



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 16, 2015

Contact:
Steve Sharp
760.833.8167
Agua Caliente
Cultural Museum

MUSEUM PRESENTS TRADITIONAL BIRD SONG & DANCE FESTIVAL

PALM SPRINGS, CA - January 16, 2015 -- **On Saturday, January 31, 2015**, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum will present ***Singing the Birds (Wikitmallem Tahmuwhae): Bird Song & Dance Festival*** in Palm Springs High School gymnasium at 2401 East Baristo Road from Noon to 7:00 p.m. This free public event hosted by Michael Mirelez (Desert Cahuilla) celebrates traditional Native American bird singing and dancing.



Also, preceding the festival on the evening of Wednesday, January 28, the Museum will present ***Bird Singing: Perspectives on Indian Social Song and Dance*** -- a panel discussion with distinguished bird singers and dancers. Panelists will discuss aspects of traditional bird singing and dancing past and present, and what the future holds for this unique performance practice. The event begins 6:30 p.m. at the Palm Springs Hilton

Hotel located at 400 East Tahquitz Canyon Way. Admission is free.

Singing the Birds will feature honored bird singers and dancers from California and Arizona. It is anticipated that over 500 bird singers, dancers and other guests will attend the festival. Native food and craft vendors will be present, as well as Tribal representatives who will display educational resources and other information.

The event will include a free-standing exhibition about the tradition of bird singing, with a special tribute to past Tribal elders who kept alive the tradition of bird singing by their teaching of bird songs to succeeding generations of Tribal members. This photographic display with accompanying text will be presented on a series of large vertical panels that highlight the rich cultural heritage of Cahuilla bird singing and dancing. Created by the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum staff, in consultation with Tribal members and Lowell J. Bean, Ph.D., the exhibition will be displayed in the gymnasium for viewing at the daylong festival. After the event, individual panels of the exhibition will be displayed at public programs and educational outreach presentations in schools.



Through the ages, bird singing and dancing have been an important part of Native culture for tribes in southern California and other regions of the Southwest. Birds inspired the Cahuilla people to migrate after the death of their creator, Mukat. They saw birds come and go throughout the seasons, and thought they must be going somewhere better. The people followed the birds but lost their way, not knowing where to find water or food. They were caught in snow storms and many people died before they made their way back home. Bird songs are social songs that tell stories about the lessons learned during this migration. A completely oral tradition, they were sung in a precise order that accurately accounted for the chronology of the migration, and depended on their transference from teacher to student. Men and women both participate--singing and dancing while accompanied by the metered beat of rattles.

For additional event information, call 760-833-8169 or e-mail cvictor@accmuseum.org.

About Agua Caliente Cultural Museum

In 1991, a modest museum of less than 1,600 square feet was founded to collect and preserve stories and artifacts of the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and share them with local residents and visitors alike. Today, Museum programming provides a thriving resource for Native and non-Native people and a dynamic forum for permanent residents and visitors of all ages.

Museum offerings that serve over 28,000 adults and children each year include: quality exhibitions at the Museum, at off-site locations, and online; stimulating and enlightening lectures; classes and demonstrations that feature hands-on experiences with Native skills and crafts; a six-day Native film festival and other cultural special events; library and archives research opportunities; Museum tours;

guided cultural hikes; and presentations for students in schools.

For teachers, students, artists, scholars, and collectors the Museum's holdings provide unique research and archival resources -- from recordings of a tribal *net*(ceremonial and political leader) to the documentation of ongoing challenges made to tribal land and water rights. Free online resources are available on the Museum Web site at www.accmuseum.org.

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit institution. In keeping with its mission, the Museum inspires people to learn about the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and other Native cultures through exhibitions, collections, research, and educational programs.

In recognition of its role as a regional and national resource, Agua Caliente Cultural Museum was the first Native American museum to be part of the prestigious Smithsonian Institution Affiliations Program. The association with Smithsonian Institution provides opportunities for a mutual sharing of resources in collections, scholarship, programming, and technical expertise, and entitles the Museum to bring world-acclaimed Smithsonian exhibitions to the Coachella Valley.

Agua Caliente Cultural Museum is located at 219 South Palm Canyon Drive in downtown Palm Springs. The Museum is open September through May -- Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 am to 5:00 PM and June through August -- Friday through Sunday, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Admission to the Museum is free.

Administration Offices of the Museum are located at 901 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite C-204, Palm Springs, CA 92262. Additional information is available at 760.778.1079 or visit www.accmuseum.org.

###