

VERMIN WATER HAUL

By Scott Gibson, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member

The "Vermin" drinker is located on the western end of the Old Dad Mountains, within the Mojave National Preserve. This legacy water development consists of three (3) upright plastic tanks manifolded to a "New Mexico" style drinker box. Rainwater is collected in a slick rock canyon check dam and then piped to the tanks. While many areas of the Mojave desert received rain last season, the Vermin system did not collect enough water to fill completely. Neal Darby, from the National Park Service (NPS) at the Preserve, reached out earlier this spring to let us know about the dwindling water conditions. Neal and his team continued to monitor the system. As summer was approaching fast, we made the call to provision Vermin with a water haul on May 19th and 20th.



Above: Steve Marschke and David Hawxhurst filling a water tank at NPS Maintenance Yard, Baker prior to transport to the Vermin Guzzler.

Our advance volunteer crew met at Camp Cady Wildlife Area to load equipment on Friday afternoon, May 19th. Once we loaded Big Red, we convoyed to the NPS maintenance yard in Baker. There we filled our totes with water then headed to the guzzler.



Above: We worked quickly to set up the bladder tank and string as much hose as possible Friday night..

Out in the Old Dads, we set up the 3000-gallon bladder tank and discharged our truck mounted tanks to start filling it up. We also began stringing out the half mile of hose needed to reach the tanks



Above: Big Red dropping second load of water to the 3000-gallon bladder tank as the Mark 3 Wajax Water Pump begins operation..

On Saturday Morning, the main "water haul" group met back at the NPS yard in Baker. Our team consisted of volunteers from SCBS, CDFW and NPS employees. As each truck filled with water, we began making the hour long 4x4 trek to the Vermin site. Each truck discharged it's load of water in the bladder tank then returned to Baker for a second load. When the bladder was full, we started pumping operations.

We were able to finish pumping a little after noon, a new record for us. With left over water in some of the trucks, Neal Darby led a crew to the "New Vermin" tank site less than a mile away. We rolled up the hose and loaded all equipment to depart the site by 3:00 PM.



Above: SCBS volunteers, like Dan Panattoni, had to carry all the fire hose back to the trucks.

Highlights:

- 4,275-gallons of water pumped to SB16 Vermin.
- 1,925-gallons delivered to SB67 New Vermin
- Approximately 3,300-feet of firehose used with a total weight of nearly 1,200-pounds.
- The WaterAxe pumped for 2-hrs 6-min, yielding a flow rate of ~31 gpm.
- High temperature of 102°F with a low temperature was 67°F.