

Carrizo Plain National Monument Advisory Committee

Preliminary Preferred
Alternative

February 23, 2008

Progress Report

- Previous meetings:
 - Scoping meeting (April 2007)
 - Partner meeting to develop concepts for alternatives (Aug. 2007)
 - Incorporation of scoping and MAC input into concepts for range of alternatives (Sept. 2007)
 - Planning team took these concepts and developed detailed range of alternatives (Oct.-Nov. 2007)
 - Developed preliminary preferred alternative (Dec. 2007)
 - Partners met and discussed/refined the preliminary preferred (Jan. 2008)
 - Presenting main components of Preliminary Preferred to MAC for initial comment and recommendations (today)

Range of Alternatives – General Themes

- Alternative 1 –Represents a more “hands off” approach to natural resource management, and provides for a more limited array of improvements and public uses of the monument
- Alternative 2 –Incorporates elements of the other alternatives as well as some unique elements to provide for protection of monument resources while allowing for compatible public uses
- Alternative 3 – Represents the most active approach to natural resource management and restoration. Provides for a broader array and higher levels of public use and access while still retaining the overall rustic character
- No Action – Continuation of present management approach based on existing plans and proclamation

Note: Based on proclamation and scoping input, the “reasonable” range of alternatives all emphasize protection/restoration of the objects of the proclamation

Purpose of Preferred Alternative

- Represents partners "best shot" at recommending course of action for managing area
- Other alternatives are viable and reasonable and will be presented in Draft RMP
- During comment on Draft RMP (Fall 2008), the public can recommend the adoption of other alternatives (or components of other alternatives) to develop the Proposed RMP

Selecting the Preferred Alternative

The Preferred alternative is intended to best respond to:

-- Direction from Proclamation

-- Themes identified during scoping

-- Applicable laws and policies

-- Planning criteria

- *Uniqueness of the Carrizo Plain as undeveloped portion of San Joaquin Valley ecosystem as a context for management*
- *Restore and maintain mosaic of natural communities and successional stages and biodiversity. Emphasize an increase of native and indigenous species*
- *Carrizo Plain's importance for T & E species recovery and regional landscape conservation*
- *Identify core areas where endangered species will be a primary management priority*
- *Protect known Native American traditional uses, cultural sites, and sacred places*
- *Public uses will be consistent with protecting objects of the Monument Proclamation*

Preferred

- Incorporates new scientific data to refine management actions
- Will include an adaptive management component to respond to changing conditions and uncertainty
- Involves Managing Partners, MAC, science review

Recreation Management

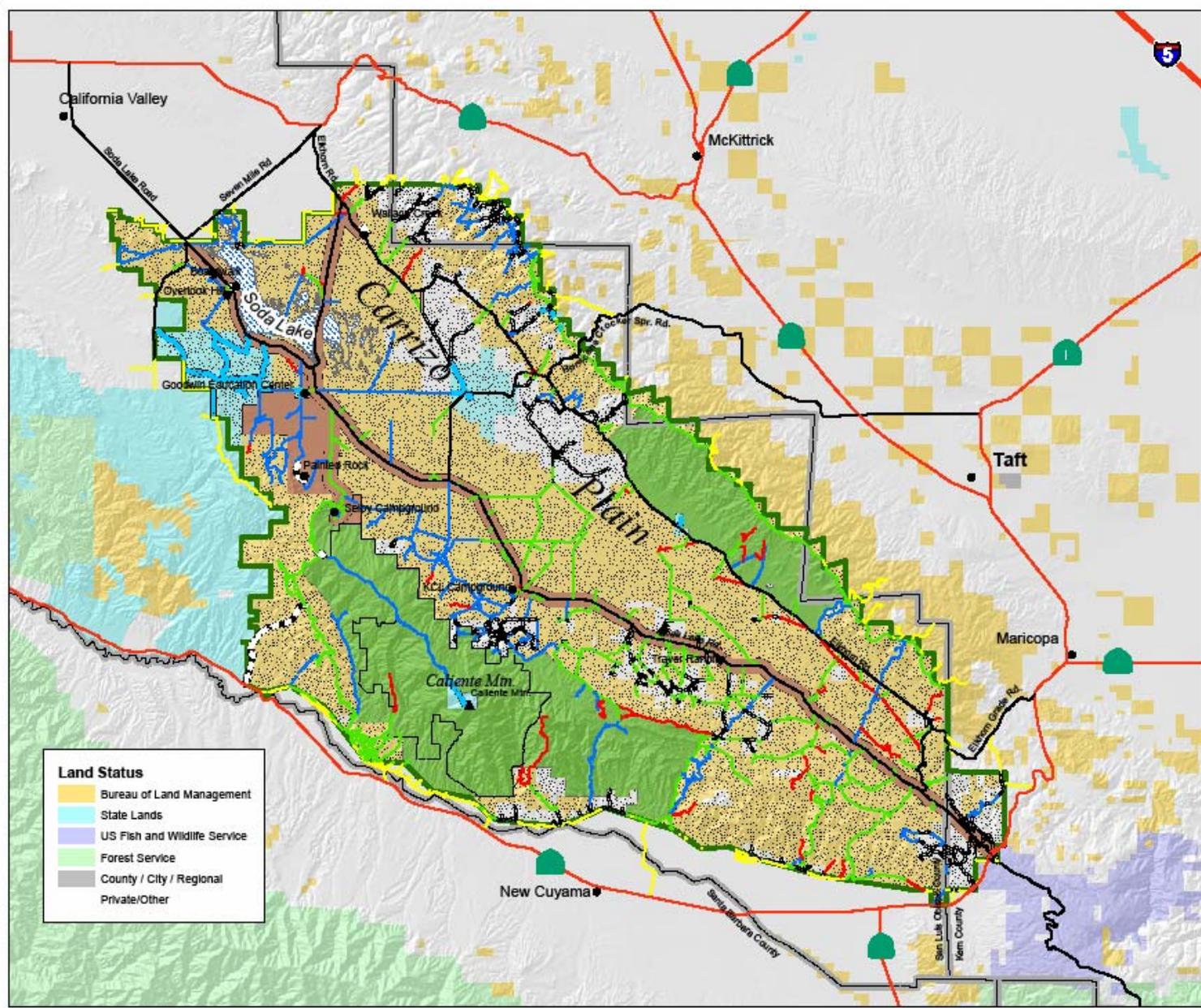
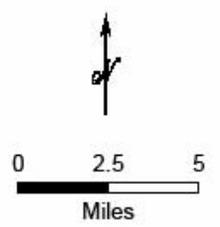
- Scoping: Manage visitor use to protect area and maintain undeveloped character. Low-key facilities should focus on interpreting monument features
 - Alternatives identify "Recreation Management Zones" (RMZ) that are characterized by common types of opportunities, and settings, and level of management and facility development
 - All of the RMZ's identified for Carrizo are at the rustic/primitive end of the scale

**Map 2-X
Alternative 2:
Recreation Management Zones and
Route Designations**

Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office
Carrizo Plain National Monument
Resource Management Plan

- Legend**
- State Highways
 - County Roads
 - Open
 - Limited
 - Closed
 - Foot Trails
 - Routes on State Lands
 - Routes on Private Lands
 - Routes outside CPNM
 - CPNM Boundary
 - Caliente Mtn. WSA
- Recreation Management Zones**
- Front Country
 - Primitive
 - Back Country

- Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - State Lands
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - Forest Service
 - County / City / Regional
 - Private/Other



Recreation Management

- Primitive Zone (54,464 Acres)
 - Alternate name “Wilderness Character Zone”
 - Manage for wilderness experience
 - Only non-motorized / non-mechanized travel
 - Greatest opportunity for solitude, seclusion and self sufficiency
 - No on-site facilities

Recreation Management

- Back Country Zone (186,819 Acres)
 - Motorized/mechanized travel on designated routes
 - Minimal recreation facilities
 - Low-key signing, dispersed camping
 - Opportunities to exploring remote parts of monument on one's own

Recreation Management

- Front Country Zone (20,839 Acres)
 - Focus of majority of visitor use
 - Interpretive displays and overlooks plus visitor center
 - Developed rustic campgrounds
 - Provide opportunity for casual visitors to learn about and appreciate the monument resources

Recreation Management

- Work with gateway communities to develop complementary off-monument visitor support facilities and programs
- Develop comprehensive interpretive program (using web and other formats) that incorporates seasonal information, use ethics information, etc.
- Develop driving interpretive tour of monument

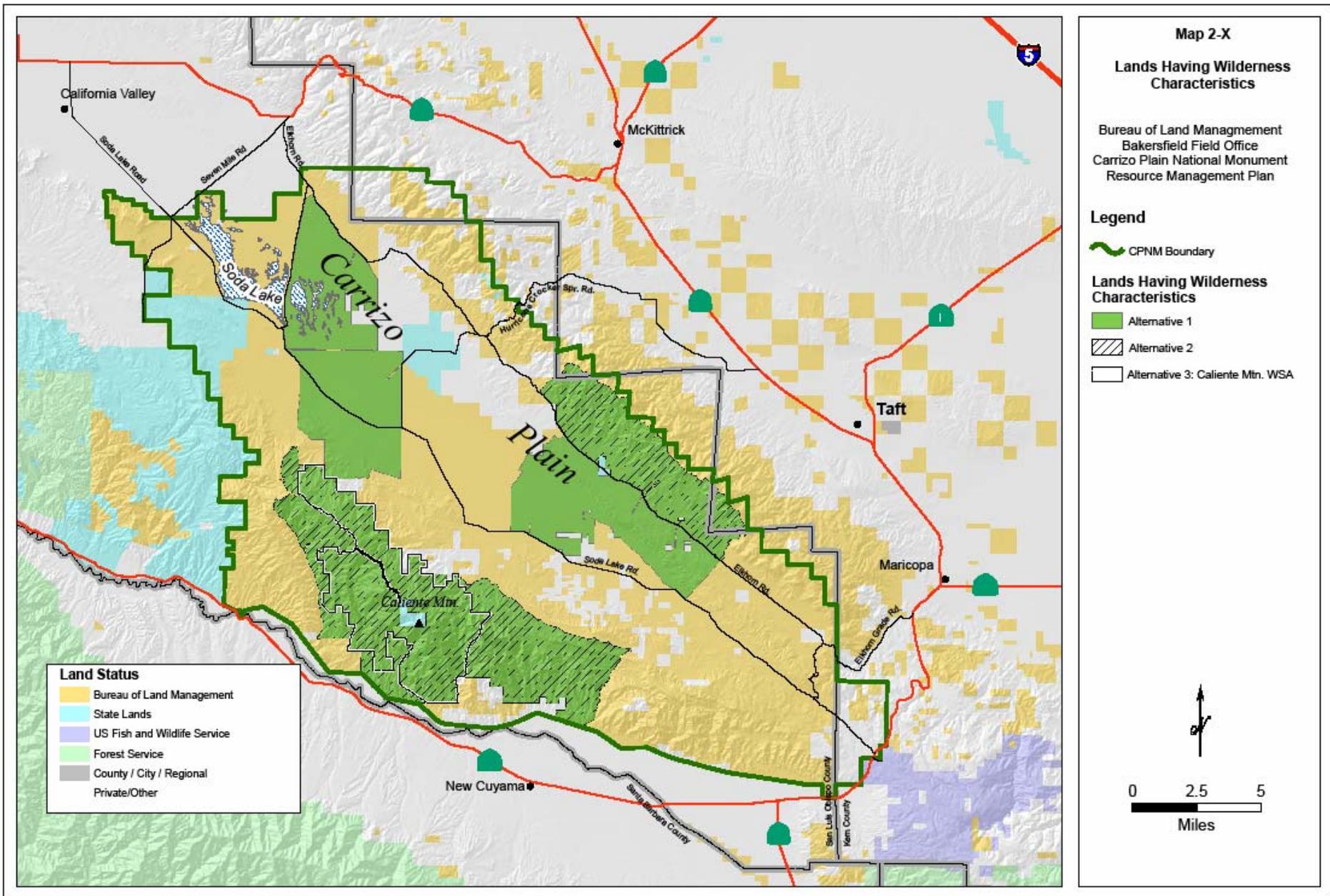
Visual Resources Management

- Primitive Zone – VRM Class I
- Back Country Zone --VRM Class II
- Front Country Zone – VRM Class III

- Retrofit existing facilities to reduce contrast and make compatible with VRM objectives

- Coordinate with cultural program to remove non-historic structures/materials from monument

- Minimize lighting - use shields to protect night sky qualities



Wilderness Character

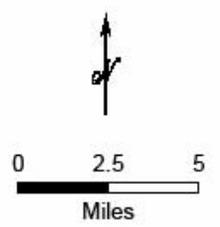
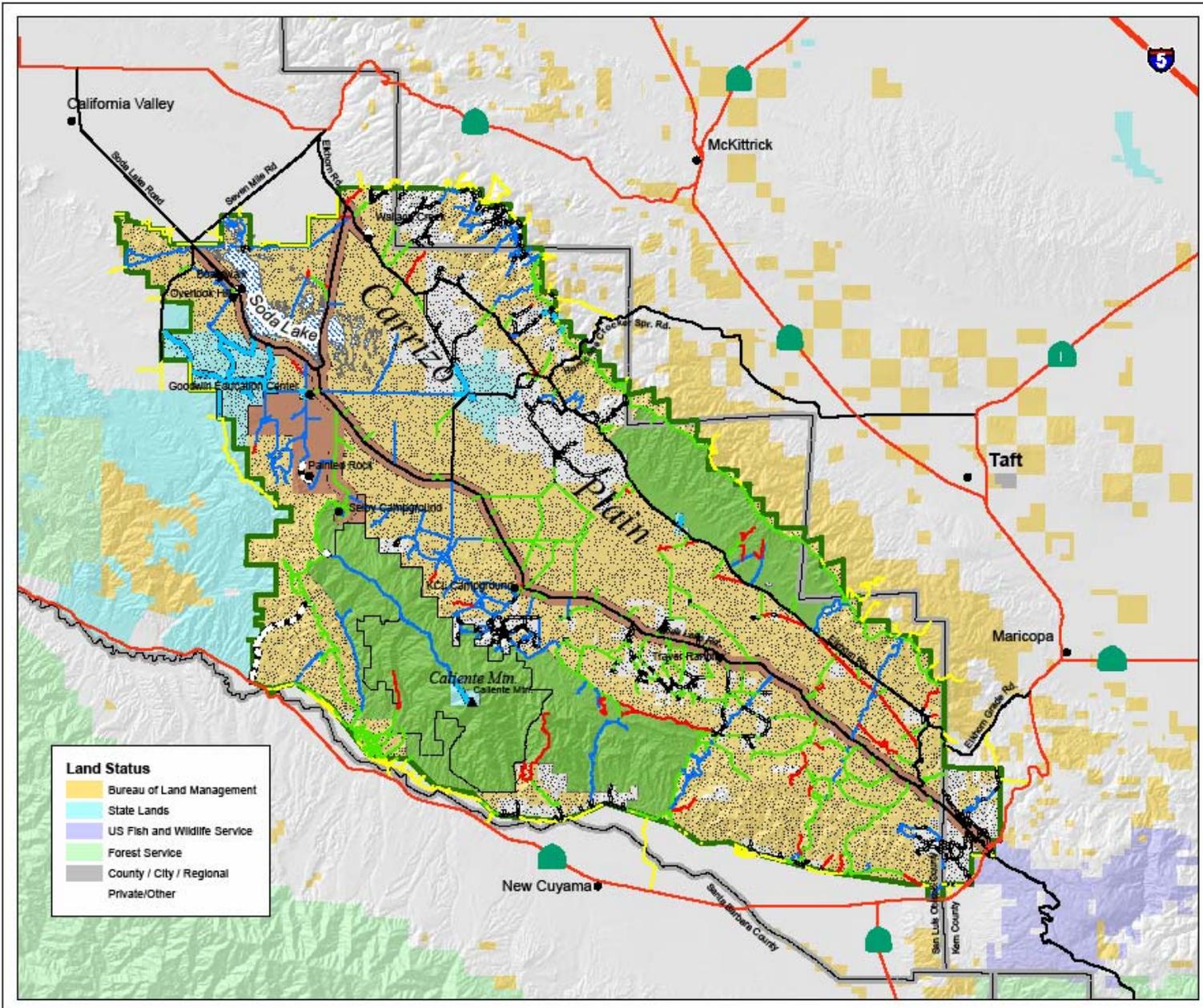
- Assessed monument lands for areas with wilderness characteristics as defined under 1964 Wilderness Act
- Manage 54,464 Acres to protect those wilderness characteristics
 - Rationale: This acreage best represents wilderness qualities within Carrizo
- RMP includes specific management and public use guidelines for wilderness character acreage – e. g. these lands also identified as “Primitive Recreation Management Zone”
- Other alternatives range from 83,202 acres (alternative 1) to 17,984 acres (alternative 3)
- Areas not recommended would still remain undeveloped under RMP

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Travel Management

- Open - Open to public vehicle travel
- Limited - Limited to authorized vehicles only or to certain times of year
 - Generally available for public for foot, bicycle and equestrian access
 - Some areas have additional limitations e. g.:
 - Road to Painted Rock limited to guided tours in the spring
 - Routes in areas managed for wilderness character open to public foot-equestrian use (no mechanized access)
- Closed - Closed to all travel and either actively restored or left to naturally rehabilitate

Travel Management

- Road Mileage:
- Open – 196 miles (Alt. range 195-247)
- Limited – 136 miles (Alt. range 97-136)
- Closed – 41 miles (Alt. range 81 –10)

- *Note: RMP contains criteria to evaluate routes once lands are acquired. These criteria would be used to evaluate whether to designate routes open, limited or closed*

Biological Resources (vegetation and wildlife)

Scoping Comments

- Protect ecosystems and species
- Maintain and restore habitats

Context for Management

- Federal Land Policy Management Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Recovery Plans
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- State Fish and Game Laws and Regulations

Biological Resources

Goals

- Enhance value as significant, unique, undeveloped remnant of San Joaquin Valley ecosystem
- Restore and maintain natural communities and processes to benefit biodiversity and native species
- Emphasize importance for Threatened and Endangered species, rare communities, regional landscape conservation
- Identify and manage T&E core areas

Biological Resources

Ecological Sub-Region Use

- Use has evolved from what was initially envisioned
 - In Affected Environment chapter to describe different parts of monument with similar ecological character
 - In Alternatives chapter to provide geographic context for certain management actions
 - In Environmental Affects chapter to help identify levels of impacts

Biological Resources Conservation Target Table

- Identifies actions to meet objectives for plant communities, listed and other sensitive species of plants and animals
 - Identifies important habitat and population parameters
 - Identifies indicators to be monitored, measurable attributes and thresholds that will trigger management actions
 - Identifies the management prescriptions for desired outcomes
- Table will be updated using an Adaptive Management approach

Biological Resources

Adaptive Management

- Used in complex ecosystems where effects of actions involve some uncertainty
- Requires clear agreement on objectives (desired resource conditions or outcomes identified in RMP)
- Develop an initial suite of actions aimed at reaching objectives (Conservation Target Table and other actions in RMP)
- Predict effects of implementing actions (will be done in impact analysis)
- Monitor results of treatments (RMP incorporates monitoring & scientific review)
- Refine existing actions or implement new actions based on monitoring results – These actions are still targeted towards RMP objectives & within scope of analysis
- In summary: Continue to refine management approach as we learn more about ecosystem and reduce uncertainty about its response to our actions

Biological Resources

Rare Plants

- Maintain/enhance viable populations of T&E/rare plants
 - Monitor rare plant populations, pollinators and habitat
 - Support rare plant and pollinator research
 - Protect rare plant populations, pollinators and habitat
 - Promote seed bank recharge

Non-native Plants

- Control spread of noxious weeds/non-natives
 - Follow Integrated Pest Management principles
 - Monitor for new populations and eliminate
 - Eradicate/control target weeds
 - On landscape level, suppress non-native annuals/seed with natives
 - Minimize spread by livestock and horses

Biological Resources

Native Plants

- Maintain, increase, restore ecologically important plant communities

Communities	Native Plants
Native perennial grasslands, alkali sink, saltbush scrub, upper Sonoran sub-shrub scrub, vernal pools	Bulb plants, perennial herbs, annual herbs, wildflowers, biological crusts, Alvord and blue oaks, yuccas, saltbush, ephedra, manzanita

Biological Resources

Native Plants

- Manage select native plant resources and habitat (Conservation Target Table)
 - Monitor target native plants and communities
 - Support research
 - Restore native plants and natural communities, especially in areas of degraded habitat. Supplement natural processes with an active restoration program

Other Alternative: Rely on natural processes to maintain communities, allow fire to occur without intervention, use weed control for noxious weeds only

Biological Resources

Vegetation Management

- Modify vegetation abundance, distribution, composition and/or structure to achieve a desired outcome
 - Use a variety of tools and methods

Other alternative: Use only hand and mechanical methods to modify or let natural processes occur

Biological Resources

Core Area T&E Animal

- Focus management for T & E species in core areas to prevent their disappearance from the monument
 - Identify/map areas, monitor to define minimums
 - Take actions when populations approach minimums per Conservation Target Table
 - Support research to define factors influencing trends
 - Use a variety of vegetation management tools
 - Re-establish through translocation if needed

–Other alternatives: allow populations to disappear or reappear except monument-wide disappearance; no grazing or fire as tools. Actively manage all suitable habitat (not just core areas) for the species.

Non-Core Area T&E Animal

- Allow T&E species to fluctuate naturally in non-core areas. Take action in non-core areas in addition to core areas only if necessary to keep these species from disappearing from the monument
 - Monitor to determine trends and define minimums
 - Use a variety of tools
 - Pursue partnerships with private landowners for habitat mgmt.

Biological Resources

Pronghorn antelope and Tule elk

- Develop and maintain Carrizo herds of 250 pronghorn and 500 elk in identified sub-regions
 - Improve fawning/calving and foraging habitat-restoration, water, feeding
 - Modify, realign or remove fencing
 - Use tools as per the Conservation Target Table
 - Allow animal introductions

Other Alternative: No active restoration to improve habitat, no water or food supplied, no livestock grazing in key areas, no fences except to protect cultural sites, no herd augmentation

Biological Resources

Avian Species (roosting, mountain plover, condor and upland game birds)

- Maintain habitat in identified sub-region for roosting shorebirds
- Conduct surveys and support research
- Provide protection
- Map core areas and manage winter plover habitat in identified sub-regions; apply tools in fall
- Condor foraging habitat in identified sub-regions; unobstructed habitat in additional sub-regions
- Maintain habitat and provide water for upland game

Other Alternative: Allow natural habitat/water sources; remove guzzlers

Biological Resources

Other Avian Species Nesting Sites and Habitat

- Maintain/improve habitat for wintering raptors as well as nesting, roosting and foraging sites for other raptors, ground nesting birds and migratory songbirds in identified sub-regions
 - Conduct surveys, monitoring & inventories; support research
 - Allow structures and non-native trees at ranch sites to remain
 - Apply a variety of treatments/restoration techniques for a mosaic of habitats/crane-grain outside monument

Other alternative: Allow removal of non-native trees and structures; allow natural conditions for suitable habitat

Biological Resources

Viable populations of Animals

- Maintain or increase for special status, declining or unique species
 - Monitor and survey
 - Support research/education
 - Protect/manage
 - Implement recovery plan actions

Non-native and captive-held native animals

- Control/eliminate non-native animals
 - Allow augmentation of T&E, pronghorn and elk
 - Allow approved bio controls and livestock use
 - Pet control

Biological Resources

Habitat Structure and Diversity

- Maintain a mosaic of habitat: structure, composition, patchiness
 - Monitor, develop maps
 - Modify using a variety of tools
- Maintain a linkage from monument to San Joaquin Valley and other areas
 - Maintain suitable habitat in identified sub-regions and protect link by acquisition or other means

Biological Resources

Riparian

- Protect/restore all riparian, seeps and springs
 - Use variety of restoration methods
 - seeding, fencing, redesign developed springs, etc.
 - Take measures to limit actions of feral pigs

Soda Lake

- Maintain ecological process/hydrologic vitality of Soda Lake system
 - Monitor and respond to threats
 - Identify adjacent lands important for the system/coordinate actions
 - Design new trails etc. to minimize disruption

Biological Resources

Vernal Pools and Sag Ponds

- Maintain ecological process/hydrologic vitality of pools and ponds
 - Monitor ecological factors, define habitat characteristics for possible restoration
 - Determine role of livestock
 - Eliminate non-native species

Research Management

- **Goal:** Conduct research to improve understanding, management and protection of resources and to further scientific knowledge of those resources
- **Objectives:**
 - Prioritize research
 - Incorporate scientific community review
 - Outreach and support
 - Data retrieval and storage
 - Proposal evaluation and authorization

Grazing

Scoping Comments

- Continue grazing as a means to control invasive species and to continue historic use
- Grazing should be “subordinate” to natural resource protection and only used if it actively benefits native species
- Eliminate or phase out all grazing

Grazing

Alternatives considered but dismissed

- Convert Section 15 Leases to Free Use Permits
 - Issuing a different type of authorization for grazing would conflict with the allowable reasons for cancelling an existing grazing lease
- Authorize all livestock grazing in the Monument under Section 15 leases
 - Conflicts with a 1996 BLM decision to accept relinquishment of the permitted grazing use on these specific allotments and then designate those lands as available for livestock grazing for the purposes of vegetation management to meet resource objectives other than the production of livestock forage

Grazing

Preferred Alternative

- Objective (Long-Term) of Preferred Alternative:
 - Utilize livestock grazing only as a vegetation management tool, which meets objectives other than the production of livestock forage
- *Other Alternatives:*
 - *Continue the existing livestock grazing for both purposes*
 - *Remove livestock grazing for all purposes*
 - *Improve opportunities for livestock grazing in areas where it is an allowable use which utilizes livestock forage and continue livestock grazing in areas where it is used as a vegetation management tool*

Grazing

Preferred Alternative

- Initially designate lands as “available/unavailable” as per the map
- Upon receiving any voluntary relinquishment of permitted grazing use from a Section 15 lease, the Authorized Officer will re-evaluate whether livestock grazing is in the best interest of achieving the land use plan goals. All or part of the relinquished permitted grazing use will be re-designated as “available for livestock grazing, but only for the purpose of vegetation management” and made available to qualified applicants. Should the Authorized Officer examine and document that continued livestock use of all or part of that forage allocation would not be compatible with achieving land use plan management goals and objectives, that forage allocation will be re-designated as “unavailable for any livestock grazing”

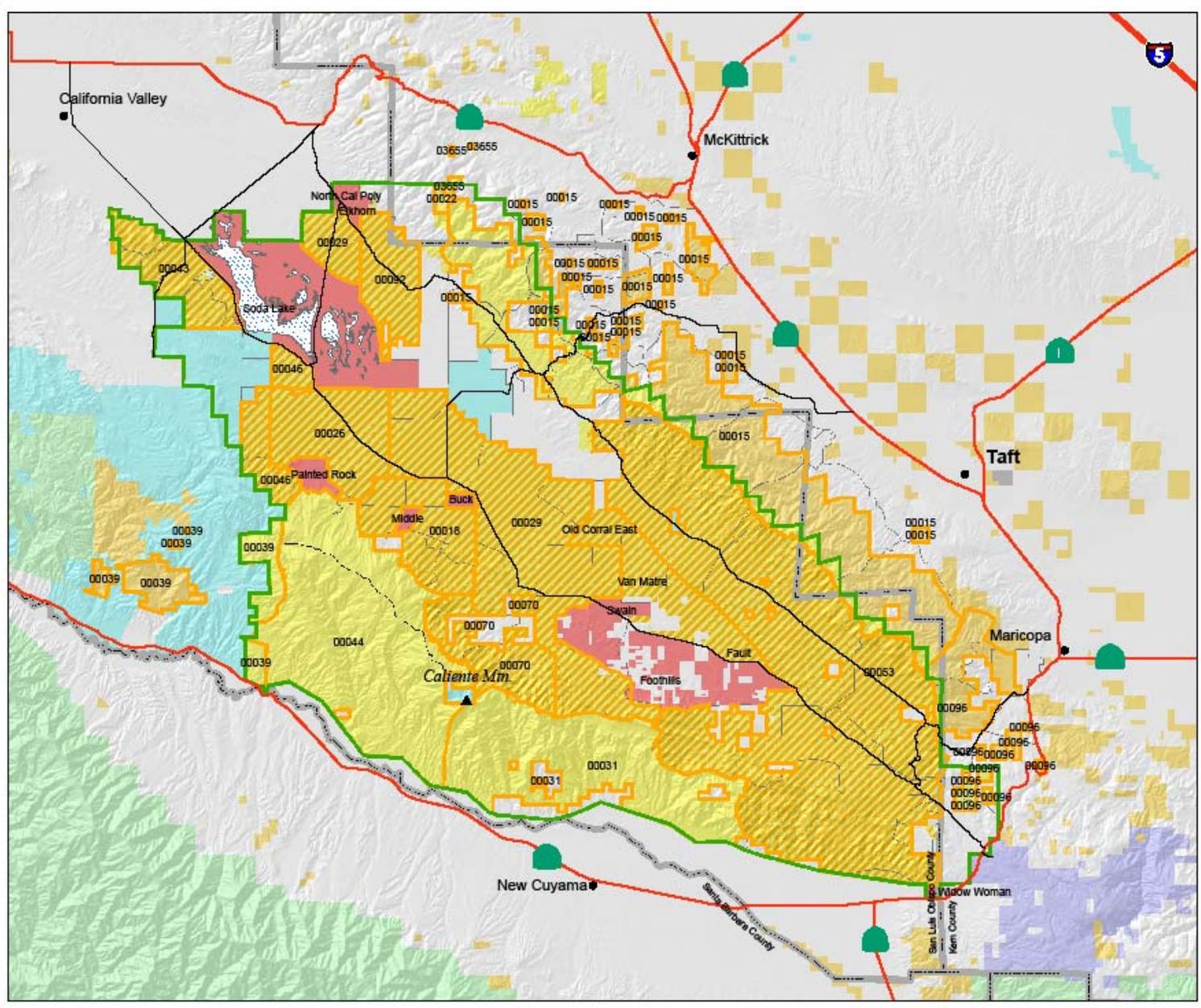
Map 2-X

Alternative 2 and 3:
Livestock Grazing

Bureau of Land Management
Bakersfield Field Office
Carrizo Plain National Monument
Resource Management Plan

Legend

-  Carrizo Boundary
 -  BKFO Grazing Allotments
 -  Pastures
 -  Unavailable
 -  Available, Only Veg. Mgmt.
 -  Available
- Land Status**
-  Bureau of Land Management
 -  Forest Service
 -  US Fish and Wildlife Service
 -  State Lands
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 -  Private/Other



Grazing

- Meet both Rangeland Health Standards and Carrizo Specific Objectives
- Apply Rangeland Health Guidelines and Carrizo Specific Guidelines which are derived from the Conservation Target Table and modified through an adaptive management process

Fire

Scoping Comments

- Many native plants and animals adapted to low-intensity fire
- Use naturally occurring fire and prescribed fire to help restore ecosystems
- Implement fuel reduction to reduce wildfire intensity
- Fire suppression protocols must be consistent with protection of monument's resources

Fire

Wildland Fire Suppression

- Apply the appropriate management response to wildland fire using the following assumptions:
 - Actively suppress fires that threaten life, facilities or private property
 - Actively suppress fires that threaten fire-sensitive natural or cultural resources such as saltbush or other shrub communities and National Register properties
 - In other areas, apply a confine strategy, where fires are suppressed when they reach the nearest existing control feature such as a road

Fire

Prescribed Fire and Fuels Mgmt.

- Coordinate with biological specialists to utilize prescribed fire to contribute to native species restoration goals and noxious weed control. Treat up to 10,000 acres with prescribed fire each decade
- Reduce fuels adjacent to structures and other improvements, as well as along major travel corridors, to reduce the number of human caused ignitions. Treat up to 4,000 acres per decade with non-fire fuels treatment (mowing, clearance around structures)

Fire

Alternative Dismissed: Wildland Fire Use

- Use naturally occurring fire for resource benefits in pre-determined areas
 - Will be analyzed in Alternative 1 (for Caliente Mountain WSA only)
 - Wide scale implementation of Wildland Fire Use dismissed due to sensitive resources, proximity to private property and agency infrastructure
 - Appropriate management response using confine strategy allows flexibility for more hands-off suppression tactics where appropriate

Cultural Resources

- Scoping Comments:
 - Preserve archeological resources
 - Allow for traditional uses
 - Restore ranch complexes with historic value
- Management Goals:
 - Identify, protect and preserve prehistoric and historic resources
 - Provide opportunities for Native American traditional practice and access
 - Enhance opportunities for research, public education and awareness of sensitivity of heritage resources

Cultural Resources

Rock Art

- Painted Rock
 - Provide continued guided tours of Painted Rock
 - Require permit for non-guided visitor access to Painted Rock – Permit will contain information on proper preservation, use ethics, etc. Maximum of 25 visitors in rock alcove at one time. Night-time closure
 - Allow Native American access for traditional activities
- All Rock Art
 - No commercial photography of rock art
 - Develop rock art preservation plan in consultation with Native Americans
 - Prioritize patrol and monitoring

Other Alternatives: Varying levels of public access and protection/conservation– Including no public access

Cultural Resources

Public Education and Information Archiving

- Provide balance of both on-site and centralized cultural resource education opportunities
- On-site materials and displays would be compatible with Recreation Management Zone objectives
- Study feasibility of providing and expanded on-monument educational, archival storage and scientific research facility

Other alternatives: Varying levels of public access on-site/field displays and use of indoor facilities

Cultural Resources

At-Risk Archaeological Resources

- Restrict access and protect sites at high risk from human caused impacts
- Require permits for access containing protective stipulations and use ethics information
- Allow Native American pedestrian access for traditional activities

Rationale: Human disturbance is causing impacts to sites (not necessarily intentional). This would protect two known sites as well as additional sites if impacts are identified

Other alternative: Closure of all sites at risk

Cultural Resources

Ranching Equipment and Structures

- Retain selected historic equipment in place
- Retain buildings/structures with historic value. Only remove those that pose public safety hazard
- Emphasis on restoration and rehabilitation of significant historic resources

Other alternatives:

- Remove more buildings/structures and relocate more equipment from on-site to centralized location
- Manage in place in state of arrested decay (stabilization)

Mineral Resources

- Oil and Gas Leases - Current
 - No new leases
 - Existing leases maintain “valid existing rights”
 - Two oilfields containing both federal and private leases
 - 35,000 barrels of oil per year from 15 wells (also 27 shut-in wells on leases)
 - Current and new operations allowed to continue on pre-existing federal leases (with environmental safeguards)
 - BLM to encourage practices that recognize and protect the the objects of the Proclamation
- Solid Minerals
 - No existing or new solid minerals leases
 - Maintain ability to provide small borrow pit for minor administrative/ emergency use only

Mineral Resources

Private mineral estate

- 130,000 acres private (out of 250,000 acres total)
 - OXY/Vintage largest private minerals owner w/ 30,000 acres
 - Valid existing rights
 - Owners have right to reasonable access
 - BLM would conduct environmental review to minimize impacts to federal (and private) surface

Mineral Resources

Geophysical – Seismic operations

- Allowed throughout monument with restrictions based on protection of objects of proclamation
 - Vibroseis (“thumper trucks”) allowed only on existing roads
 - Small portable drill rigs may be allowed off-road in certain areas to drill shallow “shot holes” (small shallow holes, small amounts of buried explosives)
 - Geophones (receivers) – place using helicopter or on foot

Next Steps

- Team completes impact assessment (Early May 2008)
- Partner/BLM State Office review (May-June 2008)
- MAC briefing (early July 2008)
- BLM State Office and Partner managers briefing (Early July 2008)
- Washington Office review and briefing (Late July 2008)
- Document to printer (September 2008)
- Formal public comment period on Draft RMP (October-December 2008)
- Develop Proposed RMP which will incorporate responses to public comments on the draft document (January 2009 – late 2009)



Paleontology/Geology

Management Goals:

- Identify, protect and preserve paleontologic values and unique geologic features and examples of geologic processes pursuant to the Proclamation
- Enhance scientific, educational, and recreational opportunities pertinent to paleontologic and geologic resources

Public Education and Scientific Research

- Improve on-site educational opportunities of geologic/paleontologic resources with materials & displays that would be compatible with Recreation Management Zone objectives
- Inventory monument to identify and assess condition of significant resources and establish monitoring program
- Pursue field research of paleontologic and geologic resources using hand tools and mechanical equipment where site specific analysis shows that its use is necessary
- *Other alternative: Minimize on-site educational opportunities and focus displays at centralized location. Field research would be restricted using minimal tool*

Realty

Land Tenure

- Consolidate /acquire additional lands and mineral estate from willing sellers
- Direct acquisition priorities to areas with important biological and cultural resources

Realty Actions/Utility Corridors

- ROW Avoidance Area (ROWs discouraged & likely rejected). Wilderness Character Areas would be ROW exclusion
- Minimize new communication sites/work with lessees to move existing sites off-monument.
- Pursue relinquishment of existing unneeded ROWs
- Extinguish two existing utility corridors through monument
- Convert facilities to alt. energy and remove existing power line

Soil-Water-Air

Soil:

- Conserve/restore biological soil crusts
- Employ best management practices to reduce exposure of residents/visitors/employees to valley fever
- Assess soil resources for proper functioning condition & employ restoration actions where needed

Water:

- Maintain and enhance surface and subsurface water quality throughout monument
- Coordinate with appropriate agencies to protect water quality of off-monument sources (i. e. water entering Soda Lake)
- Assert water right reserved through proclamation

Air Quality:

- Reduce dust along main BLM access routes near public use sites
- Conform with all local/state/federal air quality regulations