



CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY

Conservation. Education. Recreation.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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“Go Wild!” with the Catalina Island Conservancy

Experience and Explore Nature—Just an Hour from Los Angeles

AVALON, CA, March 12, 2014 -- The Catalina Island Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring Catalina Island, provides a wide variety of fun activities for families and singles to enjoy over the summer vacation.

Catalina is California’s only destination island, attracting nearly 1 million visitors a year. Located an hour from Los Angeles, it is the only Channel Island with a sizable full-time residential population as well as hotels, restaurants and other amenities for tourists. The Catalina Island Conservancy is responsible for 88 percent of the Island – mostly the largely undeveloped wildlands. While many Island visitors may see only the town of Avalon, the Conservancy offers a wide range of opportunities to explore and experience nature throughout the Island on custom Jeep® Eco Tours or Wildlands Express, and hiking and camping adventures.

“The wildlands give us all an opportunity to see California as it once was – wild and free of development,” said Ann Muscat, Ph.D., president and CEO of the Catalina Island Conservancy. “Our Jeep® Eco Tours offer people of all ages and abilities an open-air adventure, led by experienced naturalists, through the Island’s spectacular valleys and mountains.”

With the Conservancy’s Jeep® Eco Tours, visitors can “Go Wild!” on the 42,000 acres of open space managed by the nonprofit organization. During these tours, visitors often see the Island’s iconic bison herd and may even catch a glimpse of the elusive Catalina Island fox, an endangered species that has enjoyed one of the fastest recoveries on record, thanks to the Conservancy’s work.

Visitors may also see bald eagles soaring over the Island’s cliffs. This national symbol disappeared from the Island in the 1960s. The eagles have returned to Catalina, thanks to the hard work of dedicated wildlife biologists.

Hikers, bikers, campers, runners and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the Conservancy’s 80 miles of hiking trails, 14 campsites and 62 miles of unspoiled beaches. Visitors seeking a peaceful walk through nature and a commanding view of Avalon Bay can find both at the Catalina Island Conservancy’s historic Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden. A 30-minute walk or short ride

from downtown Avalon, the memorial and garden offer visitors a peaceful sanctuary and an opportunity to explore more than 35 acres of California's and the Channel Islands' endemic and rare plant species, some that are found nowhere else in the world.

At the Conservancy's two Nature Centers, visitors can learn all about the Island – from its geology to how species arrived and adapted here – through the exhibits, videos and hands-on activities.

The Conservancy's Wildlands Express offers a convenient and inexpensive way to travel between Avalon and the Airport in the Sky for pilots, passengers and visitors seeking to explore and experience Catalina's wildlands from the comfort of an air-conditioned passenger van.

The Conservancy's world-famous airport sits atop a 1,602-foot mountain, providing a popular destination for pilots and their passengers as well as visitors and hikers from Avalon. The Airport Loop Trail offers a short hike through unique soapstone quarries used in bygone centuries by the Native Americans who once inhabited the Island, the Tongva.

"As we like to say on Catalina, we are just an hour away, but we are a world apart from the hustle and bustle of Los Angeles," said Muscat. "Come discover Catalina. It is an Island that has represented a cherished escape for millions of people who have challenged themselves physically and intellectually, discovered a love of the outdoors and made lifelong memories along its shores and in its wildlands."

Schedule a Jeep® Eco Tour and find a hike by calling 310-510-2595.

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

To arrange tours and trips to the Island, please contact Patricia Maxwell, 909.587.9034, pmaxwell@catalinaconservancy.org. The Conservancy also has a gallery of high-quality photos for feature stories and can arrange Jeep® Eco Tours and access to the wildlands for credentialed reporters or reporters who can demonstrate they are regularly published in widely circulated or widely read publications and online outlets.

About the Catalina Island Conservancy

The Catalina Island Conservancy was formed in 1972 and 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. The Conservancy protects the magnificent natural and cultural heritage of Santa Catalina Island, stewarding approximately 42,000 acres of land deeded to the Conservancy in 1975, 62 miles of rugged shoreline and more than 80 miles of trails. It operates the Airport in the Sky, Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden and two nature centers. Twenty miles from the mainland, the Island is home to more than 60 plant and animal species found nowhere else in the world. For additional information, visit www.catalinaconservancy.org.

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Jeep® Eco Tours – By far the best way to experience Catalina’s wildlands is by Jeep® Eco Tour. Catalina Island Conservancy naturalists drive participants into the wildlands, where the flowering flora and glimpses of fauna are part of the drive.

Stately Structure – The Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden at the top of Avalon Canyon features the giant mausoleum dedicated to William Wrigley Jr.