



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

California

# Carrizo Plain

National Monument

Annual Manager's Report—Fiscal Year 2014



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# 1 Carrizo Plain Profile

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## Designating Authority

**Designating Authority:** Presidential Proclamation, Proclamation 7393

**Date of Designation:** January 17, 2001

## Acreage

**Total Acres in Unit** 208,698

**BLM Acres** 208,698

**Other Federal Acres** 0

**State and Private Acres\*** 39,575

\*State and Private acres are not part of the total of the unit acres

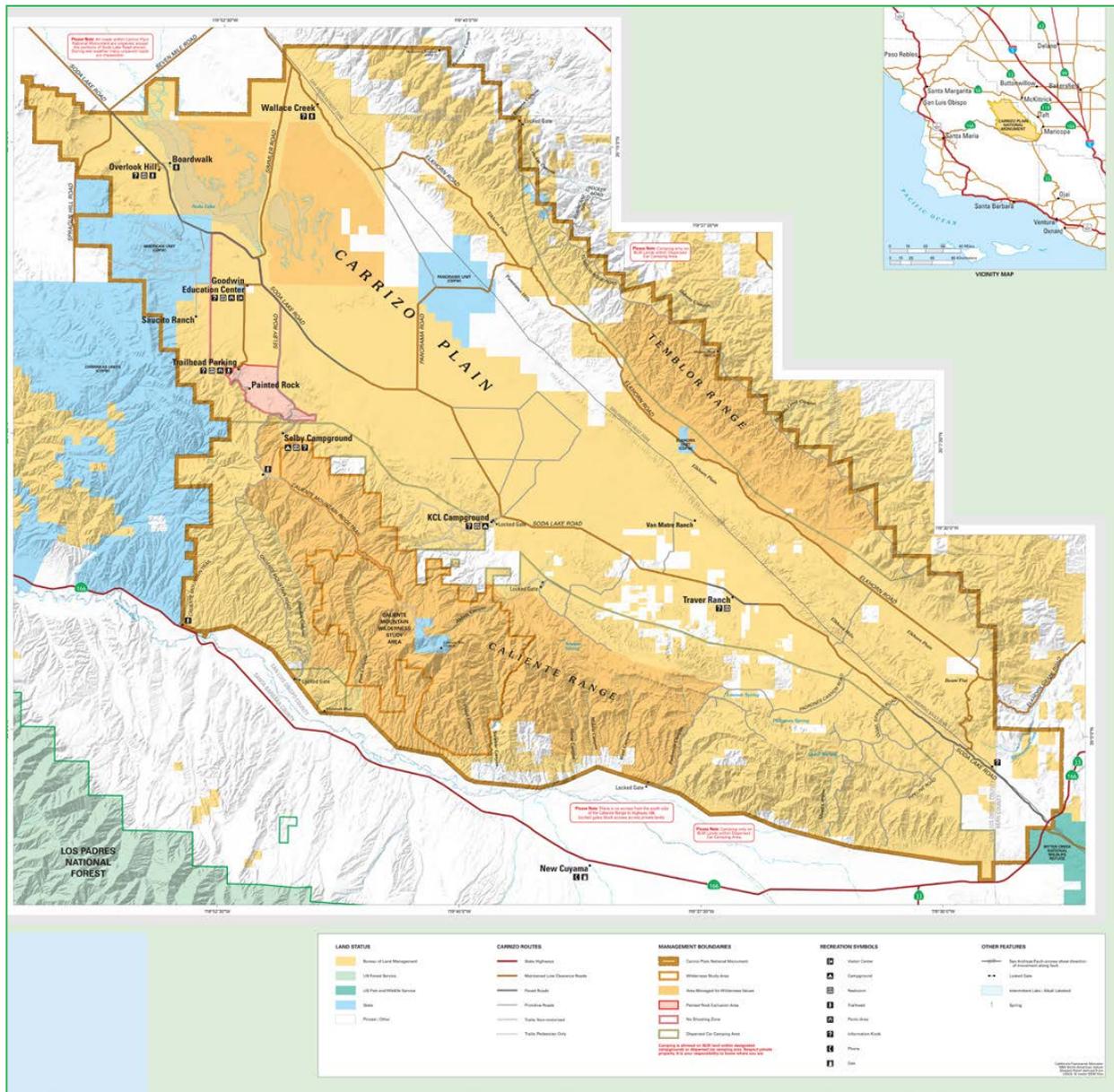
## Contact Information

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**Field Office Name** Bakersfield  
**District Office Name** Central California  
**State Office Name** California

## Budget

**Total Fiscal Year 2014 Budget** \$786,600  
**Subactivity 1711** \$754,000  
**Other Subactivities' Contributions** \$14,600  
**Other Funding** \$0

## Map of Carrizo Plain National Monument



## Managing Partners

The Monument is managed cooperatively by the Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish & Wildlife and The Nature Conservancy.

## Staffing

The Monument has a permanent dedicated staff of 6, who spends 100% of their time on the monument. These positions include the Monument Manager, Wildlife Biologist, Recreation Planner, Natural Resource Specialist, Maintenance worker and Outreach & Admin Program Support Tech. Other support staff needed for the management of the

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Monument are shared with the Bakersfield Field Office. These positions include Law Enforcement Officers, Archaeologists, Lands staff and others as needed. These positions allocate approximately 25% of their workload on the Monument depending on the need. In addition, a seasonal, visitor services person staffs the visitor center 6 months out of the year.

# 2 Planning and NEPA

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## Status of the Resource Management Plan

The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the monument was completed and signed in April 2010. We evaluated our implementation strategy and identified priorities for the upcoming year. These priorities are based on staff capabilities and funding levels.

## Status of Activity Plans

We have continued our planning efforts on our travel management plan. We have had 3 public meetings with interested parties to address users concerns. The plan should be finished in 2015.

## Status of the RMP Implementation Strategy

Our implementation strategy is based on the goals and objectives from the RMP and focuses on priorities for each resource. Accomplishments for the year focused on biological, cultural and recreational resources. This year we conducted annual surveys of biological resources, completed 200 acres of habitat restoration, continued to develop the travel management plan as well as monitored cultural resources and inventoried certain areas. Over 1,600 acres were acquired and added to the Monument this year.



Trenching project along the San Andreas Fault

**Table of Monument-wide Priorities**

Resource	Theme	RMP Action	Resource priority	On-going	One-time
Biology	Core area T&E animals	BIO-9, 10	1	x	
	Special status animals species	BIO-15, 17, 18, 19, 24, 67	2	x	
	Vernal Pools	BIO-38	3	x	
	Acquisition	BIO-90	4		x *
Botany	Rare plants	BIO-3, 4	1	x *	
	Native plants	BIO-48	2	x	
	Weeds	BIO-82, 83	3	x	
Grazing	Compliance	GRZ-4	1	x	
	Grazing impacts	GRZ-3	2		x *
Recreation	Signing	REC-3	1	x	
	Amenity fees	REC-1	2	x	
	Expand Ed Center	REC-30, ADM-25	3		x *
	Overlooks	REC-25, VRM-3	4		X
	Education/outreach	REC-11, 17	5	x	
	Partnerships/gateway communities	REC-15, 16	6	x	
Visuals	Reduce facilities' visual impacts	VRM-3	1		X
Travel Mgmt	Travel Mgmt Plan	TRV-1	1		X
	Close roads	TRV-4	2		X
	Illegal off-road travel	TRV-8	3	x	
Cultural	Painted Rock permit	CUL-6, 27	1		X
	Baseline data development	CUL-3, 4, 8, 11, 20, 33, 37, 44, 5	2		X
	Monitoring	CUL-32, 2	3	x	
	Mitigation/stabilization	CUL-5, 34, 48, 29, 4, 18	4		x *
Geo/Paleo	Baseline data development	GP-3, 8	1		X
	Inventory	GP-1	2	x	
Fire/fuels	Resource protection	FIRE-3	1	x	
Minerals	Establish SOPs	MNL-1	1		X
	Manage leases	MNL-2,4, 5,10,18,20	2	x	
Soil	Erosion	SOIL-1	1	x	
Water	Soda Lake Water Quality	WTR-7, 8,9,10,11,13	1	x	x *
	Riparian PFC	WTR-1, 2, 5	2	x	
Air	Air Quality	AIR-9 (solar)	1		x *
Lands	Acquisition	LR-1	1		x *
Admin facilities	Maintain	ADM-1	1	x	
Research	Data management	RM-14, 16, 17	1	x	

**Key National Environmental Policy Actions and/or Projects Authorizations**

**NEPA for 2014: S oda**

**Lake Deposit Deformation Study:**

The purpose of the study was to assess the deformation of deposits adjacent to the northern and southern basins of Soda Lake within the Carrizo Plain National

Monument.

- **Sag Pond and San Andreas Fault Zone Excavation:**  
Trenches were excavated at a large sag pond located within the San Andreas Rift Zone for comparison purposes to ultimately determine the magnitude of earthquakes that have happened in the past.
- **2D Seismic Survey:**  
BLM approved geophysical data acquisition via a non-invasive, 2D seismic survey within a small portion of land adjacent to the company's private land.
- **Carrizo Plain Ecosystem Project (CPEP):**  
The CPEP is a long-term study designed to inform management about the relationships between plants and animals (including endangered species) to better our understanding of a complex ecosystem and the best tools needed for conservation and management. 12 temporary, rainfall manipulation systems (rainout shelters) were added component to assess effects of climate change on the ecosystem.
- **Cochran Solar Well:**  
The project converted the pump operation at a remote water well from a gasoline-powered generator to solar.
- **East Temblor Hill Climb Restoration:**  
This project involves constructing fences and barricades, setting up educational signage and rehabilitation of habitat destroyed by years of illegal, off highway vehicle use.

Authorizations for 2014:

- **Giant kangaroo rat trapping:**  
Giant kangaroo rats were trapped to maintain data consistency for a monitoring project and collect data on rats in areas of sub-optimal habitat.
- **San Joaquin kit fox conservation measures:**  
Activities including trapping and radio-collaring of kit foxes and installation of wildlife cameras were authorized.
- **Small game guzzler maintenance:**  
Repairs to guzzlers were authorized to restore and maintain functionality for use by wildlife
- **Rattlesnake venom study:**  
The collection of rattlesnake venom as part of a comparison/genetic study conducted in the 1970s.
- **Legless lizard genetic study:**  
Lizard sampling was authorized as part of a larger study which looks at newly identified species of legless lizards.
- **Beetle specimen collection:**  
Specimens were collected to document the ranges of known species, to discover

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currently unrecognized species, and to obtain specimens for DNA sequencing and genomic studies understanding two families of beetles.

- **Kit fox spotlighting:**

Spotlighting for viewing of San Joaquin kit fox (an endangered species) was authorized for visiting school groups.

- **Geologic mapping:**

Authorization for a university Geology class from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA to conduct geologic mapping.

- **Parasitic wasp collection:**

Continuing authorization was granted to collect parasitic wasps for identification and as part of a state-wide checklist created by the Essig Museum of Entomology at UC Berkeley.

# 3 Year's Projects and Accomplishments

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## General Accomplishments

Significant accomplishments for fiscal year 2014 in the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM) included:

- Final Supplementary Rules were published and are in effect
- 1,614 acres were acquired
- Monitored and managed Painted Rock and other cultural areas with partners
- General maintenance and upkeep of administrative facilities, including campgrounds and visitor center
- Conducted many tours and education programs throughout the year
- Monitored various animal and bird species throughout the monument
- Monitored 250 acres for noxious weeds
- Had many volunteer workdays including hosting a National Public Lands Day Event
- Establish and defined a parking area and trail head on the Caliente Mountain
- We estimate approximately 36,000 visitors enjoyed the monument (with the lack of wildflowers and dry conditions visitation was about 10,000 lower than in 2013).
- Working with our gateway communities to develop an App, for the smart phone, which will provide interpretive information to the visitor, prior to coming, as well as while on the Monument.

## Current Areas of Focus

Our highest area of focus during the past year stems from vandalism, off road use, and theft. These were identified as issues last year as well. With the price of scrap metal being at all-time highs, steel objects were a focus for thieves. We had volunteer patrols during the high use season which helped curtail some of these activities. Currently there are vacant Law Enforcement positions, so our coverage has been spotty. We have been relying on other partners to help patrol the area and provide coverage as needed. We continue to educate the public via the web, personal contacts and printed materials in hopes that this education will reduce these activities.

In the upcoming year we are going to increase on the ground signage as appropriate and continue to increase patrols.

## Education, Outreach, and Interpretation

Heritage values education and interpretive programs are a critical element in the protection and management of CPNM cultural resources. These programs foster public lands stewardship through the various opportunities for education and enjoyment on the CPNM. This includes self-guided and guided tours to the Painted Rock pictograph site and historic Saucito Ranch. During 2014, signage content for the historic Van Mater Ranch interpretive trail and the Mary Morris gravesite and homestead was developed for installation in 2015.

Our cooperating association, The Friends of the Carrizo Plain have provided funding to schools and groups to defray travel costs to the Monument. This effort has provided over 150 students an opportunity to visit the Monument. Throughout the year we give tours to various schools and specialty groups. Docents and volunteers continue to make our programs a success.

We also finished installing the interpretive kiosk at the visitor center to provide educational materials when the center is closed.

## Partnerships

Our partners and affiliated groups continue to grow and provide needed support for the Monument. Our managing partners (The Nature Conservancy and California Department of Fish & Wildlife) continue to contribute to the overall management of the monument. This includes support for managing the science program and biological resources. Our combined efforts continue to complete priority projects.

The Santa Margarita Gateway is the lead on developing an App for the smart phone that will highlight points of interest in their community and the Carrizo. They are working with the Friends of the Carrizo Plain and the other Gateway community of Taft to highlight portions of their community as well. Input into the App has begun and we are hoping it will be finished late 2015.

The Taft Gateway also operates a visitor center in the Taft Chamber of Commerce building throughout the year. Many visitors from the metropolitan cities pass through Taft to enter the monument. The information that is received by visitors enhances their experience while visiting the monument. Taft along with the Friends of Carrizo Plain continue to contribute to the publication of a visitor guide for the Monument.

The Friends of Carrizo Plain continue to support projects on the Monument. This year they covered tour expenses for Taft schools and other interest groups. They bought additional electronic equipment to have in the visitor center. They have provided funds for an intern to

help with tours and other needs. They continue to support volunteer efforts on the Monument. They have provided support to the gateway communities on different projects that will enhance public experiences while visiting the Monument.

The CPNM continues to foster meaningful Tribal consultation through partnerships with affiliated Native American Tribes. Regular meetings and outreach are conducted through the *CPNM Native American Advisory Council* and other interested descendant communities and individuals.

## Volunteers

Every year we host a National Public Lands Day event. This year we focused our efforts on revitalizing one of our campgrounds. We cleaned up weeds, dead trees, and other debris. We planted native plants and worked on a walkway around the restrooms. We had approximately 50 volunteers including a group from a local high school. It was a great day and we got a lot of work accomplished!

One of our returning volunteer groups came out to the monument on 3 different occasions to modify and or remove fence for the benefit of wildlife movement. Their efforts continue to make a difference in the management of wildlife.

Another returning volunteer has been taking archival quality photographs of cultural resources throughout the monument. This will benefit the management of these resources for years to come.

Other volunteer groups or individuals continue to contribute their time to the overall success of managing the monument.



National Public Lands Day, 2014

## Land (or Interests in Land) Acquisitions

One acquisition totaling 1,614 acres was purchased within the monument this year.

# 4 Science

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## Science

The CPNM is recognized for its exceptional biological, cultural, paleontological and geologic resources. Its vastness and high concentration of native flora and fauna make it ideal as an outdoor laboratory. Due to pressures from competing land uses and climate change conservation managers are presented with many challenges. Given the resources and management challenges there are unlimited opportunities for future science on the CPNM to provide for informed management and science-based decision making.

The CPNM's Conservation Target Table (CTT) currently serves as its Science Plan. The CTT was completed during the planning process, but is a fluid document that is reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with our managing partners to determine research priorities. It is updated as new knowledge is gained or changes in management practices are adopted.

**Name:** Carrizo Plain Ecosystem Project

**Description:** This is a long-term study designed to aid in the understanding of relationships between the giant kangaroo rat, (a federally endangered, keystone species), plant dynamics and livestock grazing to inform our management of listed and other plant and animal species. In addition, how giant kangaroo rats and livestock affect other species in the ecosystem including rodents, birds, reptiles, insects and predators are also studied.

**Key words:** giant kangaroo rat, endangered species, ecosystem

**Principal investigator:** Dr. Justin Brashares, Ph.D.

**Project status:** Ongoing; sixth year

**BLM's contributed funds:** \$30,000.00

**Name:** Ecology and Distribution of the Kern primrose Sphinx Moth

**Description:** Research on a rare, federally threatened moth continues to refine our knowledge about its ecology, habitat needs and genetics. Surveying now takes place using a synthetic pheromone developed specifically for this project. Research has expanded to include the study of parasitism on captive-reared eggs and offspring. Funding in 2014 focused on completing DNA analysis and preparing a manuscript for publication.

**Key words:** Kern primrose sphinx moth, synthetic pheromone, parasitism

**Principal investigator:** Dr. Ken Osborne and Dr. Daniel Rubinoff

**Project status:** Ongoing; manuscript has been completed and submitted for publication

**BLM's contributed funds:** \$9500.00

**Name:** Estimating Extinction Risks of Blunt-nosed Leopard Lizard

**Description:** This study looks at populations of blunt-nosed leopard lizard (a federally endangered lizard), across different public lands (including the CPNM) and generates extinction risks throughout its range. By creating three models, an extinction assessment model, a habitat niche suitability model and a population viability analysis model, the study will provide both short-term (yearly to decadal) and long-term (30 to 60 years) information for the CPNM populations of blunt-nosed leopard lizard.

**Key words:** blunt-nosed leopard lizard, extinction risk, climate change

**Principal investigator:** Dr. Barry Sinervo, Ph.D.

**Project status:** Ongoing, projected to end in 2015

**BLM's contributed funds:** In-kind contributions from the Carrizo Plain National Monument

**Name:** Special Status and Sensitive Bird Species Conservation

**Description:** The CPNM is one of the few places in California that provides habitat for San Joaquin Valley population of the Le Conte's thrasher (a BLM sensitive and state species of special concern). Le Conte's thrashers have very specific habitat and nesting requirements. Point Blue has conducted surveys for several years and has ultimately developed and refined a habitat model, identifying key areas where the bird can be found. In 2014, data collected in the previous three years was analyzed and future needs were assessed.

**Key words:** Le Conte's thrasher, habitat model, sensitive species

**Principal investigator:** Geoff Geupel

**Project status:** Ongoing

**BLM's contributed funds:** \$5000.00

**Name:** Earthquake and Faulting Research – San Andreas Fault

**Description:** The San Andreas Fault separates two tectonic plates and runs for approximately 700 miles. It also traverses the entire CPNM, a segment of the fault which is known around the world to geologists and earthquake enthusiasts. Given the potential for a catastrophic earthquake research has been stepped up in recent years to acquire updated information on magnitude and frequency of past earthquakes along the fault. The research has involved USGS and several universities who have constructed temporary trenches in specific areas along the fault in order to analyze past activity and collect samples used for dating. Superior technology now allows for more accurate dating and improved imagery providing more precise interpretation of trench walls. These advances are being used to make better predictions that will affect thousands of Californians. A project in 2014 used trenching within a sag pond to determine the magnitude of earthquakes detected in trench work located elsewhere.

**Key words:** San Andreas Fault, earthquake

**Principal investigator:** Sinan Akciz Ph.D.

**Project status:** One project on hold until funding is available. The sag pond trenching project is completed.

**BLM's contributed funds:** None

# 5 Resources, Objects, Values, and Stressors

## Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources. The CPNM contains some of the most significant cultural resources in the nation. This has been formalized through the designation of 100 Native American heritage sites as the Carrizo Plain Archeological District National Historic Landmark. In addition to sites associated with Native American occupation, the CPNM also contains several NRHP eligible historic period sites associated with early Anglo settlement and the regional development of agriculture. The Carrizo Plain is also imbued with Native American spiritual values and many culturally affiliated Tribal members view the CPNM as a sacred landscape. Cultural resource management within the CPNM is focused on preservation and public education in cooperation with Tribal partners.

### Cultural Resources Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Good	Improving through implementation of proactive adaptive management approaches aimed at preservation.

### Cultural Resources Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
250,000	Approximately 25,000	282 recorded cultural sites	80 resources monitored in 2014

## Stressors Affecting Cultural Resources

Cultural Resources within the CPNM may be potentially adversely affected by public use due to dispersed camping, route usage, vandalism, unauthorized livestock trespass, vandalism and looting. Cultural sites are also potentially subject to natural degradation due to weathering, erosion and wildland fire.

## Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species

The Monument Proclamation that established the CPNM recognized its exceptional biological resources as objects to be protected and the importance of the area as a large remnant of habitat for many wildlife species endemic to the nearby San Joaquin Valley, and as a refuge for the dwindling flora and fauna of the valley. Several plants and animals are listed as threatened or endangered and the CPNM plays an important role in their conservation and recovery. In addition, the National Audubon Society has designates the

CPNM as a globally Important Bird Area. The CPNM is home to nearly 700 species of plants with over 35 of those considered rare, and over 240 species of animals, over 40 of which are sensitive species. Management focuses on ecosystem function and health with emphasis on listed, rare and sensitive species. The Resources, Objects and Values listed in the Proclamation have been grouped into the following: (1) Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species and (2) Rare and Sensitive Plant Species.

Wildlife species targeted for conservation and recovery include giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, Longhorn and Vernal pool fairy shrimp, San Joaquin Le Conte's thrasher and Kern primrose sphinx moth (discovered following the Proclamation). With the exception of the Kern primrose sphinx moth, all of these animals were once common throughout large portions of the state. Loss and fragmentation of habitat due to intensive agriculture, urban and industrial development and energy production has heightened the importance of the habitat that the CPNM provides for each one of these species.



Blunt-nosed leopard lizard

### Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
<p>For 2014, the status for many <b>Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species</b> within the CPNM was categorized as poor based on extreme drought conditions with little or no reproduction occurring</p>	<p>The Carrizo is a desert type ecosystem and with indications from past droughts and climate change extinction models, species are expected to recover with the onset of rain. Trend is expected to be improving.</p>

**Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table**

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
<p>Approximately 154,000 acres for giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin kit fox, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, blunt-nosed leopard lizard and mountain plover; &lt;30 acres for long-horn and vernal pool fairy shrimp and Kern primrose sphinx moth; approximately 10,000 acres for Le Conte's thrasher.</p>	<p>~ 1000 newly acquired acres</p>	<p>Approximately 20 acres but potential for several listed species of animals over the 1000 acres with conservation as a priority.</p>	<p>For endangered, threatened and sensitive species of animals is estimated at 100,000 acres through ongoing studies for giant kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, blunt-nosed leopard lizard and Kern primrose sphinx moth as well as roadside surveys for San Joaquin kit fox and San Joaquin antelope squirrel. Less than 5 acres were monitored for fairy shrimp due to the limited amount of water in vernal pools due to drought-related circumstances.</p>

**Stressors Affecting Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species**

Stressors to endangered, threatened and sensitive species of animals on the Monument include mortalities as a result of vehicle strikes, illegal activities such as off-road vehicle use which can directly impact species and habitat, vandalism to signs and barriers that serve to protect habitat and the lack of law enforcement presence to prevent or curb illegal activities. Recreational activities such as dispersed camping and increased numbers of visitors can stress wildlife by disrupting and disturbing reproductive efforts and caring for young. Drought conditions continued to have a direct impact on species and reproduction.



San Joaquin kit fox

### Rare and Sensitive Plant Species

The CPNM is home to 3 federally listed plants: California jewelflower, San Joaquin woolly-threads and Kern mallow. Hoover’s woolly-star was delisted under an agreement with USFWS to continue to be treated as listed on BLM lands. There are 32 additional rare plant species. The wide variation in topography such as valley floor, mountains, foothills and alkali sink provide the necessary habitat for these species and the plant communities they are a part of.

#### Rare and Sensitive Plant Species Status and Trend Table

Status of Resource, Object, or Value	Trend
Status of Rare and Sensitive Plant Species unknown. Drought conditions prevented annual plant germination in 2014.	Most of the rare and sensitive plant species on the Monument are annuals whose populations are driven by rainfall. It is uncertain how all populations of rare species will respond to long-term drought however, the trend for some is expected to improve with winter rainfall if it occurs.

#### Rare and Sensitive Plant Species Inventory, Assessment, Monitoring Table

Acres in Unit	Acres Inventoried	Acres Possessing Object	Acres Monitored in FY14
Approximately 50,000 acres for rare and sensitive plant species.	0 acres.		Approximately 50,000 acres for rare and sensitive plant species.

## Stressors Affecting Rare and Sensitive Plant Species

Stressors to rare and sensitive plants are predominantly off-road vehicle use and drought conditions.



San Joaquin woolly threads

# 6 Summary of Performance Measure

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2014 represented the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a drought that ultimately affected plant and animal species on the Monument. Monitoring of populations and habitat reported little to no recruitment of young for animals and no germination of plants. While a look at 2014 alone gives a bleak picture of species populations, the overall nature of the system is one that has adapted to drought/desert-like conditions and populations are expected to respond positively once drought conditions end.

<b>Resources, Objects, and Values Status Summary Table</b>		
<b>Resource, Object, or Value</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Improving through the implementation of proactive adaptive management approaches aimed at preservation</b>
<b>Endangered, Threatened and Sensitive Animal Species</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Expected to improve once drought conditions end</b>
<b>Rare and Sensitive Plant Species</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>Unknown but expected to improve once drought conditions end</b>

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## Manager's Letter

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Even though we have been in a drought, and the beautiful wildflower displays have not been present, the amount of persons visiting the Monument is still noteworthy. We recognize the need to continue to increase our presence out on the monument with volunteer patrols, supported by law enforcement. We will continue to be creative on how we accomplish this task.

With the coming year we hope rain will grace the landscape and help all species. We will continue to support scientific studies on the monument both ongoing and proposed. We are looking forward to continue our wildlife and ecosystem research.

We have had a lot of dedicated volunteers that continue to support the monument. Their efforts are critical to the ongoing management of the area. Continued support of their efforts is critical in the upcoming year.

A couple of projects that occurred that were significant were:

- re-vitalizing one of our campgrounds
- Initiating restoration work, damaged by off road use
- Habitat restoration project, planting a mixture of native grasses

We are planning to conduct restoration efforts on approx. 150 acres in the coming year.

Our partners are working on some great projects, we will continue to support their efforts throughout the year and look for other opportunities to create new partnerships.

As always there will be unseen challenges that will arise, we will work with our partners and staff to continue to manage this unique place for generations to come.



**NATIONAL  
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## **Carrizo Plain**

### **National Monument**

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