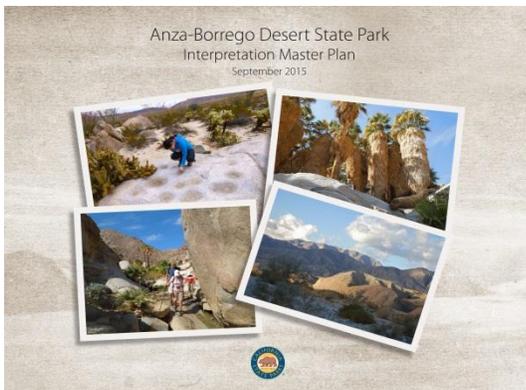


## Anza-Borrego Desert State Park California Interpretive Master Planning

*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.*



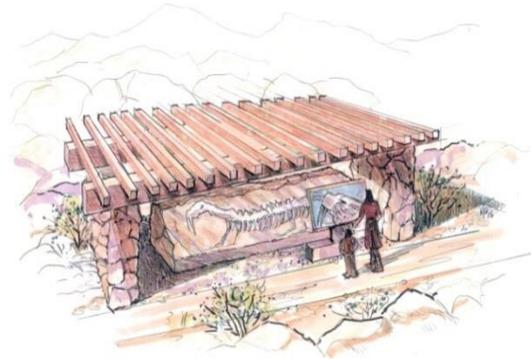
In fall 2013, The Acorn Group began developing the Park's Interpretive Master Plan. The challenges were daunting. The Park is massive—it exceeds 615,000 acres and spans three counties. Its stories are complex and its resources are deserving of protection and stewardship. It holds one of the richest and 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 document, 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. The Park staff began implementing the Interpretive Master Plan in 2015 and once again enlisted The Acorn Group to help.



**Anza-Borrego Desert State Park  
California**

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In October 2015, having completed the Park's Interpretive Master Plan just one month prior, The Acorn Group team began developing new interpretive panels for the trails, grounds of the Visitor Center, Cultural Preserves, and other sites of historical, cultural, and biological significance within the Park.



We commissioned the art, coordinated the photography, wrote the panel copy, consulted with the Park's geologists, archaeologists, botanists, and paleontologists, and created the designs and layouts.

We also worked closely with Park staff and Stone Imagery in order to meet a highly ambitious deadline of May 2016. All told, we created 84 panels, each strategically placed at a site within the Park's 615,000 acres. The panels were delivered on time and according to budget.

