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Community Events Planned to Celebrate 20th Anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act

Twentynine Palms, CA – Today, the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts announced [a calendar of more than a dozen events celebrating the 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994](#). These events are part of an initiative led by the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, numerous community partners, and the desert’s national parks to mark the two decades since the California Desert Protection Act became law on October 31, 1994.

“These events are a great opportunity to celebrate the California desert and the 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act,” said Vickie Waite, Executive Director of the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts. “There’s an activity for everyone – whether you want to mark this occasion by hiking or enjoying art inspired by the desert. Join us this fall and celebrate our heritage, our history, and the beauty of the California desert.”

Locals and visitors can choose from events with hikes, activities for children, art exhibits, and more. The events are scheduled to take place from September to December at locations across the desert region, including Joshua Tree National Park, Coachella Valley, Death Valley, Shoshone, the Mojave National Preserve, Tecopa, Ridgecrest, Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, and Yucca Valley.

“On November 15, residents and visitors are invited to a mural dedication and a gourmet desert-themed dinner in Twentynine Palms,” said Cynthia Truitt, Executive Director of the Twentynine Palms Chamber

of Commerce. “These events will celebrate our community, our region, and the 20th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act, which allows visitors and residents to enjoy our expansive desert vistas and starry night skies.”

The events are listed on a new website launched by the Council for the Arts: www.caldesert20.org. The website, which also offers background information about the California Desert Protection Act, maps, photos, and more, will be updated regularly throughout the fall. All events are free and open to the public, unless otherwise noted.

“We invite desert residents to join us and celebrate the California Desert Protection Act turning 20 years old,” said Wanda Stadum, President of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce. “On November 16, we’ll host an all-day event in Yucca Valley featuring student artwork and desert projects, a coloring contest, face painting, even birthday cupcakes. We’ll also be entertained by Yucca Valley and Twentynine Palms high school band and choir members. This is a great event for families and a great opportunity to celebrate our region.”

The California Desert Protection Act enlarged and re-designated Joshua Tree and Death Valley as national parks, established the Mojave National Preserve, and established 69 wilderness areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the California desert. In total, the California Desert Protection Act increased protection for 8.6 million acres of the California desert.

“This is an important moment to reflect on the California Desert Protection Act, and what it did for our community,” said Pastor Frank Ruiz, of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Indio, California. “On this anniversary, we must recommit ourselves to being stewards of God’s creation. I invite the community to join us October 4 at ‘Nuestro Desierto, Nuestra Comunidad’ a day-long event to mark this special occasion and to honor Hispanic Heritage Month. We will be celebrating the Hispanic community’s role as stewards of the California desert.”

Organizations and community members interested in getting involved with the 20th anniversary events should contact Vickie Waite, Executive Director of the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, at (760) 217-8839 or director@caldesert20.org. Members of the media should contact Sarah Hersh, Full Court Press Communications, at 510-550-8170 or sarah@fcpcommunications.com. Downloadable photos of the California desert are available to media [here](#).

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About the Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts

The Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts is dedicated to fostering the spirit of artistic expression inspired by the park, celebrating the park's majestic landscape and precious wildlife, preserving the park's cultural history, and supporting the preservation, enhancement, and sustainability of the entire California desert region. Learn more at www.jtnparts.org and follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/JTNPArts) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/JTNPArts).