



SUN photo by MARIS BRANCHEAU

*CALIFORNIA State Park Ranger Paul Reisman points out an area where he has encountered ordnance and munitions to Colorado Desert District Environmental Coordinator David Lawhead during a technical planning meeting Jan. 18 in Borrego.*

## Study of ordnance moves forward

The United States Army Corps of Engineers moved towards the potential cleanup of a former military training site by holding a Jan. 18 meeting with stakeholders and major property owners in Borrego.

The Borrego Maneuver Area, six sites encompassing most of Clark's Dry Lake and parts of Military Wash in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area, is under study for potential ordnance identification and mitigation. During the nearly three-hour meeting at Palm Canyon Resort, representatives from the Corps and contract companies MARRS and

Earth Tech explained the steps in the study process, but did not provide details as to what techniques might be employed to scan the desert for unexploded bombs, rocket particles or other munitions.

A second meeting for stakeholders is scheduled for Feb. 15 at Palm Canyon Resort. The Corps hopes to have a draft work plan available for public review in May. A 45-day public comment period will follow the work plan's release.

Buzz Barton, a project manager for Earth Tech, said his company, along

*See MILITARY, Page 14*

## MILITARY: Clark's Dry Lake under study

*Continued from Page 3*

with the Corps and MARRS, will be seeking right-of-entry access to property within the Borrego Maneuver Area. He said public comments will be important in the study process.

"We don't want to come in here and presuppose that we know it all," Barton said. "We won't be asking you to rubber stamp a plan. We want to get your feedback and incorporate it into our plans."

Ordnance experts and contractors visited areas of Military Wash with park rangers on Jan. 17 and 18. Larry Sievers of the Army Corps of Engineers said areas rangers called "Bombville" and "Rocketville" were previously unknown to the Corps. He said park personnel could guide the Corps to areas that need to be cleaned up. He noted that the Corps will need the permission of land owners.

"We can't operate without your per-

mission," Sievers said. "We do understand this is your park."

About 40 people attended the preliminary meeting, the first in what the Corps calls the Technical Planning Process. Park rangers, administrators, environmental scientists, and archaeologists were present.

A handful of property owners who read about the meeting in the *Borrego Sun* attended. Sievers said the 240 identified property owners weren't officially invited, but were welcome. He said property owners would be contacted before land surveys begin.

Fritz Liebhardt, a property owner on the north side of Clark's Dry Lake, said he wanted to know more about the project.

"We'll need to know how they plan to scan the ground. They haven't identified where they will need to go, but this is a good start. It seems like it's going to be a long process," Liebhardt said

Carmen Lucas, an American Indian with lineal ties to the area, said the ordnance issue brings up two concerns for her. She wants to ensure that children are kept away from the by-products of military training. Her second interest is respecting lands where cultural resources, including ancestral remains could be buried.

"There would need to be proper identification of where burial sites may be before people start digging and blowing up ordnance," Lucas said. "I think it's terribly important for Native Americans to become involved in the process."

The Borrego Maneuver Area ranked as a higher priority for the Corps than the Carrizo Impact Area. The Carrizo Impact Area could see a similar study process within the next year, Sievers said.

Both areas contain bombs made up of a variety of powders, and pieces of projectiles and rockets.