

### Chuckwalla-Chemehuevi Tortoise Linkage

**Description /Location:** The area is bordered on the north by the Chemehuevi ACEC, on the south by several BLM wilderness areas, and on the west by Joshua Tree National Park. Portions of this area are currently managed as the Rice Valley Multi-species Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) and as multiple Bighorn Sheep WHMAs under the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan. The Iron Mountain Divisional Camp ACEC, Granite Divisional Camp, and the Rice Airfield are also within this area.

#### **Nationally Significant Values:**

**Ecological Values:** The proposed lands would protect an area of highest value desert tortoise habitat in northeastern Riverside County (2009 USGS Desert Tortoise Habitat model). It would provide critical desert tortoise habitat connectivity between the two major desert tortoise populations identified in the Colorado Desert (i.e., the Chuckwalla and Chemehuevi critical habitat units) and Joshua Tree National Park. The area contains several bighorn sheep demes and corridors (demes in the Granite, Palen, Coxcomb and Iron mountains). The area also contains the Rice Valley dunes and sand transport corridor and core habitat for the Mojave fringe-toed lizard, a BLM Sensitive Species and a California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern. The proposed NLCS unit would also contribute to the overall linking of five currently isolated Wilderness Areas of northeastern Riverside County (i.e., Palen-McCoy, Big Maria Mountains, Little Maria Mountains, Riverside Mountains, and Rice Valley) with each other and Joshua Tree National Park, and would protect a large, intact representation of the lower Colorado Desert.

**Cultural Values:** This vast area also contains three Desert Training Center Divisional (DTC) Camps (Camp Iron Mountain, Camp Granite, and Camp Coxcomb), one of which is an existing ACEC (Camp Iron Mountain). These DTC Camps were promoted designed and initiated by General George S. Patton Jr. in preparation for the training of troops for the North African Desert Campaign in 1942. The intensive and realistic desert environmental training that the soldiers received was credited for the winning of the campaign in North Africa and the eventual war against Nazi Germany in World War II. The proposed ACEC has important scenic value as it is the backdrop of Highway 62, a proposed scenic highway, and a regionally relevant visual corridor.

**Scientific Values:** This area is critical for the understanding of desert tortoise and other special status species, recovery of these species, and the importance of sand transport and other unique variables. Prehistoric archaeological values are unknown as little to no surveys have been performed to date, but the area has high potential for these resources. The area has outstanding opportunities for research and study of natural and cultural values. The Desert Training Center Camps and the associated historic archaeological sites hold key information attributable to the lives and experiences of over 1 million WW II soldiers who received training for the war effort. While much is known about the written history of the large-scale events and famous officers such as General Patton, so little is known relating to the "average GI" and the hostile environmental experience they endured.

**Special Designations/ Management Plan/ Date:** new proposal

**Relevant and Significant Criteria:** Relevant biological and cultural resources. Important desert tortoise habitat and populations. Important dune formations for fringed toed lizards. Important wildlife and plant linkages.

**Goals and Objectives:** Protect biological and cultural resources. Protect visual landscape. Maintain desert tortoise habitat connectivity between the Chuckwalla and Chemehuevi ACECs. Bighorn Sheep management

goals and objectives are described in Section 2.3.1 in the NECO Plan. Protect the cultural values of the three divisional camps and the overall cultural landscape of the Desert Training Center. Protect visual corridor along state highway 62.

**Designation and Acreage by Alternative:**

Alternative	BLM Acres of NLCS within ACEC or Wildlife Allocation	BLM Acres within ACEC	BLM Acres within Wildlife Allocation	ACEC Disturbance Cap**
No Action	0	0	0	NA
Preferred Alternative	156,700	323,700	0	0.1, 0.5 and 1%
1	13,300	224,900	98,800	0.1, 0.5 and 1%
2	224,900	224,900	98,800	0.1, 0.5 and 1%
3	323,700	323,700	0	0.1, 0.5 and 1%
4	34,300	130,500	98,700	0.1, 0.5 and 1%

\* Acreage values are for BLM managed lands

\*\* This conservation area is zoned, with different disturbance caps associated with the zones. The 0.1% disturbance cap applies to critical tortoise linkages, the 0.5 disturbance cap is associated with desert tortoise conservation areas, and the 1% disturbance cap is associated with all other resource values.

**Alternatives:**

Under All Alternatives—This area (size and location vary between alternative, see table above and maps that follow) would be identified as an ACEC and/or Wildlife Allocation Area and would be managed to support and maintain wildlife connectivity.

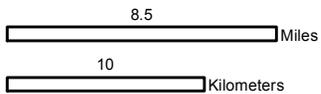
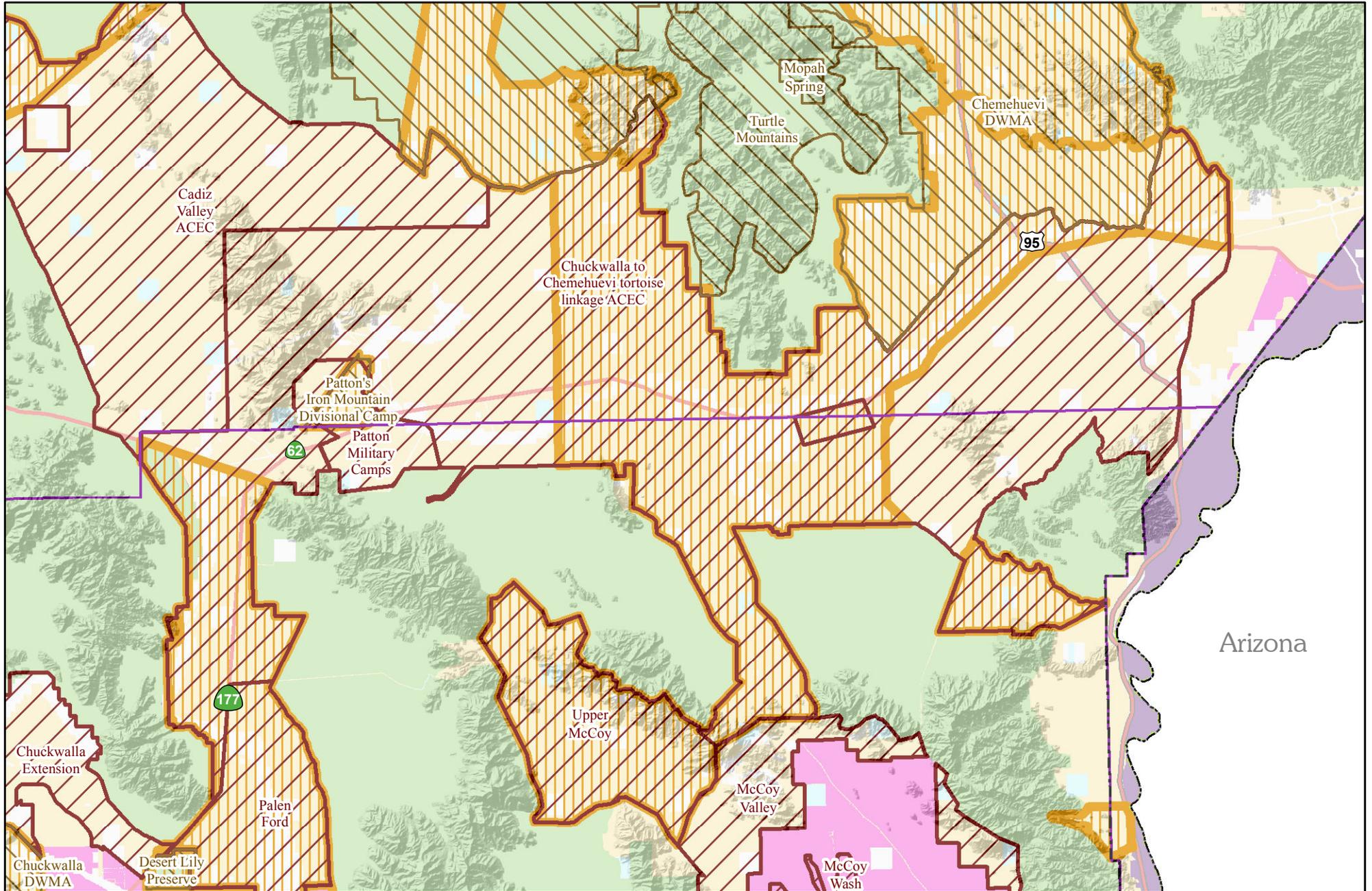
No Action – this conservation area would not exist, as it does not exist currently.

<b>Objectives (desired future conditions)/Allowable Uses/Management Actions</b>	<b>Resource</b>
<p>Restrict construction activities when soils are susceptible to heightened risk of erosion. Limit ground-disturbing activities when soils are wet in order to avoid compaction of soils. Comply with the State of California for all proposed actions that would contribute to particulate matter emissions.</p> <p>Objective: Prevent excessive ground water withdrawal that would potentially threatened dune/ playa dependent vegetation.</p> <p>Management Action: Allow no activities that would create a water basin deficit/ decline.</p>	Soil, water, air
<p>Management Action: Protect special status vegetation including rare plants and rare natural communities.</p> <p>Management Action: Maintain vegetation important to habitat for special status animal species.</p> <p>Management Action: OHV limited to designated routes. Limit surface disturbance with mitigation to protect resource values.</p>	Vegetation (incl. special status species)

<p><i>Objective:</i> Maintain desert tortoise habitat connectivity between the Chuckwalla and Chemehuevi Desert Wildlife Management/ Area of Critical Environmental Concern/ Critical Habitat Units.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> Develop a desert tortoise habitat linkage management and monitoring plan. The plan would include an inventory of potential obstructions to connectivity and sources of mortality within the ACEC, and a list of specific actions under the jurisdiction of BLM that may be needed to remove or mitigate impediments to desert tortoise occupancy and movement, and minimize the risk of fatalities (e.g., construction of fences and culverts along Highway 62, repair of culverts under railroads, etc.).</p> <p><i>Objective:</i> Maintain the integrity of the sand transport system and sand sources. Control invasive species on the sand dunes/ Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> prevent or mitigate projects that would have the potential to impede sand transport or would impact sand source areas.</p>	<p>Fish and Wildlife (incl. special status species)</p>
<p><i>Management Action:</i> Remove burros per CDCA plan.</p>	<p>Wild Horses and Burros</p>
<p><i>Allocation:</i> OHV use limited to designated routes. There are no designated hiking trails at this time</p>	<p>Trails and Travel Management</p>
<p><i>Objective:</i> Area would be managed within the Eastern Riverside Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Provide dispersed opportunities focused on enjoyment of the ACEC qualities.</p>	<p>Recreation</p>
<p><i>Objective:</i> Retain public lands.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> Acquire all inholdings from willing sellers</p>	<p>Land Tenure</p>
<p><i>Management Action:</i> Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC) within the ACEC would be ROW exclusion areas.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> Playas, dunes, and sensitive vegetation types outside of LWC would be avoidance areas for transmission ROWs and exclusion areas for all other types of ROWs.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> Desert dry wash woodland outside of LWC would be ROW avoidance areas. Where the ACEC overlaps the designated BLM Utility Corridor, the area is open for transmission ROW only (i.e., the integrity of the BLM Utility Corridor will be maintained), and avoidance for all other ROWs.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> All other areas in the ACEC would be ROW avoidance areas.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> ROWs in avoidance areas would be authorized on a case by case basis to meet public demand consistent with the goals and objectives of the ACEC. All relevant and importance values of the ACEC must be protected.</p> <p><i>Management Action:</i> all avoidance areas within the ACEC, ROW development and land use authorizations must ensure full protection, or be fully mitigated.</p>	<p>Rights of Way</p>

<p>Not an allowable use. Renewable energy development is not compatible with NLCS and ACEC unit values and criteria. Geothermal: Area is closed to geothermal leasing and development</p>	<p>Renewable Energy</p>
<p>Recommend withdrawal of the ACEC from locatable mineral entry.</p> <p>Continue to allow mineral material disposals on a case by-case basis subject to site specific environmental analysis. Allow no disposal of mineral material in Lands with Wilderness Characteristics.</p> <p>No-surface occupancy leasable minerals.</p>	<p>Locatable Minerals Mineral Materials Non-energy Leaseables</p>
<p>Objective: Under existing RMP, the Rice Valley Allotment is available for sheep grazing. A portion of the ACEC would remain available for grazing. Action: Fence Riparian Area Management Action: Should the permittee voluntarily relinquish grazing permit, the area would be made unavailable.</p>	<p>Livestock grazing</p>

# Chuckwalla to Chemehuevi tortoise linkage



## Preferred Alternative ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office



### ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Design Focus Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected

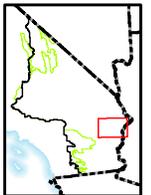
- Cities
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

### Land Status

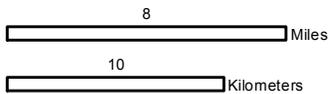
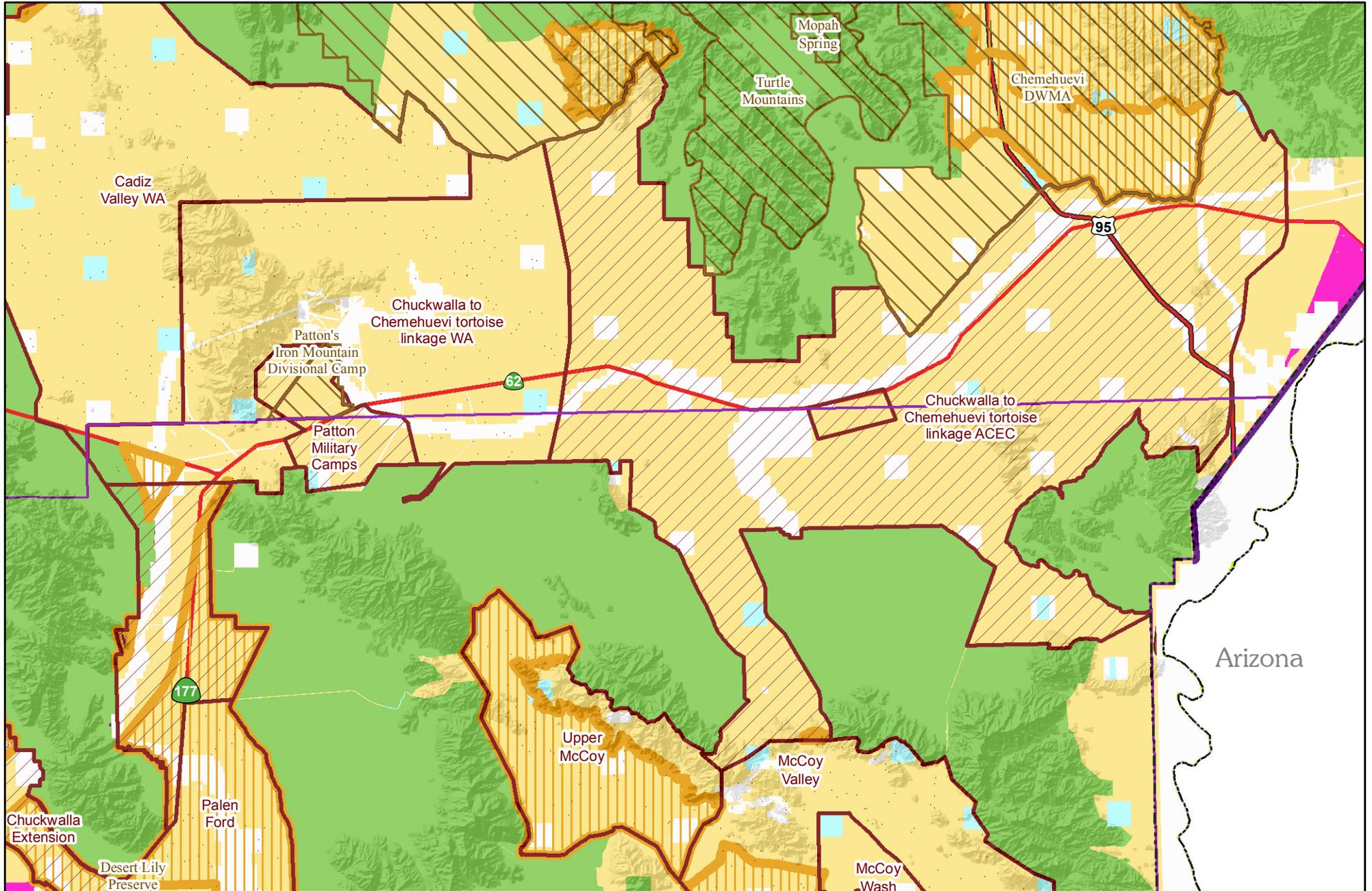
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

### GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



# Chuckwalla to Chemehuevi tortoise linkage ACEC & Wildlife Allocation



Alternative 1 ACECs  
 Date Printed: 7/28/2014  
 Prepared by BLM California State Office



## ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed Wildlife Allocation
- Legislatively and Legally Protected

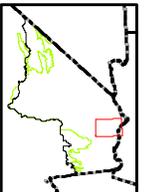
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

## Land Status

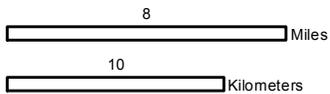
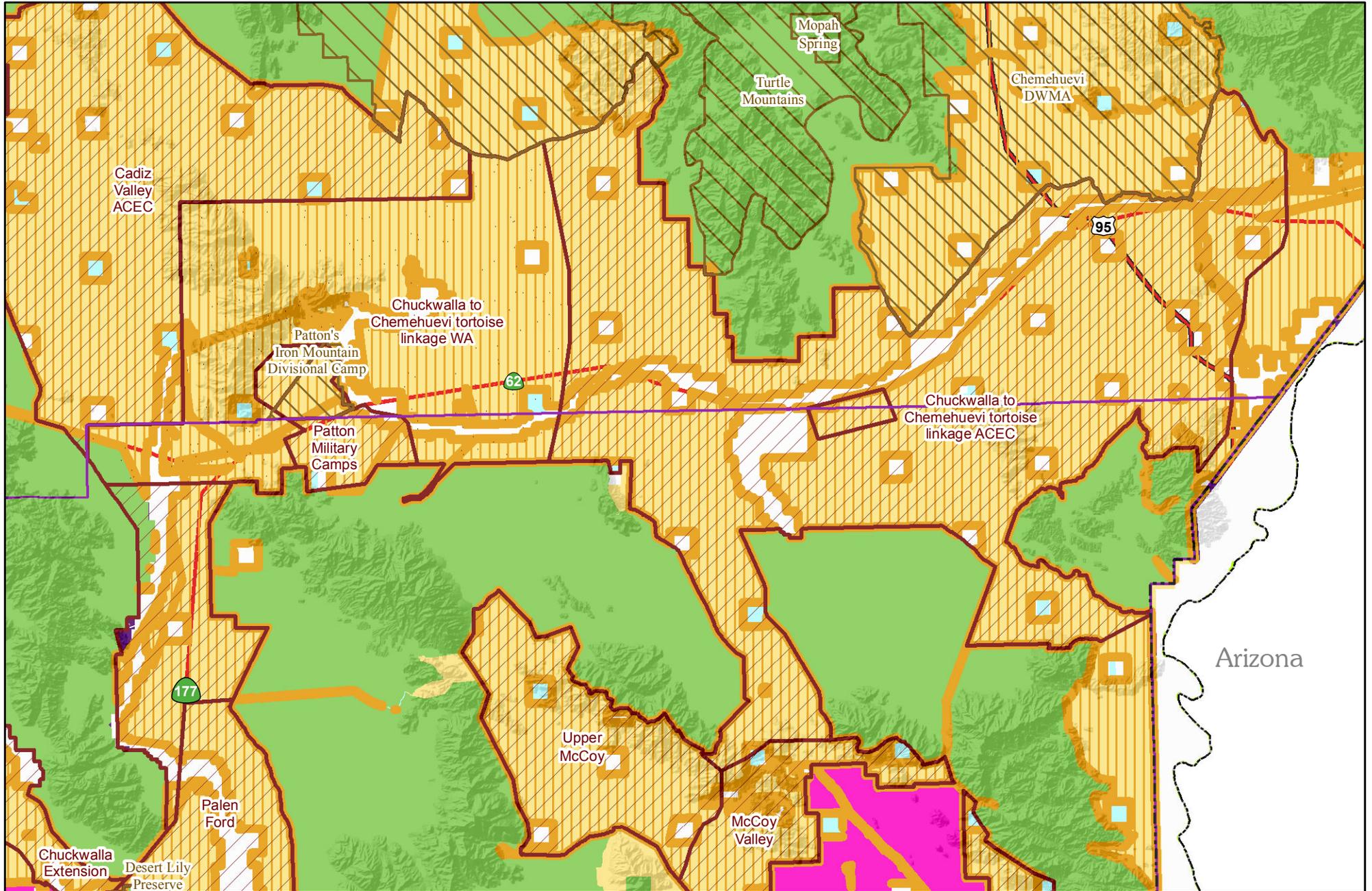
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

## GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



# Chuckwalla to Chemehuevi tortoise linkage ACEC & Wildlife Allocation



Alternative 2 ACECs  
 Date Printed: 7/28/2014  
 Prepared by BLM California State Office



## ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed Wildlife Allocation
- Legislatively and Legally Protected

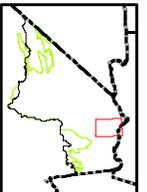
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

## Land Status

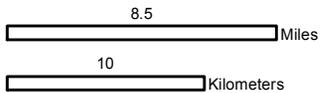
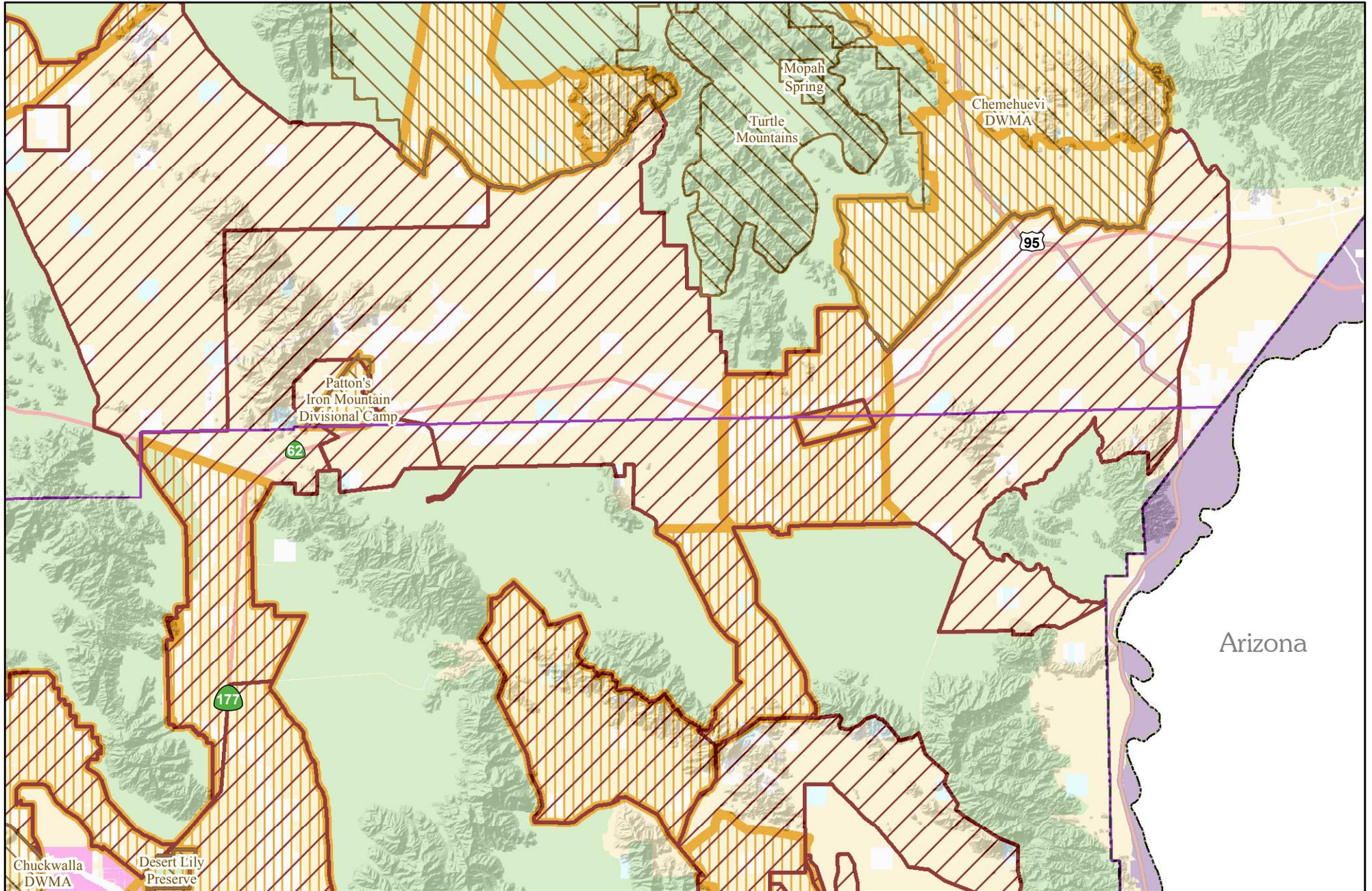
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

## GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



# Chuckwalla to Chemehuevi tortoise linkage



## Alternative 3 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013  
Prepared by BLM California State Office



### ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Design Focus Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected

- Cities
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

### Land Status

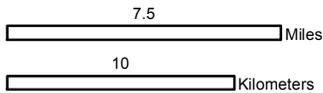
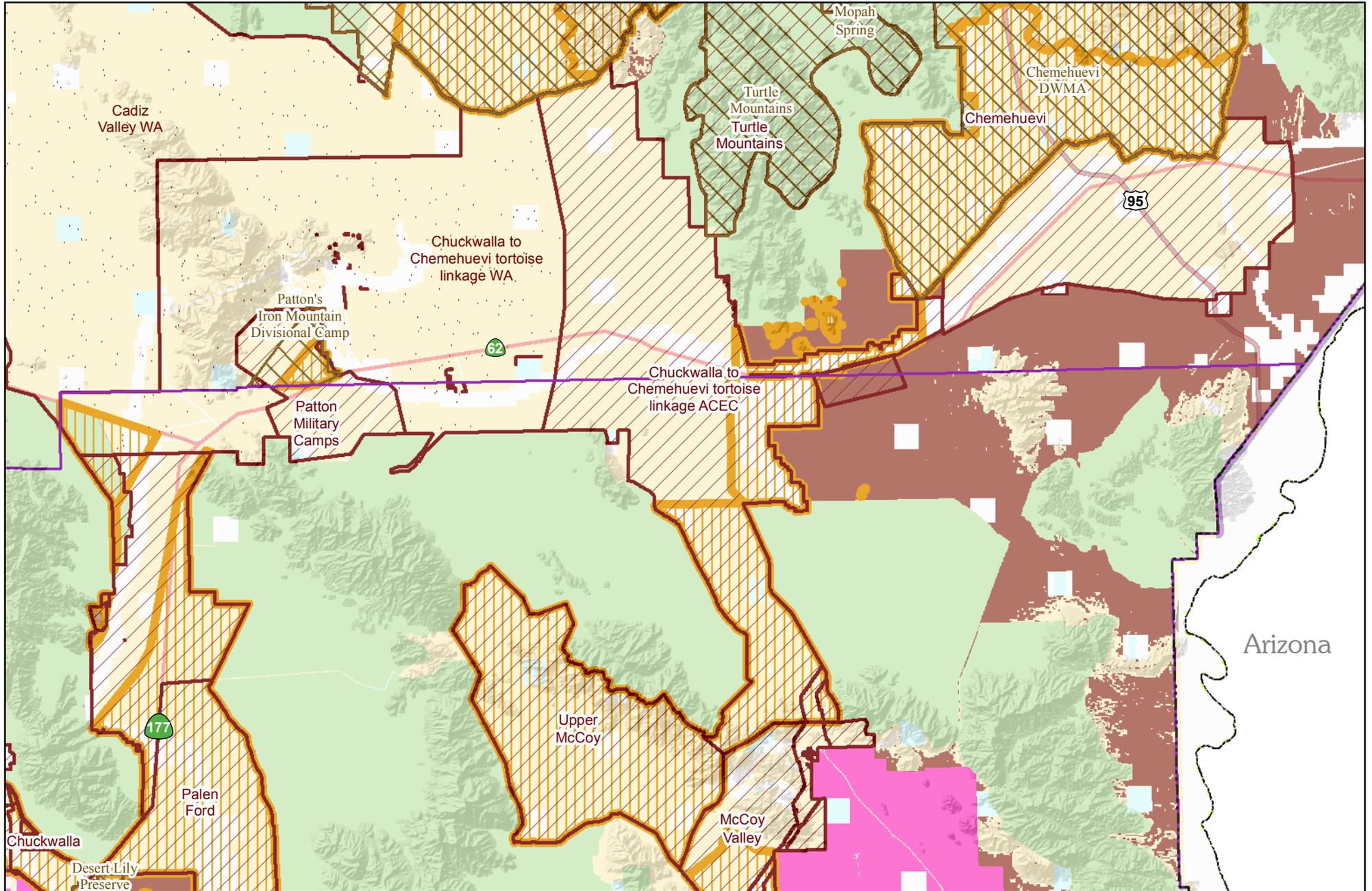
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

### GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



# Chuckwalla to Chemehuevi tortoise linkage ACEC



**Alternative 4 ACECs**  
 Date Printed: 8/6/2014  
 Prepared by BLM California State Office



### ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed Wildlife Allocation
- Legislatively and Legally Protected

### Design Focus Areas

- Design Focus Areas
- Variance Lands
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

### Land Status

- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

### GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

