



"Council Pine" Ponderosa, one of the oldest in California dating back to the years of 1450-1500.

Middle Winter Moon - January 2015

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Winter at the James Reserve



Greetings from the James Reserve! Many of you are aware that starting in 2012, the James entered a new era, thanks to the addition of three new cabins and classroom and a simultaneous turn over in all three of the James' personnel. The increased capacity for visitors took a toll on our off-the-grid power system. Consequently, I had to have the generator rebuilt and purchase a new ½ bank of photovoltaic batteries. We are saving up to complete improvements with a second installment of batteries. With the field station operating more stably, we finally have the time to launch new programs and to anticipate future needs of large groups of up to 70 people. Our aim is to better serve bigger groups of researchers and students and the public with minimal disturbance to the natural environment. As a first step, we have just submitted a planning grant proposal to the National Science Foundation. Funds would enable us to assemble a panel of experts that would visit the Reserve and help us devise a strategic plan that will carry us successfully into the James' next five years. In the meantime, we continue to plan and make necessary improvements to keep the station well-maintained and running—a new snow plow, renovation of the cook shack, as well as updating maps, brochures and our website (james.ucnrs.org). We will keep you informed of our new directions in 2015 and we welcome your feedback and guidance as we solidify our vision for the Reserve.

Jennifer Gee

Director of the James Reserve

TRAILFINDERS FALL MEETING 2014 – Jim Haley’s Report

Once again Trailfinder “Chief” Em Sebenius hosted a fall luncheon get-together on the first Monday in November at the Brookside Golf Course clubhouse by the Rose Bowl in Pasadena. Joining the Trailfinders were Kim Hammond from UCR and James Reserve Director Jennifer Gee.

Accompanying them was newly-hired Reserve Assistant Director John Laundré. Welcome aboard, John!

Trailfinder reports followed the announcement of RSVP regrets sent by Ed Paul, John Van de Kamp, Peter Pohl, and Gus Sebenius. Dion Neutra now has a museum in the Neutra Office Building in Silver Lake. He is also being honored by the city for his firm’s contributions to the community. Jim Farber’s exhibit on Route 66 continues to run at the Autry Museum by Griffith Park. It is well worth seeing. Older Trailfinders would recognize on display many roadside artifacts from their Coconino Trip days. Art Evans summarized his latest biography of his friend and fellow automotive racing enthusiast John Fitch. He continues to praise Harry for his own upbringing and providing the inspiration for his success as an author. Jim Halley spoke of his current mission to document “Trailfinder memories” of the Reserve property. Mike Hamilton had begun the project, and Jennifer Gee has met recently with Idyllwild historians. He is inviting anyone who remembers any story Harry told about the property and its neighborhood to send it to Jennifer at the Reserve. One

question regards local bears. Did Harry ever mention any encounters in that area? Even Linda Kamb remarked she had encountered one in her own Pasadena neighborhood. John Laundré is large-animal naturalist and has already photographed an adult mountain lion on the property.

Reports from the Reserve include upgrading the foundation of the guest cabin by Trailfinder Lodge and naming it Blair House in honor of Trailfinder, Marvin Blair, whose donated trailer began the need for the snow shed that evolved into a cabin during the last directorship. Also the plumbing has been restored to Lolomi Lodge as part of its continuing need for upgrades and reinforcement. Donations still welcome! Future plans for the Reserve are focused on the increased use of the facilities as an outdoor education center for the local community as well as the University. Its use as a center for artists and musicians is another possibility. With no cell phone reception at its facility, James Reserve provides a welcome retreat from urban distractions.

Finally, both Steve Smith and Bud Halley, as well as the rest, were intrigued to hear that during Jim’s recent visit to the Reserve an astonishing discovery was made. A fruit-bearing apple tree now grows in what was once the center of the Ponderosa Council fire ring at the base of the Champion Ponderosa! An omen?

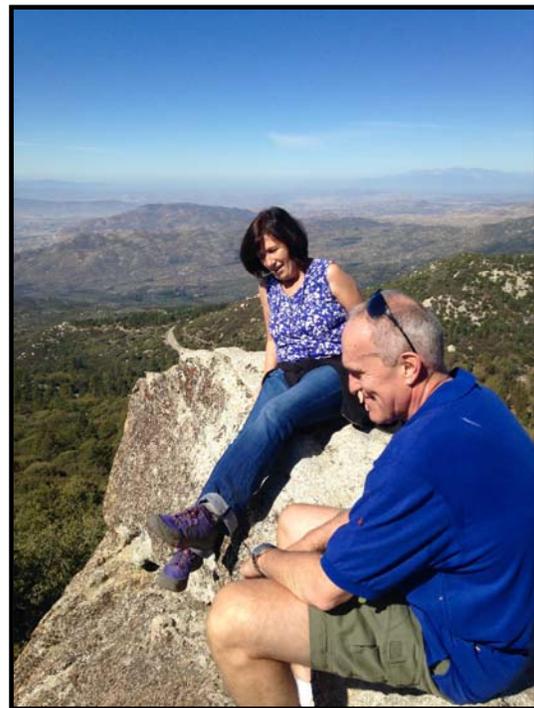
Trailfinders Reunite!

In my 2½ years as Director, I have learned that the life paths and adventures of the Trailfinders are incredibly diverse. Several Trailfinders have diligently kept in touch with other Trailfinders as well as the James Reserve. Others lost touch after they grew up and moved away from California. We are fortunate in that recently, a few Trailfinders have found us on Facebook and through other means. We are delighted to have been contacted over the last two years by former Trailfinders as well as family and friends of the Trailfinders who fondly remember their Trailfinder connections and experiences. We extend a hearty welcome back to Jim Moule, Doug Sigler, and Tim Farwell, and to Nina Smith and Marsha Hunt Condit. Thank you for sharing your memories and for your interest in the special camp that is now the James Reserve. Please consider joining us at the Summer 2015 meeting at the James (first Sunday in June).

Research and Teaching Activities at the James

Since the last newsletter, the Reserve has been busy with a wide variety of activities, from a visit by UCR's Chancellor, Assistant Chancellor and Chancellor of Research, to multiple courses (see photo), to a UCR Biology Faculty Retreat, and a multiweek visit from a team of geologists conducting research on the paleoseismology of the Garnet Hill Fault near the James Reserve satellite reserve, Oasis de los Osos. We have had a very busy fall with visits from researchers to collect data on and near the James. Several groups, including the Department

of Biology at UCR, used our facilities for retreats or meetings. With the start of classes at Universities, the James turned into an outdoor classroom again for many young scholars. We have also begun to work with the Boojum Institute, based in the nearby town of Anza, to host a couple of their spring outdoor classes that will concentrate on learning how to study the natural world. Our efforts to establish the Next Generation Trailfinders at the James has caught the imagination and of the



UCR Chancellor Kim Wilcox (front) and Dr. Kim Hammond, UCR-NRS Faculty Director of the James on summit of 4-saints trail.

Idyllwild Community. Ongoing discussions with locals are helping us to find volunteer teachers and funding sources. Our goal is to run a 2-3 day pilot summer program this year. About half of the participants will be local students who

live on the hill in Idyllwild and the Santa Rosa Indian Reservation. The remaining participants will be invited from areas “off the hill,” many of whom have never seen the montane wilderness that surrounds the James. Our efforts also continue to establish our “Young Scholars Program” aimed at providing research support for new faculty members and graduates students interested in doing research at the James.

Improvements at the James



Students from Dr. Chris Clark’s course entitled Evolutionary Ecology of Terrestrial Vertebrates working with Anna’s hummingbird

Besides research and teaching activities at the James, we have also been able to make various “nut and bolts” improvements. The first and most significant is that Lolomi now has a new septic drain field! This may not sound too spectacular but it is an important step in the restoration of Lolomi Lodge. We have also had a couple of upgrades in our equipment to help maintain the James. After persistent problems with our old (25+ years) John

Deere Tractor, we traded it in on a newer used tractor that is in much better shape.



Digging the trench and putting in the new drain field for Lolomi Lodge

With the pending approach of winter, we replaced our old broken snowplow with a new Snow Bear plow, which may or may not get a lot of use this winter, depending on drought conditions. In order to encourage use of the little-used campground, we have moved split log benches to provide campers with a place to relax, and we have begun to renovate the old cook shed at the campground. It has been very popular with our youngest visitors and will ensure that it is a safe place for children to explore. We are hoping to maintain its rustic character but increase its utility. For the nonhuman



Welcome to our newer tractor, a 4-wheel drive John Deere equipped with a scraper and bucket, both essential for its use at the James.

animals, we have added a watering hole up by the solar panels where we can now monitor daily energy use and storage levels of our band of photovoltaic batteries, a necessary improvement for measuring the load to our system when we host big groups. The idea behind the new watering hole is to provide wildlife with access to water during the dry summer months and it seems to be working. We have sited the watering hole



Old cook shed under renovations in the campground at the James.

in one of the few remaining patches of montane chaparral that exists in the mature forest. Besides numerous bird species (most importantly to Jen, Mountain Quail) and small mammals, including regular visits from a gray fox, infrequent visits (most importantly to John) from a mountain lion were recorded on a trail camera mounted near the water.



A surprise visitor to the new watering hole at the James.

TRAILFINDER TIDBITS

“No one becomes a Trailfinder by merely attending council and paying dues. A boy must know the laws and strive to live in the spirit of them.”

--Harry James: Manual for Trailfinders

“The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant, "What good is it?" If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.”

--Aldo Leopold

Until the spring newsletter, when the James wakes up from its winter slumber, remember: “Be wise, for stupidity is the root of all evil”, Trailfinders Rule #8.



First winter snow on the mountains at the James

**Best Wishes and Happy Holidays from
your friends at the James Reserve—
Kim, Jen, John, Kevin and Dexter**

James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve ❖ PO Box 1775 ❖ Idyllwild, CA 92549
(951) 827-6835; website: james.ucnrs.org

If you wish to support the James Reserve, you can make a donation in the following ways: Please make your check to the “UCR Foundation” and write in the memo line “James Reserve-200330.” Do include a note if your gift is in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one. Mail to the UCR Foundation, 1136 Hinderaker Hall, Riverside, CA 92521. You can also donate online by going to <https://advancementservices.ucr.edu/AdvanceOnlineGiving/search> . Choose “College of Nat & Agr. Science and under that follow the link to “Natural Resources” and then “James San Jacinto Mountains Reserve. Thank you!