



**Meeting Report
Stakeholder Working Group
Meeting on Wolves in California
July 22, 2014**

City of Redding Community Room
777 Cypress Ave
Redding, CA 96001



Photo Courtesy of Gary Kramer

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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1.0 Introduction

On July 22, 2014 the California Wolf Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) reconvened to continue their work toward the development of a California wolf plan. The meeting took place in the City of Redding's Community Room in Redding, CA. The group's previous meeting took place on June 25, 2014 at the Department's Office of Training and Development. This was the group's 12th meeting.

2.0 Meeting Objectives and Mechanics

The purpose of the meeting was to continue to engage the SWG in the wolf planning process and work toward the completion of a California wolf plan (CWP).

The stated objectives were:

- Develop and confirm strategy for CWP Funding Subcommittee
- Discuss federal coordination for CWP actions
- Discuss and confirm CWP timeline, scheduling, and stakeholder commitments moving forward

The meeting was attended in person by the meeting facilitator Sam Magill, 15 stakeholders, and four CDFW staff. Two additional stakeholders attended via conference line. Appendix A provides a list of participants, their affiliations, and their contact information. Also in attendance was one member of the public. The meeting agenda is provided in Appendix B.

3.0 Meeting Outputs

The SWG's standing ground rules are:

- Seek to learn and understand each other's perspective
- Encourage respectful, candid, and constructive discussions
- Provide balance of speaking time
- Seek to resolve differences and reach consensus
- Discuss topics together rather than in isolation
- Make every effort to avoid surprises
- Limit sidebars
- Turn off cell phones/switch to non-ring mode

The SWG's goals as presented in the group's operating principles are:

1. If and when wolves establish in California, seek to conserve biologically sustainable populations of wolves in the state
2. Manage the distribution of wolves in the state where there is adequate habitat

3. Manage native ungulate populations in the state to provide abundant prey for wolves and other predators, intrinsic enjoyment by the public, and harvest opportunities for hunters
4. Manage wolf-livestock conflicts to minimize livestock losses
5. Communicate to the public that natural dispersal of wolves into California is reasonably foreseeable given the expanding populations in the Pacific Northwest, inform the public with science-based information of gray wolves and the conservation and management needs of wolves in California, as well as the effects of having wolves in the state

Welcome, Introductions and Logistics

Members in the room introduced themselves, and Mr. Magill explained where to find the restrooms.

Review Agenda and Ground Rules/Operating Principles

After introductions Mr. Magill went over the agenda so members would know what to anticipate for the day. He explained that the afternoon will be devoted to hearing a presentation by Ms. Amy Fesnock from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as the beginning of conversation about federal agency coordination. The plan is to have a presentation from the U.S. Forest Service at a future meeting. The Department wishes to consider the most appropriate way to coordinate with these two agencies with respect to wolf planning, and may ask for an additional subgroup to meet on the topic.

DFW Staff Updates

OR7

- Results of DNA testing of scats collected in the vicinity of OR7 are not completed yet
- The pack is displaying typical wolf behavior by moving upslope to deer and elk summer range
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will likely re-collar OR7 or collar his mate

Dates for Future SWG and Subgroup Meetings

The next full SWG meeting is tentatively set for September 9, probably in Sacramento.

Status of Plan by Chapter

- As previously discussed the Background chapter title will be changed to Wolf Life History
- The Diseases chapter will not be available until August 7
- The Wolf-Human Interactions chapter will be available in 1-2 weeks
- There were some minor edits made to the Wolf-Dog Interactions chapter and the Department requests any additional comments be sent ASAP
- The Public Information and Education chapter has received some comments and will be edited soon
- The Wolf Conservation chapter is still being drafted, with many nuances arising leading to delays
- The Wolf Ungulate Interactions chapter is nearly complete, but some additional information from the Mexican wolf experience will be added; an internal Department meeting tomorrow will help resolve some questions

Status of FAQ

- Not many additional questions have been received by the Department to add to the FAQ
- Members were asked to submit any final questions they think would be of interest to the public as soon as possible

Discuss, and Revise June 25 Meeting Report

One comment was provided:

- The fourth sentence of the first full paragraph of page 5 is confusing. Suggest adding a period and removing the word “but,” making it two sentences.

Department staff requested any additional comments on the report be submitted by the end of the week.

Summary of Subgroup SWG Meetings/Planning/Next Steps

In terms of dates for upcoming subgroup meetings, the Wolf-Livestock Interactions subgroup is scheduled to meet on August 4 in Sacramento. The next Wolf-Ungulate Interactions subgroup will be scheduled soon. The Wolf Conservation subgroup met yesterday, and was the only subgroup to have met since the last full SWG meeting so theirs were the only updates to provide at today’s meeting.

Wolf Conservation Subgroup (WCS)

The subgroup met on July 21st in Redding. They discussed the schedule for Fish and Game Commission findings and adoption of the regulatory package for wolf listing; refining the Operating Assumptions, which will be used as a basis for the Wolf Conservation chapter; and suggested changes to the Phase 1 approaches and management objectives. The Environmental Caucus had submitted suggested edits on both the Operating Assumptions and Phase 1 Objectives documents, so discussion of those documents revolved around their suggestions.

Specific to the Operating Assumptions, the Department's goal is to provide a rough draft of the chapter before the September 9th SWG meeting, and if possible it will go to the Wolf Conservation Subgroup for review first. Members also discussed the following:

- How possible changes to management of wolves in Oregon as a result of their transition to their Phase 2 might affect California
- A new Area of Known Wolf Activity in Wallowa County, Oregon
- Changing assumption #9 by dropping those factors that are similar in California and Oregon (such as lack of large refugial areas, and the mix of public and private land), and splitting it into two: 1) factors that are different in the two states, 2) factors that reflect carrying capacity
- CA has a larger general population than Oregon, but in both states the majority of residents are in areas where wolves are not expected to occur
- How population size affects wolves' resilience to mortality
- The possibility of OR7's pack or offspring dispersing into California in the next couple of years
- The Fuller et al. (2003) paper and its discussion of prey availability versus vulnerability
- A suggestion to create a new assumption that goes into more detail on Population Viability/Minimum Viable Population modeling

Specific to the Conservation Objectives document, the members discussed the environmental caucus's suggestion to have the ending of Phase 1 be based only on a timeframe, and not on population objectives. The caucus could not find a science-based reason to rely on population objectives for that purpose, but suggested convening an independent panel of wolf-knowledgeable scientists to recommend an approach to developing population objectives for wolves. Department staff explained that the wolf plan will not likely include recovery objectives due to time constraints for developing a draft. Finally, the group discussed whether or not lethal control should be included as a potential management tool. The Department will make appropriate edits to the documents and distribute to subgroup members by the end of the week if possible. In addition, the Conservation and Agriculture caucuses will submit their comments to the Department by the end of the week.

After this summary of the Conservation Subgroup meeting was presented, some discussion among the SWG members ensued. Comments made by various members included:

- In a discussion after the meeting we talked about the importance of providing criteria for when lethal take may be warranted; you can't just say yes or no, you have to define specific criteria for when it might be allowed.
- Any discussion of lethal take has to be consistent with conservation of the species.
- This is the first in-depth discussion we've had about lethal take as an option; the environmental caucus was responding to a request for discussion of the topic, and our first thought is that it should not be allowed, but we are not completely opposed if authorized by statute; we also wanted to hear the Department's and others' opinions about whether lethal take should be allowed to respond to certain conflicts.
- If we go to 2030 with no wolf population objectives how do we know if we are conserving the species, and that the species is recovered and we can delist it?
- This conversation makes it clear that we need to have additional meetings for further discussion of the topic.
- It is critical to consider all options in managing wolves, and the tool of lethal control needs to be on the table. We must be careful not to exclude options.

Funding Subcommittee Discussion

Mr. Magill introduced this topic by reminding SWG members that they were asked to volunteer to form a new subcommittee to discuss how to fund implementation of the plan. He asked Ms. Kovacs to list areas in the plan that will require funding, and she stated that likely all components will require funding. However top priorities will be increased assessment of ungulate populations. Currently ungulate populations are estimated based on harvest data for the purpose of setting tag quotas. However the level of ungulate population information that will be needed for wolf plan implementation will be much greater and will therefore require increased effort and staffing. Other expenses will include purchase of equipment for monitoring, radio telemetry, and flight costs. The Department will also be proposing disease surveillance, wolf genetics workups, monitoring den sites, public outreach and education. Long term funding will be important but may be difficult to obtain, since much funding for state wildlife programs comes from the federal government in the form of hunting- and recreation-related fees, and as grants that require a match by the state. One possible approach is to develop a wolf-ungulate or carnivore-ungulate program with secure funding. Other major components that will need funding are promoting nonlethal measures and compensation.

Comments and suggestions from stakeholders included the following:

- If this plan identifies measures that are not funded adequately it will render the plan less effective
- Habitat improvement for ungulates is a major funding need and the Department should look beyond existing funding to accomplish that
- There may be an opportunity for a ballot initiative for a wolf tax
- It would be helpful if the Department put together an outline of the areas of need

Mr. Magill will poll those who volunteered for prospective dates for a first meeting of the new subgroup.

Discussion of Remaining CWP Schedule

Ms. Kovacs displayed the most recent version of the wolf plan schedule (Appendix C), and discussed how SWG members may be involved after their meetings have concluded and the Department is engaged in public meetings

Federal Agency Coordination Discussion

After a break for lunch, Mr. Magill introduced Ms. Amy Fesnock from the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Ms. Fesnock was invited to address the SWG to provide the group with an overview of the agency's responsibilities

The main points of Ms. Fesnock's presentation were as follows:

- BLM is driven by the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) which mandates multi-use on their lands which requires them to provide for wildlife and habitat, plants, recreational and economic opportunities, grazing, wild horse and burros.
- Goals, objectives, and priorities of BLM are identified first at the federal level using a variety of manuals, each of which addresses a specific topic such as wildlife or sensitive species. At the state level state-specific manuals may be developed.
 - For landscape-level management, resource management plans are developed at the field office level
 - Project-specific plans are then developed more locally, such as for a cattle allotment or restoration project
- BLM funding is budgeted several years in advance, so a lag exists between when the needs are identified and when the funds are actually available
 - The Office of Management and Budgets identifies funds to appropriate, and those funds are provided for specific activities; congress then mandates how much to spend on each activity.

- Priorities are defined at the national level, not at the state level.
- Under FLPMA, wildlife is one of six purposes for which BLM is responsible; however wildlife is not receiving its 1/6 of the allotted funds.
 - Many lobbies exist for the other purposes such as forestry and grazing, so they get more funding than wildlife
- BLM California does not have a wildlife manual because the national manual is sufficient. The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) should provide direction for how wildlife should be managed in California, and BLM can tier to that document for wildlife
- A priority for the agency should be land use plans which have a 20 year lifespan so it is difficult to make changes to them. Many in California are due for revisions such as the Redding and Arcata plans, which is a two year process.
 - The public can interact with the land use plan revisions; the agency posts their intentions to engage in planning on the Federal Register and asks for input during a scoping phase, on the draft and final plans, and during implementation of projects identified in the plans.
 - They do work with partners such as Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, and Wild Turkey Federation, which can propose projects.
- The listing of a species does not provide for additional funding for BLM. Listed species are managed according to the rules outlined in the manual, and each category of listing (i.e. federally listed, BLM sensitive) has its own set of rules. BLM sensitive species are those which meet specific criteria: they are native, occur on BLM land, BLM has the ability to affect the species' population trajectory, and there is an indication that the species is in decline or at risk.
 - BLM is required to consider those criteria as they relate to California state listed species and list them on the California-BLM Sensitive Species List
 - People can propose to add a species to the list
 - For species that are not listed but in decline the manual requires that BLM take measures to prevent their listing
 - Managing for game species such as deer and elk falls under both habitat management and recreational hunting; to consider managing them as "habitat" for state listed wolves, California BLM would have to consider the other 300 listed species for which funding is minimal, as well as the criteria mentioned above for adding a species (wolf in this case) to the California-BLM Sensitive Species List; this would entail considering how much land that supports deer and elk BLM manages, if such management could affect the trajectory of the wolf population, and how it would fit as a priority relative to other listed species.

- The majority of BLM lands occur in the desert regions (See Appendix D for maps), to a total of about 2 million acres in the Northern California District and an adjacent 1.5 million acres in Nevada.
 - The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) worked to develop maps of different species including elk and mule deer; much of BLM lands in California overlap with the identified elk and mule habitat
- In Montana BLM includes language in their allotments requiring permittees to work with the state wildlife agency for depredation issues; California BLM will take the same approach – any depredation issues with our permittees would be the purview of the CDFW
 - If CDFW wanted to require a permittee to use some form of conflict reduction measures which was not specified in the allotment, the permittee would have the right to appeal; BLM has used emergency NEPA clauses to modify allotments in some situations such as removing sheep to protect Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep from disease transmission, however the permittee still has the right to appeal.
- We have a new grazing coordinator who should be able to answer your questions with respect to what is and is not allowed in the grazing allotments

Wrap Up and Action Item Review

- CDFW staff will provide members with the latest version of the wolf plan schedule
- CDFW will poll the Funding Subgroup volunteers for a first meeting date
- CDFW will develop an outline of funding needs for the Funding Subgroup
- Additional meetings for all subgroups will be scheduled based on polling results
- Members will provide comments on the June 20 meeting report to Ms. Converse by end of the day on July 25.

APPENDIX A. WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Name	Affiliation	Email
Stakeholders		
Marilyn Jasper	Sierra Club	marilyn.jasper@mlc.sierraclub.org
Pamela Flick	Defenders of Wildlife	pflick@defenders.org
Noelle Cremers	California Farm Bureau	ncremers@cfsf.com
Kimberly Baker	Environmental Protection Information Center	kimberly@wildcalifornia.org
Kirk Wilbur	California Cattlemen's Association	kirk@calcattlemen.org
Bill Gaines	California Houndsmen for Conservation	bill@outdoorheritage.org
Jerry Springer	California Deer Association	jerry@westernhunter.com
Mark Rockwell	Endangered Species Coalition	mrockwell@stopextinction.org
Sean Curtis	Modoc County Resource and UCCE Farm Advisor	modoccfb@frontier.net
Damon Nagami	Natural Resources Defense Council	dnagami@nrdc.org
Amaroq Weiss	Center for Biological Diversity	aweiss@biologicaldiversity.org
Robert Timm	UC Agriculture and Natural Resources	rmtimm@ucanr.edu
Paul Kjos	California Agriculture Commission – Shasta County	pkjos@co.shasta.ca.us
Rachel Carnes	California Wolf Center	rachel.carnes@californiawolfcenter.org
Randy Morrison	Mule Deer Foundation	randy@muledeer.org
Lesa Eidman	California Woolgrowers Association	lesa@woolgrowers.org
Pat Griffin	California Agriculture Commission – Siskiyou County	pgriffin@co.siskiyou.ca.us
California Department of Fish and Wildlife Staff		
Karen Kovacs	Wildlife Program Manager – Region 1	karen.kovacs@wildlife.ca.gov
Mark Stopher	Senior Policy Advisor	mark.stopher@wildlife.ca.gov
Karen Converse	Environmental Scientist –Wildlife Branch	karen.converse@wildlife.ca.gov
Joe Hobbs	Senior Environmental Scientist – Elk Program	joe.hobbs@wildlife.ca.gov

APPENDIX B. AGENDA

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW)
California Wolf Stakeholders Working Group (SWG) Meeting
Redding Community Room, 777 Cypress Ave, Redding, CA
July 22, 2014

9am-4pm

Objectives:

- Develop and confirm strategy for California Wolf Plan (CWP) Funding Subcommittee
- Discuss federal coordination for CWP actions
- Discuss and confirm CWP timeline, scheduling, and stakeholder commitments moving forward

Agenda

Gather in the meeting room	8:45
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome, Introductions and Logistics <i>Karen Kovacs, DFW</i> <i>Sam Magill, Kearns & West</i>	9:00
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review Agenda and Ground Rules/Operating Principles <i>Sam Magill, Kearns & West</i>	9:15
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates: <i>DFW Staff</i><ol style="list-style-type: none">1. OR72. Dates for future SWG and Subgroup meetings3. Status of plan by Chapter4. Status of FAQ	9:20
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of subgroup SWG meetings/future meetings <i>All Participants</i> Wolf Conservation Wolf Ungulate Wolf Livestock	9:40
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding subcommittee discussion <i>All Participants</i>	10:00

LUNCH

11:30

- Federal Agency Coordination Discussion 1:00
DFW Staff
US Bureau of Land Management
All Participants
 - Presentation: DFW coordination possibilities for CWP actions with federal agencies
 - Discussion: SWG suggestions for CWP federal coordination strategy

- Discussion of Remaining CWP Schedule 2:30
DFW Staff
All Participants

- Public Questions 3:00
Public Participants

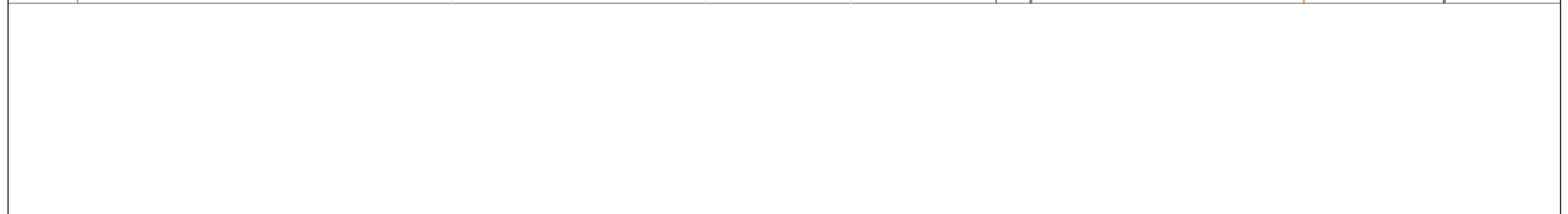
- Wrap Up and Action Item Review 3:30
Sam Magill, Kearns & West

Adjourn

4:00

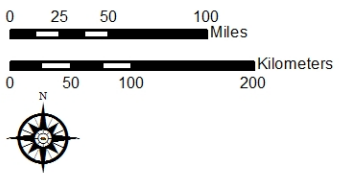
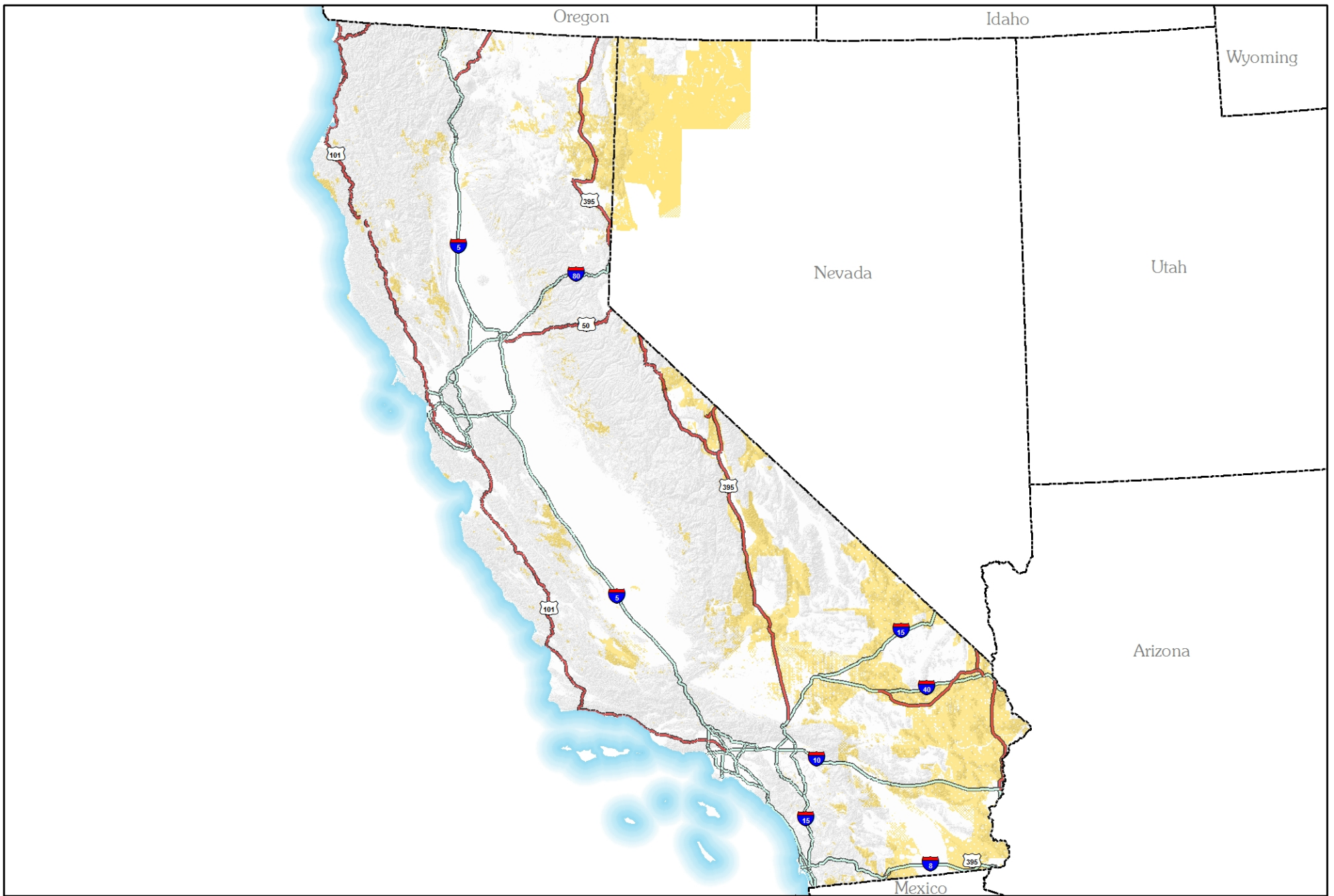
APPENDIX C
REVISED CALIFORNIA WOLF PLAN SCHEDULE

ID	Task Name	Resource Names	Start	Finish	2013				2014				2015		
					Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3	Qtr 4	Qtr 1	Qtr 2	Qtr 3
1	Task 1 - Wolf Stakeholder Working Group	Kovacs,Loft,Donlan,Stopher	Wed 1/29/14	Wed 12/31/14											
10	Task 2 - Write Preliminary Draft CA Wolf Plan	CDFW Staff	Mon 7/1/13	Wed 10/1/14											
25	Task 3 - Select Peer Review Panel	Kovacs,Loft	Tue 9/2/14	Tue 9/30/14											
26	Task 4 - Internal CDFW and SWG Review of Preliminary Draft	Donlan,CDFW Staff	Fri 10/3/14	Fri 10/24/14											
27	Task 5 - Revise Draft Based on Results of Task 4	CDFW Staff	Mon 10/27/14	Fri 11/7/14											
28	Task 6 - Evaluate Necessity for CEQA compliance	Kovacs,Donlan,Loft	Mon 11/10/14	Fri 11/28/14											
29	Task 7 - Peer Review of Draft	Peer Review Panel	Mon 11/10/14	Fri 11/28/14											
30	Task 8 - Write Public Review Draft	CDFW Staff	Mon 12/15/14	Fri 1/2/15											
31	Task 7 - Public Review of Draft Plan	Public	Mon 1/5/15	Fri 2/6/15											
32	Task 9 - Write Final CA Wolf Plan	CDFW Staff	Mon 2/9/15	Fri 3/6/15											
33	Task 10 - Coordinate With Tribes	Kovacs,Loft	Mon 3/4/13	Mon 3/9/15											
34	Task 11 - Coordinate With Federal Land Managers	Kovacs,Loft	Mon 3/4/13	Mon 3/9/15											
35	Task 12 - Public Release of Final Wolf Plan	CDFW	Mon 3/9/15	Mon 3/9/15											



Project: CA Wolf Plan Concept Date: Thu 7/3/14	Task		External Milestone		Manual Summary Rollup	
	Split		Inactive Task		Manual Summary	
	Milestone		Inactive Milestone		Start-only	
	Summary		Inactive Summary		Finish-only	
	Project Summary		Manual Task		Deadline	
	External Tasks		Duration-only		Progress	

APPENDIX D
BLM PRESENTATION



BLM Holdings in California



Creation Date: 7/16/2014

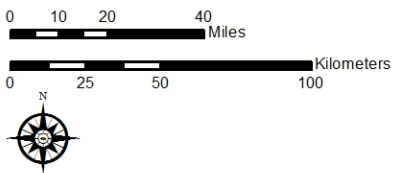
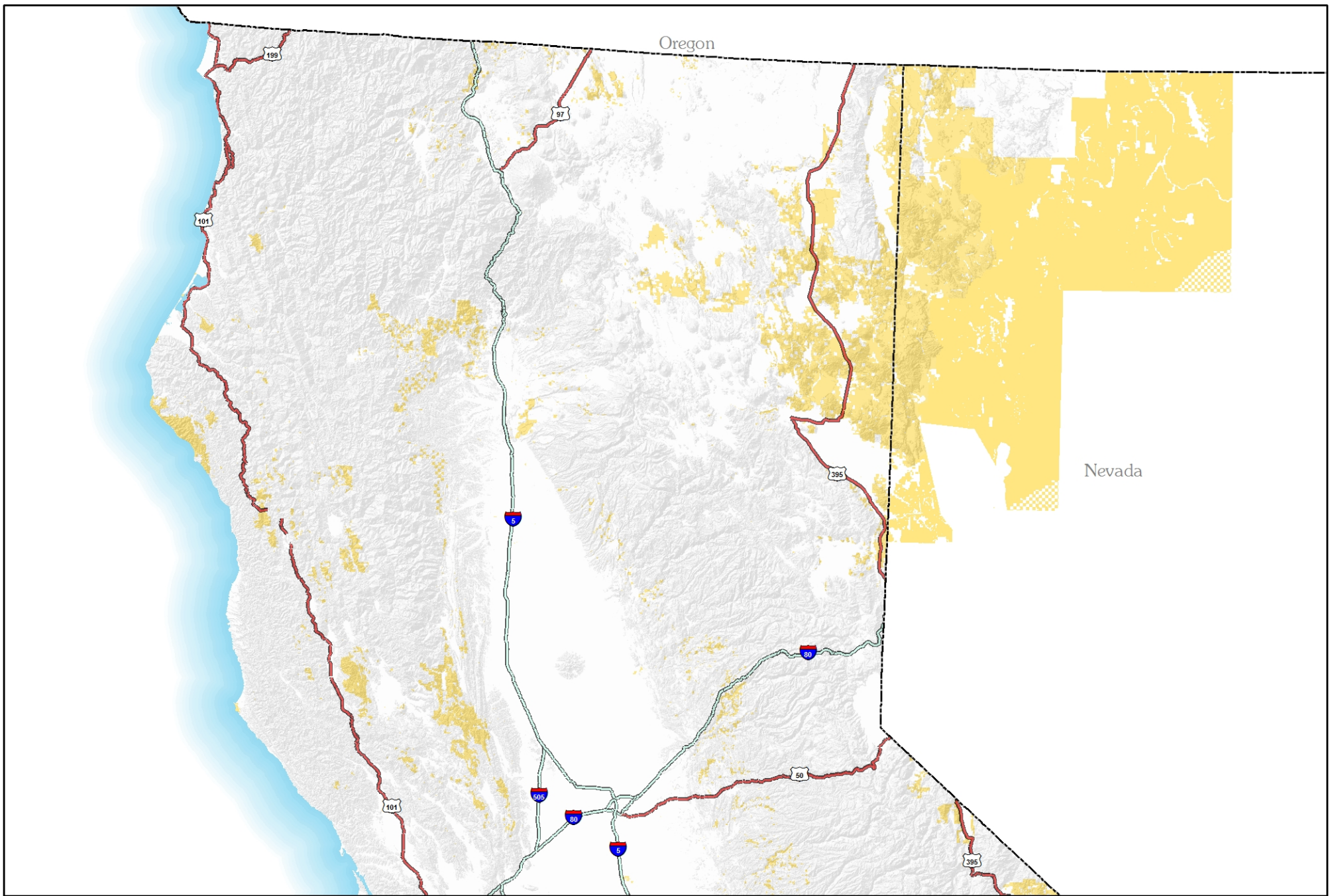
Prepared by BLM California State Office



BLM

Interstate

US Hwy



BLM Holdings in California



Creation Date: 7/16/2014

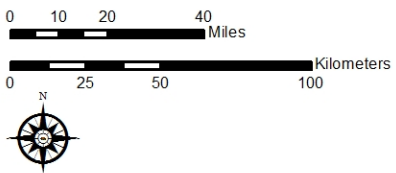
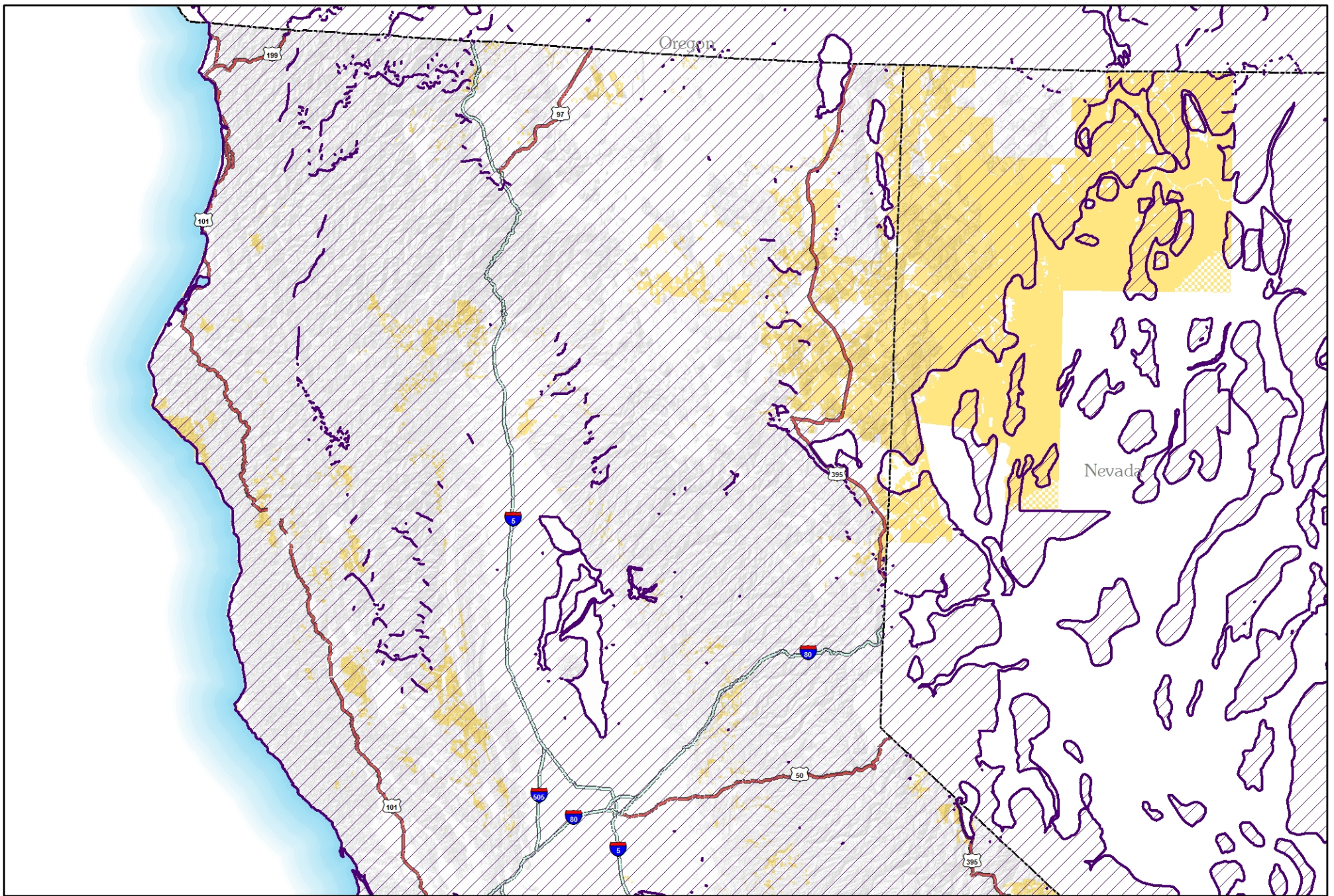
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BLM

Interstate

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Mule Deer Habitat in California

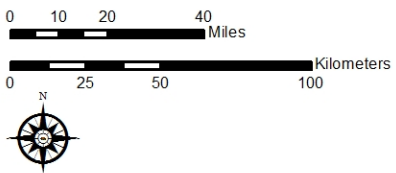
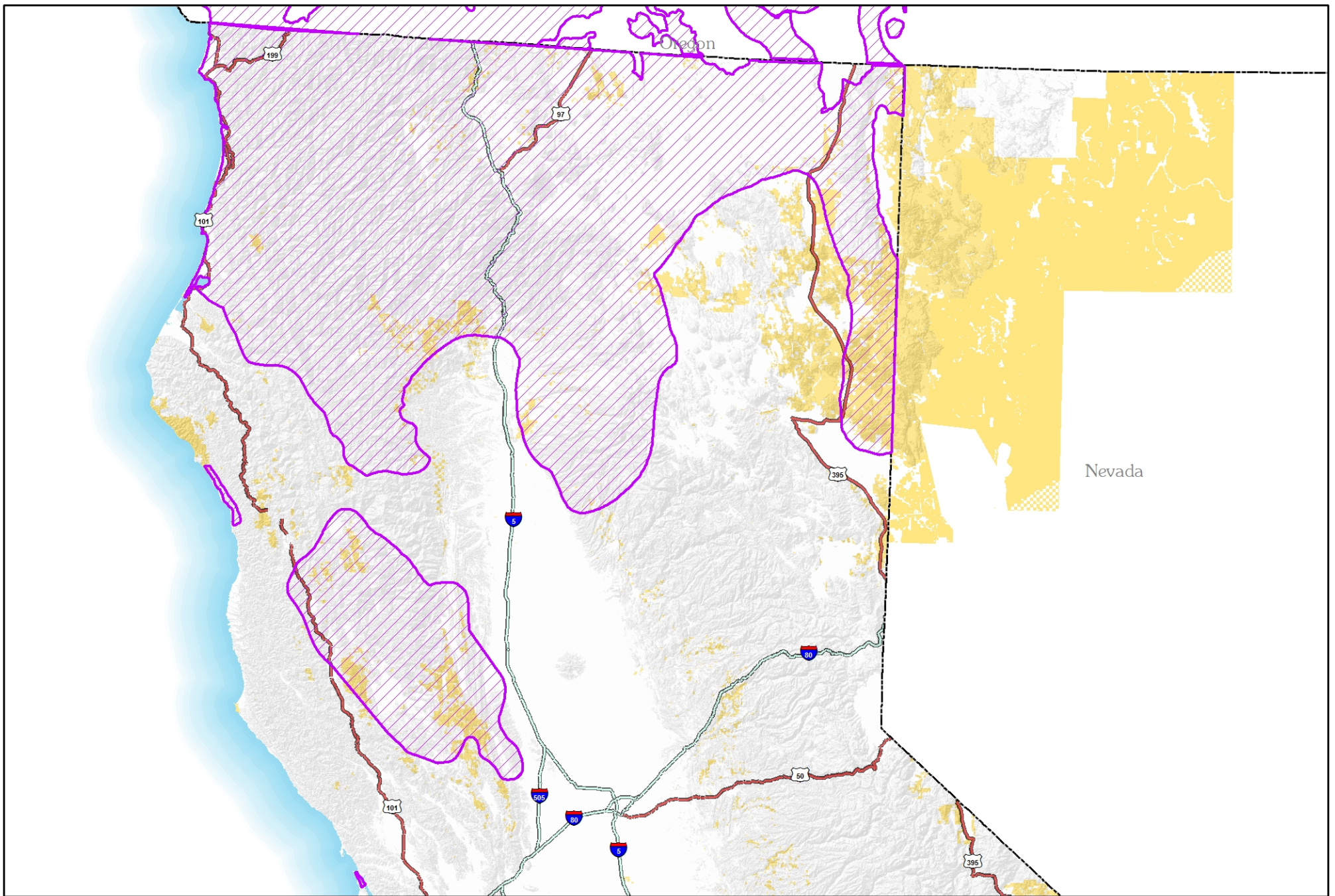


Creation Date: 7/16/2014

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- BLM
- Mule Deer Habitat
- Interstate
- US Hwy



Elk Habitat in California



Creation Date: 7/16/2014

Prepared by BLM California State Office



- BLM
- Elk Habitat
- Interstate
- US Hwy