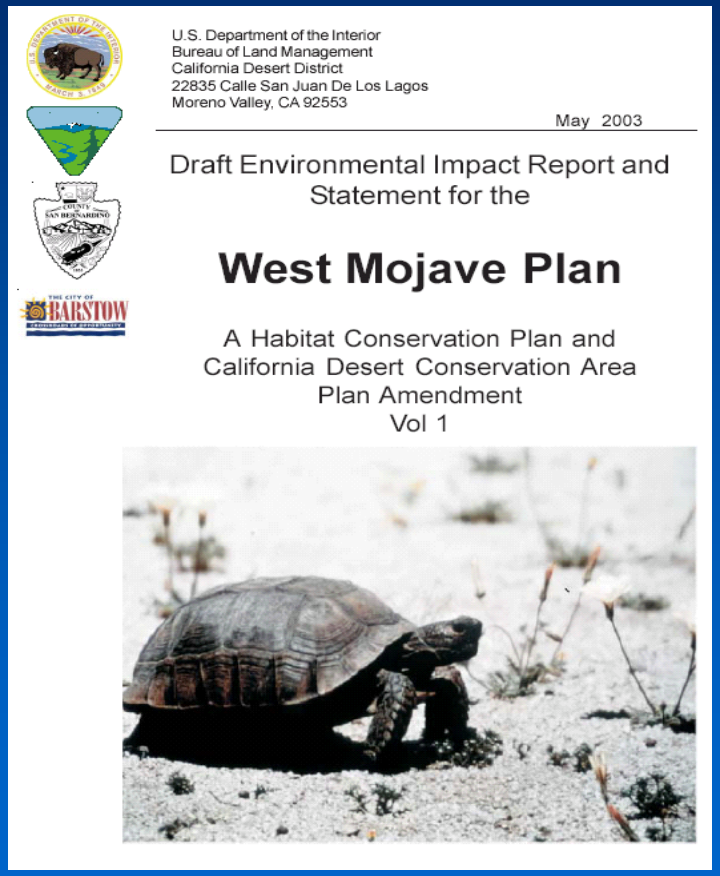
West Mojave Plan

A Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Federal Plan Amendment

William Haigh, Project Manager
Randy Scott, San Bernardino County Planning

What is the West Mojave Plan?



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

May 2003

Draft Environmental Impact Report and Statement for the

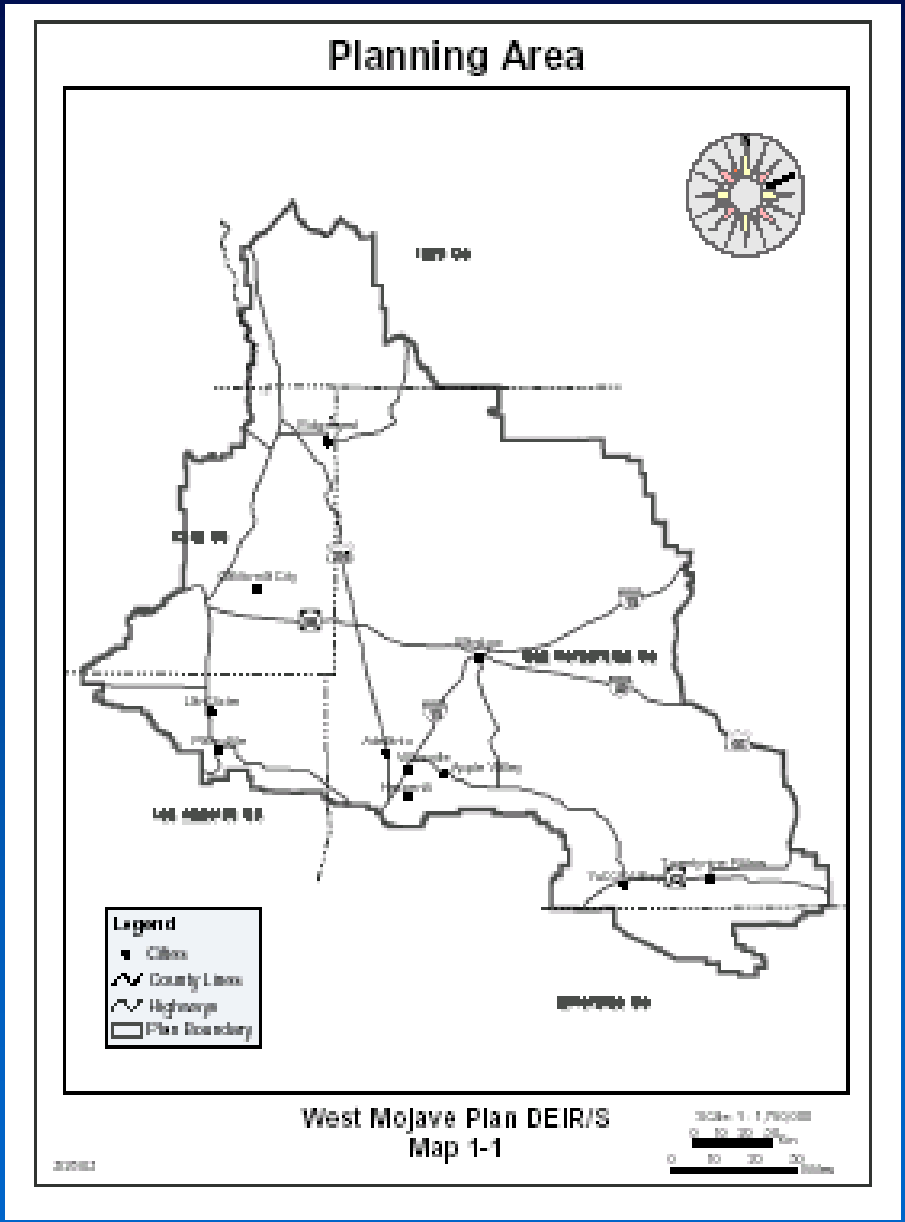
West Mojave Plan

A Habitat Conservation Plan and California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment
Vol 1

- Collaborative Planning
  - Cities, Counties, State and BLM
- Goals
  - Conserve Sensitive Species
  - Streamline ESA Permitting

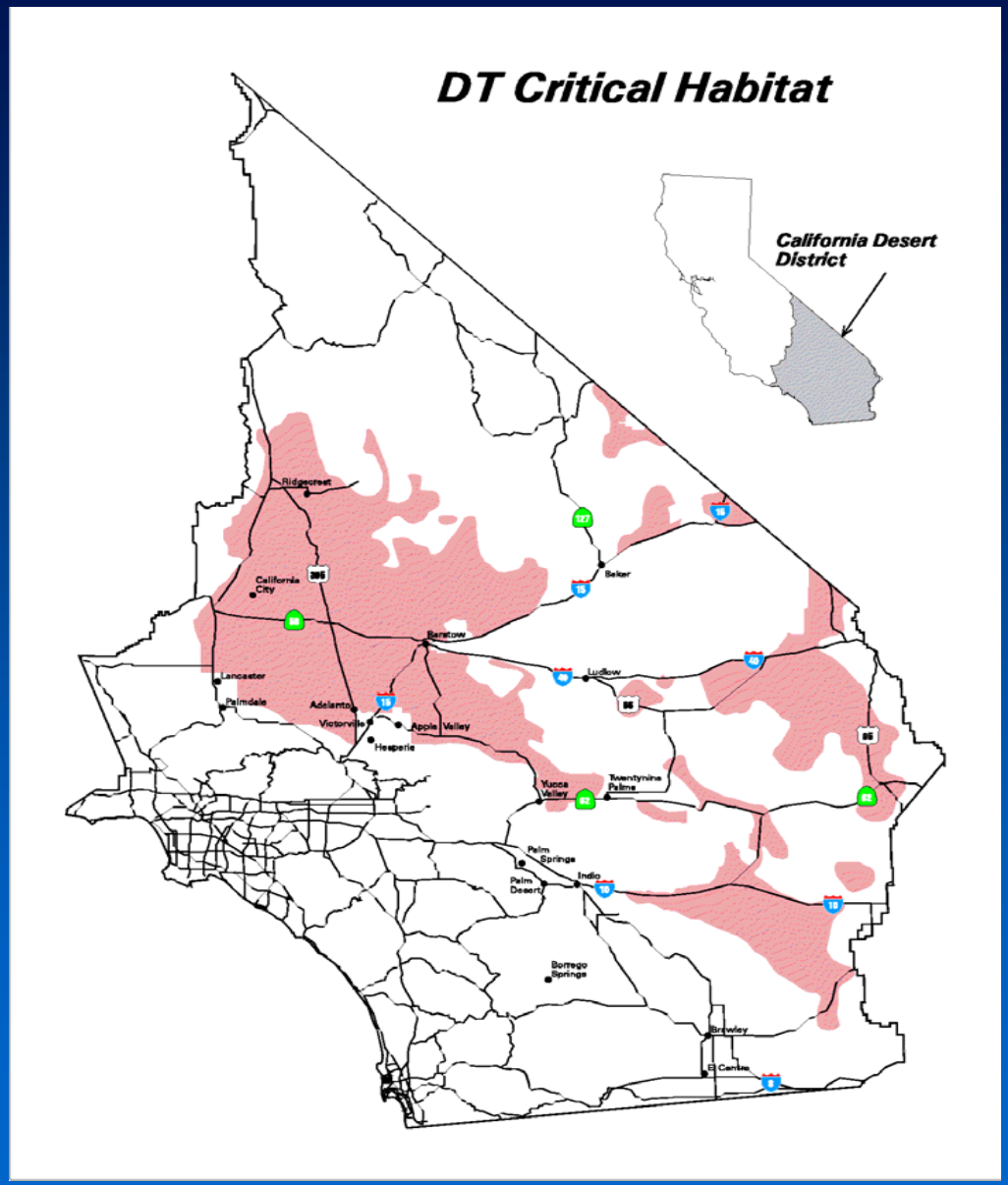
Overview

- 9.3 Million Acres
  - 1/3 BLM
  - 1/3 Military
  - 1/3 Private
- Adjacent to 18 million people
- Rapid urbanization
- Over 100 sensitive plants & animals
- Significant ESA “red tape” concerns



The Desert Tortoise

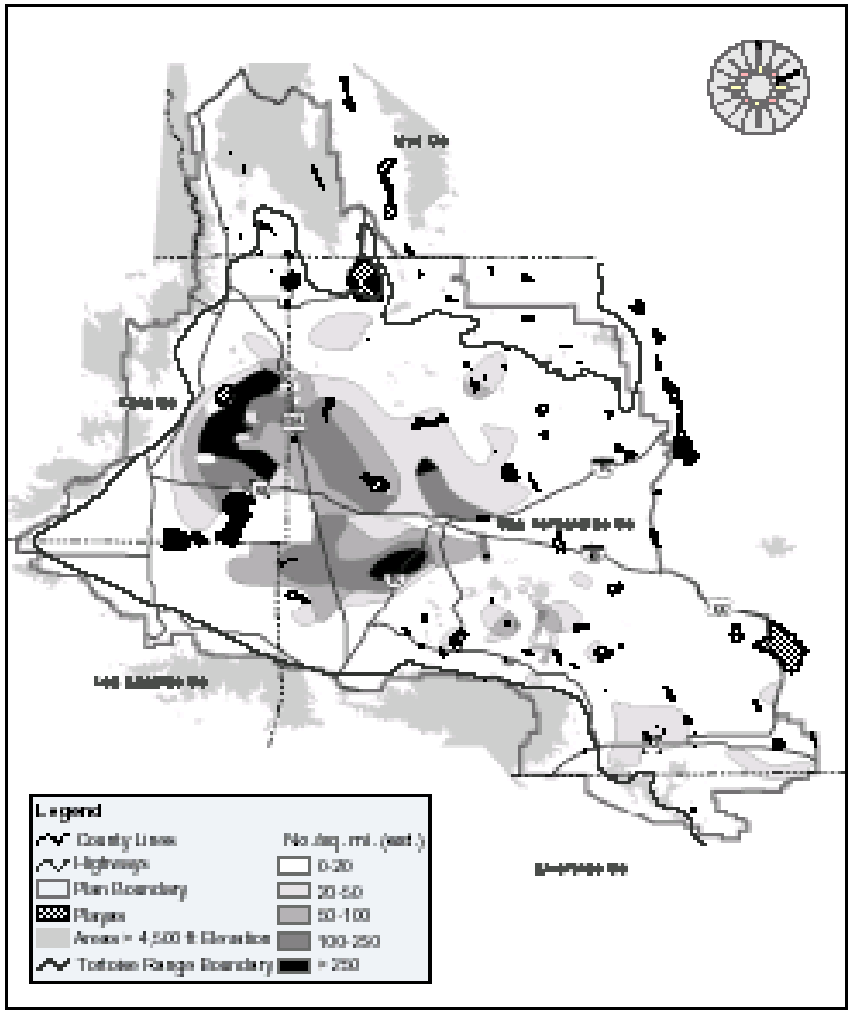
- California State Reptile
- High Public Visibility
  - Desert Tortoise Council
  - Volunteers, Clubs, Hobbyists
- 1990 – Listed as Threatened by
  - United States
  - California



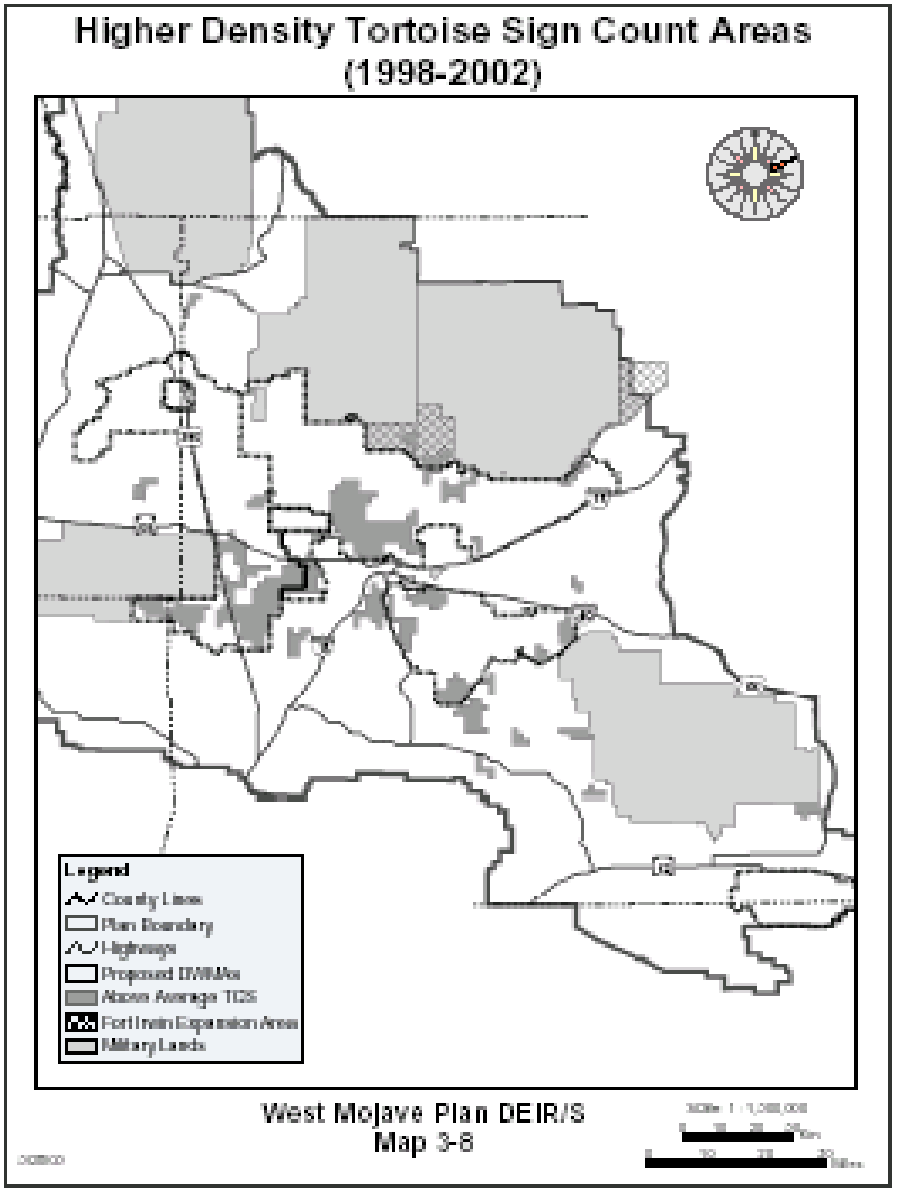
Tortoise Range

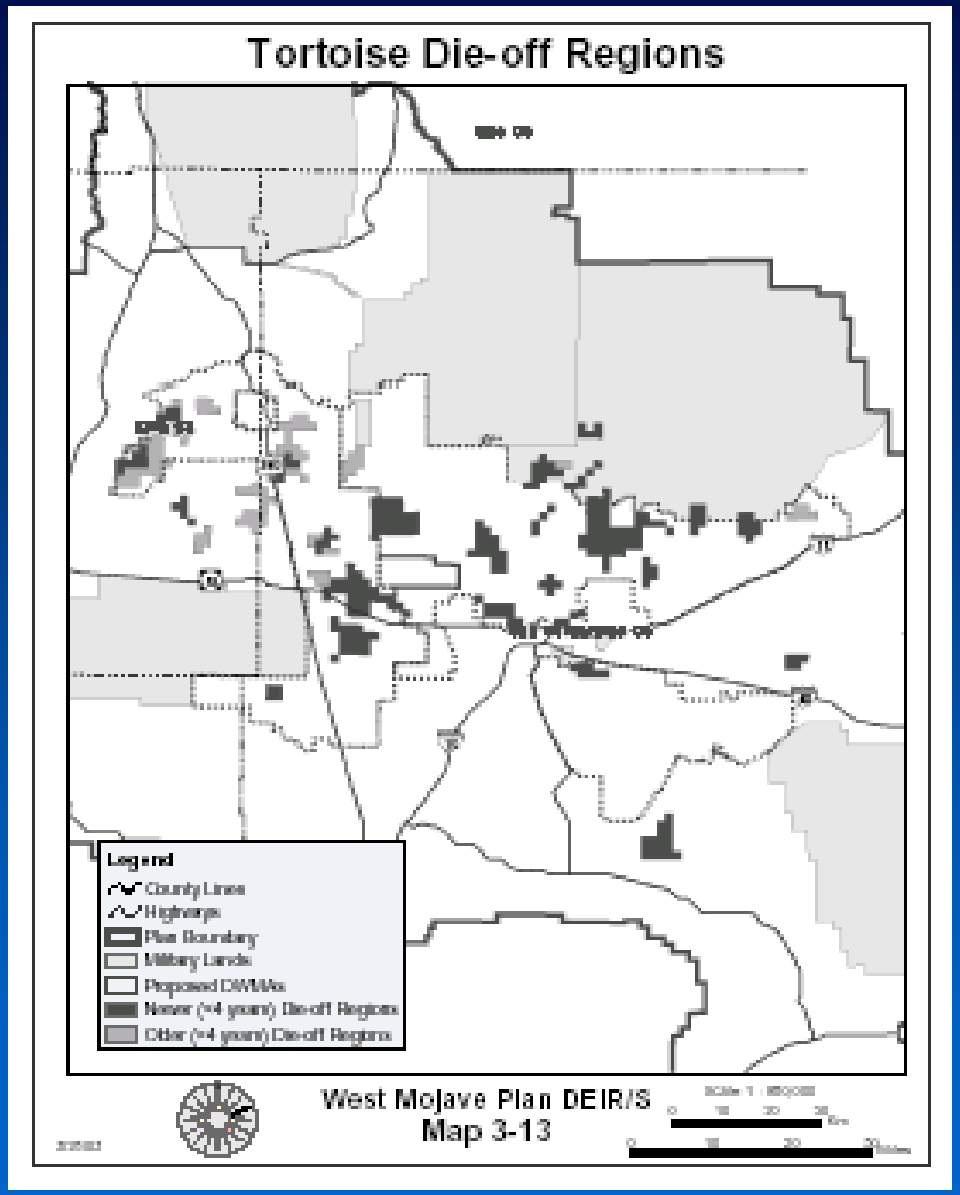
- 6 Recovery Units
- West Mojave Unit Adjacent to Major Population Centers

1984 Tortoise Range and Density Map



West Mojave Plan DEIR/S
Map 3-7


Higher Density Tortoise Sign Count Areas
(1998-2002)
Legend
County Lines
Plan Boundary
Highways
Proposed DWMAs
Above Average TDS
Fort Irwin Expansion Area
Military Lands
West Mojave Plan DEIR/S
Map 3-8


Tortoise Die-off Regions
Legend
County Lines
Highways
Plan Boundary
Military Lands
Proposed DWMAs
Newer (>4 years) Die-off Regions
Older (>4 years) Die-off Regions
West Mojave Plan DEIR/S
Map 3-13

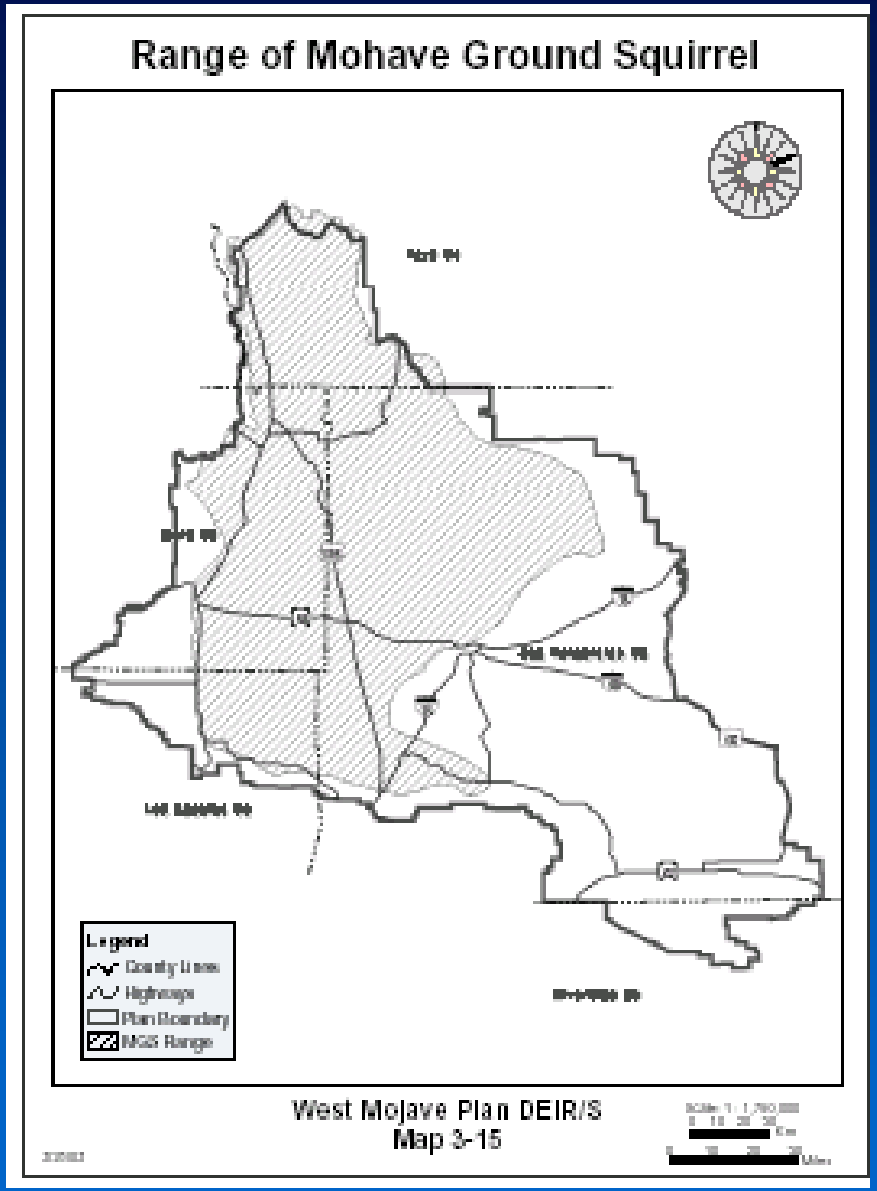
Threats

- Habitat Loss & Deterioration
- Disease
- Human Activities
- Predation
  <mostly ravens

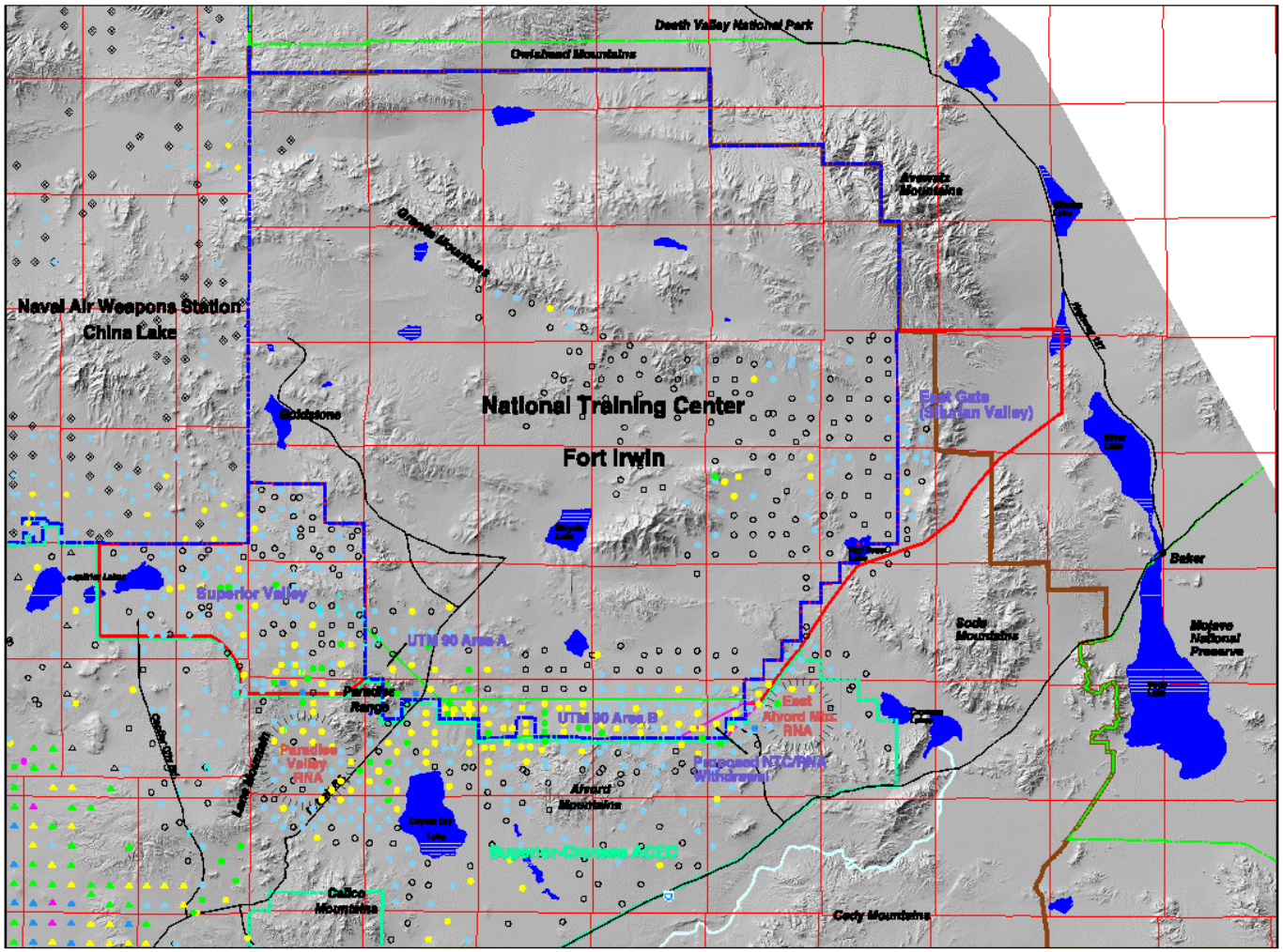
Current Permit Costs Typical 10-acre Parcel

- Presence-Absence Survey -- $125 to $1,250
- Draft Permits -- $5,000 to $65,000
- Clearance Survey -- $250 to $2,500
- Monitoring -- $350 to $500
- Compensation & Endowment -- $26,050
- GRAND TOTAL
  - DOLLARS -- $31,775 to $93,200
  - TIME – 2 to 3 Years

Mohave Ground Squirrel


Range of Mohave Ground Squirrel
Legend
County Lines
Highways
Plan Boundary
MGS Range
West Mojave Plan DEIR/S
Map 3-15

Ft. Irwin Expansion Proposal



West Mojave Plan

Legend

- 1999 Transects
- 1998 Transects
- 1990 China Lake Transects
- 0 TCS
- 1 to 3 TCS
- 4 to 8 DT TCS
- 9 to 16 DT TCS
- 17 to 28 DT TCS
- 29 to 50 DT TCS
- Playas (Dry Lakes)
- Lane Mountain Milkvetch
- NTC Proposed Expansion Area Boundary
- Proposed NTC/RNA Withdrawal
- "UTM 90" A and B Lines
- Highways, Major Roads
- Mojave River
- Proposed ACEC Boundary
- Existing Military Boundary
- National Park Boundary
- WM Plan Boundary

Plotted by N. Prestini, August 15, 2001

Lane Mountain Milkvetch

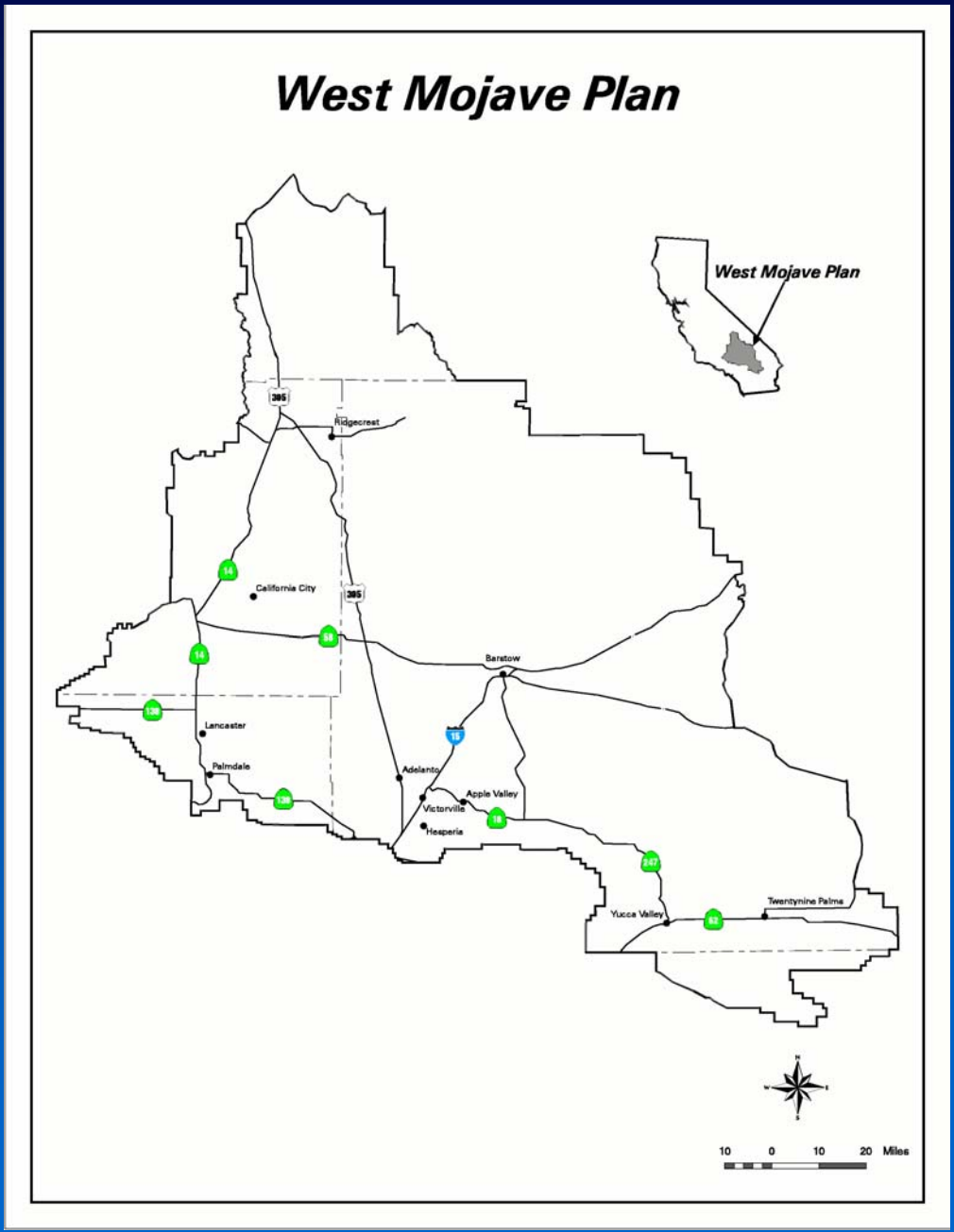
- Found in Proposed Ft. Irwin Expansion Area
- Listed as Endangered
- 1/3 of Known Population on BLM
- 2/3 of Known Population on Fort Irwin

Problems

- FESA & CESA Compliance
  - -- Permit Delays & Expense
  - -- Impedes Economic Development
- Endangered Species Conservation
- Fort Irwin Expansion
- Route Designation

Solution: Interagency Collaboration

- West Mojave Plan
- 28 Agencies & Jurisdictions
- BLM Plan Amendment
- Private Land HCP



Difficult, Time-Consuming and Expensive But --

Only Good Alternative to Litigation and Conflict

Plan Goals

- Streamline ESA, CESA Compliance
- Conserve Sensitive Species

Key Participants

- BLM
- 3 Counties: San Bernardino, Kern, Inyo
- Eleven Cities
- FWS, CDFG
- Caltrans
- Military

A Public Process

- Supergroup Writes Plan
  - <28 Agencies
  - <120 NGOs
  - <Individuals
- Task Groups & Subcommittees
- Steering Committee
- Planning Team
- No Closed Doors

Task Groups

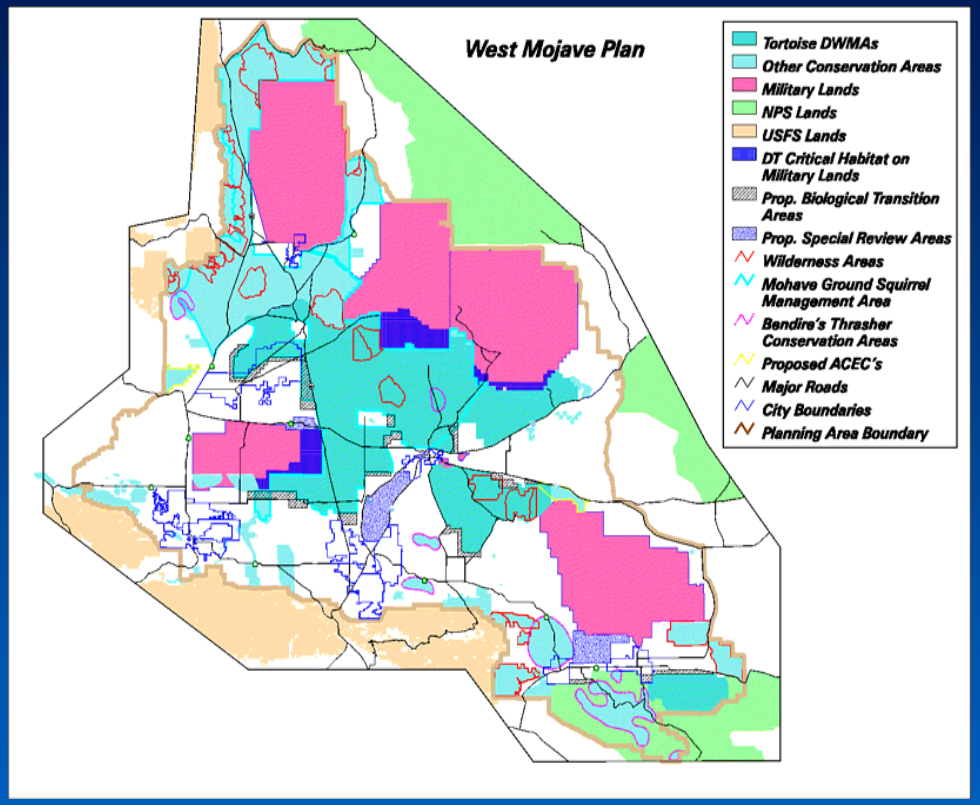
- Four
  - 1: Conservation Strategy
  - 2: Route Designation
  - 3: Regulatory Issues
  - 4: Implementation
- Open Membership
- Best Science Reasonably Available
- FWS-CDFG Evaluation Report
- Meeting Notes on Internet
- 48 Meetings

Resolving Disputes

- Step 1: Refer Issues to Subcommittees
- Step 2: Elevate Deadlocks to Steering Committee
- All Significant Minority Positions Can Be EIR/S Alternative

Conservation Strategy

- Habitat Conservation Area
- Reduced Permittee Costs (Three-tiered Fee Structure)
- Tortoise Survey Zones
- 1% Ground Disturbance in HCA
- Habitat Restoration Credits
- Species Conservation
- Education Program



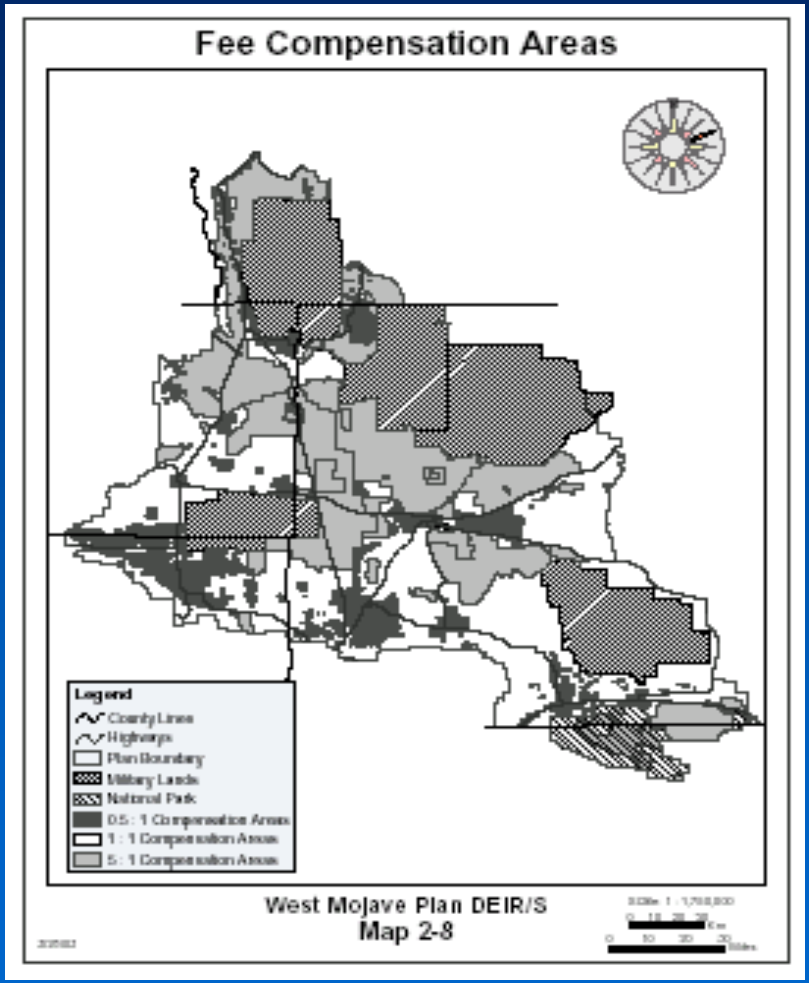
Conservation Areas

- Desert Tortoise
  - Fremont-Kramer DWMA
  - Superior-Cronese DWMA
  - Ord-Rodman DWMA
  - Pinto Mountain DWMA
- Mohave Ground Squirrel
- 12 Others Including
  - Lane Mountain Milkvetch
  - Middle Knob
  - Big Rock Creek
  - Alkali Mariposa Lily

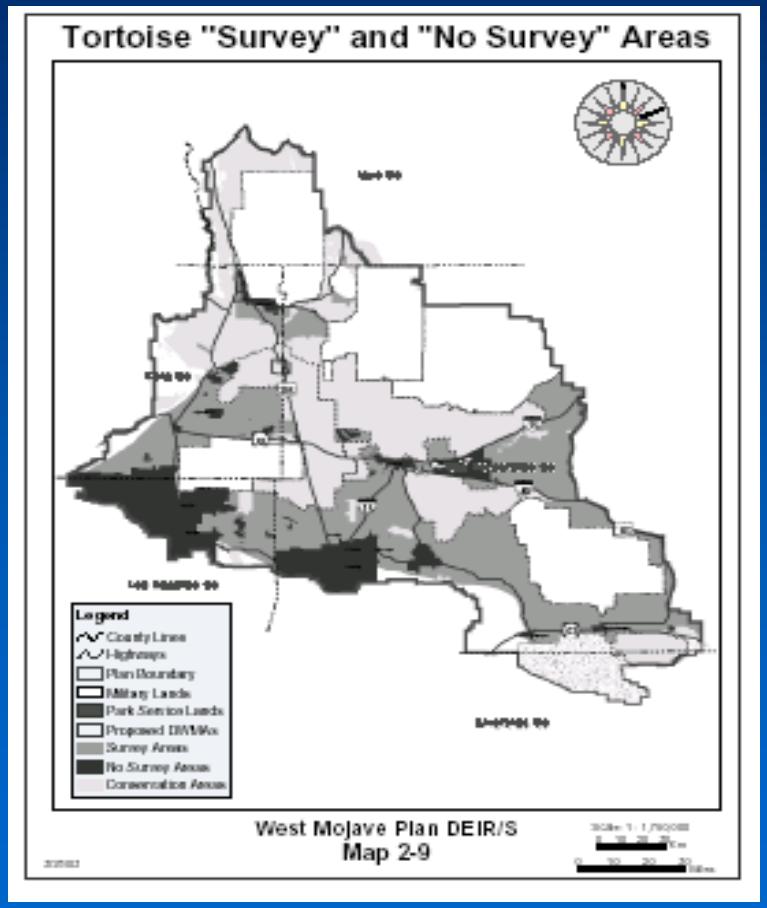
Mitigation Fee

Fee Structure

- HCA
  - 5:1
- Outside HCA
  - 1:1 -- Undisturbed Habitat
  - 0.5:1 -- Disturbed Habitat



Tortoise Survey and No Survey Areas



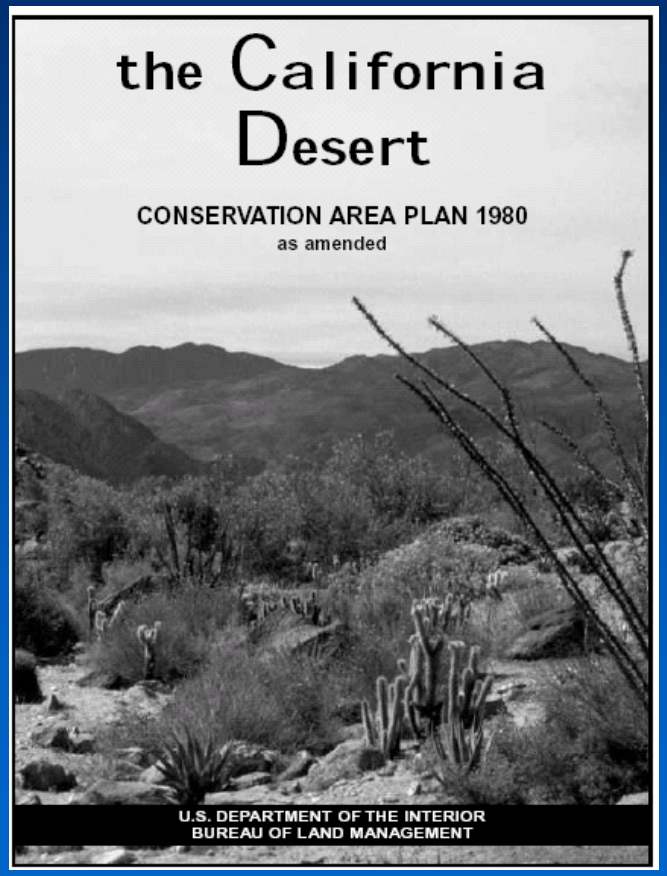
- **DWMAs:** Both Presence-Absence and Clearance Surveys
- **Survey Areas**: Clearance Survey Only
- **No Survey Areas**
  - Tortoises not likely to occur
  - Hotline phone number

Motorized Vehicle Access Network

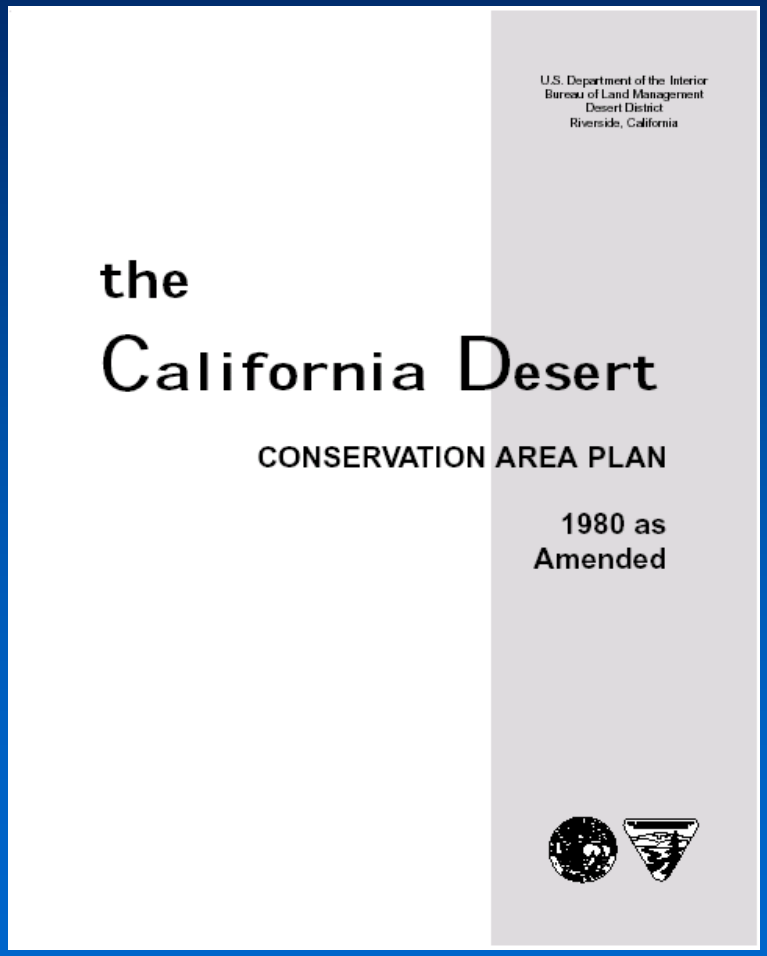
- "Fine Tune" Route Network Adopted by BLM on June 30, 2003
- El Paso Collaborative Access Planning Area
- Retain All Open Areas
- Juniper Flats Revision

Desert Plan Amendments

- New and Modified ACECs
- Multiple Use Class Changes
  - Wilderness Reconciliation
- Tortoise Category Changes
- MGS Wildlife Habitat Management Area
- West Mojave LTA Boundaries

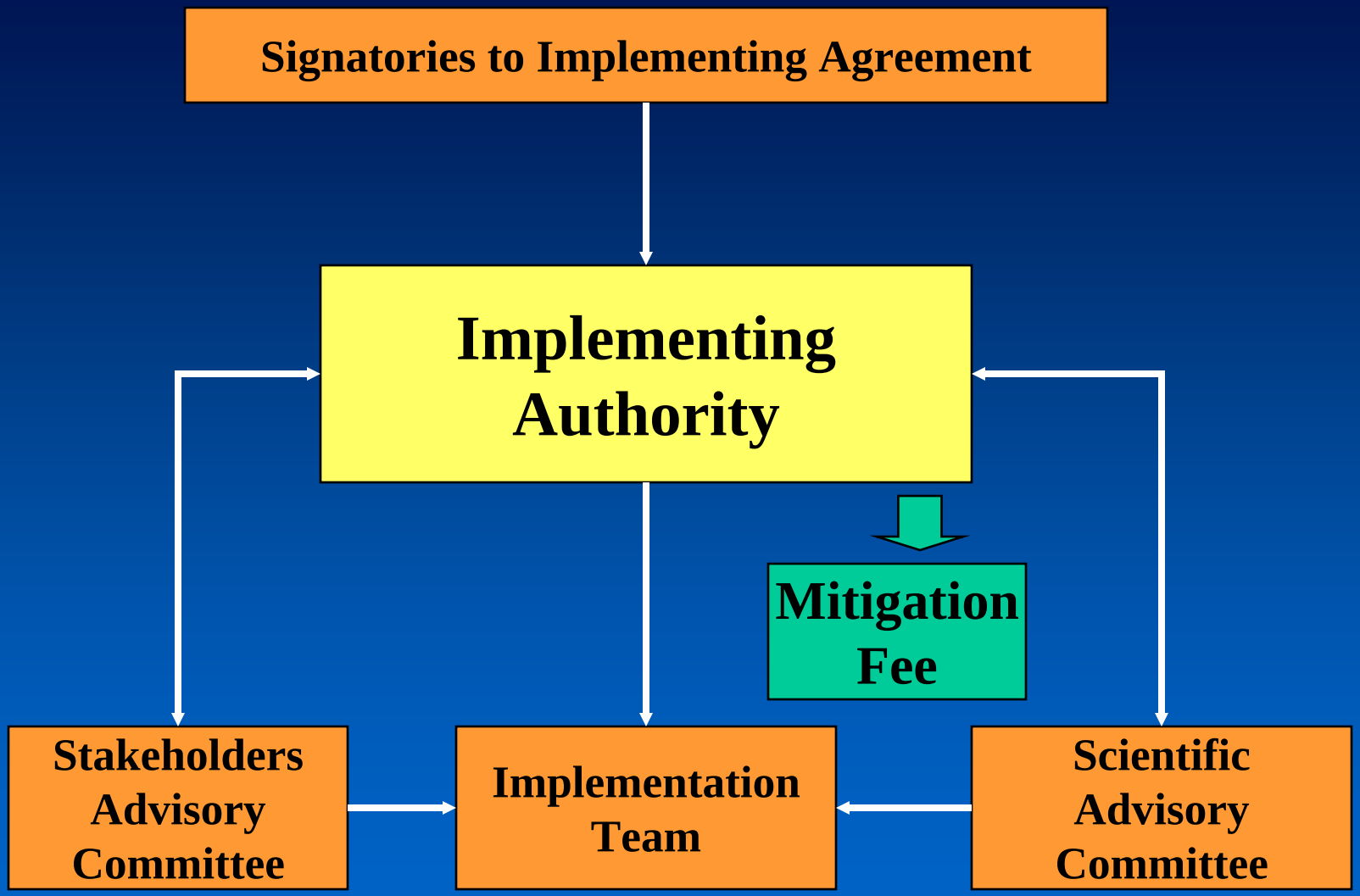


Desert Plan Amendments



- Pending Amendments From
  - Rand Mountains –Fremont Valley Management Plan
  - Afton Canyon Management Plan
- Livestock Grazing
  - Standards and Guidelines
  - Voluntary Relinquishment
- Route Designation – Juniper Flats
- Motorized Vehicle Stopping, Parking and Camping

	CURRENT SITUATION	PROPOSED ACTION		
		DWMA	OUTSIDE HCA	
			TORTOISE SURVEY AREA	TORTOISE NO SURVEY AREA
Presence-absence Survey	$125-1,250	$125-1,250	$0	$0
Permits Drafted **- Cost** **- Timeframe**	$5,000-65,000 1 - 5 years	$0 No Delay	$0 No Delay	$0 No Delay
Other Surveys **- Clearance Survey** **- Weekly Monitoring**	$250-2,500 $350-500	$250-2,500 $350-500	$250-2,500 $350-500	$0 $0
Compensation **- Mitigation Fee** **- Endowment Funds**	$23,100 $2,950	$38,500 $0	$7,700 or $3,850 $0	$7,700 or $3,850 $0
Total Cost	**$31,775 to $93,200**	**$39,225 to $43,750**	**$8,300 to $10,700 in 1:1 area, $4,450 to $6,850 in ½:1 area**	**$7,700 in 1:1 area, $3,850 in ½:1 area**
Business Planning Certainty?	**NO**	**YES**	**YES**	**YES**


Signatories to Implementing Agreement
Implementing Authority
Mitigation Fee
Stakeholders Advisory Committee
Implementation Team
Scientific Advisory Committee

Local – Federal Relationship

West Mojave Implementing Authority ⟷ **DMG**

EIR/S

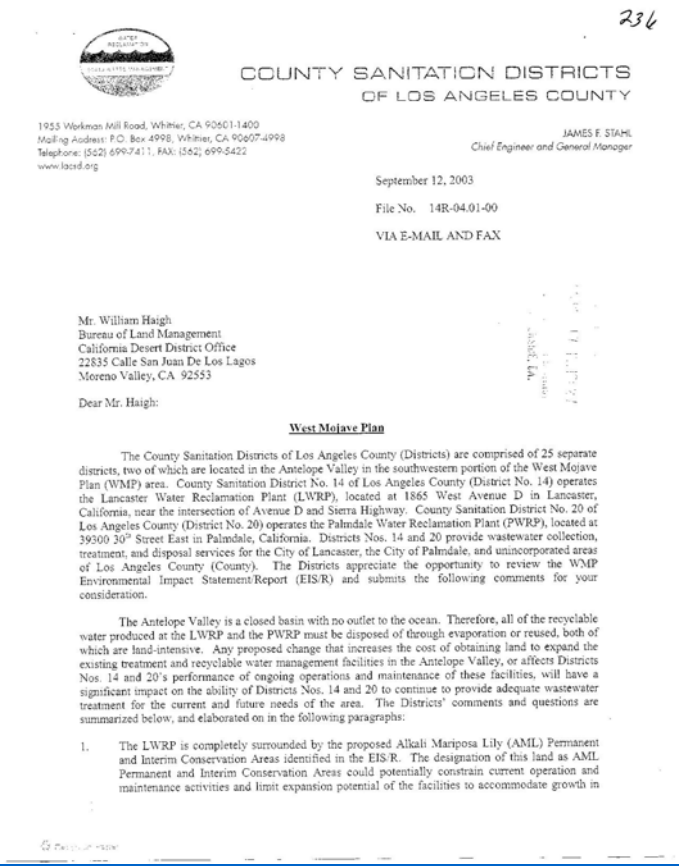
- NEPA Lead: BLM
- Cooperating Agencies
  - Kern County
  - San Bernardino County
- CEQA Leads:
  - San Bernardino County
  - City of Barstow
- Draft EIR/S
  - 90-day Public Review

EIR/S Alternatives

- Proposed Action
- BLM Only
- Tortoise Recovery Plan
- Enhanced Ecosystem
- One DWMA, Enhanced Recreation
- Raven & Disease Management, No DWMA
- No Action

Public Comments

- 276 Comment Letters
- Public Hearing Transcripts
- CDFG Review -- December 22, 2003
- USFWS Biological Opinion -- Late Winter 2004



236

COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS
OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

1955 Workman Mill Road, Whittier, CA 90601-1400
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 4998, Whittier, CA 90607-4998
Telephone: (562) 699-7411, FAX: (562) 699-5422
www.lacsd.org

JAMES F. STAHL
Chief Engineer and General Manager

September 12, 2003

File No. 14R-04.01-00

VIA E-MAIL AND FAX

Mr. William Haigh
Bureau of Land Management
California Desert District Office
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Dear Mr. Haigh:

West Mojave Plan

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) are comprised of 25 separate districts, two of which are located in the Antelope Valley in the southwestern portion of the West Mojave Plan (WMP) area. County Sanitation District No. 14 of Los Angeles County (District No. 14) operates the Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant (LWRP), located at 1865 West Avenue D in Lancaster, California, near the intersection of Avenue D and Sierra Highway. County Sanitation District No. 20 of Los Angeles County (District No. 20) operates the Palmdale Water Reclamation Plant (PWRP), located at 39300 30th Street East in Palmdale, California. Districts Nos. 14 and 20 provide wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal services for the City of Lancaster, the City of Palmdale, and unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County (County). The Districts appreciate the opportunity to review the WMP Environmental Impact Statement/Report (EIS/R) and submits the following comments for your consideration.

The Antelope Valley is a closed basin with no outlet to the ocean. Therefore, all of the recyclable water produced at the LWRP and the PWRP must be disposed of through evaporation or reused, both of which are land-intensive. Any proposed change that increases the cost of obtaining land to expand the existing treatment and recyclable water management facilities in the Antelope Valley, or affects Districts Nos. 14 and 20's performance of ongoing operations and maintenance of these facilities, will have a significant impact on the ability of Districts Nos. 14 and 20 to continue to provide adequate wastewater treatment for the current and future needs of the area. The Districts' comments and questions are summarized below, and elaborated on in the following paragraphs:

1. The LWRP is completely surrounded by the proposed Alkali Mariposa Lily (AML) Permanent and Interim Conservation Areas identified in the EIS/R. The designation of this land as AML Permanent and Interim Conservation Areas could potentially constrain current operation and maintenance activities and limit expansion potential of the facilities to accommodate growth in

Upcoming Dates

- **May 2004:** Final EIR/S
- **Summer 2004:** Amendments to BLM's California Desert Conservation Area Plan
- **Late 2004:** Decisions by Local Jurisdictions

Summary

- USA's Largest HCP
- Streamlines ESA Compliance
- Conserves sensitive species
- Collaborative Public Process
- Mitigation Fees
- Need to Develop DMG – IA Relationship