



The Source



Voice of the Saline Preservation Association

Issue #33

Winter 2008

UPDATE ON SPA

Hello again after such a long time. Happy New Year to all lovers of Saline Valley and environs. We want everyone to know that SPA is alive and well and doing whatever we can to give the Saline Warm Springs visitor community a voice in the management of the Saline Warm Springs by Death Valley National Park.

Our lack of action and communication in recent years was due to both a perceived less than receptive attitude on the part of DVNP administration, and a severe case of frustration and fatigue/burn-out in the case of those serving on SPA's Board of Directors.

We have seen a definite improvement recently on both of these fronts. Spa has been re-invigorated recently by the addition of two new Board members to our number; John Dukes of Ridgecrest and Keeler and Patricia Barton of Bishop, both long-time regular visitors to Saline Valley Warm Springs. We welcome John and Patricia's joining us in our goal of representing the interests of the Saline Valley visitor community to DVNP management in Furnace Creek. Our names and contact information are listed on the masthead of this newsletter, and we welcome any communication you might want to send our way about your experience at Saline Warm Springs, as well as your thoughts about how they are being managed. We hope that you will feel free to get in touch with any of us and be assured that both the communication and the identity of its source will be kept confidential, for SPA Board members only. Please note that we have changed our mailing address back to Keeler, as it was originally, when we began more than twenty years ago.

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DVNP & SPA GETOGETHER • September 7, 2007

SPA has continued to monitor conditions at Saline Valley Warm Springs over the last several years, during which time we experienced a severe water flow crisis at the Lower Warm Spring. This situation put a tremendous strain on the resources available to visitors and on those having to respond to it in regard to management of those resources. As a result of complaints made by several different regular visitors to Saline Warm Springs, SPA requested and was granted a meeting with DVNP Superintendent J. T. Reynolds and his management staff, including Camp Host Lee Greenwell. Meeting with Superintendent Reynolds and his staff were all five SPA Board members, three regular current visitors to Saline Warm Springs and a neutral meeting facilitator. In addition, letters were submitted for the record from three members of the visiting public not able to travel to attend this meeting.

SPA Board chair Sam Merk presented a folio of photographs taken at Saline Warm Springs the previous weekend illustrating some of the physical problems we wished to discuss: these included signage problems, trash problems, sanitation issues, locked water valves, non-native species proliferation, regulatory violations, fire, safety and health issues, and land use designations and use patterns on-site.

Visitors present and via submitted letters commented primarily about their inability to use facilities at Saline Lower Warm Spring due to control of water flow and water use priorities and decisions made by the Camp Host. Complimentary comments were made regarding the Camp Host's physical site maintenance efforts, though some visitors were less than positively impressed by the lack of receptivity demonstrated towards them in response to their efforts to engage in discussion of facilities availability at Lower Warm Spring.

Superintendent Reynolds made it clear that the Camp Host is considered essential to the successful management of Saline Warm Springs, and that spreading the responsibility load on the Camp Host, in the form of Assistant Camp Hosts through the Volunteers In

DVNP & SPA GETOGETHER

September 7, 2007 Continued

Parks program, is an idea they would like to consider for the future. Information on procedures to apply to participate in the Volunteers In Parks program will be posted on the Lower Warm Springs Bulletin Board. The necessity for appropriate training in DVNP regulatory and public relations issues for all Camp Host personnel was emphasized by SPA Board members with Superintendent Reynolds in agreement.

DVNP Resources Manager Linda Greene agreed to arrange to tour and survey Saline Valley Warm Springs with SPA Board members to develop plans and procedures relative to solving the physical site problems that were pointed out. The need to develop a specific site management plan for Saline Warm Springs was agreed to by all present, and a collaborative effort involving OVNP staff and SPA Board members was promised.

Spa requested that a liaison person on DVNP staff be designated whom visitors could communicate with regarding the quality of experience they are encountering at Saline Warm Springs, and Superintendent Reynolds stated that he would like to receive all such communications from visitors. He assured all present that he would keep the identities of all such correspondents confidential, though he acknowledged that staff with records access might be able to breach that assurance. Superintendent Reynolds would want to be informed if any future correspondent felt that they had been subjected to negative behavior on the part of any DVNP personnel as a result of having communicated with him.

A suggestion was made that a "Saline Warm Springs

Camp Support Fund" be established so visitors could contribute directly to the costs of supplying and maintaining the Saline Warm Springs facilities and management efforts. Superintendent Reynolds agreed to establish such a fund and directed that donations be sent to him marked for that purpose. SPA has issued and sent a check for \$250.00 to get this fund started!

It's our hope that we will show Superintendent Reynolds how much of a resource the Saline Visitor community can be to him and his staff via our communications and donations to this fund. The address for either or both is:

Mr. J.T. Reynolds, Superintendent

Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, CA 92328

Last, but not least, SPA will be allotted a space on the Saline Warm Springs Bulletin Board for organizational and contact information, possibly including newsletter copy. It was suggested that SPA could include communication from Superintendent Reynolds in our newsletter, words of wisdom to the visiting public. SPA also agreed to submit SPA newsletter copy to Superintendent Reynolds for review prior to publication.

In conclusion, we feel that our efforts to communicate the concerns of the visiting public regarding Saline Warm Springs were given close attention and consideration by Superintendent Reynolds and his staff. We are encouraged by his positive response and assurance of his personal commitment to the continuation and improvement of the quality of experience available to the visiting public in Saline Valley, and his intention to work collaboratively with SPA toward that goal. Though we have yet to be able to schedule a joint assessment tour as agreed to at this meeting, we remain hopeful that we will be able to proceed together towards our mutual goals in the near future.

If you would like to take a look at Death Valley National Park's current rules and regulations, you may visit their website at: <http://www.nps.gov/deva/parkmgmt/upload/Compendium 2007.pdf>

SPA TREASURER'S REPORT

The balance in the SPA Treasury at the close of 2007, and before deducting the costs of this mailing of The Source, was \$3,277.95. The approximate printing and postage costs of this mailing are \$1,000, leaving an approximate balance of \$2,277.95.

Donations to SPA are encouraged so that future newsletters may be funded and to allow for additional contributions, as needed, from SPA to the Saline Warm Springs Camp Support Fund administered by Death Valley National Park.

Your contributions to SPA, which is a non-profit 501.3.c corporation, are tax deductible.

Please send your SPA contributions to the SPA, P.o. Box 136, Keeler, CA 93530. You may also contribute directly to the Saline Warm Springs Camp Support Fund (not tax deductible), do Mr. J. T. Reynolds, Superintendent, Death Valley National Park, Death Valley, CA 92328.

ROAD CONDITIONS

Feb. 11, 2008 • We've had a lot of snow recently which means that our passes are snow and ice covered. The North Pass is closed for sure, but traffic is going in and out the South Pass with 4WD. The 4WD is needed for the getting out part. We recommend 4WD with chains knowing what it's like when the snow turns to ice and even 4WD will not do the job. Lippincott Rd. is passable but VERY rough, and Steel Pass is an option for those with the appropriate vehicle and spirit of adventure. So come prepared with 4WD, chains, extra gas and food for the duration.



Saline Warm Springs Visitor Survey

As part of our effort to serve as a conduit for communication between the Saline visitor community and DVNP administration, we would like to ask you to give us some basic information about your use of Saline Valley and the Saline Warm Springs as a recreational resource. This is intended to be an anonymous survey, no identification required, and we have pre-printed our address on the envelope included for your use in returning this survey to us. We would ask that you provide the postage stamp necessary for this purpose and remove your address from the back if you wish to keep your response anonymous.

1. How often do you visit Saline Valley?
 Several times a year Every other year
 Once a year Other _____
 We no longer visit Saline Valley
2. How long do you stay per visit on average?
 Weekend One week Two weeks
 30 days Other _____
3. When you visit Saline Valley, where would you prefer to camp?
 Lower Warm Spring Wapasha cold pool
 Palm Spring Pat Keyes Cyn
 Upper Warm Spring McElvoy Cyn
 Between Lower and Palm Springs
 Hunter Cyn Other _____
4. When you visit Saline Valley, what activities do you enjoy pursuing?
 Soaking Sunbathing Hiking
 Biking (non-motor) Motorcycle riding
 Reading/writing Artwork
 Socializing with fellow campers Music
 Other _____
5. What facilities available at Saline Warm Springs do you use regularly?
 Soaking tubs Bathtub Showers
 Sinks Latrines Fire Pans
 Communal Fire Pit Library
 Aluminum Recycling Equip.
 Lost & Found Other _____
6. Are there facilities not available at Saline Warm Springs that you feel would make a good addition to those there now?
7. Do you have any comments about the way DVNP and/or the Camp Host manage the Saline Warm Springs? If so, what are your observations?
8. If there are things about the way Saline Warm Springs are being managed that you especially like or appreciate, what are they?
9. Would you like to contribute to financially support Saline Warm Springs maintenance by donating to the fund established by DVNP for that purpose?
 Yes
 No
10. Is there anything else you would like to communicate to DVNP Superintendent Reynolds and his staff about the conditions and quality of experience available at Saline Warm Springs?

Please respond as soon as you are able. Thanks!
Sheri



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