McCoy Valley

Description/Location : The area is bordered on the north by the Palen-McCoy, Rice Valley, and Big Maria wilderness areas. Portions of the area are currently managed as the Big Maria Multi-species Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) and as multiple bighorn sheep WHMAs under the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan

Nationally Significant Values:

Ecological: The proposed ACEC would protect the upper bajadas and highly dissected alluvial fans along the base of the McCoy, Big Maria, and Little Maria mountains associated with the higher value desert tortoise habitat in the McCoy Valley. The McCoy Valley is proposed as one of the larger solar development areas in the California Desert. The ACEC would provide crucial desert tortoise habitat connectivity between the two major desert tortoise populations identified in the Colorado Desert (e.g., the Chuckwalla and Chemehuevi populations). The area contains bighorn sheep demes and corridors (demes and corridors in the Big and Little Maria mountains).

Cultural: There is an increased archaeological concern in this area from the Historic WWII Desert Training Center activities. Archaeological sites are known throughout the valley between the mountain pediments. Prehistoric Trails are commonly located along the higher bajada and low mountain pediment interfaces. Native Americans would have gathered resources provided by the dispersed microphyll woodlands along the washes, and hunted lagomorphs, and camped along washes and mountain pediments.

Scientific: There is a significant scientific informational value to the desert washes and the microphyll woodlands within them, and the wildlife that is attracted to these niches. Cuts along the washes reveal stratigraphy of laid down under aeolian alluvial and pluvial actions for thousands of years. Evidence that can contribute to knowledge of environmental and climactic changes over time can be gleaned from these strata.

Special Designations/ Management Plan/ Date: new proposal for ACEC designation, portions of the proposed ACEC are currently managed as Bighorn Sheep Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMAs) (NECO 2002) and as a Multi-species WHMA (NECO 2002).

Relevant and Significant Criteria: Relevant biological resources. Critical desert tortoise habitat and connectivity zones, Important bighorn sheep habitat and connectivity between populations, important plant habitat and associations.

Goals: Protect biological resources. Maintain bighorn sheep demes and corridors. Bighorn Sheep management goals and objectives are described in Section 2.3.1 in the NECO Plan. Maintain desert tortoise connectivity

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	0	26,200	0	1%
1	12,400	0	55,200	Wildlife Allocation
2	26,200	26,200	0	0.25%
3	12,400	50,000	0	0.1 or 1%
4	6,500	18,900	0	0.1 or 0.25%

*** 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 and the other identified disturbance cap is associated with all other resource values.**

Alternatives:

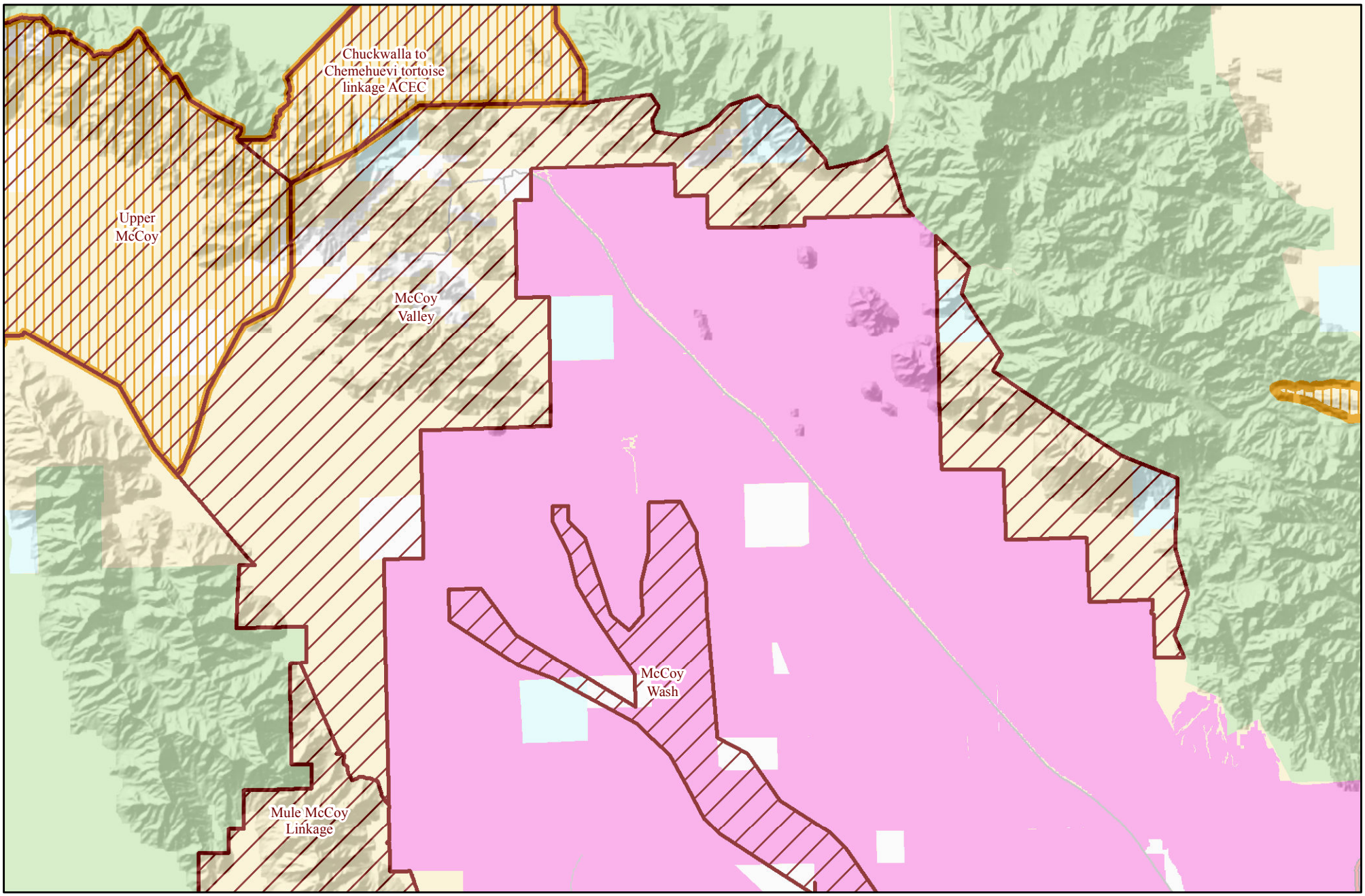
Under All Alternatives—This area (size and location vary between alternative, see table above and maps that follow) would be identified as an ACEC and/or Wildlife Allocation Area and would be managed to support and maintain wildlife habitat and connectivity.

No Action – this conservation area would not exist, as it does not exist currently. The currently identified Wildlife Habitat Management Areas would continue to exist and they would be managed as such.

Objectives (desired future conditions)/Allowable Uses/Management Actions	**Resource**
Objective: Protect the higher value desert tortoise habitat associated with the upper bajadas and highly dissected fans surrounding the McCoy Valley. Objective: Maintain bighorn sheep demes and corridors. Bighorn Sheep management goals and objectives are described in Section 2.3.1 in the NECO Plan.	Fish and Wildlife (incl. special status species)
Objective: Manage area as VRM III Action: Restore all undesignated OHV routes to meet VRM class III objectives.	Visual Resources
Objective: Protect wildlife habitat Management Action: OHV Limited to designated routes	Trails and Travel Management
Objective: Area would be managed within the Eastern Riverside Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Provide dispersed opportunities focused on enjoyment of the ACEC qualities. Portions of this ACEC overlap the Midland LTVA Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Please refer to the SRMA summary for details on recreation goals/management.	Recreation

Objective: Consolidate habitat management Management Action: Acquire inholdings from willing sellers	Land Tenure
Objective: Protect wildlife connectivity Management Action: Lands with Wilderness Characteristics would be ROW exclusion areas. Management Action: Avoidance zone for all new ROW except in existing utilities corridor Management Action: Locate new ROW within the existing corridor	Rights of Way
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	Renewable Energy
Objective: Protect wildlife connectivity Management Action: Recommend withdrawal of the ACEC from locatable mineral entry. Management Action: 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. Management Action: No-surface occupancy leasable minerals.	Locatable Minerals Mineral Materials Non-energy Leaseables

McCoy Valley



3 Miles

4 Kilometers

N

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

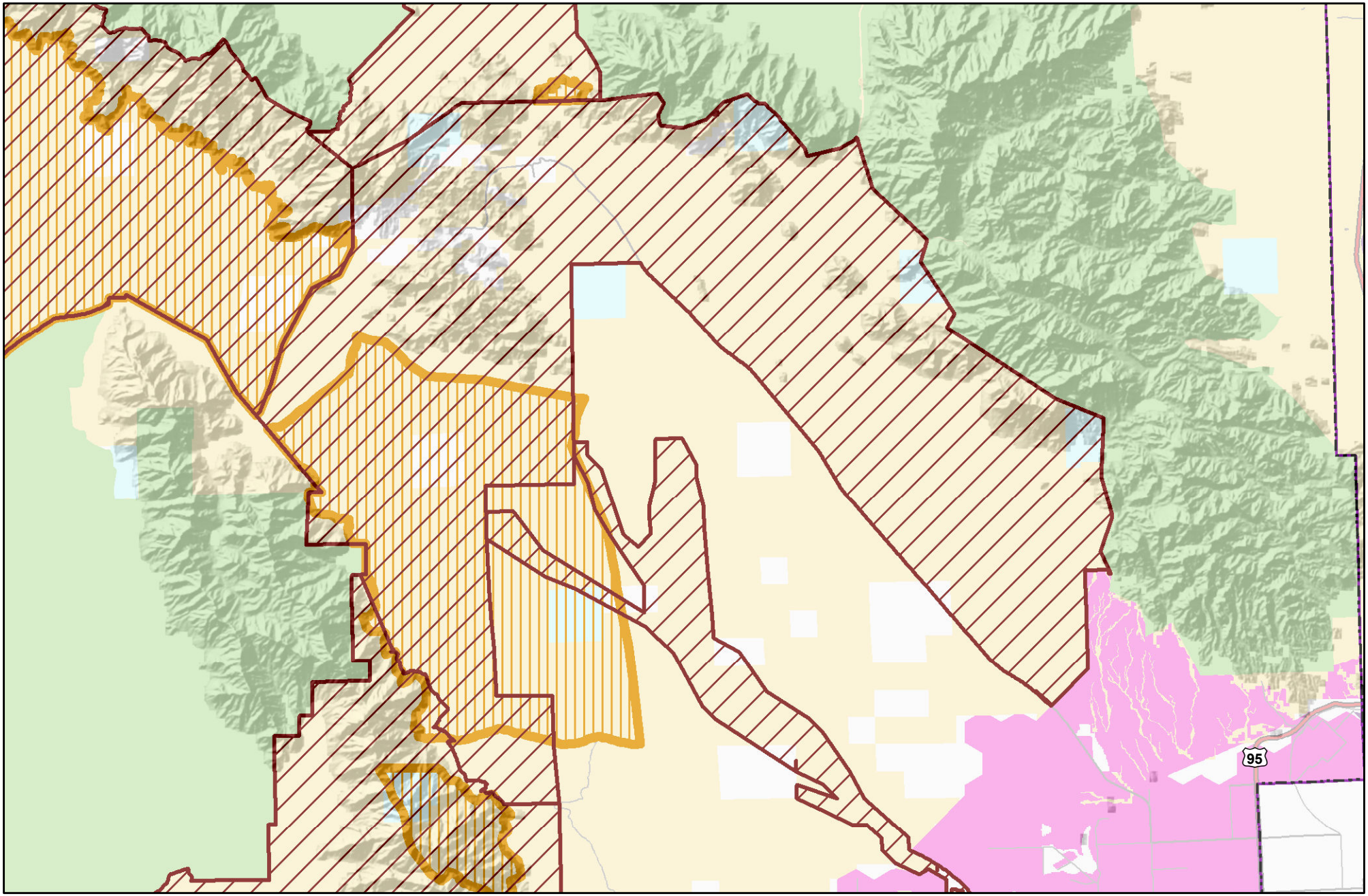
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

McCoy Valley



3.5 Miles

4.5 Kilometers

N

Alternative 1 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

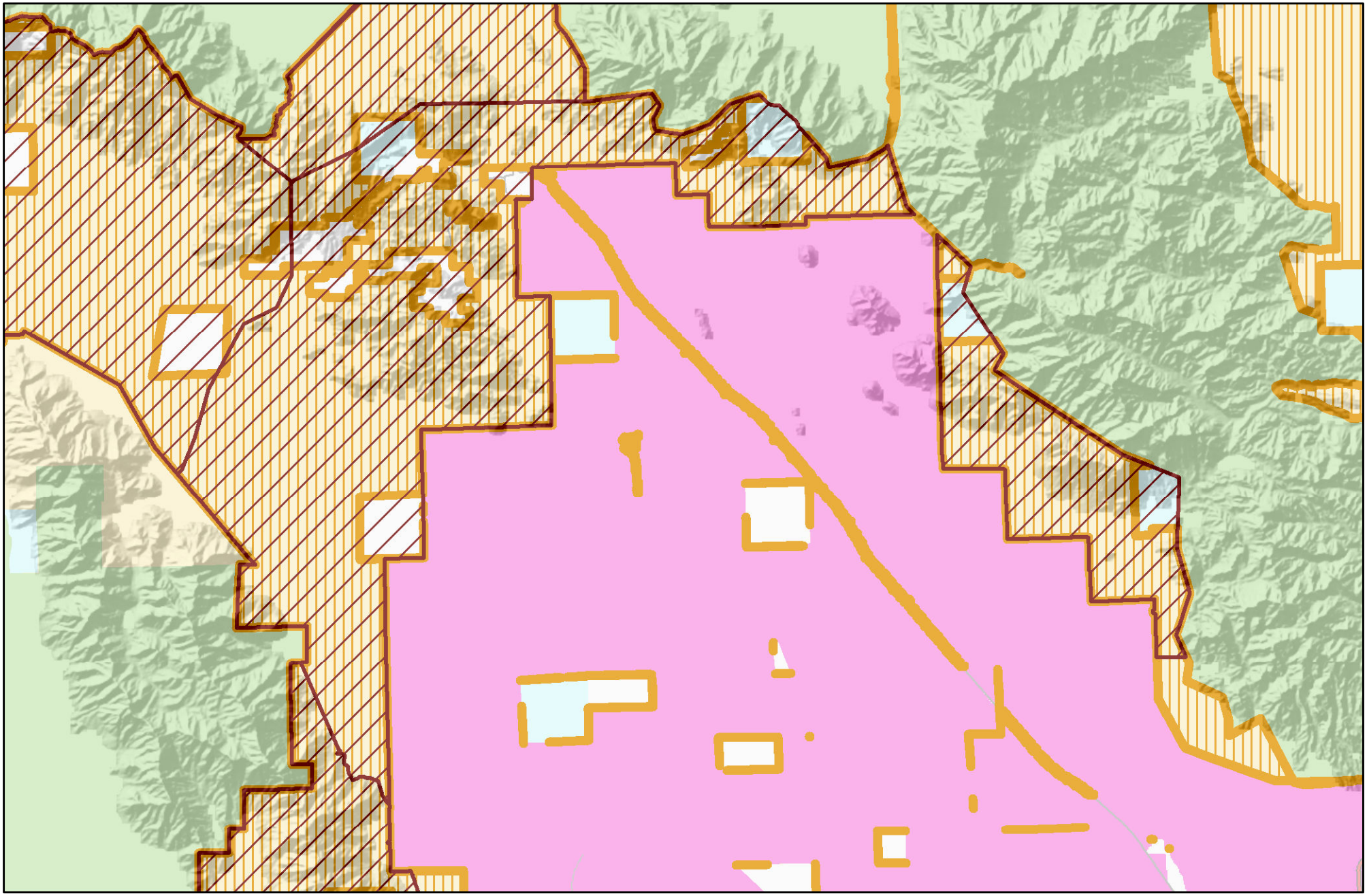
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

McCoy Valley



3 Miles

4 Kilometers

N

Alternative 2 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

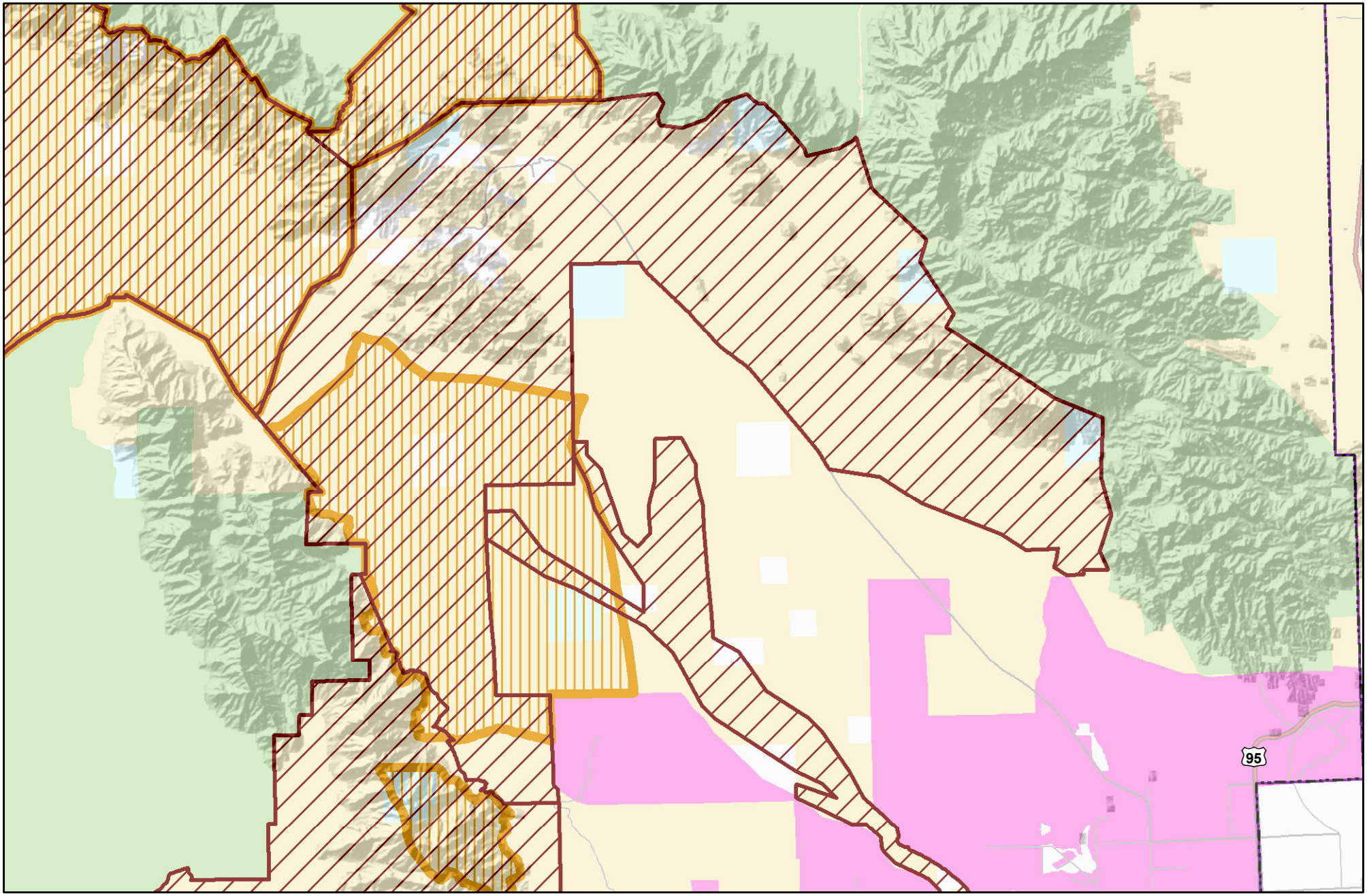
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

McCoy Valley



3.5 Miles

4.5 Kilometers

N

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

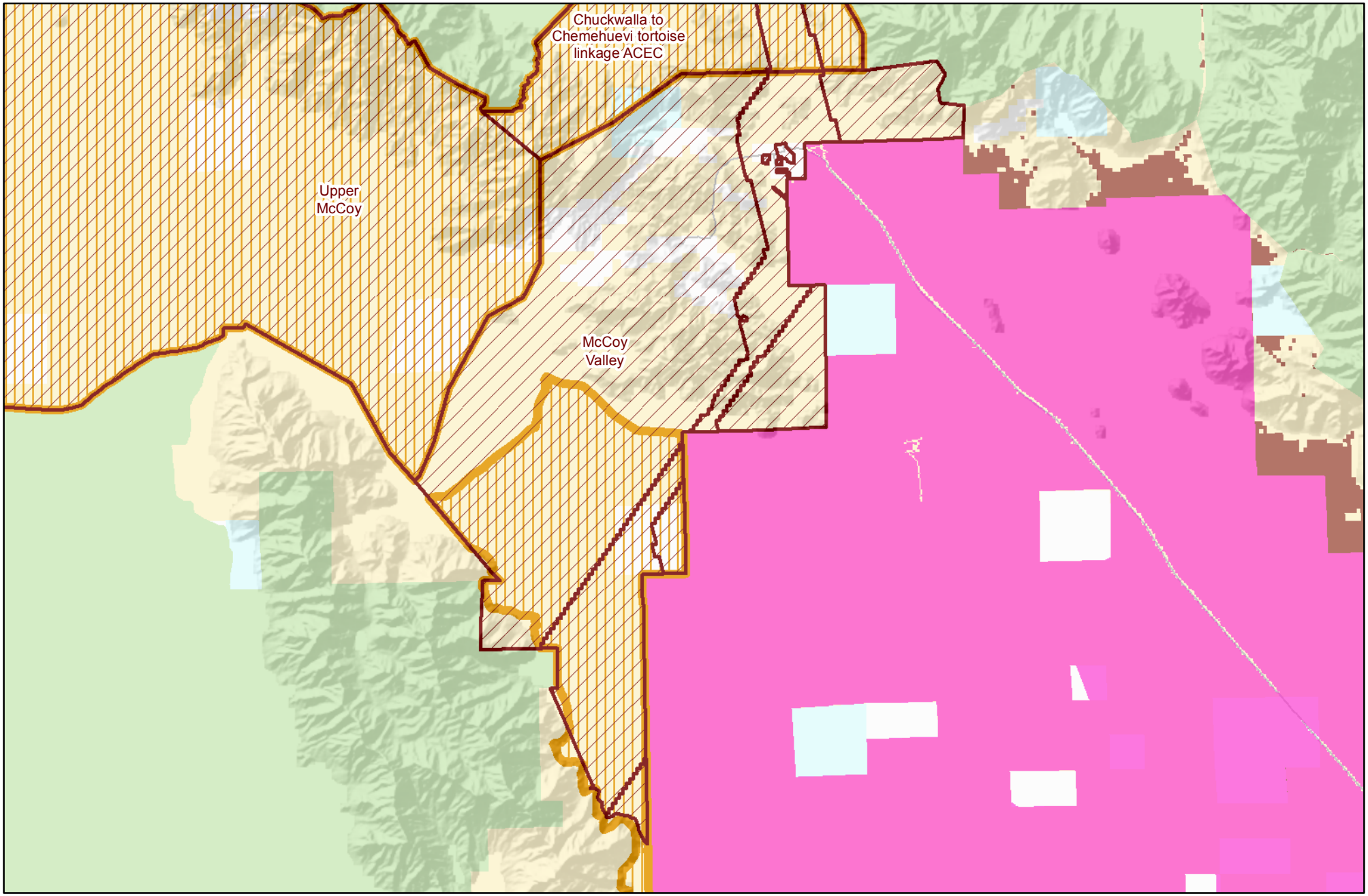
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

McCoy Valley



2.5 Miles

3.5 Kilometers

N

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
- 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