

NPCATRAVEL



The Travel Program of the National Parks Conservation Association

MARCH 18-24, 2023

California's Desert Landscape:
**JOSHUA TREE &
DEATH VALLEY**

EXPLORE

A MESMERIZING DESERT OASIS
WITH EXPANSIVE NIGHT SKIES

LEARN

HOW NPCA IS PROTECTING
THE MOJAVE DESERT

VISIT

FIVE NATIONAL PARK UNITS

JOSHUA TREE SUNRISE
Joshua Tree National Park

PARK HIGHLIGHTS 

- Journey amongst the iconic Joshua Trees and unique rock formations at **Joshua Tree National Park**
- Hike through a labyrinth of golden colored hills and winding narrow canyons at **Death Valley National Park**
- Tour **Manzanar National Historic Site**, a World War II Japanese incarceration camp, with National Park Service staff

NPCA EXCLUSIVES 

- Take part in a **one-of-a-kind trip**, custom designed with NPCA's mission, work and partners at its heart
- With NPCA partners and local experts by your side, get a behind-the-scenes look at **Sand to Snow National Monument**, home to some of the most botanically diverse mountains in the United States
- Connect privately with **National Park Service staff** at Death Valley, Joshua Tree and Mojave National Preserve
- Hear firsthand how NPCA is **helping to establish a new national park** unit in the East Mojave Desert that helps protect a critical habitat for wildlife and sacred land for tribal groups
- See how NPCA works with local partners to **protect endangered species** such as the desert tortoise and desert bighorn sheep

**FEATURED BIO: CHRIS CLARKE**

Chris Clarke serves as NPCA's Ruth Hammett Associate Director of the California Desert Program. Chris works closely with desert communities to protect national parks, monuments, and other protected places, and the landscapes that surround them. Based in Twentynine Palms, California near Joshua Tree, he brings years of experience from his tenure working in the California deserts and has written several articles on issues facing this important ecosystem.

California's Desert Landscape: Joshua Tree & Death Valley

AVAILABLE DATES: March 18-24, 2023 | **Min/Max:** 12/14

Length of Tour: 7 days/6 nights

NPCA Member Price: \$6,935/person double occupancy; \$1,170 single supplement

Deposit: \$980 per person due at registration

Arrive: Palm Springs, CA; **Depart:** Las Vegas, Nevada

Reservations: Please contact Jared Dial, NPCA's Associate Director of the Educational Travel Program, at **1.800.628.7275** or email the Travel Program at **travel@npca.org**.

Activity Level: Travelers should be prepared for full-day adventures of walking, standing and sitting. This tour includes activities which may require physical exertion like hiking and long walks. We recommend travelers bring hiking poles. Hikes during our journey are rated easy to moderate and are typically 1-3.5 miles in length. Some trails have significant elevation descent and gain, and our longest hike is 7.2 miles. All hikes are optional and, whenever possible, your guides will provide alternative options for either a shorter or less demanding route. Hikes, walks and vehicle transportation may be on rough terrain and take multiple hours.

Inclusions: All outlined accommodations, meals as noted in the itinerary (B-breakfast, L-lunch, D-dinner), non-alcoholic beverages (alcoholic beverages *will* be included for the welcome dinner and farewell dinner), standard gratuities, entry fees for activities listed in the itinerary and carbon offsets for each trip day.

Exclusions: Airfare to arrival location and from departure location, luggage charges, meals not included in the Itinerary, alcoholic drinks (alcoholic beverages *will* be included for the welcome dinner and farewell dinner), travel insurance, items of a purely personal nature and any items not listed in Inclusions.

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate



Explore the best of Death Valley and Joshua Tree alongside NPCA experts and partners on this exciting journey through the Mojave Desert. These amazing Southern California national parks offer incredible trekking opportunities across diverse and mesmerizing landscapes. See first-hand two large desert parks that NPCA helped to establish, Sand to Snow National Monument and Mojave National Preserve, with a behind-the-scenes look at how NPCA works with local partners to protect these valuable places. Have a formidable visit at Manzanar National Historic Site, an off-the-beaten-path park that preserves one of 10 American incarceration camps where more than

120,000 Japanese Americans were held for years against their will during World War II. Throughout the trip, you'll discover a plethora of desert phenomena, including lush oases, vast sand dunes, towering granite monoliths, salt flats, badlands, alpine peaks and more! Keep a sharp eye out for desert wildlife with opportunities to see desert bighorn sheep, desert cottontail rabbits, roadrunners, desert reptiles, coyotes and snakes. This tour offers a cornucopia of experiences in America's stunning Mojave Desert with an inside look at the various threats this ecosystem faces and how NPCA is working to protect it. Each night we'll retire to comfortable accommodations that put us close to the action.



DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1 MARCH 18: Arrivals into Palm Springs, CA

1 Arrive by 3:00 PM into Palm Springs International Airport (PSP) in California and meet your Iconic Trip Leader at baggage claim. You will then transfer via private shuttle to your Palm Springs hotel for a chance to freshen up before gathering with your NPCA staff hosts and fellow travelers this evening. After brief introductions and an orientation to the days ahead, enjoy a delicious welcome dinner at a local restaurant. Learn about some of the key NPCA initiatives related to the itinerary, and prepare for a week of hiking, learning and adventure! [Courtyard by Marriott Palm Springs \(D\)](#)

DAY 2 MARCH 19: Sand to Snow National Monument

2 After breakfast this morning, depart on a 45-minute drive from Palm Springs to **Sand to Snow National Monument**, which NPCA helped to establish in 2016. Meet here with a special NPCA partner and hear a personal account of the campaigning process for the designation of Sand to Snow National Monument as well as the establishment of **Big Morongo Canyon Preserve**. This national monument gets its name from the area's extreme elevation change—from the sand of the **Sonoran Desert** to the peak of **San Geronio Mountain**, a difference of about

10,000 feet. Sand to Snow is home to the most botanically diverse mountains in the contiguous United States and provides a critical water source for many of Joshua Tree National Park's desert bighorn sheep. We'll enjoy a scenic hike in the monument before we continue an approximately 1-hour drive to 29 Palms Inn, where we will check in and have dinner on-site in preparation for our day in **Joshua Tree National Park** tomorrow. [29 Palms Inn \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY 3 MARCH 20: Joshua Tree National Park

3 Today, explore the wonders of **Joshua Tree National Park** with NPCA's California Desert Program Manager and partners. This popular park is best known for its namesake yucca plant, but its landscape is dominated by enormous, intricately shaped granite rock formations. After breakfast, we'll drive 45 minutes to our first hike of the day; delight in up-close views of these rocky wonders as we take an easy, 1-mile stroll along the **Hidden Valley loop trail**. Nearby, we will continue along a trail which will loop us through **Barker Dam**. This valley is rich with petroglyphs and lush with plant life thanks to the precious reservoir created by the dam. It also carries with it the tall tales from the days of gold mining and cattlemen. After a picnic lunch, we'll embark on our day's final journey as we travel together along the **Willow Hole Trail**, an out-and-back hike that ventures into the famed **Wonderland**



Joshua Tree National Park



Death Valley Desert

of Rocks. This trail offers expansive views of the desert and distant mountains, proceeding through washes and into a labyrinth of cliffs, canyons, domes and unique rock formations. Get an in-depth look at how NPCA addresses the compromised air quality and diminished views in the park, mostly due to the agriculture industry in the San Joaquin Valley—one of the most polluted areas in the nation. After an invigorating day of hiking, return to 29 Palms Inn for some down time before heading to a local restaurant for dinner as a group. [29 Palms Inn \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY 4 MARCH 21: Mojave National Preserve to Death Valley National Park

4 Start your day with breakfast at the Inn, saying goodbye to Joshua Tree as we drive 2 hours north, stopping midway to stretch our legs en route to **Mojave National Preserve**. We'll drive through **Mojave Trails National Monument**, which connects **Joshua Tree National Park** to **Mojave National Preserve**, creating a large natural corridor and living landscape. We'll also learn about the important role NPCA played in preventing the development of the Cadiz pipeline, a water-mining project advocated prevented from being built across this fragile desert landscape. Upon arrival to Mojave National Preserve, meet with park staff for an introduction to the Preserve and to the landscape you'll explore today. Enjoy a picnic lunch, followed by an exciting 3.2-mile hike along the **Teutonia Peak Trail**. Beginning with a gradual incline through a dense forest of **Joshua Trees**, the trail requires a steeper climb as you make your way towards the 5,755-foot summit. At the top, catch your breath as you take in views of the surrounding landscape including **Cima Dome**, the most symmetrical dome of its type in the United States. As you absorb your surroundings, consider the impacts of the Dome Fire which burned over 40,000 acres in the Joshua Tree woodland here in 2020. Since fall 2021, hundreds of volunteers, including NPCA's California Desert team, have turned out to replant Joshua trees in those places hit hardest by the Dome Fire. Chat with NPCA staff and partners about this campaign and the impact of wildfires

and other threats to the area's wildlife. Back on the road, relax during a 1.5-hour drive to **Shoshone, CA**, where we'll meet with an NPCA partner and have a chance to stretch our legs. Proceeding one more hour to reach **Death Valley National Park**, we will check in to our accommodations at Ranch at Death Valley, our home for the next three nights. Enjoy dinner this evening in the park and get a good night's sleep in preparation for tomorrow's adventures! [Ranch at Death Valley \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY 5 MARCH 22: Death Valley National Park
 After breakfast on-site and a quick stop at the **Furnace Creek Visitor Center** to get an introduction to **Death Valley** from park staff, we'll proceed to the **Salt Creek Interpretive Trail**, an easy .8 mile loop where we'll keep an eye out for endangered pupfish. From there, we'll journey along the moderately-difficult **Mosaic Canyon Trail**, winding our way through narrow canyons and discovering fascinating geologic features at every turn. You'll also have an opportunity to hear about NPCA's work to protect California desert landscapes and the exciting return of American Pronghorn to the park. In the late afternoon, spend some downtime at Ranch at Death Valley. This evening, we will take a drive after dinner to meet with park staff for an **expansive night-sky viewing program**. Death Valley offers some of the best stargazing in America and is designated a Gold Tier Dark Sky Park, the darkest possible rating. [Ranch at Death Valley \(B, L, D\)](#)



Guard tower at Manzanar National Historic Site

DAY 6 MARCH 23: Death Valley National Park and Manzanar National Historic Site
 Getting an early start today, we'll enjoy sunrise at the **Mesquite Flat Sand Dunes**. After breakfast and ample photography opportunities, we'll continue west and hike to **Darwin Falls**, a mesmerizing Death Valley oasis situated at a higher elevation in the park. After Darwin Falls, we'll take an approximately 1.25-hour drive to **Manzanar National Historic Site** for a cultural tour of this fascinating World War II Japanese incarceration camp. Sue Kunitomi Embrey, a woman who was incarcerated at the camp during the war, helped plan annual pilgrimages to Manzanar and spearheaded a campaign to designate it as a national historic site. NPCA and National Park Service staff will help the group imagine what life was like behind the barbed wire fences of this camp and discuss the lives of Embrey and others who ensure these stories continue to be told for generations to come. You will hear from your NPCA expert why it's so important to protect these sites and stories through the National Park Service. After the tour of Manzanar, sit back and relax as we make our way back to the Ranch at Death Valley, a 2.5-hour drive. Once back at the Ranch, freshen up before reconvening for a farewell group dinner at the Inn at Death Valley. Join together with your NPCA staff hosts and new friends to reflect upon a memorable week in California's desert landscape. [Ranch at Death Valley \(B, L, D\)](#)

DAY 7 MARCH 24: Death Valley National Park to Las Vegas
 This morning, we'll check out of our lodging bright and early to drive to nearby **Zabriskie Point** for one last Death Valley treasure. Here, we will bask in the glow of a final sunrise, taking in the views as we eat breakfast. From there, continue via private transfer 2 hours to Las



Zabriskie Point in Death Valley National Park

Vegas' Harry Reid International Airport (LAS) for afternoon flights home. **(B)**

Please note: This itinerary is subject to change based on weather conditions and park closures related to COVID-19.

Travel Insurance: To protect yourself from the loss of deposit and cancellation fees, you are encouraged to purchase travel insurance. If you need assistance, NPCA recommends contacting Travel Insurance Services through USI Affinity at 1-800-937-1387 or at <http://my.travelinsure.com/npc>; email confirmation packets will include additional details.

Traveler Responsibility: Travelers are responsible for choosing an NPCA trip consistent with their ability, fitness and overall health. All travelers are required to complete and return their NPCA waiver of liability, personal information form, flight form, and accept Iconic Adventure's Terms and Conditions before being allowed to participate in a trip. Travelers also are responsible for reading and understanding all pre-departure materials and bringing appropriate clothing and gear.

Trip Cancellation Policy: Written cancellations must be received in Iconic's sales office for a cancellation to be valid. Iconic strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance.

Cancellation charges will be as follows:

121+ days prior to departure	120-91 days prior	December 18, 2022	90-61 days prior	60-0 days prior
Deposit is 100% refundable	Deposit is 100% transferable to another Iconic-operated NPCA trip OR 50% refundable	Final payment is due	50% of trip cost is refundable	No refund

COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Each of our travel partners have developed robust safety protocols to protect the health of our guests, staff and the communities we visit. **In order to participate in this trip, you must be up to date on all COVID-19 vaccinations, as outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Please contact us for details.



Why Travel with NPCA?

Our goal is to offer premium itineraries in educational travel in the places we know best: America's national parks.

For over 100 years, NPCA has worked to protect places of unparalleled natural wonder, historical significance and cultural value. Now we want you to experience them firsthand with our knowledgeable staff and partners. Each of our mission-driven trips is custom-designed exclusively by NPCA for you, our closest supporters. Gain valuable insights into our advocacy and conservation efforts by taking a personal look at NPCA's important contributions to park protection. You'll come away with a deeper understanding of, and connection to, this crucial work, made possible only by your support.

GAIN ACCESS TO OUR EXPERTS

Spend quality time with your knowledgeable NPCA trip experts as you experience the national parks alongside those who have fought to protect them. Our trips provide special behind-the-scenes access to National Park Service staff, NPCA partners and other fascinating specialists who bring these places and their stories to life, providing insights into the cultural, natural, and historical significance of the areas and topics explored.

SUPPORT NPCA'S MISSION

By traveling on any of our trips as an NPCA member, a percentage of your trip goes back to support NPCA's work to protect and enhance America's National Park System for present and future generations.

ENJOY SMALL GROUPS

Group size on each of our land trips is guaranteed to be no more than 18 people to maximize your interactions with the experts, boost educational opportunities and allow the group to access lesser-visited places that larger groups cannot. You'll be joined by other park enthusiasts from around the country to share in the experience.

TRAVEL WITH EASE

With NPCA, you can explore the parks without the hassle of planning on your own. Everything is included in your tour, such as meals, accommodations, expert speakers, transportation at the destination, and all activities (unless otherwise stated). We have also worked with each of our travel partners to develop safety measures for our trips in response to the global pandemic.

TRAVEL RESPONSIBLY

Each NPCA travel operator partner is selected based on criteria that includes a commitment to environmentally and socially responsible travel so that we can ensure our parks are preserved in perpetuity.

Death Valley Sand Dune

NPCA is the only independent, nonpartisan organization dedicated to advocacy on behalf of the National Park System. Over 70% of our funding comes from donations from individuals like you. NPCA trips are an exclusive NPCA member benefit. One traveler per group must be an NPCA member to participate in an NPCA trip. An annual membership starts at \$15 per person. Please make dues payable to NPCA by check or credit card at npca.org.