

**Application: Meccacopia/Chuckwalla Planning**

**Project Description for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2010/2011**

**Agency: BLM - Palm Springs South Coast Field Office**

**A. List of Restoration Activities**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC FO) manages 1,500 miles of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes on over 1.65 million acres. The majority of OHV usage in the PSSC FO occurs in and around the area of the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area (SMRA). The project area includes such OHV riding and camping designations as the Drop 31, Summit Road, and Red Cloud areas. The planning project addresses the enhancement or protection of existing Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) opportunities or will lead to new opportunities or to protection of resources.

**B. Describe how the proposed Project relates to OHV Recreation and how OHV Recreation caused the damage:**

This Field Office has successfully undertaken numerous, large-scale desert planning grants that later developed into restoration projects to enhance sustainable OHV recreation. The Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office (PSSC FO) public lands hosted more than million visitors in fiscal year 2010 providing a variety of recreation opportunities that include: casual motorized OHV trail riding for all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, and sand rails; trails for four-wheel driving; and many non-motorized activities such as hiking, backpacking, hunting, rock-hounding, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, photography, and mountain biking. The mandate of multiple use management challenges the BLM to balance the ever-increasing demand for OHV recreational opportunities with conservation efforts in a way that protects valuable cultural, biological and wilderness resources. Resource damage, such as destruction of protected habitat caused by a limited number of OHV-users, has led to the criticism of the entire OHV community. BLM's efforts to facilitate responsible OHV recreational opportunities incorporate a multifaceted approach which includes law enforcement, public outreach, signage of legal routes, closure of unauthorized routes; and restoration of lands damaged by illegal OHV activity. Planning and restoration projects are an essential part of this equation because they serve to encourage responsible OHV recreation, and to demonstrate to the public how OHV dollars support the protection of public land. By planning for restoring natural resources, this project will reduce user conflict, enhance public awareness, and sustain legal OHV opportunities in the local area.

**C. Describe the size of the specific Project Area(s) in acres and/or miles**

The California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan Amendment of the Coachella Valley designated the Meccacopia Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) in December 2002.

The SRMA consists of approximately 125,000 acres; it includes two congressionally designated Wildernesses: the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains Wildernesses. The SRMA also includes limited use areas surrounding both of these areas.

#### **D. Monitoring and Methodology**

#### **E. List of Reports**

Environmental Assessment

Program Specialist Reports:

Botanical Resources

Cultural Resources

Recreation

Wildlife

Lands & Realty

Minerals

Grazing

#### **F. Goals, Objectives and Methodology / Peer Reviews**

#### **G. Plan for Protection of Restored Area**