

## Call for Data Related to Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)

### Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

#### 1. Documents Requested

##### a. Resource Management Plans/Land Use Plans

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) has not yet initiated a Resource Management Plan. The 1993 Mimbres RMP will be followed in the interim. The Mimbres RMP can be accessed here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName\\_dispatchToPatternPage&currentPageId\\_108879](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName_dispatchToPatternPage&currentPageId_108879).

##### b. Record of Decision

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) has not yet initiated a Resource Management Plan. The 1993 Mimbres RMP will be followed in the interim. The Mimbres RMP can be accessed here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName\\_dispatchToPatternPage&currentPageId\\_108879](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/planAndProjectSite.do?methodName_dispatchToPatternPage&currentPageId_108879).

##### c. Public Scoping Documents

Public Scoping has not yet been initiated for the OMDPNM.

##### d. Presidential Proclamation

The May 21, 2014 Presidential Proclamation 9131 (attached as 1.d. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Presidential Proclamation.pdf).

#### 2. Information on activities permitted at the Monument, including annual levels of activity from the **date of designation to the present**

##### a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has diverse recreational opportunities and attracts a wide spectrum of recreational enthusiasts. OMDPNM has four separate units: the Organ Mountains, the Dona Ana Mountains, the Robledo and Las Uvas Mountains, and the Petrillo Mountains. The Organ Mountains has the most developed recreation sites including Recreation Fee areas but also has many opportunities for dispersed recreational use. The other three units have more undeveloped, backcountry recreation, except in the Dona Ana Mountains where

there is a very popular mountain bike trail system that is beloved by the local mountain bike community. Some of the recreational opportunities in the Monument include but are not limited to hiking, hunting, mountain biking, OHV use, mountain climbing, bouldering, sightseeing, and more.

Due to the dispersed recreational use across most of the Monument, it is a challenge to collect visitation statistics. This year BLM installed a series of both pedestrian and vehicle counters in key locations to get better baseline visitor use information.

In the Organ Mountains unit, there are three National Recreation Trails: Soledad Canyon Day Use Area, Aguirre Spring Campground, and Dripping Springs Natural Area. The most reliable visitor counts come from vehicle counters that are at Dripping Springs, Aguirre Springs, and Soledad Canyon, though this does not capture the other dispersed recreational visits outside of these three areas. The following is a combination of visitation at these three sites since monument designation as reported in the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS):

- FY 2014- 67,378
- FY 2015 - 84,377
- FY 2016 - 170,451

- b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)
- i. There has been no production of coal, oil and gas, and renewable minerals in OMDPNM. There are no leases for any of the above mineral uses within the Monument.
  - ii. Since the designation of the OMDPNM, there has been no new construction of energy transmission infrastructure. There has been road maintenance activity related to energy transmission service roads.
  - iii. There are 31 existing transmission and distribution power lines within and/or intersecting the OMDPNM. Most of these were constructed between the early 1960s to mid-1980s.
  - iv. There has been activity on the following concerning energy transmission infrastructure:
    - Prior to the OMDPNM designation, one energy transmission rights-of-way (ROW) request was proposed and a grant issued after the OMDPNM designation. This ROW lies within the section 368 energy designated

corridor, (West-Wide Energy Corridors enacted August 8, 2005). Construction for this infrastructure has not yet began.

- There has been one additional energy transmission request to upgrade facilities and increase the ROW width of an existing line within the monument.
- Other activities that would likely occur from the date of the OMDPNM designation to present are routine maintenance requests from energy companies to maintain existing service roads.

c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

There are no mining claims within OMDPNM. There is a Common Use Area for mineral materials; however, no sales or production has occurred in the CUA since the designation of OMDPNM.

d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

There is no active timber production within the OMDPNM. Our desert ecosystem does not lend itself to this type of activity.

e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)

There are 38 allotments wholly or partially contained within OMDPNM. These allotments include 86,271 permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs). Allotment boundaries do not coincide with the OMDPNM boundary, and therefore it is not possible to calculate the number of AUMs currently permitted within the monument boundary. In Grazing Year 2016, 49,861 AUMs were billed. The billed AUMs is lower than permitted AUMs due to a combination of non-use and not stocking to full capacity. This was done by the permittees for lack of forage and available water.

f. Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available

- i. Subsistence activities are those that provide bare essentials for living: food, water and shelter. The Federal Subsistence Management Program provides opportunities for subsistence way of life in Alaska on federal public lands and waters. There are no formal subsistence programs outside of Alaska.
- ii. Although the BLM manages the land in OMDPNM for the habitat of the wildlife, the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMG&F) manages the game. The BLM has not put any restrictions on hunting within the Monument.

iii. Since the OMDPNM was designated, an average of 2,590 hunting licenses have been issued by NMG&F annually on public lands in game management units that overlap with the OMDPNM, along with 450 elk hunting licenses on public lands. There have also been an average of 108 turkey hunters annually on all ownership types in the game management units overlapping the OMDPNM since designation. Other wildlife are hunted and trapped in the area, but the data are not available by game management unit, so it is not presented here. The deer licenses were not greatly different from the numbers issued pre-designation, and the elk and turkey hunting rates increased after designation.

iv. The BLM Las Cruces District Office issues between 30 to 40 Special Recreation Permits for Hunters and Guides Commercial Services annually. The number of permits issued has been consistent number for the years since designation and the five years prior. These permits include the areas within OMDPNM.

g. **Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available**

The Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument contains virtually all of human history within its confines. There are 344 recorded sites within the monument boundaries. These include Paleoindian, Archaic, Formative, Proto-historic, and Historic period sites. The vast majority of these sites were recorded in the 1970s and early 1980s. These records are extremely poor and, for the prehistoric sites, include no more information than “Lithic” or “Lithic and Ceramic.” Temporal periods for most of these is not known.

In addition to the recorded archaeological sites, David Soules recorded the locations of seven abandoned ranches, forty-seven archaeological site locations, nine CCC features (dams and erosion control structures), eleven rock walls and cairns, and one heliograph site.

There are also eight WWII era bombing targets that were bulldozed into the landscape within the Las Uvas, Robledo, and Potrillos Mountains portions of the National Monument.

Among the known sites are two Paleoindian sites (period ends about 8,000 BCE) at the south end of the Robledo Mountains. There are also innumerable Archaic Period sites across the Monument. There is a very large (around 20 acres) lithic site that is associated with several petroglyph sites and is known to date, at least,

to the Middle Archaic Period (3000 to 1800 BCE) in the southern Las Uvas Mountains.

Near the south end of the Organ Mountains there is a complex of rock shelters that have been dated from the Middle Archaic Period through the Formative Period (400 to 1450 CE). Associated with these rock shelters is a use area that covers at least 160 acres. At one of these rock shelters the excavators found corn that was, for a time, the earliest corn in the United States (approximately 4000 years old).

The Butterfield Overland Mail Route passes through the south end of the Robledo Mountains. This mail route operated from September 15, 1858 until March 1, 1861. This mail and passenger stage service ran from north Texas to San Francisco, California. There is a stage stop and a homestead (that also served as a stage stop within the National Monument.

At Picacho Mountain (also in the Robledo Range) there is an atalaya (lookout) that dates to the late Spanish colonial period. This site was found by Adolf Bandelier in the late 1800s.

Well known in the region and, now becoming known nationally, is the historic complex at Dripping Springs in the Organ Mountains. Dripping Springs was the location of The Van Patten Mountain Camp and Boyd Sanitarium. Eugene Van Patten married a Piro Indian woman from Tortugas (an unrecognized pueblo in Las Cruces) and settled in the Dripping Springs canyon in the late 1800s. He hired Tortugas men and women to build his home and a hotel there. He also had a series of dams built to contain and direct the flow of water to various places on his property.

Near the north end of Las Uvas, there is one of the aerial bombing targets that were used by trainees at Deming Army Air Field during World War II. This particular target is a life-sized outline of a battleship that was bulldozed onto the landscape and that trainees bombed in preparation for active duty in the war.

### 3. Information on activities occurring during the **5 years prior to designation**

#### a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has diverse recreational opportunities and attracts a wide spectrum of recreational enthusiasts. OMDPNM has four separate units:

the Organ Mountains, the Dona Ana Mountains, the Robledo and Las Uvas Mountains, and the Petrillo Mountains. The Organ Mountains has the most developed recreation sites including Recreation Fee areas but also has many opportunities for dispersed recreational use. The other three units have more undeveloped, backcountry recreation, except in the Dona Ana Mountains where there is a very popular mountain bike trail system that is beloved by the local mountain bike community. Some of the recreational opportunities in the Monument include but are not limited to hiking, hunting, mountain biking, OHV use, mountain climbing, bouldering, sightseeing, and more.

In the Organ Mountains unit there are three National Recreation Trails, Soledad Canyon Day Use Area, Aguirre Spring Campground, and Dripping Springs Natural Area. The most reliable visitor counts come from vehicle counters that are at Dripping Springs, Aguirre Springs, and Soledad Canyon, though this does not capture the other dispersed recreational visits outside of these three areas. The following is a combination of visitation at these three sites for the five years prior to designation as reported in RMIS:

- FY 2009- 63,724
- FY 2010- 69,793
- FY 2011 - 66,484
- FY 2012- 72,431
- FY 2013 - 75,813

- b. **Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)**
- i. There was no energy production from coal, oil and gas, or renewables during the five years prior to the designation of OMDPNM. The majority of OMDPNM has prior designations closing the area to leasing that date back at least 20 years prior to the designation of OMDPNM.
  - ii. No energy transmission infrastructure was constructed within the OMDPNM during the 5 years prior to its designation.
  - iii. There are 31 existing transmission and distribution power lines within and/or intersecting the OMDPNM. Most of these were constructed between the early 1960s to mid-1980s.
- c. **Minerals - annual mineral production on site**
- The last known mineral production within OMDPNM was in 2008 from a designated Common Use Area (CUA). CUAs are designated until the BLM

decides that the CUA is no longer in the interest of the public.

- d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

There is no active timber production within the OMDPNM. Our desert ecosystem does not lend itself to this type of activity.

- e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)

There are 38 allotments wholly or partially contained within OMDPNM. These allotments include 86,271 permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs). Allotment boundaries do not coincide with the OMDPNM boundary, and therefore it is not possible to calculate the number of AUMs currently permitted within the monument boundary.

AUMs billed/sold during the past five years are included below.

- 2016- 49,861 AUMs
- 2015- 68,666 AUMs
- 2014- 58,342 AUMs
- 2013- 41,108 AUMs
- 2012- 49,822 AUMs

- f. Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available

i. Subsistence activities are those that provide bare essentials for living: food, water and shelter. The Federal Subsistence Management Program provides opportunities for subsistence way of life in Alaska on federal public lands and waters. There are no formal subsistence programs outside of Alaska.

ii. Although the BLM manages the land in OMDPNM for the habitat of the wildlife, the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMG&F) manages the game. The BLM has not put any restrictions on hunting within the Monument.

iii. Prior to designation, only data from 2012-2013 is readily available. For these years, an average of 2,604 deer hunting licenses were issued annually on public lands in game management units that overlap with the OMDPNM, along with 350 elk hunting licenses on public lands. There were also been an average of 17 turkey hunters annually on all ownership types in the game management units overlapping the OMDPNM prior to designation. Other wildlife are hunted and trapped in the area, but the data are not available by game management unit, so it is not presented here.

iv. The BLM Las Cruces District Office issues between 30 to 40 Special Recreation Permits for Hunters and Guides Commercial Services annually. The number of permits issued has been consistent number for the years since designation and the five years prior. These permits include the areas within OMDPNM.

- g. Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available

See answer to 1(g).

4. Information on activities that likely would have occurred annually from the date of designation to the present **if the Monument had not been designated**

- a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has diverse recreational opportunities and attracts a wide spectrum of recreational enthusiasts. These recreational opportunities existed before designation and continued after designation.

In the years since designation, there has been an increase in visitation. If the Monument had not been designated, it is anticipated that there would not have been such a spike in recreational and visitation numbers.

- b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)

i. It is unlikely any production of coal, oil and gas, and renewables would have occurred if OMDPNM had not been designated. There have not been any nomination of leases for coal, or oil and gas in at least 10 years in Dona Ana County nor are there any leases within OMDPNM.

ii. In 2012 there were some geothermal leases issued within Dona Ana County but all leases offered are outside of the OMDPNM.

iii. It is challenging to determine what affect the Monument designation has had on energy transmission infrastructure. As mentioned above this below is the activity that has taken place since designation.

- Prior to the OMDPNM designation, one energy transmission rights-of-way (ROW) request was proposed and a grant issued after the OMDPNM designation. This ROW lies within the section 368 energy designated corridor, (West-Wide Energy Corridors enacted



August 8, 2005). Construction for this infrastructure has not yet began.

- There has been one additional energy transmission request to upgrade facilities and increase the ROW width of an existing line within the monument.
- Other activities that would likely occur from the date of the OMDPNM designation to present are routine maintenance requests from energy companies to maintain existing service roads.

c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

- i. A sale of mineral materials would have occurred from a designated Common Use Area for travertine boulders. This site comprises of 0.5 acre field of transported boulders and is designated to be closed once the remaining boulders have been removed. There has been interest in a sale for the remaining boulders, which would have resulted in a one-time sale.
- ii. There are many historic mine workings within OMDPNM but nothing recent.
- iii. It is unlikely that much mineral production would occur without the Monument designation due to prior special designations such as Wilderness Study Area (WSA) and Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) that encompass a large portion of the OMDPNM.

d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

There is no active timber production within the OMDPNM. Our desert ecosystem does not lend itself to this type of activity.

e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)

Designation of the OMDPNM has not changed the number of permitted AUMs. The AUMs billed/sold have varied pending climatic conditions such as lack of forage and water availability. Under the monument proclamation, it states that grazing laws, regulations, and policies followed by the BLM in issuing and administering grazing permits or leases on lands under its jurisdiction shall continue to apply with regard to the lands in the monument, consistent with the protection of the objects identified.

- f. Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available

There has been no changes in access to hunting and fishing activities since the monument was designated. Therefore it is likely that the hunting and fishing participation since monument designation is similar to what it would have been had the monument not been designated.

- g. Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available

- i. See answer 1(g).

- ii. The BLM has does not have sufficient information to predict how if the monument had not been designated what impact that would have had on the cultural resources of the monument.

- iii. The Monument Designation did have an impact on bringing national attention to the cultural resources in the monument. In 2016 the Monument hosted the American Rock Art Association National Conference. If it had not been designated that conference would not have been hosted the area.

5. Changes to boundaries - dates and changes in size

There have been no changes to the OMDPNM boundaries.

6. Public Outreach prior to Designation - outreach activities conducted and opportunities for public comment

Many meetings were held prior to designation, but these meetings were hosted by Congressional delegations, the Secretary's office, and community groups. BLM only participated in these meetings as subject matter experts and did not keep records of dates, attendees or content of these meetings.

For further information please see document attached (6.Public Input Prior to Designation) that a community group put together of all the local governments and community organizations' declaration of support of designation and press briefings of public meetings prior to designation.

7. Terms of Designation

Refer to the May 21, 2014 Presidential Proclamation 9131 (attached as 1.d. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Presidential Proclamation.pdf).

**Table 1. List of National Monuments Included in Review (per DoI Press Release dated May 5, 2017)**

<b>National Monument</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Managing Agency</b>
Basin and Range	Nevada	BLM
Bears Ears	Utah	BLM, USFS
Berryessa Snow Mountain	California	USFS, BLM
Canyons of the Ancients	Colorado	BLM
Carrizo Plain	California	BLM
Cascade Siskiyou	Oregon	#N/A
Craters of the Moon	Idaho	NPS, BLM
Giant Sequoia	California	USFS
Gold Butte	Nevada	BLM
Grand Canyon-Parashant	Arizona	BLM, NPS
Grand Staircase-Escalante	Utah	BLM
Hanford Reach	Washington	FWS, DOE
Ironwood Forest	Arizona	BLM
Mojave Trails	California	BLM
Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks	New Mexico	BLM
Río Grande del Norte	New Mexico	BLM
Sand to Snow	California	BLM, USFS
San Gabriel Mountains	California	USFS
Sonoran Desert	Arizona	BLM
Upper Missouri River Breaks	Montana	BLM
Vermilion Cliffs	Arizona	BLM
Katahdin Woods and Waters	Maine	NPS
Marianas Trench	CNMI/Pacific Ocean	FWS
Northeast Canyons and Seamounts	Atlantic Ocean	NOAA, FWS
Pacific Remote Islands	Pacific Ocean	FWS
Papahānaumokuākea	Hawai'i/Pacific Ocean	NOAA, FWS
Rose Atoll	American Sāmoa/Pacific Ocean	FWS