Dueling banjos: Julian music fest returns to its roots

BY STEVE SCHMIDT , UNION-TRIBUNE
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Julian's late-summer music festival will return to its pickin' and fiddlin' roots this weekend.

Organizers are bringing back a banjo- and fiddle- playing contest, which was dropped several years ago. The festival is set for Saturday and Sunday in Frank Lane Park, 2656 Farmer Rd., west of Julian's Main Street.

As many as 1,000 people are expected to attend each day of the backcountry event. Admission is $16 per person. Those 16 or younger are free, if they come with an adult.

Judy Taylor, who will serve as festival emcee, said organizers will stage the music contest on Saturday to boost the annual event's family appeal and recapture its homegrown flavor.

Saturday's festival will run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., with the contest starting at 10 a.m. Musicians Scott Gates and Chuck Hailes will also perform, along with the Tail Draggers.

Those set to perform Sunday -- between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. -- include Trails and Rails, Sue Palmer and Chris Stuart and the Backcountry.

The event began in 1970, when local banjo and fiddle players gathered at a nearby football field to jam and match skills.

The festival is a fundraiser for the Julian Lions Club. Organizers suggest that those attending bring folding chairs, sunscreen and hats.