



## CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY

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### **Catalina Island Conservancy President and CEO Announces Planned Retirement** *Ann Muscat, PhD, to Step Down at End of 2016 to Give Organization Time to Find Replacement*

AVALON – Ann M. Muscat, PhD, the president and CEO of the Catalina Island Conservancy, announced today that she will be retiring at the end of 2016 to provide time for the nonprofit organization to find her replacement and for her successor to get oriented to the new position. Muscat will be working with the Conservancy’s Board of Directors as it launches its search for a new president and CEO.

When she retires at the end of 2016, Muscat, 62, will have served as the Conservancy’s president and CEO for 13.5 years – longer than any previous Conservancy president, except for the organization’s first president and CEO, Doug Propst.

“I’ve had the great pleasure of working with some of the most dedicated staff and members of the community that care deeply about Catalina Island. I am proud that together we have accomplished great things for conservation, education and nature-based recreation on Catalina,” said Muscat. “I’m looking forward to joining my husband, Jack, in retirement so that we can pursue our travel plans and other goals, which will, of course, continue to include work in support of the Conservancy and Catalina Island.”

During Muscat’s tenure, the Conservancy has:

- significantly improved the ecological health of the Island,
- dramatically increased public access, both physical and intellectual, to the natural resources of Catalina,
- significantly expanded the financial and human resources needed to protect and restore Catalina’s wildlands, and
- created a compelling and exciting strategic vision for the future.

“Ann and the Conservancy have achieved a lot in the last 12 years,” said Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe. “I’ve had the great pleasure of working with Ann and her team, all of them consummate professionals who are dedicated to getting things done. I’m happy to have played a role in assisting on projects that have improved access to the Island and wish Ann the best.”

“On behalf of the City of Avalon, we thank Ann for her steadfast commitment to conservation and her leadership on other issues that benefit the entire community, such as her work with the Island Water Consortium,” said Avalon Mayor Anni Marshall.

**Confidential Document: Information not to be shared prior to Wednesday, April 22.**

The Conservancy is poised to move to the next level of growth with a strong executive team and staff, supportive donor base, solid financial position and a long-term, strategic vision firmly in place.

“Let me be clear: Yes, I am retiring, but I’m not done,” Muscat said. “Over the next 18 months, we have several unfinished projects I intend to see through. I am grateful for the experience of a lifetime with the Conservancy and to everyone who has helped us achieve our goals.”

John Cotton, chairman of the Catalina Island Conservancy Board of Directors, said: “Ann is a great leader and isn’t afraid to push for the things she believes in and that are right for the Conservancy. Rarely do you see that kind of conviction and leadership. While we’ll miss her, I respect her decision to enjoy retirement and greatly appreciate her providing the next 18 months to finish some projects and assist us with a smooth transition. I’m confident Ann will always be a resource for the Conservancy and help us on key projects from time-to-time in the future.”

Paxson Offield, a benefactor member of the Conservancy, thanked Muscat for her leadership of the organization. Offield is a member of one of the families that founded the Conservancy in 1972 to protect and restore 88% of Catalina Island.

“Ann has led a team that has had numerous conservation successes, and she has provided enhanced access for visitors to experience the wild side of Catalina Island,” said Offield. “Thank you Ann for your substantial contributions to fulfilling the visions of the Wrigley and Offield families when they created the Conservancy. We look forward to accomplishing even more with Ann at the helm over the next 18 months.”

The Conservancy is one of California’s oldest and largest land trusts. It was a founding member of the California Council of Land Trusts, and Muscat previously served as chair of the council’s board of directors.

“Ann and her team’s excellent stewardship work at the Catalina Island Conservancy is leading edge and has served as a model for many other land trusts,” said Darla Guenzler, California Council of Land Trusts executive director.

### **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).