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March 27, 2013

Use of the DRECP Land Cover dataset:

The initial land cover map used for the DRECP was a composite dataset created primarily from California Gap (2008 CA-GAP) Vegetation (USGS GAP Program, Lennartz et al. 2008) with updates for agricultural and urban areas from California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) (California Department of Conservation 2009).

Based on a best-fit strategy (i.e., looking for similarity of species or assemblages), the DRECP land cover map ecological systems from 2008 CA-GAP were crosswalked to the NVCS "group" level where possible and otherwise to the broader "macrogroup" level. The group level includes combinations of relatively narrow sets of diagnostic plant species, including dominants and co-dominants, broadly similar composition, and diagnostic growth forms. The macrogroup level includes combinations of moderate sets of diagnostic plant species and diagnostic growth forms that reflect biogeographic differences.

The initial land cover map vegetation classes were "crosswalked" to the macrogroup and group level in the NVCS. In addition, NatureServe (2010) and Sawyer et al. (2009) vegetation descriptions were used to determine similar community components across vegetation classification systems. The most recent list of NVCS natural communities was used to determine the appropriate macrogroup. In some cases, only the broader macrogroup level was used where the vegetation classes were too inclusive to assign to a more specific group.

In many cases, there was a straightforward crosswalk between classes, with a one-to-one relationship of an NVCS group closely matching the 2008 CA-GAP ecological system. For example, the most common 2008 CA-GAP community in the Plan Area by acreage is Sonora-Mojave creosote bush-white bursage desert scrub (over 8 million acres in the Plan Area). This community maps one-to-one with NVCS lower bajada and fan Mojave–Sonoran desert scrub at the group level. Where crosswalking to the group level was not possible, communities were crosswalked to the broader NVCS macrogroup level. For example, 2008 CA-GAP Central and Southern California mixed evergreen woodland is best crosswalked to the California forest and woodland macrogroup. Other cleanup of the 2008 CA-GAP data was conducted to re-class vegetation types from the original data not considered to occur in the Plan Area.

Once the land cover map was adapted to the NVCS system, new vegetation mapping conducted in the West Mojave, Lucerne Valley, and East Riverside areas using the NVCS was incorporated into the land cover map using the common classification system. Although the new West Mojave mapping data is now mapped and accessible at the alliance level, this finer-scale data is also aggregated to the group level within the common NVCS system to provide a common hierarchical level across the Plan Area for conservation planning purposes. Additionally, datasets from the Joshua Tree National Park and Anza-Borrego Desert State Park were incorporated. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Project also produced a vegetation map in 2004, which was at mapped at a coarser scale than the alliance level, and this dataset was also incorporated. Reports associated with these datasets are available at:

MDEP Central Mojave Vegetation DB Report, 2004 **[PDF]** *(5.5 mb)*

California Desert Vegetation for the DRECP Mapping Report, 2013 **[PDF]** *(28 mb)*

California Desert Vegetation for the DRECP Map and Accuracy Report, 2013 **[PDF]** *(4 mb)*

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, 1998 **[PDF]** *(3.5 mb)*

This final data set for vegetation mapping in the DRECP contains a combination of best available information using the finest scale whenever possible. It uses the second most specific level available in the NVCS hierarchy, Alliance, as its finest thematic resolution, for the 5,969,650-acre portion of the Mojave Desert and Colorado Desert. However, for remaining portions of the desert, data from other sources (listed above) was used. There are two large-acreage vegetation units, Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub and Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland, that will be treated as "Natural Communities" for conservation planning purposes and in fact represent aggregations of finer-scale communities and alliances present in other portions of the Plan Area. Consequently, analyses using these data must be mindful of these parameters when modeling resources across the boundaries of the original data sets that comprise this integration. Shapefiles and metadata for the original mapping projects that are integrated here will be added to this compilation shortly.

Please contact Serge Glushkoff, Staff Environmental Scientist, at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Serge.Glushkoff@wildlife.ca.gov) with questions regarding the use of this data relative to the strengths and limitations described above. For questions regarding access and GIS, please contact Mike Howard, Senior Biologist at Dudek, at MHoward@dudek.com.