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SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT

JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK

1996

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**SUPERINTENDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 1996
JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK**

INTRODUCTION

The year 1996 was one of the more difficult yet rewarding times for Joshua Tree National Park. Park visitation was down 11.4% over the previous year. This was attributed to the lingering effects of the government shut during the latter part of 1995 and to one of the poorest wildflower season the park has experienced in many years. The effects of the National Park System reorganization and the downsizing of government continue to have repercussions at the park level. The phrase "Doing more with less" pretty much summons up the current state of affairs.

Park operating budgets were received very late into the fiscal year which made planning difficult and risk taking essential. On a positive note the park did receive a modest base increase of \$70,000 for hiring of two park ranger positions (the down side of this increase is that the actual cost of two GS/025/9 Park Rangers exceeded the amount received.

Planning and facilities improvements for the park continued to take priority. An update/rewrite of the park's Land Protection Plan was initiated and completed (Assistant Superintendent Frank Buono was the key person in bring this plan to conclusion). Work continues by the Park in the three ecosystem management plans that include the park; the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan, the West Mojave Desert Coordinated Management Plan, and the Coachella Valley Habitat Conservation Plan. All of these plans are multi-species habitat conservation efforts on a regional scale.

The Desert Managers Group, a innovative initiative that started in the early part of 1995 strengthened and reaffirmed it's role in collaborative management for the California and Nevada desert region. This new concept in multi-agency management of the vast Mojave and Colorado Desert resources, as well as public use, continues to be one of the shining stars in cooperative and effective management strategies.

Work continued on the amendment to the Park's General Management Plan. The Park's GMP was approved in 1995 and provided management direction for the developed portions of the park. The GMP amendment will provide for the establishment of a Backcountry and Wilderness Management Plan for all of the parks Natural Area and for all of the new lands added to the park from the passage of the 1994 Desert Protection Act. Planing continues and is expected to be completed in the fall of this year.

The Eagle Mountain Landfill and Recycling Center proposal has taken an extra ordinary amount of time to counter. The Eagle Mountain Landfill project proposes to place the worlds largest landfill (dump) immediately adjacent to the Park at the site of the old Kaiser Iron Ore Mine. The Eagle Mountain landfill is the most significant external threat that Joshua Tree NP has faced to date. The landfill is planned to operate for 117 years and will accept trash from all of the seven counties of southern California. In 1996 the park responded in detail to the Draft EIS/EIR document. The decision by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors on approval or denial of the landfill project, and the Bureau of Land Management decision to approve a land exchange required for the project, is expected to occur in 1997. Differences of opinion have evolved between the NPS Washington Office and the Park as to strategies for protecting the park should the landfill be approved. One of the major issues of contention is from an "agreement" or "memorandum of understanding" that was negotiated and signed by the Washington Office over the objections of the Pacific West Field Area and Joshua Tree NP.

The new "National Park" status bestowed on Joshua Tree by the passage of the 1994 Desert Protection Act has brought considerable positive attention to the park. The gateway communities have begun to recognize the economic importance Joshua Tree NP has on the region and are starting to think tourism as one of the important economic factors of the region. Community support for the park has been tremendous.

Assistance from the Denver Service Center planning team was provided to the park for the preparation of conceptual ideas for redesign and expansion of the park Visitor Information Center and Headquarters Complex. The Design team involved park staff and members of the local communities in identifying a "common Vision" for development of a information/cultural center and park support office complex. The design charette was a great success. Work towards identifying a preferred alternative continues.

Our focus this past year, and most likely into the next few years, is to improve park visitor facilities and employee working conditions. The park is very fortunate to have a dedicate staff who pull together and have a "can do attitude". Joshua Tree NP is, and will be a better place, because of staff commitment to excellence and dedication to the National Park Service mission. It has been a pleasure working with such an enthusiastic group of park, region, and association employees, and with our cadre of park volunteers.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Park Boundary Description

We resolved issues with the Metropolitan Water District concerning boundary issues in March of 1996. The preliminary official boundary maps that were produced in 1995 were made final in July. Those maps and legal descriptions have since been transmitted to the regional office, and the Washington office.

Land Protection Plan

Work began on the Land Protection Plan in April, and was completed in November of 1996. The Land Protection Plan contains information on all of the nonfederal lands within the park boundary. This includes over 500 separate tracts which comprise approximately 54,000 acres. We notified all landowners of the new additions, and that their lands were now within the park boundaries. Discussions were held with 70 of them who expressed an interest in selling 9,000 acres. We are working with the Nature Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservancy on donations of lands totaling nearly 15,000 acres, and with MWD on their relinquishing over 100 acres of lands and wilderness.

During 1996, appraisals and hazardous waste surveys were conducted on 13 tracts of land within the old Monument boundaries, including the Cohn property. We assumed management responsibility for all rights-of-way including the collection rental payments from ATT for the Bell Mountain tower.

Backcountry Management Plan, GMP Amendment

The focus of the plan is now on eight specific issues with a range of alternatives for each. We produced the first draft of the plan in 1996.

ADMINISTRATION

1996 was a year of turnover in Administrative Services. Except for the Personnel Management Specialist, every position in the work group changed hands during the year.

First to be vacated and filled was the Chief of Administration. After Kathy Tustanowski-Marsh left in March, Roger Parsons joined the staff in mid-May as the new Chief, moving over from Bryce Canyon National Park. Just one month later, another Bryce Canyon refugee, Danita Pollock, joined the staff as the new Purchasing Agent, replacing John Greener who left in April. Term employee Gimma Hyland left government service in July with many of her duties being absorbed by Danita and a temporary Office Automation

Clerk, Cathy Tavares (Cathy stayed on under two more appointments through the end of 1996 with lapse dollars covering her salary). Finally, in early August, Eunice Sibert, the Budget Assistant, resigned. Marty Golden, from Hopewell Furnace, joined the staff in late November as the new man in the Budget Office.

This upheaval led to quite a lot of rearranging of workloads and acting assignments. The only employee who didn't leave, Becky Patterson, served as Acting Administrative Officer for three months before Roger took over. Gimma covered most of the purchasing duties until Danita arrived. Roger covered the year-end closeout after Eunice left and also assumed the role of computer coordinator for the park--a role that had been shared by several previous employees.

It was also a year of some progress. Danita brought a Level II warrant to the park and was able to provide contracting up to the \$25,000 level. A team from the System Support Office came to the park in late August and installed a router to link the park (and several others dialing in through our router) to the DOINet and Internet. This eliminated the need for several modems being used throughout the park and also eliminated telephone line traffic jams that those modems had caused. More importantly, the ability of other parks to use the frame relay service provided by our router lowered their and our FTS costs to the government. And it enabled the park staff to start tapping into the enormous research and informational capabilities of the Internet for the first time.

Accounting practices were re-structured after Eunice left. Roger assumed accounting responsibilities for all park accounts and convinced the Management Team to continue with that practice for at least one more fiscal year. Marty departed for on-the-job training for that purpose in December with visits to the Field Area Office in San Francisco and to Death Valley National Park. Basically, the Budget Office now provides the park with a bi-weekly status of funds with all account reconciliation being handled by the Budget Assistant rather than six or seven program assistants. This has allowed us to keep closer track of accounts with more frequent snapshots of expenditures and balances. It has also increased productivity in other areas for those program assistants who used to have to devote much of their time to budget tracking. Divisions still review their commitment control and let the Budget Assistant know if there are any discrepancies in his reconciliation. It proved to be an effective accounting method at year end with the park finishing with less than \$600 in unspent base funds.

The park's budget received only some salary adjustments but otherwise remained flat in FY 96. One expected increase was deferred to FY 97. Most operating levels were reduced somewhat, kept close to 95 levels only through the use of lapse funds. In

comparing the FTE and funding level of Joshua Tree to parks with similar figures, our Administrative Services Division is short two to four positions (Crater Lake and Buffalo River, for example, have 9 FTE in Administrative Services compared to our 5). Office space continues to be at a premium for administrative operations. Nothing can be done at this point about office space until funding to implement the recommendations of the GMP can be obtained. An emphasis will be made to provide administrative support in the personnel office due to the increased workload associated with the increased delegation of authority. Plans are to convert the term position vacated by Gimma Hyland into a permanent, full-time Administrative Support Assistant position for that purpose. Funding for this position has been retained in the Administration budget. Serious consideration needs to be given to the establishment of a Computer Specialist position.

Budget and Finance

For the 1996 fiscal year ending September 30, 1996, the park was allocated an operating base of \$2,967,083.

Miscellaneous

Incentive Awards	3,700
VIP	6,300
GSA Reimbursement	39,400
Parks as Classrooms	6,000
Hazardous Materials/Recycling	4,000
Special Use Activities	37,700
Housing	22,800
<u>Protection</u>	70,200
Drug Investigation	
ARPA	14,500
Fee Collection Operation	175,600

Regular Cyclic/Equip Repl/Etc.

Replace Septic System Design	32,976
Maintenance ADP	5,142
Replace Vault Toilets	110,000

Restriping Park Roads	25,000
Blade Patch	154,250
Replace Visitor Amenities	40,000
Rehab Residence 502	35,000
YCC	15,200
<u>Natural Resources</u>	
Air Quality	8,000
Desert Tortoise NRPP	50,000
Water Resource Project	20,000
Canon Donation-Sheep Project	40,000
Raptor Study	6,000
Reimbursable Activities (SCS-ACOE)	32,700
<u>Cultural Resources</u>	
Backlog Cataloging	12,000
Museum Curation	163,900
Museum Storage Equipment	5,000
Stabilize Keys Ranch	18,300
Archaeological Survey Devel. A	29,100
<u>Firepro</u>	
Presuppression Operations/Permanent Staffing	156,271
381/382	136,704
TOTAL NON-ONPS	1,475,743
TOTAL ONPS	2,967,083
TOTAL FY96 FUNDING (DIRECT/INDIRECT)	\$ 4,487,599

Travel

During FY96, 181 travel authorizations were processed from Joshua Tree accounts for a total of \$ \$90,522.73. Change of station

moves were processed through the assistance of the Payroll Coordinator at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Internal Controls

All necessary internal control audits were performed (third party draft, imprest, fee collection). No major deficiencies were noted. Minor deficiencies were corrected.

Procurement

By the end of FY96, 689 third party drafts had been issued for a total of \$211,084. Some 188 purchase orders were issued (compared to 274 in the previous year) for a total of \$641,043. There was a total of 20 GSA MUFFIN orders totalling \$21,181 and 18 GSA Customer Service Center orders totalling \$2,783. We utilized blanket purchase agreements with 6 vendors and 55 receiving reports which covered \$19,251 in purchases. Imprest fund purchases were less active than in prior years with 107 transactions being covered on 9 reimbursement vouchers for a total \$7,279.

One contract was facilitated by the park for the sum of \$119,000.

The Third Party Draft Site Manager is the Purchasing Agent. The primary draft agent was the Administrative Assistant in FY 96 with the Maintenance Program Assistant as backup. The primary Imprest Fund Cashier was the Budget Assistant with the Administrative Assistant as backup. The Purchasing Agent received a Level IIC Warrant.

Property

The annual inventory was completed in November. All information in the PROP system was kept current. 19 Transfers of Property were received from various locations with 4 of those transferred to other parks.

Affirmative Action

Of the seventeen permanent positions filled during the year, seven were male (41%) and ten were female (59%). A total of 23 persons were employed seasonally during the calendar year 1996. A total of 0 persons were employed as temporaries. A total of 1 person was placed into a term appointment. Of the total seasonal, temporaries, and terms 58% were male, 41% were female, and 4% were minority.

Awards

The new DOI Awards and Recognition Plan was implemented this year. A total of 18 (FY96) employees received awards or a total of 31 (CY96).

Personnel

The Personnel Management Specialist is now performing as a Servicing Personnel Office.

74.66 FTE's were utilized in FY95. 50.92 were permanent with the remaining 23.74 non-permanent. 109 positions were occupied during 1995. Staffing at Joshua Tree National Park during 1995 consisted of the positions shown on the attached personnel roster (end of report).

Travel

During FY96, a total of 181 travel authorizations were processed from Joshua Tree accounts for a total of \$90,522.73. Seven change of station moves were processed with that responsibility being reassigned to the Purchasing Agent.

Personnel Roster - Calendar Year 1996

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>ROD</u>	<u>TRANSFER TERMINATION RESIGNATION DATE</u>
<u>Management</u>			
Ernest Quintana	Superintendent	03/20/94	--
Frank Buono	Assistant Superintendent	12/10/96	--
Sue Williams	Administrative Asst.	06/20/96	--
<u>Administration</u>			
Kathy T-Marsch	Administrative Officer	03/21/93	03/30/96
Roger Parsons	Administrative Officer	05/12/96	--
Rebecca Patterson	Personnel Mgmt. Spec.	(1990)	--
John Greener	Purchasing Agent	08/21/94	03/30/96
Eunice Sibert	Budget/Fiscal Clerk	(1990)	08/17/96
Ginmas Hland	Procurement Clk. (Term)	03/10/96	--
Cathy Tavares	Clerk Typist (CA) (Seas.)	03/24/96	--
Denita Pollock	Purchasing Agent	06/09/96	--
Marty Golden	Budget Assistant	11/10/96	--
<u>Interpretation</u>			
Joe Zarid	Chief of Interpretation	12/25/94	--
Carol Peterson	Park Ranger	(1990)	--
Arthur Webster	Park Ranger	10/31/93	05/02/96
Cindy Von Halle	Supv. Park Ranger	08/09/96	--
Elizabeth Van Zandt	Park Ranger	(1992)	--
Laureen Lenz	Park Ranger (Term)	03/12/95	--
Jody Lyle	Park Ranger	01/22/96	--
Sandra Keye	Park Ranger (Term)	01/22/95	--Eric ObergPark Ranger (Term)03/03/95--
Patricia Fitzgibbon	Info. Receipt. (Seas.)	02/19/96	3/02/96
Deanne Chatterton	Park Ranger (Term)	03/12/95	01/23/96
Deanne Chatterton	Information Receptionist (Term)	01/21/96	--
Michael Marion	Park Ranger (Seas.)	02/04/96	05/15/96
Larry Parsons	Park Ranger (Seas.)	02/04/96	05/23/96
<u>Visitor Protection</u>			
Judy Bartzell	Chief Park Ranger	06/01/94	--
Rose Knudsen	Admin/Fiscal Clerk	01/26/96	1/21/96
Melissa Fink	Clerk (CA)	07/22/96	9/25/96
Todd Swain	Criminal Investigator	04/04/93	--
Jeff O'Hls	Park Ranger	(1990)	--
Marion D-NRill	Park Ranger	04/18/93	--
Scott Stevens	Supv. Park Ranger	04/18/93	--
Keith Kalkay	Park Ranger	04/10/95	--
Jimmy Pritchett	Park Ranger	06/28/94	--
Nina Stevens	Supv. Park Ranger	05/18/95	--
Terry Olson	Park Ranger	01/03/96	--
Thomas Gavin	Resource Mgmt. Spec.	08/22/93	08/17/96

Petras Morgan	Vicior Uwe Amlsted	0303090	---
Donald Roberts	Cash Clerk	0302894	1071298
Cynthia Fero	Admin./Fiscal Clerk	1071308	---
Mike Grayson	Cash Clerk (Seas)	1162398	---
Joan Jackson	Park Ranger	1162193	---
Elio Beck	Cash Clerk (Term)	0306595	0301695
Alta Baker	Cash Clerk (Seas)	0207195	---
Gabriela Garcia	Cash Clerk (Term)	0162296	---
Tim Bertrnd	Cash Clerk (Term)	0162296	---
Jeremy Monroe	Park Ranger	0201795	129298
Jeremy Monroe	Park Ranger (Seas)	1291898	---
Ruby Hewton	Park Ranger (Seas)	1071398	1986
Teresa Estanovan	Cash Clerk (Term)	0201295	0216395
Kevln Tizman	Cash Clerk (Seas)	0201895	---
Chicklen Thims	Park Ranger	0471798	0472398
	Clerk (CA) (Seas)	0472398	---

Fire Management

Thomas Palermos	Fire Management Officer	(1980)	---
Roylne Adams	Fire Management Assistant	0162198	0472498
Margaret Schwach	Fire Management Assistant	0304995	---
Steve T. Mahan	Supv. Forestry Tech.	0023994	---
Todd McKittrick	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0071298	---
Jack French	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0462895	---
Kath Priston	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0501298	---
Chris Carpenter	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0501298	---
Nancy Casata	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0501298	---
Scott Ocker	Forestry Tech. (Seas)	0471898	1171698

Maintenance

Henry Carpenter	Chief of Maintenance	1272594	---
Shirley Knight	Admin. Assistant	0201395	---
Daryl Evans	Mech. Maint. Foreman	1171098	(1980)---
Rodica Olfenanz	Computer Clerk (Student)	1271095	---
R. John Williams	Mech. Maint. Foreman	0271898	---
James Hartschid	Maintenance Mechanic	(1980)	---
Ray Morabio	LD, Eng. Eq. Oper.	0471893	(1987)---
Bartlen Thompson	Motor Vehicle Operator	(1980)	(1988)---
Michael Adolphson	Engineering Eq. Oper.	(1980)	---
Cheer Gerda	Maintenance Worker	(1980)	---
Elena Jussiz	Maintenance Worker	(1980)	---
Emuel Sponoff	Maintenance Worker	(1980)	---
Gibori Moreno	LD, Mchnt. Worker	(1980)	---
James Hewdon	Maintenance Mechanic	(1980)	0625596
Robert Vignone	Mobile Equip. Servicer	0272293	---
Kohn Stevens	Maintenance Worker	0270595	300998
Kohn Stevens	Maintenance Worker	0381795	---
Dick Cripps	Maintenance Worker	0200595	0472798
Michael Pusk	Maintenance Worker	0200595	---
Mar Zbindel	Laborer	0300595	0400398
Elio Beck	Maintenance Worker	0300498	---
Chris Stephens	Maintenance Worker (Seas)	0300298	0001398
Victor Chapman	Maintenance Worker (Seas)	0471498	0302798
Steve Hildebrand	Maintenance Worker (Seas)	0472898	---
Scott Thornby	Maintenance Worker (Seas)	0472898	---
Dee Pollack	Maintenance Worker (Seas)	1092098	22998

Resource Management

Pat McCracken	Chief of Resource Mgmt.	1071694	0772098
Mark Holden	Supv. Park Ranger	(1980)	04-05
Jeremy French	Ecologist	(1981)	0770398
GERRI BOWSER	Ecologist	1203898	---
Gary Lindberg	Biological	0872398	0402898
Scott Strawn	Res. Mgmt. Spec.	0272394	---
Chris Hubert	Res. Mgmt. Spec.	1027798	---
Rosalee Pigoio	Museum Specialist	0305695	(1980)---
Joan Rodgers	Bio. Sci. Tech.	0471498	0471398
Ann Rodgers	Supv. Res. Mgmt. Spec.	0471498	0207298
Conrad Gentry	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Term)	0772494	---
Clay M. Dean	Admin./Fiscal Asst.	1042798	---
Stephanie Schmidt	Museum Aid (Term)	1171394	0172098
Malvina Spoo	Museum Technician	0205395	---
Malvina Spoo	Bio. Sci. Tech.	0471498	---
Michael Spoo	Museum Technician	0205395	---
Daniel Tish	Maintenance Wkr. (Term)	1171394	0472898
Whyrne Buchdweil	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0625695	0672898
Karl Murphy	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0772395	0831698
Karl Murphy	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0472398	0875098
Chris Collins	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0462898	1000498
Kathy Meyer	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0507798	---
Mark Messer	Bio. Sci. Tech. (Seas)	0507798	---

VISITOR PROTECTION

Personnel

This year the Division clerk position was filled three times. Two clerks resigned after opting to go to other positions outside the NPS. In October, Don Roberts was hired into the position from Fee Collection. Tom Gavin transferred from the Special Use Ranger position to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This position is being reclassified to include Special Use and Fee Program coordination. Jack Franklin was hired into the permanent Engine Captain GS-06 position. The Fire Clerk position was filled twice. Anne Schweich is currently in the position.

Law Enforcement Funding

Joshua Tree National Park received a base increase of \$70,000 in October to support the Criminal Investigator position. The park also received \$5,000 in ARPA funding to support investigations.

Law Enforcement and Protection Activities Statistics

Safety problems include motor vehicle accidents (nearly all single car accidents) resulting from excessive speed, inattention, or driving under the influence. Another common problem involves free climbing among rock formations. Numerous rescues are completed during each year. Numerous open mine shafts exist throughout the park. There is an active signing, fencing, and closing program for mines. The desert environment itself presents a safety problem to visitors and employees because of its harsh climatic conditions and some of its poisonous dwellers.

Statistics

Assaults	1	ARPA Violations	10
Number of Case Incidents	578	Other	74
Burglary	2	Disorderly Conduct	
Number of Violation Notices	482	Search and Rescue Incidents	30

Abandoned Property	9	Emergency Medical Services	34
Vandalism	42	Assist Other Agencies	9
Weapons	5	Assist Visitors	20
Fire/Arson	1	Commercial Use Licenses	24
Fire Outside Designated Area	7	Special Use Permits	24
Alcohol/Drug Offenses	65	Film Permits Issued	34
MVA	36	Filming Days	155
Resource Violations	326	Monetary Loss to Govt. and Private Property (Vandalism, Larcenies)	\$14,029.00

Visitation

Fee Collection Operations

\$176,500 of fee monies and \$64,000 of ONPS monies was budgeted this year for the fee operation. The total revenue generated for fiscal Year 1996 was \$752,702, which does not include Destinet collection. We operated most of the year with North West and Cottonwood stations open seven days a week. Indian Cove station was open on weekends only for eight weeks during the spring. Black Rock Visitor Center was open on weekends for most of the winter and spring.

A new Fee Collection station was constructed at the West Entrance using fee monies. The station was completed and opened in September allowing us to start contacting visitors upon both entering and exiting the park.

The following is a breakdown of the total revenue generated:

Fee Collection Statistics

Single and Individual Entries	\$419,090.00
Joshua Tree Park Pass	19,665.00
Golden Eagle Passports	237,400.00
Golden Age Passport	10,120.00
Campground Fees	35,372.00

Commercial Vehicle Fees	31,055.00

	--
Total	\$752,702.00

Fire Management

In 1996, the California Desert Fire Organization responded to the most severe fire season on record. The only change needed to operate more efficiently was to divide the Joshua Tree Zone into two smaller management units. The Mojave Zone now comprises the Mojave National Preserve and the Needles Resource Area, while the Joshua Tree Zone includes the El Centro and Palm Springs Resource Areas along with Joshua Tree National Park. The Ridgecrest and Barstow Zones continued to operate as in 1995.

Prior to the start on the 1996 fire season, a standardized fire refresher curriculum was developed and taught state-wide. The Joshua Tree Area Fire Management Officer was a member of the cadre and development team. This course is now required for all fireline personnel in the California desert.

The Black Rock Interagency Fire Center received an above average rating in safety and training during the fire readiness inspection. In 1996, NPS firefighters responded to 59 incidents and helped suppress wildfires in excess of 200,000 acres throughout California, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona.

RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Cultural Branch

Develop a Keys Ranch Management Plan. Target Date Sept 97
 Planting of representative historic fruit orchard was completed in March 1996. An initial 15 old root stock fruit trees were planted as a test for viability and hardiness and to recreate the orchard portion of the Keys Ranch cultural landscape. The trees are currently thriving with minimal evidence of pest infestation (gophers).

Develop and implement strategies for stabilization of the historic Lost Horse Mill and Huntington Mill. Target Date Sept 97
 Foaming of the collapsed portion of the Lost Horse mine shaft was completed along with the reconstruction of the main shaft. Fumigation and IPM treatment was completed on the mill structure.

Mitigation of the impacted areas will be completed by the Vegetation Branch in the Spring of 1997. Stabilization of the Huntington mill was funded this year. Excavation of the collapsed retaining wall portion was completed by University of Nevada, Las Vegas, under the direction of Dr. Claude Warren and Dr. Joan Schneider. The stabilization on the structure will be completed in house by the Maintenance Division.

Partner with Department of Defense and the Bureau of Land Management for Park curatorial and archival assistance. Target Date Sept 97

Curatorial staff from the park completed the transfer of cultural resources information on Death Valley National Park, Mojave National Preserve and Joshua Tree National Park. Archeological site information was disseminated to the various park service units. Upgrade of the parks collection storage area was funded and a Space Saver compressed storage system will be installed increasing the storage capacity fourfold. Meetings with curatorial personnel from the various agencies are ongoing with a major planning meeting slated for December 1996.

Update Scope of Collection Statement. Target Date Sept 97
Update was completed this fiscal year. Document is currently at the Field Area office for review and approval.

Wildlife/Ecology Branch

Complete year three of NRPP tortoise survey and report results. Target Date Sept 97

Data was gathered for two years and preliminary reports were completed. Reports are currently undergoing peer review.

Initiate a study to investigate the feasibility and ramifications of reintroducing pronghorn antelope to Joshua Tree National Park. Target Date Sept 1997
Currently under peer review.

Bighorn Sheep census study using Canon donated equipment. Target Date Sept 97

All data has been collected and compiled. Report is currently being written.

Inventory and monitor Desert Tortoise populations. Target Date Sept 96

Two years of data has been gathered. Because of several years of drought at monitoring plots the mortality rate is high. Currently there are two transmitters remaining. One more year of inventory and monitoring remains in funding. New Ecologist will take lead on program.

Complete data analysis for preparation of desert tortoise research manuscripts. Target Date Sept 1996
Two reports have been submitted for peer review.

Vegetation Branch

Revegetate disturbed tortoise habitat within the Pinto Basin. Target Date Sept 97

During February through April, over 700 tall pots were installed throughout Desert Tortoise habitat in the Pinto Basin. Work sites included Zulu Queen Mine Road, Sunrise Mill, Old Dale Road spurs, Pinto Wells, and Cottonwood Campground. These sites received supplemental watering and monitoring throughout the summer, and monitoring will continue for the next four years. This project has enlightened us on the topic of planting 33-inch stock into alluvium; in short, we experienced several break-downs to our tractor-mounted auger as well as our two-person auger. Equipment failure was a direct result of drilling into extremely rock soils, with cobble size frequently greater than 6-inches. This spring we have switched to a 15-inch pot to ease outplanting. So far tortoise habitat protection sites are suffering from our 1996 drought; despite extra water to the plants every four weeks, survival has been reduced to 50%. *Larrea tridentata* is by far our most successful species, and we will continue to use creosote as our main revegetation tool. We will need to continue to work these sites to speed up recovery and prevent illegal off road vehicle traffic. Ranger reports state that off-road activity continues in the Pinto Basin. Stepped up revegetation efforts may help curtail this, depending on future budget allowances.

Initiate desert bighorn sheep habitat studies & improvement projects. Target Date Sept 96

With the award of a \$40,000 grant from the Expedition Into the Parks program, JOTR has identified four key areas on our eastern boundaries where encroachment is or will have a significant impact on sheep habitat. As a result, JOTR's native plants nursery has grown 845 half-tall and tall pots for revegetation at closed and illegal road heads. Seven species were identified as critical in habitat restoration, and these will be outplanted spring of 97 at Hayfield Summit, Dragon Wash, Difficult Canyon, Boulder Canyon, and the Eastern Coxcombs. Bighorn sheep observations have identified several significant forage species which will be documented in this years final report for Expedition.

Initiate inventory of Threatened and Endangered plants. Target Date Sept 97

This is an annual inventory. In 1996, due to drought conditions, our plant species of concern were not present in significant numbers for identification. Monitoring continues, at the mercy of annual precipitation!

Implement research at the Park's Center for Arid Lands Restoration for improved germination survival and techniques, and publish results from soil sterilizer experiment and test of mychorrizal inoculum on Coleogyne ramosissima. Target Date Sept 96.

Due to personnel vacuum in Resources division, the data for these projects will not be ready for reporting until summer of 1997. Data has been collected, tests completed, and what remains is more monitoring information, data analysis, and report write-up. Preliminary results indicate no significant differences between fertilized, un-fertilized, new, and recycled soil. As we monitor outplanted growth, we will be able to determine whether the nursery could save money and time by eliminating fertilizer from our mix and using more of our recycled soil. Mychorrizal inoculum seems to have no effect on C. ramosissima survival. Measurements taken over the last year on plant height will be compiled in a final report.

Obtain data for establishment of a park Vegetation Map
Since meeting in spring 96, US Army Topographic Center and The Nature Conservancy have been developing vegetation maps for the Malapai Quad at JOTR. TNC mapping using aerial photos is complete, with alliances assigned to 17 vegetation types. Aerial Information Systems Inc., tasked with mapping and vegetation delineation, will be performing field verification in December to check typing and firm up alliance descriptions. The US ATC mapping effort will be postponed due to poor spectral analysis; automation will likewise be postponed until this spring. Initial results from the two mapping techniques indicate that for desert environments, aerial photography is the best way to create vegetation maps. AIS is working with the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Initiative on their mapping efforts involving portions of the park.

Geographical Information System (GIS)

Convert all park area topographical map data into electronic GIS format for use in providing maps and analysis for the Backcountry and Wilderness Management Plan. Target Date Sept 96

To date, the GIS operation has converted the following into arc info coverages: Park boundary, Old monument boundary, Roads for the park and surrounding area, Desert tortoise critical habitat

Physical Science Branch

Continue air quality monitoring, working with our air quality partners, and initiate an Air Quality Health Advisory program. Target Date Sept 96

Air quality monitoring and partnerships are ongoing. Because of the transfer of our Physical Science Specialist, the Health Advisory program was not implemented. That program will be taken on by the new Physical Science Specialist.

**Identify and evaluate abandoned mine sites within the park.
Target Date Sept 1996**

This is an ongoing project. 78 of the 165 abandoned mine sites within the old monument boundaries have been fully evaluated. It is currently unknown how many sites are within the newly acquired lands. BLM reports are sketchy and incomplete. County records will have to be researched. All sites will have to be mapped and visited.

Monitor and report findings of the parks air quality including ozone, dry deposition, and meteorological parameters. Provide data to the public. Target Date Sept 96

The work is contracted out and the contractor in turn submits the information to the EPA. The EPA disseminates information to the public.

Complete Abandoned Mine Lands Management Plan that would establish procedure for inventory and assessment of the park's abandoned mines. Complete park mining inventory plan and initiate park's mines inventory. Target Date Sept 97

The park's mine inventory has been initiated. The planning document has not. The new Physical Science Specialist will take this on.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance operations for FY96 totaled \$930,452.00 in ONPS funding with the addition of Cyclic, Repair/Rehab, Fee, Quarters, and Western Region Special Initiatives culminating in a total budget for maintenance at \$1,392,720.00.

Constructed a new West Entrance Comfort Station/Fee Collection Complex, established employee and visitor parking areas, connected water, additional phone service and removed all previously existing structures.

Initiated an alternate fuel program for NPS vehicles. Converted two maintenance trucks to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), added one CNG bi-fuel pick-up and two CNG bi-fuel sedans to the park fleet. Received two slow fill CNG fueling stations through a partnership grant with San Bernardino County Government Organization. Installed and placed in service both CNG Slow Fill Stations.

Conducted an eight week Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) non-residential camp. YCC enrollees worked on the following

projects: Landscape planting, exterior wall painting, rehab fire rings in campgrounds, assembled and replaced 100 picnic tables parkwide, constructed 1/4 mile hiking trail for Big Morongo Preserve, BLM and constructed six new campsites and revegetated old site scars on Santa Barbara Island, Channel Islands National Park.

Advanced the planning and partnership work towards establishing a Photovoltaic Electrical System in the Cottonwood Visitor Use and Housing area.

Buildings and Utilities Projects

In addition to routine maintenance projects and the cyclic and repair/rehab projects listed above, the buildings and utilities branch completed the following:

1. Installed an additional three Re-Cycling Centers in park campgrounds.
2. Repairs and rehabilitation work on building 501 at Indian Cove: constructed a pitch vehicle car port, replaced privacy fence and the entire HVAC system.
3. Stabilized Lost Horse and Huntington Mills.
4. Continued vault toilet screen replacement program, constructed 20 screens.
5. Contracted six new concrete SST type handicapped accessible bathrooms for topside campgrounds.

Roads and Trails Projects

In addition to routine maintenance projects, Roads and Trails accomplished the following:

1. Blade patched 6 miles of park roadway, Pinto Basin.
2. Placed slurry seal overlay and delineated entrance lanes at the West Entrance Fee Collection Complex.
3. Provided supervision and technical support for an eight week, 10 enrollee YCC summer work program.
4. Completed trail maintenance & restoration work along Hidden Valley and Oasis of Mara Trails.
5. Supervised Lost Horse mine foam closure contract.
6. Acquired tilt trailer for equipment transfer
7. Acquired two vehicle lifts for Pinto Wye automotive shop maintenance operations.

INTERPRETATION

Interpretive Programs

The table below shows programs offered and the numbers of visitors contacted in FY96:

	Total Number	Attendance Decrease	% Increase/ from FY95
Visitor Center	3	224,102	-13.3%
Talks and campfire programs	245	13,324	+62.4%
Tours and walks	332	4,448	0.0%
Special events	9	17,575	+23.7%
Off-site programs	16	941	-82.3%
Roving Contacts (locations)	12	8,441	-21.8%
Total Programs (excludes visitor center)	602	43,788	+16.9%

The total number of ranger-led programs offered declined from 657 to 602. Reasons for the decline include the six-week government shutdown in December and January and an emphasis on having rangers staff visitor centers. Most of the decline in programs offered was in the category of Tour and Walks. Conversely, the number of Talks and Campfire Programs offered increased resulting in a dramatic increase in attendance.

A new program of weekend campfire programs at Jumbo Rocks

Campground was initiated in June and continued throughout the summer, normally our slack season. These programs were well attended (average attendance of more than 40) with many local residents driving up from local communities to attend the programs even on days when the temperature exceeded 100 degrees.

Fewer off-site programs were given in FY96 (9 vs. 32 in FY95) but more special events were attended resulting in a 5.3% overall decrease in visitor contacts in these two categories.

The decision to schedule uniformed rangers at visitor center desks during all hours of visitor center operations placed rangers in immediate contact with the public resulting in a higher level of customer service. This may help explain why visitor center declined only 13.3% at a time when visitation parkwide was down dramatically for the year as a whole (approx. 25%).

Radio Programs

Interpretive Rangers Erik Oberg, Deanne Chatterton, and Lauren Lentz recorded weekly radio broadcasts about visiting Joshua Tree for several local radio stations broadcasting throughout the Morongo Valley and across the High and Low Desert regions.

Special Programs & Tours

Special tours of the park, including Keys Ranch were presented to: visiting school groups, civic groups, travel writers, bed-and-breakfast operators, local day care facilities.

Off-site programs were presented to: Marine Corps Base personnel, Rotary Clubs, and other civic groups in the Joshua Tree, 29 Palms, and Yucca Valley communities. We also manned booths during Earth Day festivities at the Living Desert Preserve in Palm Desert and the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, the Environmental Expo/Earth Day, Cal State University-San Bernardino. The Joshua Tree National Park Association once again sponsored their annual art fair that takes place over two weekends in April. Park staff participated in the 29 Palms Pioneer Days parade in October and the Yucca Valley Grubstake Days Parade in May with the park's entries winning trophies at both events.

Interpretive Volunteer Tim Terrell, who is a professional photographer and former college instructor from Los Angeles, again coordinated the "24 Hours of Photography in Joshua Tree" last April. More than 150 attended in FY96. A mural wall was created with over 200 photographs taken during the event. It was shown at the Oasis Visitor Center for over a month before being on display at various locations in the Coachella Valley.

Mr. Terrell also developed and implemented a formal Artist-in-Residence Program for Joshua Tree as part of an umbrella Art-in-the-Park program. A partnership with the Palm Springs Desert Museum was developed to review and select artists applying for the Artist-in-Residence program. The first two Artist residencies were filled by landscape painter Sandra Ruverol of Berkeley, California, and film-maker Jacqueline Turnure of Hunter College in New York City.

Park Education Program

Overall statistics for FY96:

Number of	Number of activities	contacts
Formal Environmental Education	285	10,108

Further breakdown of education statistics:

In-class, off-site programs	190	7,208	70%
In-park programs	95	2,900	30%

Junior ranger program: Approximately 22 classes completed the junior ranger unit. Their program attendance is reflected above. This represents approximately 677 students in grades 3-6.

Comparison to FY95: An overall decrease of 1,488 in program attendance during FY96 can be attributed to several things. During FY95 a grant of \$6,000 was used to help pay for bussing costs. Many classes attended in-park programs that wouldn't have been able to come otherwise. Because of grants received and special projects, less staff time was available for the presentation of in-class and in-park programs. The federal government shutdown caused some education programs to be cancelled; not all were rescheduled.

Education program highlights for FY96 include:

Teacher, student resources:

- presentation of three teacher workshops onsite, including one for a staff development day for Joshua Tree Elementary School. This included one Project WILD and two Project Learning Tree workshops. Optional credit was available through California State University, San Bernardino.
- presentation of one teacher workshop offsite at the Palm Springs Desert Museum. This was offered after school and was a joint effort of the park and museum.
- participation in school science (and social studies) days or nights at Oasis Elementary, Twentynine Palms; Cielo Vista School, Palm Springs; Truman School, La Quinta; Lucerne Valley Elementary, Lucerne Valley; and Valley View School, Coachella.
- organization and coordination of job shadowing and student

intern programs with Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley High Schools.

- attendance at California State Department of Parks and Recreation workshop to allow park to begin distribution of Coming Home to California, new bioregion education materials.
- continued availability of the environmental study kits to educators as a satellite distribution point in a joint project with the San Bernardino County Museum.
- provided coordination between the Morongo Basin Conservation Association and Twentynine Palms High School to provide hands-on field science experiences for students. As a result, nine students participated in the spring tortoise survey.
- responded to a dramatic 200% increase in requests for summer programs.

Grants:

- participation with BLM in the development of Project Archaeology in California as part of Legacy Grant from the Department of Defense.
- beginning work on development and production of desert tortoise study kits with the San Bernardino County Museum. Pursued and received additional funding for kits from the Morongo Unified School District.
- receipt of a \$6,000 Parks as Classrooms grant to produce a student-translated bilingual desert animal activity book as part of a joint project with The Living Desert.
- receipt of a \$24,160 grant to develop a high school unit on desert issues with Death Valley National Park, Mojave National Preserve, and Lake Mead National Recreation Area.
- participation with members of the Natural Science Collaborative of the Desert Region in submission of a grant to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute Science Education Initiative.

Events:

- attendance at the Educators' Resource Fair in Palm Desert.
- attendance at the Environmental Expo at California State University, San Bernardino.
- presentation on Project WILD at the Yucca Valley Rotary.

Special projects:

- improvement in materials available for mailouts to students, including design and writing of a four-page information handout.
- development of Joshua Tree's first in-park junior ranger program, available to visitors in the park newspaper.
- preparation of a display for the Oasis Visitor Center of junior ranger materials for National Parks Week.
- participation in the organization of the Natural Science Collaborative of the Desert Region, a group of almost thirty organizations and agencies presenting educational programs in the natural sciences.

- production and distribution of the first Educators Resource Guide by the collaborative.

Interpretive Planning & Media

Final comments on the park's Interpretive prospectus were submitted to Harpers Ferry Center late in the fiscal year. Review of the text and art for the park's campground wayside exhibit package was completed and forwarded to the Division of Wayside Exhibits at Harpers Ferry. Final production is expected in FY97.

A contract under the cluster Major Exhibit Repair/Rehab program was let in late September to Dan Quan Associates, Inc. of San Francisco, for the redesign and fabrication of new exhibits for the Oasis Visitor Center in Twentynine Palms. In conjunction with this effort, the park brought a team of architects, designers, and planners to Joshua Tree in September to develop a preferred alternative for the Park Headquarters Development Concept Plan. The park was approached by the Action Council of 29 Palms who offered to sponsor a longterm fundraising effort to build a new visitor center and cultural center at park headquarters. DSC produced a document with artist renderings and descriptions of three major concepts for the headquarters area. Several public meetings were held at the park in conjunction with this effort.

Work continued on the proposed Bajada Accessible Nature Trail. NEPA and cultural compliance work were completed. Interpretive Park Ranger Elizabeth Van Zandt wrote text for the trailside exhibits and cost estimates were obtained from exhibit contractors for exhibit production. Completion of this project awaits the park raising the necessary funds for trail construction and exhibit production (see the next section).

The park contracted with artist Larry Eifert for the production of a painting to be used as an orientation map to update several existing maps located at numerous locations around the park. To date, the park has received a conceptual sketch which is currently under review. Another painting by Mr. Eifert (see Cooperating Association section) is now in use as a centerpiece of the exhibit room at the Oasis Visitor Center.

Museum exhibits on fossil yuccas and Steven Willard were developed and installed at the Oasis Visitor Center in 1996. Considerable assistance was received from park museum technicians Melanie Spoo and Stephanie Schmidt in the preparation of these exhibits.

A purchase order was let to NovaAlloy, Inc. for the production of new etched metal trail signs for the Cap Rock Nature Trail.

Interpretive Projects

On April 18, the park participated in a competitive Birdathon in cooperation with Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Big Day Counts typically involve teams of birders striving against one another to observe as many bird species as possible within a single 24-hour period. Usually, teams compete within a defined geographic area. The park team, the Mojave Thrashers recorded 146 species. The park used the event as a fundraiser and raised some \$1,200 in pledges to help with the construction of trailside exhibits for the proposed Bajada Accessible Nature Trail that will be built in the park below Cottonwood to interpret the Colorado Desert.

The park agreed to develop a series of exhibits for display at the Cathedral City Central Library. The first exhibit was on the national parks and went on display in August in connection with the NPS birthday. A second exhibit on desert plants was scheduled for installation in October.

Personnel

District Interpreter Art Webster transferred to Prince William Forest Park in April. The process of combining the two District Interpreter positions into one GS-11, Interpretive Operations Supervisor was completed. Cindy Von Halle from Ozark Scenic Riverway was selected to fill this position via lateral transfer. Cindy came on board in early June.

The park Education Specialist position was reviewed by classification and upgraded to GS-11. A new term position of Information Receptionist, GS-4 was created and filled by Deanne Chatterton. This position is designed to handle the increasing workload of incoming information phone calls, process mail-out information requests, and provide primary backup coverage for visitor center coverage.

Two winter seasonal positions (February-early May) were filled by Clay Parcels and Mike Marion.

Cooperating Associations

The Joshua Tree Natural History Association finished FY96 with an overall sales increase of 3.9%. Total sales in FY96 were \$291,172, up from \$280,216 in FY95. The government shutdown in December and January and a poor spring wildflower display put a strong downward pressure on sales making the overall increase for the year fairly remarkable. This is explained at least partly by strong attendance at visitor centers.

The Association Board of Directors revised by-laws in January changing from a voting membership to a non-voting membership. In addition, the annual membership dues were increased from \$5 to

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\$20. A new range of member services were implemented, most notably the publication of a quarterly Association newsletter Keys Views. The first issue premiered in September. The Board of Directors elected not to renew the contract of Business Manager Sue Alexander. Assistant Business Manager Cheri Baylor was elevated to the vacant Business Manager position late in the fiscal year.

The Association applied for and was issued a Limited Concessions Permit in May allowing for the sale of certain convenience and souvenir items such as water bottles, firewood, and tamarisk-wood pencils. The Association also established its presence on the World Wide Web by participating in the Mesa Verde Electronic Book Store. New visitor center counters and sales fixtures were installed at the Oasis Visitor Center and at Cottonwood in January allowing for the display of a wider variety of items.

The Association hired California artist Larry Eifert to produce a landscape painting of the park for development into a poster. The painting will eventually be donated to the park as a permanent exhibit. The poster will feature an essay about conservation of California Desert public lands translated in four languages. It also includes a key of species depicted in the painting.

The Association again supported a variety of National Park Service efforts. The Association sponsored the third annual Joshua Tree National Monument Art Festival in April. This event has proved to be quite popular with local artists. Association sales clerks provided nearly \$36,000 in donated services at the Oasis Visitor Center in Twentynine Palms.

Volunteers in the Parks

Volunteer In the Park coordination is overseen by Sandy Kaye in the Interpretive Division. During FY96 there were 457 volunteers here who performed 30,027 hours of volunteer service to the park.