Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa

Description/Location: Located along the crest at the southern end of the Inyo Mountains in Inyo County. The southernmost expansion includes the area south of Cerro Gordo Peak and the town of Cerro Gordo known as Conglomerate Mesa. The northernmost expansion area is northeast of the town of Cerro Gordo, along the crest and eastern slope of the Inyo Mountains.

Nationally Significant Values:
Cultural: Cerro Gordo and its mining operations were critical in the development of Los Angeles; without Cerro Gordo revenue, Los Angeles would not be the second most populous city in the United States and the hub of international and national trade, finance, and culture that it is today. The area will provide an opportunity to research the role Cerro Gordo played in the Owens Valley resource wars, answer questions about the ethnicity of charcoal makers, and allow for the examination of the prehistoric and historic lifeways of the Native American people who used this area. The NLCS designation for this area would protect the viewshed of the Owens and Saline Valleys – as well as the Malpais Mesa and Inyo Mountains Wilderness Areas - and allow for ongoing research in this undisturbed location.

Ecological: The expanded ACEC has a unique assemblage of plant communities since it lies at the eastern edge of the Mojave Desert and the western edge of the Great Basin. The area supports creosote scrub and silver cholla, Joshua tree and pinyon –juniper woodlands, as well as sagebrush ecosystems. The area is known to contain many unique and sensitive plant species, including *Perityle inyoensis*, *Caulostramina jaegen*, *Eriogonum eremicula*, and *Eriogonum microthecium*.

Special Designations/Management Plan/Date: Designated ACEC in CDCA Plan, 1980, Cerro Gordo ACEC Management Plan 8/15/1990 (CA-060-ACEC-05)

Relevance and Importance Criteria: Relevant cultural values and rare plant and animal species and habitat found in the area. Most of the cultural resources Identified have been associated with the Cerro Gordo Mining District. Four rare plant species have been located on the limestone outcrops along the crest of the Inyo Mountains. This area contains habitat for special status species such as the Townsend Western Big-eared Bat, Big Horned Sheep, and Burro Mule Deer. The northern and southern ends of the ACEC are within the former Cerro Gordo Peak WSA. Desert mining features provide habitat for special status bat species

Expansion Area (as discussed in all of the action alternatives)
This ACEC would be an expansion of the existing Cerro Gordo ACEC to include culturally and biologically sensitive areas east of the Inyo crest and south in Conglomerate Mesa.

The new ACEC would include additional mining structures and features that were privately owned in 1990 when the original ACEC was established, but that are now in public ownership. Cerro Gordo was the largest silver producing mine in Inyo County and provided much of the revenue required to build Los Angeles. While the town of Cerro Gordo is currently under private ownership, many of the surrounding mining features and structures are associated with early mining activity at Cerro Gordo and within the Cerro Gordo Mining District. They contribute to the significance of the mine and its historic mining district whose period of significance extends from 1865 to 1890. This period may be extended into the 1930's to encompass many depression era mining activities in the area.

Conglomerate Mesa in the southern Inyo Mountains has a unique collection of historic era mining features, particularly associated with early charcoal production for Cerro Gordo and smelters in the Owens Valley.

Because of the inaccessibility of the mesa and limited to no off-highway vehicle use of the area, these sites, dated to 1868 are in excellent, undisturbed condition. The area is also identified in the ethnographic literature as being a traditional pinyon nut gathering location; this is evidenced by the presence of brush structures, lithic materials, and ceramics, dating to the contact period in the Owens Valley and earlier. The mining history of this area details battles between native groups and charcoal burners, who were competing for the pinyon resources in this area.

The expanded ACEC has a unique assemblage of plant communities since it lies at the eastern edge of the Mojave Desert and the western edge of the Great Basin. The area supports creosote scrub and silver cholla, Joshua tree and pinyon –juniper woodlands, as well as sagebrush ecosystems. The old mines east of Cerro Gordo provide bat habitat. Conglomerate Mesa provides good upland game bird habitat and in winter, mule deer habitat. The mesa is a scenic, roadless area. It provides outstanding recreational opportunities for hiking, hunting, and backpacking.

Goals: To provide protection to cultural resources, rare plant and animal species, and habitat.

For NLCS Lands -- Where this ruleset differs from the plan-wide NLCS rulesets, the more restrictive rules will apply.

Designation and Acreage by Alternative: Cerro Gordo

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	9,000	0	NA
Preferred Alternative	9,700	10,400	0	1%
1	9,700	10,400	0	1%
2	10,400	10,400	0	1%
3	9,700	10,400	0	1%
4	9,700	10,400	0	1%

*** Acreage values are for BLM managed lands**

Designation and Acreage by Alternative: Conglomerate Mesa

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	1,700	1,700	0	0.10%
1	1,700	1,700	0	0.10%
2	1,700	1,700	0	0.10%
3	1,700	1,700	0	0.10%
4	1,700	1,700	0	0.10%

*** Acreage values are for BLM managed lands**

Alternatives –

All Action Alternatives – The expansion area to the north and south would be designated as an ACEC and managed for conservation purposes. The original Cerro Gordo would continue to be managed as it is currently. This ACEC would be included into NLCS.

No Action – the original Cerro Gordo would exist and be maintained and managed as previously described.

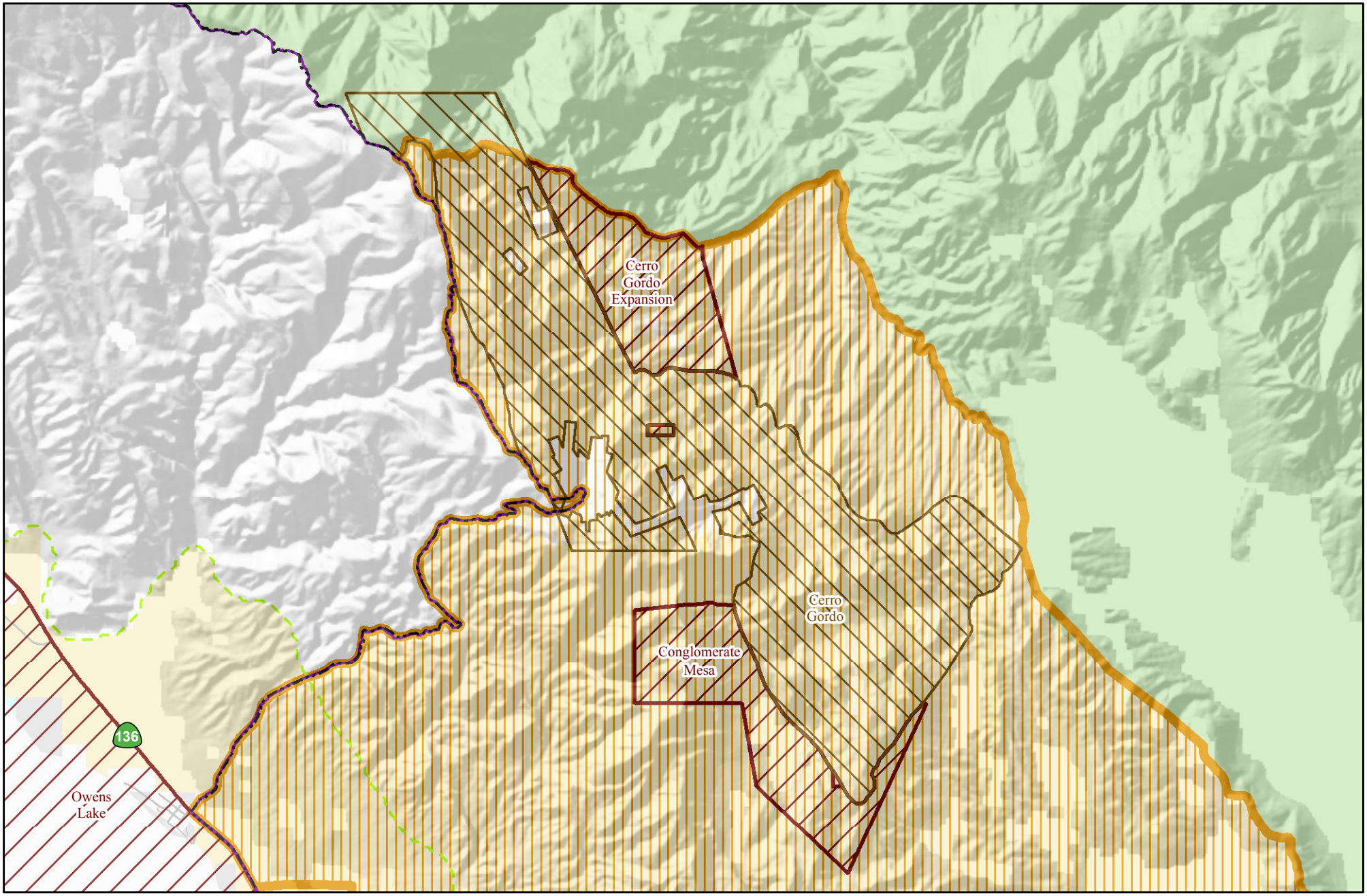
Objectives (desired future conditions)/Allowable Uses/Management Actions	**Resource**
Objective: Protect springs in a natural state and enhance wildlife habitat Management Actions Allow for natural fire regime Introduce artificial water sources to prevent further All Action Alternatives add the following: Objective: Minimize soil disturbance and prevent accelerated erosion caused by human activities. Prevent air quality degradation related to human activities. Allowable uses: Restrict development activities where soils are susceptible to heightened risk of erosion Management Actions: Ensure soils to meet or exceed the Soil Standard of Rangeland Health, as indicated by ground or plant cover, diversity of plant species, minimal evidence of accelerated wind and water erosion and the presence of biological soil crusts where appropriate.	Soil, water, air

Objective: Protect the quantity and quality of existing water resources, protect groundwater from contamination. Allowable Uses: Existing water rights Management Action: Manage riparian/wetland vegetation, structure, and diversity and stream channels and floodplains so that they are function and achieving physical and biological objectives. Monitor Proper Functioning Condition and restore natural flow stream morphology when needed. Monitor water uses	
Objective: Protect rare plants species including *Perityle inyoensis*, *Caulostramina jaegen*, *Eriogonum eremicula*, and *Eriogonum microthecium*. . Action Item 1: Prohibit collection of rare plant species by increasing ranger patrol and proper signing. All Action Alternatives add the following objects and actions: The area is known to contain many unique and sensitive plant species, such as Ripley's Cymopterus and Inyo rock daisy. It is probable that more sensitive species exist here since few surveys have been conducted. The area needs to be more thoroughly inventoried for rare plants and unusual plant assemblages so these can be protected. Maintain intact vegetation communities for sensitive species and prevent fragmentation.	Vegetation (incl. special status species)
Objective: Protect and preserve special status species and their habitat including the Big-horned Sheep, Mule Deer, and the Townsend Big-eared Bat. Action Item 1: Prohibit closure of existing adits except by BLM gating techniques Install bat gates on existing mine openings (adits, shafts). Action Item 2: Eliminate potential impacts to native and sensitive species through control of burros and feral goats. Objective: Prohibit collection of rare animals Action: Proper signing and increased ranger patrol Objective: Objective: Protect and enhance habitat to maintain stable or increasing population trends of special status species to ensure persistence: Northern Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus graciosus graciosus*) BLM Sensitive Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicluria*) BLM Sensitive Le Conte's Thrasher *(Toxostoma lecontei)* State Species of Special Concern Nelson's Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni)* BLM Sensitive Northern goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis)* BLM Sensitive Many sensitive species of bats Action Item 1: Prevent habitat fragmentation and retain connectivity for wildlife movement by limiting off-highway vehicle use and development	Fish and Wildlife (incl. special status species)

See programmatic ACEC cultural resources objective and action items in general cultural resources rules. Continue management objectives set forth in the initial Cerro Gordo ACEC Management Plan Objective: Protect and preserve cultural resources for scientific and interpretive values. Allowable Uses: Scientific research, Interpretation Management Actions: Explore options for an agreement with owners of private land for protection and preservation. Explore options for an agreement with mining claimants to clarify their legal rights to protect cultural resources. Restrict or withdraw the newly expanded Conglomerate Mesa area, where Native American sites and charcoal camps are still in pristine condition, from mineral development.	Cultural Resources
Allocation/Restriction: OHV limited Improve vehicle access for safety and access to manage resources All Action Alternatives add the following: Objective: Maintain current travel allocation as Limited Allowable uses: Motorized, non-motorized, non-mechanized, etc. Management Actions: Limit vehicles to open designated routes by posting signs, updating maps as appropriate. Stop vehicle incursions off-route into roadless areas, particularly from breaching the top of Conglomerate Mesa. All routes identified as closed and/or translinear disturbances will be rehabilitated and restored. NOTE: There is an error in NEMO. The Keeler-Death Valley trail across the top of Conglomerate Mesa is NOT a vehicle route. It is an historic foot and mule trail that extends from Keeler all the way to Ubehebe Crater in Death Valley National Park. This trail needs to be inventoried for cultural resources and a cultural-recreation activity plan developed before it can be formally adopted into BLM's trail system as a non-motorized trail.	Trails and Travel Management
Develop interpretive materials for ACEC/ cultural resources/ rare species All Action Alternatives add the following: Objective: Provide recreation opportunities that are consistent with resource protection. Objective: Provide dispersed opportunities for the enjoyment of the area attributes Allowable Uses: All forms of recreational use are allowed including but not limited to dispersed camping, hunting, photography, picnicking, climbing, rock hounding, astronomy/ star gazing, nature study and viewing as long as these	Recreation

activities due not degrade the relevant and important values that the ACEC is being established for. Management Actions: All historic structures must be fully inventoried and evaluated by qualified cultural resource specialist before allowable use by the public is determined. Delineate parking and camping areas where resource impacts are minimized Maintain signs, vehicle barriers, and install interpretive kiosks	
Allocation: Overhead powerline, communication sites and access roads Objective: Provide for existing ROWs while protecting the sensitive resources Allowable Uses: Exclusion zone for site ROW Management Actions: New proposals will need to be analyzed at on a case-by-case basis and cumulatively, to assess whether they can be accommodated within the area and its management goals.	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
Allocation: restricted mineral exploration and development See programmatic NLCS objective and action items in general mineral resources rules. Existing mining proposals and any future proposals will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and cumulatively, to assess whether they can be accommodated within the ACEC and its management goals.	Locatable Minerals Mineral Materials Non-energy Leaseables

Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa



2 Miles
2.5 Kilometers

N

Preferred Alternative ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

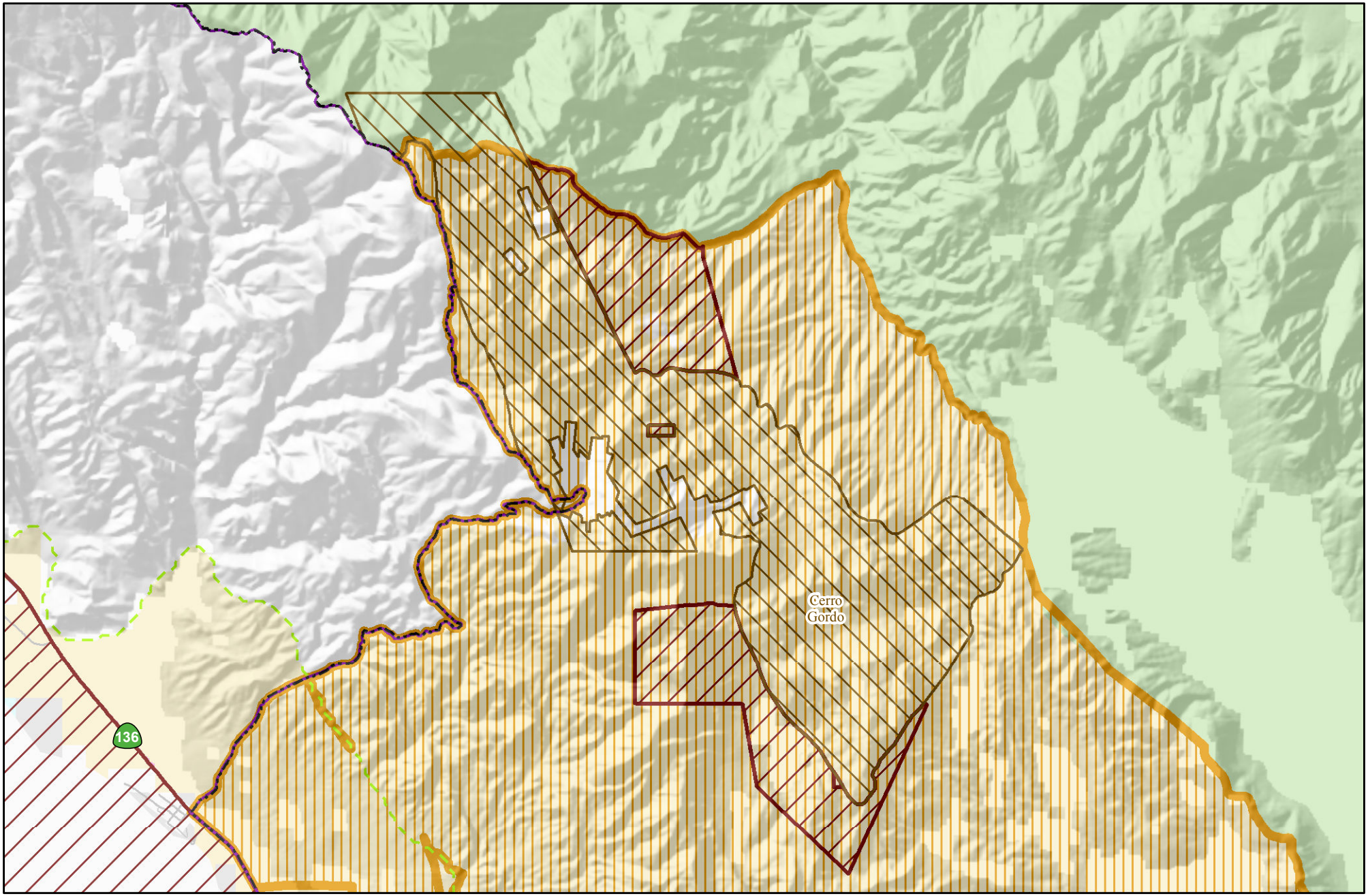
Prepared by BLM California State Office

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

Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa



2
Miles
2.5
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

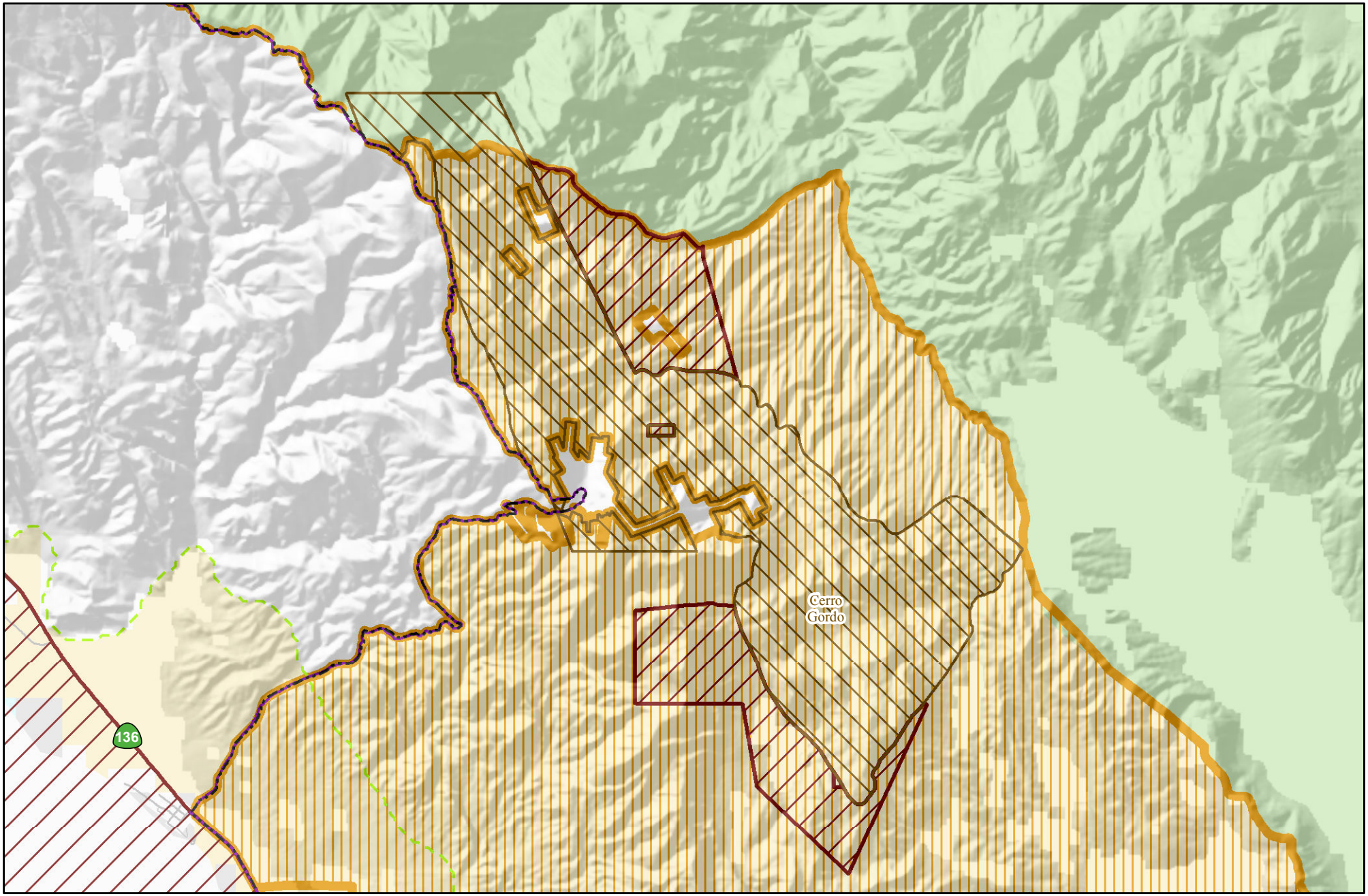
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa



2
Miles
2.5
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

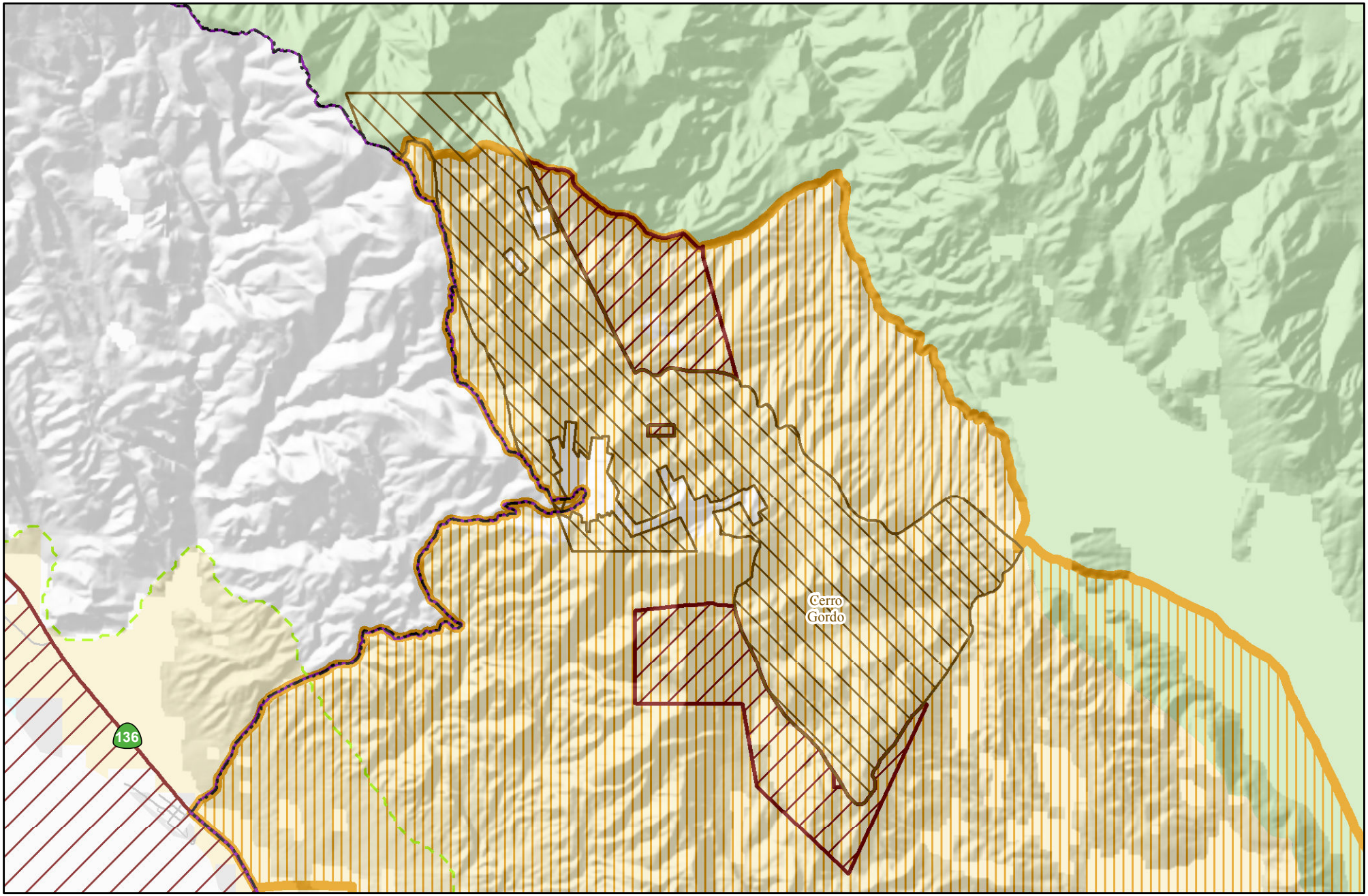
Land Status

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

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa



2
Miles
2.5
Kilometers
N

Alternative 3 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

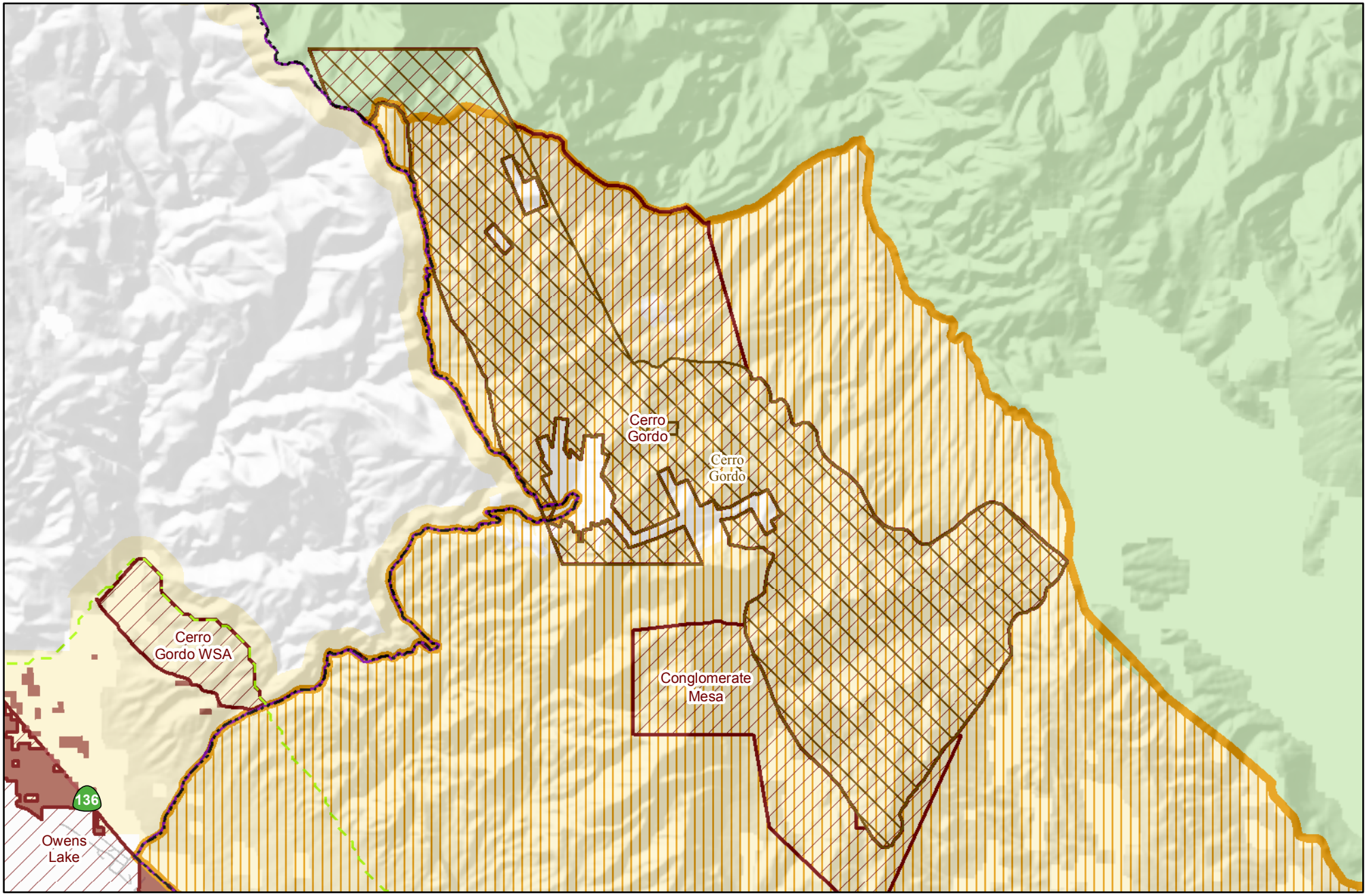
Prepared by BLM California State Office

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

Cerro Gordo-Conglomerate Mesa



1.5 Miles

2.5 Kilometers

N

Alternative 4 ACECs

Date Printed: 8/6/2014

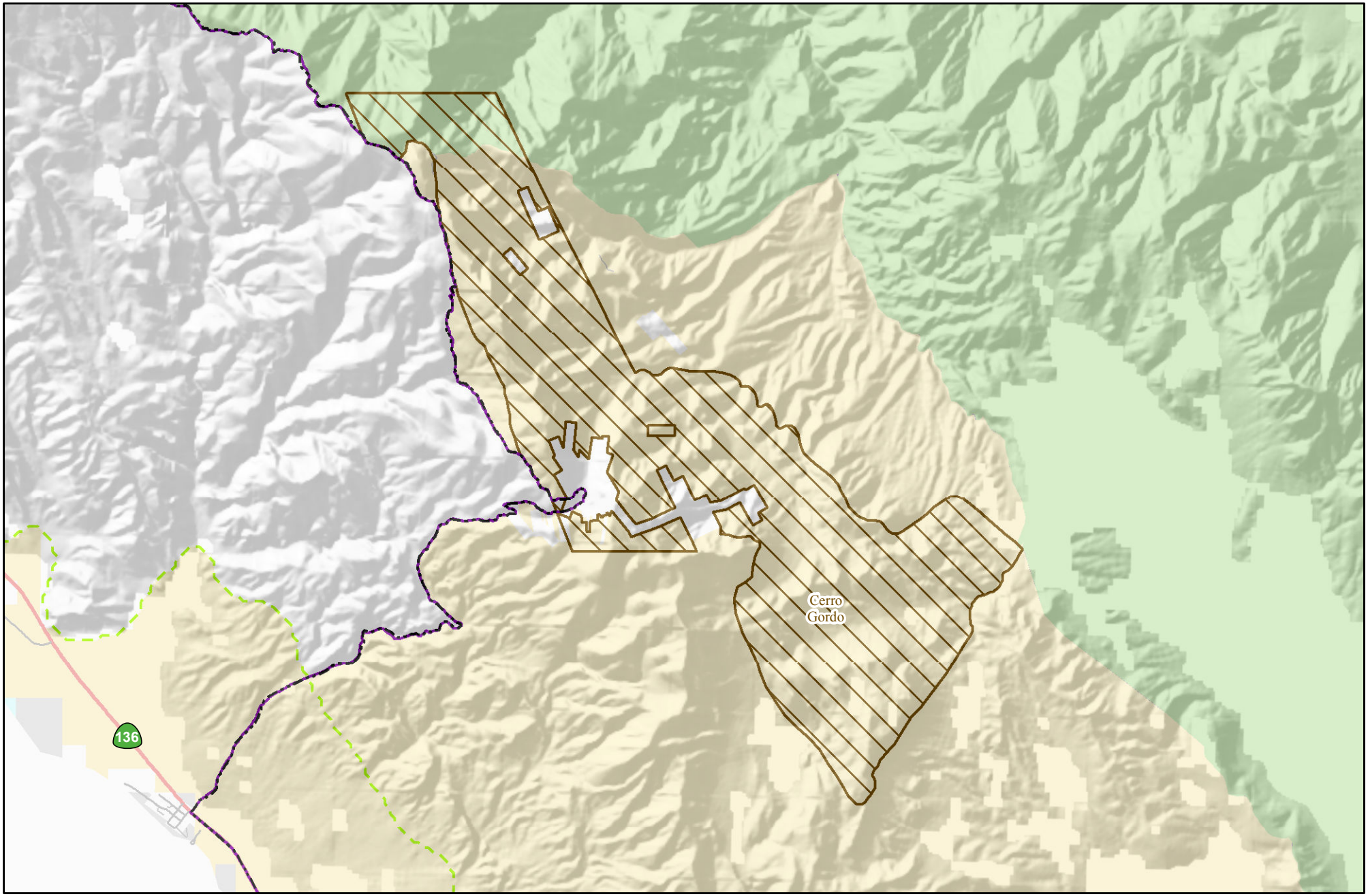
Prepared by BLM California State Office

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

Cerro Gordo



2
Miles
2.5
Kilometers

N

No Action ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- 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