

MOJAVE DESERT LAND TRUST



CONNECTING & PROTECTING
OUR PUBLIC LANDS

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



ABOUT MDLT

The Mojave Desert Land Trust protects the Mojave Desert ecosystem and its scenic and cultural resource values.



photo: Jessica Dacey/MDLT

Our service area spans 26 million acres -- the entire California portion of the Mojave and Colorado Deserts, which is about 26% of the state. We help connect National Parks, Wilderness areas, and wildlife corridors by conserving prime desert habitat.

MDLT strives to help everyone who lives, works, and plays in the California desert to embrace the significance of this magical landscape. We work closely with a broad range of desert community members and visitors, as well as with local, state and federal agencies, and we offer hands-on education and volunteer opportunities to residents and visitors of the desert.

In our work to protect the desert, we strive to benefit a diverse group of interests, including indigenous peoples, our local, state and federal partners, visitors, and desert communities.

Our vision for the Mojave: dark night skies, clean air and water, broad views and vistas, and an abundance of native plants and animals.

Only through acquisition, stewardship and awareness can we preserve these uniquely biodiverse landscapes for future generations to enjoy.



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



photo: Geary Hund/MDLT

Dear supporters,

One enduring theme arose in our conservation work in 2019: the importance of connecting, protecting, and respecting our public lands.

The year started with a significant conservation win in the shape of the California Desert Protection and Recreation Act. Passed in February, this legislation ensures important natural and cultural resources in the Mojave Desert will be protected and connected in perpetuity. Through the expansion of Joshua Tree National Park, Mojave Trails National Monument, and Death Valley National Park, and the addition of 375,000 acres of Wilderness, it advances the goal of achieving an interconnected system of reserves in the California desert - vital to maintaining the health of desert ecosystems. The Act also completed a 10-year journey to permanently protect the scenic mountains along the northern border of Joshua Tree National Park. First acquired by Mojave Desert Land Trust, these lands will now be gifted to the American people and cared for by the National Park Service.

This was a big step, but the job is not done. There are many private inholdings within protected areas. The acquisition of private inholdings from willing sellers is important to the long-term preservation of conservation lands. There are also other areas in the western and eastern Mojave and Colorado Deserts that need permanent protection.

Rock Springs Ranch was one such critical linkage habitat that the Mojave Desert Land Trust protected in 2019. This 595-acre property consists of pristine desert with panoramic views, riparian areas, stunning boulders, and important flora and fauna. This property borders the Juniper Flats National Conservation Lands, a wildlife corridor with important habitat for several rare, threatened, and endangered species.

In all, MDLT acquired 5,403 acres in 2019, over half of which were located within National Parks, Wilderness, and National Monuments – adding to our grand total of nearly 90,000 acres conserved since 2006. In 2019, we conveyed 1,700 acres within designated Wilderness to our federal partners and nearly 700 acres to Death Valley National Park through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Acquiring important habitat is just the first step in our conservation work. Our Land Stewardship team

actively manages thousands of acres across the California desert. In 2019, that work included removing 13 tons of solid waste, carrying out site monitoring and inspections, and launching a popular new volunteer stewardship program.


Deepening our conservation mission, our native plant nursery grew over 36,000 plants for a restoration project in Wind Wolves Preserve, and hosted regular plant sales to meet the ever-increasing demand in the community for native plants. Volunteers helped us add more than 200 new collections to the Mojave Desert Seed Bank and create the infrastructure for our new Desert Discovery Garden.

Volunteers are always a big part of our success, with dedicated supporters devoting over 10,000 hours to MDLT programs in 2019. Once again, an AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region team returned to help with our conservation work, providing invaluable resources in desert clean-ups and installing new informational signage and kiosks in the Chuckwalla Bench. This year also marked the start of the pioneering Women in Science Discovering our Mojave (WISDOM) internship program in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management.

In the fall, we helped take the message of connecting, protecting and respecting our public lands to new audiences. We joined forces with National Park units, nonprofits, community members, and chamber and tourism offices to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act in October. This landmark legislation established Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Parks, Mojave National Preserve, and permanently protected over 3.5 million acres as Wilderness in the California desert. As well as a diverse range of events, the campaign led to over a dozen elected bodies adopting resolutions of support for the desert.

Looking ahead, the Mojave Desert Land Trust is well-positioned to continue to protect the California desert ecosystem and its natural, scenic, and cultural resource values. We hope you will join us.

Sincerely,



Geary Hund, Executive Director

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



photo: Marinna Wagner/MDLT



Since 2006, we have acquired nearly 90,000 acres across the Mojave Desert. In 2019, we acquired 5,403 acres of important conservation lands, including parcels within National Parks and Wilderness.

We also purchased land that will help create wildlife linkage corridors in our local Morongo Basin, as well as protect important wildlife habitat.

The Native Plant Restoration Nursery and Mojave Desert Seed Bank continued to grow in 2019. Another 222 collections were added to the seed bank. Thousands of native plants were grown in the nursery for restoration projects in our service region.

Volunteers were a big part of these accomplishments, devoting over 10,000 hours to MDLT programs.

LAND CONSERVATION

Working closely with volunteers and partners, MDLT stewarded thousands of acres of conservation lands in 2019.





photo: Emmalyn Snead/MDLT

The Land Stewardship team had a productive start to 2019 by teaming up with 11 AmeriCorps volunteers from January to March. With the support from the Gold 2 team, MDLT staff was able to install 674 informative route signs in the Chuckwalla Bench as part of a joint project with the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, California State OHV Funds at Work, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

They were also instrumental in helping us remove 13 tons of solid waste from dump sites ranging from the Morongo Basin to our Palisades Ranch property in the West Mojave.

2019 also saw the launch of our Stewardship Volunteer Program, which includes bi-weekly patrols of local lands and monthly stewardship days. MDLT staff joined volunteers in the field to help steward our local properties by patching fences, removing trash and dumps, and monitoring and restoring trails.

Over the summer, we welcomed two new land stewards to the team. They helped us ensure a strong finish to the year, inspecting land for our Acquisitions team, and installing the first of seven visitor kiosks in the Chuckwalla Bench.



photo: Emmalyn Snead/MDLT

ACQUISITIONS

MDLT acquisitions help connect and protect conservation lands across the California desert.



photo: Geary Hund/MDLT

Through our land acquisition process, MDLT purchases land to permanently protect important natural, scenic and cultural resource values. MDLT acquired over 850 acres in federal Wilderness, over 1,000 acres in Mojave National Preserve, over 1,100 acres in Mojave Trails National Monument, nearly 200 acres in Joshua Tree National Park, approximately 700 acres in the Chemehuevi and the Chuckwalla Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, 25 acres in local habitat

linkages, and our first grant funded acquisition in Sand to Snow National Monument.

Utilizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund, our federal partners were able to take over 1,700 acres of designated Wilderness and nearly 700 acres in Death Valley National Park. As part of the Lands Team, the acquisitions and stewardship departments work hand-in-hand on every acquisition.

HIGHLIGHTS

A significant acquisition of 2019 was Rock Springs Ranch (pictured below). This 595-acre property borders the Juniper Flats National Conservation Lands, strengthening the status of this protected land. It consists of pristine desert with panoramic views, riparian zones, stunning boulders and important flora and fauna. Three natural springs traverse portions of the property.

Another major acquisition was Desert Springs, 1,200 acres in central Kern County, where the Mojave Desert meets the Sierra Nevada. These lands are home to seven springs, which are critical to bird migration along the Pacific Flyway. (Pictured left and page 4).



photo: Jessica Dacey/MDLT

NATIVE PLANT RESTORATION NURSERY & MOJAVE DESERT SEED BANK

MDLT is working to restore native habitats and preserve California's desert flora for future generations.

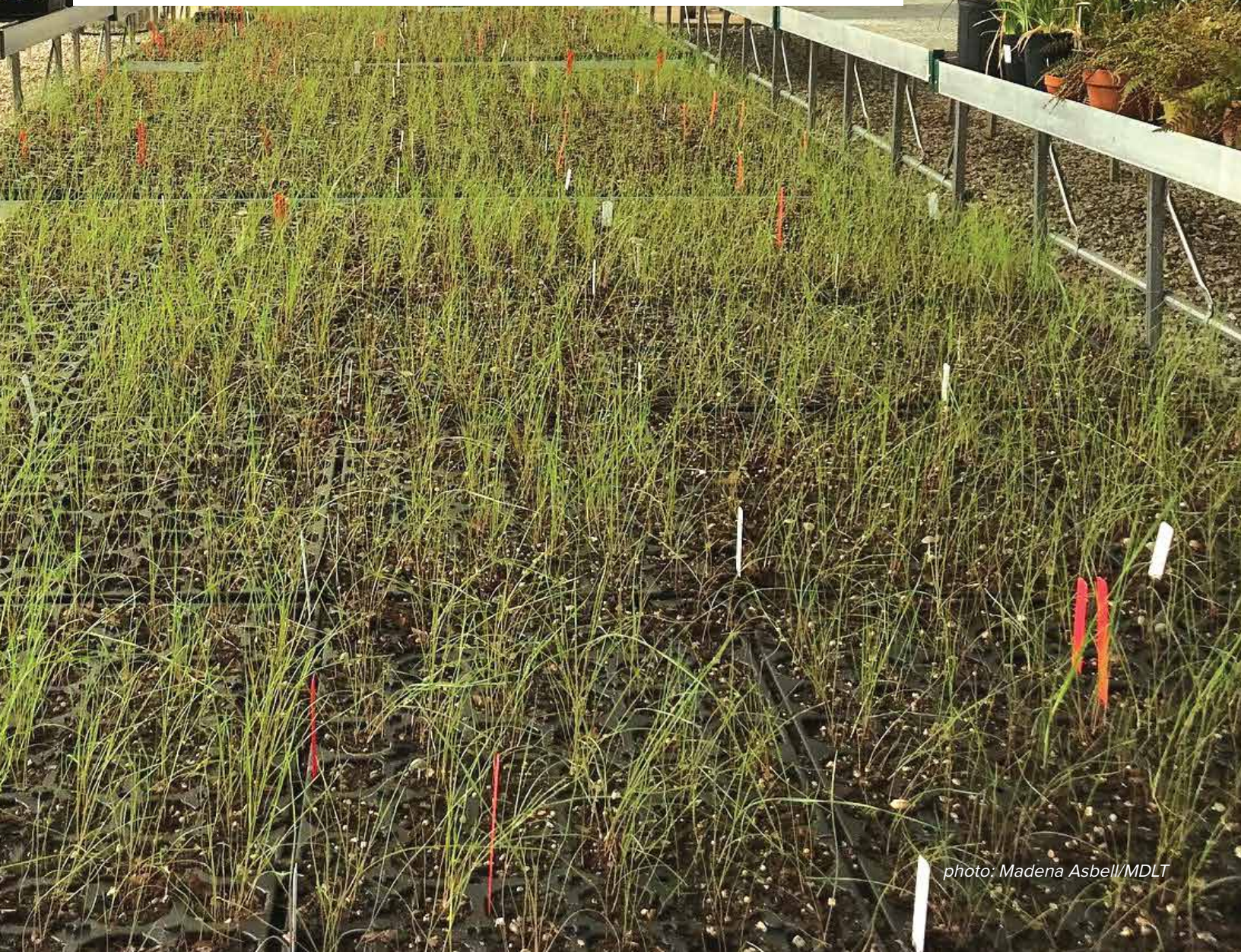


photo: Madena Asbell/MDLT

In 2019, MDLT hosted three community plant sales, grew over 36,000 plants for restoration projects at Wind Wolves Preserve, and added over 200 collections to its seed bank.

DESERT DISCOVERY GARDEN

This year we broke ground on our Desert Discovery Garden, an outdoor educational space where visitors will learn about native plants, sustainable landscaping, conservation, and stewardship. With generous support from Mojave Water Agency and Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust, and volunteers from AmeriCorps, Boy Scouts of America, Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, and the local community, we built over 250 feet of retaining wall and installed eight planter beds.

When complete, this beautiful interpretive garden will be open to the public year-round.



photo: Jessica Dacey/MDLT



photo: Madena Asbell/MDLT

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & VOLUNTEER SERVICES

MDLT engages with regional communities, educators, conservation partners, and other stakeholders in sharing the important work of stewardship and protection of our desert's unique scenic, natural, and cultural values.



photo: AmeriCorps NCCC Gold 2

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an essential resource in executing our day-to-day activities and ensuring we meet our service goals. There were a total of 10,003 volunteer hours in 2019. Gold 2, an 11-member AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region team, helped with restoration, monitoring land, removing over 9.5 tons of solid waste, and installing 674 signs. At MDLT headquarters, the team installed 969 feet of irrigation in the native plant nursery, sowed over 2,300 native plants, and helped establish the infrastructure of the Desert Discovery Garden.

DESERT DISCOVERY FIELD STUDIES

This program provides underserved students from desert communities with an innovative way of boosting their understanding of the environment, the interconnection between people and place, desert ecology, and conservation. These school experiential learning labs focus on environmental themes while providing a chance for students to safely explore and learn as citizen scientists. We reached over 380 teachers and students in 2019.

WISDOM

Women in Science Discovering Our Mojave (WISDOM) engages women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, providing them with hands-on learning opportunities. In September, MDLT launched a 6-month long pilot project which provided the Bureau of Land Management with data on the population size, health, and movement of bighorn sheep within the Mojave Trails National Monument. MDLT's WISDOM project findings help inform management plans and public use for generations to come.

OUTREACH

Among the highlights, in November, MDLT hosted 32 scholars at Amboy Crater in Mojave Trails National Monument. Participants were part of the San Bernardino-based BLU Education Foundation, whose mission furthers the education and leadership skills of African American youth. The excursion included discussions about conservation challenges facing the Bureau of Land Management. Scholars also learned about geologic features, the importance of environmental conservation, and the value of the dark night sky. Stargazing was led by Old Town Pasadena Sidewalk Astronomers. Scholars took away an understanding of the challenges in protecting the desert's natural, cultural, and scenic values.



photo: Cindy Holland/MDLT

COMMUNICATIONS

MDLT's mission has attracted supporters from around the globe. Today we are considered a California desert influencer. We use a variety of platforms to communicate about our conservation work.





A NEW LOGO

We launched a striking new logo in October, coinciding with the conservation of 80,000 acres in the California desert and an updated membership program.

The new logo is more impactful as a design and reflects the broad vistas and native flora that the Mojave Desert Land Trust strives to protect.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE MOJAVE DESERT

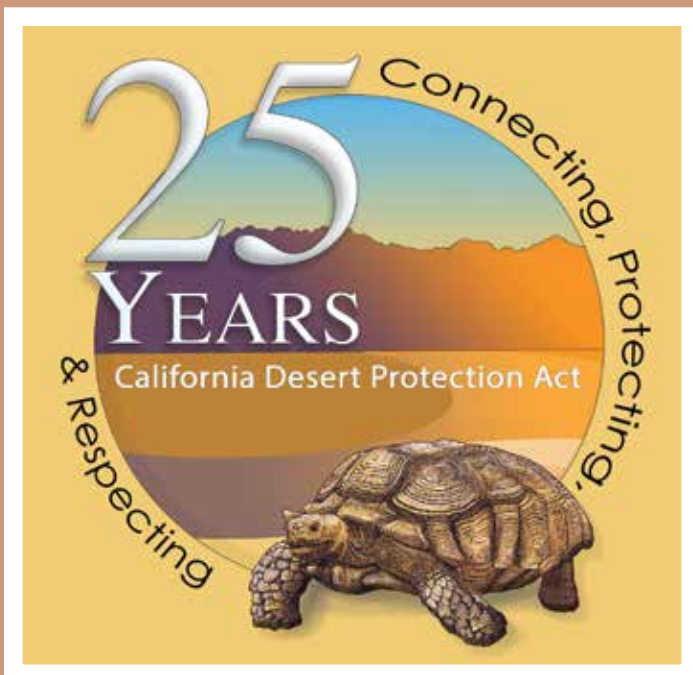
MDLT worked with Visit California to bring the television series Epic Trails to Mojave Trails National Monument. Through exquisite cinematography and interviews with local business and the Bureau of Land Management, the program showcased some of the natural wonders of these public lands.

The program aired extensively on Fox Sport and Outside TV in 2019 and introduced the National Monument to millions of viewers.

CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT

MDLT led a successful campaign to promote the 25th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act. With a nonprofit partner, EcoFlight, we hosted aerial tours for congressional staff, elected officials, and social media influencers, who shared the anniversary with over 250,000 people.

Multimedia materials such as a new logo and posters were prepared to mark the anniversary. A video prepared by MDLT with rare audio from original framers of the Act was featured in an exhibit at Death Valley National Park.



ADVOCACY

In 2019, MDLT helped raise awareness of major conservation policy issues affecting the California desert and governing our land.



photo: Cindy Holland/MDLT

CELEBRATING THE CALIFORNIA DESERT PROTECTION ACT 25TH ANNIVERSARY

MDLT brought together conservation partners and stakeholders to form a desert-wide coalition of organizations to coordinate events, policy work and public engagement in this anniversary. MDLT co-hosted a VIP event at our headquarters with the Native American Land Conservancy, National Parks Conservation Association, California Wilderness Coalition, Morongo Basin Conservation Association, and 29 Palms Band of Mission Indians.

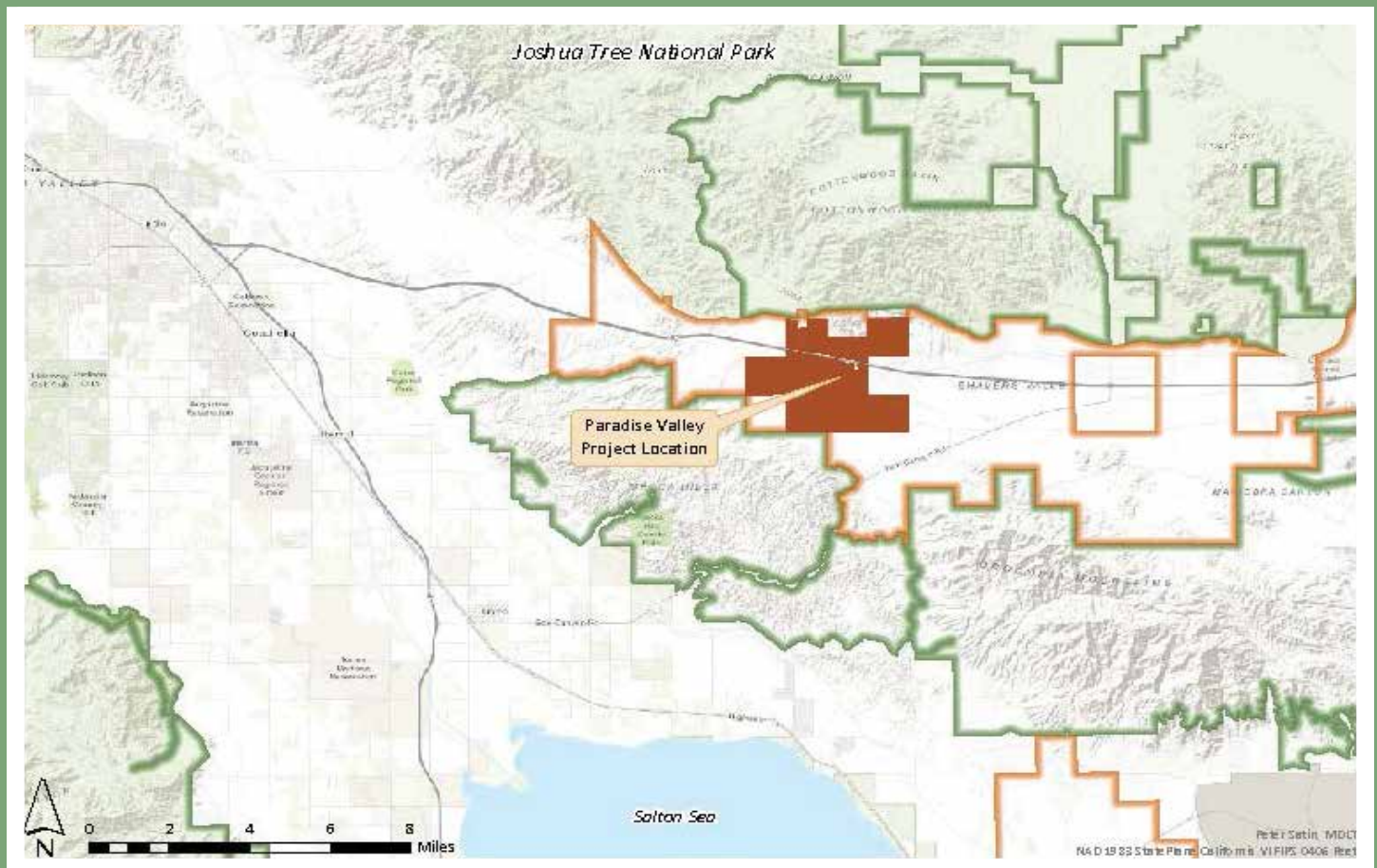
The event was attended by local, state and federal elected officials or their representatives, conservationists, resource agency personnel, tribal representatives, MDLT staff and volunteers, and other special guests. MDLT was also involved in securing proclamations of support for desert conservation from elected bodies on the occasion of the anniversary.

PROTECTION OF A PRISTINE WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

MDLT worked with our conservation partners to build opposition to the proposed Paradise Valley housing development in a vital wildlife corridor adjacent to Joshua Tree National Park's southern border. The developers planned to build 8,490 housing units in an area gifted with dark night skies, high biodiversity, and incredible views. The project was unanimously denied by Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

In a major conservation win for the Mojave, SB307 legislation was signed into law on August 1st, introducing oversight and a review process for the proposed Cadiz Groundwater Project. This effectively put the brakes on the project, subjecting it and all other proposed ground water transfers out of the desert to rigorous, do no harm standards. MDLT's peer-reviewed, published science on the potential environmental impacts of the project will be key to the evaluation process.



FUNDRAISING

In 2019 we had successful Giving Tuesday and Year End campaigns, kicked off our first annual Plant Conservation Programs Benefit Dinner, and nurtured our sponsorship and business partnerships with our first Business Mixer.



photo: Jessica Dacey/MDLT

WE CAN'T GROW WITHOUT YOU CAMPAIGN

Our Plant Conservation Programs can't grow without our supporters. We launched our "We Can't Grow Without You" campaign in mid-September and hosted our first annual Plant Conservation Benefit Dinner in September. Dinner guests were treated to a meal rich with local flavors, paying homage to our beautiful desert and were provided the opportunity to learn more about our work to preserve native plants. Thanks to a generous \$5,000 match provided by an anonymous seed bank member this campaign raised a grand total of \$19,129!

FIRST ANNUAL BUSINESS MIXER

In November, MDLT hosted our first annual Business Mixer at our headquarters. Over 50 members of our local business community enjoyed music, drinks and hors d'oeuvres, and the chance to mingle with others who love this desert we call home.

GIVING TUESDAY

In 2019, our Giving Tuesday campaign focused on the reason we do what we do: "Because We Love This Land". We opened up our headquarters to the public for a very special evening of **M**ingling, **D**iscovery, **L**earning, and **T**hankfulness. We exceeded our goal by raising \$40,379.

YEAR END CAMPAIGN: BECAUSE WE LOVE THIS LAND

Launched in conjunction with Giving Tuesday, our Year End campaign consisted of 207 donations totaling \$56,330. It was a \$26,857 increase from our 2018 Year End giving campaign -- thanks in no small part to the generous donation match provided by our long-time partners, Patagonia.

Our Year End campaign highlighted how privileged we all are to be able to experience the desert's scenic wonders, outdoor spaces, dark skies, clean air and water, and incredible wildlife.

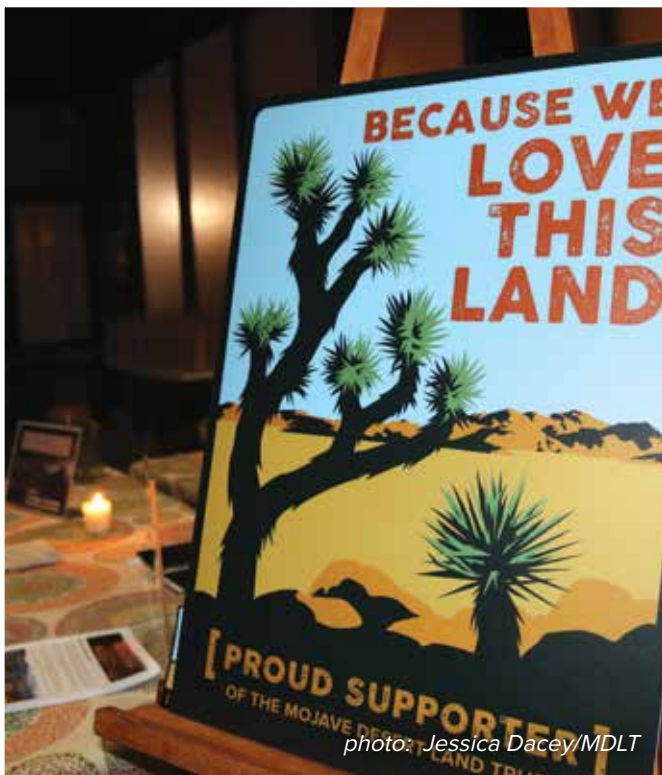
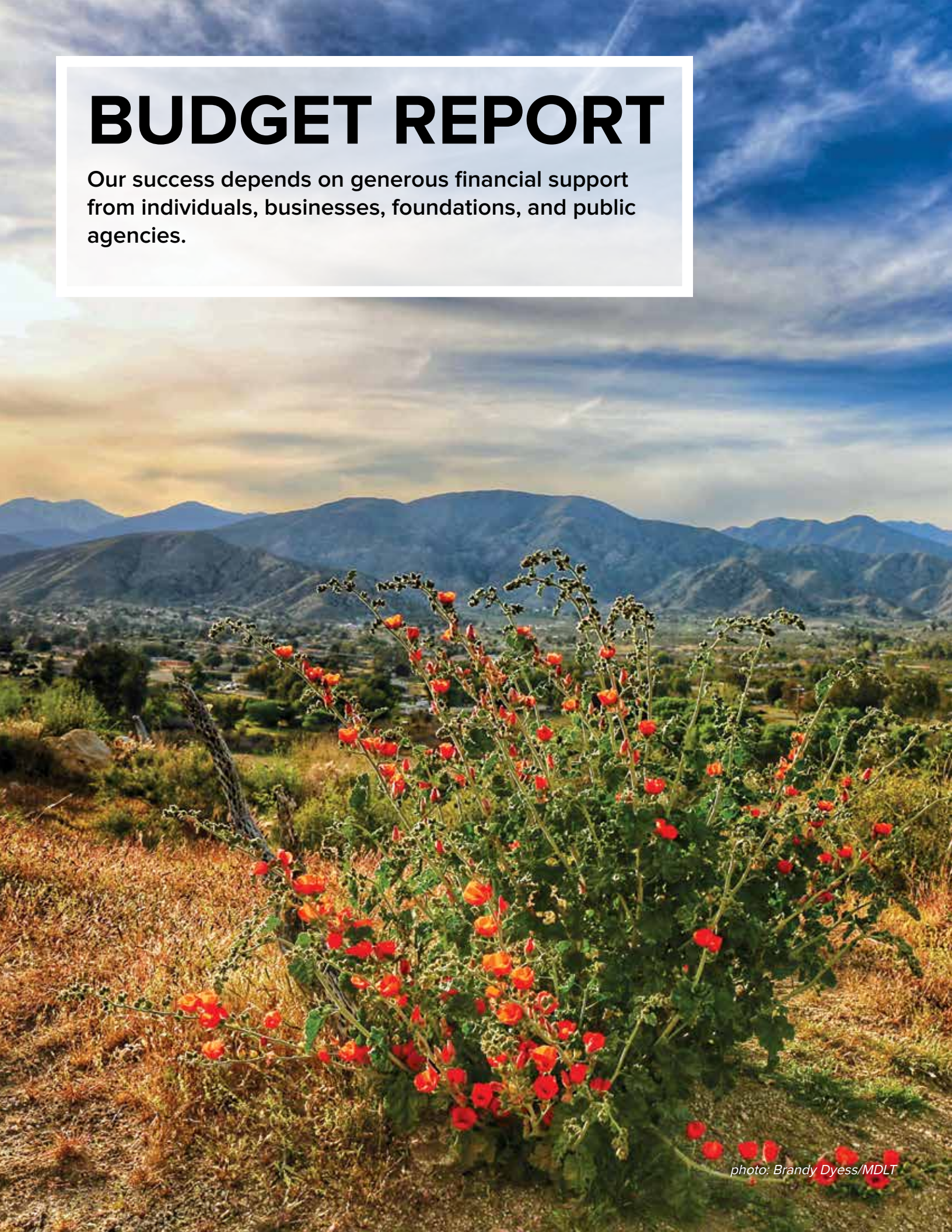


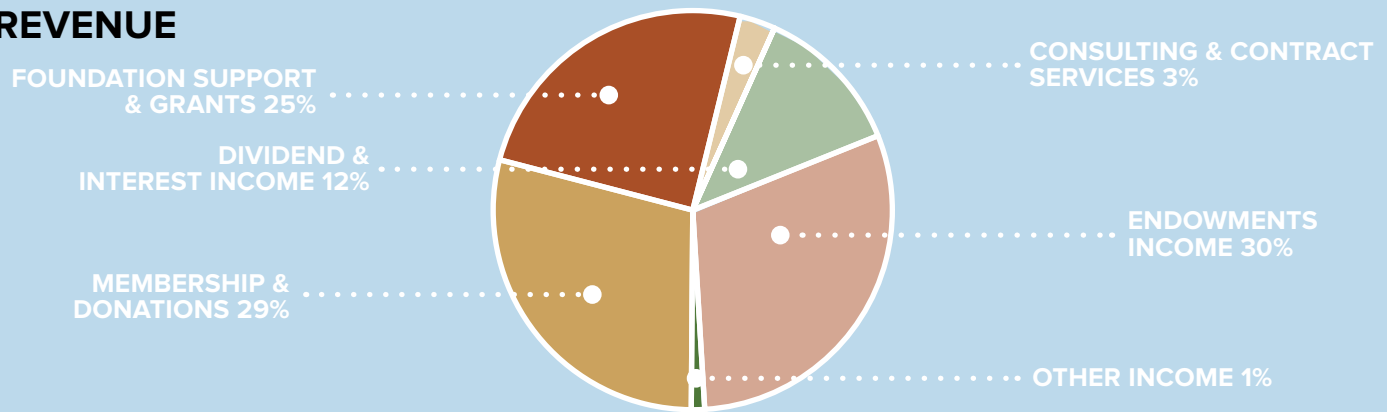
photo: Jessica Dacey/MDLT

BUDGET REPORT

Our success depends on generous financial support from individuals, businesses, foundations, and public agencies.



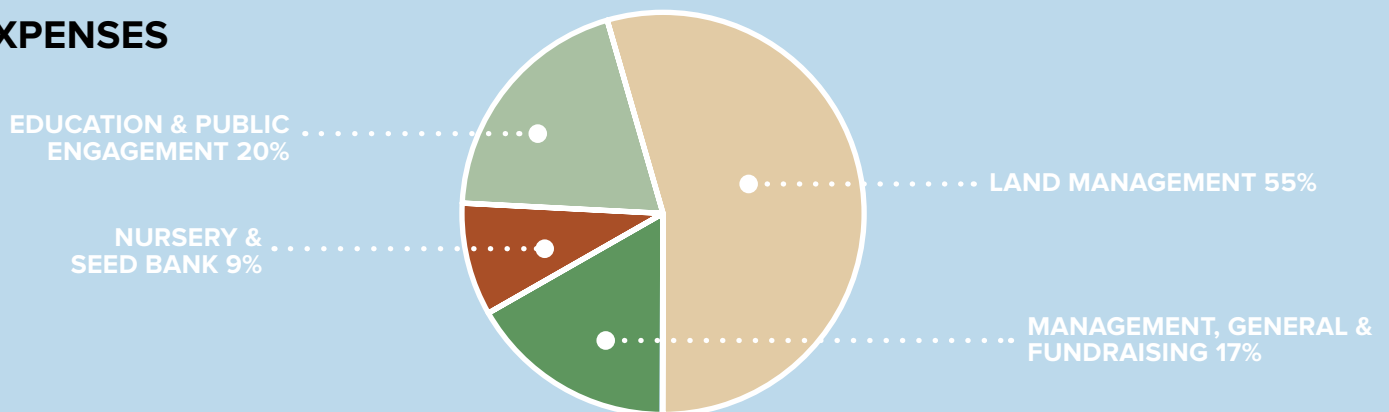
REVENUE



Membership & Donations	\$ 2,135,075	29%
Foundation Support & Grants	\$ 1,811,222	25%
Consulting & Contract Service	\$ 255,384	3%
Dividend & Interest Income	\$ 856,742	12%
Endowments Income	\$ 2,169,605	30%
Other Income	\$ 94,064	1%

TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT **\$ 7,322,092**

EXPENSES



Land Management	\$ 1,235,624	55%
Education & Public Engagement	\$ 447,440	20%
Nursery & Seed Bank	\$ 194,911	9%
Management, General & Fundraising	\$ 371,486	16%

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$ 2,205,227**

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

From Operations	\$ 5,116,865
Land Held For Conservation	\$ 2,868,496

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS **\$ 7,985,361**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



John Simpson, President

Founding member of MDLT, real estate executive

Peter Brooks, Treasurer

Former Marine, water industry executive, and defense writer

Gwen Barker, Director

Rimrock Ranch Owner and marketing extraordinaire

Robyn Helmlinger, Director

Partner with Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe

Kelly Herbinson, Director

Desert tortoise conservation researcher and author

Ron Radziner, Director

Architect and Design Partner at Marmol Radziner

Special thanks to Mike Avila and Jon Christensen who retired from the Board of Directors in 2019. We are immensely grateful for their service.

In 2020, we welcomed Brad Wilson, President and Co-Partner of Ace Hotel Group and the brand's in-house creative agency Atelier Ace, and Terrysa Guerra, Political Director at the United for Respect.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Mojave Desert Land Trust relies on our volunteers, donors, and supporters to fulfill our mission. This support ensures that we continue to protect the Mojave Desert ecosystem and its scenic and cultural resource values. Here are some ways that you can help:

DONATE: <https://www.mdlt.org/support/>

VOLUNTEER: <https://www.mdlt.org/support/volunteer/>



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We are grateful to every individual who donated to our conservation work in 2019. Your generous donations enable our programs to grow and flourish. We couldn't do what we do without you.

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

We also rely on support from organizations and companies. We extend a special thank you to our 2019 funders.

Anderson Children's Foundation
Ace Hotel and Swim Club
California Natural Resources Agency
California State Parks Off Highway Vehicle
Recreation Commission
Clif Bar Family Foundation
Conservation Lands Foundation
Defenders of Wildlife
Edison International
Harris Foundation
Institute of Inquiry
Resources Legacy Fund

Wildlife Conservation Board
Mojave Water Agency
Paperscaper
PrintRunner
The Trust for Public Land
Rose Foundation
Sakroots
Stasher
The Thornton S. Glide, Jr. and
Katrina D. Glide Foundation
Too Sweet Foundation
29 Palms Creative Center

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

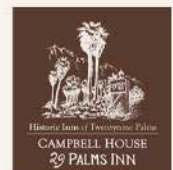
BRONZE:



SILVER:



GOLD:

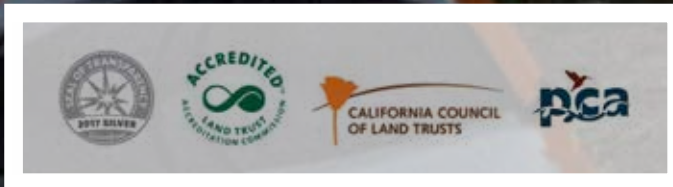


PLATINUM:



BENNETTBINNS
architecture interiors design

**Moonlight Mesa
Retreats**



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*Front cover photo: Peter Satin/MDLT
Back cover photo: Kyle Sullivan*