



National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior
Joshua Tree National Park



Joshua Tree National Park News Release

Joshua Tree National Park Presents Crossroads Conference

Location: **UCR, Palm Desert Campus Graduate Center**

Date: **Friday, December, 2**

As Joshua Tree National Park winds down its year-long, 75th Anniversary celebration, the park is taking the opportunity to reflect on the challenges and opportunities of the next 75 years. At the December 2 Crossroads Conference, park staff and a panel of accomplished speakers will shed light on some of the park's pressing issues. Topics include the potential effects of global climate change at Joshua Tree National Park, climate change impacts on individual park species and native ecosystems, and developing climate change science, monitoring programs, and climate change adaptation strategies in the national parks.

Invited Speakers

Dr. Kenneth Cole is a recently retired USGS research ecologist with a background in geosciences, global change, and plant ecology. Since 1976, Dr. Cole has been an active researcher in paleoecology, paleoclimatology, geomorphology, successional ecology, and fire ecology, especially as they relate to vegetation change. He has published 52 peer-reviewed manuscripts on these subjects. Most of his research has concentrated on vegetation of the arid southwest, although he has also studied climate and fire-related vegetation changes in the Great Lakes Region, coastal California, and the Middle East. Since 1991 he has studied the effects of future climate change on ecosystems.

Dr. Cameron Barrows is currently an assistant research ecologist coordinating the Center for Conservation Biology's Desert Studies Initiative at the University of California, Riverside. Dr. Barrow's research focuses on the impacts of climate change on southwestern desert biodiversity and population persistence on fragmented landscapes. He has a Ph.D. from the University of California at Riverside, a M.S. in Biology from California State University at Long Beach, and a B.S. in Renewable Resources from the University of California at Davis. Dr. Barrows has been working to preserve species and landscapes throughout California serving as the Manager of the Northern California Coast Range Preserve and the Southern California Regional Manager for the Nature Conservancy and more recently as the Director of the Coachella Valley Preserve for the Nature Conservancy and the Center for Natural Lands Management.

Dr. Leigh Welling leads the NPS Climate Change Response Program, which provides training, technical expertise, project funding, and information products to support National Park Service actions that preserve the park resources and values in a changing climate. She has a Ph.D. and M.S. in Oceanography from Oregon State University and a B.A. in Geology from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She has been working in the climate change research and education arena since the mid-1980s and her research focused on ground-truthing hindcast models for paleoceanographic reconstruction. Prior to joining the National Park Service, Leigh held research faculty positions at the University of North Dakota and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where she taught, supervised students, and oversaw programs aimed at the intersection of science and decision-making.

Conference Schedule

Friday, December 2

- 12:30 Welcome by Superintendent Mark Butler
- 12:40 NPCA message by David Lamfrom
- 12:45 Proclamation-recognizing the 75th Anniversary-Marc Troast representing Congresswoman Mary Bono-Mack
- 1:50 Status of JOTR projects – sustainability, External Pressures, and Climate Change Actions at JTNP
- 1:00 Introduction to Speakers' Forum
- 1:00 Kenneth Cole - *Past, Recent and Future climate changes in the southwestern deserts and their effects on the range of Joshua Tree.*
- 1:45 Cameron Barrows - *The effect of scale in an analysis of the sensitivity of Joshua trees and other species to expected levels of climate change in Joshua Tree National Park.*
- 2:30 Leigh Welling – *Tools and Strategies for Adapting to Climate Change.*
- 3:15 Break
- 3:30 Start panel discussion
- 4:00 Final Wrap up – Superintendent Mark Butler
- 4:10 Reception with 75th Anniversary Cake

Saturday, December 3

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Field trip to Joshua Tree National Park.

All Crossroads Conference presentations and field trips are free of charge. Space on the field trips is limited. For more information and to RSVP, contact Joshua Tree's 75th Anniversary Coordinator George Land at 760 367-5507, or email: george_land@nps.gov.

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