

*RECORD of DECISION*  
*Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument*  
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## **DECISION**

This Record of Decision (ROD) approves, with minor modifications, the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Proposed Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), (hereinafter referred to as the National Monument Plan). The National Monument Plan amends the 1980 Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan. It is also tiered to the 1989 San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). No decisions were changed in the approved National Monument Plan from the Proposed National Monument Plan and FEIS; however, minor wording changes were made for better clarification.

This plan amendment was prepared under BLM regulations implementing the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. An environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared for the National Monument Plan in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The proposed National Monument Plan, published October 2003, is available on BLM's Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office Web site at: <http://www.ca.blm.gov/palmsprings>. Please note that the National Monument Plan serves as the companion document to this Record of Decision. The following information provides a summary of the CDCA major plan amendments in the National Monument Plan.

## **DECISIONS WHICH AMEND BLM'S CDCA PLAN**

### **RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

#### Hang Gliding

Launches of hang gliders, paragliders, ultralights, and similar aircraft from, and landing on, BLM and National Forest lands within and adjacent to essential Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat in the National Monument, including Vista Point, would not be allowed.

- Identification of appropriate launching and landing sites outside Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat and dissemination of information about these sites would occur in coordination with hang gliding and other applicable associations.
- BLM and Forest Service would identify Federal lands outside Peninsular Ranges bighorn sheep habitat where these activities would be inappropriate.
- Launching and landing of aircraft, including helicopters, hang gliders, hot air balloons, parasails, and parachutes is prohibited in designated wilderness areas.

#### Recreational Paintball

Discharge of gas and air-propelled weapons and simulated weapons (including paintball and paintball-like weapons) would not be allowed within the National Monument.

#### Recreational Shooting

No recreational shooting, except for hunting, would be allowed on Federal lands within the National Monument. Hunting would continue to be permitted according to California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) regulations.

#### Pets - Within Essential Bighorn Sheep Habitat

Pets would be allowed in designated areas only, and must be on a leash (maximum length of 10 feet). Owners would be required to collect and properly dispose of their pet's fecal matter. Designated pet areas will be identified in the comprehensive trails management plan (pending).

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Pets- Outside Essential Bighorn Sheep Habitat

Pets would be allowed on all Federal lands with a leash (maximum length of 10 feet). Owners would be required to collect and properly dispose of their pet's fecal matter. Working dogs may be permitted on Federal lands with no leash required, pursuant to an authorization for use of such lands.

**MANAGEMENT OF VISITATION, FACILITIES AND USES**

Facility Development

- Develop a National Monument architectural theme to set the stage for National Monument facilities, signs, outreach materials, and etc.
- Address facility development within the National Monument on an as-needed basis.
- Prioritize facility placement in already disturbed areas
- Require promotion, understanding and enjoyment of National Monument resources as the goal for any private party ventures and concessionaires within the National Monument.
- Furnish new toilet facilities as needed for health, safety, and resource protection
- Identify existing and proposed partner facility locations. Cooperative efforts (including pursuit of cooperative grants) and joint uses of facilities (e.g., Tramway gas station on Highway 111 at the entrance to the City of Palm Springs) would be encouraged as appropriate.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing signs, interpretive sites, and facilities and upgrade as needed.

**ACQUISITION STRATEGY**

Acquisition Criteria

Establish bi-annual coordination meetings concerning ongoing acquisition program to identify (1) existing and prospective funding sources, (2) acquisition and partnership opportunities based on the agencies' various priorities, and (3) short-term and long-term actions to ensure acquisitions are accomplished and funding opportunities pursued.

Adopt the following criteria to supplement existing BLM and Forest Service acquisitions policies:

1. Strategic significance. As noted above, agencies may have different priorities based on their specific missions. Among factors that may be significant to one agency or another are biological resource values such as lambing habitats, or water sources for bighorn sheep, right-of-way needs for trails, or other access purposes, geological values, and cultural resource values. The Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) will identify the areas with high biological value and will delineate trail alignments. The National Monument has not been comprehensively surveyed for cultural resources, but there is an existing body of information that can help to assess the likelihood of cultural resources to occur in various areas.
2. Threat level. Areas within the National Monument where there is a threat of development or a potential for a land use conflict are of high priority.
3. Opportunity. Lands sometime become available for acquisition through a Tax Sale Agreement with the County Tax Collector. Other lands may be offered as a donation or sale at below market value if the owner wishes to seek tax credits or tax deductions. Such opportunities enable acquisitions to be made at relatively little cost.
4. Funding availability. Various agencies have access to a number of funding sources that typically have restrictions as to where or for what purposes the funds can be used.

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## **IMPLEMENTATION DECISIONS**

The following decisions are tiered to the CDCA Plan and Forest Service LRMP. These activities will be implemented as funding (both appropriated and through volunteers and partners) permits.

### **BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

#### Habitat Management –Noxious, Non-native, and Invasive Plant Species

- Inventory public lands to determine distribution of indigenous plant species and non-native species in the National Monument to assess protection and eradication needs, respectively.
- Develop and implement an action plan for eradicating noxious, non-native, and invasive plant and animal species as well as an action plan for reintroducing indigenous species. Manage existing native vegetation, in coordination with Tribes, Federal, State, and local agencies, experts, and local special interest groups such as the Southern California Indian Basketweavers Organization, NEX'WETEM, California Native Plant Society, and the Andreas Canyon Club.
- Educate the public regarding non-native, invasive species within the National Monument, such as tamarisk and fountain grass, and their impacts to the environment.
- Prepare and distribute an annual report describing noxious, non-native, and invasive plant and animal treatments and accomplishments.

#### Management of Special Status Species

- Work with partner agencies, Tribes, and volunteer groups to update existing inventories of plant and animal species occurrence and distribution to establish updated models for habitat and baseline conditions for monitoring.
- Coordinate Special Status Species management with the CDFG, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), researchers, and local jurisdictions to promote consistency, effectiveness, and efficiency of recovery actions and monitoring activities.
- Encourage research projects designed to enhance management activities which facilitate recovery of sensitive species including Federal and State listed species.
- Develop partnerships with entities such as California Native Plant Society for education and outreach.

#### Monitoring Program

- Continue to participate in development of an interagency monitoring program for the CVMSHCP including monitoring protocols, reporting, and database management. Continue to coordinate implementation of interagency monitoring program with CDFG, USFWS, local agencies and cities, researchers, universities, volunteer organizations and site stewards.
- Work with partner agencies and local governments to coordinate monitoring of Special Status Species for changes in population size, distribution and habitat use.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

#### Research

- Work with Tribes to identify significant prehistoric, historic and cultural events.
- Work with Tribes, partners, State and local agencies, and volunteer groups to develop an oral history program and to identify and interview members of the public and Native Americans who have knowledge of historic and prehistoric uses of the National Monument.
- Encourage and facilitate archival research, including review of historic maps and documents.

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- Develop and maintain a database for site management

Inventory

- Conduct a sample cultural resources inventory within the National Monument each year.
- Complete an annual, intensive survey of one specific area identified through archival and ethnographic research as having a high potential to contain significant or threatened cultural sites. Include inventory of existing roads and trails to identify cultural sites that are being adversely impacted by public visitation and access.
- Record sites to current standards by including photos and sketch maps to document the overall site setting and condition, specific artifacts and features, and any damage whether due to natural or human causes.
- Assess integrity and cultural significance of sites and make site-specific management recommendations for avoidance, protection, or interpretation.
- Seek partnerships with Tribes, State and local agencies, and volunteers to accomplish the above items.

Existing Cultural Conditions Assessment

- Gather baseline condition data and identify threats to cultural resources through field inventory, review of existing site forms, and consultation with Tribes and members of the public. Solicit input on resource conditions from BLM and Forest Service staff in all disciplines. Determine areas that are vulnerable to specific types of threats. (Example: areas adjacent to trails may be most vulnerable to impacts from increased visitation while other areas may be vulnerable to erosion or other natural processes.)
- Develop and implement a monitoring program that includes a schedule for monitoring threatened cultural sites, vulnerable areas, and cultural resources along trails. Monitor at least five sites and five miles of trails each year. Develop, implement and maintain a site stewardship program. Provide stewardship training to members of the public and Tribes, as identified during the public scoping process and through consultation.
- Track changes over time in the condition of specific resources. Define key indicators of change.
- Make recommendations for avoidance and mitigation of adverse impacts to significant cultural resources.
- Seek partnerships with Tribes, agencies, and volunteers to accomplish the above items.

Protection and Preservation

- Develop a prioritized list of site-specific protection and preservation needs prior to the end of each fiscal year, in preparation for out-year planning and budgeting.
- Implement at least two protection or preservation projects each year.
- Identify and interpret “magnet” sites to attract visitors and satisfy their desire to experience the history and prehistory of the area. Prepare at least one historic and one prehistoric archaeological site for this type of visitor usage.
- Propose trail management actions, subject to NEPA, to protect sensitive resources.
- Develop a collection policy. Identify the types of artifacts to be collected and define what circumstances warrant removing an artifact from its original location.
- Seek partnerships with Tribes, agencies, and volunteers to accomplish the above.
- Develop curation agreements with museums meeting Federal standards for curation and preservation of materials. Native American museums meeting these standards shall be given preference for curation of Native American artifacts.

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Interpretation and Education

- Develop a program for public interpretation, education and environmental awareness of the National Monument, wherein cultural and ethnographic resources are addressed with other resources.
- Involve interested Tribes in development of interpretive programs (reviewing interpretive materials and programs, providing input, etc.).
- Design and make available to the public: educational brochures, pamphlets, monographs, Web pages and other works of a popular and technical nature, emphasizing the relevance, fragility and other values of cultural and historic resources.
- Provide information regarding historical use of the National Monument, including ranching, mining, and recreation.
- Work with the Cahuilla Indian leadership, elders, and traditional practitioners to establish a mock village site for education of the public and to provide an opportunity for sharing how the Cahuilla lived, gathered, prepared food, and created traditional materials such as basketry and pottery.
- Develop a program of guided hikes and interpretive programs that utilize Tribal members as interpreters, guides and storytellers.
- Develop programs in cooperation with and support of established Cahuilla cultural events and institutions such as the annual agave harvest and tasting sponsored by Malki Museum.
- Seek partnerships with Tribes, agencies, and volunteers to accomplish the above items.

Management Plan

Within two years of completion of the National Monument Management Plan, BLM and Forest Service would initiate development of a Cultural Resources Management Plan. The Cultural Resources Management Plan would:

- Incorporate data from a condition assessment analysis that identifies existing conditions of known cultural resources and areas vulnerable to vandalism, overuse, or damage from natural processes.
- Develop a system for tracking changes in the condition of resources and develop strategies for intervention. This information, and future information, would allow managers to further identify potential resource threats and respond effectively to minimize impacts of human use and natural processes upon resources.
- Identify current and anticipated preservation and restoration needs.
- Prepare a historic context for the National Monument area and develop research themes to guide research efforts.
- Establish a mechanism, such as cultural resources working groups, to provide for on-going public participation and input into cultural resources management.
- Develop a strategy to facilitate research of cultural resources within the National Monument. Encourage the use of a multi-disciplinary approach to clarify the associations between natural and cultural resources in the cultural landscape.
- Develop a strategy that defines the purpose, extent, and uses of National Monument museum collections and provides a consistent approach among the partners to manage archeological artifacts, archival materials, museum objects, and natural resources specimens.

Access to Traditional Material Collecting and Gathering Locations and Ceremonial Sites

- Develop a policy to provide for Tribal member access to gather traditional materials.
- Distribute BLM and Forest Service plant collection policy information to Tribes. Facilitate issuance of any necessary permits.
- In partnership with the Tribes and Cahuilla traditional practitioners, develop a process for monitoring the effects of traditional collecting and gathering.

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- Using monitoring results, develop adaptive management programs jointly with local practitioners to manage traditional botanical resources.
- Restrict sensitive information concerning the location of ceremonial sites. Ensure protection and confidentiality of cultural information such as locations of sacred sites and traditional use areas.
- Provide for Native American access to ceremonial and religious sites to the extent practicable, permitted by law, and not clearly inconsistent with essential agency functions.
- Coordinate landscape restoration activities to ensure the reintroduction and restoration of native species of cultural importance.

Native American Coordination and Consultation

- Focus collaboration on identifying concerns and resolving differences in a manner that respects the cultural traditions of the Tribes.
- Provide the Tribes the opportunity to aid in resolving conflicts where their traditions and cultural values may be affected by National Monument programs and activities.
- Facilitate cooperation and consultation with and among Tribes by holding semi-annual meetings regarding management of the National Monument. Representatives and members of all affected Tribes would be encouraged to participate in these Tribal and agency working groups.
- Ensure the opportunity for government-to-government consultation with each Tribe regarding archaeological research, interpretive programs, and resource management for the National Monument.
- Develop Cooperative Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MOU's) with the Tribes to establish relationships and protocols for management of cultural and other resources within the National Monument.
- Assist the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians in its efforts to develop and promote its role as a conduit in encouraging Cahuilla involvement with the National Monument and the sharing of information and resources between the Tribes.

**RECREATIONAL RESOURCES**

Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT)

The PCT would be managed according to the existing comprehensive management plan (US Department of Agriculture 1982), and a 500-foot-wide management corridor around the PCT would be established. Management activities affecting Federal lands within the corridor, including actions relating to forest health, water quality, wildlife habitat, trail maintenance, and trail construction or reconstruction, would be analyzed for effects on the PCT, and BLM and Forest Service would coordinate with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and other stakeholders to ensure recreational values are considered. The MOU between BLM, Forest Service, and the PCTA would be revised as needed to reflect this action. The coordination requirement would not be implemented until the MOU has been revised

Feral and Uncontrolled Domestic Animals

BLM and Forest Service would establish a protocol in cooperation with Riverside County and cities of the Coachella Valley to address feral and uncontrolled domestic animals. Management of pets would be consistent with the pending trails management plan.

Forest Service Adventure Pass

The Adventure Pass would not be required when parking on National Forest lands within the Monument, and fees would not be required when parking on BLM lands within the National Monument. This would be a No Action Alternative for the BLM. Potential for a voluntary contribution to a friends group to support the improvement and development of visitor facilities and services would be investigated.

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Strategic Recreation Plan

Within one year of completion of the National Monument Management Plan, BLM and Forest Service would initiate the development of a Strategic Recreation Management Plan. The Strategic Recreation Management Plan would:

- Be consistent with decisions made through the National Monument Management Plan and the pending Trails Management Plan.
- Be consistent with other related plans (e.g., the San Jacinto Ranger District Strategic Mountain Bike Plan, and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Trails Management Plan).
- Address compatibility of all types of recreational uses within the National Monument (including hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, etc.).
- Establish a monitoring program to assess levels of use and to determine the need for altering management to protect and preserve resource values (e.g., changes to dispersed camping use policy by establishing camping zones, examine additional campgrounds at upper and lower elevation, etc.).
- Establish mechanisms for consistency of trail signage, facilities, and maintenance.
- Outline involvement of working partnerships with trail user groups and State and local agencies to ensure efficient trail management opportunities.
- Participate in a long-term working group to discuss emerging trends and opportunities to accommodate use.

**GEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Inventory and Mapping

The strategy for inventory and mapping geologic structures in the National Monument would consist of working with partner agencies, Tribes, and volunteers to:

- Inventory and map all of the important geological resources within the National Monument, including Martinez Mountain Landslide, Santa Rosa Shear Zone, San Jacinto Fault Zone, the 'watermark' and related shoreline features of ancient Lake Cahuilla.
- Inventory and map all abandoned mines on Federal lands within the National Monument.
- Compile all sources of geologic maps and current US Geological Survey (USGS) mapping projects to support the preparation of a comprehensive geologic map of the National Monument.
- Facilitate efforts to map geology in the southerly and easterly portions of the National Monument.
- Develop a 3rd order soil survey for non-mapped portions of the National Monument within two years of completion of the National Monument Management Plan.

Outreach and Interpretation

The outreach and interpretation strategy for geological resources would include working with partner agencies, Tribes, and volunteers to:

- Develop interpretation such as guided walks using geologic features in the National Monument and include both general geologic processes, (e.g. erosion, mountain building, and earthquake faulting) and specific geologic features (e.g. Martinez Mountain Landslide, ancient Lake Cahuilla features, and the San Jacinto Fault Zones).
- Work with volunteers to prepare geologic road guides for the Highway 74 and 111 corridors, focusing on the geology and geologic history of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains, with emphasis on geologic features visible at specific, safe road turnouts. These road guides would be similar to other published road guides such as the Geologic Road Guide to Northern California.
- Establish geologic points of interest within and adjacent to the National Monument by using interpretive signs or plaques describing the geologic feature or process visible at that point. Coordinate with Caltrans for placement of signs off highways and at rest stops. For example, an

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interpretive sign could be placed at the I-10 rest area near Whitewater, describing the significant elevation difference between the prominent uplifted slopes of Mt. San Jacinto and the down dropped Coachella Valley/Salton Trough. Information could also be provided concerning the tectonic origin of the mountain range, the basin, and the San Andreas Fault Zone in the region.

- Prepare a pamphlet and/or guide describing the mining history and mineral resources of the National Monument, which:
  - Emphasizes mineral development is no longer allowed on public lands within the National Monument.
  - Includes rules and regulations concerning collection of rocks and minerals within the National Monument.
  - Addresses safety issues concerning abandoned mined lands in the National Monument.
- Develop partnerships and research agreements with USGS, academic departments, and other applicable entities to:
  - Encourage geologic research in the National Monument.
  - Provide opportunities for student internships to prepare interpretive signs and pamphlets, establish representative rock mineral collections and perform research on the unique geologic features within the National Monument. (Such as: Martinez Mountain Landslide, Santa Rosa Shear Zone, and ancient Lake Cahuilla features.)

#### Protection and Preservation

The strategy for protecting and preserving geologic structures in the National Monument would:

- Restrict collecting of rocks and minerals within the “tufa” and “coral reef formations” located along the ‘watermark’ of ancient Lake Cahuilla. These areas should be monitored periodically so as to confirm the tufa and reef formations are not being disturbed or removed.

### **EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

#### Public Information

The public information strategy would consist of a community and partner-based approaches and would include the following actions:

- Provide the public with information on visitation, allowable use, recreation, and events in the National Monument across jurisdictional boundaries (enhance the Web site, brochures, video, etc.).
- Educate the public about the vision and mission of the National Landscape Conservation System, National Monuments, and Forest Service Special Areas.
- Contribute to the development of a National Monument map of trails and take a major role in sales and/or distribution.
- Use informational tools (e.g. “Leave No Trace,” etc.) to minimize resource damage to areas of visitor use and/or areas with sensitive resources.
- Provide specific messages about how each recreational user group can prevent resource damage.
- Emphasize the need for visitors to be aware of and respect safety and private property within and adjacent to National Monument lands.
- Promote recognition of the National Monument and facilitate the use of the National Monument logo among partner agencies.
- Encourage use of existing information and facilities within the National Monument (e.g. Cahuilla Tewanet, Chamber of Commerce centers, Sawmill Trailhead, etc.)

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Signage

- Enhance communication through regulatory, informative and interpretive signs.
- Install entry signs and interpretive/orientation panels along highways, trails, information centers, etc.
- Use the National Monument logo as an essential element in design and development.
- Work with partner agencies, Tribes, and jurisdictions to provide input in the development of signs on non-Federal lands.
- Install signs beside trails designating uses allowed, interpretive messages and hazards.

Education and Interpretation

- Provide the public with programs, field trips, outreach, programs, and exhibitions.
- Design a traveling exhibit to for use both on-site at the Visitor Center and at community and special events.
- Contribute to community-sponsored events and work with schools and museums.
- Develop National Monument Visitor Center exhibitions.
- Develop volunteer programs and partnerships.
- Establish guidelines for educational groups to use for their visit to the National Monument.
- Encourage appropriate use and visitation by individuals and groups, based on the availability of facilities and staff, and on safe trail conditions.
- Consider opportunities, where appropriate, for contracting with private sector businesses, nonprofit organizations, and academic, State, and local agencies to develop outreach materials and messages.
- Coordinate with partners in seeking cost share programs, in-kind contributions, and fee-for-service systems to support specific interpretation projects.
- Seek partnerships with Tribes, agencies, organizations, and volunteers to accomplish the above items.

**MANAGEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC RESOURCES**

Scientific Resources

- Maintain current coverage of resources on GIS layers to assist with research and management.
- Encourage research that promotes the understanding and increased knowledge of the National Monument resources, so long as proposed research is consistent with the objectives, land health standards, and standards and guidelines for the area of interest.
- Develop a combined BLM and Forest Service permit system to process and approve permits for research on BLM and National Forest lands within the National Monument. Where applicable, research may be incorporated with interpretive programs occurring within the National Monument. All applications for research within the National Monument would be addressed and reviewed by the National Monument Manager and approval or denial of a permit application by the National Monument Manager would be based on compliance with the objectives, land health standards, and standards and guidelines for the area of interest.
- Post a listing of current research within the National Monument on the National Monument Web site with a link to relevant research information.
- Facilitate the transfer of research information to the public through periodic science forums.

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## **MANAGEMENT OF VISITATION, FACILITIES AND USES**

### Access

Work with county, city, and private entities to secure legal access across non-Federal land through key entry points, land where trails cross, etc. through: (1) easements, (2) acquisitions, and (3) agreements and MOU's with cities.

### Private Property Concerns

- BLM and Forest Service would engage in public outreach activities designed to keep adjacent landowners and local communities informed of new developments or activities related to the National Monument. A process would be developed to maintain lines of communication with private property owners.
- BLM and Forest Service would strive to build relationships with the surrounding community through numerous approaches, including partnerships and collaborative projects. When possible, the BLM and Forest Service would use existing community resources for the development of outreach or educational materials.
- BLM and Forest Service would engage the surrounding communities in efforts to protect, enhance, and restore the resources of the National Monument through hands-on stewardship such as monitoring, restoration projects and scientific research.
- BLM and Forest Service would identify and use common land management goals as a basis for developing voluntary collaborative projects with adjacent landowners and land users of the National Monument. These projects would be designed to resolve conflicts and promote the protection, restoration and enhancement of resources in the National Monument and on adjacent non-Federal land.

### Visitor Use and Highway 74

Complete a MOU between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Forest Service and BLM to identify the process for communication, cooperation and consultation regarding activities along Highway 74. Items to address include designing future safe interpretive opportunities, monitoring vehicle use coordinating outreach regarding safe passage through the National Monument on Highway 74, identifying cooperative grants with local city and county transportation agencies, coordinating grant and funding applications, and collaborating future corridor management plans and Scenic Byway designation.

### Monitoring Visitor Use

Monitor visitor use in the National Monument by using a variety of methods:

- Install counters at the Visitor Center
- Encourage trip reports for hikers
- Authorize permits for special uses
- Use surveys and questionnaires
- Install trail registers and study trail use patterns
- Monitor attendance at programs
- Utilize visitor information gathered at city visitor centers

### Hazards to Facility, Visitor and Public Safety

BLM and Forest Service will develop a structures map identifying defensible structures to assist in fire and other hazard management. BLM and Forest Service will establish meetings twice a year with Riverside Mounted Police Unit, Desert Sheriffs Search and Rescue and other agencies with public safety responsibility within the National Monument to increase effectiveness with which response to emergencies is coordinated throughout the National Monument. Law enforcement staff will establish

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meetings at least twice a year to discuss enforcement coordination and emerging enforcement trends throughout the National Monument.

#### Fire Plan

Coordinate with Tribes, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), Riverside County Fire Department, Cathedral City Fire Department, Palm Springs Fire Department, State Parks and community fire safe councils to develop a comprehensive Fire Plan for the National Monument to be initiated upon completion of the National Monument Management Plan consistent with priorities set forth in the National Fire Plan. Items to be addressed include:

- Fire management responsibility, direct protection areas, and coordinated response.
- Vegetation management requirements throughout the National Monument.
- A clear fire history throughout the National Monument.
- Established vegetation and species-based needs for fire management throughout the National Monument.
- Needed management direction regarding drought-related fuels reduction, fuel breaks, and access for emergency purposes.
- Adaptive language that can address emergencies and a changing environment.

## **WATER RESOURCES**

#### Surface and Ground Water Resources

The BLM and Forest Service will coordinate with USGS, Tribes, Riverside County, local water districts, private water companies, and other private water users to enhance current efforts to manage surface and ground water by the following actions:

- Compile known locations of all springs, tinajas, oases, and streams within the National Monument.
- Identify potential pollution sources.
- Inventory groundwater quality, existing water wells, groundwater recharge areas, and examine the relationship of groundwater supplies to springs and oases within the National Monument.
- Include the above items in a GIS database.
- Determine water quality data throughout the National Monument to establish coordinated water quality monitoring and compatible actions in times of drought.
- Establish unified management direction as a result of monitoring.
- Initiate a watershed assessment and action plan.

## **ADAPATIVE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PROGRAM**

#### Implementing the Plan

- Facilitate the development of a Technical Review Team to include all partners such as Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, California State Department of Parks and Recreation, Tribal administrators, selected scientists and species experts, and State and Federal technical specialists from the Forest Service and BLM, to implement strategies resulting from the National Monument Management Plan for management of National Monument resources and continued visitor service. The Technical Review Team will examine survey data and monitoring data as well as scientific research on a regular basis so that future management actions will incorporate this information.
- Develop cooperative agreements with non-profit organizations and user groups to assist in management.
- Coordinate monitoring of resources within the National Monument with partner agencies and

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encourage citizen and volunteer organization involvement in monitoring.

- Prioritize monitoring of resources to address resources that are associated with highest levels of threat due to use.

## **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

### General Description of the Alternatives.

Five general alternatives, labeled A through D and a combined A, B and C alternative, were presented in the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements for managing BLM and National Forest administered public lands in the National Monument planning area. These alternatives provided decision-makers with a range of realistic and distinct options to fulfill the purpose and need for the plan, and to address the issues identified during public scoping (see Executive Summary Table ES-5). The alternatives were labeled Alternative A, Alternative B, Alternative C and Alternative D and Combined Strategies: Alternative A, B and C. Alternatives A through C represented an array of options ranging from least intensive management (A), to most intensive management (C). Alternative D is the “no action” alternative, in which BLM may opt to not change the existing decisions promulgated from existing plans. The Combined Strategy: Alternative A, B and C exists because some of the strategies presented in the National Monument Plan are general enough that they do not lend themselves to a range of options. Impacts to the existing management are then developed by comparing the combined strategy to the no action alternative.

### Environmentally Preferable Alternative.

Federal environmental quality regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1505.2 (b)) require that an agency identify the environmentally preferable alternative or alternatives in the ROD. Alternatives B and C are the environmentally preferable alternatives. Alternative C requires the most intensive management.

## **MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

Congresswoman Mary Bono introduced legislation (H.R. 3676) to the 106<sup>th</sup> Congress for the establishment of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. A companion bill (S. 2784) was introduced in the Senate by Senator Dianne Feinstein. The passage of this legislation and the signing into law by President Clinton on October 24, 2000 created a 271,400-acre National Monument. The National Monument encompasses 89,500 acres of US Department of Interior BLM lands, 65,000 acres of National Forest lands, managed by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service, 19,800 acres of Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians lands, 12,900 acres of California Department of Parks and Recreation lands, 28,900 acres of CDFG lands, 7,500 acres of other State of California agencies lands, and 38,500 acres of private land.

This bipartisan legislation established the first monument to be jointly managed by the BLM and the Forest Service. The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-351), hereinafter referred to as the National Monument Act of 2000, affects only Federal lands and Federal interests located within the established boundaries. The BLM and the Forest Service jointly manage Federal lands in the National Monument in consultation and cooperation with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, other Federal agencies, State agencies and local governments to protect the National Monument’s biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational, scientific, and scenic values.

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The National Monument Act of 2000 requires BLM and the Forest Service to complete a Management Plan for the National Monument that establishes strategies to fulfill the following needs:

- (1) Preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument;
- (2) Secure now and for future generations, the opportunity to experience and enjoy the magnificent vistas, wildlife landforms, and natural and cultural resources, and to recreate therein;
- (3) Manage the National Monument in coordination, cooperation and consultation with private interests; the local advisory committee; Federal, Tribal, State, and local government agencies; interested owners of private property; and holders of valid existing rights within the National Monument boundary; and
- (4) Coordinate BLM and Forest Service management activities across jurisdictional boundaries.

The National Monument is comprised of Federal lands subject to prior congressional designations for which land management plan revisions have recently been completed (BLM) or are in progress (Forest Service). These other planning processes are to be considered in the National Monument Management Plan to ensure consistent resource allocation decisions. Toward that end, the National Monument Plan will serve as a bridge linking the separate BLM and Forest Service planning processes, and will focus only on issues not addressed by the recently completed amendment or plans in progress as described below.

The purpose of this National Monument Management Plan is to fulfill the aforementioned needs by establishing a comprehensive interagency approach to land and resource management within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument and to provide a mechanism for communication, consultation, and coordination of activities.

The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument is located in southern California, approximately 100 miles east of Los Angeles. The National Monument has a dramatic landscape rising abruptly from near sea level in the Coachella valley to 10,834 at the top of San Jacinto Peak.

Five distinct “life zones,” from Sonoran Desert to Arctic Alpine provide exceptionally diverse biological resources. The National Monument runs northwest to southeast along the edge of the Coachella Valley, a broad, low elevation valley comprising the westernmost limits of the Sonoran Desert.

Nine cities: Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Indian Wells, Palm Desert, La Quinta, Indio, Coachella and Desert Hot Springs, lie within this valley -- an area of rapid growth and increasing urbanization. As noted in the National Monument Act of 2000, the National Monument provides a “picturesque backdrop” and an abundance of recreational opportunities that are important regional economic resources for the Coachella Valley and mountain communities.

The BLM-managed portion of the National Monument, 89,500 acres in total, occurs at elevations from near sea level to roughly 6,000 feet. Vegetation ranges from creosote and desert flora to chaparral. This portion of the National Monument interfaces with several communities in the Coachella Valley, including Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, and La Quinta.

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The Forest Service manages 65,000 acres within the National Monument. This land ranges in elevation from 2,000 feet to 9,000 feet. Vegetation ranges from chaparral to mixed conifer, with moderate to steep slopes and deeply dissected canyons. National Forest lands interface with the communities of Pine Cove, Idyllwild, Mountain Center, and the Pinyon community.

The total planning area encompasses approximately 271,400 acres. National Monument planning decisions will only affect Federal lands as described above. However, management of the National Monument will be a cooperative effort that encourages collaboration between the BLM, Forest Service, other Federal and State agencies, and Tribal and local governments.

Population growth surrounding the Monument has varied depending on the area. In the Coachella Valley, growth has been very rapid, as the Valley's cities have attracted a more diverse and year-round population. In the mountain communities, on the other hand, the perceived limitations of access, job opportunities and water availability have resulted in considerably less significant growth. The Coachella Valley population more than doubled during the 1980's, from 91,124 to 194,718. During the 1990's, the population of the Coachella Valley grew to 274,470, which represents a 10-year gain of 79,752 or 41 percent. In the Mountain Communities, the population increase only 16 percent, demonstrating the differing pressures of the two areas. Altogether, the population of the planning area in 2000 was estimated at 320,522 persons.

The Coachella Valley population is expected to continue to grow rapidly over the next two decades. The Southern California Association of Governments forecasts that population will reach approximately 440,301 by year 2010, and 540,901 by year 2020. At their historic rate of growth, the Mountain Communities can be expected to grow to 10,386 in 2010, and 12,037 in 2020, and the Desert Pass communities to 41,542 in 2010, and 46,527 by 2020.

## **MITIGATION MEASURES**

In the course of developing and approving the management plan for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, agencies adopted all practical means to avoid or reduce environmental harm. Indeed one of the primary reasons for developing this plan is to preserve the nationally significant biological, cultural, recreational, geological, educational and scientific values found in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.

Future activities and projects on the BLM-managed lands must be in conformance with the land use decisions outlined in the approved Coachella Valley Plan (43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-3(a)). The BLM may impose mitigation measures as a condition of approval for activities and projects and to ensure conformance with the Coachella Valley Plan, and to ensure compliance with applicable State and Federal laws and regulations. The following is a summary of the more pertinent mitigation programs to be applied to future activities and projects incorporated into the National Monument Plan.

Cultural Resources. All management actions shall comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which provides for protection of significant cultural resources. In furtherance of this Act, the 36 Code of Federal Regulations 800 procedures shall be implemented for all management actions determined to have the potential to affect historic properties on lands managed by the Forest Service. The BLM will meet its responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act through the implementation of the State Protocol Agreement (1998) between the California State Director of the BLM and the California State Historic Preservation Officer.

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Native American Concerns. For all public land activities adjacent to reservation lands, the agencies shall consult with the relevant tribes to determine potential impact to Native American trust assets and cultural values and to develop mitigation measures as needed.

Threatened and Endangered Species. In order to minimize adverse impacts to listed species and to avoid future listings, BLM and Forest Service would continue to consult or confer, as necessary, with the USFWS on all listed and proposed species. Adherence to the terms and conditions presented in applicable biological opinions shall be required as a condition of approval for proposed projects.

Water Quality. Best management practices shall be implemented to protect and achieve water quality standards.

## **PLAN MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Land use plan monitoring is the process of tracking the progress towards implementing land use planning decisions, and assessing the relative success of implementing those land use plans in meeting the goals and objectives of the affected programs. Findings obtained through monitoring, together with research and other new information will provide a basis for adaptive management changes to the National Monument Plan. The processes of monitoring and adaptive management share the goal of improving effectiveness and permitting dynamic responses to increased knowledge and a changing landscape. The monitoring program itself will not remain static. Monitoring would be periodically evaluated to ascertain if the monitoring questions and standards are still relevant, and the program would be adjusted as appropriate. Some monitoring items may be discontinued and others added as knowledge and issues change. The changes to the monitoring are part of plan maintenance.

Land use plan evaluation is the process of reviewing land use plans, assessing the efficacy of these plans, and determining if amendments or revisions to these plans are needed. Bureau, manual guidance recommends that land use plans be evaluated at least every five years (BLM Manual H-1601-1, V.B.). As this National Monument Plan was developed in close coordination with its partners planning efforts, monitoring and evaluation for the National Monument Plan shall be conducted in tandem or at least in coordination with the partners and their respective plan monitoring and evaluation efforts.

BLM land use plans periodically require maintenance (43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.5-4) to further refine or document previously approved decisions incorporated into the plan. Provided no new decisions are being made, additional NEPA review is not required.

## **AGENCY AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Throughout development of the National Monument Plan, the National Monument staff strived to create as open a planning process as possible, such that opportunities for public input were not limited to the minimum requirements set forth by BLM planning regulations and NEPA. This planning process was designed to engage and involve local governments, State agencies, other Federal agencies, and Native American tribes to a very high level, so that land management activities would be coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries. The following is a summary description of the collaborative planning process which led to this Record of Decision for the National Monument Plan.

### Plan Development and Public Scoping.

The National Monument Plan was developed in partnership with local jurisdictions of Coachella Valley, special interest groups, and State and Federal agencies, and Native American Tribes.

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Informal scoping and information gathering for the National Monument Plan began in 2001 when a Monument Advisory Committee was established according to the guidelines set forth in National Monument Act of 2000. The Monument Advisory Committee was established to provide recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior regarding the development and implementation of the National Monument Plan.

The scoping process for the National Monument Plan began in Spring 2002 with the publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* on March 14, 2002 which notified the public of the BLM and Forest Service intent to develop a management plan for those BLM-managed and National Forest lands within and adjacent to the National Monument. The NOI also solicited public comments.

To inform interested parties about upcoming public scoping meetings for the National Monument Plan preparation, the location, date and time for a series of public scoping meetings were published in the form of a news release in April 2002. This news release was mailed to 450 recipients, representing individuals, special interest groups, organizations, Federal, local and State officials.

Newspaper advertisements, a press release, and other public outreach tools were issued to notify the public of the planning project, to announce the five public scoping meetings, to request public comments and to provide mailing list contact information. Content of advertisements and the press release was coordinated with BLM and Forest Service staff. The press release was also faxed to 31 newspaper, and radio and television stations. In addition, local groups were called and faxed to increase the size of the audience reached. Meeting notification was published in the *The Desert Sun* and *The Town Crier* (Idyllwild) April 18, and May 2, 2002, *The Press Enterprise*, April 24, 2002 and *El Informador*, April 2002. KVCR aired notification of the meetings April 24, 2002, and KPSI recorded a radio interview May 13, 2002.

Public scoping meetings were held throughout the Coachella Valley and in the mountain communities in the Spring of 2002 at the following locations: Indio Senior Center-May 2, Palm Springs Desert Museum-May 4, Palm Desert City Hall-May 15, Idyllwild Town Hall-April 24, and Pinyon Elks Lodge-May 15. A total of 190 persons attended the public meetings with the largest meeting attendance at the Pinyon Elks Lodge. Additional meetings were held in Fall 2002 to provide the public an opportunity to review the scoping comments collected during the scoping phase of the planning process.

The Draft National Monument Plan/DEIS was made available to the public on March 21, 2003. Notification of the availability of this plan was published in the *Federal Register*. Three public hearings in the Spring of 2003 provided an overview of the Draft National Monument Plan, and a court reporter was present to record verbal public comments. Meetings were held at the following locations: Idyllwild-April 22, Pinyon Elks Lodge-April 24, and Palm Desert City Hall-April 29. A total of 30 comment letters were received which included 246 substantive comments.

The document's availability was made known to the public through publication of two *Federal Register* notices (one by BLM and one by the Environmental Protection Agency on March 21, 2003 (pages 13948-13949)).

Copies of the Draft Plan/EIS were mailed to anyone who had participated in the planning process, including Federal, State and local agencies, Native American tribal councils, Monument Advisory Committee, interest groups, Federal, State and local elected officials, and various individuals. A copy was also sent to anyone who requested it.

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Tribal Consultation

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 requires the BLM and Forest Service to coordinate with Indian Tribes on land use planning. Consultation on a government-to-government basis with Native American Tribes is also directed by NEPA, the NHPA, and Executive Order 13007.

Government-to-government consultation was initiated by letter in May 2002. This letter introduced the need for and intent of the planning process and invited Tribal comment and participation in the planning process. The Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians, Augustine Band of Mission Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Mission Indians, Torres-Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians, and Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians were contacted. Follow-up discussions occurred with staff members of the Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians. The Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians was actively engaged in a similar land use planning process that paralleled BLM and Forest Service efforts. The Tribal Habitat Conservation Plan establishes (1) a Mountains and Canyons Conservation Area in which (a) certain lands will be dedicated to the Habitat Preserve, and (b) general and species-specific conservation measures will be imposed on Covered Projects and/or implemented by the Tribe, and (2) a Valley Floor Conservation Area from which (a) funding will generally be required for acquisition and management of additional Habitat Preserve lands, and (b) an additional conservation program includes avoidance and minimization measures, assurances for establishment of the Habitat Preserve, adaptive management and monitoring, implementation and funding, amendment procedures and conditions for changed and unforeseen circumstances.

In November 2002, as the planning document evolved and potential land management actions became more clearly defined, a second letter was sent to update Tribes and to continue government-to-government consultation. This letter solicited comments related to cultural resources or areas of traditional cultural importance. This second letter was sent to the following Tribes: The Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians, Augustine Band of Mission Indians, Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians, Los Coyotes Band of Mission Indians, Morongo Band of Mission Indians, Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Mission Indians, Torres-Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians, and Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians. The BLM also requested a record search of the sacred lands files of the California Native American Heritage Commission.

Given the parallel planning effort and the inter-related nature of some decisions, BLM and Forest Service met regularly with members of the Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians to coordinate planning alternatives, proposals and analysis. BLM and Forest Service met several times with the Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, including a field trip to sites within the National Monument. The BLM and Forest Service attended several Tribal Association of Sovereign Indian Nations (TASIN) meetings to solicit comments regarding management of the National Monument. With the assistance of Tribal Association of Sovereign Indian Nations and the Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians, the BLM and Forest Service scheduled additional meetings to involve Tribal members and staff in the planning process. Tribes were also notified of the dates of public scoping, Monument Advisory Committee, and Working Group meetings. The Cultural Resources Working Group of the Monument Advisory Committee met regularly to develop input for the National Monument Management Plan. Representatives of several Tribes attended Cultural Resources Working Group meetings. The National Monument Manager met with the Tribal Councils of the Ramona Band of Cahuilla Mission Indians, the Santa Rosa Band of Mission Indians, the Torres-Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians, and the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians.

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Copies of the Draft National Monument Management Plan and Proposed Final National Monument Plan were distributed to the Tribes upon publication. Letters were sent to the above listed Tribes in April 2003 (publication of the Draft Plan) and October 2003 (publication of the proposed final) inviting comments and extending the offer to meet with interested Tribes. A form was included in order for tribes to request a presentation about the planning document should they wish to have any of the information clarified. Follow-up to this letter was conducted by phone. National Monument staff met with the Cultural Resources Working Group two times during the 90-day comment period for the Draft National Monument Plan. Staff-level contact also occurred between agency and Tribal cultural resources staff.

Intergovernmental – Federal Consultation with USFWS

In conformance with Section 7 of the ESA, on August 18, 2003, BLM initiated informal consultation with USFWS on the effects of actions proposed in the Draft National Monument Management Plan/DEIS on eight threatened and endangered species. The purpose of the request was to obtain concurrence from USFWS with the BLM's determination of effects on these listed species. On September 3, 2003, the USFWS issued a memorandum concurring with BLM's determinations.

Intergovernmental – State

Coordination between State agencies and the BLM and Forest Service regarding lands within the boundary of the National Monument has consisted of involvement during interagency Working Group meetings during plan formation as well as representation on the Monument Advisory Committee. As established by the National Monument Act of 2000, one position on the Monument Advisory Committee includes a representative of the CDFG or the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks). Throughout the planning process, this position was filled by a member of State Parks. Each of the Monument Advisory Committee meetings was also attended by a representative of CDFG. An additional State agency represented on the Monument Advisory Committee is the Coachella Mountains Conservancy.

Intergovernmental – County, City, and Local Coordination and Interest Groups:

In September 1994, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments, representing the county of Riverside and the nine incorporated cities of the region, took the lead in developing a landscape-level conservation plan, the CVMSHCP. Throughout this planning process, the cities and County have been coordinating with BLM and Forest Service to address multi-jurisdictional issues in the National Monument. Although this process is happening outside of the scope of the National Monument Management Plan, the development of a trails management plan for the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains has resulted in intensive coordination among local jurisdictions and Federal agencies regarding trail issues.

The Forest Plan Revision process (in progress) for the San Bernardino National Forest has included a number of public meetings held in the mountain communities of the National Monument. Representation at those evening meetings by National Monument staff has resulted in cross-planning effort dialog with local communities. Coordination between the National Monument planning team and the Forest Service planning team has allowed additional opportunities to hear comments and concerns about issues within the National Monument. Although the Forest Service planning process is addressing issues outside of the scope of the National Monument Management Plan, items brought forward from the public have been used to aid in the development of the National Monument Management Plan.

Coordination between County, city, and local jurisdictions and the BLM and Forest Service regarding lands within the boundary of the National Monument has also consisted of involvement by representation on the Monument Advisory Committee. The Monument Advisory Committee includes county, city, and local representation (County of Riverside, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, La Quinta,

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Palm Desert, and the Community of Pinyon). Each of these members was able to provide input and review through 10 Monument Advisory Committee meetings and additional working group meetings.

Multiple interests were represented through the scoping comments and letters received and through comments received on the Draft National Monument Management Plan/DEIS. Workshops held within the community resulted in much dialogue concerning interests within the National Monument. Several interest groups are represented through the Monument Advisory Committee (one member each representing: conservation interests, local developer/building organization interests, Winter Park Authority/Palm Springs Aerial Tramway interests, and academic interests). During the development of the Draft National Monument Management Plan, the Monument Advisory Committee met eight times as a full group and numerous times in Working Groups. During the 90-day comment period, the Monument Advisory Committee met twice and provided a report outlining Committee comments on the Draft National Monument Management Plan.

Interagency Working Group

In 2001, an Interagency Working Group was established to assist in proposed project development within the National Monument and in development of the National Monument Management Plan. The group consists of staff representatives from Forest Service, BLM, State Parks, CDFG, Agua Caliente Band Cahuilla Indians, Caltrans, and Desert Sheriff's Search and Rescue. The group met numerous times to develop issue area content for the National Monument Management Plan and to discuss public scoping issues brought forward through the planning process. These meetings were an integral component of sharing community concerns raised through scoping with partner agencies within the National Monument. This group was fully involved in document preparation to ensure that partner agency information was accurate as integrated into the Plan.

Service First

The National Monument will be cooperatively managed by the BLM and Forest Service to promote consistency between the two lead agencies. Service First is a BLM-Forest Service innovation to create seamless service for citizens. It gives local units the opportunity to streamline multiple processes and regulations, combines management of adjacent BLM and National Forest lands, and offers one-stop shopping and a single point of contact for all customers — commercial users, partners and visitors. Coordination between the two agencies is critical to providing improved customer service for land users on both BLM and National Forest lands within the National Monument. Methods for sharing data and information have been established through the development of the National Monument Management Plan, and methods will continue to improve as both agencies continue to approach user conflicts and management issues in a cooperative manner. The BLM and Forest Service will continue to strive to reach the three goals of Service First: (1) enhance customer service; (2) improve operational efficiency and effectiveness; and (3) improve the stewardship of natural resources.

Proposed Plan/Final EIS.

Based on review and consideration of the public comments received, the Monument staff revised the Draft Plan/EIS to produce the Proposed National Monument Plan and Final EIS. Copies of the public comment letters, facsimiles, and public meeting transcripts were included in the Final EIS. The public comments were helpful in enabling the Monument staff to strengthen, refine, and clarify the text, proposed decisions, analyses, and conclusions.

The release of the Proposed National Monument Plan/Final EIS initiated a 30-day public review and protest period, beginning October 31, 2003, the day the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of availability in the *Federal Register*. The protest period ended on December 1, 2003. Individuals and organizations that submitted comments or received a copy of the Draft Plan/EIS

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automatically were sent copies of the Proposed National Monument Plan/Final EIS. Requests for copies of the document from additional parties were also honored. The Proposed Plan/Final EIS was also posted on the BLM Palm Springs South Coast Field Office website.

The Proposed Final National Monument Plan's availability was made known to the public through publication of two *Federal Register* notices (one by BLM and one by the Environmental Protection Agency on October 31, 2003 (pages 62096-62097)).

Consistency Requirements. In accordance with planning regulations at 43 Code of Federal Regulations 1610.3-2(e), the National Monument Plan was sent to the Governor of California in October 2003, for a 60-day review of consistency with State or local plans, policies, and programs. No inconsistencies were identified.

Plan Protest Resolution and Additional Comments. The BLM Director received no protests on the Proposed Final National Monument Plan.

Appeals Related to BLM Lands. Any person whose interest is adversely affected by the implementation decisions listed on pages 4-13, may have certain appeal rights as described in 43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 4.411 to the U.S. Department of the Interior Board of Land Appeals. Please contact Greg Hill, BLM NEPA Coordinator at 760-251-4800, with questions.

Appeals Related to National Forest Lands – While the decisions listed on pages 1-13 do not amend the existing San Bernardino National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, they do include site specific decisions related to implementation of the plan. Therefore, implementation of the Decision Items on National Forest lands is subject to appeal under the regulations at 36 Code of Federal Regulations 215. Any written appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer, Regional Forester Jack Blackwell, USDA Forest Service, 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, California 94512 within 45 days of the date of the legal notice of this decision. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 Code of Federal Regulations 215.14.