

# R12 LITTLE FARGO "HOT SHOTS"

## IMPORTANT WATER SOURCE ADJACENT TO JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

*By Scott Gibson, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member*

The "Little Fargo" wildlife water development (guzzler) is located at the southern border of Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP) on a piece of private property acquired by the Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT). The guzzler was originally constructed in 1997, by Desert Wildlife Unlimited (DWU) and the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS), with permission from the then landowner. Since JTNP will no longer allow maintenance of the six (6) existing bighorn sheep guzzlers located inside the park, Little Fargo has become increasingly important for the population of bighorn sheep that inhabit and traverse the Little San Bernardino Mountains as well as other desert wildlife.

The Society continues to maintain this important water source for desert bighorn sheep. Led by "Area Captains" Monte Hammer and Brian Schwab, the Society and the MDLT have now hauled water to this guzzler two times during the summer of 2021 and 2022. Rains during the 2022/23 season filled the three (3) 2000-gallon tanks, but also filled the area behind the check dam with sand. Monte and Brian were concerned that all the sand would prevent the guzzler from collecting water from upcoming rain events. Monte and Brian organized a work party, historically known as a "Hot Shot Crew", to dig out the sand. In addition to being a land trust, the MDLT also utilizes volunteers to perform habitat conservation work.

Volunteers from both the MDLT and the Society met early on the morning of April 8, 2023 on Dillon Road near Coachella, CA. After the hour long 4x4 trek and the ½ mile hike up the canyon and dry waterfall, the volunteers shoveled the yards of sand from behind the dam. The crew finished digging at about noon as the temperature climbed to 97°F.

I arrived later, with lunch provided by the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF)

