

CHAPTER 1.0

Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Palm Springs–South Coast Field Office (PSSCFO), is revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the South Coast Planning Area (Planning Area). The RMP revision will cover the federal surface and mineral estate managed by the PSSCFO within portions of five southern California counties (Map 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4).

This Draft RMP/EIS describes four alternatives for the revised land use plan (including the Preferred Alternative) and environmental consequences of each. Chapter 1 describes the purpose of and need for the plan, the role of BLM, and public participation in the proposed RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. Chapter 2 provides a description of each alternative land use plan. Chapter 3 describes the affected environment in the Planning Area. Chapter 4 describes potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects associated with each alternative land use plan and mitigation that would be incorporated. Chapter 5 discusses coordination and consultation during the RMP/EIS process.

The U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) BLM PSSCFO is the lead agency for the RMP/EIS. The lead agency has approval or disapproval authority over the description of the proposed action and alternatives, the format and analysis of the RMP/EIS, stakeholder collaboration, and public involvement procedures. The BLM must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and agency policies when addressing a wide variety of issues and analyzing a reasonable range of alternatives for the BLM-administered lands and resources within the Planning Area.

1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action

The purpose of the plan revision is to implement the BLM land use planning requirements established by Sections 201 and 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA, 43 U.S.C. 1711-1712) and the regulations in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1600. The need for the plan revision is to update the South Coast RMP (SCRMP) to: (1) ensure consistency, to the legal extent practical, with the various multi-species planning efforts and partnership agreements BLM is working to establish throughout the South Coast region; (2) re-evaluate management direction in light of new information and change in circumstances; (3) assess the impact of BLM management on threatened and endangered species listed since 1993 through formal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); (4) assess the energy related needs of the region and meet the objectives of the President's energy plan; and (5) address issues raised in scoping.

Bureau guidance (43 CFR 1610.5-5) suggests amending or revising an RMP under several circumstances including the need to:

- a) Consider a proposal or action that does not conform to the plan;

- b) Implement new or revised policy that changes land use plan decisions, such as an approved conservation agreement between the BLM and the USFWS;
- c) Respond to new, intensified, or changed uses on public land; and
- d) Consider significant new information from resource assessments, monitoring, or scientific studies that change land use decisions.

Since completion of the 1994 SCRMP, the Southern California region has undergone many changes that affect the management of public lands. Changes include accelerated population growth and demand for housing, a greater emphasis on local planning for conservation of sensitive habitat and open space, increased demand for water, energy, and energy related transmission projects, and a heightened interest in fire management planning. The BLM and its partners have also acquired over 13,000 acres to support conservation efforts of local governments. Management of these lands, and lands pending acquisition, were not addressed in the 1994 SCRMP.

The BLM has continued coordinating with Federal, State and local government agencies, Tribal Nations and private entities to effectively manage the public lands. Especially significant is the increasing importance of multi-jurisdictional planning efforts such as multi-species habitat conservation planning (in compliance with Section 10 and Section 7 of the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended [ESA]) and the State's Natural Communities Conservation Planning (NCCP) program. The rapid urbanization of Southern California and parallel loss of natural habitat has prompted the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list many new species as threatened or endangered. To comply with the requirements of the ESA and the California Endangered Species Act, local jurisdictions are pooling their resources to address threatened and endangered species habitat conservation from a regional perspective. This regional approach is also in line with established principles of conservation biology. The BLM has participated in many of these planning efforts and has agreed to provide a portion of the Federal funding and resources needed to ensure the success of conservation planning.

In September 2000, BLM completed an evaluation of the SCRMP (per BLM H-1601-1 Land Use Planning Handbook) to determine whether the land use plan decisions and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis were still valid and if any changes were needed. Changes in some of the specific land use allocations are warranted to address new circumstances which have arisen as described above and fully described below under Anticipated Planning Issues and Management Concerns. The evaluation recommended that a revision of the SCRMP would be appropriate to address these new circumstances.

1.2 Planning Area

The South Coast Planning Area encompasses portions of five highly urbanized southern California counties (San Diego, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange and Los Angeles) with a growing population estimated at over 20 million. The planning area covers the portion of the BLM's Palm Springs–South Coast Resource Area that is outside of the

California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA). The overall South Coast planning area covers nearly nine million acres, most of which are private lands.

This plan will guide future management of approximately 300,820 acres of BLM-administered public land, amounting to 3% of the land base in the planning area. This includes 133,820 acres of BLM-administered surface land (referred to as BLM public land) and 167,000 acres of federal mineral ownership where the surface is privately owned (referred to as BLM split estate land). The 133,820 acres of BLM public land are scattered over a five-county area in 278 separate parcels. Ninety-five percent of the BLM land base in the planning area is in western San Diego and western Riverside Counties, with the remainder in southwestern San Bernardino County and northern Los Angeles County. These BLM public land parcels are listed in Appendix A.

Other federally owned lands within the planning area include approximately 1.6 million acres within four National Forests, 11,755 acres in four National Wildlife Refuges, 222,000 acres within federal military reservations, over 8,000 acres under the management of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service, and approximately 160,000 acres within Indian reservations. In addition to the management of the BLM public and BLM split estate lands, the BLM has responsibility for administering mineral leasing on other federal lands in accordance with the land use plans of other federal agencies.

Collectively the five counties within the planning area are experiencing a growth rate of over ten percent, which has resulted in an increase in population from 16.8 million in 1990 to 21.1 million in 2007. Urban expansion is increasingly taking over the remaining open spaces. BLM public land, in conjunction with land in the four National Forests, forms the basis for much of the remaining open space in the region. A multitude of human social and economic needs shape the existing environment and define the challenges for future management of the BLM public lands within this area. Heavy demands are placed on natural resources for urban development, such as sand and gravel for construction, land for community expansion, landfills, utility corridors, transportation corridors, and communication systems. As urban expansion continues in southern California, demand for undeveloped land and the resources associated with it will continue to increase.

At the same time, extensive loss of wildlife habitat has resulted from past development, leading to several species being listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Although attention is focused on the few most critically affected species, the listing of an individual species is really a symptom of broader diminishing biodiversity caused by both direct destruction and degradation of habitat and habitat fragmentation into areas too small to be viable for sustaining populations of some species. Several southern California counties and cities have developed habitat conservation and open space plans to help maintain biodiversity. These habitat conservation plans (HCPs) include BLM and other public lands as “core areas” of habitat conservation reserves.

To facilitate the planning process, the planning area has been divided into four separate management areas shown on Maps 1-1, 1-2, 1-3, and 1-4. The Beauty Mountain

Management Area overlaps both the Riverside–San Bernardino County and San Diego County Management Areas, and is not shown on all maps as a distinct management area. Although these areas are relatively large and BLM parcels within them are widely scattered, the management areas have a degree of commonality with regard to resource characteristics and planning issues. The division of management areas is generally along county lines, which serves as a general geographic reference for identifying where the lands are located, and also allows them to be evaluated in the jurisdictional context of local government.

1.2.1 Los Angeles County Management Area

The Los Angeles County Management Area includes all but the northeastern desert portion of Los Angeles County, and contains approximately 5,500 acres of BLM public land and an additional 36,000 acres of BLM split estate land. Much of the BLM public land has high to moderate potential for oil and gas, and some of the BLM split estate lands in the Soledad Canyon area contain valuable sand and gravel deposits. This management area also includes Orange County. However, other than the rocks and islands of the California Coastal National Monument, and a parcel of split estate land that lies across the border of Orange County and Riverside County, there are no remaining parcels of BLM public land in Orange County.

1.2.2 Riverside–San Bernardino County Management Area

The Riverside–San Bernardino County Management Area includes the western portions of these counties. There are approximately 47,000 acres of BLM public land and an additional 46,000 acres of BLM split estate lands. Most of the land is comprised of scattered parcels in Riverside County. A number of these parcels contain habitat for several sensitive species, most notably the Stephens' kangaroo rat. The 1,000 acres in San Bernardino County include the Santa Ana River Wash Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which contains populations of three federally endangered species. The management area also contains valuable sand and gravel resources, and some lands have potential for other mineral resources, including areas with low or moderate potential for oil and gas. This management area also includes the portion of the Beauty Mountain region in Riverside County, which contains the Beauty Mountain Wilderness and part of the Million Dollar Spring ACEC. These lands have value for watershed protection, wildlife habitat, grazing, and recreational use.

1.2.3 Beauty Mountain Management Area

The Beauty Mountain Management Area includes over 30,000 acres of BLM public land in both Riverside and San Diego Counties. In addition, there are approximately 21,500 acres of BLM split estate lands. The management area is north of State Highway 79, south of the Cahuilla Indian Reservation, and west of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Most of the BLM public lands are in a few large parcels and form a nearly consolidated block of BLM public land ownership. The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 established the Beauty Mountain Wilderness and Agua Tibia Wilderness within the

planning area. The lands have value for watershed, wilderness, wildlife habitat, and also have potential to provide for recreational use.

1.2.4 San Diego County Management Area

The San Diego County Management Area includes some 85,000 acres of BLM public land and an additional 81,000 acres of BLM split estate lands in the western San Diego County. The largest blocks of BLM public lands are found in the Beauty Mountain region and in the mountainous terrain between Interstate Highway 8 and the U.S.-Mexico border. Lands within the management area contain many federally listed and sensitive plant and animal species and unique habitats, the Otay Mountain Wilderness, three ACECs, two Wilderness Study Areas, and provide opportunities for recreational use. The management area does not include the area covered by BLM's Eastern San Diego County Resource Management Plan.

1.3 Vision Statement

The BLM will manage the South Coast Resource Management Area to conserve the area's rich and unique biodiversity and maintain economic viability for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

To achieve this vision the BLM will:

- Foster appreciation and stewardship of the unique habitat and provide opportunities for local involvement in area conservation.
- Ensure consistency with the habitat conservation plans in the management of BLM lands.
- Provide recreation opportunities that compliment conservation of biodiversity.
- Provide for the uses of cultural and natural resources in a manner that sustains the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands.
- Enhance shared conservation and border security initiatives through collaboration with local, federal, international agencies and organizations.
- Respect Native American values and provide for traditional uses of natural and cultural resources.
- Protect and enhance wildlife habitat emphasizing species dependant on coastal sage scrub and chaparral.
- Protect and enhance watersheds.
- Foster cooperative stewardship of the resources.

1.4 Planning Process

The BLM uses an ongoing planning process to ensure that land use plans and implementation decisions remain consistent and comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. The BLM develops RMPs and makes decisions using the best information available and extensive public involvement.

Developing or revising RMPs also involves a collaborative approach to planning with BLM working with Tribal, state, and local governments, and Federal agencies and other interested parties; from the earliest stages and throughout the planning process. At the same time, the BLM should consider existing plans of Tribal, state, and local governments, and other Federal agencies. The BLM began this planning process with a workshop on Collaborative Planning attended by BLM staff, Federal, state, and local agencies, and members of the public and user groups. Several scoping workshops were also held to solicit input from the public on the issues and planning criteria for the proposed RMP Revision. Three public agencies accepted invitations to participate as Cooperating Agencies throughout the planning process and have provided valuable information on resource and issues affecting their lands within the plan area.

RMPs may be revised or amended as the BLM acquires information and knowledge of new circumstances relevant to land and resource values, uses, and environmental concerns.

The specific steps in the development of an RMP include:

- 1) Issue a Notice of Intent to Prepare the RMP
- 2) Conduct Scoping (i.e., public process to assist in the identification of planning issues)
- 3) Analyze the management situation
- 4) Develop alternatives to address planning issues
- 5) Analyze the effects of the alternatives
- 6) Select a preferred alternative
- 7) Prepare a draft RMP/draft EIS
- 8) Provide a 90-day public comment period
- 9) Prepare a proposed RMP/final EIS based on comments received
- 10) Provide a 30-day public protest period upon publication of the proposed RMP/Final EIS
- 11) Approve the RMP through a record of decision once the protests have been resolved
- 12) Implement, monitor, and evaluate plan decisions

The format and outline for the plan revision adheres to guidance provided in the Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), the 43 CFR 1600 planning regulations, 40 CFR 1500 regulations promulgated from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), and all other applicable laws. The draft plan revision and alternatives shall be published together with the draft EIS. The proposed plan revision and alternatives shall be published together with the final EIS, followed by the Record of Decision (ROD) and approved Resource Management Plan.

Public comments were accepted in written or electronic format. Verbal comments were not accepted and the BLM does not propose to record verbal comments at public workshops or meetings. Comments will be analyzed after a 90-day review period for the draft plan revision/EIS. All comments will be considered before the proposed plan revision/EIS is released for a 30-day public review and protest period in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5-2. The final EIS will also include public comments received on the draft EIS and the BLM responses.

Alternatives, including a No Action Alternative (i.e., current management) have been developed to respond to the issues identified at the onset of the process. Each alternative comprises a distinct resource management plan, and provides different approaches to resolving the planning issues and concerns. These alternatives have been developed in close coordination with cooperating agencies, interested publics, and other agencies through a series of workshops and meetings. The objective in alternative formulation is to develop realistic solutions which could be implemented.

1.4.1 Related Planning and Proposed Plan Amendments

In 2004 and 2005, two amendments were proposed to the SCRMP. The Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Amendment and the San Diego Border Mountains Plan Amendment were started to address issues left unresolved in the 1994 SCRMP. Neither of these plan amendments was completed and both proposed amendments will be included as alternatives in the plan revision. Public scoping comments gathered during the process for both amendments are included in this plan revision. The status of the proposed amendments was presented during public scoping meetings and workshops for the SCRMP revision.

1.4.1.1 Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Amendment

On April 26, 2004, the BLM published a Notice of Intent to amend the 1994 South Coast Resource Management Plan. The proposed amendment and EIS would describe and analyze alternatives for a proposed land exchange with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (SBVWCD). The proposed action would affect land designated as an ACEC and Research Natural Area (RNA) for protection of two plants federally listed as endangered, Santa Ana River woollystar and slender horn spineflower as well as the federally-listed endangered San Bernardino Merriam's kangaroo rat.

This proposed land exchange is part of a multi-jurisdictional Land Management and Habitat Conservation Plan proposed for approximately 4,365 acres located in the upper

Santa Ana River Wash area in southwestern San Bernardino County. The proposed plan coordinates management between state and federal agencies, local government, and private-property owners (mining companies) to accommodate existing and anticipated future activities within the Santa Ana River Wash Planning Area. The plan proposes the continuation of existing water conservation facilities; the creation of a habitat conservation area; maintains a flood management program; continues and, in some cases, expands roadways and utilities; promotes maintenance of existing trails and construction of new trails; expands two existing sand and gravel mining operations; and executes the proposed BLM land exchange.

Public workshops and scoping meetings were held in the cities of Highland and Redlands in May 2004. The alternatives developed for the Plan Amendment are: (A) Proposed Action (exchange approximately 508 acres of public lands with restrictive covenants for Conservation District lands of equal value), (B) Modification of existing land use designations on specified BLM land to permit mining activities, and (C) No Action Alternative (the exchange proposal would be rejected). Dominant issues identified so far include threatened, endangered, and other special status species, mineral resources, water resources, recreation, visual resources, cultural resources, land management, and traffic management.

In May 2008, the SBVWCD, the mining companies, and the cities of Highland and Redlands completed a Draft Land Management and Habitat Conservation Plan. The BLM's Draft Plan Amendment and Draft EIS for the proposed land exchange was released for public review in July 2009. Based on additional biological data and comments by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the BLM, the SBVWCD, and other affected parties are considering modifications to the proposed land exchange as of November 2010. Because of the complexities and long history of these negotiations, this process and the proposed alternatives will not be included in the RMP revision. If a decision is reached on the proposed land exchange which modifies the ACEC boundaries, this will be reflected in the Proposed Plan and Final EIS.

1.4.1.2 San Diego Border Mountains Plan Amendment

Since completion of the 1994 SCRMP, a significant issue has been the increasing importance of multi-jurisdictional planning efforts such as the San Diego County Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The MSCP was developed in compliance with the ESA and the State's NCCP program. The MSCP, covering over 80 species and intended to preserve over 170,000 acres of habitat in San Diego County, was signed in 1997.

The MSCP identified over 24,700 acres of BLM-managed public land as the Otay/Kuchamaa Cooperative Management Area and as a "core area" of the MSCP. In an MOU between BLM, local governments, and state and federal wildlife agencies, the BLM agreed to cooperate in the design, land acquisition, and management of the MSCP to promote biological diversity. Since 1994, the BLM acquired over 11,000 acres of sensitive habitat in support of the MSCP. These new federal lands and MSCP designations are not addressed by the 1994 SCRMP. In November 1999, the President signed the Otay Mountain Wilderness Act, designating 16,895 acres of public land as part of the

National Wilderness Preservation System. New circumstances, such as those described above, prompted the need for an amendment to the South Coast RMP.

The BLM Palm Springs–South Coast Field Office initiated a plan amendment to address these issues in 2005. Scoping meetings and public comments indicated that the major issues for the San Diego Border Mountains Plan Amendment were consistency with the MSCP, habitat protection, public access, roads and trails, and recreation use. The purpose of the San Diego Border Mountains Plan Amendment was to: (1) ensure consistency, to the legal extent possible, with the various multi-species planning efforts and partnership agreements BLM has established in southern San Diego County; (2) re-evaluate management direction in light of new acquisitions, designations, and change in circumstances; (3) complete route-of-travel inventories and designations; and (4) assess the impact of BLM management on threatened and endangered species listed since 1994 through formal consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Shortly after beginning the plan amendment, the BLM Washington Office directed and funded the Field Office to complete a revision for the entire South Coast Resource Management Plan. The work started for the San Diego Border Mountains Plan Amendment will be included in the South Coast RMP Revision. This includes the results of public scoping held in 2006, route inventories for the Otay/Border Mountain Plan Amendment, and the cultural and biological surveys for the inventoried route of travel network.

1.5 Decision Framework

Defining the planning issues and planning criteria represents the first steps in narrowing the scope of the RMP revision. The planning issues and planning criteria provide the framework in which RMP decisions are made and refer to what is established or determined by the final (approved) RMP. The RMP will provide land use plan decisions for the following categories:

- Physical, biological, and heritage resources
- Resource uses and support
- Special designations

Within these categories, the planning team develops management strategies and viable options for addressing planning issues. The management strategies provide the building blocks from which BLM develops overall management scenarios and, eventually, the more detailed resource management alternatives. The resource management alternatives reflect a reasonable range of management options that fall within limits set by the planning criteria. The planning issues and planning criteria used to revise the existing plan are described in the following sections.

1.5.1 Public Scoping

1.5.1.1 Collaborative Planning Workshop

The BLM Palm Springs–South Coast Field Office held a public workshop and class on Planning Concepts (BLM Course 1610-06), January 23-25, 2007, in Temecula, California. BLM invited a wide array of public agencies and non-profit interest groups. Along with twelve members of the BLM Planning Team, ten representatives of federal, state, and local agencies attended, and three members of public interest groups. Twenty-five people attended the workshop.

1.5.1.2 Notice of Intent

The Notice of Intent to Prepare a Resource Management Plan Revision and Associated Environmental Impact Statement for the South Coast Planning Area, California was published in the *Federal Register* on August 7, 2007. The notice is included in Appendix B. BLM sent out a press release announcing the time and location of the public scoping meetings on November 21, 2007. The formal public scoping period began August 7, 2007 and closed January 11, 2008.

1.5.1.3 Public Scoping Meetings

The BLM held Open House and public scoping meetings to gather public comment regarding the proposed SCRMP in San Diego, Riverside, and Los Angeles Counties in 2007. The meetings were held at the Mountain Empire Community Center in Campo on December 5; the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in San Diego on December 6; the Mary Phillips Senior Center in Temecula on December 10; and at the George Carvalho Activities Center in Santa Clarita on December 12. All of the meetings were held from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. A total of 75 people attended the meetings (32 in Campo, 16 in San Diego, 24 in Temecula, and 3 in Santa Clarita).

In addition to the four public scoping meetings, BLM staff met with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the USFWS, the Counties of San Diego and Riverside, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and the Department of Homeland Security on several occasions to discuss their interests in the planning area. Coordination meetings were also held with CDFG and USFWS staff to discuss concurrent planning for the Rancho Jamul Ecological Reserve (CDFG) and the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge (USFWS). In June 2008, a Social and Economic Workshop was also conducted for the Planning Area, in Temecula.

The BLM received a total of 53 letters, fax, or e-mail comments. The majority of letters were from individuals. Comments were also received from the California Wilderness Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, the San Diego Off-Road Coalition, the Riverside County Habitat Conservation Agency, the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve, the City of Temecula, the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District, and the Navy Region Southwest. (See Section 1.5.2 Planning Issues, below, and

Appendix C - *Results of Scoping* for details on the issues and concerns that were raised by the public).

1.5.1.4 Cooperating Agencies

In 2005, the BLM amended its planning regulations to ensure that it engages its governmental partners consistently and effectively through the Cooperating Agency (CA) relationship whenever land use plans are prepared or revised. State agencies, local governments, tribal governments, and other federal agencies may serve as CAs. CEQ regulations recognize two criteria for CA status: jurisdiction by law and special expertise. The BLM regulations incorporate these criteria. The BLM sent out letters to invite agencies and tribes to participate in the planning process as Cooperating Agencies. Invitations were sent to 29 tribes and to 27 federal, state, and local agencies. The following agencies agreed to be Cooperating Agencies:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs, Southern California Agency
- San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy
- Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority
- Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians

In addition to the Cooperating Agency process, the BLM has other agreements with agencies to facilitate planning. The BLM coordinates and consults with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concerning cultural resources within the Planning Area. The BLM has a national Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the USFWS to cooperate on Section 7 Consultation for the ESA. CDFG has a statewide Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the BLM and would use this agreement to work collaboratively with the PSSCFO.

Consultation and coordination is discussed in further detail in Chapter 5.

1.5.2 Planning Issues

The BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook defines planning issues as "...disputes or controversies about existing and potential land and resource allocations, levels of resource use, production, and related management practices" (DOI BLM 2005e). Issues identified during scoping for this RMP revision process comprise three categories:

- Issues within the scope of the EIS that are used to develop alternatives or are otherwise addressed in the EIS.
- Issues outside the scope of the EIS or that could require policy, regulatory, or administrative actions.
- Issues that were considered but rejected from further analysis.

Those planning issues determined to be within the scope of the EIS are used to develop one or more of the alternatives or are addressed in other parts of the EIS. A reasonable range of alternatives provides various scenarios describing how BLM and cooperating agencies can address key planning issues including the management of resources and

resource uses in the Planning Area. In other words, key planning issues serve as the rationale for alternative development.

The BLM identified 12 preliminary issues which were presented for review and consideration during scoping. These preliminary issues were published in the NOI and in handouts distributed at public scoping meetings. In general, the public, interest groups, and government agencies identified the following issues as important for management of the public lands in the South Coast Planning Area. These issues will be carried forward through the development of the alternatives for the plan revision.

- The need to conserve public lands for species recovery and to support collaborative efforts with local governments for habitat conservation;
- The need to provide adequate access, open space, and opportunities for safe recreation and visitation on public lands;
- Wilderness characteristics of acquired lands;
- Wildland fire and fuels management.

Other key planning issues identified for this EIS include: special designation areas, land health, minerals, range management – livestock grazing, air resources, soil resources, water resources, vegetative resources, wildlife resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, visual resources, public health and safety, social and economic impacts, and environmental justice.

1.5.2.1 Issues Eliminated from Detailed Analysis or Further Consideration

Issues beyond the scope of the RMP planning process include all issues not related to decisions that would occur as a result of the planning process. They include decisions not under the jurisdiction of the PSSCFO or are beyond the capability of the BLM to resolve as part of the planning process.

Most of the comments raised during public scoping were within the scope of the RMP revision and addressed issues that were developed by the BLM. Some comments and issues will be more appropriately addressed in activity level planning such as for Special Recreation Area Management Plans. Examples would be comments regarding hunting and target shooting, development of specific campgrounds or other facilities, rockhounding and wood collecting, law enforcement methods and fines, and staffing levels for the BLM. Other comments addressed issues that are outside the scope of an RMP, or outside the jurisdiction of the BLM. Issues identified in this category include the following:

- Establish a Wild Horse and Burro Herd Management Area (HMA) for Beauty Mountain.

The BLM has not identified or inventoried any wild and free roaming wild horses or burros as having occupied habitat on public lands in the South Coast Planning Area prior to 1971, and no HMAs have been established pursuant to the Wild Horse and

Burro Act or BLM planning regulations (43 CFR 4710.1). The public lands in the Coyote Canyon HMA, in the adjacent California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA), were transferred to the State of California for inclusion in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, and the HMA was deleted from the CDCA Plan through a Plan Amendment in 1998. Further discussion of grazing and allotments in the vicinity of Beauty Mountain is included in the Range Management – Livestock Grazing sections of Chapter 2 and 3.

- Determination of validity of RS 2477 claims should be deferred pending DOI clarification of BLM's legal requirements.

The BLM will not address RS 2477 claims in the RMP revision. Designation of routes as open, limited, or closed as part of the RMP does not imply a final decision by BLM on RS 2477 claims that may be made by the state or counties.

- Eliminate mining and logging that benefits profit-making businesses. Only allow logging and other surface disturbing activities when needed for ecosystem health.

The South Coast Planning Area does not contain forest product resources, and logging is not an activity that is occurring or is anticipated. Mining on public lands is addressed by law and regulation unless public lands are withdrawn from mineral entry.

- BLM should not allow commercial development such as homes and shopping centers on public lands in Southern California.

Public lands are not available for private homes or commercial developments. Public lands that may be available for sale or disposal will be addressed under the land tenure alternatives.

1.5.3 Planning Criteria

Planning criteria are the standards, rules, and guidelines that help guide the RMP process. These criteria influence all aspects of the planning process, including inventory and data collection, development of issues to be addressed, formulation of alternatives, estimation of impacts, and selection of the Preferred Alternative. In conjunction with the planning issues, these criteria ensure that the planning process is focused and incorporates appropriate analyses. Planning criteria are developed from appropriate laws, regulations, and policies. The criteria also help guide the final plan selection and are used as a basis for evaluating the responsiveness of the planning options.

Additional planning criteria can be added at any point in the planning process.

A preliminary list of planning criteria for the SCRMP revision was made available for public review and comment when the Notice of Intent is released. No comments from scoping were received which would change the preliminary planning criteria, and these will be carried forward in the planning process.

1.5.3.1 General Planning Criteria

- The plan will be completed in compliance with the FLPMA and all other applicable laws.
- The planning process will include an environmental impact statement that will comply with NEPA standards.
- The plan will establish new guidance and identify existing guidance upon which the BLM will rely in managing public lands within the South Coast Planning Area.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management.
- The plan will determine which lands are designated as available or not available for livestock grazing.
- The RMP/EIS will incorporate by reference all prior wilderness designations and wilderness study area findings that affect public lands in the planning area.
- The plan will result in determinations as required by special program and resource specific guidance detailed in Appendix C of the BLM's Planning Handbook.
- Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Tribal, and Federal agencies as long as the decisions are in conformance with legal mandates on management of public lands.
- The scope of analysis will be consistent with the level of analysis in approved plans and in accordance with Bureau-wide standards and program guidance.
- Geospatial data will be automated within a Geographic Information System (GIS) to facilitate discussions of the affected environment, alternative formulation, analysis of environmental consequences, and display of the results.
- Resource allocations must be reasonable and achievable within available technological and budgetary constraints.

1.5.3.2 Specific Planning Criteria for the South Coast Planning Area

Valid Existing Rights and Other Authorizations

Nothing in this proposed Plan revision shall be construed as terminating any valid lease, permit, patent, right-of-way, or other land use right or authorization existing on the date of approval of the SCRMP Revision. The SCRMP revision shall apply only to BLM-managed public lands and shall not be construed to affect activities on adjacent private, State, Tribal or other Federal agency lands.

Consistency with Other Federal, State, Tribal and Local Governments

In accordance with BLM planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.3-2, BLM planning documents shall be consistent with officially approved resource related plans, policies and programs of other Federal agencies, State and local governments, and Indian Tribes, so

long as the guidance and plans are consistent with the purposes, policies and programs of Federal laws and regulations applicable to public lands.

The need for definitive decisions and yet flexibility in BLM planning documents is of particular importance for multi-jurisdictional planning efforts such as the State's Natural Communities Conservation Planning program and multi-species habitat conservation planning, to which BLM continues to be a major contributor.

This planning process will involve Native American tribal governments and will provide strategies for protecting recognized traditional uses by Native Americans of the public lands and resources.

Planning and NEPA Guidance

The proposed plan revision will evaluate the decisions, goals and objectives established in the 1994 SCRMP and those decisions determined to still be valid will be carried forward into the revised SCRMP.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern Designations

The BLM will consider designating new ACECs or modifying existing ACECs in accordance with direction provided in 43 CFR 1610.7-2.

Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

Through the SCRMP revision, BLM will update its inventory of wilderness characteristics, particularly for lands outside of designated Wilderness and WSAs (including acquired lands) that have wilderness characteristics, consistent with Section 201 of FLPMA. BLM will consider whether to protect wilderness characteristics as part of its multiple-use mandate and will propose management goals and objectives to achieve such protection, if appropriate.

Wildlife Management

The BLM recognizes the State's responsibility to manage wildlife, and in accordance with regulations, BLM will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game before proposing no-hunting zones or periods for the purposes of protecting public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment.

Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area Designations and Travel Management

BLM planning guidance (H-1601-1) requires all OHV area designations to be conducted through the 43 CFR 1600 land use planning process. OHV area designations determine whether parcels of public lands are closed, limited, or open to OHV use. A Travel Management Plan, including route designations, may also be included in the planning process, though route designations are considered implementation level plan decisions. The plan revision proposes to include a Travel Management Plan in addition to OHV area designations.

Cultural Resources

This plan revision will be consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act and other cultural resource laws, 36 CFR 800 and Executive Orders.

National Landscape Conservation System

The BLM's National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) includes several categories of special designations including Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Monuments, and segments of the National Trails System.

- **Designated Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)**

The SCRMP revision will establish management guidance for all designated wilderness and wilderness study areas.

- **California Coastal National Monument**

Issues and allocations that pertain to the California Coastal National Monument (CCNM) will not be considered within this planning process. The portions of the CCNM within the South Coast Planning Area will be managed according to the California Coastal National Monument Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision, approved September 2005.

- **Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT)**

The SCRMP will recognize the purpose and need of the PCT as specified in the National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended. The Angeles National Forest manages the segments of the PCT on BLM lands in Los Angeles County under agreement with the BLM.

- **Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail and Old Spanish National Historic Trails**

The SCRMP will recognize the purpose and need of these National Historic Trails as specified in the National Trails System Act of 1968 and the subsequent legislation which established each of these trails. Neither trail crosses BLM-managed public lands, though the De Anza NHT is adjacent to BLM parcels which affect or contribute to the viewshed of the trail.

1.5.4 Plan Implementation and Monitoring

Development of the RMP revision constitutes a major federal action and is therefore subject to NEPA. NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental consequences in their decision-making processes, so as to protect and enhance the environment through well-informed federal decisions based on sound science. The President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), including provisions on the content and procedural aspects of the required environmental analysis. The most comprehensive level of analysis is the Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS — the level being applied to the South Coast RMP revision. Development of the alternatives considered in this RMP revision, and assessment of their effects, is required by NEPA. This document is a joint

RMP/EIS and fulfills NEPA requirements, CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA, and the requirements of BLM's NEPA Handbook, H-1790-1.

During implementation of the new RMP, additional documentation may be required to comply with NEPA, such as environmental assessments (EAs) for site-specific actions. Site specific actions, also known as Implementation or Activity Plans, may include Recreation Area Management Plans, ACEC Plans, Cultural Resource Management Plans, Habitat Management Plans, or Communication Site Plans, to name a few. All such documents would be prepared with the appropriate level of public input. Implementing RMP decisions would be monitored continually to ensure successful results. The implementation progress would also be evaluated periodically. RMP amendments would be prepared if a proposed management action was not consistent with the RMP-prescribed decisions. Revisions or amendments to the RMP may be necessary to accommodate changes in resource or user needs, policies, or regulations. An RMP revision, such as this document, involves preparation of a new RMP to replace the existing one. An RMP amendment is initiated by the need to consider monitoring and evaluation findings, new data, new or revised policy, a change in circumstances, or a proposed action that may result in a change in the scope of resource uses or a change in the terms, conditions, or decisions of the approved plan (43 CFR 1610.5-5).

1.6 Laws, Regulations, and Executive Orders

The BLM planning process is governed by FLPMA and the BLM Planning Regulations in 43 CFR Part 1600. Land use plans ensure that public land is managed in accordance with the intent of Congress as stated in FLPMA, under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. As required by FLPMA, public land must be managed in a manner that protects the quality of scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, environmental, air and atmospheric, water resource, and archaeological values; that, where appropriate, would preserve and protect certain public land in their natural condition, provide food and habitat for fish, wildlife, and domestic animals; and that would provide for outdoor recreation and human occupancy and use by encouraging collaboration and public participation throughout the planning process. In addition, public land must be managed in a manner that recognizes the nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from public land. Land use plans are the primary mechanism for guiding BLM activities to achieve the agency's mission and goals. BLM's Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) provides guidance for preparing land use plans, including specific guidance for each program and resource (DOI BLM 2005e).

In addition to FLPMA, NEPA, and their associated regulations, BLM must comply with the mandate and intent of all federal laws (and any applicable regulations) and Executive Orders (EOs) that apply to BLM-administered lands and resources in the Planning Area. While many laws may appear to be in conflict with others, the RMP/EIS process is intended to develop land use plan decisions that resolve such conflicts and meet the multiple use and sustained yield mandate of FLPMA.

1.7 Related Plans and Programmatic Records of Decision

The BLM-administered lands in the Planning Area are presently managed in accordance with the *South Coast Resource Management Plan* (DOI BLM 1994).

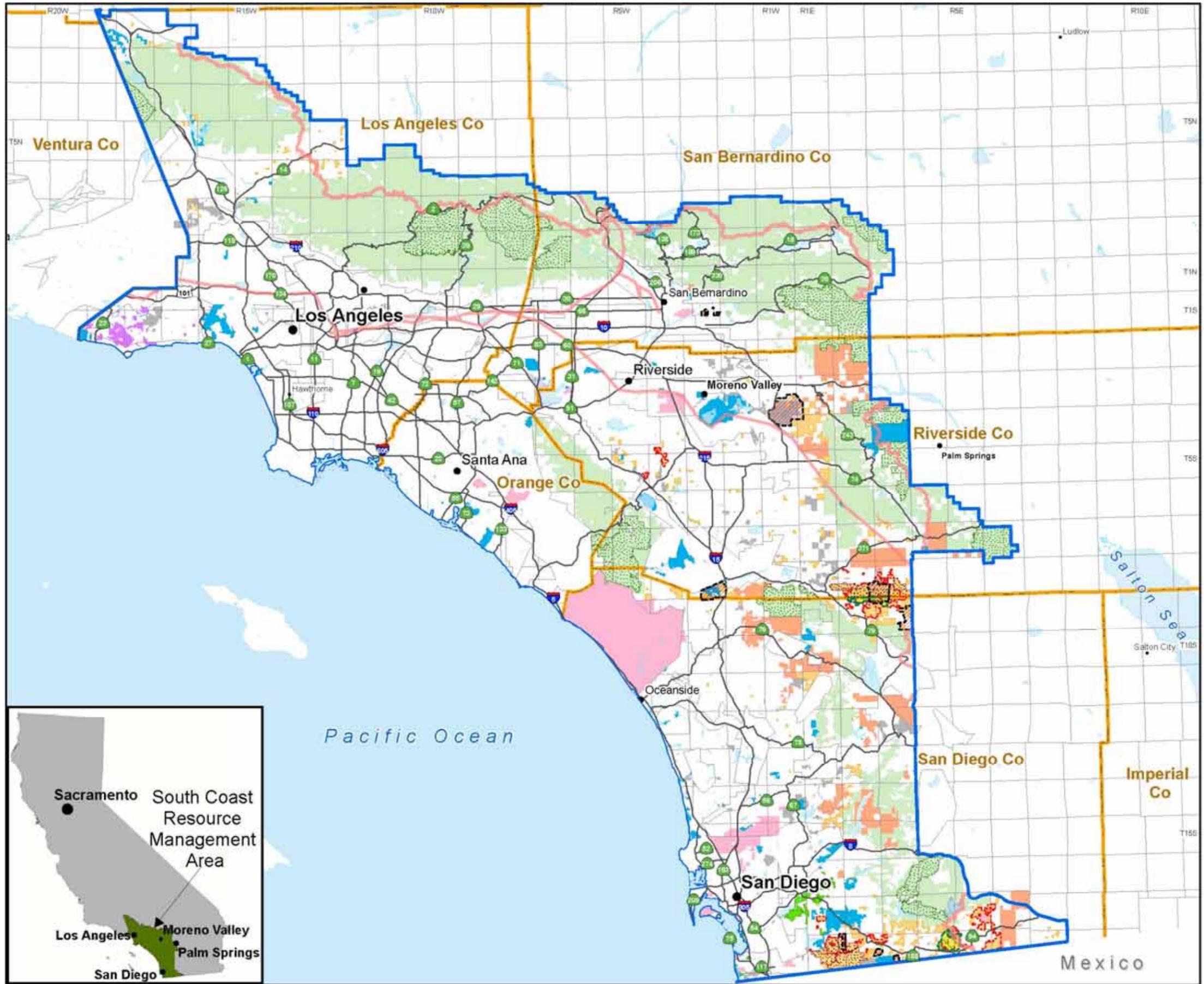
The RMP/EIS would incorporate the following BLM programmatic Records of Decisions (RODs) and environmental analyses:

- Final EIS and ROD for the Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States (2007).
- Wind Energy Final Programmatic EIS and ROD (2006).
- ROD and Resource Management Plan Amendments for Geothermal Leasing in the Western United States (2008).
- Resource Management Plan Amendments and ROD for Designation of Energy Corridors on Bureau of Land Management Administered Lands in the 11 Western States (2009).

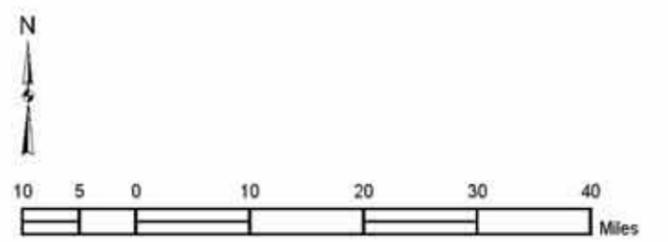
Other related plans (BLM and non-BLM), which the South Coast RMP will be consistent with to the maximum extent possible, are:

- San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program and Subarea plans (1994).
- Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan (1996).
- Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (2003).
- BLM Eastern San Diego County RMP (2008).
- Collaboration with the County of San Diego in development of the East San Diego County MSCP.
- Collaboration with the San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District in development of the Upper Santa Ana River Land Management and Habitat Conservation Plan.
- Forest Plans for the Cleveland, San Bernardino, and Angeles National Forests.

Map 1-1 South Coast Resource Management Plan Planning Area



- SCRMP Boundary
 - ACEC's
 - Grazing Allotments
 - Wilderness Study Area
 - National Trails
- SCRMP Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - US Forest Service
 - National Park Service
 - Military
 - Other Federal
 - State
 - County/State/Regional
 - Private/Other
 - Indian Land or Reservation
 - BLM Wilderness
 - USFS Wilderness
 - National Wildlife Refuges
 - County

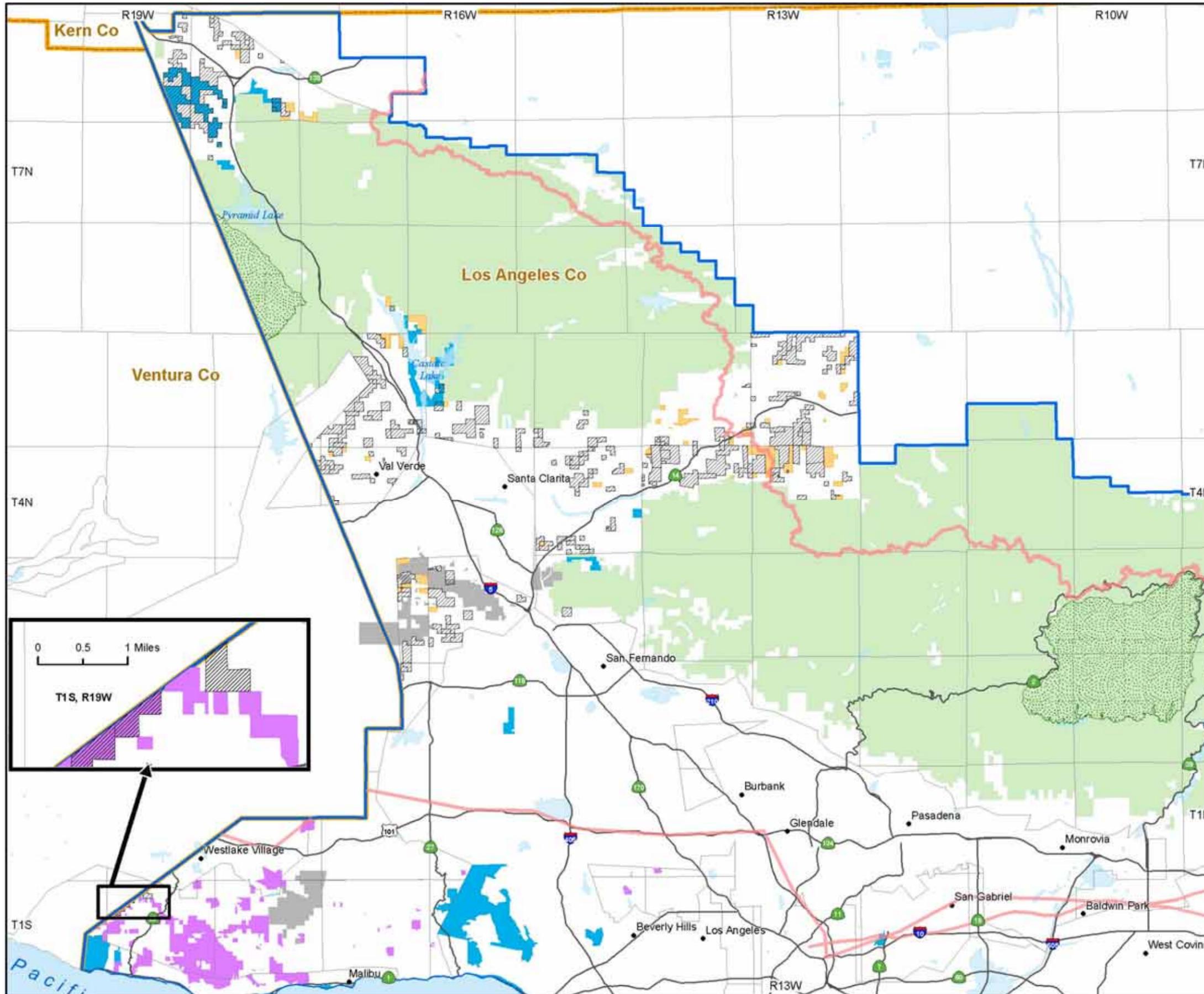


SOUTH COAST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AREA
Draft Resource Management Plan
Draft Environmental Impact Statement



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Map 1-2 Public Lands & Federal Mineral Estate Los Angeles County Management Area



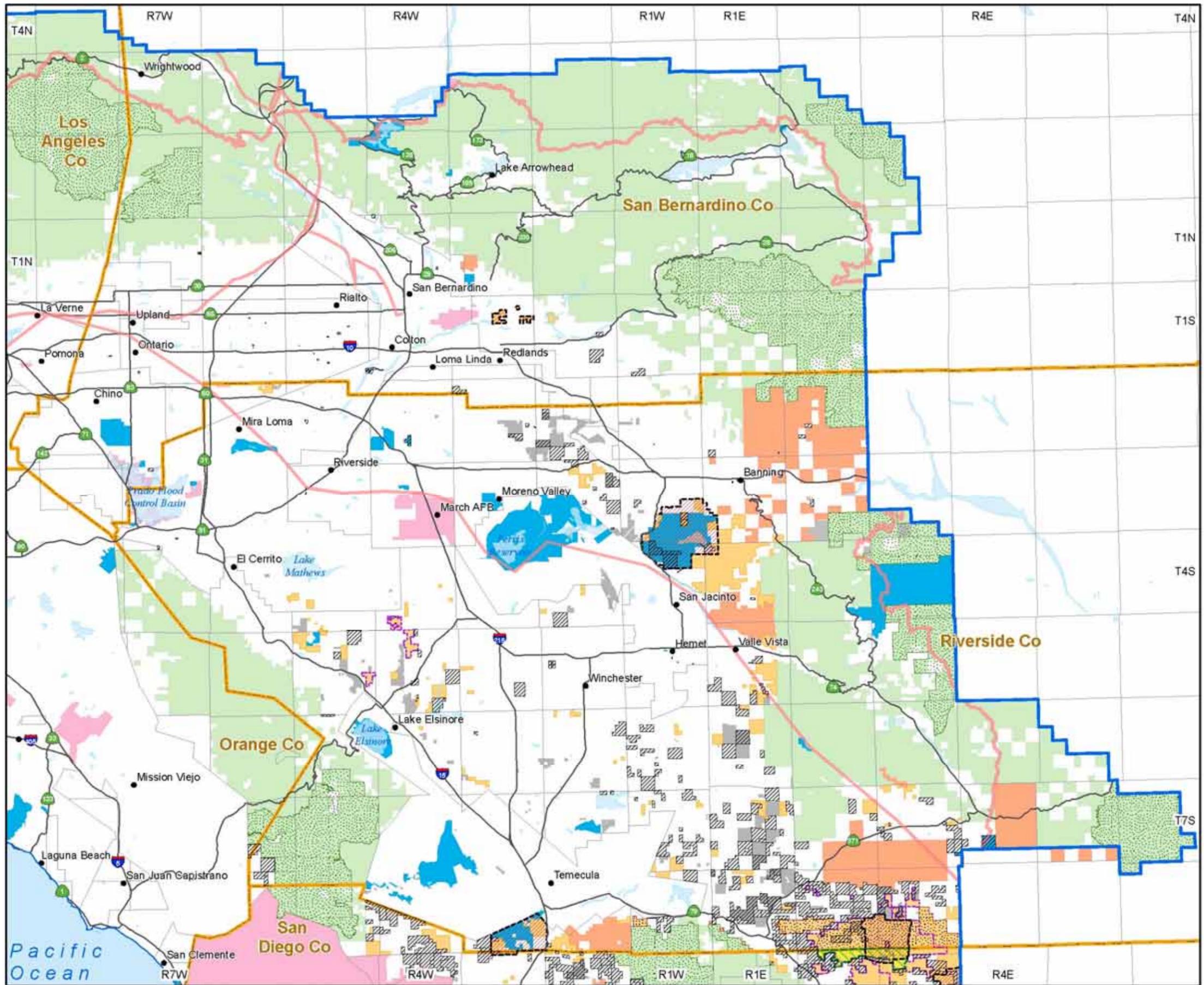
- SCRMP Boundary
- Split Estate Land Management
- National Trails
- SCRMP Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Forest Service
- National Park Service
- State
- County/State/Regional Private/Other
- USFS Wilderness
- County



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Map 1-3

Public Lands & Federal Mineral Estate Riverside/San Bernardino County Management Area

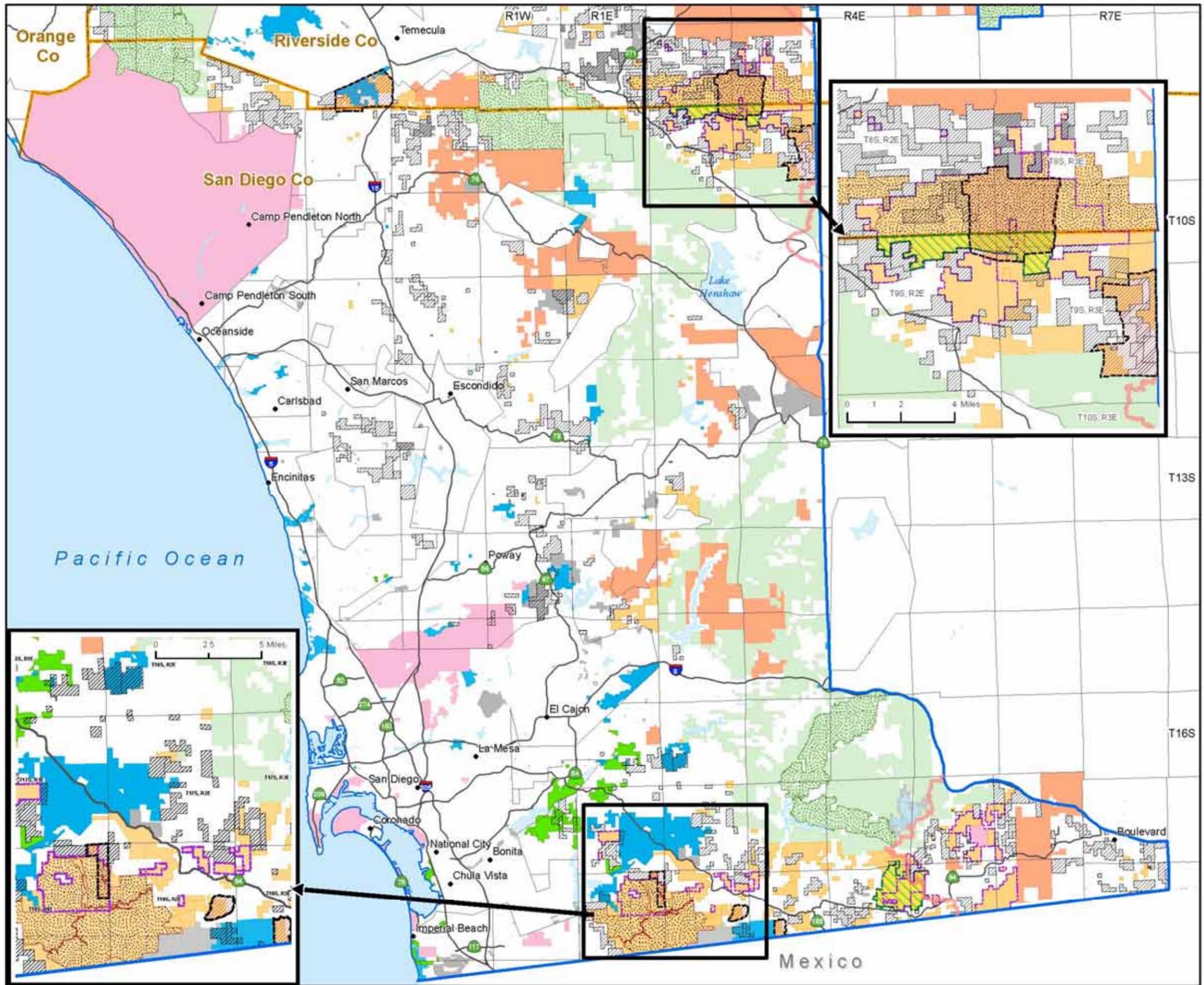
- SCRMP Boundary
 - ACEC's
 - Grazing Allotments
 - Split Estate Land Management
 - Wilderness Study Area
 - National Trails
- ### SCRMP Land Status
- Bureau of Land Management
 - US Forest Service
 - Military
 - Other Federal
 - State
 - County/State/Regional
 - Private/Other
 - Indian Land or Reservation
 - BLM Wilderness
 - USFS Wilderness
 - County



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Map 1-4
Public Lands & Federal Mineral Estate
San Diego County Management Area

- ACEC Alt A
 - SCRMP Boundary
 - Grazing Allotments
 - Split Estate Land Management
 - Wilderness Study Area
 - National Trails
- SCRMP Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - US Forest Service
 - Military
 - Other Federal
 - State
 - County/State/Regional
 - Private/Other
 - Indian Land or Reservation
 - BLM Wilderness
 - USFS Wilderness
 - Refuges
 - County



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