

Planning Update

Carrizo Plain National Monument Resource Management Plan Spring 2007

BLM

Welcome

Welcome to the planning process for the Carrizo Plain National Monument!

So far, it has been a dry year in the Carrizo Plain, and we missed the normal springtime profusion of wildflowers. Even so, it is a wild and beautiful place at this time of year and this is an ideal time to reflect on the past and plan for Carrizo's future. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), our managing partners (the California Department of Fish and Game and The Nature Conservancy), and the Carrizo Plain Monument Advisory Committee are all working together to develop a revised management plan, called a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Carrizo Plain National Monument. This updated plan will guide management and stewardship of the monument for many years to come.

Developing the RMP offers the BLM and the entire Carrizo community — those who live here, who visit, and who care about the Carrizo — a unique opportunity to produce a comprehensive long-range plan to address current needs and guide us into the future. To create this blueprint, we want to listen to and work closely with all interests. We cordially invite you to participate in this planning process. You can start by filling out the attached Visioning Worksheet and attending any of the public scoping meetings in late April – early May.

Scoping Meetings Schedule page 5



Giancarlo Sadoti photo

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Please share your ideas about ways we can improve and protect the Carrizo Plain National Monument and have a positive influence on neighboring communities and the larger region. During the past several years, the BLM has heard many concerns and ideas expressed by local community members and visitors about such topics as visitor services and facilities, protection of endangered species habitat, and the desire for more educational programs – just to name a few. We'll be exploring these and other ideas that are raised during this planning process.

I am pleased to announce that Johna Hurl has been selected as the Manager for the Carrizo Plain National Monument. She has served as the Acting Manager and the Assistant Monument Manager in past years and has done an outstanding job working with the public, our managing partners, and the Carrizo staff. She has a strong natural resources background and great passion for Carrizo and its important resources. I know she will do an excellent job as we plan for the future of the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

So please join us in charting the future of this magnificent area and help preserve its legacy for future generations to enjoy. I want to thank you for your interest in the monument.

Patty Gradek
Acting Bakersfield Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management

Inside This Issue

- Why we are developing a plan
- Opportunities for public involvement
- How the process works
- How this effort relates to previous planning for Carrizo

Public Lands USA: Use, Share, Appreciate

Bakersfield Field Office





Soda Lake with a view to the Southeast

Conserving a Very Special Place

Lying next to the San Joaquin Valley in eastern San Luis Obispo County, the Carrizo Plain contains the largest relatively intact representation of a once vast rich ecosystem. The Carrizo includes the largest remaining contiguous habitats for many endangered, threatened and rare species of animals such as the San Joaquin kit fox, the blunt-nosed leopard lizard, the San Joaquin antelope squirrel and the giant kangaroo rat.

The area also provides habitat for many rare or endangered plant species including the California jewelflower, Hoover's woolly-star and San Joaquin woollythreads. The area is home to reintroduced herds of pronghorn antelope and the Tule elk, native ungulates that had been hunted to extinction by settlers in the late 1800s. Both sandhill cranes and mountain plovers flock here by the thousands to use the Carrizo Plain as either a roosting place or as their winter home.

The area is also rich with evidence of its prehistoric and historic past. Painted Rock, a sacred, ceremonial site of the Chumash People, rises majestically from the grassland while remnants of homesteads, farms and mining operations dot the remainder of the plain.

The area provides an unparalleled laboratory for researchers to study the geology of the San Andreas Fault, and the native habitat of endangered and endemic wildlife and plants. Visitors to the 250,000 acre area are amazed that this vast undeveloped valley exists just 100 air miles north of Los Angeles.

Winter and spring are prime use seasons when people come to learn about the area's ecology and view some of California's most spectacular wildflower displays. Other visitors access the area to hunt, hike, camp or just relax.

The BLM, the California Department of Fish and Game, The Nature Conservancy and other interests have been working together since the first acquisition of land within the area in 1987 to conserve the Carrizo Plain and place its lands under public ownership. Approximately 215,000 acres of land have been acquired by partnership efforts. On January 17, 2001, the President of the United States signed a proclamation recognizing the national significance of the area and the need for special protection by designating the Carrizo Plain National Monument.

Building on Previous Planning Efforts

The public has helped develop two plans that currently guide management of the Carrizo. The Caliente Resource Management Plan was approved in May 1997, and provides general guidance on a landscape level. The three managing partners in the Carrizo – the BLM, the California Department of Fish and Game, and The Nature Conservancy — completed the Carrizo Plain Natural Area Management Plan in the late 1990s.

These plans, together with the proclamation directive, will form the basis for developing the RMP.

Completing the Plan How the Process Works

The RMP will build upon the vision of the earlier planning and management successes. The process will also take into account the changes that have occurred in the area's environment, in the types of uses and numbers of visitors, and improved scientific information regarding area ecosystem management. The existing planning framework provides a good foundation, and many of the management decisions and programs will be carried forward and integrated into the current plan update. However, we want your ideas and suggestions about how we might best update the plan to meet current and future challenges and community priorities.

Some of the key topics that we have heard about from the public over the last several years include:

- conservation of endangered species habitat,
- protecting cultural resources,
- maintaining a sustainable environment while accommodating visitors and public uses,
- fire management,
- public access,
- working cooperatively with private property owners, and
- economic opportunities, just to name a few !

See Completing, page 4

Much of the background information and many of the decisions in these plans are still relevant. The plan being developed will build on these past efforts and carry forward and reanalyze timely and relevant decisions – while factoring in the additional direction provided by the National Monument Proclamation.

Because of the extensive planning that had already been conducted for the Carrizo Plain, the BLM originally began preparation of an update of these efforts through an Environmental Assessment level of analysis. However, based on public requests and BLM's interest in expanding involvement in the process, we have decided to expand the effort to a more comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. The BLM received more than 60 comments during scoping in the Environmental Assessment process. These comments will be carried forward into the EIS process.



Parry's Mallow and Goldfields

Partners in Planning

How You Can Get Involved

A great plan requires public involvement in the process. We want to hear from you. There will be a number of opportunities for you to participate throughout the process. The first phase of the public involvement process, called “scoping,” is designed to help identify a management vision and highlight what topics the public feels are most important to future management of the Carrizo.

Completing

From page 3

We’ll be exploring these and other ideas that are raised during this planning process. It is important to identify key concerns and topics early, so they can be incorporated into the RMP/EIS process.

In developing the plan, we will be guided by certain legal parameters, along with consideration of environmental and social conditions which will shape the area’s future.

Some laws that are relevant to our plan include the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and National Historic Preservation Act. The Monument Proclamation will also provide an overarching vision and guidance. With this guidance, we will work together to determine which BLM management policies and practices are working well, and what improvements can best help to develop the plan to address current conditions, community and visitor priorities, and future trends.

As the next step in the planning process, BLM will develop a draft RMP/EIS. Under the current schedule, the draft will be available for public review in early 2008. Public meetings will be held to gather comments on the draft. The draft and public comments will be used to develop a proposed RMP and Final EIS later in the year. The last step is a Record of Decision approving the final RMP, scheduled to be completed in the Fall of 2008.

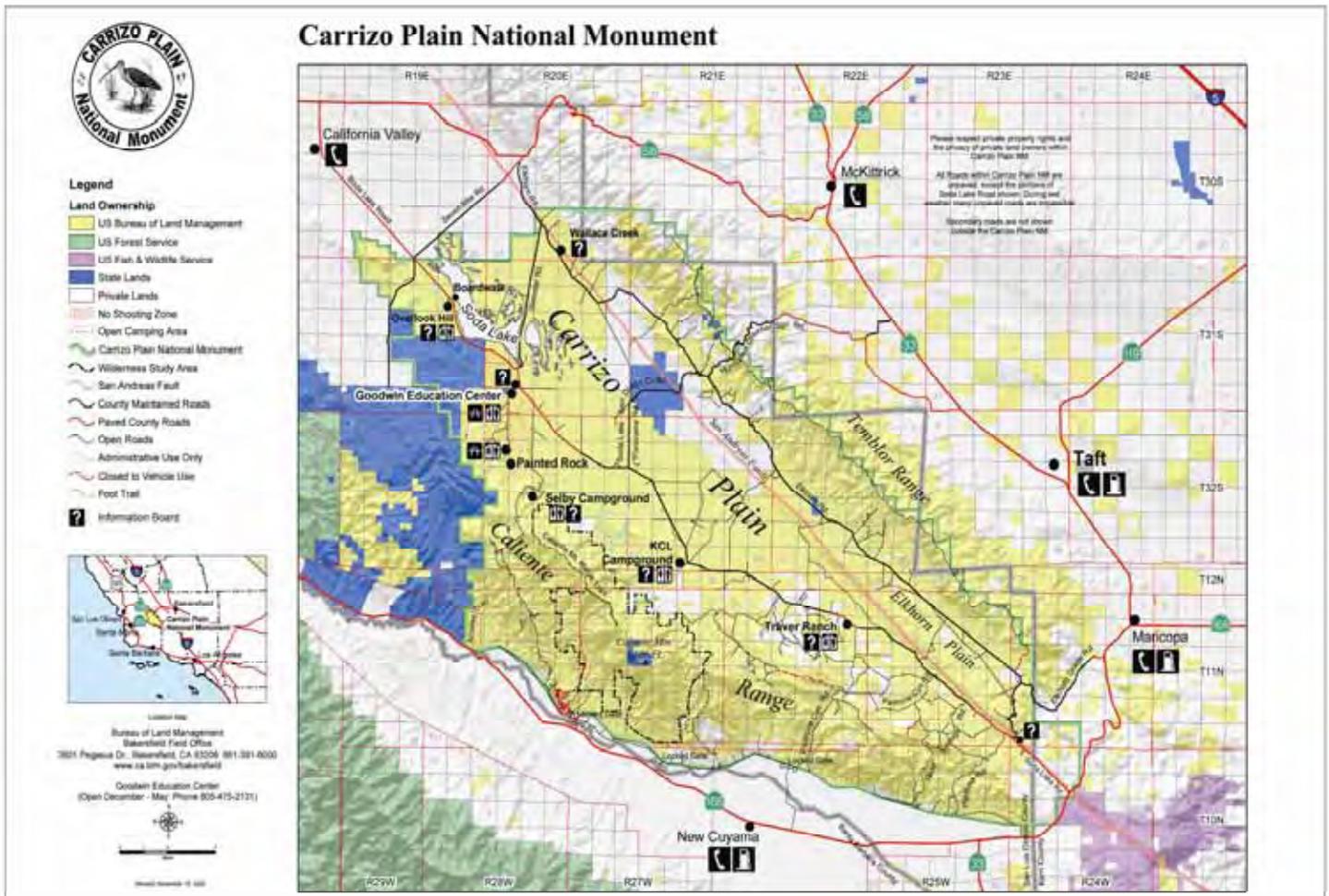
Your early participation during scoping will be key to helping us get the process off in the right direction

You can get involved in a number of ways.

1. Start by filling out the Visioning Worksheet and send it back to us by June 12, 2007.
2. Attend one of the public scoping meetings in late April-early May, 2007.
3. Contact us by phone or via the website any-time during the process.
4. Comment on the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement – likely available for public review in early in 2008.
5. Participate in the second set of public meetings in early 2008 to discuss the Draft Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement.



San Andreas Fault



Schedule of Public Scoping Meetings

Public scoping meetings will be held:

- **NEW LOCATION** April 24 at the Ludwick Community Center, 864 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. and finish at 7:30 p.m.
- May 1 at the BLM Bakersfield Field Office, 3801 Pegasus Drive. The office is about one mile east of Highway 99. Take Seventh Standard Road to Pegasus Drive. The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. and finish at 7:30 p.m.
- May 5 at the California Valley Community Services District building on Soda Lake Road. The center is located approximately three miles south of Highway 58 adjacent to the California Valley Fire Station 42. This meeting is being held in conjunction with a Carrizo Monument Advisory Committee meeting.

The planning effort will be discussed (with time for public scoping input) from 10 a.m. to noon. Lunch will be available for \$8. The Monument Advisory Committee meeting will then continue from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. focusing on other agenda topics related to the national monument.

Written scoping comments should be sent by June 12 to: Monument Manager Johna Hurl, Carrizo Plain National Monument, Bakersfield Field Office, 3801 Pegasus Drive, Bakersfield, Calif. 93308. Phone at (661) 391-6093 or email: Johna_Hurl@ca.blm.gov

BLM held scoping meetings in 2002 when the planning process was initiated. Comments submitted during that process will be considered with comments received in the current process. If you previously submitted comments, you may provide additional comments or clarifications of those previously made.

TELL US YOUR VISION
Carrizo Plain National Monument Management Plan Visioning Worksheet

Before diving into the nuts and bolts of the planning process, we want to develop a broad “vision” for the future of the Carrizo Plain National Monument that reflects the values of the community – the people who live here, who visit and who care about the Carrizo Plain. The plan will guide the area’s management practices for many years, so we need a clear understanding of where we are going and what we want to accomplish. Please take a few minutes to fill out this brief worksheet to help us develop a vision for the Carrizo Plain National Monument. You may add more pages if you wish. Please return by June 12, 2007.

NAME:
ORGANIZATION (if any):
ADDRESS:
PHONE (optional):
EMAIL (optional):

Please do not add my name to the Carrizo Plan mailing list. (check box) []

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION OF THE MONUMENT FOR THE FUTURE?

What do you value most about the Carrizo Plain National Monument, and why? (add additional sheets if necessary)

What changes would you like to see? _____

What is your vision for the future of the Carrizo Plain National Monument? What do you want it to look like in 20 years? Or even in 50 years when our grandchildren come here?

ENVIRONMENT

What are your key concerns about the environment within the Carrizo Plain? Please be specific. _____

VISITOR SERVICES

What improvements should be made to better accommodate visitors (e.g., environmental education programs, trails, etc.)? Please be specific. _____

How often do you visit the Carrizo Plain National Monument?
___ several times a year ___ once a year ___ once every few years ___ I've never visited

WORKING WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Carrizo Plain National Monument is tied into the local economies, recreational activities, culture and social activities of its neighbors. We want to know what you think about having the Monument as a neighbor to your community.

If you live in the region surrounding the Carrizo Plain National Monument, please let us know . . . what are the greatest benefits of living near the area? _____

What is the greatest drawback? _____

What could be done to improve the Carrizo Plain National Monument's effects on surrounding communities (e.g., the local economy, tourism, traffic, etc.)? Please be specific. _____

Is there anything else you would like to share with us? (attach additional sheets if needed)_____

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Place stamp here

**Carrizo Plain Monument Manager
Bureau of Land Management
3801 Pegasus Drive
Bakersfield, CA 93308**

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