

Executive Summary

ES.1 Background and Introduction

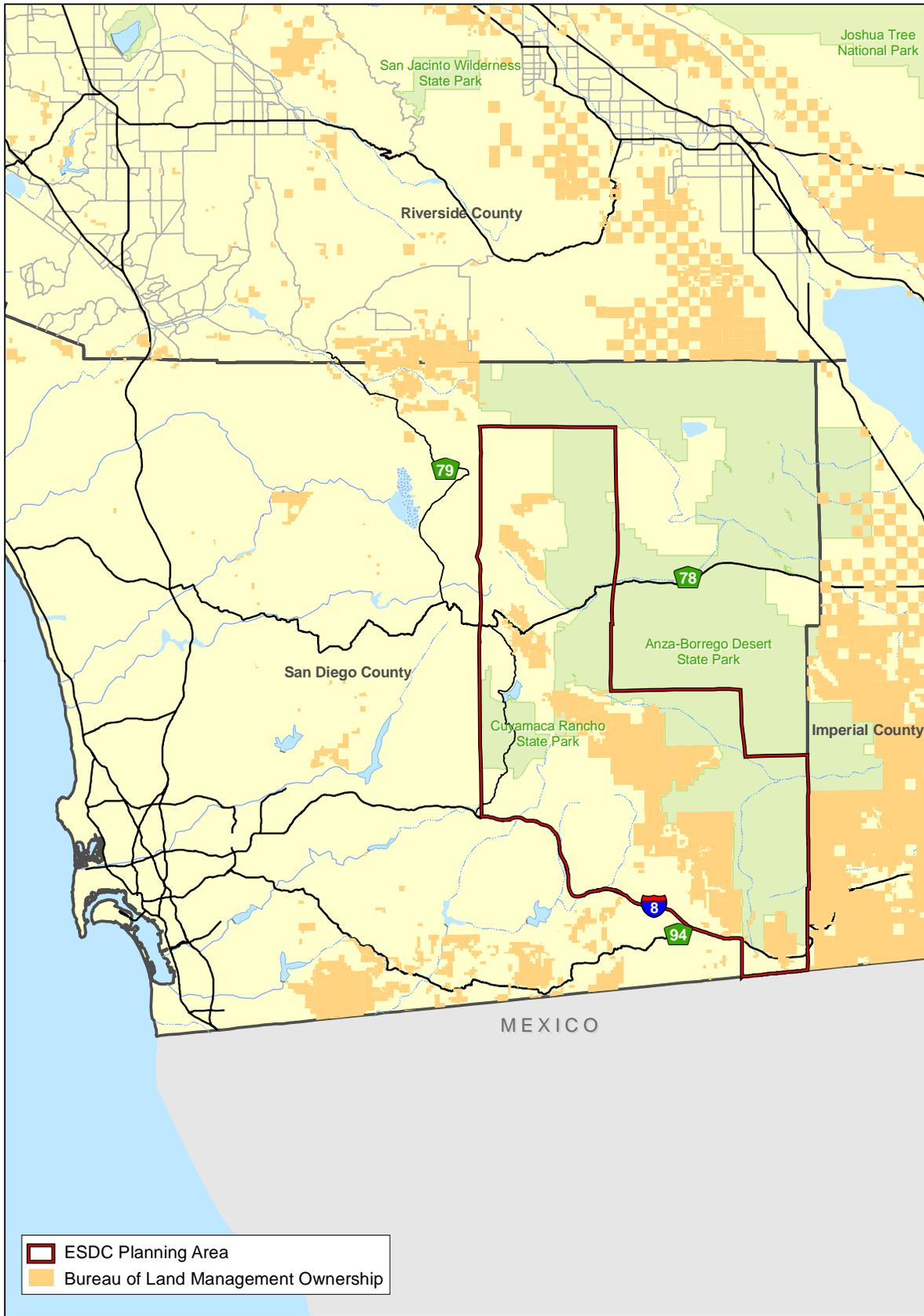
A new Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Eastern San Diego County (ESDC) Planning Area are being prepared by the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The purpose of the study is to update planning decisions based on changes in circumstances and policies since the current land use plan decisions were adopted.

The Planning Area contains 103,303 acres of public land (Figure ES-1). It spans diverse lands, with a range of environments from pine forests to palm oases overlooking desert basins.

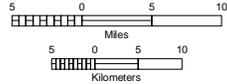
The main goal and purpose of this study is to provide guidance in the management of the lands and resources administered by the El Centro Field Office in eastern San Diego County that will achieve the following:

- address conflicts between motorized, mechanized, and non-motorized/non-mechanized recreationists;
- protect sensitive natural and cultural resources from impacts due to recreational use, livestock grazing, and other land uses;
- provide guidance for renewable energy development; and
- address other planning issues raised during the scoping process.

Other objectives include contributing to groundwater recharge and providing additional recreational opportunities within the Planning Area.



DRAFT
EI CENTRO FIELD OFFICE
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 Bureau of Land Management
EI Centro Field Office
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FIGURE ES-1: Planning Area

The Bureau of Land Management makes no warranties, implied or expressed, with respect to information shown on this map.

ES.2 Alternatives Evaluated

The following is a summary of components included in the five analyzed alternatives. Table ES-1 summarizes the management actions that vary by alternative. See Chapter 2 of this RMP for more detail.

ES.2.1 Alternative A (No Action)

Alternative A assumes the continuation of the present management of the Planning Area. Alternative A will serve as a baseline for most resources and land use allocations.

ES.2.2 Alternative B

Alternative B provides visitors with opportunities to experience natural and cultural resource values of the Planning Area. It proposes a combination of natural processes and active management techniques for resource and use management and it provides access through transportation network.

ES.2.3 Alternative C

Alternative C generally places emphasis on preservation of the Planning Area's natural and cultural resources through limited public use and discontinuation of grazing use. It focuses on natural processes and other unobtrusive methods for natural resource use and management. It proposes fewer motorized and developed recreation opportunities.

ES.2.4 Alternative D

Alternative D generally provides more opportunities for development such as renewable energy, transportation and utility rights-of-way (ROWs), and enhanced recreational opportunities (including motorized use).

ES.2.5 Alternative E (Preferred)

Alternative E represents BLM's preferred alternative for management of each resource and resource use, and provides for a balance between authorized resource use and the

protection and long-term sustainability of sensitive resources. It allows visitation and development within the Planning Area while ensuring that resource protection is not compromised. It is generally managed with decisions that have a greater balance of multiple uses. This alternative could be identical to one of the other alternatives presented or could be a combination of features from all of the other alternatives.

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
VEGETATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT					
Cooperate with the Laguna-Moreno Demonstration in prescribed burning on BLM land.	X				
Allow prescribed burning on a case-by-case basis.		X	X	X	X
Prohibit removal of trees in Buck Canyon, Chariot Canyon, Oriflamme Canyon, and McCain Valley areas	X				
Prohibit removal of native standing trees, alive or dead, with the exception of fire management, health and human safety, or disease control.		X	X	X	X
Remove tamarisk using mechanical and herbicide applications following BLM policy on minimum tools in Wilderness.		X		X	X
Remove tamarisk by mechanical means. Herbicides will not be used on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area for tamarisk removal.			X		
Limit the introduction of non-native plants through an education program partnered with equestrian recreational users, off-highway-vehicle (OHV) users, and other recreational users.		X	X	X	X
Protect riparian habitat throughout the Planning Area by excluding livestock grazing, redirecting routes, and requiring permits to collect plants from riparian areas.	X				
Riparian areas would be avoidance areas for all commercial and non-commercial surface disturbance activities.		X		X	X
Riparian areas would be exclusion areas for all commercial and non-commercial surface disturbance activities.			X		

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
VEGETATION RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
Perform revegetation projects that promote riparian area proper functioning condition and recruitment of oaks in uplands adjacent to riparian areas.		X	X	X	X
Develop partnerships with adjacent landowners, local agencies, state agencies, and federal agencies to manage habitat, conduct restoration activities, develop educational material, and provide interpretation of vegetation.		X	X	X	X
Rehabilitation priority would be given to riparian areas, desert fan palm oases, oak woodlands, and desert wash, habitats that support Special Status Species and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).		X	X	X	X
VEGETATIVE USE AUTHORIZATIONS					
Prohibit removal of trees in Buck Canyon, Chariot Canyon, Oriflamme Canyon, and McCain Valley Areas.	X				
Prohibit removal of native standing trees alive or dead with the exception of fire management, health and human safety or disease control.		X	X	X	X
In McCain Valley area, allow wood gathering for campfires only where posted.	X				
Allow gathering of dead, downed wood for personal use only.		X		X	X
Prohibit collection of dead, downed wood for personal use.			X		
Free use, without permit, of culturally important plants may be granted for traditional cultural gathering of vegetation by Native Americans. All other vegetation collecting will be on a case-by-case basis by permit. Restrict collection of plant materials to those allowable under the California Native Plant Protection Act. Consideration for collection by educational facilities, botanical gardens, and public institutions would be given priority.		X		X	X
Free use, without permit, of culturally important plants may be granted for traditional cultural gathering of vegetation by Native Americans. No commercial vegetation collection will be permitted. All other collection is on a case-by-case basis.			X		

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
WILDLIFE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT					
Continue management under Management Framework Plan (MFP) and Interim Measures such as prohibiting removal of trees and snags used as raptor perches, prohibiting new intensive development in oak groves, and protecting riparian habitat.	X				
Protect the habitat of sensitive wildlife species throughout the Planning Area (BLM sensitive).	X				
Maintain current wildlife waters through cooperation with California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and volunteer contributions.	X				
Maintain current wildlife waters through CDFG and volunteer contributions. Consider construction of new wildlife waters on a case-by-case basis, in coordination with CDFG.		X		X	X
Maintain current wildlife waters through CDFG and volunteer contributions. No construction of new wildlife waters.			X		
Provide 15 animal unit months (AUMs) for mule deer at their present population of about 100 deer over 38 square miles in the McCain Valley area.	X				
Conduct prescribed burns to benefit wildlife habitat		X	X	X	X
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES MANAGEMENT					
Protect sensitive plant species in the Julian and Oriflamme areas by prohibiting the use of herbicides when modifying fuel breaks to reduce visual impact. Determine if the opportunity exists to enhance the habitat of sensitive plants in conjunction with fire management.	X				
Protect the habitat of sensitive plants throughout the planning area.	X				
Require surface disturbance activities to avoid or minimize impacts and mitigate for residual impacts to all special status species habitat. Mitigation would be in the form of habitat restoration or acquisition.		X			X
Require surface disturbance activities to avoid adverse impacts to special status species habitat.			X		
Require surface disturbance activities to avoid or minimize impacts and mitigate residual impacts to federally listed species only. Mitigation would be in the form of habitat restoration or acquisition.				X	

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
Do not allow commercial or personal collection of special status species. Allow research collection by permit only.		X	X	X	X
Follow prescriptions in recovery plans for federally-listed species.		X	X	X	X
Limit motorized use through incorporation of seasonal closure of designated access routes, as appropriate, in sensitive areas, such as critical habitat or recovery areas.		X			X
Critical habitat and recovery areas would be closed to motorized use.			X		
Allow motorized use of access routes within sensitive areas, such as critical habitat and recovery areas.				X	
VISUAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ALLOCATIONS					
Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I (acres)	62,296	62,296	62,296	62,296	62,296
VRM Class II (acres)	40,758	41,237	41,961	13,720	32,875
VRM Class III (acres)	0	724	0	0	724
VRM Class IV (acres)	0	0	0	27,038	0
SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS					
WILDERNESS AND WILDERNESS PLANNING AREA MANAGEMENT					
Install informational kiosks at trailheads but do not improve access.		X	X		
Expand access by improving staging areas and providing informational kiosks at wilderness trailheads				X	X
Continued monitoring and signing and restoration	X	X	X	X	X
Continue to manage WSA under BLM's interim management policy until Congress designates as wilderness or releases from WSA status	X	X	X	X	X
Acquire in holdings from willing owners.					
Perform restoration treatments where damage has occurred or where it will reduce vehicle incursions.					
Manage the Table Mountain and In-Ko-Pah Mountain ACECs for biological and cultural values		X	X	X	X
Acquire in holdings from willing owners.					
Perform restoration treatments where damage has occurred or where it will reduce vehicle incursions.					

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS (CONT.)					
AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN ALLOCATIONS (ACRES)					
In-Ko-Pah ACEC	22,186	9,318	23,020	8,508	9,318
Table Mountain ACEC	4,293	4,686	5,704	4,293	4,686
Total ACEC	26,479	14,004	28,724	12,801	14,004
LIVESTOCK GRAZING					
LIVESTOCK GRAZING ALLOCATIONS (ACRES)					
Available	63,498	24,211	0	63,498	0
Unavailable	39,805	79,902	103,303	39,805	103,303
Total Acres	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT					
Conduct livestock use and associated management practices in a manner consistent with other multiple-use needs and objectives to ensure that the health of rangeland resources is preserved or improved so that they are productive for all rangeland values. Where needed, improve public rangeland ecosystems to meet objectives.	X	X		X	
Authorize and maintain range improvement projects in accordance with grazing regulations and policies.	X	X		X	
Reseed eroding sites in the Oriflamme land treatment area with native species, or allow natural revegetation. Install erosion control structures where desirable.	X				
Do not authorize a new allotment in the San Ysidro Mountain area, and do not authorize ephemeral grazing use. Monitor for livestock trespass, and take appropriate action to terminate trespass if it occurs.	X				
Establish the season of use for the expanded San Felipe Allotment as November 1 through June 30. Do not renew if the present lessee relinquishes the least. (This action is complete.)	X	X ¹		X ¹	
Establish a season of use for the Banner Queen Allotment based on further studies of the vegetative development of key species.	X	X ¹		X ¹	
Establish a season of use on the Vallecito Allotment and Canebrake Allotment as November 1 through June 30.	X	X ¹		X ¹	

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
LIVESTOCK GRAZING (CONT.)					
LIVESTOCK GRAZING MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
Establish a season of use from about March 1 through October 31 for the portion of the Tierra Blanca Allotment located in the McCain Valley.	X	X ¹		X ¹	
No Grazing—eliminate all allotments with the exception of vegetation management prescriptions.			X		X
Establish a season of use from November 1 through June 30 on the In-Ko-Pah Allotment.	X	X ¹		X ¹	
Terminate the McCain Valley Allotment.	X				
Eliminate all grazing from Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat by adjusting allotment boundaries to exclude critical habitat.		X		X	
Prohibit domestic sheep grazing within nine miles of Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat to avoid disease transmission.		X	X	X	X
Adjust allotments to exclude grazing from the OHV use area in Lark Canyon and Table Mountain ACEC.		X			
Adjust the boundaries of the Lark Canyon OHV area to minimize conflicts between OHV users and grazing permittees. The boundary of the McCain Valley allotment (In-Ko-Pah) and the boundary of the Lark Canyon OHV area are currently in close proximity, and as a result, OHV users routinely enter the grazing allotment.				X	
MINERAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT					
LOCATABLE MINERALS					
In areas of sensitive resource values, mining claims should be promptly examined and validity determination made.	X				
Propose withdrawal of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC from mineral entry.	X		X		X
Propose withdrawal of the Table Mountain ACEC from mineral entry.	X		X		X
Propose withdrawal of critical habitat from mineral entry.			X		
All critical habitat and ACECs would be available for mineral entry under the Mining Law, subject to Section 7 and Section 106 consultations.		X		X	
Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) subject to IMP.		X		X	X

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
MINERAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
LOCATABLE MINERALS (CONT.)					
WSAs proposed for withdrawal from mineral entry.			X		
Wilderness Areas (WAs) are withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws.	X	X	X	X	X
LEASABLE MINERALS					
On the public lands within the Agua Caliente and Jacumba potential geothermal resources areas, permit geothermal exploration under a Notice of Intent.	X				
Critical habitat located within ACECs would be closed. The remainder of the critical habitat outside of the ACECs would be subject to no surface occupancy.		X			
Critical habitat and ACECs would be closed.			X		X
Open all critical habitat and ACECs, subject to Section 7 and Section 106 consultations.				X	
WSAs closed.		X	X		X
WSAs subject to IMP.				X	
WAs are withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws.	X	X	X	X	X
SALABLE MINERALS					
Do not issue mineral sales or free use permits for the canebrake Canyon/Sawtooth Mountains/Vallecito Valley areas. The material sale pit on the north side of Table Mountain should be investigated, and a determination made as to the desirability of future use.	X				
The material sale pit on the north side of Table Mountain should be investigated, and a determination made as to the desirability of future use.	X				
WSAs closed.		X	X		X
WSAs subject to the IMP.				X	
WAs are withdrawn from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws.	X	X	X	X	X
Critical habitat located within ACECs would be closed.		X			
Critical habitat and ACECs would be closed.			X		X

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
MINERAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
SALABLE MINERALS (CONT.)					
Open all critical habitat and ACECs, subject to Section 7 and Section 106 consultations.				X	
RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA ALLOCATIONS					
Boulevard Destination SRMA (acres)	n/a	43,019	43,019	43,019	43,019
Julian Destination SRMA (acres)	n/a	15,180	15,180	15,180	15,180
Sawtooth Destination SRMA (acres)	n/a	45,104	n/a	45,104	45,104
Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA (acres)	n/a	n/a	45,104	n/a	n/a
ERMA (acres)	n/a	0	0	0	0
Total BLM RMA (acres)	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303
RECREATION MANAGEMENT					
Limit group size for Table Mountain to 12 visitors.		X	X	X	
Reseed and fence off eroding sites in the McCain Valley campgrounds and restrict off-road vehicle use in campgrounds as decided in the 1979 McCain Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP); allow other sites to revegetate naturally. Install erosion control devices in campground areas where necessary, but protect archaeological resources from construction activities in Cottonwood Campground. Reseed only with native species.	X				
Take steps to control erosion on vehicle routes now closed to use east of the McCain Valley Road. Reseed "Competition Hill"; allow natural revegetation in other areas. Install erosion control structure on "Competition Hill" as needed. Utilize native species for reseeding.	X				
Collect Recreation Use Permit (RUP) fees at Cottonwood and Lark Canyon campgrounds under the authority of Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA).	X	X	X	X	X
Where warranted by increased recreation demands, expand the RUP fee program to additional BLM-administered lands. The development of new and expanded RUP sites must support stated Recreation Management Objectives and Desired Outcomes, and would be contingent upon the completion of publicly reviewed recreation activity-plans that document the expected long-term compatibility with the BLM's multiple-use mission.	X	X		X	X

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
RECREATION MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
Collect Special Recreation Permits (SRP) fees for commercial activities and organized group events on a case-by-case basis to provide for a wide range of recreation opportunities within the Planning Area.	X	X	X	X	X
To the greatest extent possible, construct and modify recreation facilities and outdoor developed areas so they are accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and in conformance with relevant building standards, accessible outdoor program guidance, and program regulations.	X	X	X	X	X
Maintain, install, and improve informational and interpretive kiosks and signs at the main points of access and interest throughout the field office. Signage should focus on informing visitors of applicable regulations and sustainable outdoor recreation ethics.	X	X	X	X	X
Protect at-risk cultural resources from recreational damage as needed throughout the field office. Protection measures could include, but are not limited to fencing, signage, and trail realignments, restorations, and use limitations.	X	X	X	X	X
Increase the Planning Area's Recreation and Visitor Services staff to provide for basic safety and resource protection and the enhancement of the recreation experiences.		X	X	X	X
Collaborate with local agencies and organizations to identify and designate a sufficient number of base camps throughout the Planning Area for authorized SRP activities.					
Develop and enhance partnerships through the BLM volunteer program for the purposes of improving recreational opportunities, experiences, and benefits.		X	X		
Enhance and expand the Planning Area's interpretive and outreach programs for the purposes of public education and resource protection.			X	X	
Limit the length of stay for overnight camping on BLM-administered lands to 14 days within any 28-day period. After 14 days, visitors must move to another campsite at least 25 miles away.	X	X	X	X	

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
RECREATION MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
Currently there are 38,690 acres allocated in the McCain Valley National Cooperative Land and Wildlife Management Area in accordance with the McCain Valley Recreational Area Management Plan (RAMP 1979). This RAMP will be reviewed for consistency with approved RMP and revised accordingly.		X	X	X	X
OHV MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATIONS (ACRES)					
Open	0	0	0	0	0
Closed	62,296	62,296	88,775	62,296	62,296
Limited	41,007	41,007	14,528	41,007	41,007
Total Acres	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303	103,303
ROUTES OF TRAVEL					
Designate all areas within Class M for vehicle use as "limited to existing routes of travel." All existing routes are open unless posted closed by BLM. Designate all areas within Class L for vehicle use as "limited to approved routes of travel," with the exception of Class L portion of the In-Ko-Pah Mountain ACEC north of the Sacatone Springs Road.	X				
WAs and WSAs would be designated as closed areas for mechanized and motorized vehicle use. Travel within the rest of the Planning Area will be limited to designated routes.		X	X	X	X
Non-motorized routes of travel would be restored.		X	X	X	X
Designate the Class L portion of the In-Ko-Pah Mountains ACEC north of Lost Valley as "closed to vehicle use.	X				
Lark Canyon Recreation Zone, routes limited to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) 40" or less would be 10 feet wide, or 5 feet on each side of center.		X	X	X	
Designate the Sawtooth Mountains WSA as limited to approved routes of travel for grazing and administrative purposes.	X				
Designate the Carrizo Gorge WSA as "closed" to vehicle use.	X				
Motorized vehicles may be allowed to pull off 300 feet from the edge of a designated route.	X			X	
Motorized vehicles may be allowed to pull off 100 feet from the edge of a designated route.		X			

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
ROUTES OF TRAVEL (CONT.)					
Motorized vehicles may be allowed to pull off 25 feet from the edge of a designated route.			X		X
Route Decisions based on importance for recreation, cultural, and biological.		X			
Route decisions based on cultural and biological resources.			X		
Route decisions based on importance of the route.				X	
BLM roads will be inspected and maintained on a periodic basis		X	X	X	X
IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL DECISIONS—ROUTES OF TRAVEL (MILES)					
Motorized	108.55	92.75	77.90	108.55	92.75
Non-motorized	82.55	98.45	113.3	82.55	98.45
Total Mileage	191.20	191.20	191.20	191.20	191.20
LANDS AND REALTY MANAGEMENT					
LAND TENURE					
Potential disposal (acres)	1,715	1,080	0	1,080	490
Acquisitions	Lands and interests in lands (including easements) would be acquired from willing sellers on a case-by-case basis. Emphasis would be on protecting sensitive wildlife and archaeological resources; facilitating public recreation programs; and consolidating WAs and WSAs. Purchase and donations are key mechanisms for land acquisition.				
LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS					
Leases, Permits, and Easements	Considered and authorized on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand consistent with exclusion and avoidance areas identified by alternative.				
Rights of Way (ROW)	Considered and authorized on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand consistent with exclusion and avoidance areas identified by alternative.				
Communication Sites (number)	2	Considered and authorized on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand consistent with exclusion and avoidance areas identified by alternative.			
Renewable Energy	Considered and authorized on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand consistent with exclusion and avoidance areas identified by alternative.				

**TABLE ES-1
SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL DECISIONS THAT VARY BY ALTERNATIVE
(CONT.)**

Potential Decision	A	B	C	D	E
LANDS AND REALTY MANAGEMENT (CONT.)					
LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS (CONT.)					
WAs and WSAs are exclusion areas	X			X	X
ACECs and VRM Class II are avoidance areas.		X	X		X
Critical habitat is an avoidance area.		X			X
Critical habitat is an exclusion area. Quino recovery area is avoidance.			X		
No exclusion or avoidance areas except WAs and WSAs. No adverse modification for critical habitats.				X	
Wind energy development would be subject to best management practices, as outlined in the national wind energy policy or as updated.		X	X	X	X
WITHDRAWALS					
Existing Withdrawal–WAs	48,333	48,333	48,333	48,333	48,333
Existing Withdrawal–Public Land Order ² (PLOs ²)	26,696	26,696	26,696	26,696	26,696
Proposed Withdrawal–BLM only ³	26,479	0	26,102	0	9,471
UTILITY CORRIDOR					
Number of corridors/miles	1/1,920	1/980	1/980	1/980	1/980

¹ The allotment would continue to be managed on a case-by-case basis and permitted on a case-by-case basis pending rangeland health assessments.

² These lands are withdrawn from application under certain non-mineral public land laws and from disposition under the homestead, desert land, and scrip selection laws, and excludes overlap with WAs.

³ Proposed withdrawals are based on the mineral entry withdrawals identified in Table 2-14 and exclude overlap with WAs. These areas do overlap the PLO boundaries, as the PLOs do not withdraw lands from mineral entry.

ES.3 Affected Environment

Climate and Weather

The Coast/Peninsular Ranges extend from north to southeast through the Planning Area. Along the western side of the Peninsular Ranges the climate is dominated by the Pacific Ocean. Warm winters, cool summers, small daily and seasonal temperature ranges, and a high relative humidity are characteristic of this area. With increasing distance from the ocean the maritime influence decreases. The mountainous areas, which are well protected from the ocean experience warmer summers and winters cold

enough to allow snowfall. In the areas east of the mountains, a continental desert regime prevails.

Temperatures data from Julian show average monthly temperatures ranging between maximums of 52° to 86° and minimums of 35° to 60° Fahrenheit. Temperatures data from the Borrego Desert Park show average monthly temperatures ranging between maximums of 69° to 107° and minimums of 44° to 75° Fahrenheit. Temperatures data from Cuyamaca show average monthly temperatures ranging between maximums of 51° to 85° and minimums of 29° to 55° Fahrenheit. The average annual precipitation is 24, 6, and 33 inches at Julian, Borrego Desert Park, and Cuyamaca, respectively. The majority of rain falls in November–March.

Soil Resources

The Planning Area contains a wide variety of soil types, as might be expected in a zone which spans the transition from low desert to coastal mountains. This variety of types is the result of diversity in parent material, relief, climate, living organisms, and age of the soils.

The majority of Planning Area falls in a moderate erosion class. Approximately 40 percent of the lands consist of a slope of 50 percent or greater. Despite the high incidence of steep slopes, soil loss due to water erosion is not of major significance because of low annual surface runoff and the high percent of ground cover, which averages 48 percent throughout the Planning Area. Most erosion problems are the result of human disturbances associated with use of the land for grazing and recreation.

Twenty-four soil series composed of thirty different soil types are found on BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area.

Water Resources

There are no major lakes or reservoirs in the Planning Area. However, there are several small retention dams, built for the purpose of supplying water to livestock and wildlife. There are several springs in the Planning Area, which produce intermittent flow.

The Planning Area falls within portions of the South Coast and the Colorado River Hydrologic Regions. There are several groundwater basins within the Planning Area, however they are considered to be “low use basins”.

Water use on BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area consists of livestock use and campground use. The natural springs and some developed springs are important sources of water for wildlife, including both game and non-game animals. Grazing on the McCain Valley allotment is not occurring at this time since the springs are currently dry. The campgrounds have several water spigots which are supplied by groundwater pumped by windmill.

Vegetative Communities

The Eastern San Diego County Planning Area is bordered by the Colorado Desert on the East and by the coniferous forest of the Laguna Mountains on the west. Elevation escalates dramatically from east to west in the Planning Area. These sharp elevation changes make the Planning Area a highly diverse area for plant life.

BLM lands within the Eastern San Diego Planning Area harbor many different types of vegetation communities: mixed riparian woodland, oak woodland, desert wash, semi-desert chaparral, desert fan palm oasis, mixed conifer woodland, and enriched desert scrub.

Wildland Fire Ecology and Management

The Planning Unit is situated in a transition zone between two highly flammable fuel types (chamise/semi-desert chaparral and desert scrub communities). Combined with a scattered heavy grass component and dry climatic conditions, this fuel type is characterized by extreme fire behavior potential throughout most of the year. The potential for large fire occurrence is a constant threat for private communities in the area. Past fire history has shown that vegetation fires that become well established in the heavier chaparral fuel types under strong west wind conditions can usually make significant runs down into the desert canyons. An example was the Pines Fire in 2002. It was the largest west-wind driven fire in San Diego County history, at the time, and consumed over 61,000 acres, burning numerous homes in Julian and Ranchita, and 15,000 acres of BLM land. A trend in fire starts due to increased urbanization along the Interstate 8 corridor, in McCain Valley and the Julian/Banner Grade area is a major

concern to fire agencies. The mountain ranges in eastern San Diego County are continually hit with lightning during the summer months when monsoonal flows move up from Mexico.

Wildlife

There are a complex variety of wildlife habitats throughout the Planning Area. An abundance of wildlife exists within the Planning Area including several sensitive and federally threatened species. The area serves as a migratory corridor for numerous species of neotropical migrant birds.

The priority wildlife identified by the BLM for management includes raptors, non-game migratory birds, bats, and game animals.

Special Status Species

USFWS has identified ten federally listed species as occurring within the Planning Area: Peninsular bighorn sheep, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL), arroyo toad, quino checkerspot butterfly, Laguna Mountains skipper, unarmored threespine stickleback, Mexican flannelbush, Nevin's barberry, and San Bernardino blue grass. Unarmored threespine stickleback, Mexican flannelbush, Nevin's barberry, and San Bernardino blue grass are not currently known to occur on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area, and there is little to no habitat present to support these species.

There are six state listed species found within the Planning Area: barefoot gecko, Swainson's hawk, Laguna Mountains aster, SWFL, least Bell's vireo, Peninsular bighorn sheep.

BLM sensitive plant species identified in the Planning Area are Jacumba milk-vetch (*Astragalus douglasii* var. *perstrictus*), delicate clarkia (*Clarkia delicata*), Tecate tarplant (*Deinandra floribunda*), Laguna Mountains alumroot (*Heuchera brevistaminea*), San Diego sunflower (*Hulsea californica*), mountain springs bush lupine (*Lupinus excubitus* var. *medius*), southern jewelflower (*Streptanthus campestris*), and Parry's tetracoccus (*Tetracoccus dioicus*). BLM sensitive wildlife species identified within the Planning Area

are chuckwalla (*Sauromalus obesus*), gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*), small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), long-eared myotis (*Myotis evotis*), and Townsends's western big-eared bat (*Plecotus townsendii*).

Cultural Resources

The prehistory of eastern San Diego County, California may be divided into four major temporal periods: Early Man, Paleoamerican, Archaic, and Late Prehistoric. These time periods have regional expression through various regional archaeological complexes or archaeological cultures. A very early time of human occupation is posited for the Greater Southwest. The archaeological complex associated with this time frame is called the Malpais Complex. The earliest part of the Paleoamerican Period in the region is occupied by the Fluted Point Tradition. The Fluted Point Tradition in the far West contains many of the artifact types found in the assemblage of the San Dieguito/Lake Mojave Complex: flaked stone crescents, graters, perforators, scrapers, and choppers. The Archaic period is characterized by two archaeological complexes. The earliest is the Pinto complex (7000 to 4000 B.P.); the other is known as the Amargosa or Gypsum complex (4000 to 1500 B.P.). Beginning with the Pinto complex, there is an apparent shift to a more generalized economy and a gradually increased emphasis on the exploitation of plant resources. The Late Prehistoric period in the Colorado Desert begins at approximately 1500 B.P. (A.D. 500) and is referred to as the Patayan Pattern. Along the southern California coast, the period is characterized by the Cuyamaca Complex. Ethnographic groups and tribes historically located in the planning area include the Cahuilla, the Kumeyaay, and the Luiseño. Extensive Spanish exploration of southern California occurred began in 1540, with the first European settlement in 1769. Cattle ranching dominated the economy during the Mexican Period. Mining has been practiced sporadically or on a small scale since the major Julian gold rush of the 1870s. There are a number of historic trails within the Planning Area.

Paleontological Resources

Within the Planning Area are several rock units having high probability of paleontological resource occurrence, several rock units having moderate probability of paleontological occurrence, and several rock units having low probability of paleontological resource occurrence. The majority of the units having high probability of paleontological resource occurrence occur on State Parks land and BLM designated wilderness.

Visual Resources

Under the existing management situation all wilderness areas (WAs) and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) are managed as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I. Most other BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area are managed as Class II.

Special Designations

Within the Planning Area, Special Designations consist of two designated WAs, five WSAs, one National Scenic Trail, and two Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

Public Health and Safety

Public health and safety concerns consist of abandoned mines, hazardous (including landfills, mining and milling waste, and border issues).

Livestock Grazing

Nine grazing allotments are within the Planning Area, all classified as perennial-ephemeral. Only two of these allotments are in active use: McCain Valley – In-Ko-Pah and McCain Valley – Tierra Blanca for a total of 20,497 acres and 1,112 AUMs.

Lands and Realty

BLM manages a diverse combination of land and realty resources in the Planning Area, dealing with area allocation for utility corridors and communications, land tenure issues, land use authorizations, withdrawals, and renewable energy. Currently there is only one major utility ROW corridor traversing the Planning Area. There are three communication facilities occurring on two sites.

Mineral Resources

Locatables:

Within the Planning Area are three areas of known, historic, mineral development. These include the Julian District, the Metal Mountain District (located northwest of McCain Valley), and the Sacatone District located in the Sacatone Spring/Tule Mountain area

southeast of McCain Valley). All three mining districts include public land managed by the BLM. There are 77 mining claims recorded with the BLM in the Planning Area, 58 of which are on BLM-administered lands. No mining claims are located in BLM-managed WAs or WSAs.

BLM has classified 201,720 acres with moderate potential for the occurrence of metallic mineral resources, and 36,050 acres with high potential for metallic locatable minerals within the Planning Area. Of these lands, 53,210 acres of moderate potential and 28,550 acres of high potential are on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area. Most areas classified as having a high potential for occurrence of metallic mineral resources are on patented mining claims located principally in the Julian area.

BLM has classified 121,180 acres with moderate potential for the occurrence of nonmetallic/industrial mineral resources, and 7,400 acres with high potential for nonmetallic/industrial locatable minerals within the Planning Area. Of these lands, 44,250 acres of moderate potential and 4,530 acres of high potential are on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area.

Leasables:

There is no potential for oil, gas, coal, sodium, or potash resources in the Planning Area, or other solid leasable minerals. Three areas in the northern, central, and southern portions of the Planning Area have been classified as potentially valuable for geothermal resources because hot springs are present. Two of these areas, centering on Agua Caliente and Jacumba, are located on public lands. BLM has classified 80,240 acres classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal resources within the Planning Area. Of these lands, 22,040 acres classified as prospectively valuable for geothermal are present on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area.

Salables:

There are few historic sand and gravel sites present within the Planning Area, but currently no commercial activity. This lack of activity may be due to the poor accessibility of the Planning Area. High mineral potential exists in area of McCain Valley for a rock quarry but access is restricted.

Recreation Management

Opportunities exist within the planning unit for a wide variety of recreational uses at a low to moderate levels of intensity. Activities known to occur in the area include hunting, rock hounding, hiking, backpacking, sightseeing, target shooting, camping, equestrian, four-wheel drive touring, mountain biking, and off-road vehicle use.

Visitors that use BLM-administered public lands in the Planning Area for recreational pursuits are primarily from the surrounding communities within San Diego County and from the City of San Diego itself. Visitors who come to utilize the recreational opportunities within the Planning Area are represented by all age groups.

McCain Valley Recreation Area, in the southern portion of the Planning Area, receives the most visitation and consists of two developed campgrounds (vault toilets, water, picnic tables and fire rings), one OHV area for OHVs that are 40" wide or less, and two scenic overlooks.

Social and Economic

The County of San Diego is relatively large encompassing 2,727,000 acres. The Planning Area is generally very rural, it is sparsely populated with a few small towns or communities, and covers about 533,000 acres located in the eastern quarter of San Diego County (see Figure ES-1).

Within the 533,000-acre Planning Area the BLM has about 103,303 acres under its management. Therefore, the Planning Area represents about one-quarter of San Diego County and the acreage under BLM's control represents only one-seventh (about 13%) of the Planning Area or about 4 percent of the acreage within San Diego County.

The current population estimate of 13,742 residents for 2005 represented a small decrease (-0.4%) from the 13,794 residents reported by the 2000 U.S. Census. The number of households in the Planning Area as of January 2005 was 5,543, about 0.5 percent of the 1,061,027 households in San Diego County.

A substantial proportion of the Planning Area population was reported as White (86%). In addition, 10 percent were reported as multiple race, 3 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1 percent Black or African-American.

Substantial population growth is forecast for the Planning Area. Over the 30 year period of 2000 to 2030 the population of is expected to increase about 150 percent compared with a 37 percent increase in the population of the County. Employment growth for residents of the Planning Area is also expected to be very strong over the period rising 106 percent compared with a more modest 32 percent increase in employment within the County.

The Planning Area economy generates about \$215 million in gross regional product as measured by value added. The total output (sales) of the ESDC is approximately \$379 million and the total employee income is \$135 million. The \$379 million in output within the Planning Area supports approximately 4,400 jobs. The total value added per employee is approximately \$48,900.

The largest sector of the ESDC economy in terms of employment is Animal Production with a reported 564 jobs. Approximately, 12 percent of the employment for the ESDC Planning Area is in Animal Production. Transportation & Warehousing was the second largest employment sector with a reported 349 jobs.

The BLM and the Sonoran Institute have developed a very sophisticated economic profiling system (EPS) that enables very detailed analyses of economic and demographic trends, primarily at the county level and for larger areas. However, it has been clearly demonstrated in the preceding demographic discussion that the Planning Area represents a fairly small portion of the county in terms of land area, population, and employment. The same is true for the economic value of the goods and services that are produced with the Planning Area.

As a very general overview, the Planning Area may be defined as containing about 0.5 percent of the countywide population. It also generates about 0.25 percent of the jobs within the county, and about 0.2 percent of the county's regional product. The Planning Area is very rural, and the economy is relatively stagnant compared with the densely populated and dynamic economy of San Diego County. Therefore, it was determined by

CIC Research, Inc. that the EPS database would be somewhat misleading and inappropriate for general application in the analysis for the ESDC Draft Resource Management Plan (DRMP).

To produce the estimates of employment and the value of regional product, CIC developed a regional input-output (I-O) model for the Planning Area and for San Diego County. The regional I-O model was based on software and data provided by Impact Analysis for Planning (IMPLAN)/Pro. The value of the IMPLAN/Pro system coupled with CIC's experience and knowledge of the Planning Area was to provide a basis for measuring the size of key economic sectors of the Planning Area in terms of output, income, and employment. The I-O system also provided the ability to model the expected impact of exogenous changes in the Planning Area economy based on planning alternatives for the proposed regional master plan. The economic impacts were determined for each of the BLM-proposed planning alternatives for the Draft Resource Management Plan/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DRMP/EIS), focusing on the four programs with economic value in the Planning Area: livestock grazing, lands and realty, mineral resources, and recreation management.

Environmental Justice

The populations of Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians are not meaningfully greater in the Planning Area than the general population of San Diego County. However, there are Indian Reservations in Eastern San Diego County, in which the Indian population is meaningfully greater, than in the general population, as would be expected. There are six Indian Reservations within the Planning Area. Of these, five have resident populations: Campo, La Posta, Los Coyotes, Manzanita, and Santa Ysabel. These Indian communities can be characterized as low income and minority. At present, the BLM has no economic data focused on the economic status of these communities. The BLM has identified no other communities with a majority low income or minority population. However, the BLM assumes that there are small pockets of poverty scattered throughout the Planning Area. There are no available economic, sociological, or anthropological studies of these economically disadvantaged neighborhoods that might exist within the Planning Area.

ES.4 Impact Analysis Summary

Chapter 4 describes the potential effects from planning decisions. A quantitative analysis is included where possible; otherwise a qualitative discussion is included to describe potential impacts. These effects are summarized below.

Under implementation of Alternative A (No Action), the following effects are anticipated:

- **Air Quality.** Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no air quality impacts.
- **Soil Resources.** There is potential for erosion and compaction along routes of travel and continued surface disturbance in the existing campgrounds. However, the concentration of visitor use and their associated impacts to soils is normally preferred over allowing high levels of dispersed visitor use to continue impacting a wider area.

Erosion measures would be incorporated into projects on a case-by-case basis, and erosion would be minimized through the restoration of damaged riparian areas and the promotion of healthy native plant groundcover. Alternative A calls for reseeded eroding sites or allowing for natural revegetation in the Oriflamme land treatment site, the McCain Valley campgrounds, and "Competition Hill" and the installation of erosion control structures where desirable.

- **Water Resources.** Approved activities have the potential to result in a variety of effects to water resources including reducing disturbance to riparian waters; increasing sedimentation of surface waters; decreasing demands on surface and ground water, and conversely increasing the use of surface and ground water. Quality of groundwater could be affected by historic mineral and associated processing activities and illegal dumping or accidental spills. Restoration could result in the reduction of any input of biological contaminants into the groundwater.

- **Vegetative Resources.** Some BLM Land Use Plan (LUP) decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through vegetation protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to vegetation.
- **Wildlife Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through habitat protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to habitat.
- **Special Status Species.** Alternative A would allow current grazing practices and mineral entry within critical habitat found on BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area. This could result in effects to special status species. The action alternatives provide more protection measures for special status species, resulting in fewer impacts.
- **Cultural Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which involve ground-disturbing actions could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of cultural resources, particularly if the resource was subsurface and previously undetected. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetectable resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of cultural resources through trampling of surface artifacts and features. Range and wildlife improvement projects could concentrate livestock and wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to cultural resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of cultural resources in the planning process and provide for additional protections and would therefore have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Paleontological Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which would involve excavation or ground disturbance could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate

resources. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetected resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate through trampling of exposed deposits.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources in the planning process and would have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Visual Resources.** WAs and WSAs are classified as VRM Class I, which is the most restrictive class. Alternatives A and C are identical in their designation of lands to Class II and would not designate any acres to Class III or IV. Alternative B designates similar lands to Class II with the exception that the Cottonwood and Lark Canyon Campgrounds and Airport Mesa are designated as Class III lands. Alternative B does not designate any lands to Class IV. As the ACECs in Alternatives B and C are larger in acreage than Alternative A, Alternatives B and C provide the highest protection for scenic quality values, followed closely by Alternative A.
- **Special Designations.** The primary potential impacts to the two designated WAs within the Planning Area may occur due to the use of motor vehicles and heavy motorized equipment for fire suppression and construction and maintenance of structures as well as the structures themselves. WA values can be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts from construction and maintenance activities would result from dust emissions and noise. Potential short-term impacts on naturalness and solitude could result from dust emissions and noise related to vehicle use and access to private lands in the area. Construction and maintenance of wildlife and range improvement facilities (e.g., wildlife waters) could degrade values for which these WAs were designated. Livestock grazing, where established at the time of designation of the two WAs, shall be allowed to continue irrespective of impacts on the wilderness characteristic. The presence of livestock and associated presence of structures and ranchers would have an impact on the wilderness characteristic of naturalness. Approximately 21,204 acres of the Sawtooth Mountains WA and

approximately 5,293 acres of Carrizo Gorge WA are being grazed under Alternative A.

The primary potential impacts to the five WSAs within the Planning Area could occur from construction and maintenance of range and wildlife habitat improvement projects. WSA values could be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts could result from construction and maintenance activities, hunting activities or discharge of firearms, OHV use in and adjacent to WSAs and access to private in-holdings. No impacts are expected from mining, mineral leasing, or mineral sales activities.

Potential direct and indirect impacts to ACECs would result from the following management actions and LUP decisions: Vegetation treatments, range and wildlife habitat improvement projects, land use allocations, land tenure, construction-related activities, mineral development and leasing, recreation, OHV allocation of open areas, routes of travel, and military training. Beneficial impacts would occur from the protection of cultural resources and the protection and restoration of wildlife habitats.

- **Public Health and Safety.** Potential public health and safety issues in the Planning Area include abandoned mines, unexploded ordnance, international border issues, and hazardous materials. Inadvertent exposure to or encounters with any of these public health and safety hazards could result in serious injury or death.
- **Livestock Grazing.** Broad-scale vegetation management activities, such as prescribed fire, could temporarily reduce the forage base within grazing areas with the rate of recovery depending on the vegetation community burned, the hydrology, soil type, and intensity of the fire. Post-fire, forage quality, and palatability could increase due to the stimulation of vegetation. Range improvement projects (e.g., livestock and wildlife waters) would increase the amount of available water. Invasive species removal (e.g., tamarisk) could also increase the availability of surface water.

- **Lands and Realty**

- Land Tenure (Disposals, Acquisitions, and Recreation and Public Purposes [R&PPs])

Disposals would result in fewer acres available within the BLM transportation and access network.

Acquisition of lands through exchange, purchase, and donation improves management of natural resources through consolidation of federal landownership patterns; increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; preserve archaeological and historical resources; and implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress. Acquiring access to landlocked parcels would result in increased use of these lands by the public.

Acquiring easements allows the landowner to maintain existing land uses, but provides access to "landlocked" public lands while allowing the BLM to construct road improvements for better management and increased public access.

- Utility Corridors and Communications

Under Alternative A (No Action) there is one existing utility corridor south of Table Mountain near Interstate 8 that is 1.5 miles long and approximately 2 miles wide, encompassing 1,920 acres within the Planning Area. Alternative A has two communication sites with three facilities.

- Renewable Energy

The DRMP allows for the development of renewable energy, although land use allocations for renewable energy vary by alternative. Under all alternatives, land use authorizations for renewable energy would be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand.

Based on the wind energy potential model developed by PPM Energy (2006), there is a total of 12,764 acres of BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area that have the potential to support future wind energy projects under Alternative A, excluding wilderness and WSAs. The development of renewable sources of energy would reduce the use of irreversible/irretrievable energy resources.

- **Mineral Resources**

WAs are withdrawn from the operation of the mining and mineral leasing laws. There are no valid rights attendant to mineral resources on public lands in WAs. Impacts to mineral resources are expected from land use decisions identified in Table 2-14 where access to or availability of mineral resources is restricted. These actions include Alternatives B, C, and E, which do not allow authorization of mineral material contracts or permits, or geothermal leasing. In addition, Alternatives A, B, C, and E also restrict issuance of mineral materials contracts in special designations. Mineral material disposals from public land would not be authorized in critical habitat in ACECs (Alternative B) or critical habitat outside ACECs (Alternative C).

WSAs (Alternative C), ACECs (Alternatives C and E), and critical habitat (Alternative C) withdrawn from mineral entry would affect access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals for new mineral locations. Where mining claims with verified valid existing rights are located in areas withdrawn from mineral entry, and these rights would be acquired to protect non-mineral resources, access to, and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals would be affected.

- **Recreation Program**

- Recreation Management

Under all alternatives except Alternative A, 103,303 acres of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) would be created. BLM lands outside of SRMAs are Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA). Recreation management within ERMAs would be limited to custodial actions only. Therefore, the creation of SRMAs allows for more recreation management in these areas. Although Alternative A does not provide for

any SRMAs, it creates 38,690 acres in accordance with the McCain Valley Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP; DOI BLM 1979).

Overall, the DRMP provides for a number and variety of recreational opportunities. The allowance and level of maintenance for recreation varies somewhat by alternative. Alternatives D and E call for improving staging areas outside WAs to wilderness trailheads. Alternative C creates the Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA, which would be managed to intentionally maintain dispersed and undeveloped recreation opportunities such as hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use. Alternatives B, D, and E create the Sawtooth Destination SRMA, which would be managed to promote the continued use of the lands for hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use and would also accommodate limited OHV use, camping, and day-use outside of designated wilderness and WSAs. The development of a primitive campground/equestrian area is proposed for the Chariot Canyon Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) under Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Intensive recreational use would result in a long-term loss of productivity by means of soil compaction and areas of denuded vegetation.

- o Transportation and Public Access

Alternative B would eliminate livestock grazing in the Lark Canyon OHV area, while Alternative D would reduce the OHV area to minimize the conflict between OHV use and livestock grazing. See Table 2-18, which summarizes the acres designated as open, closed, or limited for OHV use.

For WAs, the limitation on access is for mechanized transport and motorized access. For WSAs, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical transport would not be allowed off boundary roads and existing ways. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (NST) is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes. Motorized access within ACECs is limited to existing or designated routes, except as

authorized. Outside of these areas, OHV use is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized.

Access requiring authorization (uses requiring permits) could involve seasonal restrictions such as seasonal closures in Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat during lambing season.

Authorizations or leases could result in closure to areas for public access (i.e. geothermal wind, solar) as a result of public health and safety concerns. Access for authorized uses such as minerals on split-estate lands where BLM manages the subsurface would not necessarily give public access across private lands, but grant access only to the authorized user.

- **Social and Economic.** It is not expected that any of the proposed RMP alternatives would result in any significant economic impacts. A possible exception would be the potential for wind energy development. If and when a project is proposed to the BLM, the BLM and operator(s) will need to develop project-specific Plans of Development (PODs), which would need to address the potential impacts (including economic and social impacts) of a proposed wind energy development.
- **Environmental Justice.** The socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of the Planning Area indicate that there is a very low likelihood of environmental justice impacts resulting from any of the BLM regional management plan program alternatives for the Planning Area.

Under implementation of Alternative B, the following effects are anticipated:

- **Air Quality.** Under the Alternative B, there would be no air quality impacts.
- **Soil Resources.** There is potential for erosion and compaction along routes of travel and continued surface disturbance in the existing (and new) campgrounds.

However, the concentration of visitor use and their associated impacts to soils is normally preferred over allowing high levels of dispersed visitor use to continue impacting a wider area. Erosion measures would be incorporated into projects on a case-by-case basis, and erosion would be minimized through the restoration of damaged riparian areas and the promotion of healthy native plant groundcover. Under Alternative B, construction of new wildlife waters would be authorized on a case-by-case basis; the lands available for livestock grazing would be reduced; and the restoration of non-motorized routes of travel would occur.

- **Water Resources.** Approved activities have the potential to result in a variety of effects to water resources including reducing disturbance to riparian waters; increasing sedimentation of surface waters; decreasing demands on surface and ground water, and conversely increasing the use of surface and ground water. Quality of groundwater could be affected by historic mineral and associated processing activities and illegal dumping or accidental spills. Restoration could result in the reduction of any input of biological contaminants into the groundwater. Under Alternative B, construction of new wildlife waters would increase the quantity of available surface water, but has the potential to decrease groundwater stores; the lands available for livestock grazing would be reduced, resulting in a reduction in the amount of water used.
- **Vegetative Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through vegetation protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to vegetation.
- **Wildlife Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through habitat protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to habitat.
- **Special Status Species** Alternative B would eliminate grazing from all critical habitat which would result in beneficial effect to special status species. Mineral entry would be allowed within critical habitat which could result in effects to some special status species. The parcel supporting Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

Critical Habitat is land-locked by state parks and private lands and has limited access and thus mineral entry is unlikely to affect this species.

- **Cultural Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which involve ground-disturbing actions could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of cultural resources, particularly if the resource was subsurface and previously undetected. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetectable resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of cultural resources through trampling of surface artifacts and features. Range and wildlife improvement projects could concentrate livestock and wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to cultural resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of cultural resources in the planning process and provide for additional protections and would therefore have a beneficial effect on any cultural resources that exist within the acquired property.

- **Paleontological Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which would involve excavation or ground disturbance could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetected resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate through trampling of exposed deposits.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources in the planning process and would have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Visual Resources.** WAs and WSAs are classified as VRM Class I, which is the most restrictive class. Alternatives A and C are identical in their designation of lands to Class II and would not designate any acres to Class III or IV. Alternative B designates similar lands to Class II with the exception that the Cottonwood and Lark Canyon Campgrounds and Airport Mesa are designated as Class III lands. Alternative B does not designate any lands to Class IV. As the ACECs in Alternatives B and C are larger in acreage than Alternative A, Alternatives B and C provide the highest protection for scenic quality values, followed closely by Alternative A.
- **Special Designations.** The primary potential impacts to the two designated WAs within the Planning Area may occur due to the use of motor vehicles and heavy motorized equipment for fire suppression and construction and maintenance of structures as well as the structures themselves. WA values can be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts from construction and maintenance activities would result from dust emissions and noise. Potential short-term impacts on naturalness and solitude could result from dust emissions and noise related to vehicle use and access to private lands in the area. Construction and maintenance of wildlife and range improvement facilities (e.g., wildlife waters) could degrade values for which these WAs were designated. Livestock grazing, where established at the time of designation of the two WAs, shall be allowed to continue irrespective of impacts on the wilderness characteristic. The presence of livestock and associated presence of structures and ranchers would have an impact on the wilderness characteristic of naturalness. Under Alternative B, grazing would be eliminated from critical habitat. This would reduce the extent of grazing and enhance the wilderness characteristics, primarily naturalness, of the Sawtooth WA. However, any new structures, such as fences, necessary to implement this would reduce the wilderness characteristics.

The primary potential impacts to the five WSAs within the Planning Area could occur from construction and maintenance of range and wildlife habitat improvement projects. WSA values could be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts could result from construction and maintenance activities, hunting activities or discharge of firearms, OHV use in and adjacent to WSAs and access to private in-holdings. No impacts are expected from mining, mineral leasing, or mineral sales activities.

Potential direct and indirect impacts to ACECs would result from the following management actions and LUP decisions: Vegetation treatments, range and wildlife habitat improvement projects, land use allocations, land tenure, construction-related activities, mineral development and leasing, recreation, OHV allocation of open areas, routes of travel, and military training. Beneficial impacts would occur from the protection of cultural resources and the protection and restoration of wildlife habitats.

- **Public Health and Safety.** Potential public health and safety issues in the Planning Area include abandoned mines, unexploded ordnance, international border issues, and hazardous materials. Inadvertent exposure to or encounters with any of these public health and safety hazards could result in serious injury or death.
- **Livestock Grazing.** Under Alternative B lands available for livestock grazing would be reduced and allotments would be adjusted to exclude grazing from the OHV use area in Lark Canyon and Table Mountain ACEC. Broad-scale vegetation management activities, such as prescribed fire, could temporarily reduce the forage base within grazing areas with the rate of recovery depending on the vegetation community burned, the hydrology, soil type, and intensity of the fire. Post fire, forage quality, and palatability could increase due to the stimulation of vegetation. Range improvement projects (e.g., livestock and wildlife waters) would increase the amount of available water. Invasive species removal (e.g., tamarisk) could also increase the availability of surface water.

- **Lands and Realty**

- Land Tenure (Disposals, Acquisitions, and R&PPs)

Disposals would result in fewer acres available within the BLM transportation and access network.

Acquisition of lands through exchange, purchase, and donation is designed to improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal landownership patterns; increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; preserve archaeological and historical resources; and implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress. Acquiring access to

landlocked parcels would result in increased use of these lands by the public.

Acquiring easements allows the landowner to maintain existing land uses, but provides access to "landlocked" public lands while allowing the BLM to construct road improvements for better management and increased public access.

- Utility Corridors and Communications

Under Alternative B, the utility corridor would be 1.5 miles long with a width of 1 mile (960 acres), the northern boundary of which would be the southern boundary of the Interstate 8 ROW. As discussed in Section 2.3.18.4, all new utility ROWs, consisting of the following types, would be located only within the designated corridor: 1) new electrical transmission towers and cables of 161 kV or above; 2) all pipelines with diameters greater than 12 inches; 3) coaxial cables for interstate communications; and 4) major aqueducts or canals for interbasin transfers of water.

Alternative B would consider and authorize applications for communication sites on a case-by-case basis emphasizing co-location and subleasing of facilities.

- Renewable Energy

The DRMP allows for the development of renewable energy, although land use allocations for renewable energy vary by alternative. Under all alternatives, land use authorizations for renewable energy would be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand. Under Alternative B, solar or wind generating facilities would not be located in VRM Classes I and II. WAs and WSAs are exclusion areas under all alternatives. ACECs are exclusion areas under Alternative B.

Under Alternative B, the potential buildable land for wind energy is 12,764 acres, excluding wilderness and WSAs.

The development of renewable sources of energy would reduce the use of irreversible/irretrievable energy resources.

- **Mineral Resources**

WAs are withdrawn from the operation of the mining and mineral leasing laws. There are no valid rights attendant to mineral resources on public lands in WAs. Impacts to mineral resources are expected from land use decisions identified in Table 2-14 where access to or availability of mineral resources is restricted. These actions include Alternatives B, C, and E, which do not allow authorization of mineral material contracts or permits, or geothermal leasing. In addition, Alternatives A, B, C, and E also restrict issuance of mineral materials contracts in special designations. Mineral material disposals from public land would not be authorized in critical habitat in ACECs (Alternative B) or critical habitat outside ACECs (Alternative C).

WSAs (Alternative C), ACECs (Alternatives C and E), and critical habitat (Alternative C) withdrawn from mineral entry would affect access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals for new mineral locations. Where mining claims with verified valid existing rights are located in areas withdrawn from mineral entry, and these rights would be acquired to protect non-mineral resources, access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals would be affected.

- **Recreation Program**

- Recreation Management

Under all alternatives except Alternative A, 103,303 acres of SRMAs would be created. BLM lands outside of SRMAs are ERMAs. Recreation management within ERMAs would be limited to custodial actions only. Therefore, the creation of SRMAs allows for more recreation management in these areas. Although Alternative A does not provide for any SRMAs, it creates 38,690 acres in accordance with the McCain Valley RAMP (DOI BLM 1979).

Overall, the DRMP provides for a number and variety of recreational opportunities. The allowance and level of maintenance for recreation varies somewhat by alternative. Alternatives D and E call for improving staging areas outside WAs to wilderness trailheads. Alternative C creates the Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA, which would be managed to intentionally maintain dispersed and undeveloped recreation opportunities such as hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use. Alternatives B, D, and E create the Sawtooth Destination SRMA, which would be managed to promote the continued use of the lands for hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use and would also accommodate limited OHV use, camping, and day-use outside of designated wilderness and WSAs. The development of a primitive campground/equestrian area is proposed for the Chariot Canyon RMZ under Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Intensive recreational use would result in a long-term loss of productivity by means of soil compaction and areas of denuded vegetation.

- o Transportation and Public Access

Alternative B would eliminate livestock grazing in the Lark Canyon OHV area, while Alternative D would reduce the OHV area to minimize the conflict between OHV use and livestock grazing. See Table 2-18, which summarizes the acres designated as open, closed, or limited for OHV use.

For WAs, the limitation on access is for mechanized transport and motorized access. For WSAs, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical transport would not be allowed off boundary roads and existing ways. The Pacific Crest NST is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes. Motorized access within ACECs is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized. Outside of these areas, OHV use is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized.

Access requiring authorization (uses requiring permits) could involve seasonal restrictions such as seasonal closures in Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat during lambing season.

Authorizations or leases could result in closure to areas for public access (i.e. geothermal wind, solar) as a result of public health and safety concerns. Access for authorized uses such as minerals on split-estate lands where BLM manages the subsurface would not necessarily give public access across private lands, but grant access only to the authorized user.

- **Social and Economic.** It is not expected that any of the proposed RMP alternatives would result in any significant economic impacts. A possible exception would be the potential for wind energy development. If and when a project is proposed to the BLM, the BLM and operator(s) will need to develop project-specific PODs, which would need to address the potential impacts (including economic and social impacts) of a proposed wind energy development.
- **Environmental Justice.** The socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of the Planning Area indicate that there is a very low likelihood of environmental justice impacts resulting from any of the BLM regional management plan program alternatives for the Planning Area.

Under implementation of Alternative C, the following effects are anticipated:

- **Air Quality.** Under the Alternative C, there would be no air quality impacts.
- **Soil Resources.** There is potential for erosion and compaction along routes of travel and continued surface disturbance in the existing (and new) campgrounds. However, the concentration of visitor use and their associated impacts to soils is normally preferred over allowing high levels of dispersed visitor use to continue impacting a wider area. Erosion measures would be incorporated into projects on a case-by-case basis, and erosion would be minimized through the restoration of damaged riparian areas and the promotion of healthy native plant groundcover.

Under Alternative C, there would be no construction of new wildlife waters; all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for livestock grazing; and the restoration of non-motorized routes of travel would occur.

- **Water Resources.** Approved activities have the potential to result in a variety of effects to water resources including reducing disturbance to riparian waters; increasing sedimentation of surface waters; decreasing demands on surface and ground water, and conversely increasing the use of surface and ground water. Quality of groundwater could be affected by historic mineral and associated processing activities and illegal dumping or accidental spills. Restoration could result in the reduction of any input of biological contaminants into the groundwater. Under Alternative C, all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for livestock grazing, which would reduce the amount of water used.
- **Vegetative Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through vegetation protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to vegetation.
- **Wildlife Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through habitat protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to habitat.
- **Special Status Species.** Alternative C would eliminate grazing and mineral entry from critical habitat within the BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area. This would result in no effect to special status species.
- **Cultural Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which involve ground-disturbing actions could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of cultural resources, particularly if the resource was subsurface and previously undetected. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetectable resource. Wildlife improvement projects could concentrate wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling of surface artifacts and features.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to cultural resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of cultural resources in the planning process and provide for additional protections and would therefore have a beneficial effect on any cultural resources that exist within the acquired property.

- **Paleontological Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which would involve excavation or ground disturbance could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetected resource. Wildlife improvement projects could concentrate wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling of exposed vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate deposits.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources in the planning process and would have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Visual Resources.** WAs and WSAs are classified as VRM Class I, which is the most restrictive class. Alternatives A and C are identical in their designation of lands to Class II and would not designate any acres to Class III or IV. Alternative B designates similar lands to Class II with the exception that the Cottonwood and Lark Canyon Campgrounds and Airport Mesa are designated as Class III lands. Alternative B does not designate any lands to Class IV. As the ACECs in Alternatives B and C are larger in acreage than Alternative A, Alternatives B and C provide the highest protection for scenic quality values, followed closely by Alternative A.
- **Special Designations.** The primary potential impacts to the two designated WAs within the Planning Area may occur due to the use of motor vehicles and heavy motorized equipment for fire suppression and construction and maintenance of structures as well as the structures themselves. WA values can

be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts from construction and maintenance activities would result from dust emissions and noise. Potential short-term impacts on naturalness and solitude could result from dust emissions and noise related to vehicle use and access to private lands in the area. Construction and maintenance of wildlife and range improvement facilities (e.g. wildlife waters) could degrade values for which these WAs were designated. Under this alternative, livestock grazing would be eliminated from WAs, thereby reducing impacts to the wilderness characteristic.

The primary potential impacts to the five WSAs within the Planning Area could occur from construction and maintenance of range and wildlife habitat improvement projects. WSA values could be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts could result from construction and maintenance activities, hunting activities or discharge of firearms, OHV use in and adjacent to WSAs and access to private in-holdings. No impacts are expected from mining, mineral leasing, or mineral sales activities.

Potential direct and indirect impacts to ACECs would result from the following management actions and LUP decisions: Vegetation treatments, range and wildlife habitat improvement projects, land use allocations, land tenure, construction-related activities, mineral development and leasing, recreation, OHV allocation of open areas, routes of travel, and military training. Beneficial impacts would occur from the protection of cultural resources and the protection and restoration of wildlife habitats.

- **Public Health and Safety.** Potential public health and safety issues in the Planning Area include abandoned mines, unexploded ordnance, international border issues, and hazardous materials. Inadvertent exposure to or encounters with any of these public health and safety hazards could result in serious injury or death.
- **Livestock Grazing.** Under Alternative C, all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for livestock grazing. Broad-scale vegetation management activities, such as prescribed fire, could temporarily reduce the forage base within grazing

areas with the rate of recovery depending on the vegetation community burned, the hydrology, soil type, and intensity of the fire. Post fire, forage quality and palatability could increase due to the stimulation of vegetation. Invasive species removal (e.g., tamarisk) could also increase the availability of surface water.

- **Lands and Realty**

- Land Tenure (Disposals, Acquisitions, and R&PPs)

Disposals would result in fewer acres available within the BLM transportation and access network.

Acquisition of lands through exchange, purchase, and donation is designed to improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal landownership patterns; increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; preserve archaeological and historical resources; and implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress. Acquiring access to landlocked parcels would result in increased use of these lands by the public.

Acquiring easements allows the landowner to maintain existing land uses, but provides access to "landlocked" public lands while allowing the BLM to construct road improvements for better management and increased public access.

- Utility Corridors and Communications

Under Alternative C, the utility corridor would be 1.5 miles long with a width of 1 mile (960 acres), the northern boundary of which would be the southern boundary of the Interstate 8 ROW. As discussed in Section 2.3.18.4, all new utility ROWs, consisting of the following types, would be located only within the designated corridor: 1) new electrical transmission towers and cables of 161 kV or above; 2) all pipelines with diameters greater than 12 inches; 3) coaxial cables for interstate communications; and 4) major aqueducts or canals for interbasin transfers of water.

Alternative C would consider and authorize applications for communication sites on a case-by-case basis emphasizing co-location and subleasing of facilities.

- Renewable Energy

The DRMP allows for the development of renewable energy, although land use allocations for renewable energy vary by alternative. Under all alternatives, land use authorizations for renewable energy would be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand. Under Alternative C solar or wind generating facilities would not be located in VRM Classes I and II. WAs and WSAs are exclusion areas under all alternatives. ACECs are exclusion areas under Alternative C.

Under Alternative C, critical habitat for Peninsular bighorn sheep and quino checkerspot would additionally be excluded from the potential buildable land for wind energy, for a total of 7,753 acres.

The development of renewable sources of energy would reduce the use of irreversible/irretrievable energy resources.

- **Mineral Resources**

WAs are withdrawn from the operation of the mining and mineral leasing laws. There are no valid rights attendant to mineral resources on public lands in WAs. Impacts to mineral resources are expected from land use decisions identified in Table 2-14 where access to or availability of mineral resources is restricted. These actions include Alternatives B, C, and E, which do not allow authorization of mineral material contracts or permits, or geothermal leasing. In addition, Alternatives A, B, C, and E also restrict issuance of mineral materials contracts in special designations. Mineral material disposals from public land would not be authorized in critical habitat in ACECs (Alternative B) or critical habitat outside ACECs (Alternative C).

WSAs (Alternative C), ACECs (Alternatives C and E), and critical habitat (Alternative C) withdrawn from mineral entry would affect access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals for new mineral locations. Where mining claims with verified valid existing rights are located in

areas withdrawn from mineral entry, and these rights would be acquired to protect non-mineral resources, access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals would be affected.

- **Recreation Program**

- Recreation Management

Under all alternatives except Alternative A, 103,303 acres of SRMAs would be created. BLM lands outside of SRMAs are ERMAs. Recreation management within ERMAs would be limited to custodial actions only. Therefore, the creation of SRMAs allows for more recreation management in these areas. Although Alternative A does not provide for any SRMAs, it creates 38,690 acres in accordance with the McCain Valley RAMP (DOI BLM 1979).

Overall, the DRMP provides for a number and variety of recreational opportunities. The allowance and level of maintenance for recreation varies somewhat by alternative. Alternatives D and E call for improving staging areas outside WAs to wilderness trailheads. Alternative C creates the Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA, which would be managed to intentionally maintain dispersed and undeveloped recreation opportunities such as hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use. Alternatives B, D, and E create the Sawtooth Destination SRMA, which would be managed to promote the continued use of the lands for hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use and would also accommodate limited OHV use, camping, and day-use outside of designated wilderness and WSAs. The development of a primitive campground/equestrian area is proposed for the Chariot Canyon RMZ under Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Intensive recreational use would result in a long-term loss of productivity by means of soil compaction and areas of denuded vegetation.

- Transportation and Public Access

Alternative B would eliminate livestock grazing in the Lark Canyon OHV area, while Alternative D would reduce the OHV area to minimize the

conflict between OHV use and livestock grazing. See Table 2-18, which summarizes the acres designated as open, closed, or limited for OHV use.

For WAs, the limitation on access is for mechanized transport and motorized access. For WSAs, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical transport would not be allowed off boundary roads and existing ways. The Pacific Crest NST is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes. Motorized access within ACECs is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized. Outside of these areas, OHV use is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized.

Access requiring authorization (uses requiring permits) could involve seasonal restrictions such as seasonal closures in Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat during lambing season.

Authorizations or leases could result in closure to areas for public access (i.e. geothermal wind, solar) as a result of public health and safety concerns. Access for authorized uses such as minerals on split-estate lands where BLM manages the subsurface would not necessarily give public access across private lands, but grant access only to the authorized user.

- **Social and Economic.** It is not expected that any of the proposed RMP alternatives would result in any significant economic impacts. A possible exception would be the potential for wind energy development. If and when a project is proposed to the BLM, the BLM and operator(s) will need to develop project-specific PODs, which would need to address the potential impacts (including economic and social impacts) of a proposed wind energy development.
- **Environmental Justice.** The socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of the Planning Area indicate that there is a very low likelihood of environmental

justice impacts resulting from any of the BLM regional management plan program alternatives for the Planning Area.

Under implementation of Alternative D, the following effects are anticipated:

- **Air Quality.** Under the Alternative D, there would be no air quality impacts.

- **Soil Resources.** There is potential for erosion and compaction along routes of travel and continued surface disturbance in the existing (and new) campgrounds. However, the concentration of visitor use and their associated impacts to soils is normally preferred over allowing high levels of dispersed visitor use to continue impacting a wider area. Erosion measures would be incorporated into projects on a case-by-case basis, and erosion would be minimized through the restoration of damaged riparian areas and the promotion of healthy native plant groundcover. Under Alternative D, construction of new wildlife waters would be authorized on a case-by-case basis; and the restoration of non-motorized routes of travel would occur.

- **Water Resources.** Approved activities have the potential to result in a variety of effects to water resources including reducing disturbance to riparian waters; increasing sedimentation of surface waters; decreasing demands on surface and ground water, and conversely increasing the use of surface and ground water. Quality of groundwater could be affected by historic mineral and associated processing activities and illegal dumping or accidental spills. Restoration could result in the reduction of any input of biological contaminants into the groundwater. Under Alternative D, construction of new wildlife waters would increase the quantity of available surface water, but has the potential to decrease groundwater stores.

- **Vegetative Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through vegetation protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to vegetation.

- **Wildlife Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through habitat protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to habitat.
- **Special Status Species.** Alternative D would eliminate grazing from all critical habitat which would result in no effect to special status species. Mineral entry would be allowed within critical habitat which could result in effects to some special status species. The parcel supporting quino checkerspot butterfly critical habitat is land-locked by state parks and private lands and has limited access and thus mineral entry is unlikely to affect this species.
- **Cultural Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which involve ground-disturbing actions could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of cultural resources, particularly if the resource was subsurface and previously undetected. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetectable resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of cultural resources through trampling of surface artifacts and features. Range and wildlife improvement projects could concentrate livestock and wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to cultural resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of cultural resources in the planning process and provide for additional protections and would therefore have a beneficial effect on any cultural resources that exist within the acquired property.

- **Paleontological Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which would involve excavation or ground disturbance could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetected resource. Livestock grazing could result in the degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate through trampling of exposed deposits.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources in the planning process and would have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Visual Resources.** WAs and WSAs are classified as VRM Class I, which is the most restrictive class. Alternative D identifies many specific land areas as Class III lands and two as Class IV lands. Therefore this alternative would provide the greatest allowance for visual contrast in any future proposals for cultural modifications.
- **Special Designations.** The primary potential impacts to the two designated WAs within the Planning Area may occur due to the use of motor vehicles and heavy motorized equipment for fire suppression and construction and maintenance of structures as well as the structures themselves. WA values can be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts from construction and maintenance activities would result from dust emissions and noise. Potential short-term impacts on naturalness and solitude could result from dust emissions and noise related to vehicle use and access to private lands in the area. Construction and maintenance of wildlife and range improvement facilities (e.g. wildlife waters) could degrade values for which these WAs were designated. Livestock grazing, where established at the time of designation of the two WAs, shall be allowed to continue irrespective of impacts on the wilderness characteristic. The presence of livestock and associated presence of structures and ranchers would have an impact on the wilderness characteristic of naturalness. Under Alternative D, grazing would be eliminated from critical habitat. This would reduce the extent of grazing and enhance the wilderness characteristics, primarily naturalness, of the Sawtooth WA. However, any new structures, such as fences, necessary to implement these alternatives would reduce the wilderness characteristics.

The primary potential impacts to the five WSAs within the Planning Area could occur from construction and maintenance of range and wildlife habitat improvement projects. WSA values could be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-

term impacts could result from construction and maintenance activities, hunting activities or discharge of firearms, OHV use in and adjacent to WSAs and access to private in-holdings. No impacts are expected from mining, mineral leasing, or mineral sales activities.

Potential direct and indirect impacts to ACECs would result from the following management actions and LUP decisions: Vegetation treatments, range and wildlife habitat improvement projects, land use allocations, land tenure, construction-related activities, mineral development and leasing, recreation, OHV allocation of open areas, routes of travel, and military training. Beneficial impacts would occur from the protection of cultural resources and the protection and restoration of wildlife habitats.

- **Livestock Grazing.** Under Alternative D, broad-scale vegetation management activities, such as prescribed fire, could temporarily reduce the forage base within grazing areas with the rate of recovery depending on the vegetation community burned, the hydrology, soil type, and intensity of the fire. Post-fire, forage quality, and palatability could increase due to the stimulation of vegetation. Range improvement projects (e.g., livestock and wildlife waters) would increase the amount of available water. Invasive species removal (e.g., tamarisk) could also increase the availability of surface water.

- **Lands and Realty**

- Land Tenure (Disposals, Acquisitions, and R&PPs)

Disposals would result in fewer acres available within the BLM transportation and access network.

Acquisition of lands through exchange, purchase, and donation is designed to improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal landownership patterns; increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; preserve archaeological and historical resources; and implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress. Acquiring access to landlocked parcels would result in increased use of these lands by the public.

Acquiring easements allows the landowner to maintain existing land uses, but provides access to "landlocked" public lands while allowing the BLM to construct road improvements for better management and increased public access.

- Utility Corridors and Communications

Under Alternative D, the utility corridor would be 1.5 miles long with a width of 1 mile (960 acres), the northern boundary of which would be the southern boundary of the Interstate 8 ROW. As discussed in Section 2.3.18.4, all new utility ROWs, consisting of the following types, would be located only within the designated corridor: 1) new electrical transmission towers and cables of 161 kV or above; 2) all pipelines with diameters greater than 12 inches; 3) coaxial cables for interstate communications; and 4) major aqueducts or canals for interbasin transfers of water.

Alternative D would consider and authorize applications for communication sites on a case-by-case basis emphasizing co-location and subleasing of facilities.

- Renewable Energy

Based on the wind energy potential model developed by PPM Energy (2006), there is a total of 12,764 acres of BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area that have the potential to support future wind energy projects, excluding both wilderness and wilderness study areas. This would apply to Alternatives A, B, D, and E.

The development of renewable sources of energy would reduce the use of irreversible/irretrievable energy resources.

- **Mineral Resources**

WAs are withdrawn from the operation of the mining and mineral leasing laws. There are no valid rights attendant to mineral resources on public lands in WAs. Impacts to mineral resources are expected from land use decisions identified in

Table 2-14 where access to or availability of mineral resources is restricted. These actions include Alternatives B, C, and E, which do not allow authorization of mineral material contracts or permits, or geothermal leasing. In addition, Alternatives A, B, C, and E also restrict issuance of mineral materials contracts in special designations. Mineral material disposals from public land would not be authorized in critical habitat in ACECs (Alternative B) or critical habitat outside ACECs (Alternative C).

WSAs (Alternative C), ACECs (Alternatives C and E), and critical habitat (Alternative C) withdrawn from mineral entry would affect access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals for new mineral locations. Where mining claims with verified valid existing rights are located in areas withdrawn from mineral entry, and these rights would be acquired to protect non-mineral resources, access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals would be affected.

- **Recreation Program**

- Recreation Management

Under all alternatives except Alternative A, 103,303 acres of SRMAs would be created. BLM lands outside of SRMAs are ERMAs. Recreation management within ERMAs would be limited to custodial actions only. Therefore, the creation of SRMAs allows for more recreation management in these areas. Although Alternative A does not provide for any SRMAs, it creates 38,690 acres in accordance with the McCain Valley RAMP (DOI BLM 1979).

Overall, the DRMP provides for a number and variety of recreational opportunities. The allowance and level of maintenance for recreation varies somewhat by alternative. Alternatives D and E call for improving staging areas outside WAs to wilderness trailheads. Alternative C creates the Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA, which would be managed to intentionally maintain dispersed and undeveloped recreation opportunities such as hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use. Alternatives B, D, and E create the Sawtooth Destination SRMA, which would be managed to promote the continued use of the lands for hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower

and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use and would also accommodate limited OHV use, camping, and day-use outside of designated wilderness and WSAs. The development of a primitive campground/equestrian area is proposed for the Chariot Canyon RMZ under Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Intensive recreational use would result in a long-term loss of productivity by means of soil compaction and areas of denuded vegetation.

- Transportation and Public Access

Alternative B would eliminate livestock grazing in the Lark Canyon OHV area, while Alternative D would reduce the OHV area to minimize the conflict between OHV use and livestock grazing. See Table 2-18, which summarizes the acres designated as open, closed, or limited for OHV use.

For WAs, the limitation on access is for mechanized transport and motorized access. For WSAs, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical transport would not be allowed off boundary roads and existing ways. The Pacific Crest NST is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes. Motorized access within ACECs is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized. Outside of these areas, OHV use is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized.

Access requiring authorization (uses requiring permits) could involve seasonal restrictions such as seasonal closures in Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat during lambing season.

Authorizations or leases could result in closure to areas for public access (i.e., geothermal wind, solar) as a result of public health and safety concerns. Access for authorized uses such as minerals on split-estate lands where BLM manages the subsurface would not necessarily give

public access across private lands, but grant access only to the authorized user.

- **Public Health and Safety.** Potential public health and safety issues in the Planning Area include abandoned mines, unexploded ordnance, international border issues, and hazardous materials. Inadvertent exposure to or encounters with any of these public health and safety hazards could result in serious injury or death.
- **Social and Economic.** It is not expected that any of the proposed RMP alternatives would result in any significant economic impacts. A possible exception would be the potential for wind energy development. If and when a project is proposed to the BLM, the BLM and operator(s) will need to develop project-specific PODs, which would need to address the potential impacts (including economic and social impacts) of a proposed wind energy development.
- **Environmental Justice.** The socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of the Planning Area indicate that there is a very low likelihood of environmental justice impacts resulting from any of the BLM regional management plan program alternatives for the Planning Area.

Under implementation of Alternative E (Preferred Alternative), the following effects are anticipated:

- **Air Quality.** Under the Alternative E, there would be no air quality impacts.
- **Soil Resources.** There is potential for erosion and compaction along routes of travel and continued surface disturbance in the existing (and new) campgrounds. However, the concentration of visitor use and their associated impacts to soils is normally preferred over allowing high levels of dispersed visitor use to continue impacting a wider area. Erosion measures would be incorporated into projects on a case-by-case basis, and erosion would be minimized through the restoration of damaged riparian areas and the promotion of healthy native plant groundcover. Under Alternative E, all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for

livestock grazing; construction of new wildlife waters would be authorized on a case-by-case basis; and the restoration of non-motorized routes of travel would occur.

- **Water Resources.** Approved activities have the potential to result in a variety of effects to water resources including reducing disturbance to riparian waters; increasing sedimentation of surface waters; decreasing demands on surface and ground water, and conversely increasing the use of surface and ground water. Quality of groundwater could be affected by historic mineral and associated processing activities and illegal dumping or accidental spills. Restoration could result in the reduction of any input of biological contaminants into the groundwater. Under Alternative E, construction of new wildlife waters would increase the quantity of available surface water, but has the potential to decrease groundwater stores; all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for livestock grazing, which would reduce the amount of water used.
- **Vegetative Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through vegetation protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to vegetation.
- **Wildlife Resources.** Some BLM LUP decisions and authorized activities would be beneficial through habitat protection and enhancement, while others would be negative by authorizing discretionary activities that could result in detrimental effects to habitat.
- **Special Status Species.** Alternative E would eliminate grazing from critical habitat within the BLM-administered lands within the Planning Area. This would result in beneficial effects to special status species.
- **Cultural Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which involve ground-disturbing actions could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of cultural resources, particularly if the resource was subsurface and previously undetected. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetectable resource. Wildlife improvement projects could

concentrate wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling of surface artifacts and features.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to cultural resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of cultural resources in the planning process and provide for additional protections and would therefore have a beneficial effect on any cultural resources that exist within the acquired property.

- **Paleontological Resources.** Discretionary and construction actions which would involve excavation or ground disturbance could cause the inadvertent loss and/or degradation of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources. However, these activities could also result in the discovery of an otherwise undetected resource. Wildlife improvement projects could concentrate wildlife in areas increasing the potential for trampling of exposed vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate deposits.

Land disposal is a permanent loss in terms of BLM management and oversight and could therefore have an adverse impact to vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources, if any exist on the disposed property. Land acquisitions extend additional consideration of vertebrate fossils and scientifically significant invertebrate resources in the planning process and would have a beneficial effect on any that exist within the acquired property.

- **Visual Resources.** WAs and WSAs are classified as VRM Class I, which is the most restrictive class. Alternative E would have approximately 10,000 fewer acres of Class II lands than Alternatives A, B, and C (this difference varies by alternative), because it designates the Lark Canyon and Cottonwood Campgrounds and the Airport Mesa area as Class III rather than Class II due to considerations for allowable visual contrast of cultural modifications. In addition, Alternative E identifies McCain Valley West as Class IV to accommodate renewable energy development.
- **Special Designations.** The primary potential impacts to the two designated WAs within the Planning Area may occur due to the use of motor vehicles and heavy motorized equipment for fire suppression and construction and

maintenance of structures as well as the structures themselves. WA values can be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts from construction and maintenance activities would result from dust emissions and noise. Potential short-term impacts on naturalness and solitude could result from dust emissions and noise related to vehicle use and access to private lands in the area. Construction and maintenance of wildlife and range improvement facilities (e.g. wildlife waters) could degrade values for which these WAs were designated. Under this alternative, livestock grazing would be eliminated from WAs, thereby reducing impacts to the wilderness characteristic.

The primary potential impacts to the five WSAs within the Planning Area could occur from construction and maintenance of range and wildlife habitat improvement projects. WSA values could be impacted by vegetation treatments and wildfire suppression activities and management responses. Potential short-term impacts could result from construction and maintenance activities, hunting activities or discharge of firearms, OHV use in and adjacent to WSAs and access to private in-holdings. No impacts are expected from mining, mineral leasing, or mineral sales activities.

Potential direct and indirect impacts to ACECs would result from the following management actions and LUP decisions: Vegetation treatments, range and wildlife habitat improvement projects, land use allocations, land tenure, construction-related activities, mineral development and leasing, recreation, OHV allocation of open areas, routes of travel, and military training. Beneficial impacts would occur from the protection of cultural resources and the protection and restoration of wildlife habitats.

- **Public Health and Safety.** Potential public health and safety issues in the Planning Area include abandoned mines, unexploded ordnance, international border issues, and hazardous materials. Inadvertent exposure to or encounters with any of these public health and safety hazards could result in serious injury or death.
- **Livestock Grazing.** Under Alternative E, all BLM-administered lands would be unavailable for livestock grazing. Broad-scale vegetation management activities,

such as prescribed fire, could temporarily reduce the forage base within grazing areas with the rate of recovery depending on the vegetation community burned, the hydrology, soil type, and intensity of the fire. Post-fire, forage quality, and palatability could increase due to the stimulation of vegetation. Invasive species removal (e.g., tamarisk) could also increase the availability of surface water.

- **Lands and Realty**

- Land Tenure (Disposals, Acquisitions, and R&PPs)

Disposals would result in fewer acres available within the BLM transportation and access network.

Acquisition of lands through exchange, purchase, and donation is designed to improve management of natural resources through consolidation of federal landownership patterns; increase recreational opportunities and preserve open space; secure key property necessary to protect endangered species and promote biological diversity; preserve archaeological and historical resources; and implement specific acquisitions authorized by acts of Congress. Acquiring access to landlocked parcels would result in increased use of these lands by the public.

Acquiring easements allows the landowner to maintain existing land uses, but provides access to "landlocked" public lands while allowing the BLM to construct road improvements for better management and increased public access.

- Utility Corridors and Communications

Under Alternative E, the utility corridor would be 1.5 miles long with a width of 1 mile (960 acres), the northern boundary of which would be the southern boundary of the Interstate 8 ROW. As discussed in Section 2.3.18.4, all new utility ROWs, consisting of the following types, would be located only within the designated corridor: 1) new electrical transmission towers and cables of 161 kV or above; 2) all pipelines with diameters greater than 12 inches; 3) coaxial cables for interstate communications; and 4) major aqueducts or canals for interbasin transfers of water.

Alternative E would consider and authorize applications for communication sites on a case-by-case basis emphasizing co-location and subleasing of facilities.

- Renewable Energy

The DRMP allows for the development of renewable energy, although land use allocations for renewable energy vary by alternative. Under all alternatives, land use authorizations for renewable energy would be considered on a case-by-case basis to meet public demand. Under Alternative E, solar or wind generating facilities would not be located in VRM Classes I and II. WAs and WSAs are exclusion areas under all alternatives. ACECs are areas under Alternative E.

The development of renewable sources of energy would reduce the use of irreversible/irretrievable energy resources.

- **Mineral Resources**

WAs are withdrawn from the operation of the mining and mineral leasing laws. There are no valid rights attendant to mineral resources on public lands in WAs. Impacts to mineral resources are expected from land use decisions identified in Table 2-14 where access to or availability of mineral resources is restricted. These actions include Alternatives B, C, and E, which do not allow authorization of mineral material contracts or permits, or geothermal leasing. In addition, Alternatives A, B, C, and E also restrict issuance of mineral materials contracts in special designations. Mineral material disposals from public land would not be authorized in critical habitat in ACECs (Alternative B) or critical habitat outside ACEC (Alternative C).

WSAs (Alternative C), ACECs (Alternatives C and E), and critical habitat (Alternative C) withdrawn from mineral entry would affect access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals for new mineral locations. Where mining claims with verified valid existing rights are located in areas withdrawn from mineral entry, and these rights would be acquired to

protect non-mineral resources, access to and development of metallic and non-metallic/industrial minerals would be affected.

- **Recreation Program**

- Recreation Management

Under all alternatives except Alternative A, 103,303 acres of SRMAs would be created. BLM lands outside of SRMAs are ERMAs. Recreation management within ERMAs would be limited to custodial actions only. Therefore, the creation of SRMAs allows for more recreation management in these areas. Although Alternative A does not provide for any SRMAs, it creates 38,690 acres in accordance with the McCain Valley RAMP (DOI BLM 1979).

Overall, the DRMP provides for a number and variety of recreational opportunities. The allowance and level of maintenance for recreation varies somewhat by alternative. Alternatives D and E call for improving staging areas outside WAs to wilderness trailheads. Alternative C creates the Sawtooth Undeveloped SRMA, which would be managed to intentionally maintain dispersed and undeveloped recreation opportunities such as hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use. Alternatives B, D, and E create the Sawtooth Destination SRMA, which would be managed to promote the continued use of the lands for hiking and backpacking, hunting, wildflower and wildlife viewing, rock hounding, and equestrian use and would also accommodate limited OHV use, camping, and day-use outside of designated wilderness and WSAs. The development of a primitive campground/equestrian area is proposed for the Chariot Canyon RMZ under Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Intensive recreational use would result in a long-term loss of productivity by means of soil compaction and areas of denuded vegetation.

- Transportation and Public Access

Alternative B would eliminate livestock grazing in the Lark Canyon OHV area, while Alternative D would reduce the OHV area to minimize the conflict between OHV use and livestock grazing. See Table 2-18, which summarizes the acres designated as open, closed, or limited for OHV use.

For WAs, the limitation on access is for mechanized transport and motorized access. For WSAs, the use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or other forms of mechanical transport would not be allowed off boundary roads and existing ways. The Pacific Crest NST is closed to motorized vehicles and mountain bikes. Motorized access within ACECs is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized. Outside of these areas, OHV use is limited to existing or designated routes, except as authorized.

Access requiring authorization (uses requiring permits) could involve seasonal restrictions such as seasonal closures in Peninsular bighorn sheep critical habitat during lambing season.

Authorizations or leases could result in closure to areas for public access (i.e., geothermal wind, solar) as a result of public health and safety concerns. Access for authorized uses such as minerals on split-estate lands where BLM manages the subsurface would not necessarily give public access across private lands, but grant access only to the authorized user.

- **Social and Economic.** It is not expected that any of the proposed RMP alternatives would result in any significant economic impacts. A possible exception would be the potential for wind energy development. If and when a project is proposed to the BLM, the BLM and operator(s) will need to develop project-specific PODs, which would need to address the potential impacts (including economic and social impacts) of a proposed wind energy development.

- **Environmental Justice.** The socioeconomic characteristics of the residents of the Planning Area indicate that there is a very low likelihood of environmental justice impacts resulting from any of the BLM regional management plan program alternatives for the Planning Area.

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