

## Resources



Orcutt's Woody Aster

**Plants:** A few protected California fan palms survive where their roots are able to reach water. Three rare plants, Orcutt's woody aster, Pierson's pincushion and Salton milkvetch, also grow here. Colorado Desert vegetation typically includes creosote bush, palo verde, brittle bush, mesquite and scattered cacti. Please avoid damaging vegetation.

**Wildlife:** Endangered Peninsular big-horn sheep might leave their usual mountainous habitat to forage in the Freeman Acquisition. Reptiles, birds, bats, hares and rabbits call this land their home. At least 13 rare or uncommon species of birds, including the prairie falcon and golden eagle, are known to occur here.



Peninsular Big Horn Sheep

**Paleontology:** Sediments from the Gulf of California reveal fossilized marine shells and corals. Petrified wood and vertebrate fossils, protected by federal and state laws, have been discovered. They include turtle specimens and the remains of extinct camels and horses. Shells from fresh-water lakes lie in the sun.

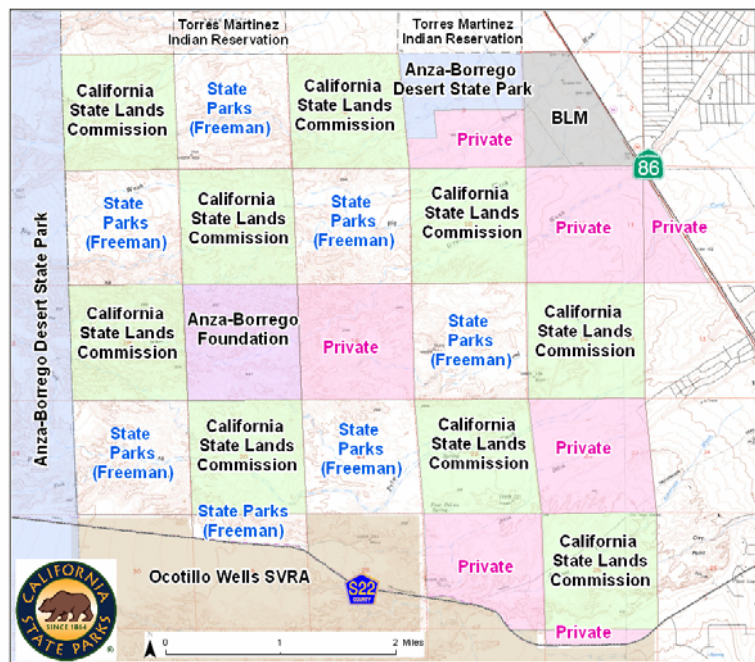
**Archaeology:** Native American ceremonial and habitation sites include dozens of cleared circles, miles of trails and a variety of cultural artifacts. Please respect these landmarks of our state's heritage.



Eroded Concretions in Big Wash

**Geology:** Extraordinary concretions cover the landscape in some areas of the Freeman Acquisition. Fragile hills conceal caves that are caused by water that seeps through the clay, creating tubes in the hills. Other formations reveal the geologic history of the area.

## The Freeman Acquisition



### Additional Plans

- ✓ Providing patrol rangers and other Park staff to promote public safety, education and resource protection;
- ✓ Assessing natural, cultural and recreational resources to determine which areas or resources require additional protective measures;
- ✓ Adopting other measures to prevent harm to sensitive areas;
- ✓ Beginning a volunteer program to train volunteers to assist Park staff in providing public education and resource protection.



Special events applications may be obtained by calling Anza-Borrego Desert State Park at (760) 767-5311.

If you see illegal or destructive activity, please report it to Park staff or call Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area at (760) 767-5391 or Anza-Borrego Desert State Park at (760) 767-5311. If there is an emergency call 911.

Archaeological stewards are monitoring archaeological sites. If you would like to be a site steward, call Joan Schneider at (760) 767-4403 or Jennifer Parker at (760) 767-1326.

# Freeman Acquisition

A Land of Diverse Resources





## The Freeman Acquisition

The Freeman Acquisition is a checkerboard of parcels, totaling approximately 4,000 acres in northwestern Imperial County. It was acquired by California State Parks in 2006. Prior to that time, the land was owned by the Freeman Trust. State Parks is undertaking a planning effort, including a full California Environmental Quality Act analysis, to determine how best to manage these lands for the protection of the resources and other uses.



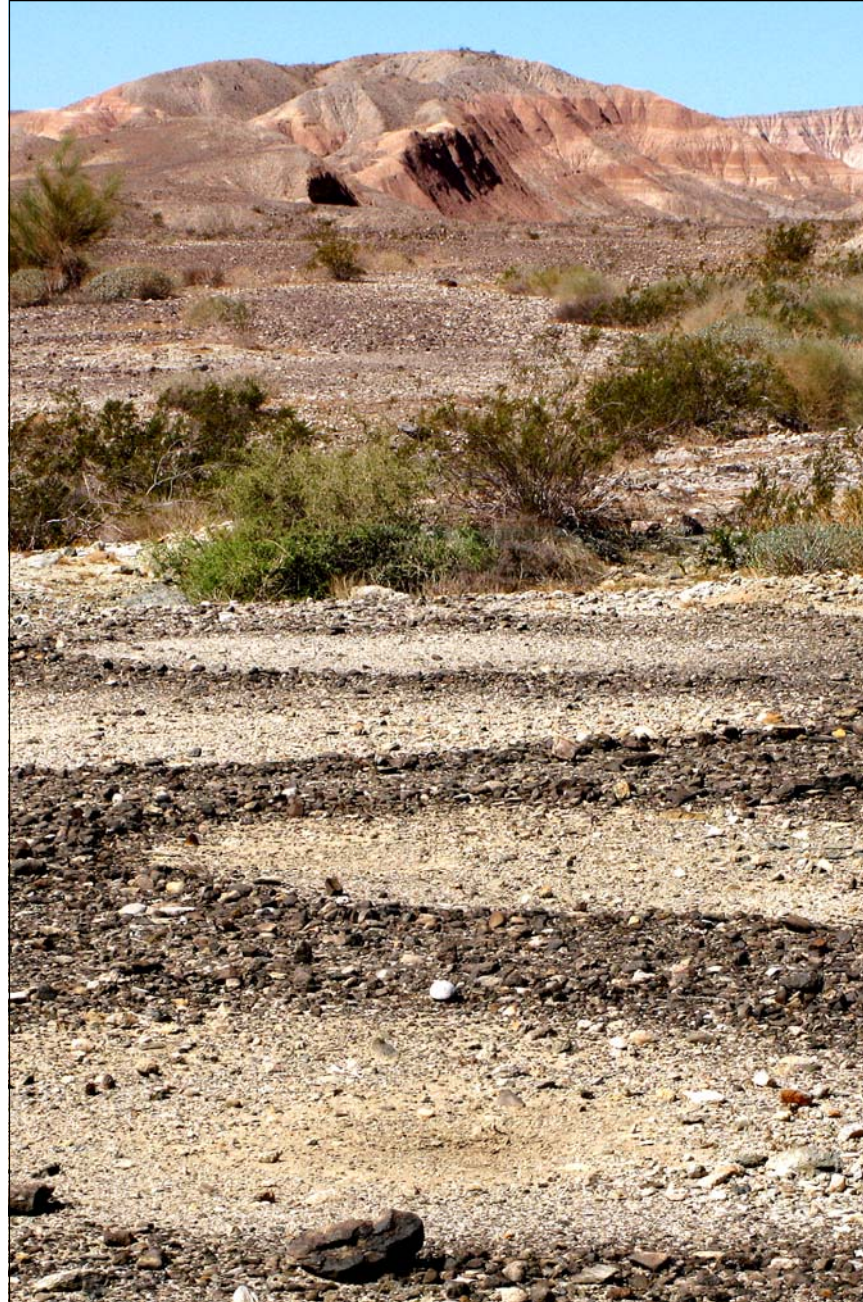
Upper Verbena Wash

Four to six million years ago, the land we call the Freeman Acquisition was covered with water from the Gulf of California. Shells and bones sank into the mud and became fossilized. The gulf water receded then a series of fresh water lakes filled much of the Imperial and Coachella valleys. The lakes dried up, forming a desert sink. Trees that grew near waterways fell and some wood became fossilized – testimony to the time when mammoths, giant sloths and saber tooth cats roamed this arid land.

When the last lake was full, Cahuilla and Kumeyaay people lived along the shore. They fished, used aquatic plants, caught waterfowl, cooked and made many types of tools. They left fire pits, trails and a variety of other features on the land. About 400 years ago the people abandoned the shore of the drying lake along with the fish traps they had built.



Desert Horned Lizard



Enigmatic Cleared Circles on Desert Pavement

State Parks is working to protect this valuable land and we need **your** help. **To preserve delicate resources, please stay on well-established routes of travel.** Traveling off established routes can damage plants, cultural resources and paleontologic and geologic sites. Irresponsible recreation can damage delicate desert land by breaking the crust of the soil or disturbing stones in desert pavement, leading to unnatural wind and water erosion and air pollution. Please respect the fragile nature of these mesas.



OHV Use on a Well-Established Route of Travel

All resources are protected. Operation of vehicles in a manner that causes damage to land, wildlife, wildlife habitat, plants or other resources, or disobeying regulatory signs, is illegal and the vehicle operator is subject to citation. Collecting plants, rocks or anything else is not allowed.

California Vehicle Code and Off-Highway Vehicle safety regulations will be enforced for the protection of these resources and other uses.