

**Lake Mead Law Enforcement  
Project No. 2003-NPS-233-P-1961-03  
Final Report**

**I. Introduction**

**Project Description:**

Patrol of lands within the Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA) and other lands identified as an Intensely Managed Area (IMA) within the jurisdiction of the National Park Service in Clark County. The purpose of these patrols was to educate the public about sensitive species and their habitat, to deter and detect actions that harm animals and habitat and to enforce violations of regulations protecting animals and habitat.

**Background and Need:**

Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LMNRA) contains approximately 188,500 acres of sensitive lands in Nevada within the DWMA's. Furthermore, lands within LMNRA excluding those inundated by Lakes Mead and Mohave, add up to approximately 575,520 acres of terrestrial habitat considered to be an IMA under the Clark County MSHCP.

This project funded additional ranger personnel to supplement the NPS Mission of conserving, unimpaired, the natural and cultural resources for future generations. These rangers had primary responsibility for resource related patrols which may not have occurred otherwise due to budget restrictions.

Lands covered by this project see varying amounts of visitor activities and recreation, but with growth in the Las Vegas Valley and Laughlin area drawing more residents every month there is a direct correlation to the increased use of public land. Some of these uses are illegal and cause substantial harm to sensitive resources.

**Conservation/Management Actions Addressed:**

The following Actions were addressed by this project:

(NPS 25) Prohibit commercial collection of fauna and flora

(NPS 27) Prohibit recreational shooting

(NPS 29) Prohibit woodcutting and shrub clearing, and other human disturbance off existing roadways

(NPS 32) Ensure adequate law enforcement is implemented within LMNRA

(NPS 33) Protect existing stands of mesquite and catclaw

(NPS 36) Enforce existing prohibition of collecting and deter poaching through increased routine ranger patrols

(NPS 51) Assure full and continuing implementation of existing management policies and actions, and monitoring of sensitive habitats and species.

## **II. Project Goals and Objectives**

### **Project Goals:**

The primary objectives and goals of the project were to:

1. Detect and deter careless and destructive behaviors by the public to sensitive species and habitat within the DWMA and other lands under LMNRA jurisdiction.
2. Increase public awareness and understanding of sensitive species and habitat within the DWMA and other lands under LMNRA jurisdiction.
3. Increase public knowledge of regulations and laws by enforcing appropriate and responsible use within the DWMA and other lands under the jurisdiction of LMNRA.
4. Sign, post, repair and monitor areas of illegal activity

### **Methods and Materials:**

*Methods:* Patrols by LMNRA law enforcement park rangers throughout the DWMA and other IMA lands under LMNRA jurisdiction. Patrols were completed by various methods including 4x4 vehicles, motorcycle, foot, and boat and fixed-wing aircraft.

*Materials:* Law enforcement tools, and supplies, photographic equipment, GPS receivers and mapping aids; shovels, rakes, wire brushes, sign posts, augers, fencing material, and signs; government-owned vehicles and equipment used by rangers were part of the operating costs supported by project funds.

### **Performance Indicators:**

The following tables illustrate accomplishments resulting from patrols of sensitive lands within LMNRA:

**Table I-Resource Related Incidents  
on IMA lands within LMNRA**

Destruction/Damage/Vandalism:	
-Cultural	1
-Natural	14
-Government property	14
-Private property	29
Sensitive animals	19
Sensitive plants	10
Arson-wildland	2
Off-road travel	82
Camping violations	141
Metal detectors	12
Dumping	27
Illegal hunting activities	15

**Table II-Misc. Public-use Incidents  
on IMA lands within LMNRA**

Alcohol violations (incl. Under the Influence)	114
Drug violations (possession, use, paraphernalia)	94
Fugitives from justice	77
Disorderly conduct	66

**Table III-  
Public Contacts**

Informational contacts	7,979
Verbal warnings	1,076
Citations	37

**Table IV-Miscellaneous  
Management Actions**

Signs installed or replaced	>150
“No Motor Vehicle” <i>carsonites</i>	>200
Misc. barriers*	>1,400+
Unlawful off-road tracks raked-out*	~3.5 mi

**\*Joint effort with resource staff**

*Totals represent period July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2005*

## **Accomplishments, Milestones & Objectives:**

Tables I & II, illustrate incidents on LMNRA and within the DWMA lands handled by law enforcement rangers. The definition of "*incident*" is any event a Ranger is involved in. This can include events observed with no responsible party present or contacted, and events in which there is a responsible party present and contacted by a ranger. Similarly, these incidents represent a full range of actions on the part of the ranger, including actions to remediate damage (i.e. placing barriers or raking-out tracks), prevent further damage, (i.e. placing signs), public education, verbal warnings, citations, and/or arrests for violations.

It is important to note, relative to Table II, that other illegal activities not directly related to resource crimes often accompany contacts for resource related violations. Individuals damaging sensitive habitat often are involved in other unlawful activities, before, during, or after the resource related crime.

Tables III & IV summarize actions by rangers. Verbal warnings typically include detailed public education, with messages about sensitive plants, animals and habitats.

Through Project funding LMNRA had the ability to place more field personnel in the DWMA and IMAs to deter illegal activities, detect resource crimes and take action to prevent further damage. Absent this staffing patrols of sensitive lands would be few in number and restricted to periods of lower visitation when other public safety demands were not of a higher priority. In addition, seasonal rangers funded under this Project have performed backcountry patrols that would otherwise not have occurred.

The presence of law enforcement rangers in the field undoubtedly deters illegal activities. This result is not measurable. High profile patrols involving marked law enforcement vehicles and armed law enforcement rangers presents a higher level of deterrent to illegal activities for instance, non-law enforcement personnel giving warnings. Furthermore, as evidenced by Table II, the potential for encountering other illegal acts during resource patrols emphasizes the need for professional law enforcement personnel. The safety of non-law enforcement personnel making contacts in remote areas could not be assured.

Another area of significant accomplishment worth noting is the monetary restitution imposed by the Federal Court System in Las Vegas. During the 2003 biennium the courts have assessed over \$10,000.00 in restoration costs on violators.

We have also used Project law enforcement rangers in conjunction with Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Project law enforcement rangers to conduct focused patrols within the DWMA with great success. These patrols were used to

target high violation, remote locations known for illegal activities. Many of the Table II stats came from contacts in these areas.

### **III. Internal or External Challenges**

It is relevant to note that recruiting, hiring and training seasonal/temporary law enforcement rangers continued to be a significant challenge for the National Park Service. Factors beyond our control made hiring and placing seasonal rangers into the field in a timely manner difficult. In the next biennium we anticipate the conversion of seasonal positions to a permanent position will resolve this challenge.

### **IV. Lessons Learned from the Project**

This second biennium has allowed further refinement of patrol tactics to address resource issues with law enforcement rangers, management actions to address illegal uses by the public and additional exposure to both the public and other groups with similar interests and missions in land and wildlife protection.

LMNRA, having multiple projects under MSHCP, has learned that coordination across project lines is essential to efficient and effective management activities. This coordination avoids duplication of efforts and builds a team who share a vision of sensitive species and habitat protection.

### **V. Project Impact**

This Project is highly effective and results in direct protection of sensitive animals and habitats as shown in above tables. The absence of resource protection and law enforcement personnel on the DWMA lands would result in accelerated loss of animals and degradation of sensitive habitat. Lands classified as an IMA would certainly not be as intensely managed as they should be, and the classification of those lands as IMAs could be considered questionable.

Through partnering with the County and its' contractors at University of Nevada-Reno, we have developed an electronic field reporting system that will improve data collection used for reporting to the Implementation and Monitoring Committee (IMC). This information will be useful for management decisions as well.

Our success and your support have made us a model for interagency law enforcement nationally. As a result of this and the reorganization of the land management training at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC) areas within the DWMA were visited by FLETC staff and evaluated to create scenarios and lectures that are relevant to our field personnel.

In closing LMNRA would like to thank the US Fish and Wildlife Service and Clark County for their continued support of this program.

