

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
Preliminary General Plan/Final EIR



Proposed Changes to Preliminary General Plan
and
Public Review Comments & Responses
SCH #2002021060



November 2003

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**Proposed Changes to the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park®
Preliminary General Plan/EIR**

Section 2.1.3.6 - International Land –

- add as the final sentences to the last paragraph:

Proposals to construct an international border structure through the Park have arisen in the past. Such structures would likely have a significant negative effect on the movement of wildlife through this region, as well as the area's aesthetic values.

Section 2.2.1.4 - Air Quality and Pollutants – (re: response #36.2)

- Change the third paragraph second sentence to read:
...these vehicles produce exhaust emissions and dust. (deleting: ...a substantial volume of...)

Section 2.3.1 - System Wide Planning influences –

- Remove the following sentence:
See Appendix 5.3 for a complete listing of system wide planning influences and Department Resource Management Directives.

Section 2.3.2 - Resource Management Directives for California State Parks –

- Add headings to list of directives to clarify numbers referenced in the section.

Section 2.3.3.1 - Regional Planning Influences – (re: response #5)

- Change bullet six to read:
Land and Resources Management Plans (USFS)

Section 2.3.3.2 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – (re: response #36.18)

- First paragraph, third sentence will be changed to read:
Least Bell's Vireo Critical Habitat within the park is confined to...

Section 2.4.3 - Cultural Resource Issues

- Replace the two paragraphs in this section with the following:
Anza-Borrego Desert SP holds numerous significant prehistoric and historic-period archaeological sites and areas of special significance to Native American communities in the region. Cultural sites can tell us a great deal about the way others lived within this desert region, and help us understand how the park fits into a broader picture of regional and California history. Archaeological sites and historic structures are irreplaceable and nonrenewable.

All archaeological sites, being a part of the natural landscape, are subject to degradation or outright destruction due to natural erosion and natural disasters.

Many cultural sites of Anza-Borrego Desert SP are located within geologically dynamic terrain, where sheet wash, wind and rain scouring, seasonal flooding in washes and side canyons, seismic activity, and other natural forces, will eventually remove all physical remains of past human use.

State Park staff must formulate plans for the adequate documentation and, where feasible, stabilization of archaeological sites within Anza-Borrego Desert SP, in response to the inevitable natural erosion occurrences and natural degradation. Detailed recordation of archaeological sites, excavation of test samples (test units), and/or collection of selected surface cultural materials are techniques presently available to staff to assure preservation of cultural data inherent in park sites. Photographs, videotape, and other means could be employed to document the condition and environmental circumstances of an archaeological site and the cultural materials present thereon.

Archaeological sites and other places of cultural significance are potentially subject to damage and degradation from park visitor activities. These activities include, camping, vehicular use, hiking, horseback riding, parking vehicles atop sites, gatherings to observe the night sky, unauthorized rock collecting, unauthorized artifact collection, and other forms of active recreation. Off-highway vehicles and other forms of four-wheel drive vehicles can access many areas of the park at this time. The potential for vehicular traffic running through archaeological sites is good in the park. Several archaeological sites are now traversed by vehicular trails, while many sites lie next to common routes of travel and next to primitive camping locations.

Activities by agencies, companies, or individuals on lands adjoining Anza-Borrego Desert SP have the potential to cause damage to archaeological sites within the park. Operations at mines next to the park and park roads can be a problem, in particular, if roads that traverse archaeological sites are used. Vehicular activity permitted on adjoining Ocotillo Wells SVRA or BLM land may accidentally cause damage to sites where boundaries are not conspicuous. Roadwork by Caltrans or San Diego County crews can potentially damage sites in the park; many sites lie next to main paved roads.

The vastness of Anza-Borrego Desert SP poses an issue of the feasibility to conduct regular or periodic archaeological fieldwork. The rugged terrain and the remoteness of many important archaeological sites make access to potential work locations difficult and time-consuming. The amount of park terrain that can be feasibly covered in any one day is relatively low in many areas of the park. Safety can also be an issue when working in rugged terrain. Certain areas of the park were used for gunnery and bombing practice in World War II, so unexploded ordinance is a possibility in these locations. Patrols of areas by State Park rangers cannot always be as thorough or regular as would be desirable due to the vast size

of the park. Therefore, Park staff should also employ other, innovative measures to aid in protecting archaeological sites or updating their condition (e.g., use of Site Stewards, signs, interpretation at the Visitor Center, etc.).

Section 3.2.4.5 - Wilderness Zone—

- Under “Purpose and Intent” the following will be added: *The General Plan proposes to add approximately 19,122 acres (17 new parcels) to four existing wilderness areas in the park. These areas will be included in the existing Santa Rosa Mountains State Wilderness, the Grapevine Mountain Wilderness, Sheep Canyon Wilderness (proposed name change to “Jim Whitehead Wilderness”, and Vallecito Mountain Wilderness. In addition, two new wilderness areas are proposed that would equal about 37,594 acres (2 new parcels). These new wilderness areas are titled “Wil-ye Wilderness” and “Sin Nombre Wilderness”. The total proposed acreage for additional and new wilderness equals approximately 56,716 (19 new parcels). See Figure 7.6 “Management Zones Preferred Alternative” Map for the location of these proposed additional and new wilderness areas.*

- *New Proposed Wildernesses To Be Added To Anza-Borrego Desert State Wilderness:*

- *Wil-ye Wilderness*

The proposed Wil-ye Wilderness, consisting of approximately 29,482 acres, is located in upper Coyote Canyon north of Santa Rosa Mountains SW and east of Coyote Canyon Road, in the Riverside County portion of the Park. This parcel was not in the Park when the existing Wilderness Areas were classified in 1974 and 1982. It is in a roadless area rich in natural and cultural resources similar to those in existing adjacent Wilderness Areas, providing a home for endangered Peninsular bighorn sheep, mountain lions and mule deer. The area is geographically and biologically diverse, with habitats containing Pinyon pine, juniper, and Coulter pine. Although the area is bordered by the popular Coyote Canyon Road area, this area has exceptional opportunities for experiencing quiet and solitude. The Cahuilla Native American people lived in the Canyon for hundreds of years prior to European exploration, and "Wil-ye" is the Cahuilla name for all of the Coyote Canyon area. Its meaning is similar to "the opening," "the clearing," or "the parting." The name was suggested by representatives of the modern-day Cahuilla tribe in consultation with State Park staff.

- *Sin Nombre Wilderness*

The Proposed Sin Nombre Wilderness is located in the southern part of the Park north of County Road S-2, separated from Carrizo Badlands SW on the north by Carrizo Creek Wash Road, bounded on the west by Canyon Sin Nombre, and on the east by the Coyote Mountains Federal Wilderness. It is proposed to add this new Wilderness to the Park, consisting of approximately 8,112 acres. This

pristine roadless area includes the valuable desert wetland resources of Carrizo Marsh, several sensitive species of flora, important cultural and paleontological sites, and spectacular scenic resources with high quality badlands formations. This area is one of the most isolated in the Park, with tremendous opportunities for experiencing solitude. "Sin Nombre" is Spanish for "without name."

- Under "Camping," the last sentence will read: (re: response #19)
Cars may pull off these roads one-vehicle width, as long as no wildlife or vegetation is impacted, damaged or destroyed. Some areas may contain sensitive resources and therefore, exception to camping will be posted for resource protection purposes.

Section 3.2.4.6 - Cultural Preserve Zone

- Under "Purpose and Intent" the following will replace the second paragraph:

***We-nelsch Cultural Preserve** - Located in the western-most wedge of the intersection of County Road S-2 and State Highway 78 in the area known as Scissors Crossing in the San Felipe Valley. The General Plan proposes to classify this land, consisting of approximately 428 acres, as a Cultural Preserve. This property is at the center of a very large Kumeyaay Native American village complex that was occupied until the early 20th century. The plentiful natural resources attracted the Native Americans to this rich area at the juncture of mountains and desert. . The village was the site of one of the first major interactions between Native Americans and Europeans in the region, and was the subject of many nineteenth century diarists, including, John W. Audubon. The Native American village complex holds vestiges of Indian culture spanning from pre-historic times through 1903 when local Indian groups were evicted from ancestral lands.*

This natural crossroads area would later attract European explorers and settlers, and includes portions of the Mormon Trail, Southern Emigrant Trail, and Butterfield State route. The site of the Butterfield Overland Mail Company's San Felipe State Station, which operated from 1857 to 1861 as the regional changing station, is also found in the proposed Cultural Preserve. Subsequent to its use in the stage route, this location continued to serve as an important stop for travelers throughout the 19th and 20th Centuries. The site of San Felipe is significant in the history of regional transportation.

"We-nelsch" is the Kumeyaay place-name for this village, as noted in the papers of Edward Davis, who was present when the Native Americans in the village were moved to the Pala Reservation in 1903. The place name was translated by Cinon Duro, Head Man of the Mesa Grande Kumeyaay people at the time, as meaning "rock move." This name is indicative of the seismic activity in the area. The adjacent area to the south is still commonly known as Earthquake Valley.

This name was chosen for the Cultural Preserve in consultation with members of the modern-day Kumeyaay community.

Section 3.3.1.2 - Physical Resources – (re: response #15)

- Under “Hydrology,” change the first goal to read:
Protect the surface water and groundwater of ABDSP. Strive to restore sustainable and functional watersheds and groundwater basins throughout the region.

Section 3.3.1.3 - Biotic Resources – (re: response #196)

- Under Fire Management, change the third guideline to read:
California State Parks will take educational and preventative measures with the public to minimize the risk of wildfires originating within and adjacent to the Park.
- First guideline will read:
California State Parks will identify situations where State and Federal environmental legislation is not adequate to protect native biota. California State Parks will be proactive in biological conservation and not necessarily focus on species management when other levels of biological organization may be more appropriate units of conservation. California State Parks . . . criteria for listing, but are not yet listed.

Section 3.3.1.5 - Interpretation –

- The San Diego Archaeological Center has been added as a potential partner

Section 3.3.2.5 - Sentenac Canyon – (re: response #65)

- The Goal will be changed to read:
Support efforts to protect and interpret the historical, archaeological, natural, and scenic resources of this unique area of the Park while providing minimal activity and trail access.
- The second sentence in the guideline will read:
These facilities will be limited to interpretive/information kiosks, drinking water, hitching posts, portable toilets, and other facilities to support minimal activities
- The third sentence will be eliminated.

Section 3.4.1 – Backcountry Camping Management Plan – (re: response #20)

- Change heading and all references as such to read:
Camping Management Plan

- After sentence four, the section will be changed to read:
A Public Use Interface Element of the Cultural Resource Management Plan will serve as one foundation for the Camping Plan, and will guide where camping can occur without affecting sensitive cultural resources.

A total of 393 camping areas have been inventoried and mapped within the park. This inventory identifies the number of groups typically in the area, type of camping, typical distance from a paved road, availability of water, primary attraction, and associated problems. These problems include vehicle traffic, shooting, ground fires, litter, vegetation damage, as well as, archaeological site damage. The inventory will support management and operational efforts to anticipate visitor-use patterns, prevent conflicts and problems associated with different types of recreational use, minimize impacts to sensitive resources, and assist with planning and development.

Areas of ABDSP now open to primitive camping may be recommended for designation as a Cultural or a Natural Preserve. Zones designated by the General Plan will provide general rules and regulations governing the application of the Camping Management Plan.

Section 3.4.2 – Roads Management Plan –

- After sentence five, the section will be changed to read:
A Public Use Interface Element of the Cultural Resource Management Plan will serve as one foundation for the Road Plan, and will guide where roads can occur without affecting sensitive cultural resources.

Section 3.4.4 - Cultural Resources Management Plan – (re: response #31)

- An additional bullet will be added to read:
Formulate measures for curation of archaeological and historical collections.

Section 4.5.3.2 – Mitigation WR 1 –

- Change third sentence to read:
Specific management plans will include measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential impacts to water resources, as much as possible, and consider establishment of monitoring programs for potential long-term effects.

Section 4.5.3.3 - Mitigation BR 2 –

- Change third sentence to read:
If special status species are discovered within this area of potential impact, surveys will continue through the period of construction and construction activities will be redirected and constructed to allow surveys and species protection.
- The fourth sentence will be eliminated.

Section 4.5.3.3 - Mitigation BR 3 – (re: response #111)

- Change second sentence to read:
This will minimize damage to sensitive riparian habitat and reduce the level of impact.

Section 4.5.3.4 - Mitigation PR 1 –

- Change fourth sentence to read:
If fossils are uncovered during a project, work will be controlled and redirected to allow resource recordation, recovery and/or protection development.

Section 4.5.3.5 - Mitigation CR 1 –

- Change fifth sentence to read:
If cultural remains are uncovered during a project, work will be controlled and redirected to allow resource recordation, recovery and/or protection development.

Section 4.5.8 - Mitigation and Monitoring – (re: response #111)

- Change to reflect that CEQA review will be required as well as approval by jurisdictional regulatory agencies.

Figures 7.1 – Facilities, 7.3 – Topography, 7.6 – Management Zones Preferred Alternative, & 7.10 – Preferred Alternative Close-ups – (re: response #63)

- Trails will be more clearly identified on these maps

Figure 7.10 – Preferred Alternative Close-ups – (re: response #16)

- Additional close-up maps will be included.

Section 8 – Bibliography – (re: response #36.5)

- The following references will be added:
Cole, D.N. 1995. Disturbance of Natural Vegetation by Camping: Experimental Applications of Low-level Stress. *Environmental Management* 19(3) 405-416.

Gillette, D.A. and J. Adams. 1983. Accelerated Wind Erosion and the Prediction of Rates. In *Environmental Effects of Off-Road Vehicles, Impacts and Management in Arid Regions*. R.H. Webb and H.G. Wilshire, Editors. Springer-Verlag New York Inc. New York, New York.

Hobbs, R.J. and L.F. Huenneke. 1992. Disturbance, Diversity, and Invasion: Implications for Conservation. *Conservation Biology* 6(3) 324-337.

Lovich, J.E. and R. de Gouvenain. 1998. Saltcedar Invasion in Desert Wetlands of the Southwestern United States: Ecological and Political Implications. In *Ecology of Wetlands and Associated Systems*. S.K. Majumdar, E.W. Miller and F.J. Brenner editors. The Pennsylvania Academy of Science.

Meffe, G.K., C.R. Carroll, and Contributors. 1997. *Principles of Conservation Biology*. Sinauer Associates, Inc. Sunderland, Massachusetts.

Marion J.L., and T.A. Farrell. 2002. Management Practices that Concentrate Visitor Activities: Camping Impact Management at Isle Royale National Park, USA. *Journal of Environmental Management* 66:201-212.

Swarthout E.C.H. and R.J. Steidl. 2003. Experimental effects of hiking on Breeding Mexican Spotted Owls. *Conservation Biology* 17(1) 307-315.

Trobulak, S.C. and C.A. Frissell. 2000. Review of Ecological Effects of Roads and Terrestrial and Aquatic Communities. *Conservation Biology* 14(1) 18-30.

Westbrooks, R. 1998. *Invasive Plants, Changing the Landscape of America: Factbook*. Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW), Washington, D.C. 109pp.

Widner, C. and J. Marion. 1994. Horse Impacts: Research Findings and their Implications. National Outdoors Leadership School. WY, USA. <http://www.lnt.org/Newsletter/NewsltrHorseImpacts.html>

Back Cover – Acknowledgements –

- The following text will be added:

The department would like to offer a special thank you to Michael A. Mantell, former Undersecretary for the California Resources Agency. As Undersecretary in the 1990s, Mr. Mantell was a strong supporter for this General Plan, and was responsible for securing the necessary funding for the inventory and planning efforts.

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**Southern Service Center**

8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270
San Diego, California 92108



NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Draft Environmental Impact Report/ Anza-Borrego Desert State Park® Draft General Plan

The California Department of Parks and Recreation has prepared a draft Environmental Impact Report with the intent of adoption for the General Plan at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park® located in San Diego, Imperial, and Riverside Counties.

COPIES OF THE General Plan **ARE AVAILABLE** from the Southern Service Center of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270 San Diego, CA 92108, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Copies are also available for review at Colorado Desert District Headquarters, 200 Palm Canyon Drive, Borrego Springs, CA 92004; the San Diego Public Library, 820 E. Street San Diego, CA 92101; the Borrego Springs Branch Library, 500 Palm Canyon Drive Borrego Springs, CA 92004; and the Julian Branch Library, 2133 4th Street Julian, CA 92036. The draft General Plan is also available at www.parks.ca.gov (Click on General Plans/General Plans in Progress/Anza-Borrego Desert State Park®). If there are any questions, please call Michelle Fredrickson at 619.220.5300.

A REVIEW PERIOD, during which the California Department of Parks and Recreation will receive comments upon the proposed draft General Plan, commences on January 17, 2003. The deadline for receiving written comments regarding the adequacy of the draft General Plan is March 3, 2003. Comments may be sent to Environmental Coordinator at the Southern Service Center of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, 8885 Rio San Diego Drive, Suite 270 San Diego, CA 92108 or faxed to 619.220.5400.



Gray Davis
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse



Tal Finney
Interim Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

DATE: January 22, 2003
TO: Michelle Fredrickson
Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108
RE: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
SCH#: 2002021060

This is to acknowledge that the State Clearinghouse has received your environmental document for state review. The review period assigned by the State Clearinghouse is:

Review Start Date: January 17, 2003
Review End Date: March 3, 2003

We have distributed your document to the following agencies and departments:

California Coastal Commission
California Highway Patrol
Caltrans, District 11
Caltrans, District 8
Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning
Department of Conservation
Department of Fish and Game, Region 5
Department of Fish and Game, Region 6
Department of General Services
Department of Parks and Recreation
Native American Heritage Commission
Office of Historic Preservation
Reclamation Board
Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 7
Resources Agency
State Lands Commission

The State Clearinghouse will provide a closing letter with any state agency comments to your attention on the date following the close of the review period.

Thank you for your participation in the State Clearinghouse review process.

1400 TENTH STREET P.O. BOX 3044 SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95812-3044
(916)445-0613 FAX(916)323-3018 www.opr.ca.gov





Gray Davis
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse



Tal Finney
Interim Director

March 4, 2003

Michelle Fredrickson
Department of Parks and Recreation
8885 Rio San Diego Drive
San Diego, CA 92108

Subject: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
SCH#: 2002021060

Dear Michelle Fredrickson:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIR to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on March 3, 2003, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

California State Parks Response

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2002021060
Project Title Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
Lead Agency Parks and Recreation, Department of

Type EIR Draft EIR
Description To meet requirements set forth in Section 5002.2 of the Public Resources Code and Section 4332 of Title 14 of the California Administration Code, The California Department of Parks and Recreation is preparing a General Plan for the park. This plan will delineate a number of resource management zones and a set of goals and guidelines will be developed for each zone, which will guide park management, specific project management, and implementation. These goals and guidelines will address recreational, operational, interpretive, and resource management opportunities and constraints.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Michelle Fredrickson
Agency Department of Parks and Recreation
Phone 619-220-5300 **Fax**
email
Address 8885 Rio San Diego Drive
City San Diego **State** CA **Zip** 92108

Project Location

County San Diego, Riverside, Imperial
City
Region
Cross Streets County Roads S-2, S-3, S-22
Parcel No.
Township **Range** **Section** **Base**

Proximity to:

Highways 79, 78, I-80
Airports
Railways (abandoned) San Diego/Yuma RR
Waterways
Schools
Land Use State Park/State Wilderness

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Air Quality; Archaeologic-Historic; Coastal Zone; Drainage/Absorption; Flood Plain/Flooding; Geologic/Seismic; Noise; Population/Housing Balance; Public Services; Vegetation; Wetland/Riparian; Landuse

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; California Coastal Commission; Department of Conservation; Department of Fish and Game, Region 5; Department of Fish and Game, Region 6; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Reclamation Board; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 8; Caltrans, District 11; Caltrans, Division of Transportation Planning; Department of General Services; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 7; Native American Heritage Commission; State Lands Commission

Date Received 01/17/2003 **Start of Review** 01/17/2003 **End of Review** 03/03/2003

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.