



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Joshua Tree National Park

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Joshua Tree National Park News Release

Free Entry and Special Activities Highlight National Park Week, April 21-29, at Joshua Tree National Park

Visitors who make the nearly 1,000-foot climb to the summit of Ryan Mountain during the upcoming National Park Week will be treated to a stunning view across a vast stretch of Joshua Tree National Park encompassing desert mountain ranges, mazes of granite boulders, historic gold mines, and uncounted numbers of Joshua trees— all of it free. Celebrating the theme, “Picture Yourself in a National Park,” National Park Week will run from Saturday, April 21 through Sunday, April 29. Throughout the country, visitors can enjoy the beauty and wonder of 84 million acres of the world’s most spectacular scenery, historic places and cultural treasures free of the customary park entrance fees. Camping and special user fees will still be collected, however.

“America’s national parks have something for everyone,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “Take a break and experience something new, enjoy some fresh air, get some exercise, and see where history happened. And, since admission is free to all 397 parks, all week long, National Park Week is a great time to get up, get out, and explore a park.” Apart from the outstanding opportunities national parks present for outdoor recreation, they are also wonderful stress relievers. Natural quiet and solitude are never far away at Joshua Tree, and spring is an especially good time to enjoy the park’s natural wonders as many desert plants and park wildlife are at the peak of their annual activity.

The park will also be conducting several special events during National Park Week.

Saturday, April 21 is National Junior Ranger Day at Joshua Tree. This year Junior Ranger Day activities will take place from 9 a.m. to Noon at the Echo Tee parking area near Hidden Campground. The park will have a fire truck, a ranger patrol car, and a large earth mover parked for kids to explore. A solar astronomy telescope will be available for looking at the sun. Smoky Bear will be on hand to greet young Junior Rangers, and park rangers will be at Echo Tee with displays, Junior Ranger activity books, and badges for children who have completed their Junior Ranger requirements. For more information for

Joshua Tree's Junior Ranger Day events contact, Park Volunteer Coordinator George Land at 760-367-5507.

On April 27 and 28, the park will also hold its second Biodiversity Hunt. The focus of this year's survey will be the 49 Palms Oasis. Visitors who make the 1.5 mile hike into the Oasis will witness a 30-hour intensive race to identify all living things at the 49 Palms Oasis and riparian area. Scientists, park staff, and community members will join forces at 49 Palms Oasis in this collaborative citizen science effort. Biodiversity Hunt scientists will deliver hands-on talks at the site throughout the day to those who trek to the site. The park is also seeking volunteers to help with this year's Biodiversity Hunt. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/jotr/planyourvisit/bioblitz.htm or to sign-up for any of our BioDiversity Hunt activities, contact Amelia Rodelo, Biological Science Technician at (760) 367-5578, or e-mail Amelia_rodello@nps.gov.

Other ranger programs scheduled for National Park Week can be found on the park's website: www.nps.gov/jotr. Current park wildflower reports can be found on the park website as well.

Park Superintendent Mark Butler reminds everyone that National Park Week can also be a time to think about the benefits national parks bring to the American people. "The people of southern California have long looked to Joshua Tree as a place of refuge and recreation. We hope that as they visit us during National Park Week, they will also think about how they can get even more involved. There are many ways people can support the park, and rangers will be happy to suggest ways people can make a difference."

Visitors to Joshua Tree National Park should report emergencies to park rangers, or call the Federal Interagency Communications Center Dispatch at 909-383-5651. For general information about park services and facilities, visitors can call 760-367-5500, or visit the Joshua Tree National Park website.

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04/11/12