

THE STORY OF DEEP CREEK VOLUNTEERS

www.DeepCreekVolunteers.com

by Ron Mercer, April 2006



These natural hot springs are located in the San Bernardino National Forest. Since the time Native Americans inhabited the area, people from all over the world have come to the Springs to get away, soak, sunbathe, relax and enjoy the natural clothing optional environment all year long.

While the springs are located on federal public land, the easiest access route crosses a stretch of private land known as the Bowen Ranch. The current owner of the Bowen ranch charges a small fee per person to park or camp on his land in order to access the springs.

Deep Creek Volunteers was formed in October 2002 by several concerned hot springs users, some of whom had been visiting the springs since the early seventies. We were worried that the negative and disrespectful attitude of a few people could eventually lead to the United States Forest Service (USFS) considering closing Deep Creek Hot Springs to public access. Our intention was to work with them to preserve these hot springs and keep them clean, healthy, clothing optional, and family oriented; so they will still be there for our children and grandchildren.

After choosing a name, we prepared a mission statement and a flyer to present and distribute to visitors at the springs. We presented it to the USFS, and after about two months it was approved by them with only minor modifications but agreeing to tolerate nudity within the entire Deep Creek drainage area within the San Bernardino National Forest boundary with the exception the area known as the T-6 crossing close to Lake Arrowhead. A year later they requested we move our brochure box off the national forest land itself so it is now located at the trailhead at the Bowen Ranch.

It is difficult to say with certainty who the founding members were. However, I think it would be fair to say that the members that were involved in the initial process and joined by the time the brochure was approved are our founding members. They would include in addition to myself, Laughing Bear, Wizard, Sycamore Laughing, Paul Tall Tree, AZ Mike, Paul P., Scott, Naked Man and DCR.

Deep Creek Volunteers continues to grow steadily. Today it has 66 members and its presence and contribution towards the springs is recognized and appreciated by visitors and USFS alike. Our website (deepcreekvolunteers.com) which is hosted and maintained by webmaster Ralph Maese, receives between 30-50 hits a day. Our members continue to help by carrying out trash, cleaning and repairing the pools, keeping our box on the Bowen Ranch supplied with flyers, educating visitors on appropriate etiquette and the clothing optional custom, answering emails and being the eyes and ears for the Forest Service.

To join our group or for a guided visit please visit our website and look for the "New Members" link and or mail us at Deep Creek Volunteers, P.O. Box 5870, Orange, CA 92863-5870 (714-77103702). We will be more than happy to answer any questions or coordinate a guided hike for you and your fellow students.