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## Elementary School Students Participate in Environmental Stewardship Program at California Desert Parks: Mojave National Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park

*First Solar supports a national effort to increase environmental stewardship among youth*

TEMPE, Ariz. & ROCKVILLE, Md.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- More than 100 students in grades K to 8 from rural communities in Nevada and California visited Mojave National Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park from Oct. 16 to 19, exploring the area's unique desert ecosystem through National Park Trust's (NPT) nationally recognized environmental education program, *Where's Buddy Bison Been?*<sup>®</sup> ([www.buddybison.org](http://www.buddybison.org)). For the majority of these students, this was their first national park experience.



Sandy Valley Elementary Student "Hangs Out" With Buddy Bison (Photo: Business Wire)

Earlier this year, NPT received a \$48,000 grant from First Solar to implement the NPT environmental education program in four rural schools: Baker Elementary School (Baker, Calif.), Eagle Mountain School (Desert Center, Calif.), Sandy Valley Elementary School (Jean, Nev.) and Del Sur Elementary School (Lancaster, Calif.).

"We greatly appreciate the generous support from First Solar that has made it possible to welcome students from Baker, Sandy Valley and Eagle Mountain Elementary School into NPT's Buddy Bison school program this year. This partnership exemplifies First Solar's commitment to educating children, especially those from underserved communities about sustainability, the unique ecosystems of Mojave National Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park, 'green' career opportunities and healthy outdoor recreation," said Grace Lee, executive director, National Park Trust.

During the park trips, the students participated in environmental learning activities which offered valuable information about sustainability, geology and STEM concepts. At the 1.6 million-acre Mojave National Preserve, Baker and Sandy Valley students were greeted by volunteers from First Solar and embarked on ranger-led hikes at one of the largest sand dunes in the United States (Kelso Dunes) and to the Teutonia Peak Trail which is home to the densest population of Joshua Trees in the world. At Joshua Tree National Park, students and volunteers took a scenic bus tour of the Cholla Cactus Garden on their way to White Tank where they hiked through the park's extensive granite rock formations and learned about geology and desert wildlife.

"This is my best day ever and I will never forget it!" said an Eagle Mountain student as he stood atop a rock overlooking Joshua Tree National Park.

Desert Sunlight and Stateline solar projects have been working closely with NPT to participate in these trips and will continue to provide volunteer support as well as supplemental educational resources to the students throughout the school year.

First Solar associates supporting the company's Silver State South,

"We are excited to support the work that National Park Trust is doing to help create the next generation of park stewards and educate children on the importance of sustainability and solar energy," said Laura Abram, First Solar director of Sustainability and Community Affairs.

The Buddy Bison school program has garnered attention from Department of the Interior's Youth in the Great Outdoors initiative and First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative. The program was established to cultivate the park stewards of tomorrow and to promote healthy living through increased activity and outdoor play. Since 2009, NPT has engaged 8,000

students at 40 schools across the country.

### **About National Park Trust**

National Park Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving parks today and creating park stewards for tomorrow. As people spend more time indoors and as successive generations grow up with less of a connection to nature, NPT wants to build a greater awareness of the importance of protecting and enjoying our country's parks and public lands and water. National Park Trust has also organized the annual National Kids to Park Day grassroots movement. To learn more about our work visit [www.parktrust.org](http://www.parktrust.org) or our website for children [www.buddybison.org](http://www.buddybison.org).

### **About First Solar, Inc.**

First Solar is a leading global provider of comprehensive photovoltaic (PV) solar systems which use its advanced thin-film modules. The company's integrated power plant solutions deliver an economically attractive alternative to fossil-fuel electricity generation today. From raw material sourcing through end-of-life module collection and recycling, First Solar's renewable energy systems protect and enhance the environment. For more information about First Solar, please visit <http://www.firstsolar.com>.

### **For First Solar Investors**

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Photos/Multimedia Gallery Available: <http://www.businesswire.com/cgi-bin/mmg.cgi?eid=50452296&lang=en>

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