



Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Update

Amy L. Fesnock

Mojave Ground Squirrel TAC Meeting

March 5, 2014



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

What is the DRECP?

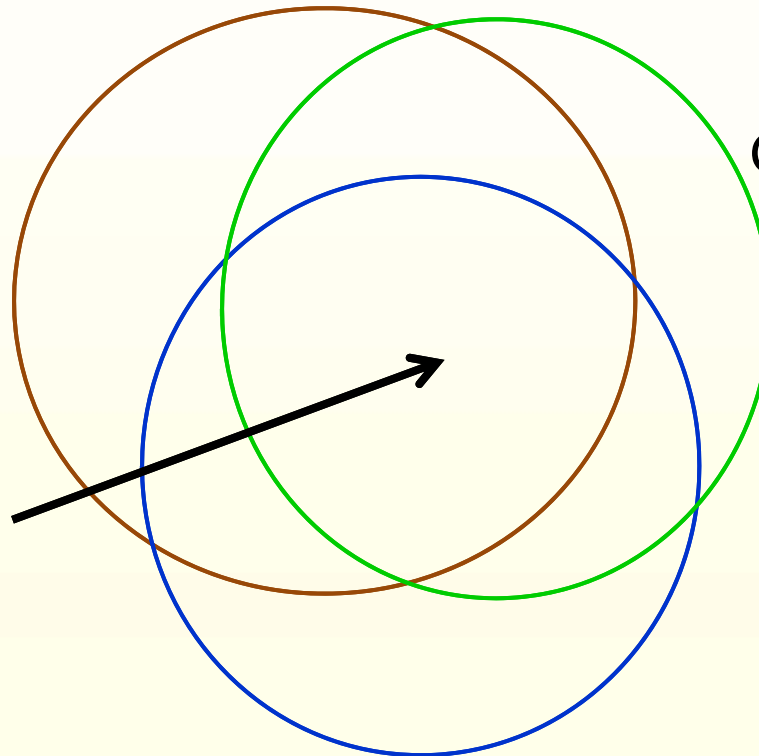
**Bureau of Land
Management**

Land Use Plan
Amendments

**US Fish and Wildlife
Service**

General Conservation
Plan
(ESA)

DRECP



Calif. Dept of Fish & Wildlife

Natural Communities Conservation Plan



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

DRECP Scope and Objective

DRECP Scope

- 22.5 million-acre planning area
- Federal, state, and private lands



DRECP Objective

- Respond to California's renewable energy targets through 2040

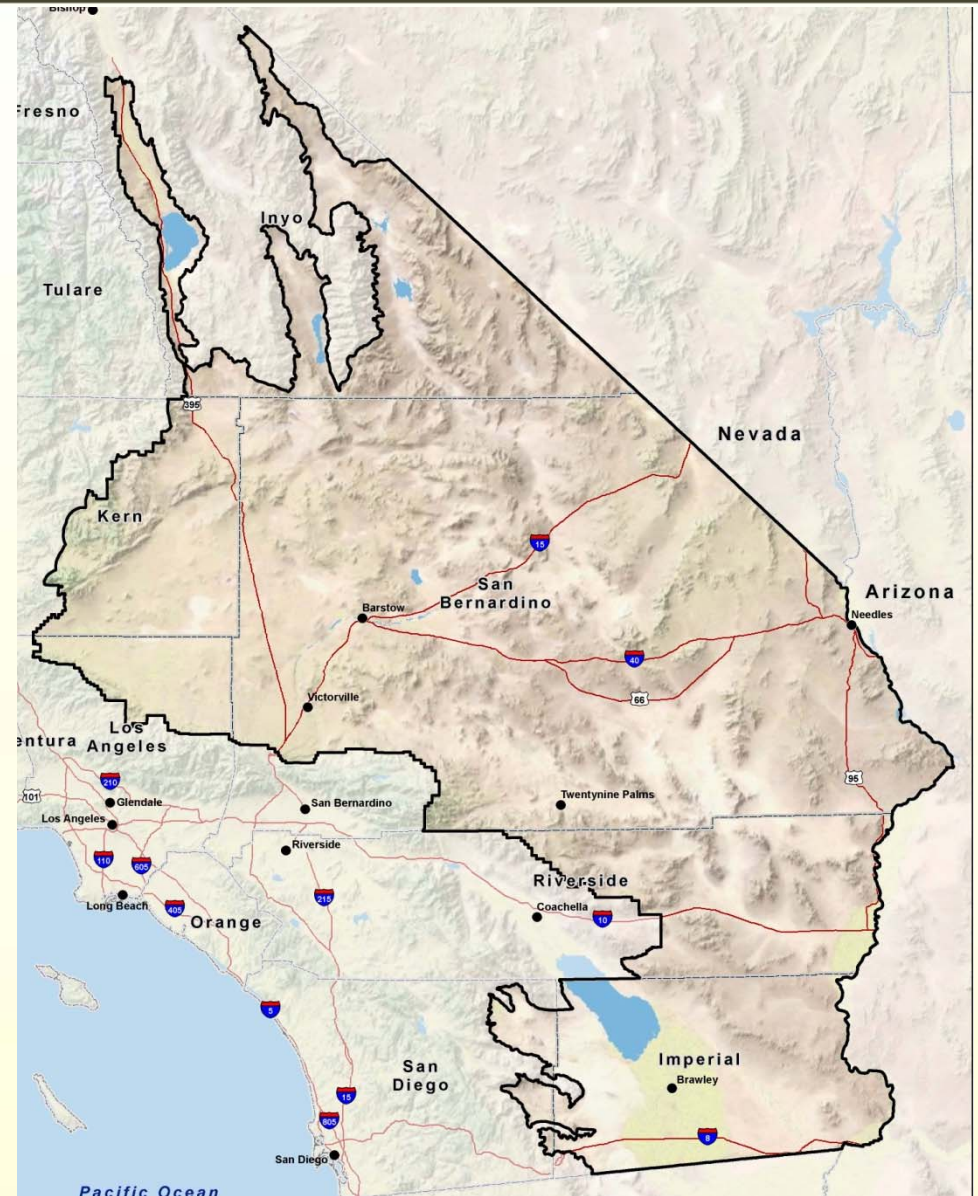


DRECP Plan Area



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

- Mojave & Colorado Desert Eco-regions
- Counties include:
 - Imperial
 - Inyo
 - Kern
 - Los Angeles
 - Riverside
 - San Bernardino
 - San Diego



Proposed Energy Activities

DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

- Utility-scale (20 MW+) renewable energy projects





DRECP Natural Resources

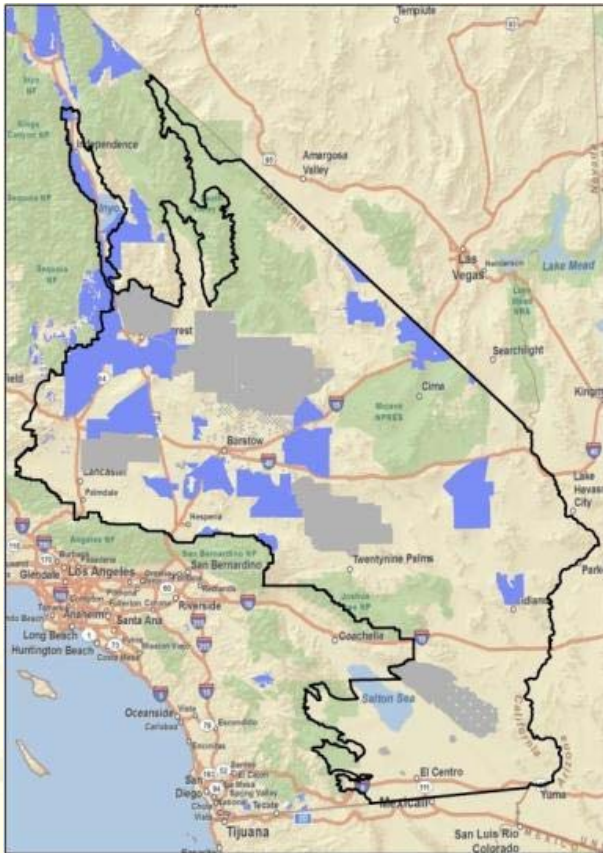
DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

- 6 natural communities
 - desert scrub & chaparral, dune, mountain & foothill woodland, wetlands, riparian, grassland & agriculture
- ~77 different plant and animal focus species
- Habitat connectivity and Ecosystem Function



Other Resources & Interests

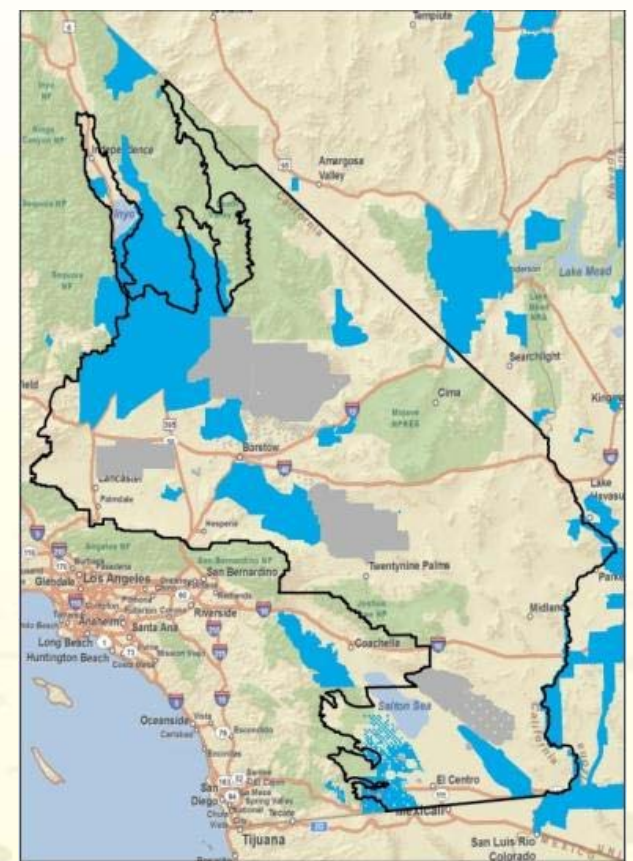
Grazing Allotments



Herd Mgmt Areas



SRMAs



Military, Tribal, Cultural, Visual, Wilderness, Minerals, etc...

Biological Conservation



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Plan-wide Biological Goals and Objectives

- at the landscape, natural community, and species levels

Plan-wide Conservation Management Actions

- at the landscape, natural community, and species levels
- Avoidance and Minimization Measures
 - Buffers, time restrictions, etc.
- Compensation
 - Land acquisition
 - habitat enhancement actions

Biological Reserve Design





DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Biological Reserve Design

Started with Existing Conditions

- Conservation: ACECs, DWMAs, Wilderness, NPS lands
- Exclusions: Military Lands, Open OHV, Mining, etc

Conducted GAP analysis

Conducted MARXAN analysis

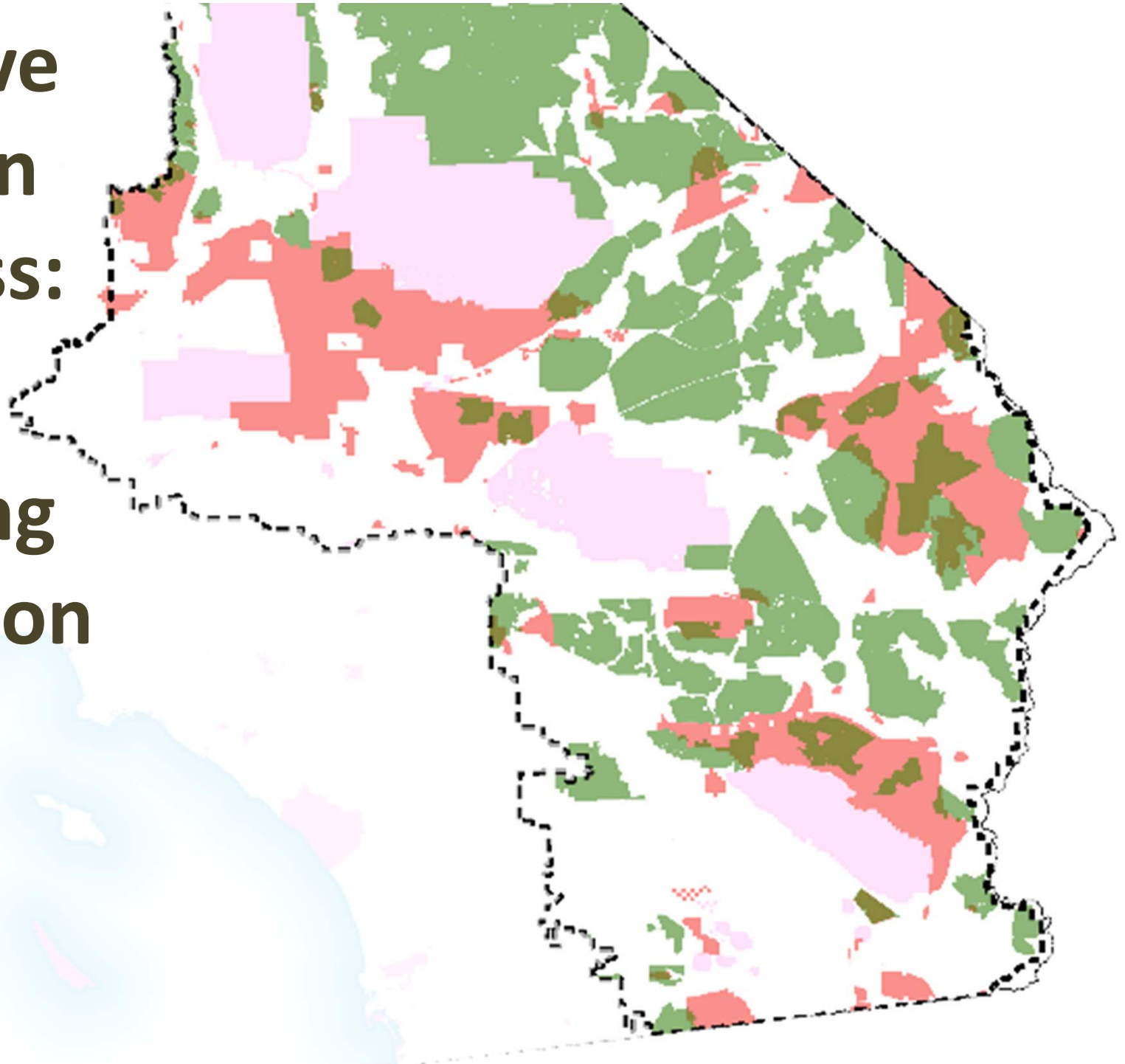
Additional “layered” analysis

- Species Habitat and Distribution,
- Natural Communities/Features
- Large habitat blocks/core areas
- Linkages/corridors
- Geologic/Environmental Process



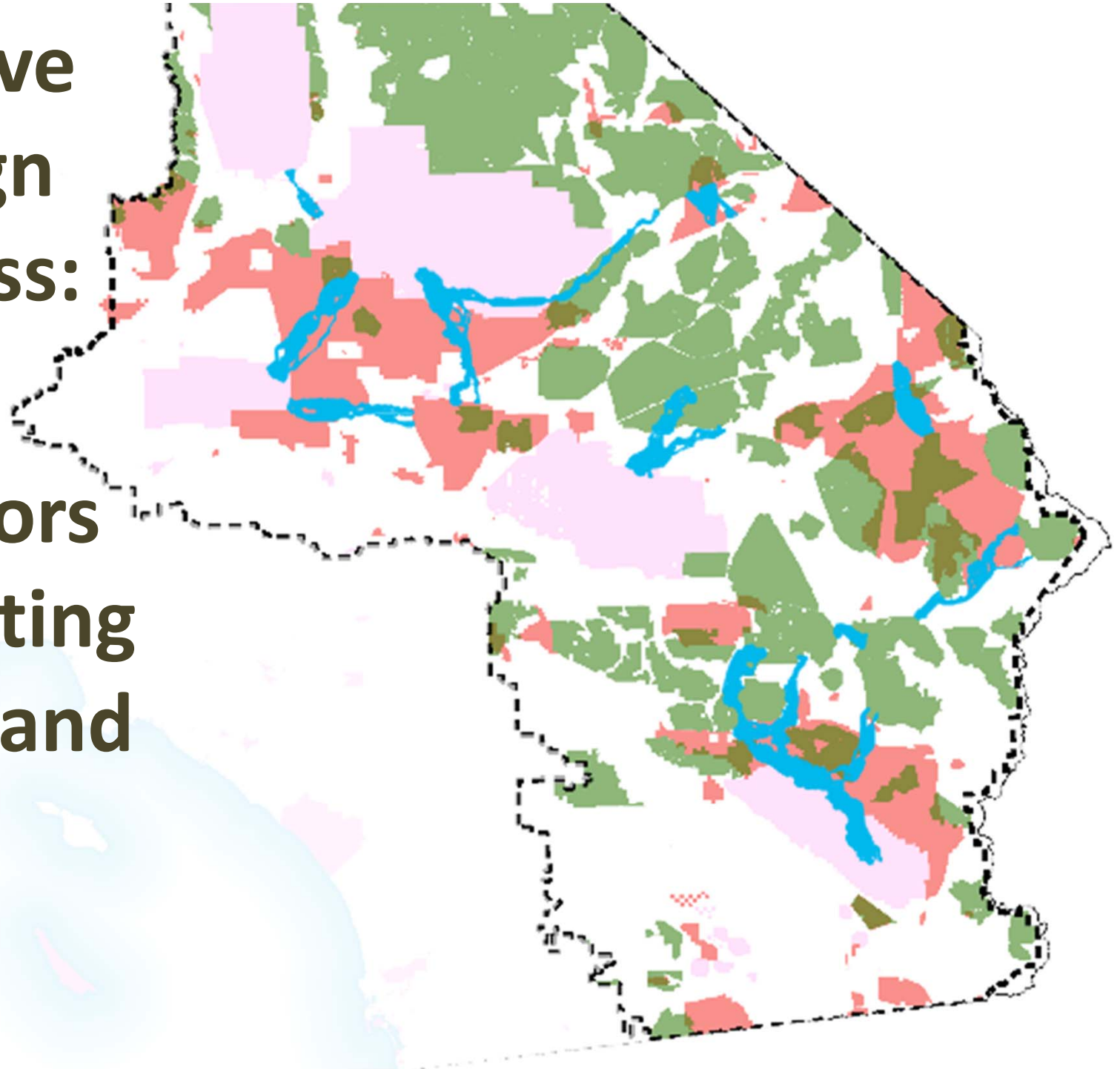
**Reserve
Design
Process:**

**Existing
Condition**



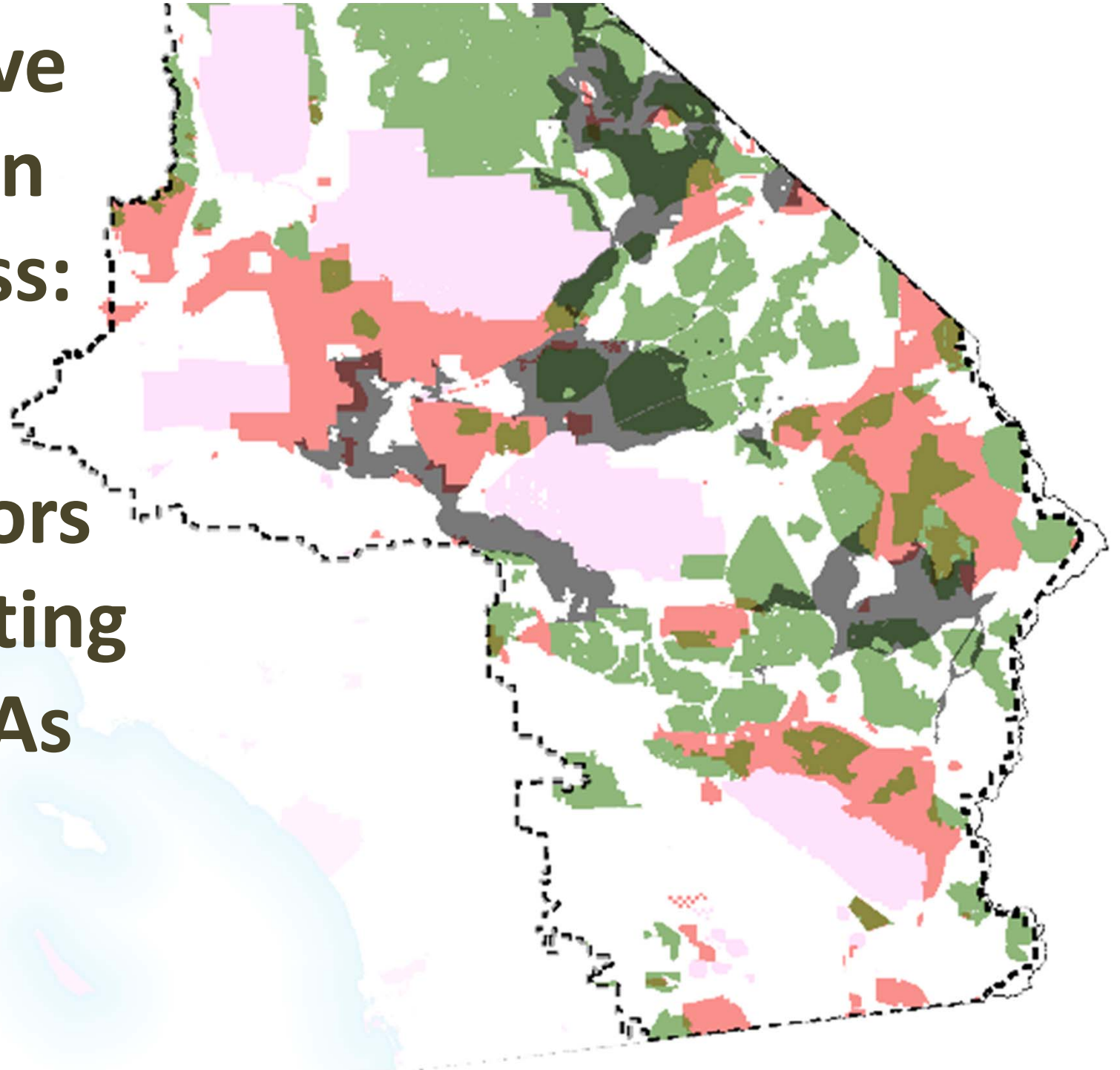
Reserve Design Process:

**Corridors
Connecting
Intact Land**



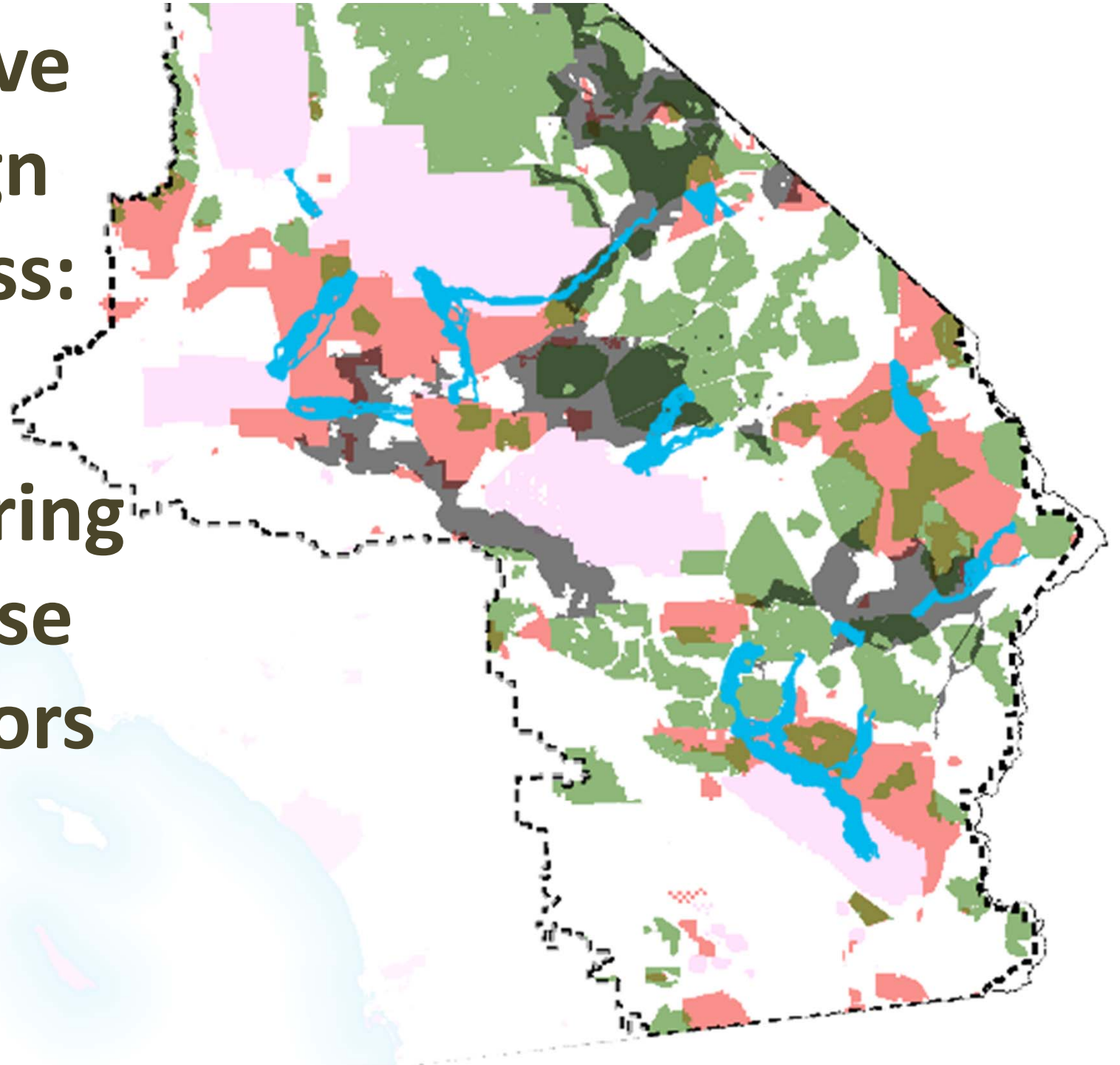
**Reserve
Design
Process:**

**Corridors
Connecting
DWMAs**



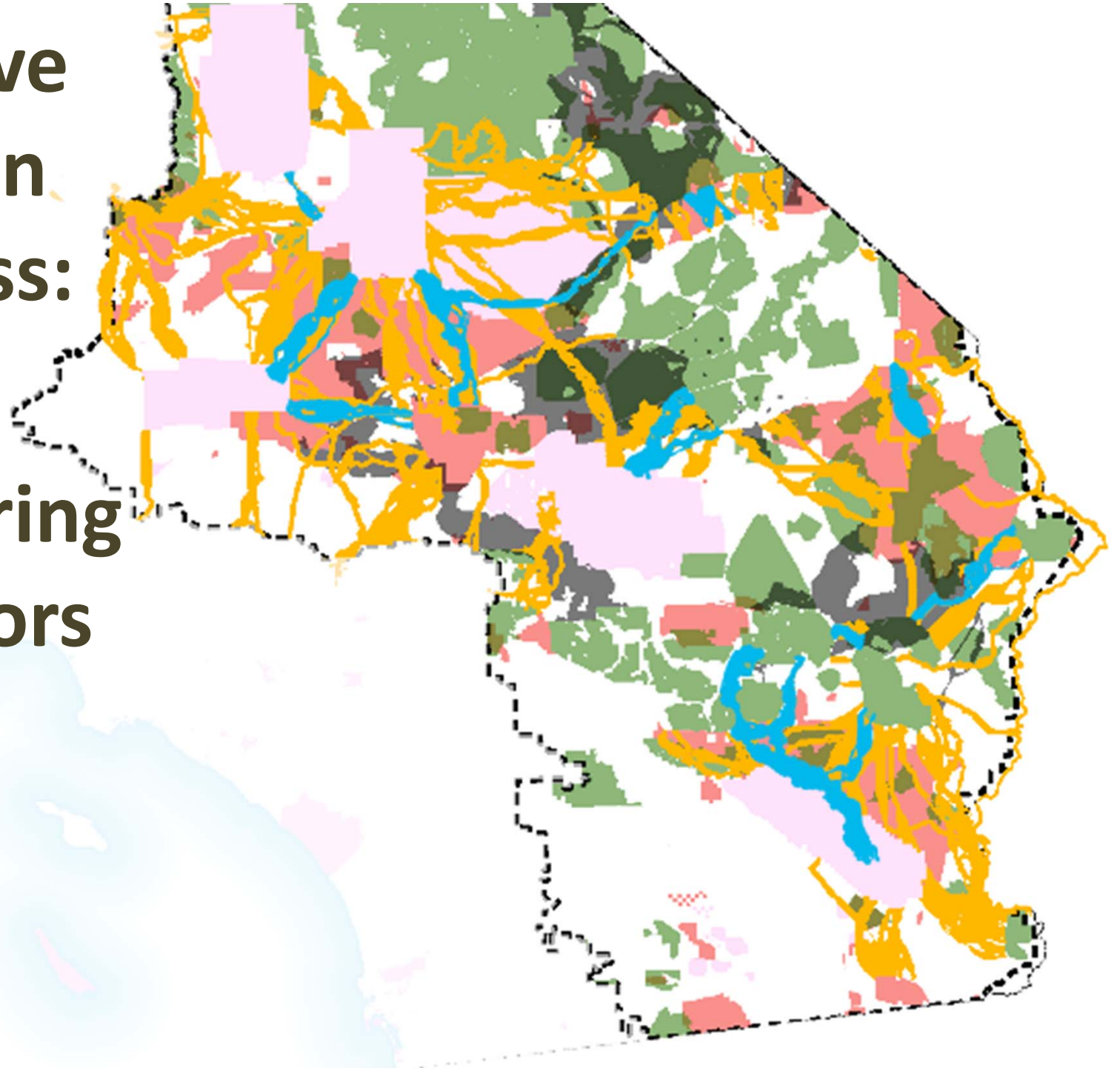
**Reserve
Design
Process:**

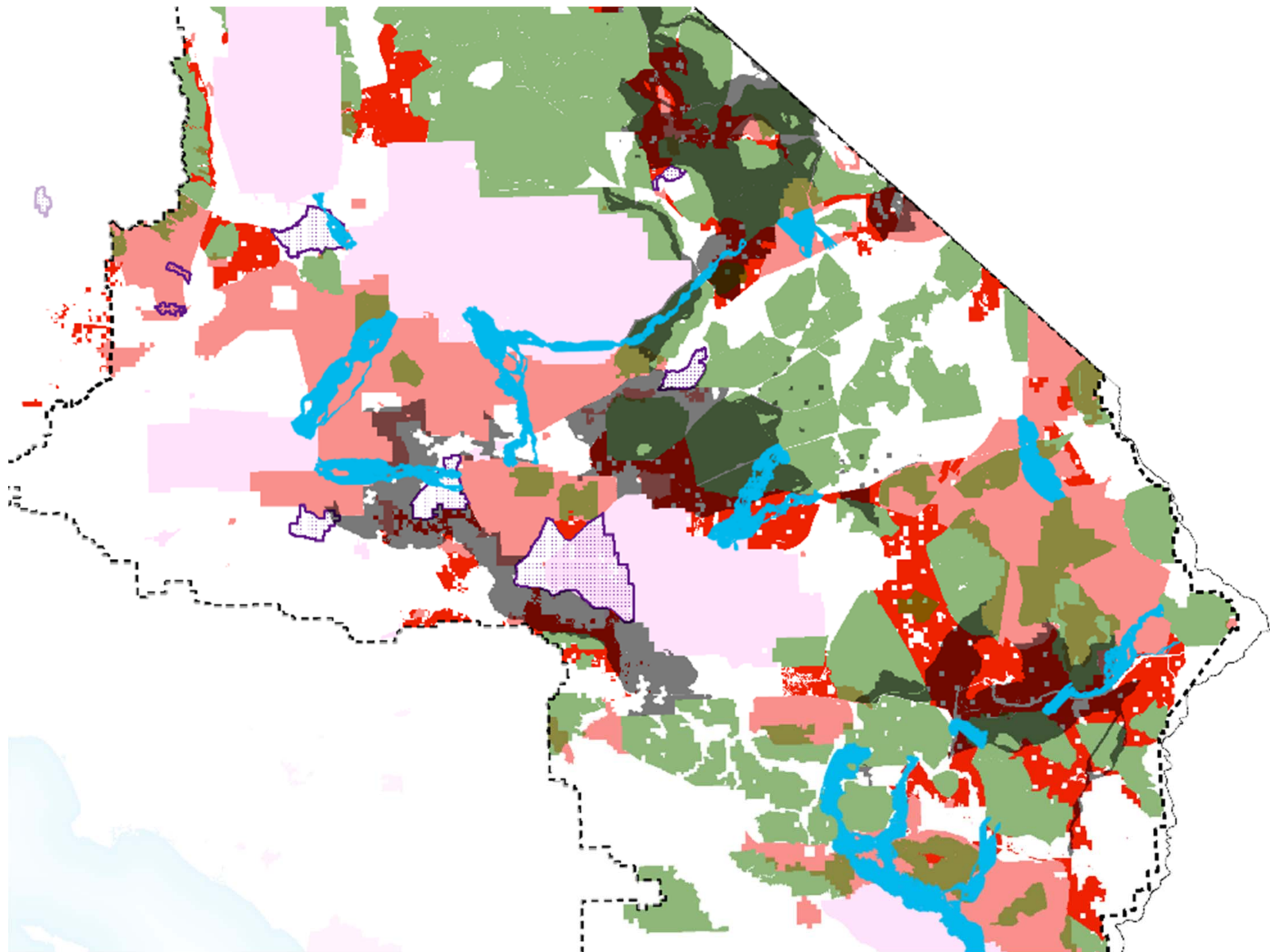
**Comparing
Tortoise
Corridors**



Reserve Design Process:

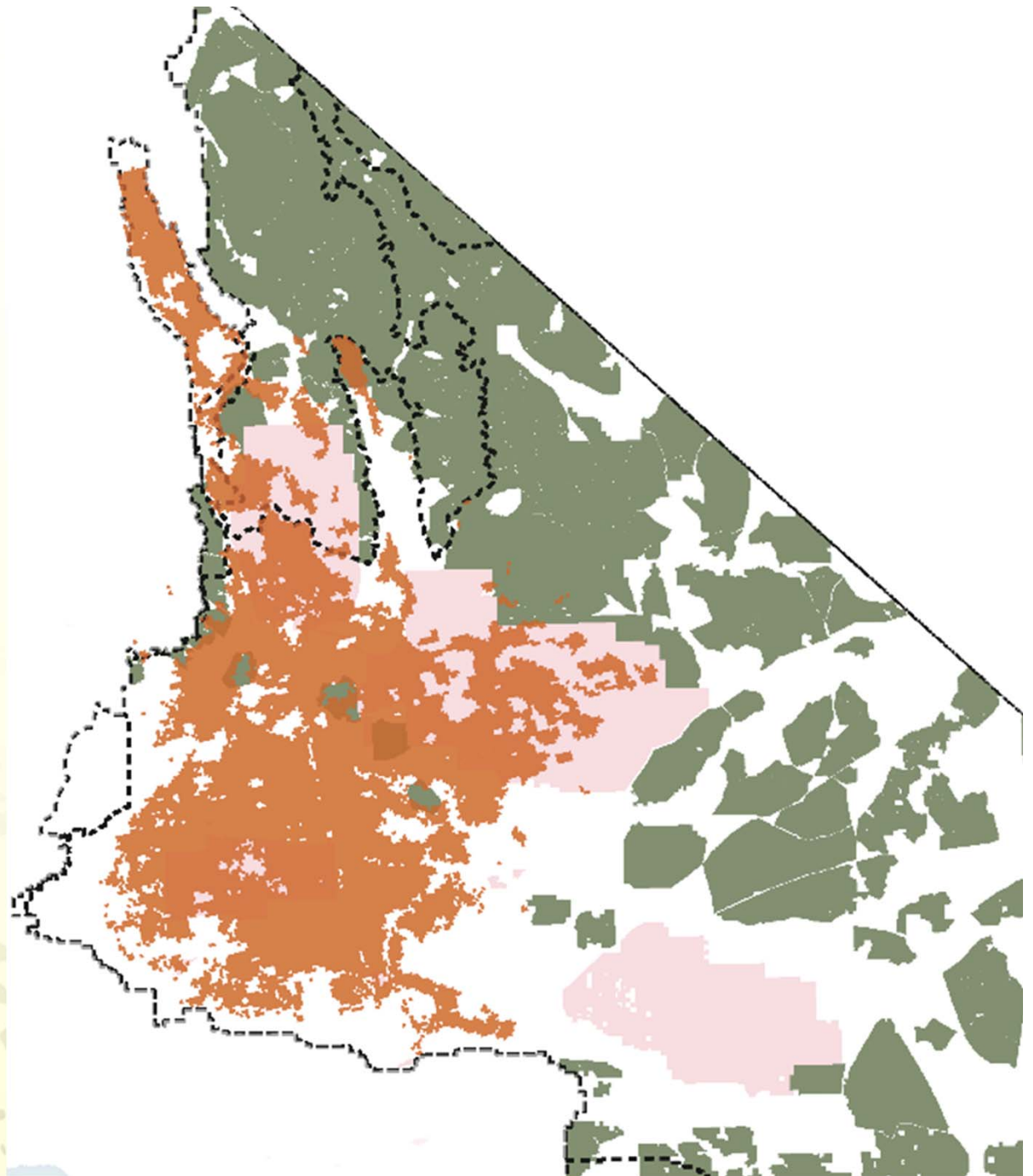
Comparing Corridors





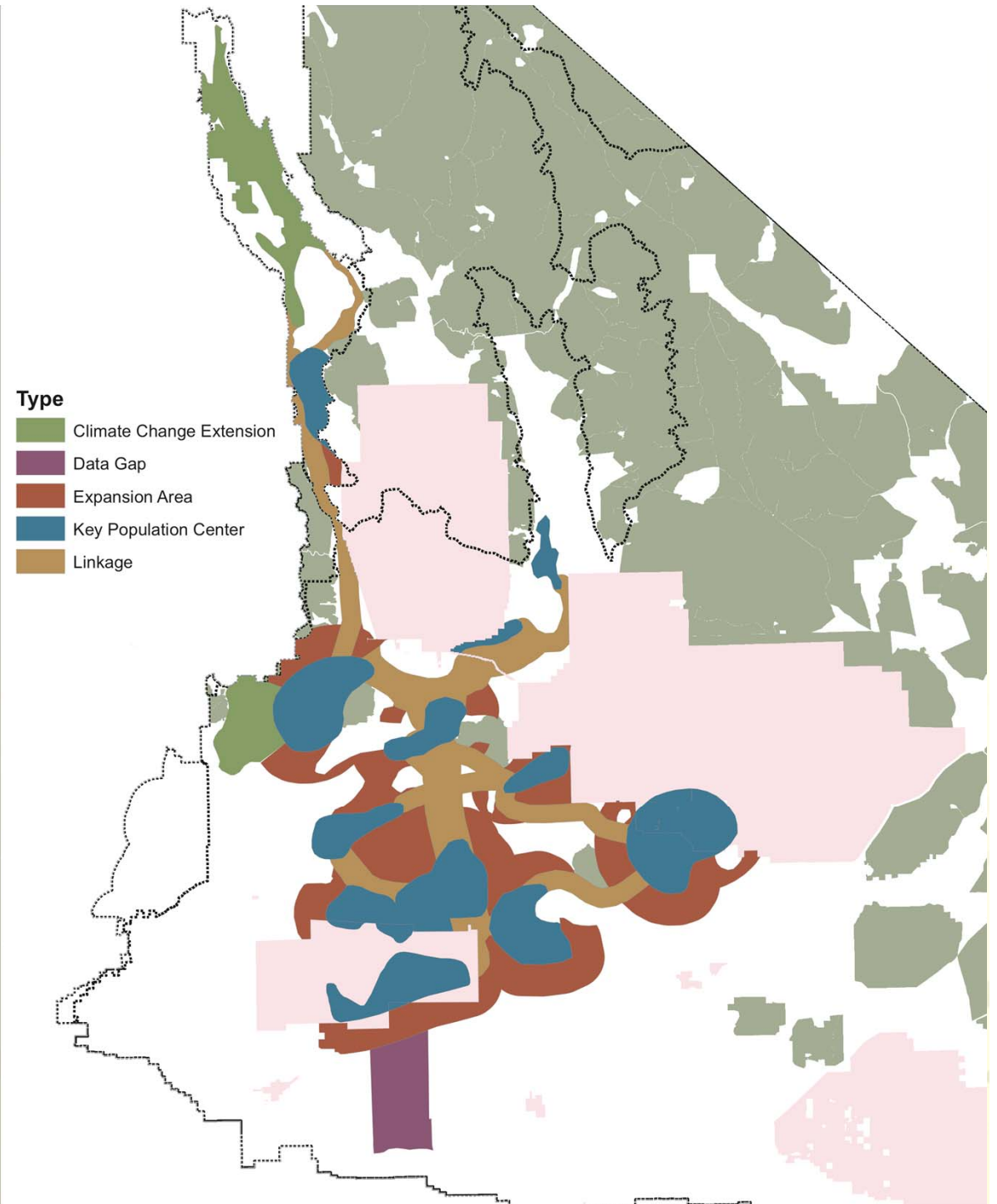
Reserve Design Process:

MGS Habitat Model



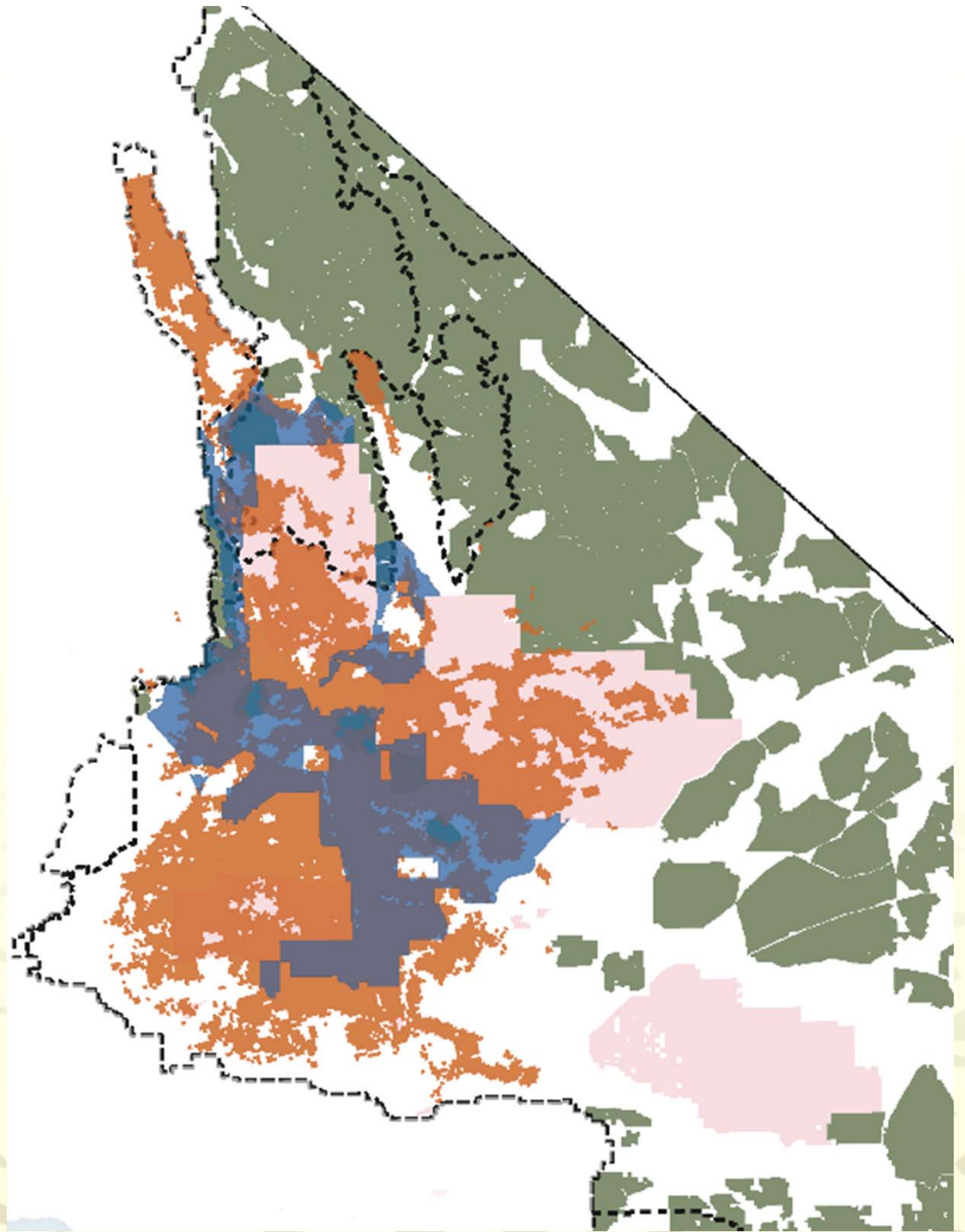
Reserve Design Process:

MGS Model+



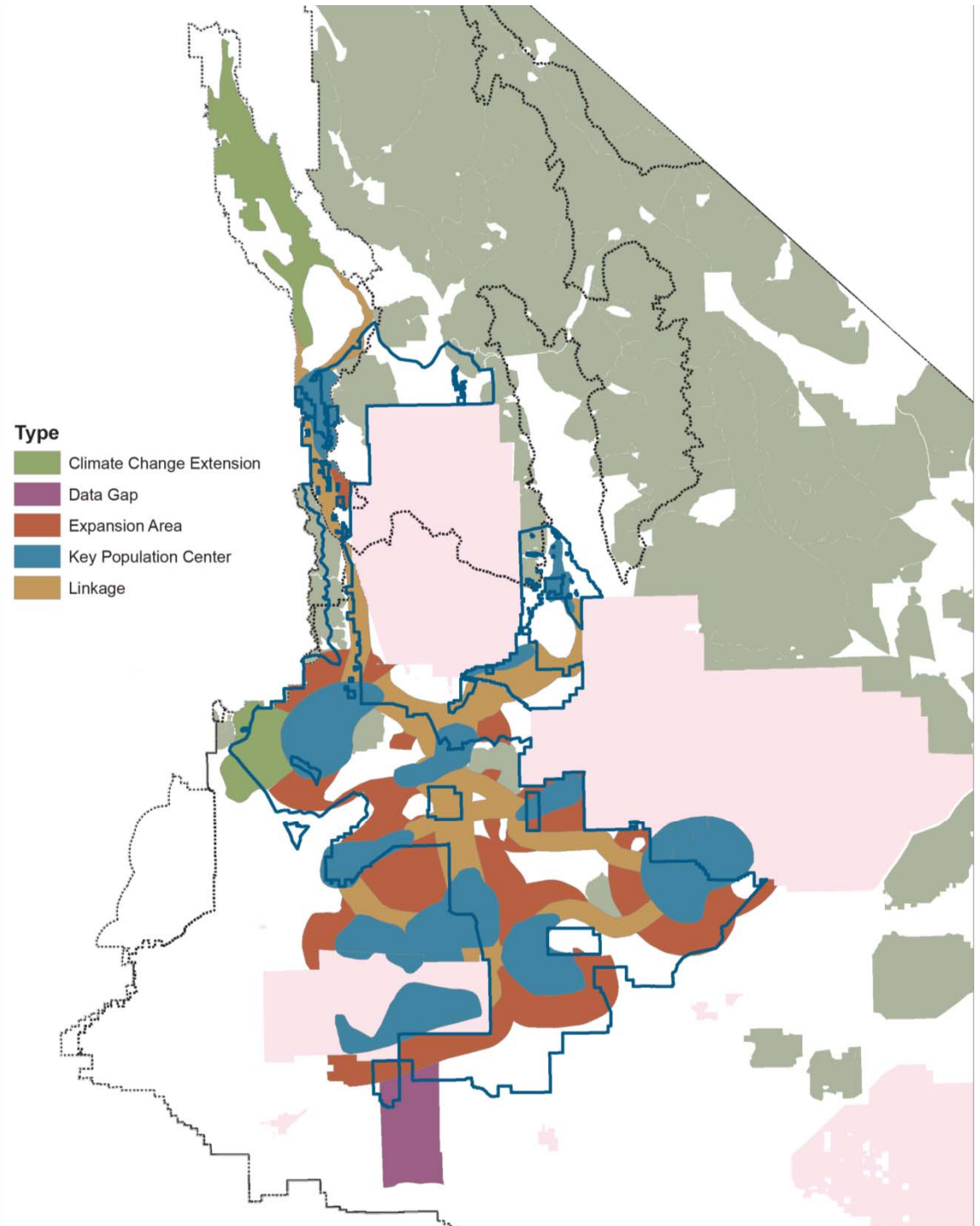
Reserve Design Process:

Comparing
Model to
Existing
MGS MA



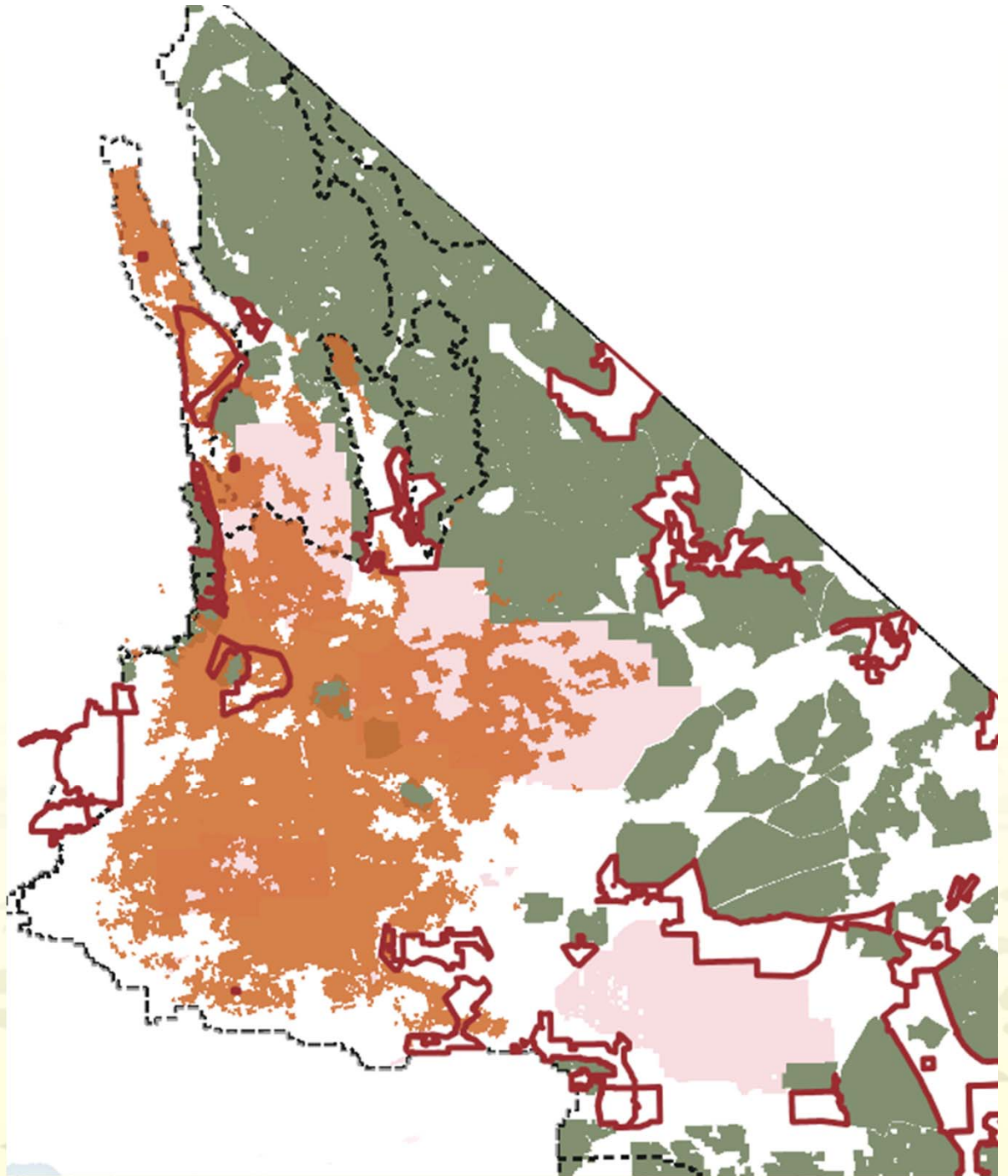
Reserve Design Process:

Comparing
Model+ to
Existing
MGS MA



Reserve Design Process:

Model
Compared to
New ACECs





Development Planning Process

DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

- For 2040, CEC estimates an expected reasonable range of generation capacity required from the DRECP area is ~ 20,000 – 22,000 MWs.
- Estimated acreage of development footprint to accommodate this level of renewable generation ranges from ~200,000 – 500,000 acres.
- Development Focus Areas are larger than estimated development footprint acreages, to allow for proper sighting of projects (10-50%)

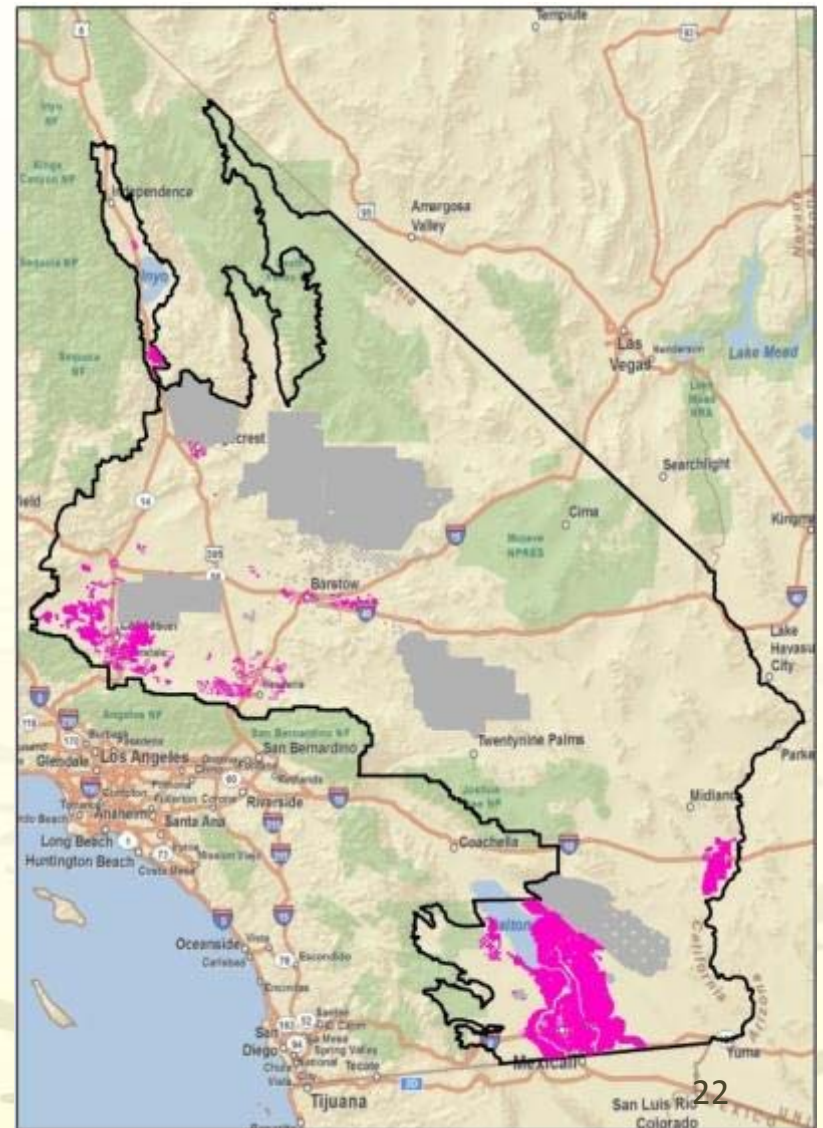


DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Sample Alt 1

Summary:

- 1,100,000 acres of DFAs
- Development of highly disturbed lands
- Limited development flexibility
- Minimum resource conflicts
 - Minimal additional protected federal lands



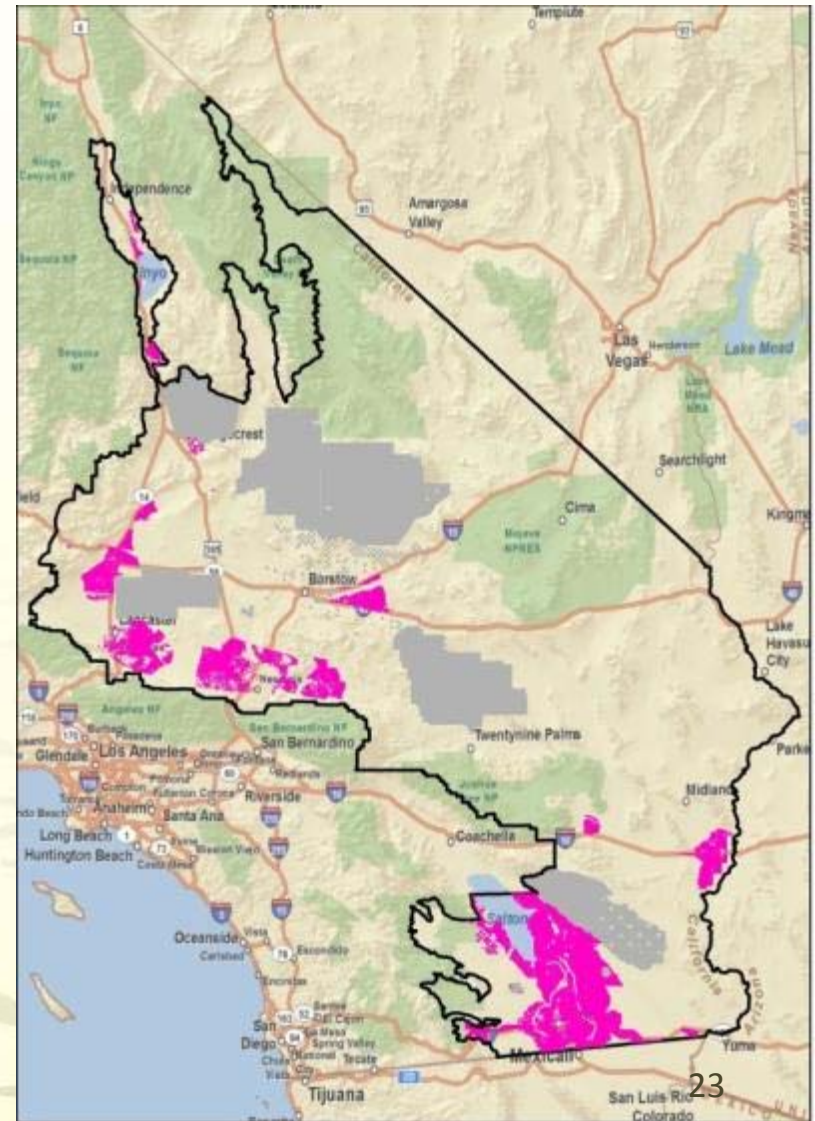


DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Sample Alt 2

Summary:

- 1,500,000 acres of DFAs
- Lands from Alt 1 plus lands from agency field reconnaissance
- More development flexibility, but still “limited”
- Minimized resource conflicts
 - Some increases in federal land conservation



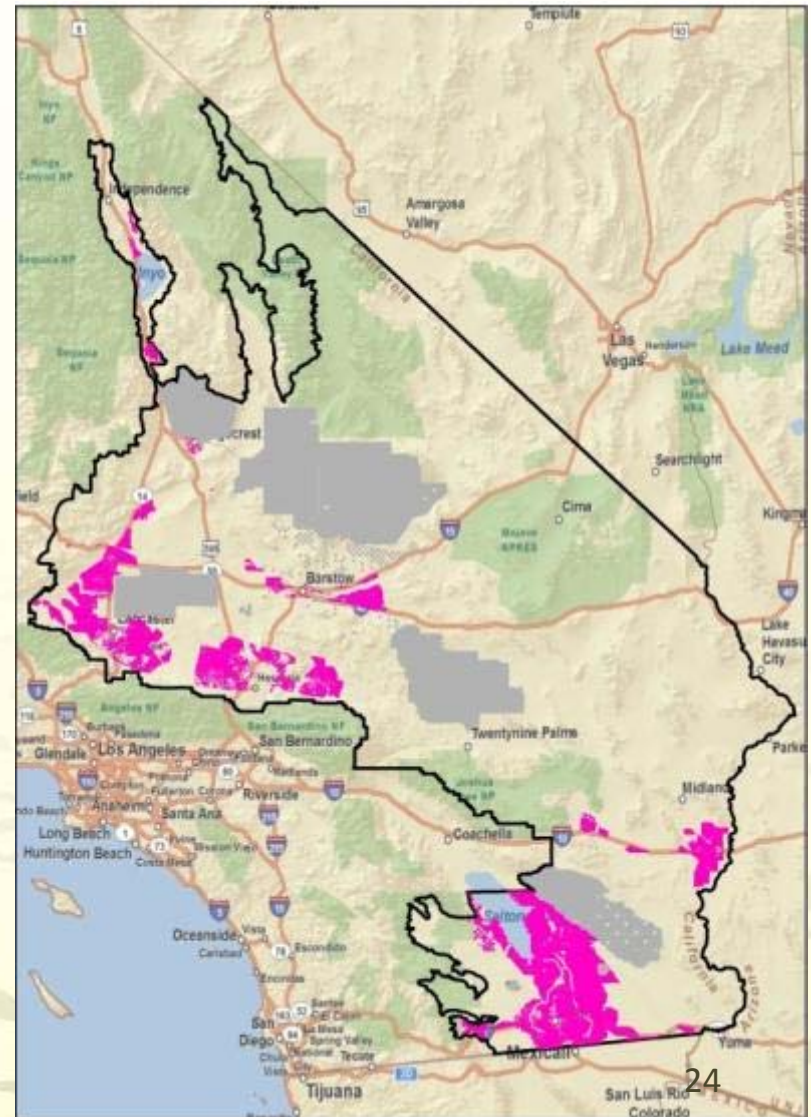


DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Sample Alt 3

Summary:

- 1,700,000 acres of DFAs
- Increased development areas and incorporation of military concerns
- More development flexibility in some areas (less in others)
- More potential for impact of resources
 - Increased federal land reserves



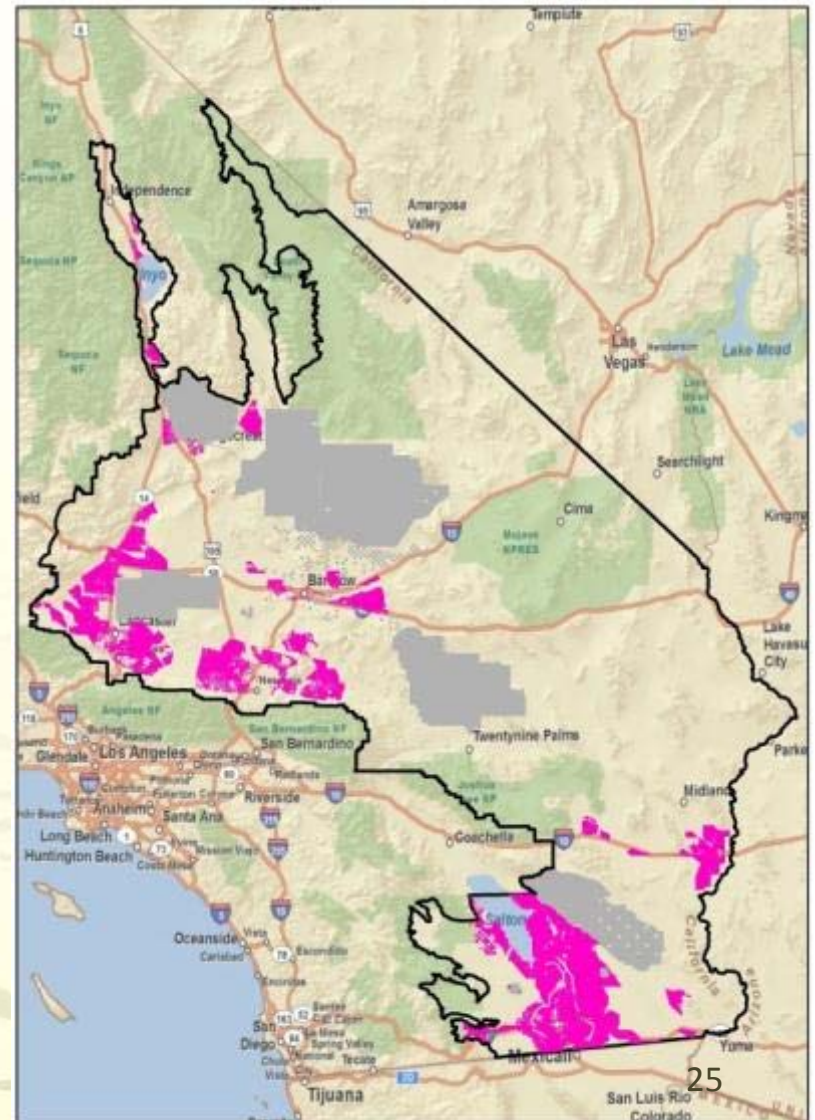


DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Sample Alt 4

Summary:

- 1,900,000 acres of DFAs
- Increase development zones, increased flexibility
- Increased potential for conflicts with high value resources
- Increased conservation lands
 - Increased protection on Federal lands

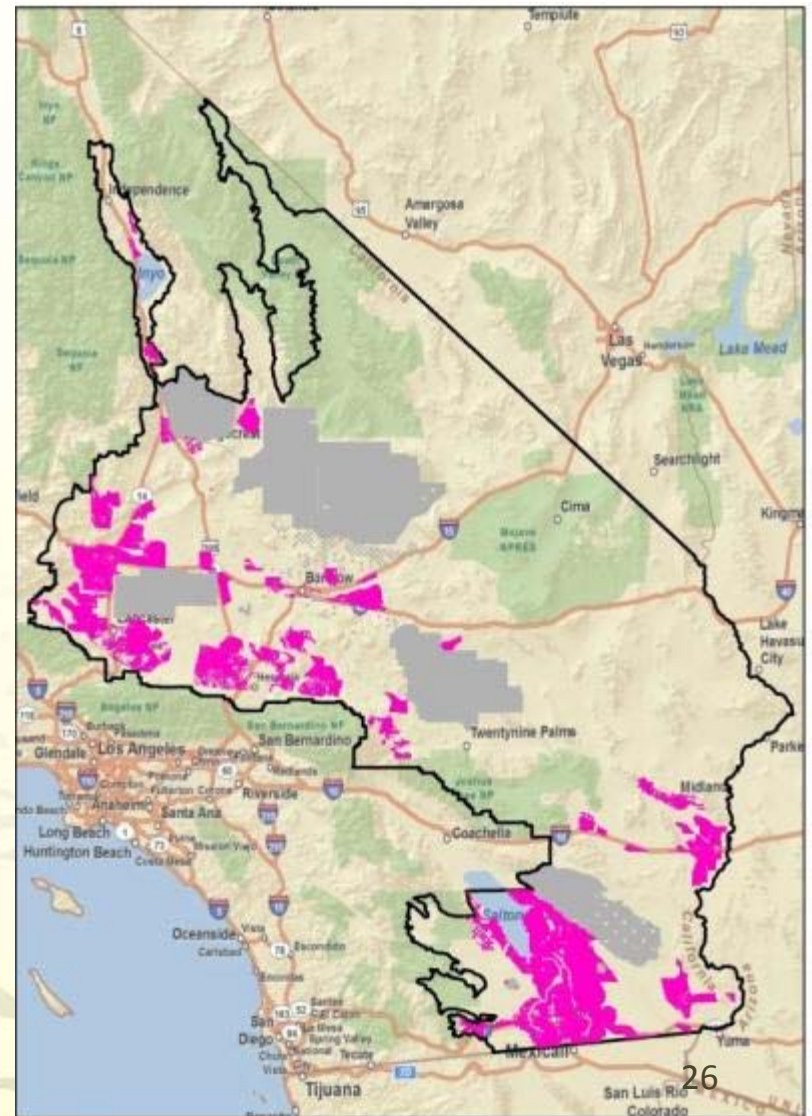




Sample Alt 5

Summary:

- 2,300,000 acres of DFAs
- Expanded development potential, with maximum flexibility
- Highest potential conflict with high value resources
- Largest federal conservation system
 - More restrictive management





DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

The Range of the Alternatives

- Streamlined “Development Focus Areas” range from 1.1 million to 2.3 million acres
 - “constrained” to more “dispersed”
- DFAs on BLM lands between 82,000 and 621,000 acres
- Varying mixes of new or expanded ACECs and NLCS units created to meet conservation goals, up to 5.3 million acres of NLCS
 - Disturbance caps from 0.25 to 1%
 - Clear articulation that renewable energy development is not compatible with conservation in these areas



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Do I support the DRECP?

**Do I *really* think it improves the
current condition?**



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

YES



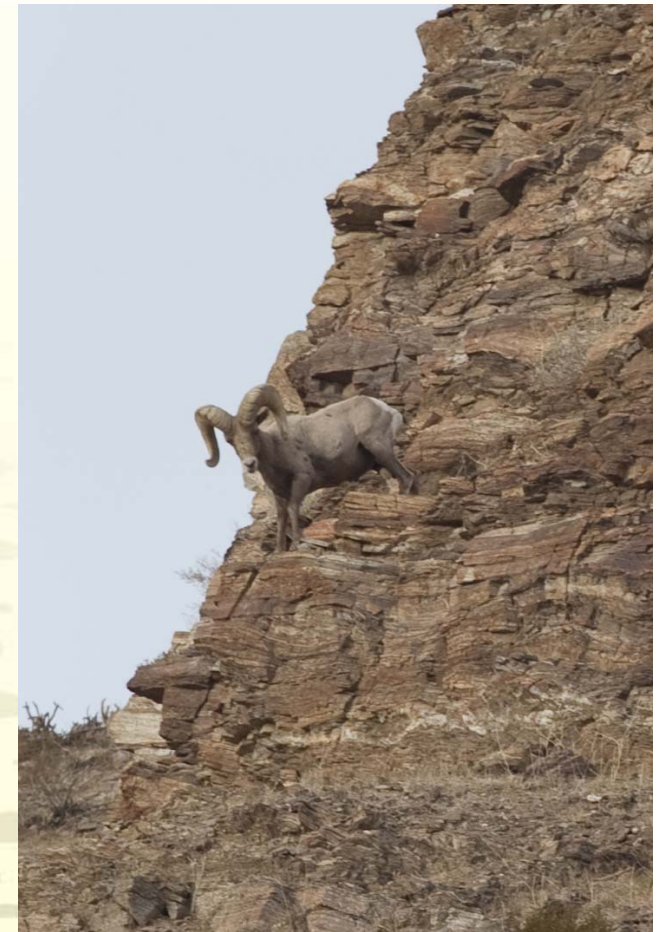
Current BLM Status

Renewable Energy Development

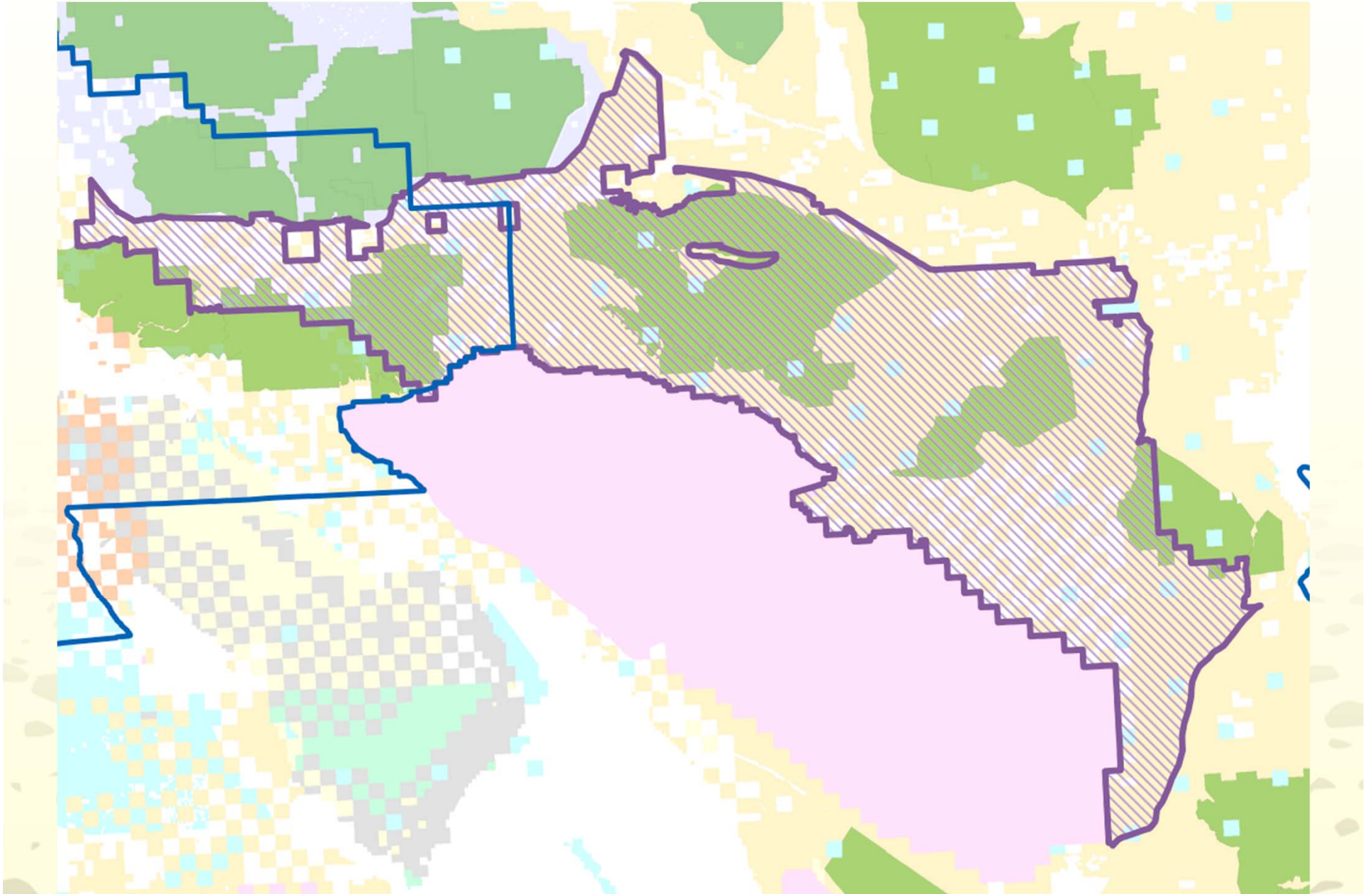
- Solar limited to Solar Energy Zones (SEZ) and Variance Lands
- Wind (case by case, no restrictions)
- Transmission Corridors Identified

Conservation Lands

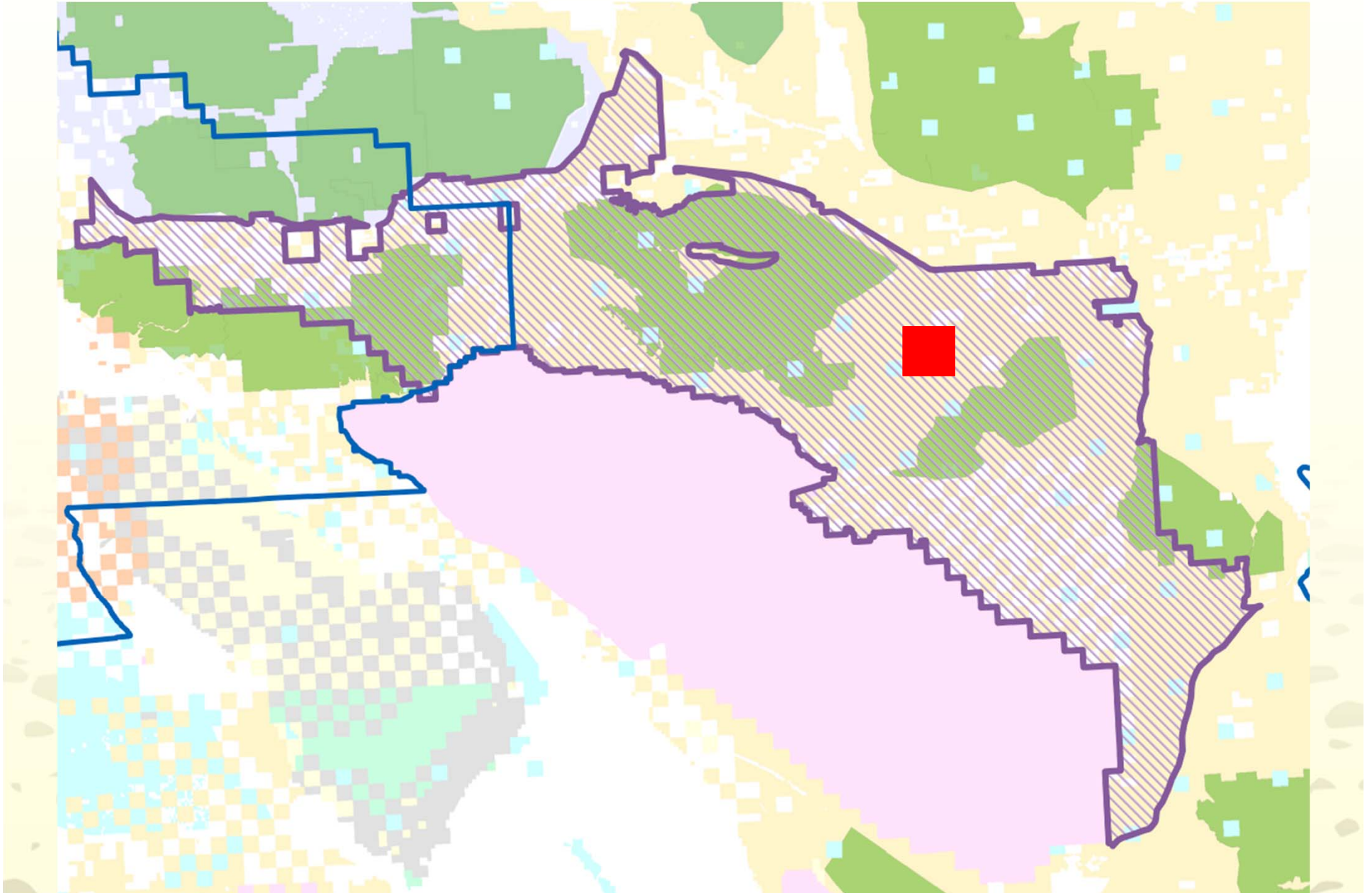
- ACECs
- DWMA's
Definition morphed between
NEMO, NECO, and WEMO
- 1% development cap
 - First come, first serve
 - Only of actual ground disturbance
 - No mechanism to “save” it for future use



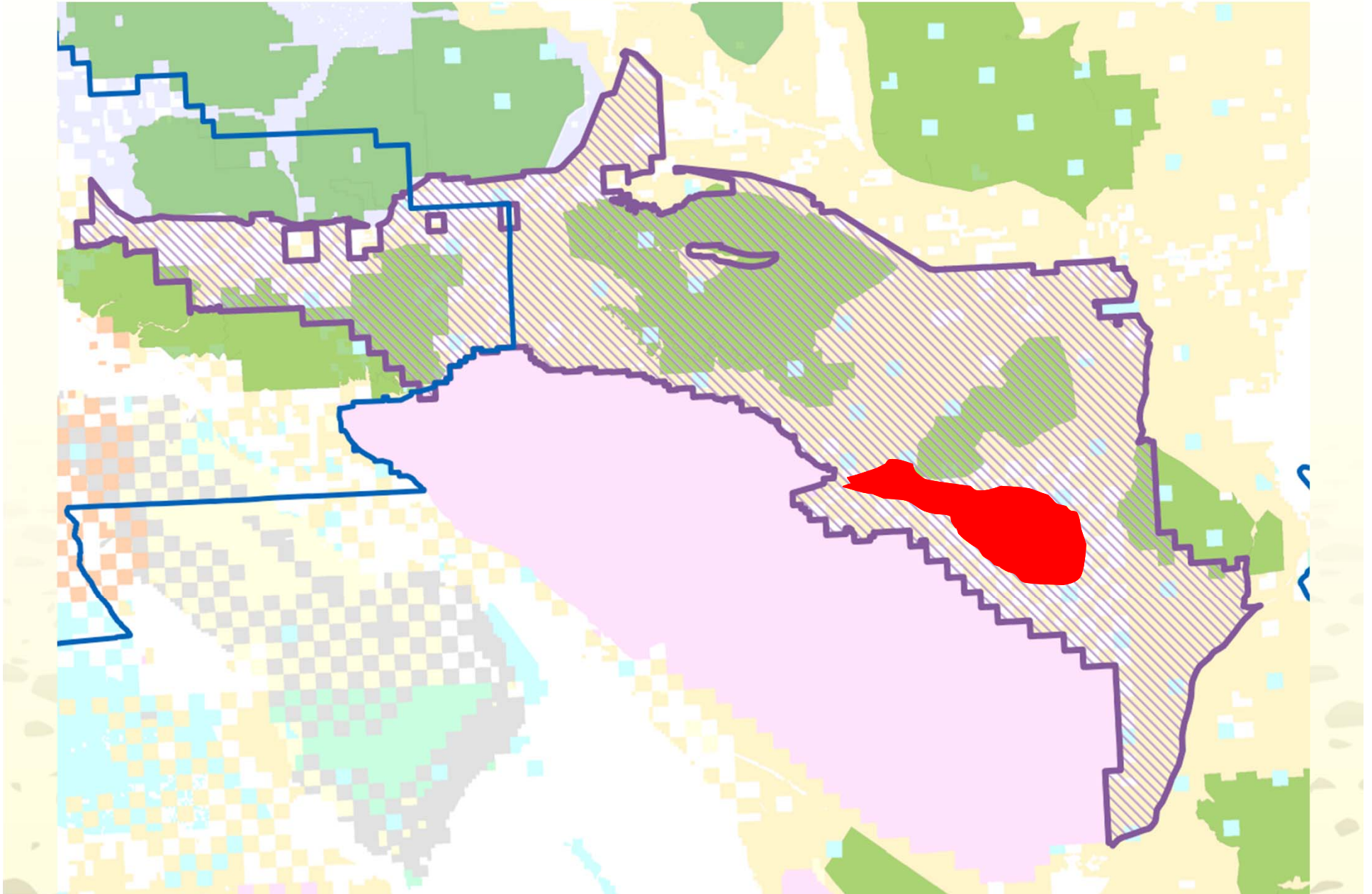
Current BLM Status: Chuckwalla DWMA



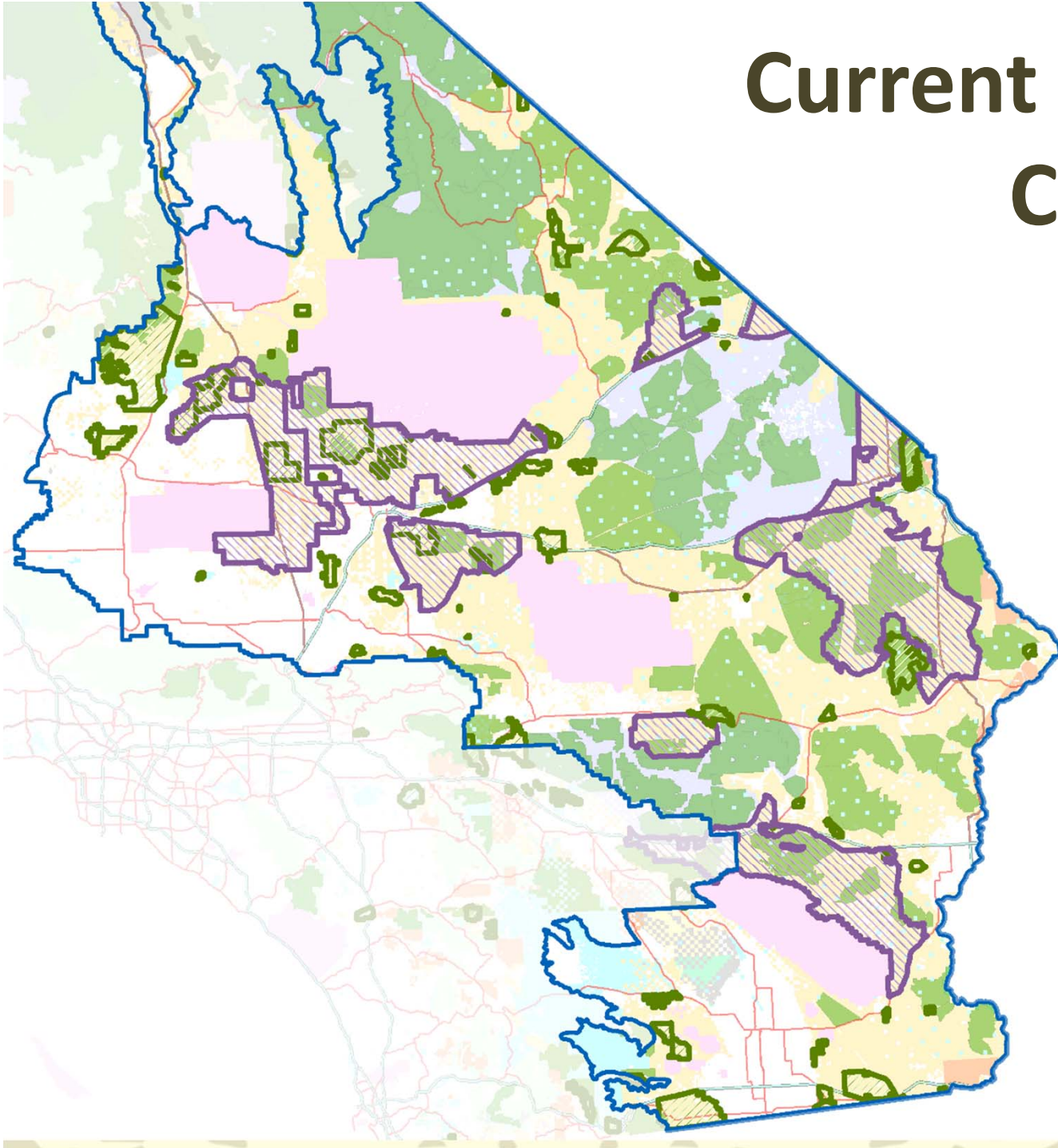
Current BLM Status: Chuckwalla DWMA



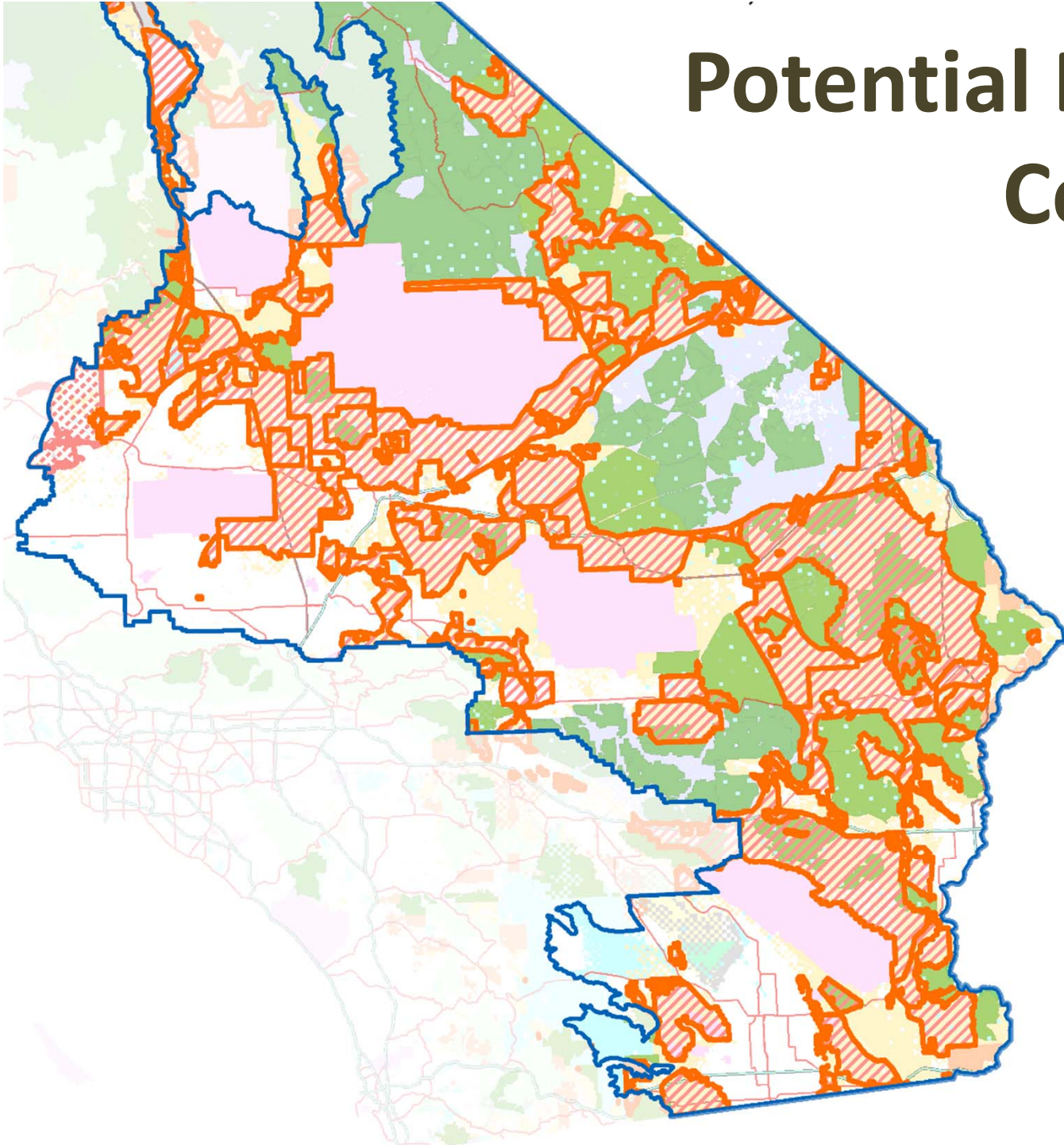
Current BLM Status: Chuckwalla DWMA



Current BLM Status: Conservation Lands



Potential BLM Status: Conservation Lands





- The public draft will present a range of alternatives for public review
- Draft plan will be released in late spring 2014
- 90 day comment period
- Expect FEIS Preferred Alt to be a “Frankenstein”
- Data Basin “DRECP Gateway” available to facilitate public and stakeholder understanding of the draft plan

- “Attacked” the conservation land design from several angles, using several methods, came up with essentially the same results
- Definition of DFAs has been an iterative process
- Engage! Review and provide comments!
- Don’t “freak out”
- Please give me comments that are *substantive* and are not easy for the agencies to “ignore”



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

Want More Information

- www.drecp.org
- databasin.org/galleries

BLM Land Use Plans: www.blm.gov/ca

Endangered Species Act: www.fws.gov/endangered

CEC: www.energy.ca.gov/33by2020

Natural Communities Conservation
Planning: www.dfg.ca.gov/nccp

CBI: www.consbio.org

