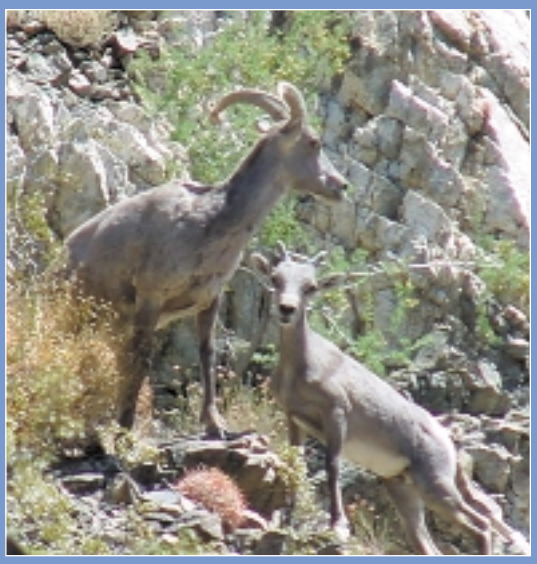


Introduction

ZZYZX
Mineral Springs
12,000 ACRES
DRIVE SLOWLY...5 MI. PER HR.
for reservations or information...
...COME TO OFFICE
KINDLY PARK YOUR CAR
IN OUR PARKING ZONE...
YOU ARE INVITED
TO HAVE DINNER WITH US...

Introduction

Overview

This *General Management Plan* is Mojave National Preserve's overall management strategy for a 10–15 year period. This plan focuses on the park's purposes, its significant attributes, its mission in relation to the overall mission of the National Park Service, what activities are appropriate within these constraints, and resource protection strategies. It provides guidelines for visitor use and development of facilities for visitor enjoyment and administration of the Preserve. It serves as the overall umbrella guidance under which more detailed activity or implementation plans are prepared.

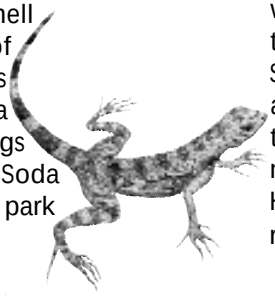
This plan envisions Mojave National Preserve as a natural environment and a cultural landscape where the protection of native desert ecosystems, natural processes, and historic resources is assured for future generations. The protection and perpetuation of native species in a self-sustaining environment is a primary long-term goal. The plan seeks to manage the Preserve to perpetuate the sense of discovery, solitude and adventure that currently exists. The plan also seeks to provide the public, consistent with the NPS mission, with maximum opportunities for roadside camping, back-country camping and access to the Preserve by existing roads. The plan would seek funding for the complete rehabilitation of the historic Kelso Depot and its use as a museum and interpretive facility. The goal of this plan is to determine how to best manage this new park unit to meet the Congressional intent and the mission of the National Park Service.

The California Desert Protection Act also requires the plan to place emphasis on the historical and cultural sites and ecological and wilderness values in the Preserve. It calls for the evaluation of the feasibility of using the Kelso Depot and the existing railroad corridor to provide public access to and a facility for special interpretive, educational, and scientific programs. It specifies that the plan address the needs of individuals with disabilities in the design of services, programs, accommodations, and facilities.

Description of Mojave National Preserve

Mojave National Preserve is a 1.6 million-acre unit of the National Park Service, established by Congress on October 31, 1994, by the California Desert Protection Act. The Preserve is a vast expanse of desert lands that represents a combination of Great Basin, Sonoran, and Mojave desert ecosystems. This combination allows a visitor to experience a wide variety of desert plant life in combinations that exist nowhere else in the United States in such proximity.

Located in southern California, the desert area is a land of mountain ranges, sand dunes, great mesas and extinct volcanoes. Mojave contains several diverse mountain ranges, the Kelso dune system, dry lakebeds and evidence of volcanic activity (domes, lava flows, cinder cones). Plant and animal life complement the geological features. Mojave contains the largest Joshua tree forest in the world. Providence Mountain State Recreation Area (Mitchell Caverns), the University of California's Granite Mountains Natural Reserve, and California State University's Soda Springs Desert Studies Center at Soda Springs are also within the park boundaries.



Mojave is bounded to the north and south by major interstate highways, I-15 and I-40. The Nevada–California stateline makes up most of the eastern boundary. Located about half way between Las Vegas and Joshua Tree National Park, it is an area that many people have seen through their windshields, but few have taken time to explore.

Of the Preserve's 1.6 million acres, about 700,000 acres are designated wilderness. In addition, about half is designated as critical habitat for the federally listed threatened desert tortoise.

Evidence of the early human uses includes archeological sites, possibly dating back to 12,000 years. Historic features, such as mail and trade/travel routes, ranching, farming, and mining, are abundant and often well preserved. The old Union Pacific train depot at Kelso serves as a wonderful reminder the railroading hey-days of the 1920s. The collection of buildings at Soda Springs, called Zzyzx, built by Curtis H. Springer also has a remarkably interesting tale to tell of this most unusual man. These two features and many more, such as Fort Piute, Government Holes, and Ivanpah town sites add to the very rich history of the Preserve.

Purpose and Management

Unit purpose, significant features, and agency mission and mandates (laws) form the basis for management decisions and planning. Decisions about the management of resources are generally measured against these elements to determine activities that may be acceptable in a unit.

Purpose and Mission

The park purpose is the reasons why Congress set the area aside for protection as a unit of the national park system. As a unit of the national park system, Mojave must be managed in accordance with the National Park Service preservation mission as provided in the Organic Act of 1916; 16 USC 1, which provides that the primary purpose of park units is:

> *"...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein, and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."*

In the 1970 General Authorities Act, Congress recognized that a confusing variety of designations had been used in the creation of National Park System units (parks, monuments, seashores, historic parks, recreation areas, preserves, etc.). They responded by amending the Organic Act to clarify that all units, regardless of their specific designation, are to be managed under the Organic Act mandate.

> *"...these areas, though distinct in character, are united through their interrelated purposes and resources into one national park system as cumulative expressions of a single national heritage; ...and that it is the purpose of this Act to include all such areas in the System and to clarify the authorities applicable to the system."*

In 1978, Congress amended the General Authorities Act in the Redwood National Park Act to further clarify the importance of park resources systemwide:

> *"The authorization of activities shall be construed and the protection, management, and administration of these areas shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these various areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically provided for by Congress."*

In addition to the overall purpose of parks as outlined in the NPS Organic Act, as amended, specific purposes may also be provided in each unit's establishing or enabling legislation. Certain activities may also be authorized that would otherwise be contrary to the Organic Act (i.e. hunting, grazing, mining, etc.). These activities are not legislative purposes of the unit, but rather exceptions made by Congress to recognize pre-existing rights or activities. In the case of Mojave National Preserve, for example, hunting is an activity not normally found in national park units. Where hunting is permitted in NPS units, the area is called a preserve rather than a park.

Congress provides more specific direction for the new California desert parks and wilderness areas in section 2 (b)(1) of the California Desert Protection Act:

> *Preserve unrivaled scenic, geologic and wildlife values associated with these unique natural landscapes;*
>
> *Perpetuate in their natural state significant and diverse ecosystems of the California desert;*
>
> *Protect and preserve the historical and cultural values of the California Desert associated with ancient Indian cultures, patterns of western exploration and settlement, and sites exemplifying the mining, ranching and railroading history of the Old West;*
>
> *Provide opportunities for compatible public outdoor recreation, protect and interpret ecological and geological features and historic, paleontological, and archeological sites, maintain wilderness resource values, and promote public understanding and appreciation of the California desert; and*
>
> *Retain and enhance opportunities for scientific research in undisturbed ecosystems.*

The specific purposes for Mojave National Preserve, as derived from the Organic Act and the CDPA, can be summarized as follows:

- Preserve and protect the natural and scenic resources of the Mojave Desert, including transitional elements of the Sonoran and Great Basin deserts.
- Preserve and protect cultural resources representing human use associated with Native American cultures and westward expansion.

- Provide opportunities for compatible outdoor recreation and promote understanding and appreciation of the California desert.

SIGNIFICANCE

Park significance statements tell why the park is special and deserves to be a part of the national park system. Statements of significance clearly define the importance of the park's resources as they relate to the park purpose. These statements help set resource protection priorities, identify primary interpretive themes, and develop desirable visitor experiences.

Significance in this context is the importance of a feature or an outstanding value. It may be locally, regionally, nationally or globally significant or important to our national and cultural heritage. It may be a feature that is unique or extraordinary. Significance is not used here in a legal sense, such as with the National Environmental Policy Act or the National Historic Preservation Act.

The following significance statements were developed for the Preserve and serve as the basis for management actions:

- Mojave National Preserve protects an extensive variety of habitats, species, and landforms unique to the Mojave Desert and is the best place to experience this ecosystem.

- Mojave National Preserve contains outstanding scenic resources, rich in visual diversity containing a varied landscape of sand dunes, mountain ranges, dry lakebeds, lava flows, cinder cones, Joshua tree forests, and far-reaching vistas.

- The Joshua tree forest of Cima Dome and Shadow Valley is the largest and densest population of Joshua trees in the world.

- The Preserve is internationally known as a place to conduct desert research, and its lands are known for their geological features such as Cima Dome, the Cinder Cones, and the Kelso Dunes.

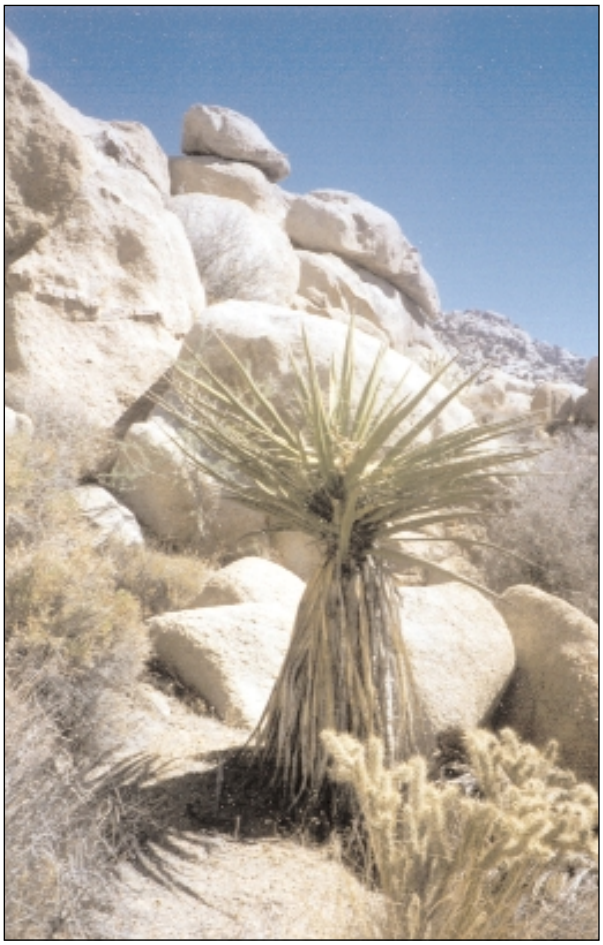
- Mojave is a naturally quiet desert environment with very dark night skies that offers visitors and researchers opportunities for natural quiet, solitude and star gazing with few human caused noise or light glare sources.

- The Mojave Desert has a long cultural history as a travel corridor across a harsh and foreboding desert, linking different areas in the Southwest. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, railroads were constructed in this historic transportation corridor; more recently, modern interstate highways traverse the area.

- Mojave National Preserve protects many significant rock art sites that provide evidence of early Native American use of the Mojave Desert.

- Mojave National Preserve protects numerous historic sites from early mining, ranching, homesteading and railroading endeavors that serve as reminders of the bold and tough people that opened the harsh and forbidding western frontier.

- Historic Kelso Depot is associated with the early 20th century heyday of the great steam locomotives and the establishment of the final major rail crossings of the Mojave Desert. The Kelso Depot, built in 1924, is a rare surviving example of a combined depot, railroad restaurant, and employees' rooming house.



Interpretive Themes

The primary park stories or interpretive themes are overview statements that provide the basis for communicating the purpose and significance of the park and provide the elements that the park believes each visitor should develop an understanding of during their visit. Interpretation is a process of education designed to stimulate curiosity and convey messages to the visiting public. These themes will be developed during the preparation of a comprehensive interpretive plan for the Preserve and will guide the development of interpretive materials (signs, brochures, walks, talks, etc.).

Management Objectives

Seek to protect significant natural and cultural resources and values, including geologic features, and to foster an improved understanding of natural processes and cultural resources through monitoring efforts and scientific research.

Participate cooperatively in the preservation of ecological resources and cultural / ethnographic resources that extend beyond the Preserve's boundaries.

Manage visitor use in a manner that promotes and perpetuates a sense of exploration and self-discovery, while protecting resources from overuse.

Educate visitors regarding the National Park Service mission and the natural and cultural resources of the Preserve.

Seek to continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations and administration. Adopt and incorporate sustainable practices into all aspects of park operations.

Perpetuate the natural quiet and sense of solitude in the Preserve. Adopt strategies and work actively to reduce human-caused noise impacts from internal and external noise sources, including aircraft overflights.

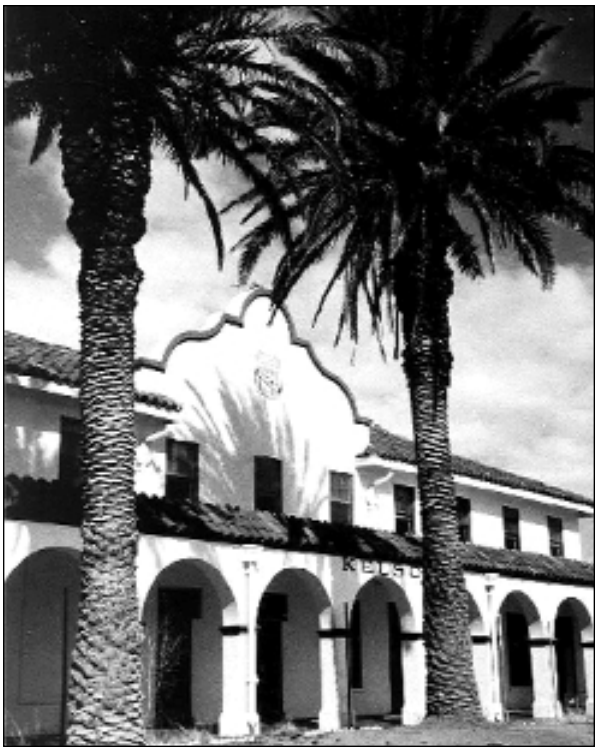
Perpetuate scenic and cultural landscapes. Landscapes should be free from activities and facilities that distract from the scenic beauty or the historic condition of the landscape.

Protect wilderness values and the wilderness experience in areas congressionally designated as wilderness and manage desert resources, including wilderness, for maximum statutory protection provided for under the law.

Perpetuate and improve dark night sky conditions wherever feasible. Adopt criteria for protecting dark sky conditions and work with adjacent permitting entities to reduce glare from light sources.

Find creative ways to increase the accessibility of NPS programs, facilities and experiences in a reasonable manner. Provide access for all segments of the population, including visitors with disabilities, small children, senior citizens, and populations that generally do no use national parks, in accordance with the laws requiring the National Park Service to preserve and protect wilderness and cultural and natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

Pursue mutually supportive partnerships with representatives from gateway communities and local and tribal governments. Consider ways in which communities and the parks can support each other. Promote economic growth of communities in ways that complement the Preserve's management objectives.



Policy and Planning

Park units are administered by the National Park Service, an agency under the Department of the Interior. Management of the national park system and NPS programs is guided by the Constitution, public laws, treaties, proclamations, executive orders, directives of the Secretary of the Interior and the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and

Parks, and by rules and regulations. Servicewide management policies are established by the director and provide the overall framework and guidance for park management decisions.

The NPS planning process is designed in tiers to be flexible and dynamic, beginning with overall management strategies and becoming increasingly more detailed and complementary. General management plans represent the first phase of tiered planning for parks and provide the overall management framework under which other more detailed plans are developed. This first plan is designed to remain effective for at least 15 years, but generally, much of it will not change significantly. Decisions about site-specific actions are deferred to implementation planning when more detailed site-specific analysis would be done.

The most dynamic parts of park planning are the "implementation plans" that are prepared to implement the general management plan. These plans may change as often as necessary to accommodate new information. Examples of implementation plans that may be necessary at Mojave are listed under Future Planning Needs below.

Strategic Planning

In 1993, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), requiring the federal government to adopt goal driven performance management concepts already widely used by the private sector. The purpose of this directive was to engage agencies in more effectively and efficiently managing their activities to achieve their missions, and to more effectively communicate with the Congress and the American people.

GPRA requires agencies to develop:

Strategic plans covering five years
Annual Performance Plans
Annual Performance Reports

The Preserve developed its first strategic plan in 1997. This plan layed out a five-year strategy for park operations covering fiscal years 1998–2002. A new five-year strategic plan was prepared in April 2000 for the years 2001–2005. Each year, beginning in fiscal year 1998, the park prepared an annual performance plan that identifies goals and action steps to achieve those goals. At the end of each fiscal year, a performance report is prepared documenting achievements towards our goals.

Future Planning Needs

Additional NPS planning documents have been identified as being needed to supply detailed information for specific topics. These activity level plans developed under the general management plan are subject to further review as required by NEPA and in accordance with NPS *Management Policies*. Additional planning efforts that may be undertaken over the next ten years include:

- comprehensive interpretive plan — initiated in FY99
- resource management plan — initiated in FY99
- fire management plan — initiated in FY99
- backcountry/wilderness management plan — initiated in FY99
- development concept plan for Hole-in-the-Wall — initiated in FY99
- grazing management plan — initiated in FY00
- water resource management plan
- development concept plan for Soda Springs
- road management plan
- communication management plan
- fee study plan
- inventorying and monitoring plan
- cave management plan
- Zzyzx historic structures report/cultural landscape report
- historic resources study
- administrative history -- initiated in 02

Environmental Compliance Responsibilities

Every action taken or plan proposed by the National Park Service that could affect natural and cultural resources or the quality of the human environment is subject to a host of laws and regulations designed to protect and enhance the environment. These laws and regulations constitute Mojave's environmental compliance responsibilities.

National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, Public Law 91-190, (NEPA) declared a national environmental policy; created a formal, legal process for integrating environmental values into federal decision-making; and provided an umbrella under which compliance with several environmental laws can be integrated.

In the National Park Service, construction activities, natural or cultural resource management projects,

actions on external proposals such as rights-of-way and mining plans of operation, and park plans trigger the majority of NEPA analyses. Numerous environmental laws, regulations, policies, and executive orders fall under the NEPA "umbrella."

Endangered Species Act of 1973

(Public Law 93-205)

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA) calls for the preservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species and their habitat. Some of the most important provisions of the act are:

Section 3 gives legal definition to the terms "threatened" and "endangered." "Endangered species" means "any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range." "Threatened species" means "any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range."

Section 7 requires federal agencies to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if their activities may affect a listed species, and requires the agencies to develop programs for the conservation of listed species (50 CFR 402 provides details on the consultation process).

Section 9 contains "taking" prohibitions for endangered animal species. The term "take" means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct."

The ESA also requires the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop recovery plans designed to increase the populations of threatened and endangered species to the point where they could be removed from the list.

Due to the presence of the threatened desert tortoise, the ESA is a law that pervades nearly all actions taken within Mojave.

Other laws that Mojave must consider as part of its regular environmental compliance responsibilities include the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Wilderness Act. In addition, Mojave must comply with laws and regulations that pertain to cultural resources.

As part of its stewardship, the National Park Service is mandated by Congress to preserve and protect resources within its jurisdiction. The Organic Act of 1916, as amended by U.S.C.1a-5, which created the Service, was enacted:

> To conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (Act of August 25, 1916).

Other federal legislation that also applies to cultural resources:

- Antiquities Act of 1906 (Public Law 59-209; 16 U.S.C. 431-33)
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665, as amended in 1980 and 1992, Public Law 102-575, 16 U.S.C. 470)
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (Public Law 91-190; 42 U.S.C. 4321, 4331, 4332)
- Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (Public Law 96-95; 16 U.S.C. 470)
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-601; 25 U.S.C. 3001)

In addition, the management of cultural resources is guided by:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) "Protection of Historic Properties"
- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations (36 CFR Part 800) "Protection of Historic Properties"
- *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995)
- National Park Service's *Management Policies*
- National Park Service's Director's Order 28 (1998)
- 1995 "Programmatic Agreement among the National Park Service, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers."

The National Park Service, in conjunction with the Chemehuevi, Fort Mojave, and Las Vegas Piute tribes, and the San Manuel Tribal Community, strives to survey, inventory, and evaluate all cultural resources on lands under its jurisdiction, that is, all archeological, historic, and ethnographic resources. Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that historic properties be identified and

evaluated for their eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Section 110 also stipulates that historic properties be managed in a way that preserves and protects their historic and cultural values, especially nationally significant values.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that federal agencies consider the effects of their actions on historic properties and that they seek comments from the state historic preservation officer and, if necessary, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Amendments to 36 CFR 800 in 1999 strengthen the requirement to provide the public an opportunity to comment on agency actions. The purpose of section 106 is to avoid harm to historic properties or other cultural resources either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and to afford the state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council an opportunity to comment and advise, especially if mitigation becomes necessary.

The National Park Service consults with the tribal historic preservation officers on all matters affecting cultural resources. Native American consultations honor in particular the government-to-government relationship between the United States of America and those tribal entities that are historically associated with the lands in the Preserve. Thus, the National Park Service is consulting with the tribal governments of the aforementioned neighboring American Indian peoples through their duly elected representatives.

The opportunity to consult with American Indians and other Native Americans arises from the historic as well as current government-to-government relationship of the federal government with them and from the related federal trust responsibility to help conserve tribal resources. Tribal sovereignty is involved and supported by the government-to-government relationship. The government-to-government relationship stems from treaties, laws, and other legal entities, including presidential executive orders, proclamations, and memorandums; federal regulations; and agency management policies and directives. Examples are:

- the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990
- the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- the 1994 amendments to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975
- the Presidential Memorandum of April 29, 1994, entitled "Government-to-Government Relations With Native American Tribal Governments"
- and Executive Order 13007 of May 24, 1996, entitled "Indian Sacred Sites"