



**National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

Joshua Tree National Park

**Superintendent's Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2005**



Curt Sauer, Superintendent

Superintendent's Introduction

Fiscal year 2005 was another fiscally challenging year for the National Park Service. However, here at Joshua Tree National Park, we choose to focus on our accomplishments, rather than focusing on what is not getting done due to budgetary constraints. Some of the highlights that were accomplished through the superintendent's office and his staff are included below.

Safety continues to be a priority and the major component of any work project. The safety committee has undergone a facelift, with new members on the committee and a new captain at the helm of the program. Old and new ideas have been implemented, with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

The park's Fee Demonstration Program was reviewed to ensure compliance with new guidelines that were derived from the 2005 appropriations bill that established a permanent fee program. The staff meets regularly to process and complete approved and funded projects

Several partnership agreements were completed, including outside funding sources such as Park Stewardship through the Arts donations, and, State Air Quality Board analysis of air monitoring data.

The superintendent worked closely with the Joshua Tree National Park Association and investigated the feasibility, and actually formed a viable "Friends Group."

In cooperation with Desert Managers group, Joshua Tree led the implementation of the Desert Tortoise Education and Outreach Plan.

Lands

Joshua Tree National Park continued to work with the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation, the Land Resources Regional Staff and the National Park Foundation to acquire additional lands on a willing seller basis. In FY05, there were 3 tracts, totaling 55 acres acquired. Park staff continue to assist with this process, with the Management Assistant having the lead with Lands issues, and rangers assisting with the land inspection.

Significant time and energy was spent with the local municipalities, developing positive working relationships with regards to the significant population/real estate growth along the park's boundaries. Many meetings were held with planning officials to share the importance of the park's mission and how protection of the park's resources can only benefit the communities. Meetings were held with potential developers; Paradise Valley staff proposing 15,000 homes on the south boundary, west of Cottonwood, and Century Vintage Homes staff, proposing over 1400 homes in the area north of Covington Flats.

Employee Safety

Park records indicated that during FY05, there were twelve recordable employee injuries with two being lost-time injuries resulting in a total cost of \$1,897.10.

Administration

The Administrative Division saw more of partnering with a ‘play well in the sand box’ attitude and in so doing, stretched limited funds. Examples were evident not only in resource sharing (as shown throughout the park) but in the number of agreements where the park is partnering with other state and federal agencies to support the mission.

Budget/Finance

Base funding for fiscal year 2005 was \$4,080,070. The park received approximately \$4 million from other National Park Service sources such as repair/rehabilitation and cyclic maintenance, as well as the Fee Demonstration Program, the Federal Lands Highway Program, special grants and other funding sources. Many of the park's accomplishments in recent years have been made possible because of funds from sources other than the park's base budget.

Employee Housing

Employee housing rentals generated over \$22,000 in revenue in FY2005.

Human Resources

The park's Human Resources Officer continues to be responsible for all of the park's human resources and the personnel security and suitability adjudications of all NPS positions that handle government money and works with WASO staff to develop, write, and review bulletins and policies related to human resources and suitability issues. Currently, WASO provides 50 percent of the salary costs for the human resources officer. WASO funds two additional Human Resource Assistants.

Information Technology Information Services

“Travel and partnering” have been the key words for Information Technology at Joshua Tree National Park this past year. Travel in the electronic sense consisted of assisting with the successful repair of over 900 helpdesk requests as part of the Mediterranean and Mojave Network. The ability to remotely assist users eliminated physical travel to parks to repair user problems. The Joshua Tree IT Specialist traveled to Baton Rouge, Louisiana to provide computer and telephone support services to FEMA after the devastating Katrina and Rita hurricanes.

Partnering refers to the new buildings throughout the region that Joshua Tree Information Technology assisted in making IT compliant. An example is the 8,000 feet of network and telephone cable that was installed in the new Law Enforcement building at Joshua Tree National Park. 15,000 feet of network cable was installed at the Kelso train station for Mojave National Preserve and the completion of the communication project at Great Basin National Park that extended the existing network and telephone system to the newly constructed Visitor center located in Baker, Nevada.

Procurement, Contracting and Accountable Property

The contracting office conducted credit card audits on all cardholders.

Disposal of excess IT property (3rd wave) was completed through the Dell Asset Recovery Service (ARS). Disposal of 12 excess vehicles was completed through the use of GSA Auctions.

Disposal of excess trailers (old protection offices) was completed through a donation to a non-profit animal organization.

Workforce Diversity

The number of encumbered permanent positions in the targeted occupational series was 23. Of those 23 positions, 10 (48%) met the definition of diverse employees. Targeted Occupations: 0025, 0193, 0301, 0401, 1010, 1015, 1640.

Facility Management

The Chief of Maintenance position was vacated in July by Mr. Harry Carpenter when he transferred to a Project Manager position in the Santa Fe office. The Foremen rotated acting assignments throughout the remainder of the fiscal year.

Facility Construction & Renovation

Facility Improvements that were under construction during FY05 include a new Maintenance Building, which now houses the Facility Manager, the Maintenance Program Assistant and several foremen. When the build-out is completed at the Headquarters Complex, one large room will be a dedicated Physical Fitness area. For now, this area will house other staff while we initiate work on a Resource Management building.

Road Construction & Repair

The roads crew has continued to clean up storm damage from the past 3 years' worth of significant washouts. They have been "rearmoring" road sides for future floods, have completed major road repair work on Park Route 11, rehabilitated the Indian Cove Campground road to the Group Sites; they have been replacing delineation boulders park wide, including campgrounds, roads, picnic areas, day use areas. They are responsible for operational maintenance of unpaved surfaces and paved surfaces.

Trail & Campground Maintenance & Rehabilitation

The campground staff have remained busy maintaining the campgrounds, ensuring the restrooms are clean and stocked. At the end of FY05, our permanent trail crew members had an all expense paid trip to Louisiana to assist with hours of chainsaw work cleaning up parks that were severely impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The trail crew has rehabilitated many miles of trails within the park and maintains an active Youth Conservation Corps program. In 2005, the YCC corps assisted Haleakala NP staff with several trail projects.

Interpretation & Education

Fiscal year 2005 continued a multi-year trend at Joshua Tree that has seen declining staff levels within the Division of Interpretation and a consequent drop in visitor services offered. Much has been written and said about budget issues within the National Park Service, and the picture for interpretive operations at Joshua Tree is much the same as elsewhere throughout the Service—reduced staffing levels and declining visitor services. Figure 1 shows visually that the Interpretive Division has been doing more with less for the past five years.

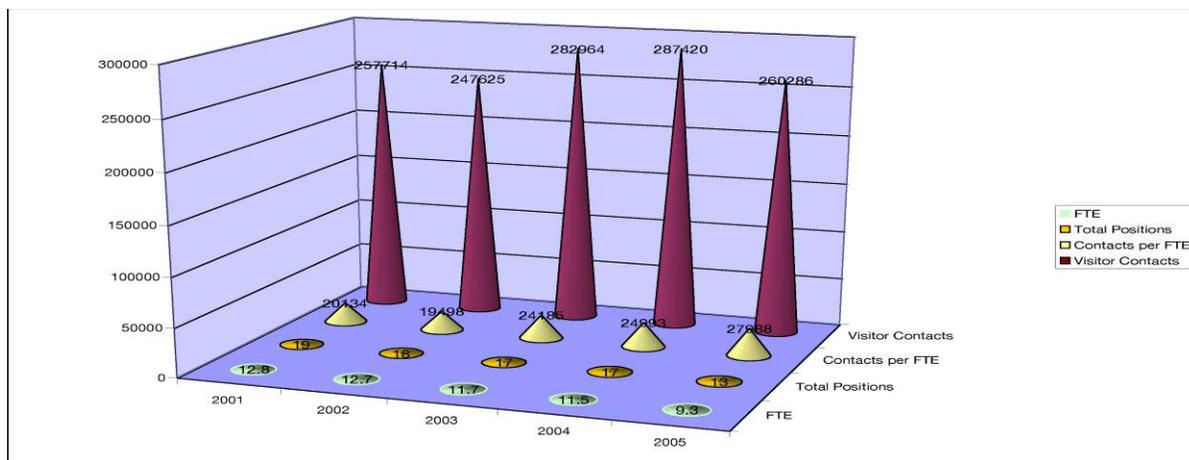


Figure 1
Visitor Contacts Compared to Staffing Levels
Joshua Tree National Park, Division of Interpretation, 2001-2005
 Data taken from the Servicewide Interpretive Report, Form 10-769

While the numbers of position and FTE able to be employed in providing interpretive and information services has steadily declined from 2001-2005, the number of visitor contacts per FTE has increased over that time. The Division employees in 2005 are generally working harder and under increased stress, but are still serving large numbers of visitors and are doing an admirable job in maintaining the quality of our services.

And there are some bright spots. The Joshua Tree Education Program continues to be the largest *Parks As Classrooms* education program within the Pacific West Region in spite of the slight decline in numbers of students and program in 2005. New electronic exhibits at the Oasis Visitor Center allow the public to obtain in-depth information from sources not available to park visitors in prior years. A new amphitheater and new exhibits at the Cottonwood Visitor Center have improved the quality of the visitor experience for visitors to the southern region of the park. The quality of the park newspaper, the *Joshua Tree Guide*, continues to improve and receives many favorable comments from the public.

The Education staff also provided substantial support and project oversight to the Desert Managers Group on the implementation of the education components of the Desert Tortoise Outreach Project. The Education staff held teacher workshops and began work on activities and planned desert tortoise traveling trunks for use by educators. Education Rangers also began planning with Clark County, Nevada on a partnership to implement the County's Mojave Max Emergence Contest in California during the 2005/2006 school year (see www.mojavemax.com). Mojave Max is a captive tortoise at the Red Rock Canyon Conservation Area outside Las Vegas and the symbol of a highly successful desert tortoise public education project in southern Nevada.

Desert Tortoise Outreach

Joshua Tree is coordinating a three-year public outreach campaign on behalf of the threatened desert tortoise in support of the interagency partnership, the Desert Managers Group, (DMG). A total of \$152,000 in grants from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, the California Department of Fish and Game, the California Off-Highway Motor Recreational Vehicle Commission, and the National Park Service Challenge Cost-Share program, are funding the

tortoise outreach project in 2005 and 2006. The park developed a position description for a term position as Desert Tortoise Outreach Coordinator for the DMG. The position was announced and filled late in the fiscal year. The park will provide supervision and project oversight for the activities of the Tortoise Outreach Coordinator during the anticipated duration of the project.

Exhibit & Facility Renovation

Exhibit cyclic funds were used to refurbish an aging photo exhibit at the Cottonwood Visitor Center. The new exhibit was produced and installed in September. The new exhibit tells the early history of the Cottonwood area, air quality at Joshua Tree and the park's night sky resources. There is also an exhibit case devoted to the desert tortoise which fulfills an obligation under the Federal Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan.

The park's wayside exhibit project completed planning and design for replacement of Phase I wayside exhibits. Planning and design for Phase II exhibits was 80% completed in 2005. The park took delivery on Phase I exhibit hardware in 2005 as well as some of the Phase I exhibit panels. Compliance activities for the Wayside Exhibit Plan were completed in FY2005, and a draft Environmental Assessment was prepared and released to the public for review and comment. A public meeting was held in December to discuss the park's wayside exhibit program.

In the area of Fee Demo projects, a new solar-powered campground amphitheater was built at the Cottonwood Campground in 2005. The Oasis VC auditorium was treated to a badly needed 'extreme makeover,' receiving all new audio-visual equipment, floors, walls, and new chairs. The new auditorium became operational in November. An interactive natural history computer exhibit in the Oasis VC exhibit room was put into operation in July. It includes links to an Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis web site featuring the interpretation of geologic research conducted in the park. The research was funded through the Joshua Tree National Park Competitive Science Grant, a park science research program that receives annual financial support from the Lee Family Foundation and the Joshua Tree National Park Association.

Grants

The park received a \$4,400 Parks As Classrooms grant in 2005 titled *Desert Winds, Using Science in the Desert*. This project enabled the park to develop a new curriculum unit for high school grade levels involving the use of radio telemetry to show how wildlife scientists use technology to study and monitor animal populations. In addition, the grant allowed for development of a National Park Service booth and education exhibit at the California Science Teachers Association's annual conference in Palm Springs which was held in October 2005.

Special Events

A major special event was held in November 2004 when Joshua Tree National Park celebrated its 10th birthday following passage of the 1994 landmark conservation bill, the Desert Protection Act. Working together with dozens partner organizations and individuals from local communities, a four-day weekend of special events was planned to celebrate the park's 10th birthday during the Veteran's Day weekend, November 11-14. The National Parks and Conservation Association and the Joshua Tree National Park Association (JTNP) contributed

funds to support the event, and the 29 Palms Chamber of Commerce gave a grant to support a special exhibit of historic Stephen Willard photos for display at the park's Oasis Visitor Center. Over 1,000 people attended 10th Anniversary events in the communities of Morongo Valley, Joshua Tree, Twentynine Palms, and Yucca Valley. The main event on Saturday, November 13 took place at the Oasis Visitor Center where the first Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award was presented to Susan Luckie Reilly, and a commemorative mural depicting Minerva Hoyt and her efforts to establish Joshua Tree National Monument was unveiled. Larry Grable, a representative of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, read a letter from the Governor, and the Basin Wide Foundation, presented a plaque to the park honoring Minerva Hoyt. Associate Regional Director Marti Leicester spoke on behalf of Regional Director Jon Jarvis. The celebration was attended by surviving family members of Mrs. Hoyt, granddaughters Minerva Kunzel and Daphne Kurchak, and granddaughter-in-law Ruth Griswold.

A second major special event occurred in April when the Director of the National Park Service, Fran Mainella, and the National Park System Advisory Board paid a two-day visit to Joshua Tree National Park, the Morongo Basin, and the Coachella Valley. Seasonal Park Ranger Sue Spearing was detailed to coordinate planning and logistics for the Director's visit. The visiting dignitaries received a top notch tour of the park. Park Ranger Dar Spearing spoke to the group on the park's natural history while Education Specialist Lorna Lange-Daggs provided a tour of Keys Ranch and provided an overview of the park's Education Program. Park Chief Interpreter and Public Information Officer Joe Zarki helped set up a series of interviews for the Director and Superintendent Sauer with the local press.

Staffing

Long-time Cottonwood Area Interpretive Park Ranger Elize Van Zandt retired in June, 2005. Her position was not immediately filled. Program Clerk Heidi Beck took on added responsibilities in March 2005 by serving as Program Clerk for the Division of Resource & Visitor Protection as well as for Interpretation. This action was necessitated when a number of program clerk positions in the park became vacant and could not be filled.

A number of factors led to declines in some levels of services provided. Planned and emergency medical leaves in the Education program caused the first decline in students served in several years. High water levels and concern over the structural integrity of several historic dams led to periodic interruptions of public tours at the historic Keys Ranch property. As a consequence, the numbers of public tours offered at the Ranch were the lowest since the start of the Keys Ranch fee interpretation operation in 1999. Structural modifications recommended by the Bureau of Reclamation and incorporated into the dams at Keys Ranch should result in fewer safety-related closures in 2006. Fiscal pressures from declining base budgets and the retirement of the Cottonwood Area Interpreter led to the lowest Interpretation staffing levels since the mid-1990s and accounted for the corresponding drop in programs offered and visitors served. These staff declines occurred during a year of record spring visitation due to a phenomenal wildflower season in the California Desert.

Division of Interpretation & Education Staff, 2005

Joe Zarki., Chief of Interpretation	Sandra Kaye, Visual Information Specialist
Cindy VonHalle, Supervisory Park Ranger	Anne Staley, Exhibit Specialist
Lorna Lange-Daggs, Education Specialist	Dar Spearing, Seasonal Park Ranger
Caryn Davidson, Park Ranger, Education	Sue Spearing, Seasonal Park Ranger
Laureen Lentz, Park Ranger, HQ	Cathy Stanton, Seasonal Park Ranger
Elize Van Zandt, Park Ranger, Cottonwood	Andy Swan, Seasonal Park Ranger
Heidi Beck, Program Clerk	Pam Tripp, Visitor Use Assistant

Visitation

March 2005 was the busiest month in the history of the park. More than 268,000 people visited the park, over 35,000 more than the previous busiest month in April, 1996. Phenomenal early spring wildflower blooms drove the big increase in visitation.

The Interpretation Division also offered a variety of ranger-led programs and other visitor services in 2005. FY2004 figures are provided for comparison purposes. These are summarized in Table 1 below:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Contacts</u>	
	<u>FY2004</u>	<u>FY2005</u>
Visitor Center Contacts (3 facilities)	199,815	212,927
Formal Interpretation	14,669	11,218
Informal Interpretation	7,026	4,414
Education Programs	19,803	16,569
Junior Ranger Program	1,173	1,327
Community Programs	4,768	233
Loan Materials	1,144	456
Audio Visual & Electronic Media	39,022	11,471
Publications Distributed	166,100	109,250

Table 1, Division of Interpretation & Education
Visitor Services Statistics for Joshua Tree National Park, FY2004 & FY2005.
Taken from the Servicewide Interpretive Report, Form 10-769

Joshua Tree National Park Association Operations

Joshua Tree National Park Association set another record year with gross revenues of \$821,137, a 27% increase over 2004. Net revenue was \$471,845. Aid to the National Park Service was \$192,591, up 30.7% over 2004. The new nonprofit organization report to Federal Land Management Agency for fiscal 2005 calculates aid as a percentage of net revenue rather than gross revenue, with the result that the Association's aid to Joshua Tree National Park in FY 2005 was 40.8%.

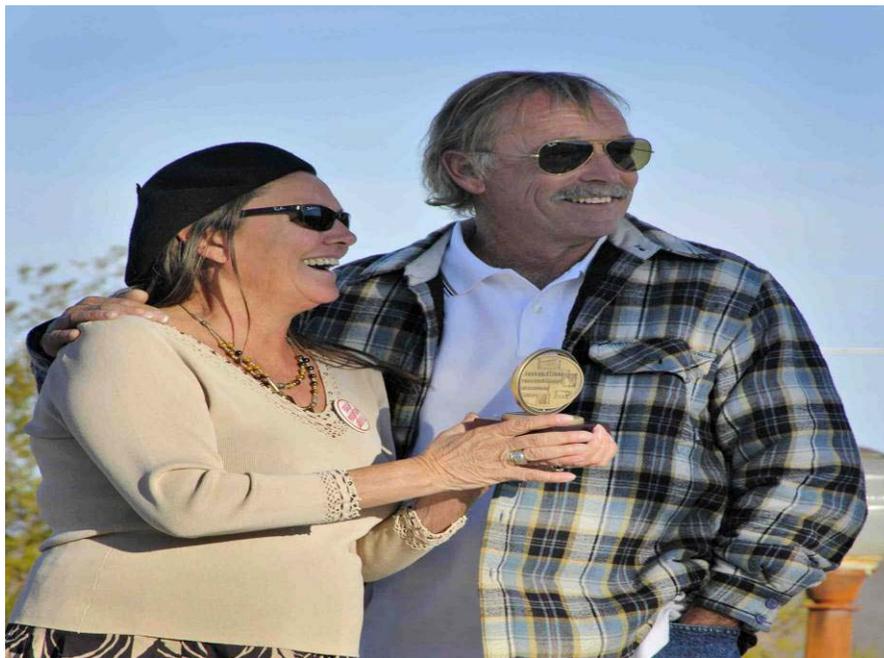
In 2005, JTNPA entered into an agreement with Joshua Tree National Park that allows the association to raise funds and other forms of assistance for the benefit of the Park. "The Legacy

Project for Joshua Tree National Park”, is the new philanthropic outreach arm of the association that upon request of the park superintendent will carry out fundraising projects.

Joshua Tree National Park Association entered into an agreement with a film production company, *CameraOne*, to produce a Joshua Tree National Park interpretive film presentation, funded in part by Toyota USA, Inc. a Supporting Sponsor. The film will tell the stories of Joshua Tree National Park and will be available for viewing by over 350,000 people annually at park visitor centers; a DVD of the film will be available for purchase as well.

In November 2004, the Association and local communities of Joshua Tree, Morongo Valley, Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley joined with Joshua Tree National Park to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act that established Joshua Tree as a national park. The weekend-long series of events included a JTNPA-sponsored exhibit of historic prints from the Palm Spring Desert Museum’s Stephen H. Willard Photography Collection (funded through a generous grant from the City of Twentynine Palms), and a celebration at park headquarters in Twentynine Palms.

The Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award was newly created in 2004 by the association to recognize annually individuals or organizations that have made notable achievements in the areas of leadership, protection, preservation, research, education, and stewardship leading to a significant and lasting contribution on behalf of the deserts of California. This inaugural award was presented to Susan Luckie Reilly as part of the Joshua Tree National Park Tenth Anniversary celebration. The 2005 recipients were Donna and Larry Charpied who were recognized for their activism promoting the importance of the park’s resources throughout the past 15 years. Donna and Larry are primarily known for their opposition to the proposed Eagle Mountain Landfill near the southeastern portion of the park.



Donna & Larry Charpied, Recipients of the 2005 Minerva Hoyt Award

Desert Institute

The Desert Institute field studies program also enjoyed a successful year. The Institute presented 49 field courses with an enrollment of 419 students. Five new courses were offered in 2005. Two new lecture series were created to expand outreach for the park: the Old Firehouse Lecture Series at the Historical Society of Palm Desert and the Hi Desert Nature Museum Lecture Series in Yucca Valley. Combined with the enduring Old Schoolhouse Lecture Series over 500 people attended one of the Institute's evening lectures. For the entire year, the Institute recorded over 5200 participant contact hours.

Joshua Tree National Park Association and the Lee Family Foundation funded the 2005 Joshua Tree National Park Annual Competitive Research Grantee, *A Land of Plenty: Depression-era Mining Landscapes in Joshua Tree National Park* submitted by principle investigator, Jessica L. K. Smith, Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada. This grant provides up to \$12,000 to support field research in the physical, biological, ecological, and cultural sciences.

The Association sponsored the thirteenth Joshua Tree National Park Art Festival in early April. The three-day event typically attracts about 30 artists each year and over 1,000 daily visitors. The artists donated \$4000 (10% of their proceeds) to the association for the park.

Other contributions to park operations included an increase of free publication support to the total of \$20,632, interpretive program support, almost \$30,000 funding for scientific research in the park, new visitor center fixtures and increased information specialist support at the visitor centers.

Resources

New Chief of Resource Management

The Resources Management division saw a change in leadership February 2005 with the appointment of Paul DePrey as the new Chief of Resources Management. Paul came from Whiskeytown National Recreation Area where he was the Chief of Natural Resources and Fire Management. Paul was accompanied by his wife, Cari Kreshak, who is the Cultural Resources Program Manager for Lassen Volcanic National Park with her new duty station at Joshua Tree.

Archaeology

Archeological work continues in developed Park areas. Archeological inventories were conducted along Boy Scout Trail, California Riding and Hiking Trail, Indian Cove Nature Trail, Wall Street Mill Trail, Lost Horse Ranger Station Road, Keys Ranch Road, Pinto Wye Maintenance Road, and portions of Old Dale Road and all cultural remains recorded to current standards. Archeological site testing was also conducted on a site that is bisected by the Keys Ranch Road.

Ethnography

Work continues on a contracted Traditional Use Study regarding rock art in the Park.

Environmental Compliance

The park began implementation of the online PEPC system to facilitate documentation of NEPA

and NHPA compliance. A management directive was developed to identify the process for conducting the compliance process in the park. Several programmatic categorical exclusions were developed to cover repetitive operational issues such as issuing scientific research permits, incident business activities, and regular maintenance activities. Environmental assessments were completed for the park's fire management plan, restoration of the Indian Cove Borrow Pit and reconstruction of Keys View Road.

History

Work continues on the Historic Resources Study for the lands added to the Park in 1994.

Historic Structures

The cultural cyclic maintenance program addressed stabilization issues at Cary's Castle and Keys Ranch.

Museum Collections

Cataloging continued with 625 archaeology, 15 history, and 9,238 archives entered into the Automated National Catalog System database in 2005. One hundred forty-six objects were returned to the Park after conservation treatments were conducted at the Western Archeological and Conservation Center.

The Park's museum curator assisted both Lake Mead Recreation Area and Alaska Region with moving collections to new storage facilities.

In April 2005, an interdisciplinary park team, along with PWR program leads and several members of the local community, met to discuss options for both short and long-term goals for comprehensive management of the Keys Ranch. During the summer the interdisciplinary team developed a draft plan, reviewed management options, conducted public meetings, and responded to public comments. The plan, finalized in September, includes goals for interpretation, resource protection, and the preservation of structures and historic landscape. Implementation of several of the activities identified will begin in FY06.

The year-long multidivisional Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Assessment for Keys Ranch and associated artifact assemblages was initiated and completed.

Paleontology

Cyclic prospecting for fossils in Pinto Basin continued through a partnership with the San Bernardino County Museum.

Research

The Joshua Tree National Park Association and the Lee Foundation again funded a \$12,000 grant for a competitive research project related to Joshua Tree National Park. Dr. Holmgren from San Diego State University was awarded the grant to study packrat middens as a source of information on paleoecology of the Joshua Tree area. William Godsoe and Dr. Olle Pellmyr had a strong proposal that was funded through the Desert Southwest Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit and Joshua Tree National Park to study the relationship between yucca moths and Joshua trees. Field work for both projects is slated for 2006.

Vegetation Management

The Center for Arid Lands Restoration propagated 753 plants for park road reconstruction projects, 1,334 plants for the Indian Cove Borrow Pit restoration project, 465 plants for cultural site rehabilitation, and 2,768 for contracts with Ft. Irwin and the Bureau of Land Management. The nursery currently has four volunteers that contributed 140 total hours throughout the year. The National Park Conservation Association's Center for Park Management was selected to conduct a feasibility study for improving management of the Center for Arid Lands Restoration. The feasibility study is expected to be completed in 2006.

The Federal Highways projects continued this year; monitoring of past restoration efforts continued along Park Boulevard, as well as mapping and preparing for the new Key's View road. Also, restoration efforts were started at the Indian Cove Borrow Pit and three protected cultural resource sites. Finally, the Closed Roads project was completed; 160 closed road sites were vertical mulched and at 20 of those sites long-term monitoring plots were established to assess regeneration of native plants and soil crust.

Weed eradication continued to keep us busy this year. We managed to remove quite a load of invasive plant material from the Park: 4,420 lbs. of Sahara Mustard, 1565 lbs. of London Rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), 155 lbs. of Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), 50 lbs. of Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), and 46 lbs. of Tumble mustard (*Sisymbrium altissimum*). Most important, we had a lot of help from a very strong volunteer force this year who contributed 686 hours of a total 925 hours spent removing weeds!!

Rare plant surveys in 2005 were quite successful with our biggest discovery being a long sought after population of *Erigeron parishii* (Parish's daisy), which is federally threatened. In addition, we added and mapped new populations of *Hulsea vestita* var. *parryi*, *Penstemon thurberi*, and *Androstephium breviflorum*, the latter being completely new to our plant list. Potential and known locality maps were created for all 58 of our rare plant species. Additionally, we certified the vascular plant list for the I&M program, added over 100 species to our list of plants occurring in the Park, vouchered over 400 species for the Joshua Tree National Park Herbarium, and created a new database for the Herbarium collection.

Research projects that were started or continued this year include: 1) a study addressing the most effective way to minimize social trail proliferation; 2) the Vertical Vegetation study was repeated; 3) a demographic study of *Pinus monophylla* was continued; 4) a lichen flora of the Park was initiated; and 5) a seed germination study for *Xylorhiza cognata* (Mecca Aster) was initiated.

Wildlife Ecology

Desert tortoise monitoring using transmitter-tagged individuals expanded this year along the main roads in the park. Nine individuals have been tagged from the Pinto Basin to Lost Horse. A new curbing project was created to assess the effect of curbing in the park as it relates to tortoise movement.

Based on information from a baseline study of ravens conducted in 2004, the park is cooperating in preparation of a raven management plan environmental assessment for the Desert Manager's Group.

The park continued California treefrog surveys focusing on 49 Palms Oasis and Rattlesnake Canyon, but extended to Johnson Spring and Smithwater Canyon. Due to results from this study, we believe that their distribution is restricted from historic locations and current populations are very low.

A guzzler survey was continued that used motion trigger cameras to monitor which wildlife species are using the guzzlers. The damaged rattlesnake guzzler is being rehabilitated so that it can re-enter this study. This effort is a small part of the larger need to determine the efficacy of guzzlers in wilderness and their impacts on wildlife, primarily bighorn sheep.

Pitfall trapping in the park continued to collect data on the rodent and reptile distribution in the park. Currently under reevaluation, this project will be converting from an inventory project to a monitoring project.

The park Wildlife Ecologist, Amy Fesnock, accepted a position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service during the fall. Acting in this position is Michael Vamstad, who also works on vegetation restoration efforts.

Resource and Visitor Protection

The Resource and Visitor Protection Division continues to manage the park's Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Search and Rescue, Fee Collection, and Special Use programs. The 11 commissioned rangers continued to manage backcountry, wilderness and recreational climbing uses. The division staff work in cooperation with BLM and Forest Service employees in the utilization of the Federal Interagency Communications Center. Rangers cultivated relationships with the U.S. Attorney's office, the California Highway Patrol, San Bernardino Coroner's Office, San Bernardino and Riverside County Sheriff's Department and the U.S. Marine Corps. Many incidents were worked cooperatively based on good relationships with surrounding agencies.

The Protection program provided Incident Command and monitoring support during the Keys Ranch Dam breach. The dam developed a leak which required involvement of the Dam Safety staff from the Denver Service Center and Regional office. The Dam was evaluated and a plan for releasing water from the reservoir was implemented.

The staff worked to increase the activity of the volunteer equestrian patrol unit to increase contacts with the area's large equestrian community. The equestrian volunteers represented the park in local community parades and provided visitor contacts in the campgrounds on the weekends during peak visitor season.

The patrol staff coordinated and participated in an interagency Best Practice Review for federal dispatch center, this resulted in supporting working groups for quality assurance and writing policy manuals.

The Ranger division continued to support all of the mountain top repeater sites. The Park Radio Coordinator supported several other divisions with technical support.

Archeological Sites

Rangers routinely conducted backcountry patrols, monitoring and observing archaeological sites. There were 13 incidents of damage to archaeological resources documented and 2 citations were issued for damage and 2 misdemeanor convictions.

Disturbed Lands

The Ranger Division continued to represent the park on the Desert Managers Group Hazardous Materials Working Group which coordinates the cleanup of illegal dumpsites in the California Desert.

Emergency Medical Services

There were 32 calls for Basic Life Support assistance and 2 calls for Advanced Life Support. The division staff continued to build relationships with University Medical Center of Las Vegas, Nevada, which serves as the park's base station hospital, and with the Emergency Physicians Medical Group of Southern Nevada, which serves as medical director for the park. Sufficient additional training was provided to allow all ranger EMTs to maintain their certifications, and CPR was taught to employees and volunteers in all park divisions and training in basic first aid was provided to staff.

Employee Safety

The staff continued to implement service-wide medical standards testing in accordance with DO-57. All protection staff completed National Registry certification in 2005. Ranger Division employees in identified arduous positions participated in a physical fitness program, including commissioned employees and fire fighters. Commissioned employees participated in physical fitness testing, using the FLETC standard test of the PEB. Over 70% of the staff increased their fitness score over preceding years.

The Ranger Division continued to administer the park safety program. One of the ranger staff served as the park safety officer. Safety training was offered in conjunction with the park's safety committee.

Fee Collection Activities

During 2005, the park fee collection program staffed Joshua Tree's entrance stations and campgrounds throughout the year. Stations were staffed during traditional peak traffic times.

Staff administered the NPS camping reservation system and continued to coordinate and implement policies in relation to the Federal Land's Recreation Enhancement Program. The program collected \$1.9 million in 2005

Educational materials were distributed from the stations, including park safety information, rules and regulations and general guides and brochures.

The fee program was brought to full staff, including hiring two new Visitor Use Assistants to run the new campground fee program. Fee staff has been instrumental in establishing a registration program for the campgrounds in advance of charging fees and disseminating information about the new fees to both visitors and other park staff.

Law Enforcement Activities

Rangers maintained high profile road patrols, conducting traffic enforcement aimed at reducing the number of motor vehicle accidents. Rangers responded to thirty four 36 CFR Part 1 offenses and over 800 Part II offenses, with a monetary loss of \$21,336 to the government.

Rangers have remained ready for Homeland Security mobilization. They received training in HazMat First Responder. Ranger Kevin MacLean attended the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and successfully completed the Field Training program, graduating top of the class!

Rock Climbing

The Joshua Tree Climbing Management Work Group was formed by some of the members of groups represented on the recently disbanded Climbing Committee. The group is not a park-organized group and meets independent of park operations. It has identified a need for a common ground approach to how climbing is managed in the park.

A new study of the effectiveness of barriers in areas used by the public to access climbing routes was initiated. Different types of barrier methods were developed and observation of visitor access patterns has been monitored. Installation of barriers and their effectiveness will be studied in 2006.

Search and Rescue Activities

There were 31 search and rescue incidents, which involved 38 lost or injured individuals. There were not any fatalities in FY2005. Rangers responded to flash flooding in the park. This involved supporting staff with dam safety and road repair.

The Volunteer Search and Rescue team, (JOSAR), provided over 5,000 hours of support to the park's search and rescue program. Interest in the team remains extremely high in the surrounding communities. Rangers provided training for the volunteers monthly, and provided organization and supervision to the unit.

Threatened Species

Visitor protection monitored critical desert tortoise habitat, and conducted specialized patrol operations targeting wildlife violations. One tortoise poaching case was investigated resulting in 2 young tortoises being returned to the park. Prosecution is pending.

Visitor Satisfaction

The Division of Resource and Visitor Protection provided high visibility patrols in all park campgrounds, picnic areas, and public areas daily, addressing all disturbances, complaints, and visitor conflicts. Patrols were provided in campground areas well into the evening and early morning hours on every weekend, and during the week during months of traditionally high visitation. Additionally, Protection rangers responded after hours to assistance calls initiated from the Hidden Valley Emergency Phone, or from the county dispatch center or the Indian Cove emergency phone.

In 2005, the Resource and Visitor Protection Division continued to foster relationships with the climbing community by attending meetings with a local climbing coalition made-up of environmental and climbing organizations. The staff promoted stewardship and the “leave no trace” outdoor ethic through a special program called “climber’s coffee”. The park’s climbing ranger attended and spoke at weekly interpretive programs and coordinated partnership programs with local climbing advocacy groups.

Special Park Uses

The Special Park Use Coordinator administers the park’s special use program, issuing and monitoring over 65 Incidental Business Permits, 54 commercial filming permits, and 29 Special Use Permits, including permits for weddings and special events. The special use program had a record number of film and photography permits.

The Special Use program continued to work within the new NEPA guidelines as outlined in DO-12, to ensure all special use permits comply with the NEPA process.

Wilderness and Backcountry

Staff continued to chair the Wilderness Steering Committee, and continued implementation of the Backcountry Management Plan. The committee includes members from all park divisions, charged with park wide coordination of wilderness projects and conducting minimal tool analysis for the park. Leave No Trace publications were distributed at Climber Coffee programs. The park completed the climbing brochure and distributed them to 1000 visitors.

Wildland Fire & All Risk Management

In 2005, the park completed an EA for the park’s Wildland Fire Management Plan and approved the plan. The engine crew successfully completed a Readiness Review and provided respond to the park during the fire season. The park provided support to the local fire service on two fires outside our boundary, but threatened to burn into the park (one did enter the park and burned less than a quarter of an acre). No significant acreage was lost to fire in Joshua Tree National Park in 2005.

The local responses include 35 local fires, approximately 3 vehicle fires, over 50 EMS calls, 2 controlled burns, and assisted with 3 Search and Rescue calls. The park provided support to national and regional fire fighting efforts in 2005 as well as response to Hurricane Katrina and Wilma. Staff provided assistance through IMT assignments and crews. The park fire crew provided EMS support to BLM’s "Operation Imperial Dunes" during holiday weekends

Visitor Use Statistics

In Calendar Year 2005, the park welcomed 1,375,111 visitors. There were 5,875 Backcountry overnight stays and a total of 209,908 campground stays.

Comments from JOTR Employees

Their accomplishments as recorded at an All Employees' Meeting

Maintained operations in spite of the Chief's Vacancy
 Provided outstanding, clean restrooms
 Hired 2 outstanding Chiefs
 Did not authorize equestrian use at Indian Cove
 Survived 1st year with the NPS
 Still enjoy my job
 Recorded revenue
 Organized the Cottonwood Open House
 Served as an Acting Captain
 Made money
 Assisted with the preparation of the Fire Management Plan
 Recovered the Superintendent's Lotus Notes
 Utilized Safe Working Methods
 Filled the Indian Cove Borrow Pit
 Started to build the new maintenance office
 Saved the park money on materials.
 Helped to get the EMS program up and running.
 Rebuilt the Cottonwood ampitheater
 There weren't any fatal accidents
 The roads remained open
 Increased outreach
 Made the Desert Institute more visible in the lower desert
 Participated in Fran's visit
 Worked with a great Human Resources Team
 Completed lots of Background Investigations
 Helped get the new park wayside exhibits created
 Launched the Tortoise Outreach program
 Completed the Climbing Brochure
 Completed the Keys Ranch Mgmt. Plan
 Helped to coordinate the CA Science Teachers' Conference
 Initiated the Mojave Max program in the desert
 Participated in the JTNPA Membership Drive
 Worked on the plant inventory
 Revegged closed roads
 Helped to propagate plants
 Worked as a team to get stuff done!