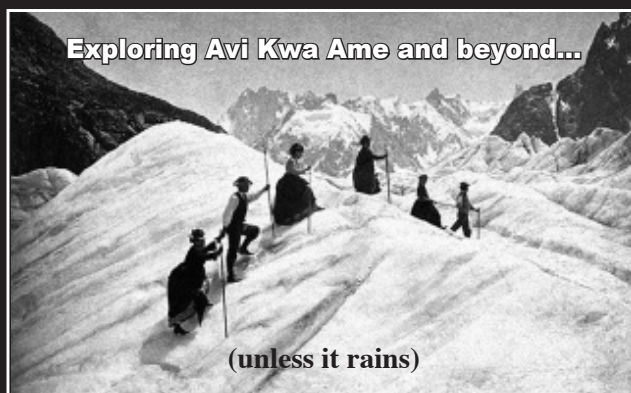
We only want to live and worship our creator, and tell our creation stories to our children, like others all over the world. We want to live as our grandparents did, and all our ancestors before them. All we ask is to love this land as we have, care for it as we have, protect it and respect it as we have. For the whole world is precious.

There is more I can say, but it is very difficult to explain. When our chiefs, our elders would talk, their words were deep, and they came from the heart. I have just one more thing to say, and that is Ahoté Ki-su-maak (*Dream good*), My friends, Ni-un-ti-ya, (*we will see each other again*). Sumach ahoté (*Thank you and have good dreams*).

Paul Jackson is an artist, teacher, and elder of the Ft. Mojave Indian Tribe. For the past 23 years, he has used his paintings and sculptures to share cultural stories, and to teach the history and language of the Mojave people to the next generations.

SEARCHLIGHT HIKING CLUB

Exploring Avi Kwa Ame and beyond...



(unless it rains)

For information on our next adventure check Searchlight Nevada Events and Advertisements on Facebook.

Desert Trumpet

(*Eriogonum inflatum*)

Weird Wonder of the Mojave

by Sage Reynolds



Once you start to notice the desert trumpet, you won't soon forget it. Not only does this plant look like it may be from outer space or from a Dr. Suess story, it also boasts some out of this world stories of its own! In fact, the plant has long been associated with everything from pipe smoking to finding hidden gold.

A member of the buckwheat family found throughout the Southwest, desert trumpet's strange, inflated stems rise up to 3 feet from a central point in elongated green clusters, and are crowned with umbrellas of tiny yellow flowers, hanging in the air above the plant like delicate cloud forms. Palm-shaped, scalloped leaves remain close to the ground radiating from the plant base. As the plant closes its life cycle, the inflated stems dry to a beautiful mahogany color and eventually fade.

Its long list of common names gives clues to some uses: pipe-weed, bladderstem, bottle bush, bottlestopper, desert spoon, and umbrella plant. My family always called it vase plant, as we would use the hollow stem as a temporary vase for tiny collections of wildflowers if we found some on walks.*

More traditional uses of desert trumpet include native foodways such as cooking the leaves as a vegetable and pounding the seeds into meal to eat as porridge. The stems are used as drinking tubes or smoking pipes (for desert tobacco and mistletoe), and are said to have a pleasant, sour taste. The plant has also been used traditionally in medicines to treat a variety of conditions, including colds, cuts, diarrhea, and stomach disorders.

Plants like the desert trumpet can also offer clues for understanding the type of rock that lies

beneath, and sometimes, even for finding precious resources. Geobotany, the scientific study of the distribution of plants in relation to the geology of the landscape, teaches us that different plants enjoy different types of rock to live in: agaves like limestone, yuccas crave quartz, and desert trumpets prefer the highly mineralized soil where you might also find metals. For this reason, desert trumpet is sometimes utilized as an indicator plant by prospectors to find gold.

The beautiful desert metal-mark butterfly (*Apodemia mormo deserti*) uses desert trumpet as a food source, and the plant also attracts a variety of butterflies and insects, some of whom lay their eggs inside the trumpet stems. For years, scientists have noticed these insects interacting with the plant, and thought the inflation of the trumpets to be a result of their presence in the stems. However, since the plants seem to inflate even without the presence of insects, researchers have more recently theorized that the stems have evolved to help the plant photosynthesize light into energy.

According to Chris Clarke from the Mojave National Preserve Conservancy, "the desert trumpet's hollow stem serves as a reservoir for carbon dioxide. Plants breathe CO₂ when they're engaging in photosynthesis, and higher concentrations mean more efficient turning of sunlight and water into plant tissue. What's more, the stems don't lose water to the outside air as readily as the plant's leaves do, which makes those swollen stems very efficient little photosynthesis engines indeed."

So, the next time you spot the desert trumpet plant out in the landscape, know that you have found a unique and wonderful

treasure. Long may it grace us with its weirdness!

Sage Reynolds is an amateur naturalist with an emphasis on studying native plants from the Mojave desert. A resident of Southern Nevada, she also enjoys bird-watching, jeeping, and plant illustration.

*Editor's Note: picking wildflowers is not recommended these days

— grow your own in the garden if you'd like to pick some of these beauties. It's also probably not the best idea to randomly experiment with your own medicines (we have pharmacies for that) or go digging up all of our local plants looking for gold. And if you haven't already noticed, there is a beautiful little mural on the wall of the BV Motel in Searchlight that features a desert trumpet plant design.

LOCAL PICKS

Adventure, Provisions, and More!

Nelson: (no services)
El Dorado Mine Tour, Access to Lake Mohave, Historic Mining Village
(please be respectful of residents)

Cal Nev Ari:
Blue Sky Motel, Market and RV Park

Palm Gardens:
Chevron Gas and Convenience Market

Cottonwood Cove:
Resort Motel and Marina, Boat Rentals, General Store Cafe *(open on weekends, check hours)*
Access to Lake Mohave and nice beaches

Searchlight:
Searchlight Museum
Terrible's Roadhouse Bar and Casino *(live music most Friday nights!)*
Denny's Restaurant *(in Terrible's Roadhouse)*
El Rey Motel
McDonalds *(great iced Tea!)*
Terrible's Chevron and Convenience Store
Rebel Gas and Convenience Market
Terrible's Casino and Bar *(great pizza!)*
Gus' Really Good Jerky *(and nuts, honey and snacks!)*
Searchlight Senior Center *(dinner every Thursday, 4:30pm)*
BV Motel
Searchlight Treasures Thrift Store *(amazing finds!)*
Clark County Library, US Post Office, and Laundermat

Editor's Picks for Laughlin:
Don Laughlin's Classic Car Museum *(and antique slot machines!)*
Casa Serrano Mexican Restaurant *(in the Riverside Casino, Great Views)*
Bubba Gump Shrimp Company

Editor's Picks for Boulder City:
Milo's Wine Bar and Cafe, Southwest Diner
Nevada State Railway Museum, Hoover Dam Tour

Editor's Picks for Fort Mojave:
Pipa Aha Macav Cultural Center
Avi Resort and Casino *(great cafe!)*

of a number of gardens across the Mojave that contains representative plant species, and she has been researching what plants will grow best under each site's different conditions. There is a part of the garden that is not fenced, and there are rabbits all over the place when she puts fresh plants out there.

Gold Beam: We've had very minimal wildflowers the last couple of springs, so I imagine that while they are partial to certain plants, rabbits will eat just about anything when they are desperate. Is that affecting plant health and populations too?

Todd: Yes, it is a dramatic response when there are so few fresh plants for rabbits to eat, and they also depend on plants for the water that they get in their systems. They will resort to eating plants that are much tougher, and will even chew on the trunks of large Joshua Trees, which looks like a beaver has been chewing on them. They'll strip the bark at first, and then they'll just keep going. It's not uncommon to see that out in the desert, and we don't know whether that has a population level effect on the Joshua trees or not. It's something that researchers are working on.

Rabbits also tend to be in places where there is a bit more cover, and when there are no leaves on the shrubs, it's probably easier for the eagles and great horned owls to see right in there and see where they are, and easier for coyotes to find them. One part of the study we are doing for Clark County is to look at coyotes, and when we have fewer rabbits, we should see smaller groups of pups in the litters, and higher mortality of the older and weaker ones, so we should see a decline in their populations as well when we have less rabbits. That's usually how the system works.

But we aren't seeing that yet, and one of our studies is asking the question: Are the coyotes being subsidized? Because it's not very far from Searchlight to Boulder City and Henderson, and a coyote can go between those towns in a day. So, they can get a drink when there is a drought, and on Tuesday or Thursday in Boulder City, they can have a feast down in the alleys by going through the garbage cans. We haven't studied it long enough yet, but as the rabbits go down, the coyotes are so far not going down at the same rate.

Gold Beam: Wow, I never thought that how we might be interacting with coyotes in populated areas might be having an effect on the rabbit population in the middle of the pristine desert. What can we do as people who live in or are visiting the Avi Kwa Ame area, that can positively affect the situation for the rabbits?

Todd: For one thing, when we take our trash out, let's make sure to get it in the trash bin, and make sure it's closed properly, so that the coyotes have a tougher time getting to it. And we can encourage the management of our areas where we take our trash, to deposit it in ways that reduce its availability to predators.

And we also want to do that when we are riding around and enjoying the desert — we want to pick up after ourselves out there. A lot of times we get casual, and we figure, "It doesn't matter" or "Something will eat it" or "It will all be cleaned up", but it's more complicated than that. It used to be that the desert was much bigger than the towns, but we're filling in all the spaces now. There are smaller and smaller amounts of wild places and shorter distances between the towns, and we want to take good care of areas like Avi Kwa Ame, and manage our activities properly so we aren't subsidizing the predators. Coyotes and ravens are the two subsidized predators we worry about most right now.

Gold Beam: In my parents' and grandparents' day, we just left the food scraps out in the desert, thinking "it's got to benefit somebody". Of course, all we would ever see were happy animals eating what was left for them, if we were lucky enough to see that. I've changed my mindset on that in recent years, and what did it for me was hearing that it increased the number of ravens that prey on young desert tortoises. It was hard to change that mindset though, and not to get to see those animals enjoy the food.

Todd: I know there are a lot of well-meaning people out there that probably have had the same experience that you've had in your lifetime, and that I have had too. It's a hard thing to change, but when you know the outcome of it, it makes it easier to make the change, I think. It has made me change the way I do things, and be more careful as well. I didn't have the same recognition of this before I started studying these things, and the good thing about it is, we have the capacity to learn.



Soup. Nothing is more welcome at table, more nourishing to the body, more enjoyable at all times of year, more pleasing to the palette of young and old, and more cost effective. From hearty, meaty stews to smooth, delicate creams, soup is relished as a starter or main, and soup's infinite variations will surely lighten the vegetable load in your crisp drawer, use up those half-forgotten sundries in the pantry, and the frost-kissed meat from the back of the freezer. Throw together a savory broth with a vegetable or five, and combine with endless options of weekly leftovers: pasta, rice, tortilla chips, chopped chicken, beans, sausage or cheese.

The only thing more praise-worthy than a steaming bowl of this goodness is one that features your own, homemade soup stock. It is a simple procedure, and one that you will learn to do automatically as part of your kitchen routine, once you have tried it a few times and experienced for yourself, the exceptional alchemical transformation of your foodscraps into a quart of kitchen gold.

To make soup stock, you must first collect these neglected gems: onion and garlic skins, carrot peels, and trimmings of mild vegetables such as squash, celery, potato and tomato, in any combination. To make chicken, pork or beef stock, also gather the bones, skin, and leavings from your Sunday meat roasts. Store these items in a bag or lidded container in the freezer,

adding to them throughout the week as you prepare and clean up your meals.

A weekly inspection of your refrigerator bins will yield more willing participants in the form of wilted vegetables that need a job, pronto. Mild herbs such as parsley, green onion, and cilantro can be added in small amounts, as can apple cores and trimmings. For vegetarian stocks, an old bit of parmesan rind, mushroom stems, leftover beans, or a knob of tomato paste can work wonders in achieving a rich and well-balanced, earthy broth.

Resist the temptation to include members of the brassica family, bitter greens, or any product of strong flavor: vegetables such as brussel sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, spinach, beets, mustard and kale can be harsh and unpleasant to the tastebuds, and are best avoided.

When you are ready to convert these castoffs into culinary treasure, take them from the freezer and place them in a pot, add enough water to cover, and bring to boil. A spoonful of vinegar can assist in breaking down proteins and balancing flavors. Once on the boil, cover the pot and lower the heat to keep the concoction at a lively simmer. Stir occasionally, and leave to brew for as little as 20 minutes if you are in a rush, or as long as 4-6 hours for vegetables, 8-10 hours for hearty, concentrated meat stocks. Strain into jars and use at once, or let cool, label and store in the freezer. Be sure to leave plenty of room for the liquid to expand if you freeze the stock in jars.

You can use your homemade soup stocks in any recipe that calls for broth or a canned product from the grocery shelves, and you will never wish to buy store-bought stock again, Mrs. Frugal guarantees.

One more thought before I go. The greenest, cleanest, safest and cheapest form of energy is using less energy, so in the words of the great Bugs Bunny: **TURN OFF THAT LIGHT!** The planet, your neighbors, and your pocketbook will thank you.

Until we meet again, may your cooking pot be full and your heart be warm.

Mrs. Fancie Frugal

What's Up With The Rabbits?

The Gold Beam interviews Todd Esque, US Geological Survey



Todd Esque is based at the Western Ecological Research Center, where he investigates a range of issues related to species diversity and environmental change. We sat down with Todd to get some insight into the mystery of our disappearing rabbits.

Gold Beam: I've been noticing that there are dramatically less rabbits, (both cottontails and black-tailed jackrabbits) in the landscape, and it seems concerning. From your perspective as a researcher, am I imagining things, or are we really seeing a decline in rabbit populations?

were driving all night and seeing maybe just one jackrabbit. So, the return on the work that we were doing was not sufficient to warrant continuing. We can also capture rabbits and put GPS collars on them so that we can track them on an hourly basis, and that gives us a lot of good data about where they are. We also have cameras, and you can create ratios of how much time you have a camera up, and how many rabbits are seen.

What is really important about this data, is that while populations normally fluctuate, going up and down through time in a cycle, we had moderate levels of jackrabbits a few years ago, and then we went into this drought, which has been discussed as being the worst drought in the Southwest in 1,200 years, and the numbers we are currently down to are very low.

Todd: We've actually seen a real decline in rabbit population numbers in the last 2 years or so. We know that because there are different ways that we try to measure the abundance of rabbits.

For the last 3 or 4 years, my team has been going out once a month to drive the roads for 3 nights in a row, and count rabbits and everything else that they see, so we can get an idea of the relative abundance. But those numbers are fairly loose, and in the last year we quit doing the road surveys because people

Gold Beam: So drought is the cause here, and it's part of a cycle, but still concerning?

Todd: Yes, because a cycle would be a regular pattern of up and down – about the same amount. And our numbers are very low now, lower than the usual cycle. We call that a fluctuation, because you can never predict how high or low it's going to go.

There is also another interesting part to this. In 2019, researchers discovered a new disease that was introduced to North America, called RHDV2, (Hemorrhagic Disease Virus Number 2), and they were very concerned that it would get into our rabbits here and also cause a decline. But, although it might have been here before we could detect it, we've been working on the rabbits here the whole time, and haven't seen any unusual observations in the El Dorado Valley. We do have some reports of the virus being in other parts of Clark County, but it's really quiet now. It's possible that the low population size from the drought has actually reduced the possibility that the disease would move around among the rabbits, because higher populations carry disease more readily.

Gold Beam: Wow, that's really interesting. It's almost a silver lining to the drought for our rabbits. But meanwhile, while there are so

few of them, how does that affect other animals and plants in our ecosystem?

Todd: Well, we have quite a large population of golden eagles down in Avi Kwa Ame – we are a pretty good nesting site for them. Eagles being a top predator, there are never lots of them, but just about every mountain down here has a site where there are eagle nests, and some of them are active, so that's really wonderful. And they are dependent on rabbits. And we know coyotes depend on rabbits, and other predators as well: kit foxes and gray foxes, and bobcats. Badgers probably get baby rabbits, and for that matter, snakes and Gila monsters do too, especially cottontails, when they can find them.

Gold Beam: So basically, every predator out there would like a tasty rabbit as a meal.

Todd: Absolutely! Great horned owls and raptors too. Every predator is depending on rabbits, so they are absolutely fundamental to the food base for our whole system. And while they are at the bottom of the animal hierarchy, they are also at the top of the plant situation. They eat a lot of plants of all different types.

Leslie deFalco, USGS, has been doing restoration experiments in what we call a "common garden" in the El Dorado Valley. It's one



Poetry: A Treasure in Words

As a biologist based in Searchlight, NV, and the mother of twins, Dr. Michael Webber is intimately familiar with the experience of desert moms. One of her areas of research is scorpion reproduction, and she is particularly interested in how hard these moms work: molting their outer skins, carrying their children on their backs, and making themselves more vulnerable to predation through the process. In this poem, Webber describes the pregnancy and childrearing practices of these usually-feared creatures as something to be admired -- beautiful, dignified, and sacred – and comparable to all other mothers.

Ode to Desert Mothers

Dr. Michael Webber

She eagerly awaits her night's beginning,
Her moment, to traverse the inhospitable world
from which she was formed.

Close to the earth, indistinguishable from its inanimate forms,
Shedding the armor of her past, she is renewed,
soft and vulnerable... but she will become tough and resilient --
Her radiance, unseen, except by those who seek her.

Star-filled nights give way to stately promenades,
enchanted by the dance.

Her future responsibility looms with obligation, sacrifice,
ever-growing burdens and constraints,
choices predetermined by past tribulations.
It could consume her --or she could consume it.
With all-seeing eyes, she forges ahead.

She is creator, provider, protector...
but only for a moment.
She sees herself in abundance, repeated in miniature,
unaware of the forces that control her.
She survives, endures, in perpetuity --
until she has given all, purpose fulfilled,
released to those who continue to dance.

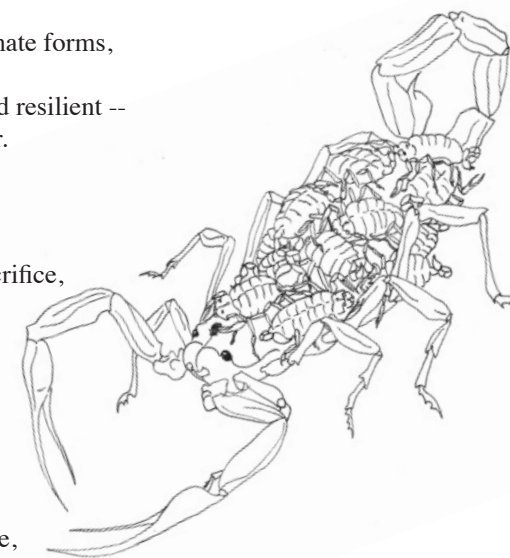
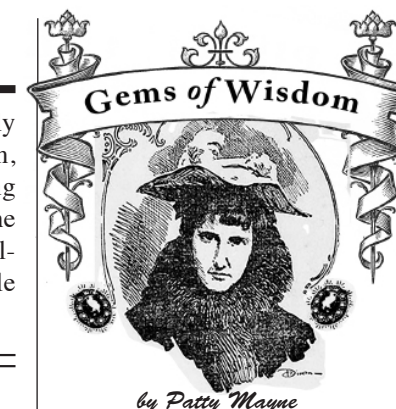


Illustration by Rachel Hillberg



by Patty Mayne

Forethought spares afterthought.
– Amelia E. Barr

The world is the work of a single
thought, expressed in a thousand
different ways.
– Madame de Staël

I've dreamt in my life dreams
that have stayed with me ever
after... and altered the color of
my mind.
– Emily Brontë

When I let go of what I am, I
become what I might be.
– Lao Tzu

We reason deeply when we forc-
ibly feel.
– Mary Wollstonecraft

Our deeds determine us, as
much as we determine our
deeds.
– George Eliot

You are only sure of today: do
not let yourself be cheated out
of it.
– Henry Ward Beecher

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Honoring Avi Kwa Ame: What's in a Name?

by Kim Garrison Means

To most non-Native Americans, the majestic mountain peak at the tip of Southern Nevada is known as Spirit Mountain, or Newberry Peak. But the Mojave-language name for it is Avi Kwa Ame (pronounced Ah-Vee-Kwah-May). The Mojave place name is tied to the reverence the 10 Yuman-speaking tribes have for this site. It is the setting of their creation story, retold down countless generations as an important cultural teaching on how to live, how to die, and how to care for one another.

There are many other historical place names within the monument landscape. Christmas Tree Pass and Timber Mountain were mining era nicknames for local sites where trees could be felled for buildings and mine supports. Knob hill, a small mining settlement, was probably named for the shape of the rock formation, and the miners' hopeful reference to an affluent neighborhood in San Francisco. Other fanciful and optimistic mining claim names include Copperopolis, the Majestic Goldfrog, the Good Hope, and yes, the Gold Beam.

Searchlight has a name shrouded in mystery. The town was named around 1898 after one of the area's first gold claims; some said the name referred to a popular brand of matches, while others claim that a prospector, after not finding any evidence of gold, stated that one would need a searchlight to find anything of value there.

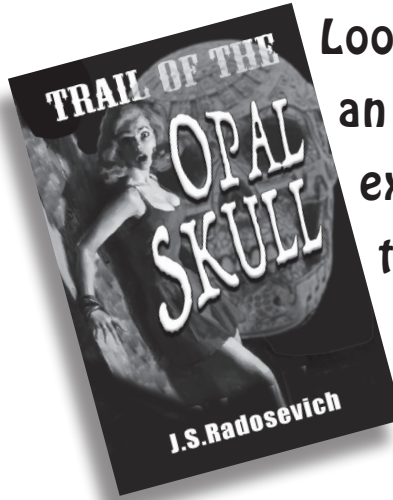
The northern valley in the monument is the El Dorado, named after the famed meso-American legend of the golden man, while the southern, Piute Valley, is named for the Nuwu (Southern Paiute) tribes, for whom this is an important area of ritual migration, part of the Salt Song Trail. The Wee Thump Wilderness in the western portion of the monument means Ancient Ones in Paiute, and refers to the majestic Joshua Trees and Yucca found there that can live for up to a thousand years. Other forms of life, such as the colorful desert lichens and the fragrant creosote bushes can live even longer – some of the oldest specimens are estimated to have lived for tens of thousands of years.

This region has endured other, less kind names and word associations over the years: wasteland, dumping ground, ghost town -- to name a few. These names have perpetuated the myth that this landscape is barren and devoid of value, and that there isn't anything here worth treasuring.

However, nothing could be further from the truth. This landscape reveals its treasures to all who look for them, through an abundance of biodiversity, history, culture and natural beauty. The Mojave tribe has given a gift to this landscape, and to all who come here, by sharing their sacred name with everyone, Avi Kwa Ame, and inviting us all to share in its stewardship for future generations.

Your Gold Beam Literary Reviewer suggests:

A Searchlight Adventure Classic!



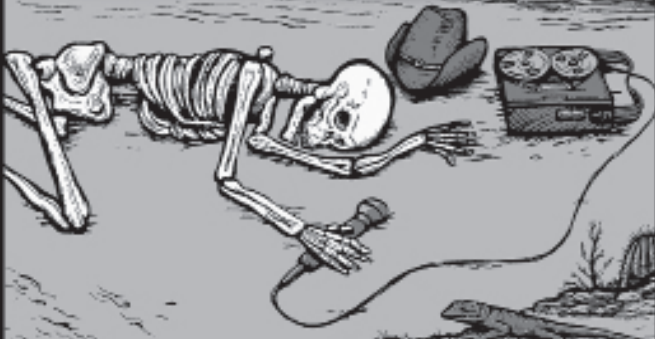
Look for an exciting excerpt in the next Gold Beam Annual!

If it's in the Gold Beam it must be true... unless it's not.

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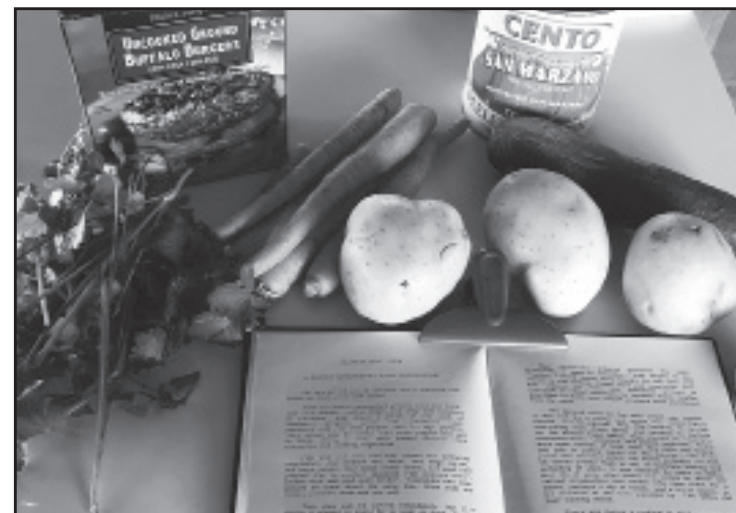
the desert protection podcast



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Treasured Recipes



Searchlight Stew

*A Recipe Remembered from Searchlight**

Put one #2 ½ can of tomatoes into a saucepan and break up fruit with spoon. (in modern lingo a large, 28oz can.)

Form ¾ pound unseasoned ground beef into balls, size of a walnut, roll in flour, and drop into tomatoes in saucepan. Add about a pinch or two each of rosemary, oregano, garlic salt, powdered sage, powdered mild red chili pepper, and ½ tsp. parsley. (Dry spices may be used.) Add black pepper and salt to taste. Bring to boil, then simmer covered while preparing and cooking vegetables.

Peel and cut into bite-size pieces the following vegetables: one medium red onion, one large carrot, one large potato, four large stalks celery, ½ small bell pepper. Put in another saucepan with minimum water, season with salt and cook until tender. Vegetables and meat should be done about the same time. When both are ready, combine them and mix well.

This stew can be served immediately, but it is tastier if allowed to stand for at least an hour, to allow spices to mellow and flavors to mingle, and then reheated. It is also good when prepared beforehand, and then heated in a casserole in the oven.

Serve in soup plates, with hot bread, a crisp salad, and a rich dessert. This recipe makes about six servings. Allow at least two servings per person.

** Editor's Note: This recipe can be found in "Searchlight Remembered" a memoir of Arda M. Haenszel's life in Searchlight from 1919-1922. Fresh Pasilla for bell pepper is a tasty substitute, and this recipe is extra made extra easy using frozen grocery store meatballs (or veggie meatballs).*

Delicious Desert Dessert

CHOCOLATE CHIA PUDDING

A delicious and light breakfast, snack or dessert made with chia seeds, a Southwestern native plant food common to this area. You can use dairy for this, or make it totally vegan. Vary the toppings with fresh fruit, granola, nuts, yogurt or whipped cream (or coconut cream). It takes a while to soak, but is so easy to make, and keeps several days, that we find it a great staple item. Sweeten with agave nectar to carry on the native plants theme, or you can use maple syrup, honey, or your favorite syrup.

stir. Add the chia and repeat, then add the rest of the milk. Stir and let rest for 10 minutes, then stir again. Put in the fridge for at least 4 hours. It's even better overnight. Add more liquid as desired for consistency. Chia reacts to humidity like flour, and so may absorb more or less moisture on any given day. Taste and adjust sweetness and spice! Serve with the fruits and nuts on hand, and enjoy guilt-free.



Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup chia seeds
- 1 and 1/2 cups milk (We usually use oat milk or almond for a nice non-dairy treat everyone can enjoy)
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 2-3 Tbs agave syrup (you can add more at any time)
- spices (a pinch of salt, dash of cinnamon or clove, hint of espresso powder, be creative)
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract (or experiment with other liqueurs or extracts)

Process:

Pour 1/2 cup milk into a container or mason jar. Add the cocoa powder and shake or

About Chia:

Salvia columbariae (chia) is a member of the mint family. With square stems and showy purple flowers, it is a festive annual after a good spring rain. Its flower calyxes look similar to its relative, salvia dorrii (desert purple sage), but have protruding spikes. Chia is an important Native American food plant, and is, of course, also eaten by birds and small mammals. It is best to leave wild chia seeds for the ecosystem, but it can easily be purchased at health food stores, Mexican markets, or online. It can also be grown from seed in the Southwestern garden.

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THE WEATHER TODAY.



▼▲▼▲▼▲▼ Ask The Professor ▼▲▼▲▼▲▼



Dear Professor, My wife and I enjoy exploring the desert and she collects rocks on all of our trips. Now our windowsills, bookshelves, bathroom counters, garden pots, and the whole house is filling up with rocks. How do I get her to stop? -- Hitting Rock Bottom

Ah yes. Rocks, in their natural state, actually supply fodder for beautiful objects. I suggest you buy your wife some rock polishing equipment or find your local rock club who often have equipment she can use. This is how rocks can become very special objects (and much smaller in the process) but more importantly, once she sees how much work the damn

things are she will probably lose interest in collecting them. Professor, What vehicle do you recommend for traveling on desert backroads? -- Roland A. Long

The one you have. I have personally spent quality time on desert back roads in cars such as Austin Healeys and Karman Ghias, and they all did the job either very well or at least in an interesting fashion. Two pieces of equipment that are essential: a shovel, in case you need to dig yourself out of a situation, and a piece of rope that is used to hold in your hand while you look pitiful after burying your fine street auto up to its axles in sand. A cooler of beer is also handy while waiting for someone to come by and help you. Be sure to save a beer for them.

Professor Emeritus has opinions on all things desert-related, and shares them freely and frequently ad nauseum. Send queries to: SearchlightGoldBeam@gmail.com

The Bird Watcher: Gilded & Golden

By Alex Harper - Red Rock Audubon Society



The Gilded Flicker

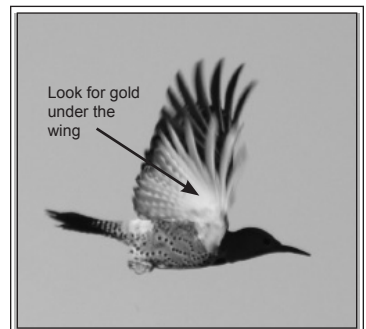
is a shy woodpecker found in the Sonoran Desert of Mexico and Arizona and in the Joshua Tree forests of the southernmost tip of Nevada. It just barely finds suitable habitat in Nevada; go a few miles north and well before Boulder City, you're unlikely to run into the Gilded Flicker. The chance to encounter this bird only exists in the Joshua Tree forests bordering the town of Searchlight.

More often heard than seen, its rollicking song lasts ten to fifteen seconds. From its perch on a Joshua Tree, it can be heard giving a sturdy "kwik-wik-wik-wik..." song. It's a sound that many of us can recognize, but so often can't

name the bird making the sounds. It's a bird that would rather not be seen, but still makes its presence known to those listening in the desert.

The gilded flicker is a rather large songbird, about the length of a pigeon, but sleeker. It has a pointed but sturdy beak, and a sandy-colored body. If one can get a close enough look, they'll notice the fine lines running horizontally across the back, a black bib on the breast, and dapples of dark spots across the belly. Males and females look nearly identical, but males have a dash of red on an otherwise gray face. When the bird opens its wings, it reveals the reason for its namesake: flashes of golden yellow glisten like the desert sun. It looks as if its underwings and tail have been dipped in gaudy yellow paint. They often fly low and purposefully between trees, making a bounding motion as they flap, dip, flap, dip and flap again.

Another variety, or species, of flicker calls the southern Nevada



home. The Northern Flicker lives in a wider range of habitats and is more widespread overall. It's almost an exact clone of the Gilded at first glance. But unlike the gilded yellow wings of its cousin, the Northern sports crimson red underwings and tails. The areas around Walking Box Ranch and the Wee Thump Wilderness are some of the only places that these two birds are known to overlap where they breed. In some cases, they're even known to pair up and hybridize. The result: offspring with colors of yellowish reds and reddish yellows.

What these birds also have in common is their role in a functioning Joshua Tree ecosystem. Both flickers can excavate fist-sized holes in the woody branches and trunks of the Joshua Tree. They create these holes to build nests within them. In the years that follow, other birds and animals may move in to find cover or build nests. Small falcons, Bewick's Wrens and Ash-throated Flycatchers live in the Joshua Tree desert and often depend on the carpentry of woodpeckers to create their homes; without them, these other birds must attempt to look elsewhere.

To find a Gilded Flicker, you must find the habitat of choice: Joshua Tree desert. Birds are most active and vocal in the hours following sunrise, and the cooler afternoon hours before dusk. They'll often visit pools of water. Since flickers are skittish and don't of-

ten tolerate close approach, the best method might be to listen for its distinct song and wait for the bird to inevitably cross your path. Pay close attention to wing colors, and you'll have the chance to tell which flavor of flicker you've been lucky enough to set your eyes on.

Flicker photos by Justin Streit



More about the Gilded Flicker including samples of its calls.

Learn more about birding and outdoor events in Southern Nevada with the Red Rock Audubon Society



Red Rock Audubon logo and illustration of a person with binoculars. Text: 'From Young Chicks to Old Buzzards, We're All Good Eggs. Learn about our excursions at: redrockaudubon.com'

What is a National Monument?

by Neal Desai, National Parks Conservation Association

Our federal public lands have so many names, it can get confusing very quickly! We have national parks, national recreation areas, wilderness areas, national historic sites, and national monuments – just to name a few. Some places are managed by the National Park Service, some by the Forest Service and others by the Bureau of Land Management – all of which are federal agencies that steward our public lands. A national monument could be a historic house, or a landscape of hundreds of thousands of acres. So what is Avi Kwa Ame??

Avi Kwa Ame is a National Monument made up of existing federal public lands, approximately 450,000 acres in size. These permanently protected lands will continue to be man-

aged by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). National Monuments can be established by either Congress or the President of the United States, and Avi Kwa Ame was established by President Biden. This presidential action continues a long bi-partisan tradition of Presidents creating national monuments, including our past three Presidents (Trump, Obama and Bush).

When local communities and advocates were wondering what type of land protection designation was best for Avi Kwa Ame, it was clear that a national monument designation under the BLM would best protect the lands while ensuring recreational activities enjoyed by the public could continue. Unlike a national park, a BLM national monu-

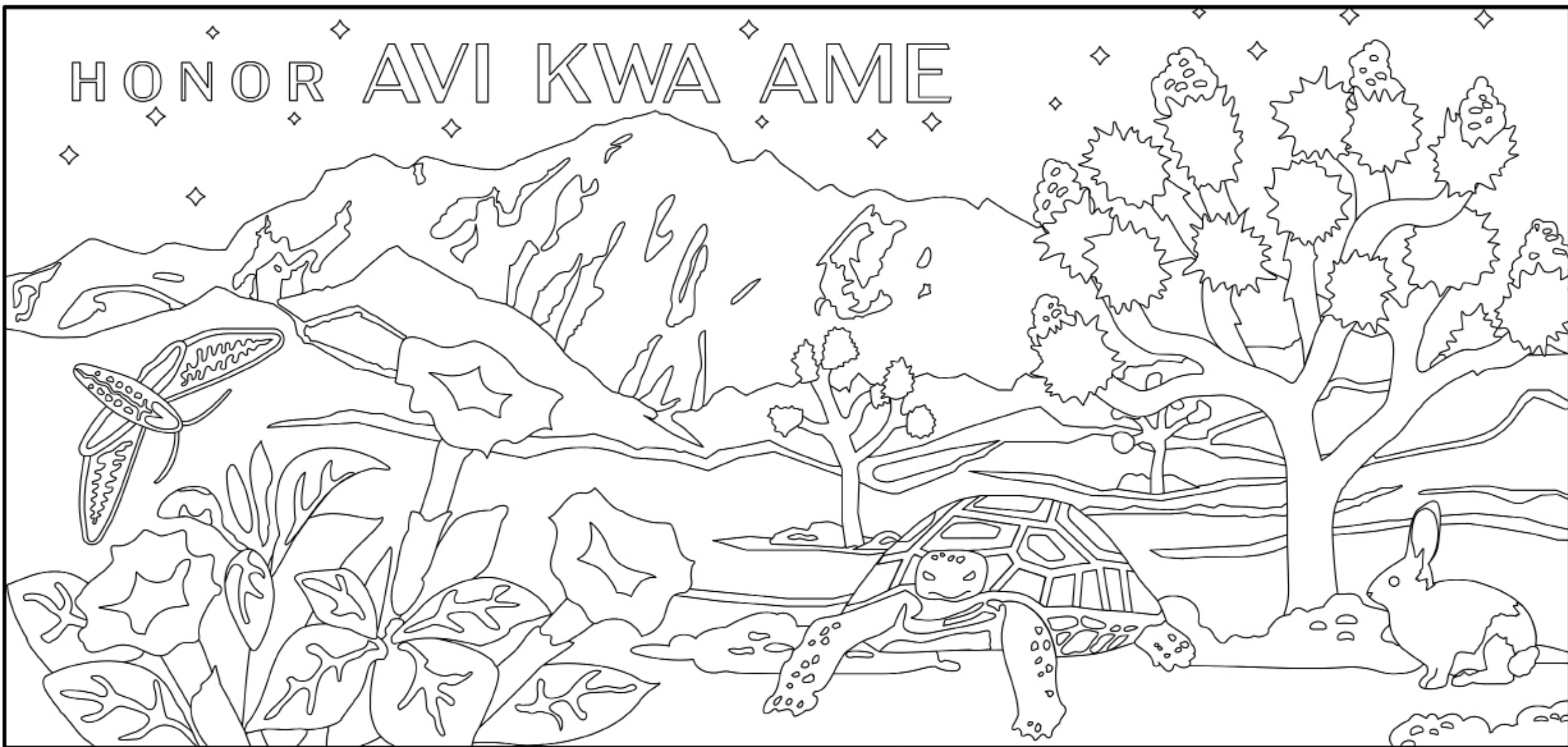
ment allows the continued use of designated backcountry roads for off-highway vehicle driving, and also allows for continuation of recreational rockhounding and hunting. Most importantly, it protects the lands from industrial development, ensuring the spectacular views remain unobstructed, the recreation retains its world-class values, and we honor this landscape that is considered sacred for a dozen Native American Tribes.

One look at a map of the national monument makes it clear that Avi Kwa Ame was the missing link to finally complete connecting the California desert to the Colorado Plateau. This completion of landscape protection means that our desert – and all its inhabitants – can be more resilient to a changing climate where

the dries are getting drier and hots are getting hotter. For example, Joshua trees and wildlife like bighorn sheep and desert tortoise will have room to adapt to higher, wetter elevations.

The establishment of a national monument also allows our local communities to have a more formal voice in shaping the future. For example, a stakeholders committee will be formed soon, including representatives from Searchlight, Laughlin and Boulder City, as well as nearby tribal nations, with the important goal of shaping a future management plan for Avi Kwa Ame. It's an opportunity to protect what we love, like our dark night skies and recreational activities, and together improve the outlook for generations of future visitors.

Advertisement for 'Full Color Extended Annual Edition of GOLD BEAM'. Features a flashlight graphic with 'THE SEARCH LIGHT' and 'GOLD BEAM' text. Includes a list of featured articles: 'The Story of the Cyrus Noble Mine', 'Trail of the Opal Skull', 'Spirit of the Land Exhibition', 'Searchlight Community Postcard Art', 'A Day in the Castles', and 'Interview with the Searchlight Volunteer Fire Department'. Also mentions 'Expert trail guides, recipes, plants, animals, area info and more!'. Ends with 'Entertainments Galore!' and 'ALLWAYS REASONABLY PRICED AND IN GLORIOUS COLOR!'. Includes a row of small character icons and 'Pick up yours at Searchlight Treasures, The Barrick Museum of Art, or your favorite desert bookstore!'.



Did You Know?

Avi Kwa Ame is the Mojave word for Spirit Mountain, the tallest mountain in the area. It rises to 5,642 feet high, over a mile above the Colorado River below it to the East.

Avi Kwa Ame is a sacred place to many local Native American communities, and a special landscape that is home to plants and animals that are unique to the Mojave desert, such as the Joshua Tree and the Desert Tortoise.

The Joshua Tree is tall with many branches of green, spiky rosettes. In the spring, it produces large clusters of cream-colored flowers that look a bit like party hats on top of the trees! Joshua

FUN DESERT FACTS!

trees are pollinated by small, Yucca Moths that also lay their eggs inside the flowers to hatch their young in the developing fruit. The trees can live to be very old, some of them up to a thousand years.

Another, much larger moth found here is the Sphinx Moth, also called the Hummingbird Moth because of the way it can hover in the air. It can have a wingspan of 3 inches or more, and

has beautiful black, brown and pink markings. The Sphinx Moth pollinates many plants, but it especially loves the giant white flowers of the Datura. The flowers the Datura plant open at night, so it is also known as a Moonflower.

The Desert Tortoise and the Cottontail Rabbit enjoy nibbling on desert wildflowers. They also eat many green plants and grasses that grow throughout the landscape. Cottontails can run fast

to escape predators (up to 18 miles per hour!) and confuse them by running in a zigzag pattern. These rabbits are light brown and white, and blend in well with the desert surroundings.

The Desert Tortoise is also colored with many browns and grays like the rocks and shadows. It cannot outrun predators, but it can hide within its shell, or in one of its underground burrows. Its underground home also helps protect it from the heat of the summer and the cold in winter.

It is a lucky day when you get to see Mojave desert plants and animals. This is the only place they live, and they work hard to survive in a landscape that gets little rain. The plants and animals can teach us many things when we take the time to observe them more closely.