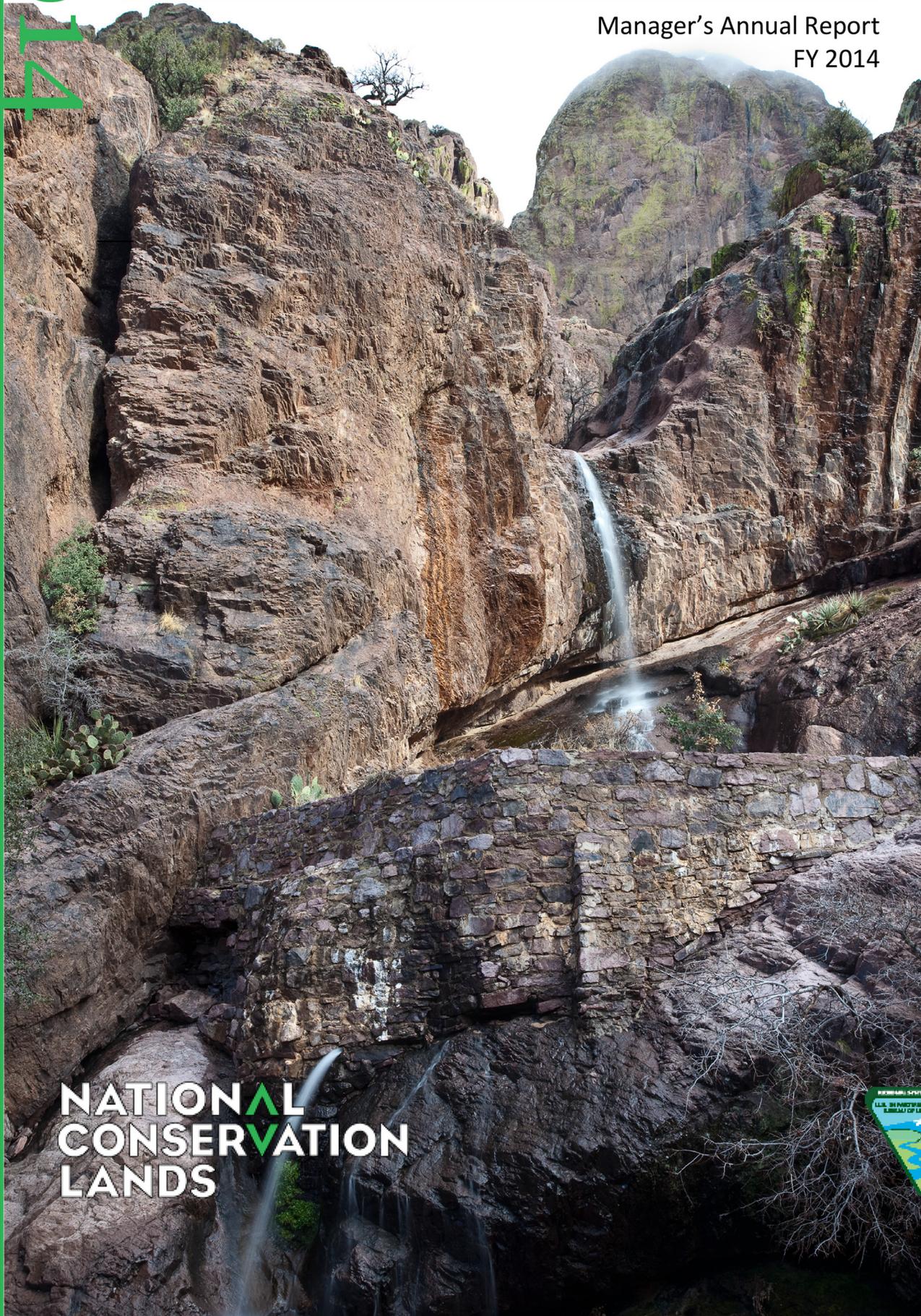


Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks

National Monument

Manager's Annual Report
FY 2014

2014



New Mexico

NATIONAL
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1 Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument Profile

Designating Authority

Designating Authority: Section 2 of the Antiquities Act (34 Stat. 225, 16 U.S.C. 431)

Date of Designation: May 21, 2014

Acreage

Total Acres in Unit	BLM Acres	Other Fed. Acres	State Acres	Other Acres
496,540	419,532	0	67,083	9,925

Contact Information

Unit Manager	Phone	E-mail	Mailing Address
Bill Childress	575-525-4499	wchildre@blm.gov	1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, NM 88005

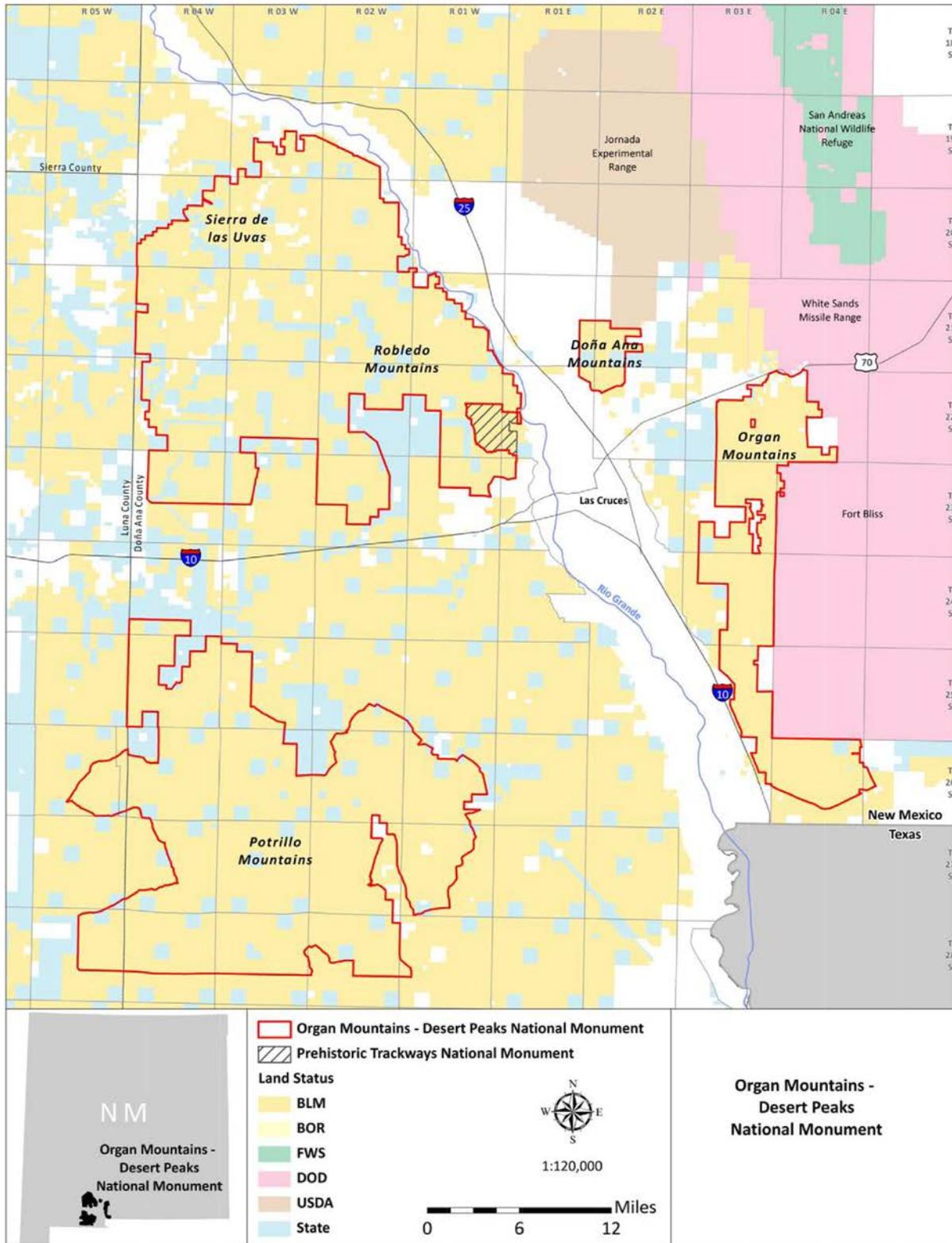
Field Office	District Office	State Office
N/A	Las Cruces	New Mexico

Budget

Total FY14 Budget	Subactivity 1711	Other Subactivities' Contributions	Other Funding
*	*	*	*

* This report addresses the year in which the National Monument was designated, addressing the last four months of the fiscal year. During this transitional time period, a budget was not yet established.

Map of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument



Managing Partners

N/A

Staffing

For FY 2014, there was no specific staff with sole responsibilities within the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (Monument); however, numerous staff within the Las Cruces District Office support work within the Monument. The Las Cruces District Manager is filling the role of Monument Manager, providing extensive outreach and communications to public. The facilities manager is involved in daily activities associated with the Aguirre Spring Campground and Dripping Springs Natural Area (both are fee sites). The Las Cruces District volunteer coordinator supports recruitment and management of three host site couples (one couple at Aguirre Spring, and two couples at Dripping Springs Natural Area), as well as support for numerous day volunteers at Dripping Springs Natural Area. Much of the recreation workload is associated with dispersed recreation activities, but also includes two developed recreation sites. The cultural resources staff shares responsibilities for review of proposed projects, but most of those ceased upon designation, therefore, staff involvement by archaeologists has been minimal. Several rangeland management specialists are involved in management of the numerous grazing allotments, along with two wildlife biologists whose areas of responsibility overlap different portions of the Monument. Two law enforcement rangers have overlapping areas of responsibility within the Monument.



West Potrillos and surrounding desert

2 Planning and NEPA

Status of RMP

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) will be initiated in FY 2016.

Status of Activity Plans

No activity level actions were initiated in FY 2014.

Status of RMP Implementation Strategy

An implementation strategy will be developed upon completion of the RMP.

Key NEPA Actions and/or Project Authorizations

No key NEPA actions or projects were authorized during FY 2014.

3 Year's Projects and Accomplishments

General Accomplishments

A trail crew from Rocky Mountain Youth Corps worked on the Pine Tree Loop Trail in September 2014. They naturalized social trails, installed water diversion techniques, and put up trail markers. The project employed eight youth for a total of 1,280 hours.



Rocky Mountain Youth Corps working on Pine Tree Loop Trail.

On Public Lands Day, September 27, 2014, the BLM hosted an event along with the Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Doña Ana Groundworks, and Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in which members of the public worked on trails, put up signs, and cleaned up Aguirre Springs Campground sites.

Current Areas of Focus

Because the Monument was designated in this fiscal year (May of 2014), the main focus has been establishing a functioning Monument, including developing public information, clarifying management requirements, identifying baseline inventory needs, identifying staff needs, and developing internal budget and other controls.



Organ Mountains and surrounding desert

Education, Outreach, and Interpretation

Interpretation:

During the summer of 2014, the BLM partnered with Doña Ana Groundworks through a Youth Conservation Corp grant. We trained 13 youth guides, ranging in age from 16-21, to complete interpretive and education outreach programs for the Prehistoric Trackways National Monument, Dripping Springs Natural Area, and other Las Cruces District recreation sites. The team received training and certification as certified interpretive guides from the National Association for Interpretation. The guides led tours at recreation sites, organized clean-ups, worked on trails, and participated in other resource projects in the Las Cruces District. In total, the Doña Ana Groundworks youth guides led over forty programs, reaching hundreds of visitors. They did various types of programs, including patio talks, guided hikes, and living history and educational demonstrations. The program was a huge success, and will continue through summer 2015. The youth guides gained an appreciation for the work the BLM does, and recognized that skills they learned in the program will support them in interacting with people throughout their professional lives.



A Doña Ana Groundworks Guide presenting a program on Ringtails.

Outreach:

The BLM created a Junior Explorer book, and initiated the program at Dripping Springs Natural Area.

Education Initiatives:

The Monument was designated a new Hands on the Land site. During FY 2014, a park ranger led many field trips. The participating schools for these included Desert Hills Elementary, Sonoma Elementary, Picacho Elementary, Hermosa Heights Elementary, and Gadsden Elementary Schools.

Partnerships

Partner organizations include: Las Cruces Public School District; Gadsden School District; New Mexico State University (NMSU) STEM Program; Take It Outside New Mexico (U.S Forest Service, National Park Service, Asombro, New Mexico State Parks); Paleozoic Trackways Foundation; and Las Cruces Museum of Nature and Science. The NMSU STEM Program provided funding to create Junior Explorer backpacks filled with resources for the visiting schools.



A Junior Explorer backpack along with its contents

The BLM partnered with the Take it Outside, NM! Network for a program called “Passport to Outdoor Fun,” in which families could visit four out of eight dedicated sites, answer questions, and get stamps. They then sent the completed passports in to get a patch and be entered to win a prize. Schools also were awarded transportation funds to go to the different sites. If classes entered a sharing project, their teachers were entered to win environmental educational supply prizes. It was great initiative to get both families and school children outdoors learning and having fun.

The BLM continues to build upon the partnership with the Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

For the summer youth corps, the BLM partnered with Doña Ana Groundworks.

Volunteers

In the FY 2014, day volunteers contributed 580 hours for recreation services within the Monument. Campground hosts and site hosts contributed 14,560 hours. Hosted youth workers contributed 6,060 hours.

Land (or Interests in Land) Acquisitions

There are private and State lands located within the Monument boundaries. The BLM has begun to evaluate the extent of these lands so that it may be able to prioritize acquisitions should the landowners make them available. At this time, no land acquisitions are in progress.

4 Science

Science

Science Plan:

The BLM will have to develop a science plan for the Monument, but at time time it has not yet been initiated.



Visiting scientist presenting about scorpion research at Dripping Springs Visitor Center.

5 Resources, Objects, Values, and Stressors

Archeological Resources:

The Monument’s landscape contains the archaeological remains of a diverse human history resulting from over 10,000 years of occupation. Artifacts common to the area include rock art, ceramics, and basket fragments, which tell of a rich cultural heritage. Remnants of ancient dwellings, including those at La Cueva and a ten room pueblo in the Robledo Mountains, attest to the people who once called this area home.

Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Rock Art sites: Stable	Static
Habitat sites: At high risk	

Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
496,540	To date, as entered into GIS: 6,287	To date, as entered into GIS: 1,204	Unknown

Stressors Affecting Archeological Resources

At this time, stressors to the archaeological resources have not been identified.

Historical Resources:

The Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks landscape contains the evidence of recent historical activities through numerous objects spanning the 19th and 20th centuries. The Dripping Springs Resort contains several structures supporting a getaway for famous and average persons that were repurposed over time for use as a sanatorium. Baylor Pass is a landmark through which soldiers passed during civil war battles. Lookout Peak was the site of a heliograph station the military used to transmit Morse Code messages during western campaigns. The Butterfield Trail passes through the Monument, and a stage stop was located here. Outlaw Rock contains the inscription of Billy the Kid. The most recent historical sites in the Monument include bombing targets which were used to train WWII pilots.

Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Fair	Stable

Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
496,540	To date, as entered into GIS: 6,287	To date, as entered into GIS: 1,204	Unknown

Stressors Affecting Historical Resources

At this time, stressors to historical resources have not been identified.

Biological & Ecological Resources:

The Monument is located within the Chihuahuan Desert ecoregion. Some of the plants found here are rare or endemic and include the Organ Mountain evening primrose, Organ Mountains giant hyssop, Organ Mountains paintbrush, Organ Mountains pincushion cactus, Organ Mountain figwort, Organ Mountains scaleseed, night-blooming cereus, Plank's Catchfly, nodding cliff daisy, and likely the endangered Sneed's pincushion cactus. Plant species and plant communities important for contributing to the ecological diversity within the Monument include Chihuahuan grasslands, ponderosa pine stands, small riparian ecosystems, and desert shrub communities. The quality and proximity of these ecosystems are important resources for ecological research. The ecosystems of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks support a wide variety of wildlife, from common animals to more rare and sensitive species. Though too numerous to list in their entirety, a description of notable species includes mountain lions and mule deer, raptors, including the Organ Mountains chipmunk, migratory song birds, a large variety of reptiles, birds such as Gambel's quail, ladder-backed woodpecker, Scott's oriole, and cactus wren, as well as many species of bats. One of several species of rare terrestrial snails, the Organ Mountain talus snail, is endemic to the Organ Mountains.

Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
496,540	496,179 through the Site Write up Area done in the Soil Vegetation Inventory Method	496,540	50,000

Stressors Affecting Biological & Ecological Resources

At this time, stressors to biological and ecological resources have not been identified.

Geological Resources:

The Monument has long been an area of geological studies of sedimentation and stratigraphy, as well as a setting for research on the formation of desert soils. The Organ Mountains are a steep, angular mountain range with rocky spires of Precambrian granite and metamorphic basement rock that jut majestically above the Chihuahuan Desert floor to an elevation of 9,000 feet. The range derives its name from the needle-like spires that resemble the pipes of an organ. The Desert Peaks are characterized by steeply rising desert mountains from flat plains, and include the Robledo Mountains, which exhibit sedimentary deposits of scientific interest, Sierra de Las Uvas Mountains, and Doña Ana Mountains exhibiting peaks of monzonite. The Potrillo Mountains area is a volcanic landscape of cinder cones, lava flows, and craters. Numerous volcanic cinder cones jut out prominently from otherwise broad desert plains. Volcanic features of the Potrillo Mountains include the Aden Lava Flow, Kilbourne Hole, which exhibits Olivine glass, and Hunt’s Hole.

Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
496,540	496,540 through geological layers in GIS	496,540	0

Stressors Affecting Geological Resources

The BLM has not identified any threats to the geology of the Monument because they are of such a scale that scientific values are not threatened by human activity.



Mt. Riley and surrounding landscape

Paleontological Resources:

The paleontological resources in the Monument are predominantly Permian Age fossil material, but include other discoveries as well. The primary paleontological resources include the fossilized tracks of ancient animals (associated with the adjacent Prehistoric Trackways National Monument; Shelter Cave in the Organ Mountains, which includes fossil remnants of ancient ground sloths, birds, and voles; and Aden Crater lava tube in the Potrillo Mountains area, which contained the fossil remains of a giant ground sloth.

Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Stable

Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
496,540	496,540, through GIS Potential Fossil Yield Classification	Higher Potential Fossil Acreage 142,139	0

Stressors Affecting Paleontological Resources

The primary stressors to paleontological resources are environmental (runoff in arroyos from rainstorm events can erode otherwise stable sites), and human disturbances (which include inadvertent impacts and intentional theft).

6 Summary of Performance Measure

The overall status of the ROVs is stable. As the new Monument is brought up to full operational standards, the BLM will further inventory baseline status of objects, and identify condition trend through monitoring. Stressors have not been fully identified for most of the ROVs, pending further inventory and monitoring.

Summary Table*		
Resource, Object, or Value	Status	Trend
Archaeology	Rock Art sites: Stable Habitat sites: At high risk	Static
Historic	Fair	Stable
Biological and Ecological	Good	Stable
Geology	Good	Stable
Paleontology	Good	Stable

*This table is a synthesis of the individual object/value status tables in the “Objects, Values, and Stressors” section.

7

Manager's Letter

Dear Friends of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument,

This last fiscal year was big year for us in the Las Cruces District. On May 21, 2015, President Barack Obama declared the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks an monument. The Proclamation stated that, "The protection of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks area will preserve its cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and maintain its diverse array of natural and scientific resources, ensuring that the prehistoric, historic, and scientific values of this area remain for the benefit of all Americans."

In this coming year, our focus will be on inventorying the Monument objects. We are hoping to fill new BLM positions, and/or intern positions, to begin the process of inventorying the immense heritage, scientific, and ecological resources in the Monument, and to provide services to the visitor interested in this beautiful landscape.

Another priority in the next year is going to be community outreach. We will continue visiting with local community groups, organizations, and agencies to highlighting the resources of the Monument, but also to share what the process is going to look like for the planning of the Monument over the next few years.

During the next year, there are a few events that are taking place in Las Cruces that will have big impact on bringing national attention to the Monument. In May 2015, local community groups are planning a weeklong celebration of the 1-year anniversary of the Monument dedication. Also, there are plans for Las Cruces to be the site for the Pecos Conference for Southwest Archaeology that can attract up to 500 people, and would include tours of sites within the Monument.

Thank you,

Bill Childress
BLM, Las Cruces District Manager



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Organ Mountains- Desert Peaks National Monument

Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Phone: 575-525-4300

April 16, 2015

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