

Outdoor Education Newsletter

What's New? -Mike

Within the next month or two, Pathfinder will be welcoming a new member to our Nature Center family! A Southern California Native, the Desert Collared Lizard, will serve as a great addition and teaching tool to the ranch. Desert Collared Lizards get their name from the pair of black band-like markings around their neck. We are more than excited to introduce this new critter to the

Pathfinder community, and can't wait to use this local species as a teaching tool for our Herpetology and Animal classes!

Pathfinder Ranch has also welcomed a new equine to the horse barn! Charlie is a marble coated Palomino, and is already fitting in as a great addition in the pasture. Otter has been hard at work, getting him ready for kids. We can't wait until he can join us on our horse rides!

Meanwhile, students and adults are enjoying our cabin renovations! Some of these updates include new beds and bed frames, game tables, new seating, beautiful new fire places and themed interior decorations. These new additions have made students, chaperones and teachers feel all the more comfortable in our cozy mountain cabins.

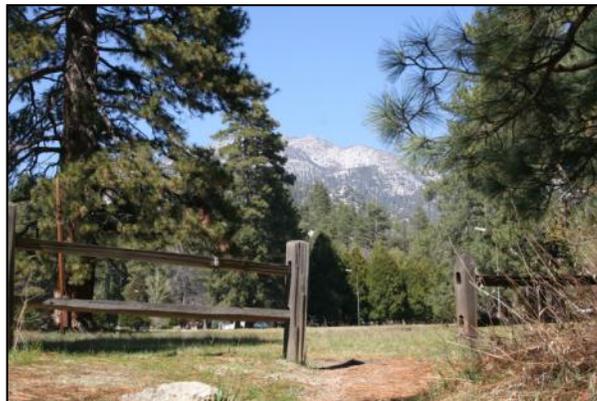
Featured Green Space: Idyllwild Park -Taylor

Idyllwild Park, located just outside the small town of Idyllwild on Highway 247, is home to some of the most iconic and scenic hiking, biking, and educational sites in the San Jacinto Mountains. Chief among them are Pines to Palm Scenic Drive (a fun twisty road from the desert through the mountains and out to the coast) as well as the Ernie Maxwell Scenic Trail, which is a 4.8 mile trail with wild flowers in the spring and amazing views of Suicide Rock and Tahquitz Peak.

It also boasts the Idyllwild Nature Center, which offers exhibits and programs on

local ecology, flora, fauna, Cahuilla Native culture, and the geologic history of the San Jacinto Mountains. For visitors planning to spend multiple nights in the park there are 96 rustic but well-kept campgrounds for \$25 a night. The Day Use fee is

\$7 per vehicle (more on holidays) and due to its high elevation and winter weather it is best enjoyed March through November. For a fun, invigorating, and educational trip into nature, look no further!



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School Quotes:

- *HS Chaperone- "[I will apply] the leadership skills that I learned here."*
- *Student- "I learned that it doesn't matter where you come from, you can bond with anyone. I will never forget my new friends."*
- *Teacher- "The whole experience is always so new for our students and I always see many of them come out of their shell...and someone always says 'I don't miss the electronics.'"*

Fire -Glacier



Fire: It is an integral part of the ecosystem, but it also has the ability to destroy people's livelihoods. Southern California experienced this devastation first-hand last December, with the Thomas Fire, the largest fire in California recorded history, burning 281,893 acres. With the frequency and intensity of fires increasing in recent years, it has become essential to share knowledge and build awareness about fires.

Pathfinder has a fire ecology class to highlight the delicate balance of fire as a benefit to replenishing

ecosystems and fire as a force of destruction. To demonstrate this balance, the students have a chance to play a giant board game in which they can learn about different plant and animal adaptations to fire. The students become the board game pieces and get to experience challenges throughout the game. After learning about fire's role in the ecosystem, students build a fire and select certain plants to see how fast they burn.

DIY Pollinator Attractor -Todd

Here are some easy steps to encourage nesting for solitary, nonaggressive pollinators:

1. Drill a variety of holes up to 10mm into the side of a thick piece of untreated timber or fence post. The holes should be open on only one side and not drilled all the way through the wood.
2. Attach a sloped roof or place under cover to guard from adverse weather.



3. Sand down the hole openings to prevent splinters.

There are many varieties of bee/pollinator "hotels" that could be found online along with methods to maintain the health of these small habitats.

Safety is a high priority, so this is not recommended for homes that have a family member who is allergic. Pollinators are critical to an ecosystem's health, but thoroughly research beforehand.

Upcoming Events -Haley

Pathfinder has a plethora of events this winter and spring! Our annual Gala is on Saturday, February 24th. This flashy event will have a delicious dinner, live music, and an auction. All of the proceeds will be split between Pathfinder Ranch and the Palm Springs Boys and Girls Club.

For families that have students attending this spring, we will be hosting an Open House on March 3rd with tours, an archery lesson, and light refreshments. This event is FREE! Call 951-659-2455 to reserve a spot.

Lake Hemet, Lake Perris, and a few other lakes in the area will be hosting the last Bald Eagle count for this winter season on March 10th. The event is run through the Forest Service. Call Anne Bowers at 909-382-2935 for more info.

Lastly, our summer camp registration system is now live! If you want to send your child (or children) to our camp for a week this summer, please visit our website for more info and to register.



Pathfinder Ranch is a non-profit organization founded in 1964 that is dedicated to connecting people to nature and each other. We offer outdoor education field trips, youth summer camp, and retreat opportunities for groups of all types and ages. We take pride in providing affordable and high quality programming throughout the year. Check out our website and Facebook page for more information, and contact us if

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