



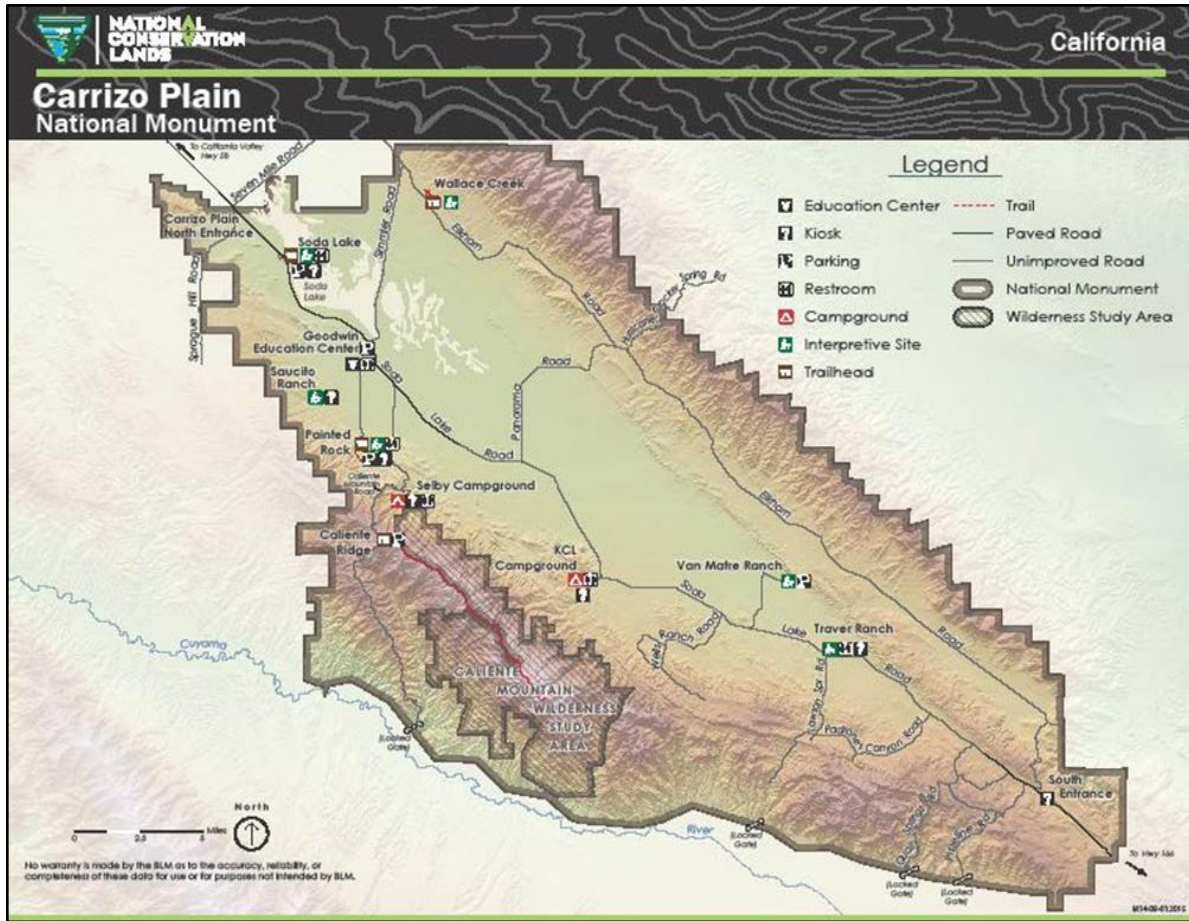
**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

California
2021: Annual Manager's Report

Carrizo Plain National Monument



Map



Accomplishments

The Carrizo Plain National Monument had many accomplishments this year despite the challenges presented by COVID-19. A modular trailer was replaced providing needed housing and office space for staff and interns. A contract was awarded for an addition to the visitor center. Since the visitation to the monument continues to increase, the existing visitor center was inadequate to serve the needs of the public and staff. The expanded visitor center will provide visitors with additional interpretive displays and give staff additional office space. The estimated completion date is June 2022. Visitation increased this year because the public was eager to get out in the open due to some of the COVID-19 restrictions.





Challenges

This year the major challenge have been trying to meet the public's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the increase in visitation protecting the monument's resources has been challenging. This year some of the staff have taken other opportunities, and the vacancies have left the monument short staffed. This has affected staffing for the visitor center and the BLM's ability to respond to visitor requests. The Carrizo Plan National Monument Manager is working diligently to fill the vacant positions which will alleviate some of these challenges. Currently we are in the 3rd year of drought which has brought challenges related to resource management. This has made resource management difficult because of concerns relative to resources responding negatively to the drought conditions.. The drought conditions also increase the potential wildfire activity in the area.

Visitors

Visitation to the monument increased this in FY21 to 90,725 visits and 111,277 visitation days. The majority of the visitors were looking for dispersed locations to camp, hunt and explore while maintaining social distancing. The monument usually sees increased visitation with the onset of a wildflower bloom. This year, due to the drought conditions, there was not a significant wildflower bloom, so the monument team is attributing the increased number of visitors to the public's desire to recreate in open spaces during a time of COVID-19 restrictions. Additionally, this year the adjacent national forest was closed during some of the hunting seasons due to wildfire concerns, and this also contributed to the increase in visitation because the monument remained open. Typical visitation in a non-wildflower year is 50,000 - 60,000 visitors. Popular visitor activities include wildlife viewing, camping, hiking, horseback riding and hunting. During a big wildflower bloom, the monument sees over 100,000 visitors engaged in wildflower viewing, photography, hiking, exploring, and wildlife watching.





Partnerships

The Carrizo Plain is managed by the BLM with important cooperative partnerships with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). The BLM has strong working relationships with each of the cooperative partners. These partnerships play a significant role in the management of the monument. The Monument's Friends group, The Friends of the Carrizo Plain, works closely with the BLM to support efforts on the monument and ongoing projects. Some of the projects include visitor center displays as well as new interpretive signs for the visitor center and other points of interest.

Gateway communities continue to support the monument by distributing interpretive and educational information to visitors throughout the year. The Native American Advisory Committee continues to give recommendations on resource management in the monument.

The Carrizo Plain National Monument continues to have a strong volunteer program. Throughout the year, volunteers support workdays and provide interpretive support for displays in the visitor center.

Science

Research continues to be an important component of the Monument. Long-term studies in collaboration with local universities aid in the management of threatened and endangered species who call the Carrizo Plain National Monument home. Studies underway include research on demographics of the Giant Kangaroo Rat and surveys of San Joaquin Valley Kit Fox populations. Studies are also being conducted to determine how Blunt Nosed Leopard Lizards react to increased temperatures and how, in turn, they compensate in those conditions. Other research includes geological studies on the San Andreas Fault to determine frequency and severity of earthquakes in that region.

Additional research includes ongoing monitoring of Western spadefoot toads, Fairy shrimp and Kern primrose sphinx moth. Monument staff are also working with botanical researchers on monitoring of threatened and endangered plants and the effectiveness of native species planting after wildfires as a tool for restoration.



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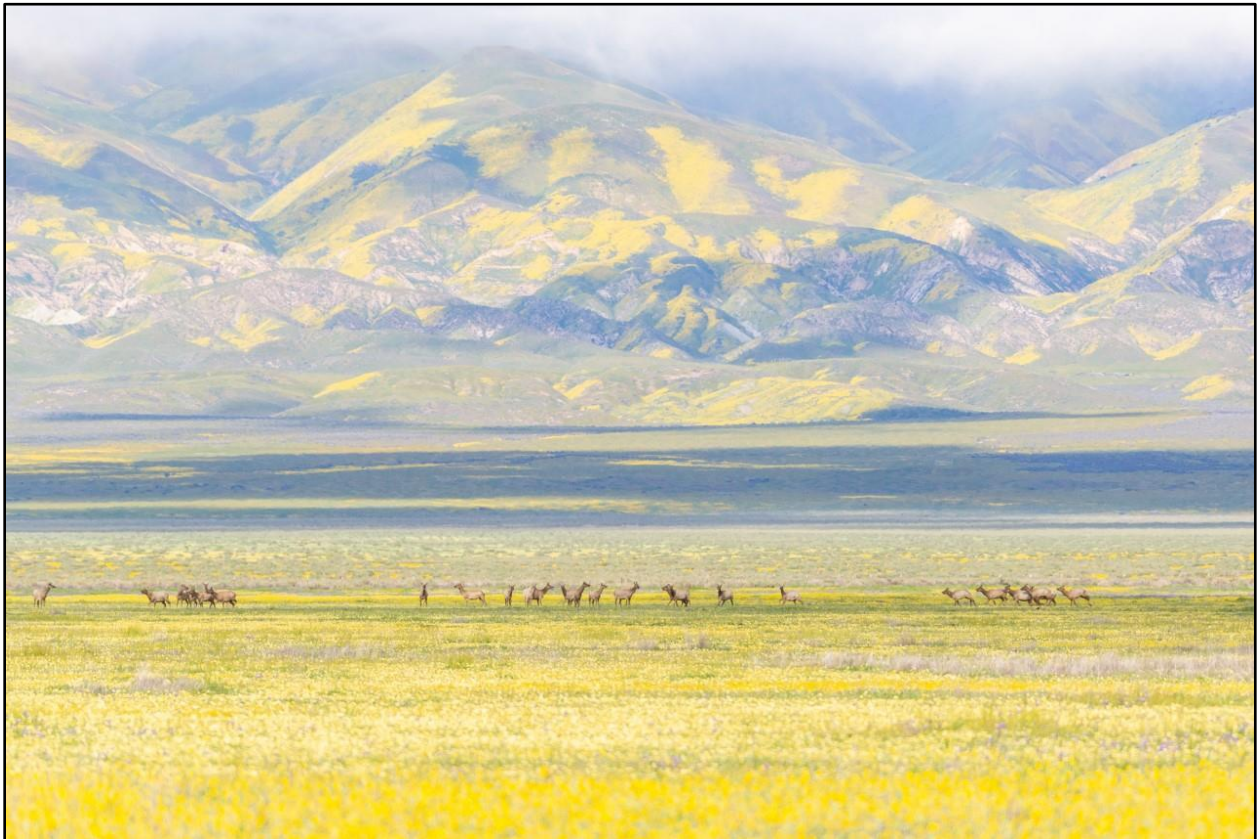


Climate Impacts

The Carrizo Plain National Monument continues to be in a cycle of drought. Over the past decade, years of drier conditions outnumber the number of normal rainfall years. Decreased rainfall has affected vegetation types and growth and this has also had an effect on the animal species in the monument. Additionally, given the drier conditions, wildfires start more easily earlier in the year and move rapidly through the grassland.

Climate Resiliency

Because the Carrizo is a large grassland composed mostly of annual plants, with the occurrence of normal rainfall the plants and animals respond quickly in a positive manner. The monument staff have changed some of the water wells that were traditionally pumped by generators to solar pumps. This reduces the use of gas-powered generators and reduces the time it takes personnel to pump these wells. Staff have identified additional wells to transition to solar in the next few years.





Social and Environmental Justice

Throughout the season Carrizo hosts tours for schools, organizations, and the general public. The Friends of the Carrizo offers funding to bus local schools to the monument that otherwise wouldn't be able to come due to lack of funding. Visitors come from all over the world to see the wildflower displays when they are in bloom.

Events

In September, Carrizo Plain National Monument hosted a National Public Lands Day event at the historic Saucito ranch. A lively group accomplished many tasks, including stacking downed tree limbs, removing non-native vegetation and completing trail work. The Friends of the Carrizo supported the effort with volunteers and provided lunch. Volunteers came from local communities, metropolitan cities, and the local university. Lots of work was accomplished and a good time was had by all.





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Carrizo Plain

National Monument

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