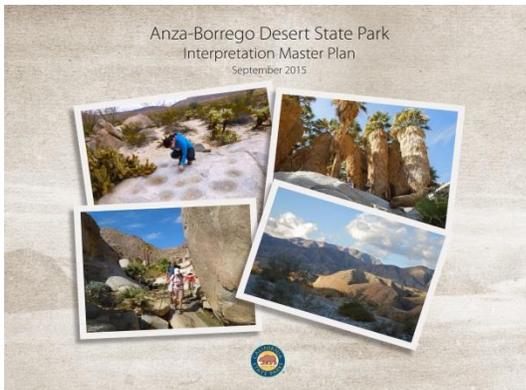


Anza-Borrego Desert State Park California

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park was formed in 1932 to protect a handful of rare palm oases. Over time, the Park's holdings have expanded significantly – and so has its mission. Today the Park exists to provide protection for a significant piece of the western Colorado Desert. The Park also provides opportunities for a diverse array of visitors to experience and enjoy this remarkable and fragile landscape.



In fall 2013, The Acorn Group began developing the Park's interpretive master plan. The challenges were daunting. The Park is massive – it exceeds 615,000 acres and spans three counties. Its stories are complex and resources deserving of protection and stewardship. It holds one of the richest and most varied fossil records in the western hemisphere. Its topography is stunning. Badlands, deep canyons, ancient seafloors, playas, palm oases, alluvial fans, and bajadas all contribute to the Park's remarkable character. And its weather conditions can prove fatal. Summer heat is extreme. Monsoonal rain can create flash floods that unleash their fury without warning.

We surveyed the land from the ground and air. Listening sessions, interviews, visitor surveys, and observations informed our process, enabling us to test assumptions and fully understand the needs of staff, volunteers, and visitors. We learned visitors need reliable way-finding tools, prominently displayed access points, improved print media including maps, and access to podcasts, user-friendly websites, and other pre-loaded information. Staff and volunteers seek greater emphasis on the region's dark skies, a new gateway at the southern entrance, and robust programming that resonates with various audience sectors.



In the master plan we identified new programs, facilities, interpretive tools, and media to help disperse traffic, protect sensitive resources, and direct more attention to the unseen – the small, the seasonal, and the remote. Already, Park staff have begun implementing the interpretive master plan and once again have enlisted The Acorn Group to help.