

Catalina Island Conservancy Celebrates The Launch of Trekking Catalina

By Laura Mecoy
Catalina Island Conservancy



Supervisor Don Knabe presents Conservancy President and CEO Tony Budrovich with a congratulatory proclamation from the County of Los Angeles for the groundbreaking of Trekking Catalina. Photo by Robb Rosenfeld

Conservancy Hosts Groundbreaking for New Hiking Trails and Honors Supervisor Don Knabe

AVALON - The Catalina Island Conservancy broke ground Friday on Trekking Catalina, the most extensive enhancement of the organization's hiking trail network since the 2009 opening of the 37.2-mile Trans-Catalina Trail.

It also honored Los Angeles County Fourth District Supervisor Don Knabe for his many contributions to the Conservancy and the Island during the new trail groundbreaking at Patrick's Reservoir, one of the trailheads in Catalina's wildlands, and a celebratory picnic at Haypress Recreation Area.

Knabe and his staff have been champions of the Conservancy and Catalina, providing much-needed funding for numerous projects, including a \$1.5 million Proposition A - Los Angeles County Regional Parks and Open Space grant for Trekking Catalina. The Conservancy's wildlands are part of the LA County's open space and natural areas.

"I have visited Catalina Island for decades, and I was thrilled to

be able to help the Conservancy launch this major expansion of its hiking trails," said Knabe. "The Conservancy has done an outstanding job of protecting and restoring the Island, while also ensuring the public could experience and explore Catalina-California's only accessible destination island. With Trekking Catalina, the Conservancy will create a world-class hiking experience on Catalina."

Tony Budrovich, the Conservancy's president and CEO, thanked Knabe for his support and said Trekking Catalina will be a substantial improvement to Catalina's hiking trails.

"Supervisor Knabe and his staff have been among the strongest supporters of the Conservancy and Catalina," said Budrovich. "With their help, Trekking Catalina will be a sustainable and environmentally sound way to expand hiking opportunities on the Island and to encourage people to see California beautiful as it once was - wild, open and free of development."

The Conservancy is committed to providing nature-based recreational activities on Catalina Island, and Trekking Catalina will expand those opportunities by creating 26.7 miles of newly developed hiking trails on the Island. It will minimize the impact on the land by

upgrading and consolidating "social trails," which are unofficial trails created by wildlife and the foot traffic of campers and other users over time.

The Conservancy also will install sustainable restrooms that will meet the need for clean and odor-free facilities to improve the hiking experience and help to protect the environment. In addition, the Conservancy will install new signage to make it easier for hikers to find their way around the Island. Some of the trail expansion work will be performed by the Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) to fulfill Prop A youth employment goals. Through CCLB's participation, Avalon youth will also have opportunities to work on the trail project so they can gain work experience in construction and conservation.

The groundbreaking for Trekking Catalina is another major milestone in IMAGINE CATALINA, the Conservancy's long-range strategic vision and master plan. The groundbreaking comes just four months after the Conservancy began construction of its new visitors' center, The Trailhead, in Avalon, another major component of IMAGINE CATALINA.