

## Comments due Sept. 5 for work plan in Borrego Maneuver Area

The bombing, shooting and test-rocket firing that took place in the Anza-Borrego Desert during training for World War II and the Korean War left remnants that might or might not be dangerous.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is accepting public comments on a work plan that details how more than 400 square miles of local desert will be scanned and studied for potentially dangerous military munitions. The deadline for comments is Sept. 5.

The work plan provides a detailed project execution plan that explains how the Corps will estimate the location, concentration, and type of munitions and explosives of concern in eight project sites collectively called the Borrego Maneuver Area. Areas include Clark Dry Lake, Benson Dry Lake, the former Ensign Ranch, and portions of washes in both Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area.

The plan details how the Corps will work with either on-site biologists or consultants to ensure sensitive species and their habitat are protected during field investigations.

After investigations are completed, a feasibility study will be released that will propose alternatives for dealing with the munitions. Signage could be installed or a full-fledge removal project could be proposed.

David Lawhead, environmental coordinator for the Colorado Desert District of State Parks, said he will compile comments from district historians, archaeologists and paleon-

tologists into a single report that responds to the Corps plan. Lawhead said the work plan doesn't address paleontological resources at all.

"There are areas out there that do have (fossil) resources," Lawhead said.

The Corps plans to conduct the study in areas designated as critical habitat for the Peninsular bighorn sheep and the flat-tailed horned lizard. Lawhead said that some of the military remnants that aren't inherently dangerous could be considered part of the park's history.

"Our archaeology and history folks are still weighing in on the plan," he said.

The several-hundred page draft plan and a public involvement plan are available for review at the Borrego Springs library branch in The Mall on Palm Canyon Drive and online at [www.borregosprings-mmmp.org](http://www.borregosprings-mmmp.org).

Comments can be sent to USACE Los Angeles District, CESPL-PM-M Attn: Larry Sievers, 915 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 15011, Los Angeles, CA 90017-3401 or e-mailed to [larry.a.sievers@usace.army.mil](mailto:larry.a.sievers@usace.army.mil).

The Corps plans to visit Borrego again for a fourth technical project planning meeting with property holders and other stakeholders on Wednesday, Oct. 4. The time and location for the meeting are pending.