

Geologic mapping projects in the Mojave Desert area sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey

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Several geologic mapping projects by the U.S. Geological Survey are currently underway in and near the Mojave Desert, bringing renewed vigor to understanding this still incompletely mapped area. Past projects in the Las Vegas Corridor and Needles 1° x 2° sheet have produced a large number of geologic maps. The Southern California Areal Mapping project and the Death Valley Junction project are currently preparing maps along the southern and northern parts of the desert, respectively. All of these projects, past and present, have produced detailed to intermediate-scale maps of both bedrock and surficial geology in order to systematically develop a platform for diverse research goals and applications.

A somewhat different approach has been adopted by the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Science project and the Surficial Geologic Mapping project, which focus on surficial materials with a goal of understanding surface processes and climate history, all of which can lead to more complete understanding of the desert ecosystem and improved land management applications. For these latter projects, the focus is on surficial materials because they are generally unmapped and they receive the greatest impact from most of man's activities. Scattered detailed maps are welded into a regional 1:100,000-scale series of maps to allow a synoptic understanding to be developed of the entire desert in the next few years.

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