

The Work of Desert Survivors

This document is a concise and readable rendition of what Desert Survivors Directors, trip leaders and volunteers do. We use this to inspire them all in their work to educate about the desert and protect it. Members and non-members are encouraged to help us in our efforts. The desert needs all the help it can get.

THE WORK OF DESERT SURVIVORS

October 15, 2008

The mission of Desert Survivors is to experience, share and protect the desert, a beautiful, fragile and threatened environment deserving of respect and requiring constant vigilance.

1. TRIPS

Desert Survivors work is based on its trips to the desert. Trips are an educational tool for the membership — trip leaders are teachers. But the trips also teach the leaders themselves about what to protect and when. Some Desert Survivors trips are done just for recreation, but most go to remote Wilderness where nature is protected. Many trips are performed to monitor the desert's condition or to do service projects for public lands agencies. Desert Survivors has a reputation for knowledge about the desert based on visitation. It is this expertise that informs our efforts in desert protection: WE KNOW THE LAND.

2. SURVIVOR ARTICLES

The SURVIVOR is Desert Survivors' quarterly journal, detailing what has happened — the group's efforts and its program. Aside from the fun stuff and the serious issues, trip reports in the SURVIVOR show where we've been, what we've observed there, and what we've discovered — the threats as well as the beauty. In trip reports we can show the country and describe protection problems.

3. THE WEBSITE

In the Desert Survivors website we show the wide world what we do and where we go. The trip schedule is prominent. Photo essays about the desert and our trips are important. Our Issues Page describes threats and what we can do to combat them. It is the second tier of our efforts to inform the community.

4. FAIRS, SLIDESHOWS, CONFERENCES

The third tier of our efforts to inform is outreach via fairs, slideshows, conferences and other events. These provide us with person-to-person contact where we can have a profound effect on the consciousness of the public. With these efforts we build an appreciation of the desert as a valuable ecosystem worthy of protection. Such efforts also build membership, a necessary goal if we are to remain a viable organization with a purpose.

5. DESERT PROTECTION WORK

Desert protection work is the payoff of our efforts with trips, consciousness-building and outreach. Everything else we do points toward that. When we network with other groups and pool resources, write comments on desert issues, join in lawsuits, speak at public hearings, and urge our members to do the same, we can protect the desert from further harm. It is most satisfying to stop a toxic waste dump or power plant, close a sensitive area to off-roaders, or convince a public lands manager to stop harmful practices. This makes it all worthwhile.

6. KEEPING THE BOOKS

One function necessary to the program is keeping the finances in order. By this means the group can keep paying its considerable bills and thus pay for programs and volunteer efforts.

7. DATABASE

Another function necessary to the program is keeping the membership database up to date. This enables timely mailings, accurate records of membership information and good membership relations, all of which are necessary to keep the membership interested in our programs and willing to support them.

8. FUND-RAISING

Desert Survivors is currently funded almost entirely from membership dues, but fund-raising outside the membership base is sometimes necessary. Desert Survivors has not been very successful in getting grants, but this will be a growth area for us from now on. Grants especially are important to us because they do not tax our members' pocketbook and patience. Much of what we do IS a public service, beneficial to the public, and therefore is worthy of funding. Desert Survivors has never been "just a hiking club", concerned only with fun and athleticism. Our role in the environmental community is clear.
