



Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep

Sheep Sheet - Volume 2 – August 2014

www.desertbighorn.org



Water Haul

Here is a pic of the South I40 Marble Mt guzzler fill on Tuesday July 15, 2014 Big thank you to Eric from CalTrans for stopping freeway traffic, California Fish and Wildlife, Cal Wild Sheep, volunteers Clint and Tim Humphreville, and Terry Anderson for making this water fill happen. Especially big thanks to SCBS for donating \$1000.00 to pay for the 8000 gal of water. This was one of the fastest guzzler water fills ever, 15 min.





Newsletter by E-Mail

If you would like to have the Newsletter sent by e-mail let me know at cameracoordinator@sheepsociety.com. You can still get a paper copy via regular mail.



The SCBS Board of Directors meets at about 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month in the conference room at Bass Pro Shops, 7777 Victoria Gardens Lane, Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91730. You are invited to attend any and all board meetings, to bring a friend, to visit, and, hopefully, to participate.

SCBS 2014 Board of Directors

| Director | Phone Number | Director | Phone Number |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Robert Burke | 760-617-9261 | Jeff Crouse | 760-680-9819 |
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| Gary Thomas | 909-981-5847 | Terry Anderson | 760-408-7118 |
| | Dave Smith | | 760-617-3291 |



Gary Thomas had a computer problem that has ended in a new operating system that will not accept his old address book. So, here is Gary Thomas new e-mail address: dezman7@outlook.com please drop him a line so he can rebuild his address book.



THE MOJAVE YUCCA { YUCCA SCHIDIGERA }

When you walk the desert quietly and alone long enough you quit observing it in a conscious manner, and you learn things in the silence of the desert.

There are all kinds of things you can contemplate and learn if you accept silence of the desert and walk alone. You will find joy in such things as contemplating the ways of the various plants like the yucca. Like all plants it is fascinating, and to understand it, is to understand many things about it's environment.

We can start here, by taken an imaginary hike across the desert.

In the distance we see a small patch of Yuccas perhaps fifty or one hundred plants on ten or twenty acres. Just from being aware of their presence we know certain things. There is almost certainly an increase in the variety of desert plants among the yuccas, and of course there is the constant companion of the yucca, the pack rat. The yucca that has a pack rat's nest at its base usually grows bigger and has a better chance of survival than those that do not.

Here is a sample of how the basic systems and relationships of the Yucca work. The Yucca's root system draws in all the moisture and nutrients it can from the ground around

it. Then on the next level up the pack rats run around on the surface doing their part, such as collecting all sorts of things like small bones, leaves, branches, and other things within a radius of about 20 yards. This is far beyond the reach of the yuccas root system. The pack rats do this to build their home in the shelter of the Yucca. They will also deposit bits of leftover food and their own urine and droppings.

When it rains, the nutrients from all these decaying items are washed down into the soil so that the Yuccas root system can absorb them, making this particular yucca bigger and healthier than the others near it. This in turn attracts all sorts of birds that prioritize this particular Yucca to perch on. Then their droppings and various leftover parts of their prey fall to the ground, and helps this yucca grow even more.

So a yucca like this can be visualized as a point in the desert environment that is growing upward by attracting and utilizing resources on three levels. Also this yucca's presence is radiating outwards into the desert environment through its root system, the pack rats system, and the bird's system. Not all yuccas have this middle way, of the pack rat, to radiate out into the desert environment. While the pack rat system makes a significant difference in the lifecycle of the yucca, the pack rat also makes a significant difference in the desert environment as well. One of the many reasons for this is that the pack rat is a mammal and not a reptile. As a mammal it is active throughout the year and in a wider variety of weather conditions than any reptile. Thus the yucca, through the pack rat provides food for such animals as a kit fox and the owl, when there would be little or perhaps no other food source available to them. And while the yucca provides some food for the pack rat directly, it's indirect effects in the desert environment are more important.

This is because these effects are amplified by other plants. To get a basic understanding of this we must start with the shape of the Yucca itself which has two basic shapes.

There is the Yucca plant that has many stalks, perhaps five or ten, and then there's the yucca plant that has a single stalk. The more stalks the yucca plant has the more likely it will have some that are very tall, and will have a rat nest in the middle of it. These large yuccas cast a very dense and important shadow on the desert soil beneath them. This conserves the soil's moisture so much that you can often trace the intensity of this shadow by the increased size and health of the annual and perennial plants that grow there. The yucca's that have a single stalk, of course, has a smaller shadow, but it still a very important one. You can often find a large perennial plant such as the cholla or barrel cactus growing in its shadow. Oftentimes this happens right where the head or green part of the Yucca casts its shadow. If we have a cholla cactus growing in this shadow it too has a shadow that in turn preserves the moisture in the ground allowing yet another plant to grow there. Thus the life-giving shadows of the Yucca echo across the desert landscape for centuries. Sometimes these reverberations will split off from one another and start a separate chain of events.



Here is an example of the barrel cactus growing in the shadow of the yucca

While this can happen in many ways, here is but one example.

Let's say a cholla cactus grows up in the shadow of the yucca. Then the shadow of this cholla cactus allows a creosote bush to get started. Then the cholla, being a plant that lives a relatively short time compared to the yucca and creosote bush, dies and decays. So when you see this yucca and creosote bush they do not seem to be associated with one another, but they once were. You can see this if you read any clues that might be there, and use your imagination see far enough back in time.

Then going forward in time the shadow of this creosote Bush will eventually make things right for another perennial plant to start, perhaps even another yucca. So next time you walk the desert and you see in the distance a group of yuccas, you can use this knowledge and the power of your imagination to see in to the deserts environment deeper in time and distance. We should remember, however, that the reality of the yucca and the desert environment are infinite in their complexity. And knowing and experiencing these kind of things allows us to become part of this infinite and complex environment, and this, is THE WAY OF THINGS

By Carlos Gallinger
www.thewayofthings.org



Area Captain Coordinator/ Spring Captain Coordinator

Thanks to all the area captains and others who helped out with the checking of some of the more remote drinker systems. Also, if you are out checking drinker systems PLEASE fill out the Area Captains Repot and send it to jjrestorationservice@yahoo.com . Jeff is always looking for help covering all the SCBS water systems so give him a call at 760-680-9819 or drop him an E-Mail at jjrestorationservice@yahoo.com if you can give a hand covering water systems.

There was a great turn out for the Area Captains' Meeting Held at the Hampton Inn & Suites in Barstow this June. There were speakers from the BLB Barstow Field Office and the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department Search and Rescue Team members.



Editor Notes

As you can tell by the lateness of the newsletter, I am a little behind the eight-ball. I have been appointed to the Desert Advisory Council and I also set on the a couple of sub-committees so I will try better manage my time and get this newsletter out in a more timely manner.

I also got a lot of feedback about an article that was put into the newsletter from a Student working on a master's degree picture was an old world sheep not a Bighorn Sheep, she has a no hunting point of view so on and so on. I was surprised that there were not more comments criticizing the writer and the article. So, with that being said, I have decided not to post the 2nd half of the article.

Please help by sending your articles to be in the Newsletter.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

A California Non-Profit Organization is looking for:

Sportsmen and Conservationists who are concerned about our California Desert Bighorn sheep and who are willing to get involved to make a difference. Be a part of history with our program to put bighorn sheep back in their historical ranges. The Society works with the California Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management in programs such as: sheep transplanting and propagation; habitat improvement; wildlife census; research and development; and many more. If this sounds exciting and fulfilling to you, then fill out the following application and join the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep today! Check our website at: **www.desertbighorn.org**

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

**Attn: SCBS Membership Chairman
5801 Calico Cove Court
Bakersfield, CA 93306**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Phone: (H) _____ **(W)** _____

E-Mail Address (Optional): _____

Make checks payable to: SCBS

Annual\$35.00/Year New _____ Renewal _____

Student (Full Time). \$20.00/Year New _____ Renewal _____

Life\$300.00 New _____ option: 3 Qtrly Pmt of (\$100.00)

Corporate\$1000.00/Year

Enclosed is my Tax Deductible check for \$_____ which includes my contribution of \$_____ to help you support desert wildlife.

Please send me information on the Society's desert water projects. Yes ___ No ___

Where did you hear about SCBS? _____

SCBS Sponsor: _____

Application Received: _____ Funding Received: _____

Voted In: _____ Member Card Sent: _____



Have you seen me? Send the editor pictures of your sightings.



Bob Burke - Editor
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