







CALIFORNIA DESERT CONSERVATION AREA

Congress established the California Desert Conservation Area in 1976 with the goal of providing "for the immediate and future protection and administration of the public lands in the California Desert within the framework of a program of multiple use and sustained yield, and the maintenance of environmental quality." Provision for the desert conservation area was included in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579), sometimes called the "BLM Organic Act." Congress noted that the California Desert contains a variety of

natural, cultural and economic resources "that are uniquely located adjacent to an area of large population." Congress adopted the two-pronged approach begun earlier by the Bureau of Land Management's desert program: Concurrent elements of comprehensive, long-range planning and interim critical management actions pending completion of an overall plan. The Secretary of the Interior, through the Bureau of Land Management, is to prepare and implement a plan for the management, use, development and protection of public lands within the con-

A program of interim management "to manage, use and protect the public lands, and their resources now in danger of destruction" is authorized for the period between passage of the Act and

completion of the long-range plan.

The law provided for a California Desert Conservation Area Advisory Committee to advise BLM on development and implementa-

A program of law enforcement, including a uniformed desert ranger force, also was authorized; and search and rescue was made an assigned mission of BLM where no other emergency forces are available.
The California Desert Conservation Area contains some 25 mil-

lion acres, or about one-fourth of the land surface of California.

About 12½ million acres is National Resource Land administred by BLM, in addition to apprixmately 5 million acres of military and National Park lands. The enabling Act said the use of all California desert resources

can and should be managed "to conserve these resources for future generations, and to provide present and future use and where appropriate of off-road recreational vehicles."

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

## **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT** The Bureau of Land Management, an agency of the Department

of the Interior, is responsible for the conservation, management and development of 473 million acres of National Resource Lands, 20 percent of the land area of the United States and 60 percent of all federally owned lands. In addition, BLM has administrative responsibility for public mineral resources on 369 million acres of private and other federally owned lands, and for approximately 1.1 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf. National Resource Lands are managed for multiple-use, including timber, minerals, livestock grazing, wildlife, watershed, wilderness and outdoor rec-

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CONSERVATION AREA





