



## CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY

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### **Catalina Island Conservancy Hosts International Visitors through the U.S. Department of State**

AVALON - Catalina Island expanded its worldview last month when a group of 20 professionals from countries all over the globe visited to learn about environment protection and biodiversity conservation. The visitors, participants of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and hosted by the Catalina Island Conservancy, enjoyed a full day on April 6 of hands-on learning regarding the conservation and environmental work of the Conservancy on Catalina Island.

The International Visitor Leadership Program is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. Through short-term visits to the United States, current and emerging foreign leaders in a variety of fields experience the U.S. firsthand and cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts. The U.S. State Department selects each participant through a nomination process with the staff at U.S. Embassies around the world.

The majority of IVLP exchanges are generally three weeks in length and focus on a particular theme. This particular trip ran from April 2 to April 20 starting in Washington, DC, and focused on environment protection and biodiversity conservation at locations all over the country, including Catalina Island on April 6.

Conservancy President and CEO Tony Budrovich and Avalon Mayor Anni Marshall welcomed the group to the Avalon City Council Chambers where they enjoyed the Conservancy's Naturalist Training by education staff. The visit continued with a stop at the Nature Center at Avalon Canyon and then all made their way up to the Airport in the Sky for lunch and discussions on best practices in biodiversity conservation, wildlife management and sustainable tourism. The afternoon was spent touring the interior of the Island, visiting the Conservancy's James Ackerman Native Plant Nursery and meeting with Conservancy plant, wildlife and trails managers to continue learning about the Conservancy's work in education, recreation and conservation.

This is not the first time the Catalina Island Conservancy has hosted a group of international visitors through IVLP – they have participated for several years and have been honored to do so. "Having Conservationists from around the world learn about managing such a large and complex organization as the Catalina Island Conservancy provides an opportunity to showcase

the work of the Conservancy to an international audience,” says Frank Galea, Director of Conservation with the Catalina Island Conservancy.

Natalia Lvovich, Director of International Programs at the International Visitors Council of Los Angeles (IVCLA), organizes the IVLP visits to the Los Angeles area. “The International Visitors Council of Los Angeles creates international understanding and cooperation between the Los Angeles region and the rest of the world through Citizen Diplomacy,” Lvovich says. “Each year, IVCLA creates programs for the hundreds of international visitors who are chosen by U.S. Embassies around the world through IVLP. The participants come to the Los Angeles area to share best practices on many important global issues. This would not be possible without our local partner organizations such as the Catalina Island Conservancy. Over the years, the Conservancy has hosted several IVLP delegations. The Conservancy has been a great partner and we are truly grateful for this collaboration.”

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#### **About the Conservancy**

Formed in 1972, the Catalina Island Conservancy is one of California's oldest land trusts. Its mission is to be a responsible steward of its lands through a balance of conservation, education and recreation. Through its ongoing efforts, the Conservancy protects the magnificent natural and cultural heritage of Santa Catalina Island, stewarding approximately 42,000 acres of land and more than 60 miles of rugged shoreline. It provides an airport and 50 miles of biking and nearly 150 miles of hiking opportunities within its road and trail system. The Conservancy conducts educational outreach through two nature centers, its Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden and guided experiences in the Island’s rugged interior. Twenty miles from the mainland, the Island is a treasure trove of historical and archaeological sites. It also contains numerous rare and endangered animals and plants. The Island is home to 60 species – and counting – that are found only on Catalina. For additional information, please visit [www.catalinaconservancy.org](http://www.catalinaconservancy.org).