

Prospectus

Hiking Around Palm Springs

April 4-April 11, 2009

The city of Palm Springs, in southwest California, lies at the northwest end of the sixty-mile long Coachilla Valley, which extends to the southeast beyond Palm Desert towards the Salton Sea. Although much of the valley itself has become urbanized as more and more people have been attracted by its beauty and desert climate, the surrounding lands mostly remain pristine desert wilderness.

The valley is bordered by the San Jacinto, and Santa Rosa Mountains to the west and southwest, and by the San Bernadino Mountains, BLM managed lands, and the Joshua Tree National Park to the northwest, north, and northeast. This extreme range of topography; from low desert, through high desert, to the 10,800 foot San Jacinto peak that towers over Palm Springs, offers a wonderful varieties of hiking opportunities as well as of plant and animal life.

Early April is the ideal time to explore this area. The desert flowers and cacti are in bloom while daytime temperatures remain moderate; ranging from the 70's into the 90's.

Accommodations

We will be staying in golf course resort two or three bedroom condominiums at the beautiful Desert Princess Resort in Palm Springs. Three or four persons will occupy each unit. Single persons will have their own private room with shared bath, while couples will share a king bedded master suite with private bath. Because these units are individually owned, all are differently furnished; but all provide towels and linens and have fully equipped kitchens, living/ dining rooms, outdoor patios, and access to adjacent outdoor Jacuzzis and pools. Participants will have access to tennis facilities (at extra charge).

Transportation

We fly into Palm Springs airport, which is served by several airlines. Participants will be met at the airport by a leader and transported by car the short distance to the Resort. If, for any reason, you wish to fly into Ontario, CA or elsewhere, the most convenient and least expensive way to reach Palm Springs is to rent a car for the week.

It is recommended that participants plan to arrive in the afternoon on Saturday in order to settle in and shop prior to our "get acquainted" dinner. On our last day, you should plan to leave before noon.

We will travel to our hiking destinations, dinner, shopping, etc. by automobile; with four to five persons per vehicle. Trips to trailheads will be of relatively short duration; usually less than one hour. We will enlist one or two trip members to be volunteer drivers.

Meals and Dining

Breakfasts will be taken, and trail lunches prepared, by each participant in his/ her condominium unit. Since all wants are different, each will purchase his/her breakfast and lunch supplies. There will be ample opportunity to shop at a local supermarket.

Dinners most nights will be taken in local restaurants. Since we will have several cars at our disposal, it is not necessary that we all dine at the same time or restaurant every evening. Those who choose to dine separately from the leaders will be given a meal allowance for that evening. A moderately priced evening restaurant dinner has been included in the cost of the trip. Each person is responsible for his/ her own alcoholic beverages.

On the Saturday of our arrival, we will have a “get acquainted” dinners at the leader’s condo and on our last evening we will all dine together at a local restaurant

Group Size

The group will consist of a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 16 persons including two leaders.

Educational Goals

Although, from a distance, the desert appears to be devoid of life; in fact it is rich in plants and animals that are wonderfully adapted for this severe environment. Canyons contain hidden palm tree oases. Dryer regions are home to many different species of cacti and other hardy plants that vary with altitude. Mountains are home to cougars, mountain sheep, and coyotes as well as many smaller animals including an occasional rattlesnake. The geology of this area has its own complex story to tell.

To help us understand these riches, local naturalists who can tell us about the natural history and geology of the region shall accompany us on several hikes.

Daily Program and Hikes

We will assemble each morning at the appointed time having breakfasted and prepared our trail lunch in our own condominium. Our hike for any particular day will depend in part on the temperature (higher elevations on hot days), and partly on the availability of a naturalist to accompany us, or an appropriate park ranger program. Most days we shall return home by mid-afternoon to allow for clean up and pool side relaxation prior to dinner.

Although most will be shorter, some hikes may be up to eight miles in length and/ or up to 2000’ elevation gain. Trails may occasionally be rocky and steep, but the pace will generally be easy. Daytime temperatures are unpredictable in April. They may be in the 90’s in the low desert, but we may even encounter snowfields at higher mountain elevations. .

Wednesday will be our free day and there are many things to do. You may want to visit some of the many area art museums and galleries, visit the Living Desert museum, take the cable car to the top of San Jacinto peak, visit the wind farms, go shopping, or just hang out around your condo. If there is demand, we might drive southwest to the Salton Sea and Anza-Borrego State Park.

Expectations for Participants

ABILITY: Although most hikes will be shorter or easier, participants should be prepared and conditioned for hikes up to eight miles in length with 2000' elevation gain on some steep and rocky terrain. These correspond to moderate hikes in the White Mountains. It is important for group cohesion that the levels of ability be roughly uniform.

GROUP SAFETY: Group safety is always the highest priority. The group always stays together and hikes at a pace comfortable for the slowest person. All should be prepared to carry as many as four quarts of water and have appropriate clothing, including a hat and summer-weight hiking boots, for the day's hike.

GROUP DYNAMICS: The enjoyment one finds from any excursion is derived as much from interaction with other group members as from the beauty of the hikes, the weather, the quality of the accommodations, or the skills of the leaders. If you work towards an enjoyable group experience, are prepared to help your fellow hikers, and practice basic courtesies such as always being on time, you and all of your companions will have a memorable experience.

TRIP LEADERS

Herb Kingsbury has been an AMC Echo Lake Camp hike leader for twenty-three years and a four-season leader with the New Hampshire Chapter for fourteen years. He has been a co leader or leader for seven major excursions to the American west and southwest and for seventeen inter-chapter trips. He has vacationed in the Palm Springs for eight years and has hiked extensively in the area. This will be his third year leading this excursion

Roy Loiselle is a hike leader with the Narragansett Chapter. He has been a major excursion co-leader to St. John Island and Palm Springs, has co-led inter-chapter excursions, and has participated in several major excursions.

COSTS AND PAYMENTS

The price of the excursion is \$1140.00 plus airfare which is estimated to be \$450-\$550 Boston- Palm Springs. Participants will be responsible for any unanticipated increase in cost and any unspent funds will be returned to the participants after the trip. The trip price includes accommodations, local transportation, evening meals, medical and evacuation insurance, and entrance fees (except on free day). In accordance with AMC policy, the price includes the leaders expense and AMC overhead to defray administrative and publication costs.

A registration deposit of \$400, check payable to the Appalachian Mountain Club, is due within 10 days of notification of your acceptance on the trip. At that time, you must also submit a registration form, the Confidential Medical form, and the Risk Release Form.

FLIGHT TICKETS

If you desire, the leader will buy your flight tickets, round trip from Boston, using your credit card, at the time he buys his own. Be aware, however that the leader has no special advantage in price or timing, and may pay more than some other participants.

The leader will also notify participants frequently of current Internet fares.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Your cancellation shall not raise the cost of the trip to any of the participants or to the leaders. Therefore, if you cancel, all money received will be returned less your share of expenses already incurred and future expenses that cannot be avoided. If the trip becomes fully booked, your payments will be refunded in full.