

IV.7.3.5 Alternative 3

The impact analysis for biological resources under Alternative 3 is provided below.

IV.7.3.5.1 Plan-Wide Impacts of Implementing the DRECP: Alternative 3

This section provides the Plan-wide assessment of impacts of implementing the DRECP for Alternative 3. This Plan-wide assessment addresses the impacts and mitigation measures from renewable energy and transmission development and impacts of the reserve design.

IV.7.3.5.1.1 Plan-Wide Impacts and Mitigation Measures from Renewable Energy and Transmission Development

Impact Assessment

The following provides the Plan-wide assessment of impacts and mitigation measures for renewable energy and transmission development for Alternative 3. Impacts are organized by biological resources impact statement (i.e., BR-1 through BR-9). Alternative 3 includes DFAs (1,405,000 acres) and transmission corridors where approximately 182,000 acres of ground disturbance related impacts and operational impacts would occur. As described in Section IV.7.1.1, the reported impact acreage (e.g., acres of impact to natural communities or Covered Species habitat) is based on the overlap of the DFAs and the resource (e.g., mapped natural community or modeled Covered Species habitat) times the proportion of the impacts from Covered Activity development anticipated with the DFA. Alternative 3 includes Future Assessment Areas (FAAs), and these areas are not considered impacted or conserved in this analysis. In Alternative 3, the SAAs from the Preferred Alternative are part of the Reserve Design Lands, and this analysis of Alternative 3 includes conservation within those lands.

Impact BR-1: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of native vegetation.

The following provides an analysis of the impacts of the development of Covered Activities on natural communities in the Plan Area. Table IV.7-206 shows the impacts to natural communities within DFAs. An effects summary by general community is provided below. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community effects by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

California forest and woodlands are limited to the higher elevations in the Plan Area, where they occur primarily in the Tehachapi Mountains in Kern County and the mountains in southwest San Bernardino County.

Overall, approximately 40 acres (0.03%) of California forest and woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3. Because California forest and woodlands are located primarily in peripheral portions of the Plan Area with little overlap with DFAs, impacts to these communities are limited in extent and are primarily associated with effects from transmission. Furthermore, CMAs would be implemented to address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects.

California forest and woodlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Tehachapi slender salamander, golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, bighorn sheep, and Bakersfield cactus. Therefore, impacts to this community may have an adverse effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat; however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Chaparral in the Plan Area occurs in the Tehachapi Mountains and at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains near Antelope Valley in the southern portion of the Plan Area. Coastal scrubs in the Plan Area generally occur east of the Tehachapi Mountains near Mojave, in the southern portion of the Plan Area from Mountain Top Junction east of Highway 138 east to Mojave River Forks Regional Park, in the Fort Irwin area, and in scattered locations west to the Plan Area boundary.

Overall, approximately 900 acres (0.9%) of the chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3. Impacts would be primarily from solar development and most impacts would be to Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub. Impacts to chaparral and coastal scrubs would only occur in the Western Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. CMAs would be implemented to address Covered Species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-2, AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, AM-RES-BLM-PLANT-1, and AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Chaparral and coastal scrubs provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Parish's daisy, and Bakersfield cactus. Therefore, impacts to this general community may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat;

however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Desert conifer woodlands

The desert conifer woodlands in the Plan Area primarily occur in the Tehachapi Mountains, along the southwestern boundary of the Plan Area to the San Gabriel Mountains, in the Providence and Bullion Mountains, Kingston and Funeral Mountains, and the Clark Mountain Range. All of the desert conifer woodlands in the Plan Area are classified as Great Basin pinyon-juniper woodland.

Overall, approximately 800 acres (0.3%) of the desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3. Impacts would be primarily from solar development. Most impacts to desert conifer woodlands would occur in the Western Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but some would also occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. CMAs would be implemented to address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Desert conifer woodlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Tehachapi slender salamander, golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, bighorn sheep, and Parish's daisy. Therefore, impacts to this general community may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat; however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Desert outcrop and badlands occur throughout much of the Plan Area, but is most prevalent in the eastern and southern portions south of the Piute Valley. All of the desert outcrop and badlands is classified as North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop.

Overall, approximately 6,000 acres (0.4%) of the desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3. Impacts would be primarily from solar and transmission development. Impacts to desert outcrop and badlands are primarily occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. CMAs would be implemented to address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Desert outcrop and badlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and bighorn sheep. These communities also provide habitat for desert kit fox (Planning Species). Covered Species associated with desert scrub may also be associated with this general community. Therefore, impacts to desert outcrop and badlands may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat; however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Desert scrubs

Desert scrubs, which comprise more than 70% of the Plan Area, are distributed throughout the Plan Area. There are nine desert scrub natural communities identified in the Plan Area, but the majority of the general community on available lands is comprised of lower bajada and fan Mojavean–Sonoran desert scrub (82% or 10,830,193 acres).

Overall, approximately 93,000 acres (0.7%) of desert scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3. Impacts would be primarily from solar development, but transmission accounts for approximately 16,000 acres of impacts to desert scrub and wind and geothermal account for approximately 3% and 8% of impacts to desert scrub, respectively. Most impacts would be to the most prevalent desert scrub community: Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub.

The majority of impacts to desert scrub would occur in the Western Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, but impacts to desert scrubs are widely distributed; the only subareas without impacts to this general community are the Kingston and Funeral Mountains and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas. CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources that would also help reduce adverse effects to desert scrubs. These include avoidance, setbacks, and/or suitable habitat impact caps for flat-tailed horned lizard (AM-RES-RL-ICS-8 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-9 and AM-DFA-ICS-16), desert tortoise (AM-DFA-ICS-3 through AM-DFA-ICS-15 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-1 through AM-RES-RL-ICS-7), Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43 and AM-RES-BLM-ICS-14 through AM-RES-BLM-ICS-17), bat Covered Species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), and plant Covered Species (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, AM-RES-BLM-PLANT-1, and AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3). Furthermore, CMAs would be implemented to address soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) would offset the effect.

Desert scrubs provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Mohave ground squirrel, bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, flat-tailed horned lizard, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, triple-ribbed milk-vetch, alkali mariposa-lily, desert cymopterus, Mojave tarplant, Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus, Mojave monkeyflower, Bakersfield cactus, and Parish's phacelia. These communities also provide habitat for burro deer and desert kit fox (Planning Species). Therefore, impacts to this general community may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat; however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Dunes

Dune communities are restricted but scattered across in the Plan Area, and include approximately 12 systems in the Mojave Desert and lower Great Basin Desert and 4 systems in the Sonoran Desert, as well as numerous smaller dunes. The largest dune area is located in the East Mesa-Sand Hill portion of the Sonoran Desert. Dune natural communities in the Plan Area are classified as North American warm desert dunes and sand flats.

All impacts to dune communities, except those impacts determined to be unavoidable, would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the dune avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3, AM-RES-BLM-DUNE-1, AM-RES-BLM-DUNE-2, and AM-RES-RL-DUNE-1 through AM-RES-RL-DUNE-3) as well as landscape-level CMAs for Aeolian processes (AM-LL-3). Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Dune communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Mojave fringe-toed lizard and flat-tailed horned lizard. Therefore, avoidance of impacts to this general community would benefit these species and compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Grasslands

Grassland communities cover just over 1% of the Plan Area but are scattered throughout the Area. They are most common in the western portion of the Plan Area, especially along the boundary from east of Bakersfield to the southern end of the San Bernardino National Forest.

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres (2.9%) of grassland communities would be impacted under Alternative 3. The majority of impacts to grassland communities would be from solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Impacts would also occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Mojave and Silurian Valley, and Pinto

Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-AG-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Grassland communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, burrowing owl, mountain plover, Swainson's hawk, and Bendire's thrasher. These communities also provide habitat for desert kit fox (Planning Species). Therefore, impacts to this community may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat; however, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize that effect and compensation CMAs would offset the effect.

Riparian

Riparian communities cover nearly 6% of the Plan Area but are scattered throughout the Area, but are most common in the southern portion of the Plan Area in the Colorado River area, in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, and along major drainages such as the Mojave, Colorado, and Amargosa Rivers.

Riparian communities include microphyll woodlands, which are important vegetation assemblages often associated with desert washes that are comprised of the Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub natural communities. A subset of these communities would be considered groundwater-dependent vegetation (e.g., mesquite bosques). Under Alternative 3, microphyll woodlands occur within DFAs primarily in the McCoy Valley area in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea.

Impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the riparian CMAs (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Riparian communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: California black rail, Gila woodpecker, Yuma clapper rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and Tehachapi slender salamander. These communities also provide habitat for burro deer (Planning Species). In addition, species associated with desert scrub are also

associated with Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub. Avoidance of impacts to riparian communities would benefit these species. Furthermore, there are also CMAs to avoid impacts to riparian species including pre-construction nesting bird surveys for riparian and wetland bird Covered Species. Application of species-specific CMAs would also benefit species associated with riparian communities. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Wetlands

Wetland communities cover nearly 5% of the Plan Area but are scattered throughout the Area, including the Owens River Valley, and around various dry lakes and playas. The largest single contributor to wetlands in the Plan Area is the open water of the Salton Sea (22% of the wetlands). However, several isolated wetlands occur throughout the Plan Area (e.g. Amargosa WSR) and these are important for their tendency to be populated with locally endemic species of plants and animals.

Overall, approximately 12,000 acres (1.4%) of wetland communities, specifically North American warm desert alkaline scrub, herb playa and wet flat, and open water, would be impacted under Alternative 3. All impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep, except those impacts determined to be unavoidable, would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the wetland CMAs, including a 0.25-mile setback. More than half of the impacts to wetland communities would be in DFAs in open water of the Salton Sea in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. Of the remaining impacts to wetland communities, the majority would occur from solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

CMAs for North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat, southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh, and other undifferentiated wetland-related land covers (i.e., "Playa", "Wetland", and "Open Water") would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts to these features (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Wetland communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: California black rail, Yuma clapper rail, tricolored blackbird, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, desert pupfish, Mohave tui chub, Owens pupfish, and Owens tui chub. In addition, species associated with desert scrub are also associated with Southwestern North American Salt Basin and High Marsh. Avoidance of impacts to wetland communities would benefit these species. Furthermore, there are also CMAs to avoid impacts to wetland species including pre-construction nesting bird surveys for riparian

and wetland bird Covered Species. In addition, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize impacts to species associated with wetland communities. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Table IV.7-206
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>California forest and woodland</i>						
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	72,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian montane conifer forest	78,000	0	0	0	40	40
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>						
Californian mesic chaparral	4,000	0	0	0	10	10
Californian pre-montane chaparral	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian xeric chaparral	24,000	0	0	0	40	40
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	54,000	600	50	0	200	800
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	24,000	0	0	0	40	40
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>						
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	287,000	500	50	0	200	800
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>						
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	1,613,000	3,000	70	700	2,000	6,000
<i>Desert Scrub</i>						
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	57,000	0	0	0	0	0
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	106,000	500	40	0	300	800
Intermontane seral shrubland	74,000	2,000	100	0	100	2,000

Table IV.7-206
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	437,000	800	0	600	500	2,000
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	76,000	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	10,859,000	56,000	3,000	6,000	14,000	79,000
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	1,333,000	3,000	300	0	600	4,000
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	279,000	4,000	80	500	700	5,000
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	100	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Dunes³</i>						
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	282,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Grassland</i>						
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	230,000	6,000	300	0	500	7,000
California annual forb/grass vegetation	8,000	70	0	0	0	70
<i>Riparian³</i>						
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	697,000	0	0	0	0	0
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	30,000	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian	600	0	0	0	0	0
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	191,000	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	6,000	0	0	0	0	0

Table IV.7-206
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	66,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Wetland³</i>						
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	4,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	400	0	0	0	0	0
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	310,000	3,000	100	0	300	4,000
Open Water	209,000	4,000	10	2,000	1,000	7,000
Playa	78,000	0	0	0	10	10
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	261,000	2,000	60	0	100	2,000
Wetland	8,000	100	10	0	20	200
<i>Other Land Cover – Developed and Disturbed Areas</i>						
Agriculture	711,000	39,000	500	8,000	8,000	55,000
Developed and Disturbed Areas	447,000	1,000	0	60	2,000	3,000
Not Mapped	7,000	900	100	0	10	1,000
Rural	114,000	1,000	10	400	700	2,000
Total	19,040,000	129,000	5,000	17,000	32,000	182,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

³ Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs. Only impacts determined to be unavoidable would occur in these natural communities.

Notes: The natural community classification system is described in Chapter III.7 and follows CDFG 2012. Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Rare natural communities include natural community alliances with state rarity rankings S1, S2, or S3 (critically imperiled, imperiled, or vulnerable). Of the 51 rare natural

community alliances mapped in the Plan Area, 5 rare alliances would be impacted under Alternative 3 (with at least 5 acres of impact), the vast majority of the impact acreage (approximately 4,000 acres) would be comprised of impacts to Joshua tree woodland (*Yucca brevifolia*) occurring in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and Mojave and Silurian Valley subareas. CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection that would help avoid and minimize these effects on rare natural communities. Additionally, AM-DFA-ONC-1 and -2 would require inventorying and preserving or transplanting cactus, yuccas, and succulents. While the compensation CMAs would offset the lost habitat acreage of these impacts, the compensation CMAs do not specifically require the replacement of, or mitigation for, specific rare natural community alliances. After application of the CMAs, impacts to rare natural communities from Alternative 3 would be adverse and would require mitigation.

Impact BR-2: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of Covered Activities have the potential to result in adverse effects to federal or state jurisdictional waters and wetlands. In the Plan Area, jurisdictional waters and wetlands would likely include the riparian and wetland communities analyzed under Impact BR-1 and may also include other features including playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainage networks.

All Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Additionally, all impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the riparian CMAs including riparian setbacks. Impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep wetlands would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the wetland CMAs, including wetland setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Approximately 11,000 acres of other wetland communities would be impacted under Alternative 3. See the analysis for the loss of native vegetation provided under BR-1 for a discussion of these potential impacts. All or a portion of the estimated wetland impacts could result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands without compensation. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Additionally, playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainage networks are waters and wetland features that provide hydrological functions and may be determined to be jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Adverse effects to these features would have the potential to impact jurisdictional waters and wetland.

Playa

Approximately 1% (4,000 acres) of playa would be impacted by Covered Activities under Alternative 3. The majority of impacts would be associated with solar (4,000 acres), with 100 acres of wind impacts and 300 acres of transmission impacts. Ecoregion subareas of potential impacts to playas include the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes.

Application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize impacts to species associated with playas (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). CMAs would also require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters, including playas (AM-PW-9 and AM-LL-2). Compensation CMAs would offset impacts to these features (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Seep/Spring

Seeps occur within DFAs and transmission corridors and potential impacts to seep/spring locations have the potential to occur under Alternative 3 in the following ecoregion subareas: Imperial Borrego Valley, Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes. Impacts to seeps and springs would be adverse absent implementation of avoidance measures. Impacts to seep/spring locations and associated Covered Species and hydrological functions would be avoided through adherence to avoidance and minimization CMAs, including habitat assessments and avoidance of seeps with 0.25 mile setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Major Rivers

Under Alternative 3, there would no direct impacts to any of the four major rivers within the Plan Area – Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave, and Owens Rivers. However, changes in hydrological conditions associated with development could adversely impact these rivers. Riparian CMAs would require avoidance of these features with setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1).

Ephemeral Drainages

Ephemeral drainages occur throughout the Plan Area, and some of these features could be determined to state or federal jurisdictional waters. Impacts to ephemeral drainages would likely occur from Covered Activities. Application of riparian avoidance CMAs (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) would avoid and minimize impacts to a portion

of the ephemeral drainages within DFAs. Additionally, all Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Impact BR-3: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in degradation of vegetation.

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational Covered Activities would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants. The degree to which these factors contribute to the degradation of vegetation corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities in the Plan Area that would result in dust, fire, and introduction of invasive plants or that would use dust suppressants and implement fire management. As described in Section IV.7.2.1, the extent of some of these adverse effects may occur at or beyond the source of these effects, the project footprint, or the project area depending on the type of effect and other environmental considerations. As such, the potential adverse effects caused by these factors were evaluated using the overlap of the natural community mapping and the estimated distribution of Covered Activities across subareas.

Under the Alternative 3, approximately 7% of the total Plan Area would be DFAs that allow renewable energy development. Based on the planned renewable energy capacity renewable energy generation and transmission under Alternative 3, the vegetation degradation from dust, dust suppressants, fire, fire management, and invasive plants would collectively result in correspond to the terrestrial operational impacts shown in Table IV.7-207. These impacts would mostly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. As a result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to result in the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants.

**Table IV.7-207
 Plan-Wide Terrestrial Operational Impacts – Alternative 3**

Ecoregion Subarea	Solar Impact¹ (acres)	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	21,000	3,000	-	8,000	32,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	45,000	700	16,000	14,000	75,700
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	4,000	-	-	1,000	5,000

**Table IV.7-207
Plan-Wide Terrestrial Operational Impacts – Alternative 3**

Ecoregion Subarea	Solar Impact¹ (acres)	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Owens River Valley	2,000	-	1,000	800	3,800
Panamint Death Valley	2,000	-	-	500	2,500
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	12,000	6,000	-	5,000	23,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	2,000	-	-	700	2,700
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	41,000	10,000	-	2,000	53,000
Total	129,000	20,000	17,000	32,000	198,000

¹ Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Terrestrial operational impacts collectively refers to vegetation degradation impacts (BR-3) from dust, dust suppressants, fire, fire management, and invasive plants and wildlife impacts (BR-4) from creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, lighting and glare. For the purposes of analysis, terrestrial operational impacts were quantified using the project area extent for solar and geothermal, using 25% of the project area for wind, and the right-of-way area for transmission.

Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation, short-term and long-term wind (excluding project area impacts), geothermal project area, and transmission impacts. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Dust and Dust Suppressants

Most natural communities and plant Covered Species would be susceptible to degradation from physical damage, reduced photosynthesis, and reduced net primary productivity as a result of dust created by renewable energy development. However, due to the changed water usage by Mojave desert shrubs that can result from dust deposition, natural communities with these shrubs are particularly susceptible. These natural communities are primarily affected by Covered Activities in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. The Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas also contain lesser levels of impacts to these natural communities. Plant Covered Species that could also be affected by abrasion, vegetation loss, root exposure, and burial as a result of dust are prevalent near the DFAs in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Therefore, considering the distribution of DFAs and these sensitive natural communities and plant Covered Species the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would experience the greatest magnitude of dust-related impacts.

The application of dust suppressants to reduce dust emissions is a common management practice used during construction and operations and is a Covered Activity under the Plan. Dust-related degradation of vegetation would be further minimized with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization CMAs. The Plan-wide avoidance and minimization CMAs would generally identify vegetation in the project area (AM-PW-1), utilize standard practices to minimize the amount of exposed soils (AM-PW-14) and reduce dust caused by soil erosion (AM-PW-10). Additionally, Alternative 3 would implement CMAs that applicable in the DFAs would also serve to reduce vegetation degradation from dust including AM-DFA-ONC-1 and AM-DFA-ONC-2, which would require habitat assessments of natural communities and protection/salvage plans for particular plants found on project sites. CMAs AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3 would also result in the surveying of plant Covered Species, avoidance and a 0.25-mile setback from plant Covered Species occurrences, and would place an impact caps on suitable habitat for plant Covered Species. Furthermore, various CMAs would reduce potential vegetation degradation from dust created by operation and maintenance of transmission in the reserve design envelope including measures for avoidance of plant Covered Species by substations, setbacks for plant Covered Species, and impact caps on suitable habitat for plant Covered Species (AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3). The CMA AM-TRANS-4 would restrict transmission to within designated utility corridors, thereby minimizing the creation of dust from exposed soils as a result of transmission throughout the Plan Area.

The application of dust suppressants can result in chemical and physical changes to an ecosystem, alter hydrological function of soils and drainage areas, and increase pollutant loads in surface water. As a result, riparian and wetland natural communities are the most likely vegetation to be affected by the use of dust suppressants. These natural communities are most prevalent near DFAs in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea and to a lesser extent in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, where most of the impacts to riparian and wetland natural communities in the Plan Area would occur. Plant Covered Species that could also be affected by dust suppressants and are prevalent near the DFAs in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. As such, the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and to a lesser extent the Imperial Borrego Valley and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas would contain the largest potential amount of vegetation degradation because of dust suppressants.

Avoidance and minimization CMAs implemented as part of Alternative 3, including AM-PW-9 and AM-PW-10, would utilize standard practices to reduce erosion and runoff of dust suppressant outside of areas where they are applied. The CMA AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 would also establish setbacks and avoidance requirements for all riparian natural communities and some wetland natural communities. Therefore, these measures would minimize potential adverse effects of dust suppressants used during siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities.

Fire and Fire Management

Anthropogenic ignitions of fires that could result from operational and maintenance activities associated with renewable energy facilities could destroy the natural communities found in the Plan Area. Desert scrub natural communities are naturally slow to recover from fire episodes and are more vulnerable to proliferation of non-native grasses that can often successfully compete with and overcome native assemblages. The addition of non-native grasses can create a positive feedback loop of increasing fire frequency and intensity, resulting in significant and potentially permanent community type conversion. Within the Plan Area desert scrub natural communities are primarily affected by Covered Activities within the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. However, impacts to desert scrubs are widely distributed and the Imperial Borrego Valley and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas would also experience impacts to desert scrub natural communities. With the distribution of renewable energy development and these natural communities, the greatest magnitude of vegetation degradation as a result of fire would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Construction and maintenance of fire breaks and other fire management techniques would typically result in the removal of vegetation from woodland, chaparral, and grassland natural communities. However, target fuels reductions in areas of high incidence of non-native, invasive, species (e.g. salt cedar hot spots) can have a beneficial effect on native habitats. Within the Plan Area the potential impacts from Covered Activities on California forest and woodland natural communities are located mostly in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea; chaparral and coastal scrubs potential impacts are primarily located within the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas; and the majority of the grassland natural communities affected by Covered Activities would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Therefore, with the distribution of renewable energy development and the location of these natural communities that are sensitive to fire management techniques, the primary areas of vegetation degradation would be located in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes as well as the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas, which would experience the majority of the impacts in the Plan Area to these natural communities.

The potential degradation of vegetation due to fire and fire management would vary depending on project-specific factors, such as size of the project footprint and proximity to fire prone areas. However, under Alternative 3 avoidance and minimization CMAs would be implemented to minimize the potential adverse operational effects of fire and fire management. Specifically, AM-PW-12 would require projects to use standard practices for fire prevention/protection that would minimize the amount of vegetation clearing and fuel modification. Additionally AM-RES-RL-ICS-5 would require fire suppression activities to minimize the amount of desert tortoise habitat burned in the reserve design envelope.

These measures would minimize the amount of vegetation degradation from fire and fire management during siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities.

Invasive Plants

The introduction of invasive plants can be caused by siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities including transportation of invasive plants on the undercarriage of vehicles, creation of disturbed areas, and other environmental changes that favor invasive plant growth. Invasive plants can degrade vegetation by increasing the fuel load and the frequency of fires in plant communities and may induce allelopathic effects that hinder the growth or establishment of other plant species. Most vegetation, including natural communities and plant Covered Species, are generally susceptible to the adverse effects of invasive plants. As such, the most vegetation degradation caused by introduction of invasive plants would occur in the areas with the greatest amount of natural community and plant Covered Species impacts due to renewable energy development. Under the Alternative 3 these impacts to natural communities would occur primarily in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and to a lesser extent in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, as well as the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas.

The potential vegetation degradation effects that could result from siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities would be minimized through implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs under Alternative 3. Specifically, the Plan-wide CMA AM-PW-7 would ensure the timely restoration of temporarily disturbed areas that could otherwise promote invasive plants during operations. Additional CMAs would require the use of standard practices to control weeds and invasive plants (AM-PW-11) and require the responsible use of herbicides to minimize potential vegetation degradation (AM-PW-15) for all Covered Activities throughout the Plan Area.

Impact BR-4: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of listed and sensitive plants; disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife; and habitat for listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

The following provides an analysis of the impacts of the development of Covered Activities on sensitive plants and wildlife and their habitat in the Plan Area, including Covered Species and non-Covered Species. In addition to the analysis of the loss of sensitive species and their habitat provided here under Impact BR-4, impacts to nesting birds are addressed under Impact BR-5, impacts on wildlife movement are addressed under Impact BR-6, impacts of habitat fragmentation are addressed under Impact BR-7, impacts of increased predation are addressed under Impact BR-8, and impact of operations on avian, bat, and insect species are addressed under Impact BR-9.

The impact analysis under Impact BR-4 includes the following subsections:

- Covered Species Habitat Impact Analysis by Ecoregion Subarea
- Specific Covered Species Impact Analyses
- Indirect and Terrestrial Operational Impact Analysis
- Non-Covered Species Impact Analysis

Covered Species Habitat Impact Analysis by Ecoregion Subarea

Impacts to plant and wildlife species and their habitat would result from the implementation of Covered Activities. Table IV.7-208 provides the Plan-wide impact analysis for Covered Species habitat. As described in Section IV.7.1.1, the reported impact acreage is based on the overlap of the DFAs and the modeled Covered Species habitat times the proportion of the impacts from Covered Activity development anticipated with the DFA. The majority of impacts to plant and wildlife species and their habitat under Alternative 3 would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas as described below. Impacts to plant and wildlife species and their habitat under Alternative 3 would also occur in the following subareas: Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and Providence and Bullion Mountains. Supplemental impact analysis tables for impacts to Covered Species habitat by ecoregion subarea are provided in Appendix R2.

West Mojave and Eastern Slopes Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would mostly be from solar development, but would also include impacts from wind and transmission development. Typical impacts from these Covered Activities on plant and wildlife species and their habitat is described in Section IV.7.2. Impacts to suitable habitat for amphibians and reptiles would occur in this subarea, including Agassiz's desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 and AM-DFA-DUNE-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

There are impacts to suitable habitat for several bird Covered Species in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, including Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California condor, golden eagle, least Bell's vireo, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, and tricolored blackbird. CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat would further avoid and minimize the impacts on least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and tricolored blackbird to less than the

acreage reported in Table IV.7-208. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs.

Suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, desert kit fox, Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat would be impacted in this subarea. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) that would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for the following plant species would be impacted in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea: alkali mariposa-lily, Bakersfield cactus, Barstow woolly sunflower, desert cymopterus, Mojave monkeyflower, and Mojave tarplant. Although modeled suitable habitat for these species may be impacted by Covered Activities in this subarea, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3) would further reduce the impacts on these species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development within the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea would be primarily from solar energy development, but would also include impacts from wind and transmission. Impacted suitable habitat would be mostly desert scrub in this subarea. The Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea provides suitable habitat for amphibians and reptiles, including Agassiz's desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard, that would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on this species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Impacts would occur to the following covered bird species in this subarea: Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, and western yellow-billed cuckoo. CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on California black rail and western yellow-billed cuckoo to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

Impacts to suitable habitat for the following mammal Covered Species would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea: bighorn sheep, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. Burro deer and desert kit fox (Planning Species)

would also be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

No impacts to suitable habitat for covered plant species are expected in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea under Alternative 3. Furthermore, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and there are CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3).

Imperial Borrego Valley Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development within the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea would be primarily from solar energy development, but would also include impacts from wind, geothermal, and transmission development. Impacts would occur to desert outcrop and badland, desert scrub, and wetland communities. The Imperial Borrego Valley subarea provides suitable habitat for Agassiz's desert tortoise and flat-tailed horned lizard that would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on this species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

Impacts would occur to suitable habitat for the following bird Covered Species in this subarea: Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, least Bell's vireo, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail. CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, least Bell's vireo, California black rail, and Yuma clapper rail to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs (AM-DFA-AG-2).

Impacts to suitable habitat for desert pupfish, the only fish species with suitable habitat in this subarea, would total approximately 200 acres. The avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish.

Only minimal impacts (approximately 100 acres) would occur to bighorn sheep mountain habitat in this subarea. Impacts to suitable habitat for other covered mammals species would occur for California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. Impacts would also occur for the Planning Species burro deer and desert kit fox. The siting of the

DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-208.

Table IV.7-208
Plan-wide Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>						
Agassiz’s desert tortoise	9,858,000	40,000	3,000	900	8,000	51,000
Flat-tailed horned lizard	758,000	14,000	20	7,000	5,000	26,000
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	1,094,000	7,000	100	-	3,000	10,000
Tehachapi slender salamander	48,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Bird</i>						
Bendire’s thrasher	2,141,000	5,000	400	700	2,000	8,000
Burrowing owl	5,269,000	99,000	4,000	13,000	20,000	136,000
California black rail	197,000	2,000	10	1,000	900	4,000
California condor	1,240,000	17,000	800	90	1,000	20,000
Gila woodpecker	106,000	500	10	100	300	900
Golden eagle–foraging	10,747,000	18,000	900	900	7,000	26,000
Golden eagle–nesting	4,443,000	800	40	20	2,000	3,000
Greater sandhill crane	617,000	34,000	300	8,000	7,000	50,000
Least Bell’s vireo	226,000	200	10	20	90	300
Mountain plover	828,000	43,000	700	8,000	8,000	59,000
Southwestern willow flycatcher	317,000	5,000	80	2,000	1,000	8,000
Swainson’s hawk	1,455,000	38,000	1,000	5,000	5,000	50,000
Tricolored blackbird	271,000	9,000	400	20	200	10,000
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	152,000	300	10	-	40	400
Yuma clapper rail	51,000	50	-	20	10	80
<i>Fish</i>						
Desert pupfish	8,000	100	-	50	60	200
Mohave tui chub	300	-	-	-	-	-
Owens pupfish	18,000	50	-	-	20	70
Owens tui chub	17,000	50	-	-	20	70

Table IV.7-208
Plan-wide Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Mammal</i>						
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	3,854,000	4,000	100	90	2,000	6,000
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	6,649,000	3,000	400	10	3,000	7,000
California leaf-nosed bat	7,133,000	21,000	300	4,000	9,000	34,000
Mohave ground squirrel	2,383,000	27,000	2,000	900	4,000	33,000
Pallid bat	16,412,000	71,000	3,000	8,000	20,000	101,000
Townsend's big-eared bat	14,677,000	69,000	3,000	8,000	19,000	99,000
<i>Plant</i>						
Alkali mariposa-lily	119,000	3,000	200	-	100	4,000
Bakersfield cactus	278,000	1,000	40	-	60	1,000
Barstow woolly sunflower	154,000	700	40	-	10	700
Desert cymopterus	205,000	1,000	40	-	10	1,000
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	289,000	1,000	100	-	100	1,000
Mojave monkeyflower	161,000	400	50	-	200	700
Mojave tarplant	265,000	80	-	60	200	300
Owens Valley checkerbloom	147,000	400	-	-	200	600
Parish's daisy	188,000	1,000	200	-	400	2,000
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	8,000	-	-	-	-	-

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Specific Covered Species Impact Analyses

Desert Tortoise

For Agassiz’s desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C).

Under Alternative 3, DFAs occur within TCAs in the northern Fremont Valley (in the area converted to intensive agriculture), and DFAs overlap with the boundaries of the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area, West Rand Mountains, and Fremont-Kramer TCAs. CMAs would require avoidance of all TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in agricultural portion of TCA in northern Fremont Valley (AM-DFA-ICS-5). DFAs abut TCAs in the following areas: in the West Mojave – 2 ecoregion subunit (the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area), in the Pinto – 1 ecoregion subunit in upper Lucerne Valley (Ord-Rodman), and in the Cadiz – 1 ecoregion subunit in east Riverside (Chuckwalla). Impacts from anticipated transmission development would occur in the Superior-Cronese TCA and Chuckwalla TCA under Alternative 3. Under Alternative 3, DFAs overlap desert tortoise linkages in the Pinto – 1 ecoregion subunit in the Ord Rodman to Joshua Tree National Park linkage. While many of the DFAs were developed based on highly disturbed or fragmented lands, some DFAs were the result of public scoping and are included to address the need for greater flexibility for renewable energy development. While attempts were made to avoid the most sensitive areas, some DFAs do overlap sensitive desert tortoise resources.

Table IV.7-209 provides an impact analysis for these desert tortoise important areas, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, approximately 5,000 acres of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, no desert tortoise important areas would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, approximately 14,000 acres of TCAs and linkage habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3.

**Table IV.7-209
 Plan-wide Impact Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3**

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	387,000	70	-	-	40	100
	Linkage	469,000	400	20	-	40	500

Table IV.7-209
Plan-wide Impact Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
	TCA	3,130,000	800	30	-	4,000	5,000
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		3,986,000	1,000	50	-	4,000	5,000
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	784,000	-	-	-	-	-
	TCA	2,096,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		2,880,000	-	-	-	-	-
Western Mojave	Linkage	1,204,000	10,000	800	-	1,000	12,000
	TCA	2,313,000	900	30	-	1,000	2,000
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		3,517,000	11,000	800	-	3,000	14,000
Total		10,383,000	12,000	900	-	6,000	19,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Ares.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Approximately 4,143,000 acres of USFWS-designated critical habitat for desert tortoise occurs in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands). Although the TCAs include desert tortoise critical habitat, these two areas are not entirely the same geographically. Alternative 3 would result in approximately 6,000 acres (approximately 0.1% of the total critical habitat for desert tortoise in the Plan Area) of impact to desert tortoise critical habitat. Approximately 80% (5,000 acres) would occur in the Chuckwalla critical habitat unit and the majority of that impact from transmission impacts. Approximately 800 acres of impact, largely from transmission development, would occur in the Superior-Cronese critical habitat unit, and approximately 300 acres of impact would occur in the Ord-Rodman critical habitat unit from transmission development. As described in Volume II, transmission impacts assume resources are impacted within the entire right-of-way width that varies by transmission line voltage. Transmission development does not preclude the use of the area by tortoise, but does lead to the potential for increased risk of predation or striking by vehicles associated with access roads to support transmission lines.

CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-1 and AM-DFA-ICS-3 through 15).

Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Flat-tailed Horned Lizard

For flat-tailed horned lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard (FTHL) management areas were identified in the FTHL Rangewide Management Strategy (RMS). The FTHL management areas cover approximately 393,000 acres in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands) and include the following units: Borrego Badlands, East Mesa, Ocotillo Wells, West Mesa, and Yuha Basin. Approximately 9,000 acres of impact to FTHL management areas would result from Covered Activities under Alternative 3, in the East Mesa, Ocotillo Wells, West Mesa, and Yuha Basin units. Avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-DFA-ICS-16 and AM-PW-1 through 17) would avoid and minimize impacts to flat-tailed horned lizard. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for flat-tailed horned lizard.

Bendire's Thrasher

Bendire's thrasher habitat occurs in scattered locations across the Mojave and Sonoran/Colorado deserts of the Plan Area. As shown in Table IV.7-208, approximately 8,000 acres of impacts to habitat for Bendire's thrasher would occur under Alternative 3. Avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-DFA-ICS-17 and AM-PW-1 through 17) would avoid and minimize impacts to Bendire's thrasher. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Bendire's thrasher.

California Condor

California condor nesting has not been documented in the Plan Area and condor use of the Plan Area is limited to foraging and temporary roosting. As shown in Table IV.7-208, approximately 20,000 acres of impacts to potential foraging and temporary roosting habitat for California condor would occur throughout the Plan Area. As specified in AM-DFA-ICS-18, take of California condor will be avoided by Covered Activities. Additionally, the other condor CMAs (AM-DFA-ICS-19 through 25) and the Plan-wide avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-1 through 17) would further avoid and minimize impacts to California condor. Compensation CMAs would offset foraging and temporary roosting habitat loss for California condor.

Golden Eagle

In addition to the analysis of impacts to nesting and foraging habitat summarized in Table IV.7-208, a territory-based analysis was conducted for golden eagle (see methods and results in the Chapter IV.7 portion of Appendix R2). Using the golden eagle nest database, golden eagle territories were identified and individually buffered by 1 mile (representing

breeding areas around known nests) and 4 miles (representing use areas around known nests). From the 420 nest locations known from the Plan Area, a total of 161 territories were identified in available lands of the Plan Area. Under Alternative 3, 36 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 1 mile of a nest. Implementation of the CMAs for golden eagles (AM-DFA-ICS-2) would prohibit siting or construction of Covered Activities within 1 mile of an active golden eagle nest; therefore, impacts within 1 mile of these golden eagle territories would be avoided. Under Alternative 3, 70 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 4 miles of nest, and the use area of these territories could be impacted through harassment, increased risk of striking hazards, and reduced foraging opportunities by Covered Activities depending of the siting of specific projects. The CMAs for golden eagles (Section II.3.1.2.5) and the approach to golden eagles (see Appendix H) describes how the impact to golden eagles would be avoided, minimized, and compensated. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year in 2014 would be allowed to be taken within the Plan Area, which would be reassessed annually.

Desert Bighorn Sheep

For desert bighorn sheep, bighorn sheep mountain habitat and intermountain (linkage) habitat have been identified in the Plan Area. Under Alternative 3, approximately 7,000 acres of mountain habitat and 6,000 acres of intermountain habitat would be impacted. A majority of these impacts would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subarea in the Lucerne Valley area and in the Panamint Death Valley ecoregion subarea in the Searles Lake area. The SAA in the Silurian Valley occurs within bighorn sheep mountain and intermountain habitat. Alternative 3 identified DFAs that largely avoid impacts to bighorn sheep mountain and intermountain habitat; however, impacts would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. Avoidance, minimization, and compensation CMAs have been developed to offset the loss of habitat for bighorn sheep.

Although the Peninsular bighorn sheep Distinct Population Segment (DPS) is not a Covered Species, approximately 47,000 acres of USFWS-designated critical habitat for the Peninsular bighorn sheep DPS occurs in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands). These critical habitat units include Carrizo Canyon and South Santa Rosa Mountain. Alternative 3 would not result in any impacts to critical habitat for the Peninsular bighorn sheep DPS.

Mohave Ground Squirrel

Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C).

Under Alternative 3, impacts to key population centers for Mohave ground squirrel would occur primarily in the West Mojave – 2 ecoregion subunit in the North of Edwards area. Impacts to Mohave ground squirrel linkages under Alternative 3 would occur primarily in the Owens – 1 and Panamint -1 ecoregion subunits west of China Lake. Impacts to Mohave ground squirrel expansion areas would occur primarily in the Owens – 1, West Mojave – 2, and West-Mojave - 6 ecoregion subunits, and impacts to the climate change extension areas would occur only in a limited area of the Owens – 1 ecoregion subunit.

Table IV.7-210 provides an impact analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas. Under Alternative 3, a total of approximately 10,000 acres of impact to key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas would occur under Alternative 3. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43). Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

**Table IV.7-210
 Plan-wide Impact Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas –
 Alternative 3**

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Key Population Center	507,000	2,000	70	100	500	3,000
Linkage	386,000	700	-	500	700	2,000
Expansion Area	552,000	3,000	90	400	200	4,000
Climate Change Extension	224,000	900	-	-	300	1,000
Total	1,669,000	7,000	200	1,000	2,000	10,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Dune Covered Species¹

Dune Covered Species include Mojave fringe-toed lizard. Although Table IV.7-208 shows impacts to Mojave fringe-toed lizard, impacts to the primary habitat areas used by these species would be avoided through the CMAs that require avoidance of and setbacks from dunes (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through 3). Additionally, the Plan-wide and landscape-level avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-1 through 17 and AM-LL-3) would further avoid and minimize impacts to dune Covered Species. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for dune Covered Species.

Riparian and Wetland Covered Species²

Covered Species associated with riparian and wetland habitats include Tehachapi slender salamander, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Yuma clapper rail, Mohave tui chub, Owens pupfish, and Owens tui chub. Although Table IV.7-208 shows impacts to suitable habitat for some of these riparian and wetland Covered Species, impacts to the primary habitat areas used by these species would be avoided through the CMAs that require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through 9). Additionally, the Plan-wide and landscape-level avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-1 through 17 and AM-LL-2) would further avoid and minimize impacts to riparian and wetland Covered Species. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Approximately 6,000 acres of USFWS-designated critical habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher occurs in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands). These critical habitat units include Amargosa River, Mojave River, and Willow Creek. Alternative 3 would not result in any impacts to critical habitat for southwestern willow flycatcher.

Approximately 800 acres of USFWS-designated critical habitat for desert pupfish occurs in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands). These critical habitat units include Carrizo Wash, Fish Creek Wash, and San Felipe Creek. Alternative 3 would not result in any impacts to critical habitat for desert pupfish.

The USFWS proposed to designate yellow-billed cuckoo critical habitat on August 15, 2014 at the time the DRECP Draft EIR/EIS was going to print. As such, the proposed yellow-billed

¹ Flat-tailed horned lizard and plant Covered Species are also known to be associated with dunes but these species are addressed separately.

² Some of the riparian and wetland Covered Species discussed here also use other non-wetland and non-riparian natural communities.

cuckoo critical habitat was not addressed in the Draft EIR/EIS, but will be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

Covered Species associated with Agricultural Lands³

Covered Species associated with agricultural lands include burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, Swainson's hawk, and desert pupfish. As shown in Table IV.7-208, impacts to Covered Species associated with agricultural lands would occur, primarily in the Imperial Valley, Palo Verde Valley, and Antelope Valley. Specific surveys, setbacks, and other CMAs have been developed to avoid and minimize impacts of Covered Activities on these species (AM-DFA-AG-1 through 7). Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Bat Covered Species

Bat Covered Species include California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. As shown in Table IV.7-208, impacts to suitable habitat for bat Covered Species would occur throughout the Plan Area; however, impacts to roost sites and areas around roost sites would be avoided and minimized through the CMAs specific to bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1). Additionally, the Plan-wide avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-1 through 17) would further avoid and minimize impacts to bat Covered Species. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Plant Covered Species

Plant Covered Species include alkali mariposa-lily, Bakersfield cactus, Barstow woolly sunflower, Desert cymopterus, Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus, Mojave monkeyflower, Mojave tarplant, Owens Valley checkerbloom, Parish's daisy, and Triple-ribbed milk-vetch. As shown in Table IV.7-208, Alternative 3 would result in impact to suitable habitat for these species; however, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3) would avoid the direct loss of habitat occupied by these species. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for the plant Covered Species.

Approximately 2,000 acres of USFWS-designated critical habitat for Parish's daisy occurs in the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands). The critical habitat unit is the Northeast Slope. Alternative 3 would not result in any impacts to critical habitat for Parish's Daisy.

³ Some of the Covered Species discussed here as associated with agricultural lands also use non-agricultural lands.

To avoid and minimize the potential loss of Covered Species from Covered Activities, a range of species-specific CMAs have been developed and are highlighted below:

- CMAs require habitat assessments for all Covered Activities and pre-construction surveys for Tehachapi slender salamander, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, desert tortoise, flat-tailed horned lizard, riparian and wetland bird Covered Species, burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane, Swainson's hawk, Bendire's thrasher, golden eagle, Mohave ground squirrel, bat Covered Species, and plant Covered Species (see Section II.3.1.2.5.4 and Section II.3.1.2.5.5).
- Setbacks from individual species would be required from active nests of Bendire's thrasher, California condor, Gila woodpecker, and golden eagle.
- Covered Activities and other development in areas that potentially affect the amount of sand entering or transported within Aeolian transport corridors will be designed and operated to minimize mortality to Covered Species (AM-LL-3).
- In addition, a bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Covered Activities that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation will develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Operational Strategy (BBOS) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group (AM-LL-4).
- Covered Activities will include appropriate design features using the most current information from the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangeland Management Strategy (RMS) and RMS Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) to reduce mortality (AM-DFA-ICS-15).
- If Bendire's thrasher are present, CMAs require biological monitoring to ensure that individuals are not directly affected by operations (i.e., mortality or injury, direct impacts on nest, eggs, or fledglings).
- For Covered Activities where ongoing take of eagles is anticipated, and take of eagles will be authorized under DRECP, federal regulations require that any authorized take must be unavoidable after the implementation of advanced conservation practices (ACPs) (AM-DFA-ICS-29). ACPs are "scientifically supportable measures" approved by the USFWS and represent the best available techniques to reduce eagle disturbance and ongoing mortalities to a level where remaining take is unavoidable" (50 CFR 22.3).
- CMAs also require monitoring and enforcement of vehicular restrictions and travel off designated routes to prevent mortality to Covered Species associated with dunes (AM-RES-BLM-DUNE-2).

Indirect and Terrestrial Operational Impact Analysis

Siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities could result in the potential disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare. The degree to which these factors contribute to the disturbance of sensitive wildlife corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities in the Plan Area that would result in noise, predator avoidance behavior, or light and glare. As described in Section IV.7.2.1, the extent of some of these effects may exist at or beyond the source of these effects, the project footprint, or the project area depending on the type of effect and other environmental considerations. As such, the adverse effects caused by these factors would correspond to the overlap between the location of sensitive wildlife, represented by the Covered Species models, and the likely distribution of Covered Activities across subareas.

Under Alternative 3, approximately 7% of the total Plan Area, would be DFAs that allow renewable energy development. Based on the planned renewable energy generation and transmission under Alternative 3 (a total of 182,000 acres of impact), the creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare would collectively result in the terrestrial operational impacts shown in Table IV.7-208. These impacts would mostly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. As a result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to create noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare resulting in disturbance of sensitive wildlife.

Noise

Noise caused by mechanical equipment, vehicle usage, and human activities during siting, construction, and operations can cause physical damage such as hearing loss as well as behavioral changes in habitat use, activity patterns, reproduction, and foraging. Birds during the nesting seasons are expected to be particularly sensitive to noise effects from the siting, construction, and operation of renewable energy facilities. For bird Covered Species the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes are the subareas primarily affected. Smaller mammals, such as the Mohave ground squirrel, and reptiles, such the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and flat-tailed horned lizard, could be adversely affected by intense noise (and related vibration that could collapse burrows), and potentially subject to increased predation if noise affects their ability to detect predators. Effects on the habitat for these Covered Species mostly occurs in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and the Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. As such, the disturbance of wildlife from noise would predominantly occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea and the Imperial Borrego Valley subareas.

The disturbance and injury of wildlife from noise-related effects would also be minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs under Alternative 3. The CMA AM-PW-13 would reduce noise generated from Covered Activities using standard practices throughout the entire Plan Area. Additionally, various CMAs that would avoid and setback Covered Activities from noise-sensitive wildlife including seasonal setbacks for nesting birds; setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat benefitting birds, amphibians, and small mammals; and avoidance of Mohave ground squirrel's during operations (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-ICS-36). Therefore, potential disturbance of wildlife from noise during siting, construction, and operations would be minimized by these measures.

Predator Avoidance Behavior

Predator avoidance behavior can occur in some wildlife in response to human activities during operation and maintenance. Predator avoidance behavior can lead to increased physiological stress, reduced suitable foraging habitat, and can affect reproduction. Different wildlife species may have varying sensitivities to predator avoidance behavior and may experience different magnitudes of responses to Covered Activities. Desert bighorn sheep use visual cues to assess and escape predators and may not utilize foraging habitat or water sources in proximity to Covered Activities. Other species that may experience behavioral changes that reduce foraging opportunities or lead to avoidance of suitable foraging habitat including nesting bird species. These wildlife species are spread throughout the Plan Area; however, the greatest amount of terrestrial operational impacts would be located in the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. The Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains as well as the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes would also experience fewer terrestrial operational impacts, and thus less potential predator avoidance behavior than that expected for the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

Under Alternative 3, avoidance and minimization CMAs for siting Covered Activities away from sensitive wildlife habitat would be implemented for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for particular species such as the Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, AM-DFA-AG-2, and AM-DFA-ICS-36). Additional CMAs would inform workers of actions that could potentially induce predator avoidance behavior and restrict activities that could disturb wildlife and their access to water and foraging habitat (AM-PW-5, AM-PW-13, AM-RES-RL-DUNE-2, AM-DFA-RIPWET-12 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-14). The potential disturbance of wildlife from predator avoidance behavior caused by siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities would be minimized by these measures.

Light and Glare

Light and glare are created by Covered Activity development which involves both light for security and to avoid aviation collisions and glare from reflective surfaces. Exposure of wildlife to light and glare can alter wildlife behavior including foraging, migration, and breeding. Both light and glare can be experienced beyond the project footprint or project area, extending their adverse effects on wildlife outside of these locations. Solar projects would produce increased levels of glare due to the large amount of reflective panel or heliostat surfaces and would have greater effects on wildlife than other renewable energy technologies. Potential adverse effects associated with light and glare from solar projects, including solar flux and bird collisions from the lake effect are analyzed in BR-9. As described above, based on the planned renewable energy generation and transmission under Alternative 3, terrestrial operational impacts would mostly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Similarly, impacts from solar projects throughout the Plan Area would primarily occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas, which would contain most of terrestrial operational impacts from solar development.

Lighting can act through various biological mechanisms and can result in greatly different adverse effects to individual species. Diurnal predators, such as bats and insectivorous birds may exploit night lighting that increases prey detectability, while nocturnal prey species may reduce their foraging activity in lighted areas. Impacts to habitat for bats from Covered Activities would mainly be located in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, and to a lesser extent in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes as well as the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. Migratory birds that fly during the night may be affected by aviation safety lighting on high structures such as met towers and turbines. For bird Covered Species the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes are the subareas primarily affected, containing most of the total Plan-wide impacts to bird Covered Species habitat. Therefore, considering the distribution of potential renewable energy development and impacts on habitat for species sensitive from light and glare the largest magnitude of wildlife disturbance is expected to occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas.

Alternative 3 would implement avoidance and minimization CMAs specifically intended to reduce effects of lighting and glare including AM-PW-14, which would implement standard practices for shielding and reducing the use of lights, as well as AM-DFA-RIPWET-4, which specifically restricts lighting within one mile of riparian or wetland vegetation.

Furthermore, the appropriate siting and design of Covered Activities away from sensitive wildlife habitat would reduce disturbance from lighting and glare. Under Alternative 3, avoidance and minimization CMAs for siting Covered Activities away from wildlife that would be sensitive to the adverse effects of lighting and glare would be implemented for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for

smaller mammals (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-AG-2). These measures would minimize potential disturbance of wildlife from lighting and glare.

Non-Covered Species Impact Analysis

Potential impacts to Non-Covered Species on BLM Land were analyzed as described in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Table IV.7-211 provides an estimation of the impacts to natural communities associated with Non-Covered Species. While estimation of impacts to natural communities likely overestimates the potential impacts to Non-Covered Species habitats, it provides a general range of level of impact.

Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs, so impacts to potential habitat for each of these species is likely greater than would actually occur. For some species, impacts would be minimized through avoidance of the specific natural communities required for those species, e.g. dune-, spring-, or cave-restricted invertebrates, or riparian-obligate bird and amphibian species. For most species, the total impact to potential habitat across all technology types would be less than 1%, grasslands at approximately 2.9% and agricultural/rural land cover at approximately 7% (see Table IV.7-211)

USFWS-designated critical habitat occurs within the Plan Area (excluding military, Open OHV Areas, and tribal lands) for the following Non-Covered Species:

- Approximately 1,000 acres for Amargosa nitrophila
- Approximately 4,000 acres for the Amargosa vole
- Approximately 4,000 acres for the Arroyo Toad
- Approximately 300 acres for the Ash Meadows gumplant
- Approximately 600 acres for the Cushenbury buckwheat
- Approximately 1,000 acres for the Cushenbury milk-vetch
- Approximately 100 acres for the Cushenbury oxytheca
- Approximately 14,000 acres for the Lane Mountain milk-vetch
- Approximately 3,400 acres for the Pierson's milk-vetch
- Approximately 47,000 acres for the Peninsular bighorn sheep

Under Alternative 3, impacts to approximately 40 acres of Lane Mountain milk-vetch critical habitat would have the potential to occur from transmission. This calculation of impacts from transmission is derived from the transmission corridors overlapped with designated critical habitat, thus resulting is an overestimation of actual ground disturbance.

The results of impacts on Non-Covered Species from the creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare would be similar to those described for the Covered Species.

Table IV.7-211

Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
California forest and woodland/ Desert conifer woodlands	Coast horned lizard, grey vireo, loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, American badger, bighorn sheep, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, Amargosa beardtongue, Charlotte’s phacelia, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, Kern buckwheat, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, San Bernardino Mountains dudleya, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Tracy’s eriastrum, Cushenbury buckwheat	437,000	500	50	0	300	850	0.2%
Desert Scrub/ Chaparral Communities	Arroyo toad, banded gila monster, Coast horned lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch’s spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, Ferruginous hawk, gilded flicker, grey vireo, Le Conte’s thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl,	13,329,000	67,000	4,000	7,000	16,500	94,500	0.7%

Table IV.7-211

Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	Lucy’s warbler, northern harrier, yellow warbler, American badger, Arizona myotis, big free-tailed bat, bighorn sheep, cave myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, Palm Springs pocket mouse, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, western yellow bat, yellow-eared pocket mouse, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, bare-stem larkspur, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Kelso Creek monkeyflower, Kern buckwheat, Las Animas colubrina, Lane Mountain Milk-Vetch,							

Table IV.7-211
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	Mojave Desert plum, Mojave milkweed, Munz's Cholla, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt's woody aster, Orocopia sage, Parish's club cholla, Pierson's milk-vetch, pink fairy-duster, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant, Robinson's monardella, Rusby's desert-mallow, sand food, Sodaville milk-vetch, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Thorne's buckwheat, Tracy's eriastrum, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, White-margined beardtongue, Wiggin's croton, Flat-seeded spurge, Parish's phacelia, Parish's alkali grass							
Dunes3/ Desert Outcrop and Badlands	Banded gila monster, barefoot gecko, Coast horned lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch's spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Le Conte's thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, northern harrier, Amargosa vole, big free-tailed bat,	1,843,000	3,000	100	1,000	2,000	6,100	0.3%

Table IV.7-211
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	bighorn sheep, cave myotis, bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, Amargosa niterwort, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Las Animas colubrina, Mojave Desert plum, Mojave milkweed, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt’s woody aster, Orocopia sage, Palmer’s jackass clover, Parish’s club cholla, Pierson’s milk-vetch, pink fairy-duster, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant, Robinson’s monardella, Rusby’s desert-mallow, sand food, Spanish needle onion, Thorne’s buckwheat, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, Wiggin’s croton, Palmer’s jackass clover,							

Table IV.7-211
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	white-margined beardtongue, flat-seeded spurge							
Grassland	Coast horned lizard, American peregrine falcon, bank swallow, Ferruginous hawk, long-eared owl, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, Amargosa vole, American badger, spotted bat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, short-joint beavertail cactus	238,000	6,100	300	0	500	6,900	2.9%
Riparian/ Wetlands	Arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, Coast horned lizard, Couch's spadefoot, Western pond turtle, American peregrine falcon, Arizona Bell's vireo, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, gilded flicker, elf owl, Inyo California towhee, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, Lucy's warbler, northern harrier, redhead, vermilion flycatcher, white-tailed kite, yellow-breasted chat, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Amargosa vole, Mojave River vole, Arizona myotis, cave myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis pocketed	1,652,000	5,100	200	0	400	5,700	0.3%

Table IV.7-211
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	free-tailed bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat, Yuma myotis, Ash Meadows gum plant, Inyo County star-tulip, Parish’s alkali grass, Parish’s phacelia, Amargosa pupfish, Amargosa speckled dace, Amargosa spring snails							
Agriculture/ Rural Land Cover	American peregrine falcon, Bank swallow, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, northern harrier, redhead, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Arizona myotis, hoary bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat	825,000	40,000	500	8,400	8,700	57,600	7%

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

³ Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs. Only impacts determined to be unavoidable would occur in these natural communities.

⁴ This amount assumes the loss of conservation value for all land fragmented by the wellfields.

Notes: The natural community classification system is described in Chapter III.7 and follows CDFG 2012. Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. Totals may not sum due to rounding. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

As additional analysis, Table IV.7-50, in Section IV.7.3.2 provides a cross-reference of natural communities shared between primary Covered and Non-Covered Species. There are a number of species-specific CMA's for Covered Species and natural communities that would be expected to also minimize and avoid impacts to the Non-Covered Species that may co-occur, e.g., the non-covered yellow-breasted chat often occurs within the same riparian habitat as the covered southwestern willow flycatcher, therefore, conservation measures implemented for southwestern willow flycatcher would often benefit the yellow-breasted chat. Although the modeled habitat for the Covered Species does not always directly overlap the range of Non-Covered Species requiring similar habitat, this method provides a general additional guide for determining impacts and accounting for conservation measures.

Impact BR-5: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities could result in loss of nesting birds (violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513).

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of renewable energy and transmission projects would result in the removal of vegetation and other nesting habitat and cause increased human presence and noise that has the potential to cause the loss of nesting birds, which would be a violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code. The potential loss of nesting birds resulting from these activities would be adverse without application of CMAs. Avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-4, 13, 14; AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, 3, 5; AM-DFA-AG-1 through 6; AM-DFA-ICS CMAs for bird species) include the season restrictions, survey requirements, and setbacks necessary to avoid and minimize the loss of nesting birds.

Impact BR-6: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would adversely affect habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors, the movement of fish, and native wildlife nursery sites.

The following provides an analysis of the impacts of the development of Covered Activities on habitat linkages and wildlife movement in the Plan Area. Species-specific habitat linkages and wildlife movement areas are a component of analysis conducted under Impact BR-4 above. Suitable habitat for each species includes areas of habitat linkages and wildlife movement. Analysis under BR-4 specifically incorporates habitat linkage information for desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and desert bighorn sheep. In addition to the species-specific analysis of impacts to suitable habitat supporting habitat linkages and wildlife movement for species, landscape level information on habitat linkages (i.e., Desert Linkage Network) and migratory bird movement are analyzed below.

Desert Linkage Network

The desert linkage network is a comprehensive and detailed habitat connectivity analysis for the California deserts identified “swaths” of habitat of uniform physical conditions that will interact with uncertain climate changes to maintain habitat for species and species’ movement (Penrod et al. 2012, as cited in Appendix Q). Figures III.7-26 through III.7-36 in Chapter III.7 of Volume III shows the desert linkage network for the Plan Area and in each ecoregion subarea.

Table IV.7-212 shows the impact analysis for the desert linkage network for Alternative 3. Overall, over 21,000 acres of desert linkage network could be adversely impacted in DFAs and transmission corridors in seven different subareas. In the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, DFAs are located in the portion of the desert linkage network that connects the Colorado River to the northern part of the McCoy Mountains. There are also DFAs in the linkage network that extends along the McCoy Mountains and connects south to the Palo Verde Mesa. There are also DFAs in linkages in the Chuckwalla Valley that extend west and south. Numerous generally north-south habitat linkages cross the I-10 corridor area between Desert Center and Blythe in this subarea; DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid these habitat linkages and the development of Covered Activities in these DFAs would not likely result in adverse impacts to general terrestrial wildlife movement.

In the Imperial Borrego Valley, there are DFAs in the northern portion of the desert linkage network that extends along East Mesa. DFAs are not located in the desert linkage network corridors elsewhere in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. General terrestrial wildlife movement may be affected locally by the development of Covered Activities in these DFAs; however, the siting of DFAs, the reserve design, and the CMAs related to wildlife movement and Covered Species would offset the impacts on general terrestrial wildlife movement.

In the Mojave and Silurian Valley, there are DFAs in the Mojave Valley in a linkage that connects the area around Barstow to the Calico Mountains. In the Owens River Valley, there are DFAs in the desert linkage network that connects the Haiwee Reservoir to Indian Wells. In the Panamint Death Valley there is a DFA in the Searles Valley in a linkage that connects the Argus and Searles Ranges. DFAs are not located in the desert linkage network corridors elsewhere in these ecoregion subareas. General terrestrial wildlife movement may be affected locally by the development of Covered Activities in these DFAs; however, the siting of DFAs, the reserve design, and the CMAs related to wildlife movement and Covered Species would offset the impacts on general terrestrial wildlife movement.

In the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, there are DFAs in a portion of the desert linkage network that connects the Grapevine Canyon Recreation Lands to the Granite Mountains in Lucerne Valley; however, no DFAs are located in the habitat linkage between the Ord Mountains and the Granite Mountains across the Highway 18 east of Apple Valley.

DFAs under Alternative 3 are sited to avoid and minimize impacts to wildlife movement in this subarea by maintaining movement corridors between the San Bernardino Mountains and the Mojave Desert, including in the Ord Mountains to Granite Mountains linkage area and in the Bighorn Mountain area that connects to Johnson Valley and the Morongo Basin. General terrestrial wildlife movement may be affected locally by the development of Covered Activities in these DFAs; however, the siting of DFAs, the reserve design, and the CMAs related to wildlife movement and Covered Species would offset the impacts on general terrestrial wildlife movement.

In the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, there are DFAs in the linkage that connects the area around Baldy Mesa along the southern edge of the Plan Area to Helendale; however, in this area, DFAs under Alternative 3 are sited to avoid the habitat linkage along the Mojave River and the habitat linkage east of Saddleback Buttes along the Los Angeles and San Bernardino county line. In the Fremont Valley area around California City, DFAs are located in linkages between Edwards Air Force Base the Tehachapi Mountains that could adversely affect wildlife movement; however, an east-west corridor was maintained without DFAs north of California City across Fremont Valley and several large corridor remain without DFAs through the Antelope Valley. General terrestrial wildlife movement may be affected locally by the development of Covered Activities in these DFAs; however, the siting of DFAs, the reserve design, and the CMAs related to wildlife movement and Covered Species would offset the impacts on general terrestrial wildlife movement.

The DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 was developed, in part, to conserve and avoid impacts to habitat linkages and wildlife movement, including the desert linkage network. The conservation analysis for the desert linkage network is provided under the Impacts of the Reserve Design below. To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is estimated in Table IV.7-212, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered near Wiley's Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

Table IV.7-212
Plan-Wide Impact Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	890,000	4,000	100	-	4,000	8,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	156,000	200	-	100	70	400
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	174,000	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	507,000	1,000	-	-	400	2,000
Owens River Valley	19,000	300	-	200	200	700
Panamint Death Valley	206,000	100	-	-	-	100
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	291,000	2,000	300	-	2,000	5,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	152,000	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	426,000	-	-	-	-	-
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	860,000	5,000	300	-	600	6,000
Total	3,682,000	13,000	700	300	7,000	22,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Migratory Birds

Migration patterns across the Plan Area are discussed in the typical impacts section (Section IV.7.2.1.3) and quantification of operational impacts to avian and bat species are discussed in Impact BR-9. The following analysis focuses on the anticipated distribution of different technology types in relation to known migratory corridors and migratory resources in each subarea.

In Alternative 3, operational impacts from anticipated development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subareas would consist mostly of solar with some wind development in compatible DFAs. In particular, DFAs designated between Searles Lake and the Tehachapi passes that may affect migratory movement of waterbirds using the lake and associated wetlands. Further, development on solar DFAs designated near Trona may affect migratory birds using Searles Lake. Other key bird migration areas affected by the extensive DFAs would include routes between the Tehachapi and San Bernardino passes, and the other dry lakes and wetland refuges on and to the north of Edwards AFB, including the North Mojave dry lakes of China Lake and Harper Lake. Possible direct loss of important migratory bird habitat in Antelope Valley would lead to loss of habitat for wintering Mountain Plover. DFAs for both wind and solar generation development are expected in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountain subarea. Wind development would occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea to the north west of Blythe in the McCoy wash area, and north of the I-10. These areas are adjacent to the Colorado River migratory corridor, and may affect migratory bird movement to and from the Coachella Valley.

Solar development would be anticipated throughout the West Mojave and Eastern slopes, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountain and Imperial Borrego Valley ecoregion subareas. Alternative 3 would result in a 4.4-fold increase in new solar PV and solar thermal facilities in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes when compared to baseline. Further, both Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and Mojave and Silurian ecoregion subareas would be developed, where previously they have not been the focus of development. Impacts are likely to occur in DFAs in HWY 14 corridor perpendicular to the Tehachapi passes and near Koehn dry lake. Other DFAs, in Antelope Valley fall are between the San Bernardino passes and near to the dry lakes on Edwards AFB. Small quantities of solar development are anticipated in the Mojave Silurian Valley and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas, these developments would be to the west of Barstow, and less likely to impact migratory corridors than other developments. Development around the Salton Sea and in the Imperial Valley would be on the southern, western and eastern shores. As analyzed in BR-4, impacts from solar development are likely to result in a 3.7-fold increase in solar facilities when compared to baseline impacts. Development would lead to direct loss of foraging habitat for wintering and resident birds in the agricultural lands south of the Salton Sea, and would create facilities across the landscape that mimic open water. Such facilities would adversely affect the behavior migratory birds, and would result increased mortality. Areas most important to migratory waterbirds that are within both geothermal and solar DFAs include the agricultural lands west of Calipatria to the Shoreline of the Salton Sea. Transmission throughout this area is already extensively developed to serve existing geothermal facilities and would likely attract further development. These lands provide foraging for Cattle Egret, White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Crane, Mountain Plover, Whimbrel, and Long-billed Curlew throughout

winter (Shuford et al 2000). Further, the proximity of these DFAs to the Salton Sea would affect migrating and resident water birds including ducks, geese, pelicans, cormorants, and wading birds that would otherwise be minimally affected by development. In particular grebes are known to be attracted to both the reflective surfaces of solar PV facilities and the evaporation ponds used by some geothermal and solar facilities.

Development in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea, would occur along the I-10 corridor to the west side of the Colorado River, in the undisturbed McCoy wash area, and in agricultural lands west of Blythe. Anticipated development would result in a 3.3-fold increase in solar facilities when compared to baseline. This would increase hazards on the migratory linkages for birds between the Colorado River, and the Coachella Valley, and would adversely affect both Covered Species and other migratory birds.

Application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species, to the maximum extent feasible. Further, siting and construction CMAs require setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats which would minimize direct loss. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Any proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar and geothermal projects. The compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions. In combination, the application of siting, monitoring, operational and compensation CMAs would minimize impacts to migratory birds. Application of CMAs would reduce the overall impacts to migratory bird populations.

Impact BR-7: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in habitat fragmentation and isolation of populations of listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

The siting, construction, decommissioning, and operation of renewable energy and transmission projects can have the potential to fragment intact and interconnected landscapes resulting in isolated patches of habitat, isolated species populations, reduced gene flow, and remaining habitat that is more exposed to the edge effects of adjacent developments.

The DRECP integrated planning process, as described in Volume II, avoids and minimizes this impact through the siting of DFAs and through the reserve design. Renewable energy development would be restricted to DFAs under the DRECP; therefore, Alternative 3 would allow the siting of renewable energy development only within approximately 7% of the available lands in Plan Area (1,405,000 acres of DFAs). Of which, siting and construction of renewable energy development would result in ground disturbance to less than 1% of the available lands in the Plan Area (approximately 182,000 acres).

In conjunction with DFA siting, the DRECP integrated planning process identified Reserve Design Lands within which renewable energy development would be prohibited and conservation would occur. As described below under Impacts of the Reserve Design, the DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 covers 15,161,000 acres of the Plan Area (80% of the available lands in the Plan Area); therefore, these areas would not be affected by fragmentation or population isolation impacts from Covered Activities.

In order to minimize habitat fragmentation and population isolation, DFAs were sited in less intact and more degraded areas. Based on the terrestrial intactness analysis developed for the DRECP area, approximately 89% of the DFAs in Alternative 3 are characterized by low or moderately low intactness. Therefore, a majority of the DFAs are in locations with existing habitat fragmentation and population isolation such that development of Covered Activities in these areas would not appreciably contribute to additional effects.

Other measures of fragmentation and population isolation effects include the amount of impacts on environmental gradients. Environmental gradients are spatial shifts in physical and ecological parameters across a landscape. Environmental gradients are influenced by factors such as temperature, precipitation, wind, and solar exposure that vary with physical factors such as elevation, latitude, slope, and aspect. The impact analysis addresses four types of environmental gradients in the Plan Area: elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect.

Elevation: Under Alternative 3, 99% of the impacts from Covered Activities would occur in DFAs below 4,000 feet, including 56% of the impacts occurring below 1,000 feet and 36% between 2,000 and 4,000 feet. As the majority of impacts occur in DFAs below 4,000 feet, impacts will be greater to natural communities that occur below this elevation such as desert scrub natural communities as compared to natural communities that occur at higher elevations. Approximately 94% of geothermal impacts are at elevations below 1,000 feet, including 63% below sea level. Solar impacts also tend to be concentrated in the lower elevations, with 51% of impacts below 1,000 feet. Wind impacts tend to be at higher elevations, with 80% of impacts at elevations above 2,000 feet. Approximately 27% of transmission impacts would be between 2,000 and 4,000 feet elevation. Habitat fragmentation, population isolation and gene flow impacts would be concentrated at lower elevations, which has the potential to reduce the potential for successful species range

shifts, contractions, and expansions for lower elevation Covered Species and natural communities in response to climate change. As Alternative 3 would impact less than 1% of all available land within the Plan Area, any impacts to successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions will be relatively minor.

Landforms: Landforms in the Plan Area include canyons/deeply incised streams, mountain tops/high ridges, open slopes, and plains. Under Alternative 3, the vast majority (97%) of impacts within DFAs would occur to plains, with these impacts spread across the different impact types, including 74% from solar, 3% from wind, 10% from geothermal, and 14% from transmission.

Habitat fragmentation, population isolation and gene flow impacts would be concentrated in plains, which has the potential to reduce the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions for Covered Species and natural communities associated with plains in response to climate change. As Alternative 3 would impact less than 1% of all available land within the Plan Area, any impacts to successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions will be relatively minor.

Slope: Under Alternative 3, total impacts within DFAs would be progressively less with increasing slope. The large majority (93%) of impacts would occur on slopes less than 5%, and 99% of impacts would occur on slopes up to 20%. On slopes less than 20%, impacts would be spread across the different impacts types, including 73% from solar, 3% from wind, 10% from geothermal, and 15% from transmission. Habitat fragmentation, population isolation, and gene flow impacts would be concentrated on slopes less than 20%, which has the potential to reduce the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions for Covered Species and natural communities that inhabit lower slopes in response to climate change. As Alternative 3 will impact less than 1% of all available land within the Plan Area, any impacts to successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions will be relatively minor.

Aspect: Under Alternative 3, impacts within DFAs would generally be well distributed among the different aspects. Impacts from solar, geothermal, wind, and transmission would have similar distributions across the different aspects compared to overall impacts. By distributing the impacts across all aspects, there is a less potential to interrupt species movement and gene flow for species that occur within any one aspect.

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operation of the renewable energy and transmission projects has the potential to result in adverse fragmentation and population isolation effects, but these effects are avoided and minimized through the DFAs and reserve design envelope, as well as through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-LL-1 through AM-LL-4).

Impact BR-8: Construction of generation facilities or transmission lines would result in increased predation of listed and sensitive wildlife species.

Higher predator densities and hence high predation rates are a documented effect of increased human development in the Plan Area. The extent to which Covered Activities contribute to increasing predation through phenomena like predator subsidization is linked to the likely extent of Covered Activities in undisturbed parts of desert.

Agricultural landscapes in the west Mojave, Lucerne Valley and Imperial Borrego Valley or surrounding Blythe are already disturbed, with relatively high levels of human activity that supplement predators such as ravens and coyotes, and support covered predator species such as burrowing owls and Swainson's hawk. Therefore, covered operational activities in already disturbed rural and agricultural landscapes are would result in a little increase in predation.

However, Covered Activities in undisturbed desert habitat are likely to disproportionately supplement predators, increase predator density and consequently increase predation rates on Covered Species. Alternative 3 would result 116,000 acres of permanent conversion of natural desert communities with 61,000 acres of impacts (34% of the total ground disturbance) within areas characterized by disturbed land cover types.

Wind and solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes ecoregion subareas may supplement predators in undisturbed environments including parts of the Tehachapi Mountains or areas to the north of Edwards AFB. In these areas, susceptible species would include nestlings and eggs of Covered Species like tricolored blackbird, and golden eagle, as well as small reptiles like the Tehachapi slender salamander, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, and desert tortoise. Any development to the North of Edwards is likely to affect Mohave ground squirrel. Much of the development in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea, would be expected in the BLM Solar SEZ area adjacent to the I-10 corridor. This area may already experience increased predator densities as a consequence of human development, the additional impact of further development would therefore be attenuated. However, development in more remote parts to the subarea would likely increase predation. Susceptible species include desert tortoise and Mojave fringe toed lizard. Impacts in Imperial Valley would predominately occur in agricultural and disturbed lands. However, where projects are sited in natural communities, susceptible Covered Species would include flat-tailed horned lizard, and nesting birds.

Application of a Common Raven management plan (AM-PW-6), approved by the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group would reduce project activities that increase predator subsidization. Including, removal of trash and organic waste; minimize introduction of new water sources including pooling of water from dust control; removal of

carcasses from bird and bat collisions; and reduction in new nesting and perching sites where feasible.

The level of impact on Non-Covered Species would be similar to that discussed for the Covered Species.

Impact BR-9: Operational activities would result in avian and bat injury and mortality from collisions, thermal flux or electrocution at generation and transmission facilities.

The impacts of operation activities on avian and bat injury and mortality are analyzed below for wind turbines, solar, and transmission.

Wind Turbine

This section summarizes the range of impacts to bird and bat species within the Plan Area that occur as a consequence of wind turbine operation. The range of collision rates calculated in Table IV.7-213 are indicative of the overall annual collision rates for all bird and bat species, not just Covered Species. The range of collision rates is estimated for the final full build-out of wind over the life of the Plan, and is based on the range of collision rates in existing published and gray literature. While it is possible to provide a range of possible collision rates, it is not feasible to estimate the collision rate for each Covered Species, but only infer the propensity for a species to be at risk from collision by the overlap between the species habitat models and the likely distribution of wind generation across the subareas.

Overall, Alternative 3 would result in a median of approximately 5,000 collisions per year for birds and approximately 23,000 collisions per year for bats across the Plan area. In Alternative 3, 51% of impacts would be in West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, with 33% of impacts in Pinto Lucerne Valley. Of the remaining 16%, 14% would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, with 2% of development in the Borrego Imperial Valley. Collisions would predominately affect species in the northwest of the Plan, including Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, golden eagle, least Bell's vireo, and Swainson's hawk, tricolored blackbird southwest willow flycatcher, and mountain plover. Collision rates would be lower in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea. Susceptible species in this subarea include burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane and mountain plover.

Pre-construction CMAs require habitat assessments and pre-construction surveys for covered riparian and wetland birds, burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane, Swainson's hawk, Bendire's thrasher, and golden eagle. All bat Covered bats species would be susceptible including the California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Application of siting CMAs would avoid or minimize the risk to species localities. Setbacks from active nests would be required for Bendire’s thrasher, California condor, Gila woodpecker, and golden eagle. In addition, projects would be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species to the maximum extent feasible. Implementation of bat specific CMAs include 0.5-mile setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied Pallid bat and Townsend’s big eared bats roosts would reduce impacts to bat Covered Species.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar, geothermal, or transmission project. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Further, the compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee will be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions.

Similarly, a Condor Operations Strategy (COS) would be developed on a project-specific basis with the goal of avoiding mortality from operations of wind, solar and geothermal projects. No take for condors will be permitted in the form of kill from project operations. Any actions taken to encourage condors to leave an area that might result in harassment, injury, or mortality to the bird will be conducted by a Designated Biologist.

**Table IV.7-213
Plan-Wide Estimated Range of Collisions per Year
for Birds and Bats by Subarea – Alternative 3**

Ecoregion Subarea	# Turbines	Birds (Collisions/Yr) ¹			Bats (Collisions/Yr) ¹		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	136	200	700	3,000	300	3,000	19,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	17	-	100	300	-	400	2,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Owens River Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Panamint Death Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Table IV.7-213
Plan-Wide Estimated Range of Collisions per Year
for Birds and Bats by Subarea – Alternative 3**

Ecoregion Subarea	# Turbines	Birds (Collisions/Yr) ¹			Bats (Collisions/Yr) ¹		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	325	500	2,000	6,000	600	8,000	46,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	499	700	3,000	10,000	1,000	12,000	70,000
Grand Total	977	1,000	5,000	19,000	2,000	23,000	137,000

¹ Method for estimation of annual bird and bat collision rates described in Section IV.7.1.1.2 and discussed in more detail in Section IV.7.2.1.3

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table

Solar

Collision with power towers, heliostats and solar arrays, and injury or mortality from exposure to concentrated solar flux, are all known impacts of solar generation facilities. While the nature of the impacts remain the same for all alternatives, the distribution of impacts across the plan area varies in relation to the anticipated quantity and location of solar facilities in each alternative. Under Alternative 3 a total of 1,405,000 acres of the Plan Area would be designated as DFAs, of which up to 129,000 acres would be directly impacted by solar development.

In Alternative 3, plan-wide solar development would result in a 4.5-fold increase in collision risks relative to baseline (Appendix O). 16% of the anticipated solar facilities would be in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains ecoregion subarea, and 35% would be in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. The West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would support approximately 31% of the solar development, with a further 12% occurring in the Pinto and Lucerne Valley subarea. The remaining 8% would be spread across the rest of the Plan area.

Solar development in Imperial Borrego Valley area would convert agricultural lands, which would affect important winter foraging areas for mountain plover and greater sandhill crane. Alternative 3 has some of the most restricted DFAs in the Imperial Borrego Valley

ecoregion subarea, these restrictions would increase the density of development in the remaining DFAs. In particular, the DFAs in the agricultural lands running from the west of Calipatria to the Shoreline of the Salton Sea represent great potential for development because there is already extensive transmission throughout this area to serve existing geothermal facilities. However, this area also provides foraging for Cattle Egret, White-faced Ibis, Sandhill Crane, Mountain Plover, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew throughout winter (Shuford et al 2000). Further, the proximity of the Salton Sea would mean that development could disproportionately affect migrating and resident water birds including ducks, geese, pelicans, cormorants, and wading birds that would otherwise be less affected if development was more spread out.

Impacts in Imperial Borrego Valley and the Cadiz Valley would disproportionately affect wetland species like the Yuma clapper rail and California black rail. Due to the close proximity of DFAs to the Colorado River, impacts from solar operations in the Cadiz and Chocolate mountains subarea are also likely to affect riparian birds species associated with the lower Colorado river like southwest willow flycatcher, western yellow billed cuckoo, Gila woodpecker, and least Bell's vireo and would also affect migratory birds as discussed in BR-6.

Impacts in the western Mojave, along the HWY14 corridor, in Antelope Valley and east of Lancaster may disproportionately affect nesting and foraging Swainson's hawk, burrowing owl and overwintering mountain plover. Whereas, impacts in the Lucerne Valley would affect foraging habitat for nesting golden eagle populations, and Bendire's thrasher. Burrowing owl are less regionally specific, and would be affected in subareas with significant quantities of open agriculture lands. They would especially be affected by development in Imperial Borrego Valley, which contains the largest population of burrowing owls in California, and in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, in the open agricultural lands around Lancaster and Palmdale.

To offset potential impacts, the application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species, to the maximum extent feasible. Further, siting and construction CMAs require setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats, which would minimize direct loss of important migratory bird habitat. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Any proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meet the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar and geothermal projects. The compensation requirements of AM-LL-4 would be

based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to AM-LL-4. In combination, the application of siting, monitoring, operational and compensation CMAs would minimize impacts to migratory birds. Bat mortality from solar facilities may occur because of collision or solar flux injury. No DFAs are known to be specifically sensitive areas for bat foraging, and implementation of bat specific CMAs include 500 feet setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied pallid bat and Townsend's big-eared bat roosts would reduce impacts to bat Covered Species.

Transmission

The transmission collision and electrocution impacts would occur from generation tie lines (collector lines), new substations, and major transmission lines (delivery lines) that deliver power to major load centers. The distribution of impacts from collector lines would mostly occur within DFAs and be similar in distribution to the generation facilities. Most of the affected areas would be in Imperial Borrego Valley, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley, Mojave and Silurian Valley, and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas, with 714,000 acres, 8,000 acres, 5,000 acres, and 2,000 acres of terrestrial impacts anticipated respectively. The remaining 3,000 acres of terrestrial impacts would be spread throughout the remaining subareas.

Both large transmission lines and the network of smaller collector lines would present collision and electrocution hazard to bird Covered Species. In particular, lines running perpendicular to migratory corridors or close to bird refuges would represent a greater hazard. Such lines would include those anticipated to run parallel to the Tehachapi Mountains, as well as those that would cross the Tehachapi mountain passes. Other anticipated lines in the Chuckwalla Valley would run parallel to I-10 corridor in the existing transmission corridors. In the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, lines would run along the eastern side of Salton Sea in existing transmission corridors that run parallel to the foothills of the Chocolate Mountains; and would also run from east to west between the Imperial Valley and the San Diego area. All these lines would represent additional risk to migrating and overwintering covered avian species, due to their location, especially in bad weather when flocks of migratory birds may be forced down.

All bird Covered Species may be impacted by additional transmission infrastructure. To ameliorate potential hazards, transmission projects would reduce impacts to Covered Species by implementing Plan-wide, landscape-level, natural community, and Covered Species CMAs where feasible, as discussed under the wind impacts section.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP

Coordination Group. The Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions aims to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific transmission project.

A bird mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would include compensatory mitigation to offset the inadvertent mortality to covered avian species. Such compensation would be in accordance with AM-LL-4 and may include ongoing/annual fees. The biological basis for the fee will be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to AM-LL-4.

In addition, transmission projects would implement transmission specific CMAs that would: where feasible, bury electrical collector lines along roads (AM-TRANS-1); fit flight diverters on all transmission projects spanning or within 1,000 feet of water bodies and watercourses (AM-TRANS-2); avoid siting transmission projects that span canyons or are located on ridgelines (AM-TRANS-3); restrict transmission projects to within designated utility corridors (AM-TRANS-4). With the implementation of CMAs impacts to Covered Species would be minimized.

The level of impact on Non-Covered Species would be similar to that discussed for the Covered Species.

Operational Impacts Take Estimates for Covered Avian and Bat Species

The following section summarizes the initial estimates for take of Covered Species by operational activities that would require compensatory mitigation. Take estimates integrate all sources of mortality for each technology discussed above. Section IV.7.1.1.2 provides the method used to estimate the operational take for Covered avian and bat species provided here. Based on the location of DFAs and MW distribution, it is expected that take of Covered Species associated with Agricultural habitats would be particularly affected, which would include Covered Species such as burrowing owl, Swainson’s hawk, greater sandhill crane and mountain plover.

**Table IV.7-214
 Plan-Wide Estimated Total Take for Covered Avian and Bat Species – Alternative 3**

Covered Bird and Bat Species	Solar Impact	Wind Impact	Geothermal Impact	Total Impact
Bendire’s thrasher	50	20	0	70
Burrowing owl	180	10	20	210
California condor ¹	0	0	0	0
California black rail	40	0	10	50

Table IV.7-214
Plan-Wide Estimated Total Take for Covered Avian and Bat Species – Alternative 3

Covered Bird and Bat Species	Solar Impact	Wind Impact	Geothermal Impact	Total Impact
Gila woodpecker	40	0	0	50
Golden eagle ²	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Least Bell's vireo	90	0	0	100
Mountain plover	100	20	20	130
Greater sandhill crane	20	0	10	20
SW willow flycatcher	70	0	0	70
Swainson's hawk	50	10	0	60
Tri-colored blackbird	80	30	0	110
Western yellow billed cuckoo	40	0	0	50
Yuma clapper rail	40	0	10	50
Grand Total Avian Species	800	90	70	950
California leaf-nosed bat	20	10	0	40
Pallid bat	20	50	0	70
Townsend's big-eared bat	60	10	10	80
Grand Total Bat Species	100	70	10	190

¹ Take for California condor would not be permitted under the DRECP.

² Take of Golden Eagle would be permitted on a project by project basis. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year would be authorized for 2014 for any new activity within the Plan Area. Take limits for the DRECP area will be re-evaluated annually based on the amount of ongoing take and population estimates of eagles within the local-area population of eagles.

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table

Impact Reduction Strategies and Mitigation

The implementation of the Plan would result in conservation of some desert lands as well as the development of renewable energy generation and transmission facilities on other lands. There are several ways in which the impacts of the renewable energy development covered by the Plan would be lessened. First, the Plan incorporates specific biological reserve design components and LUPA components for each alternative. Additionally, Covered Activities under the Plan would be required to implement CMAs to avoid and minimize impacts inside and outside the DFAs and CMAs to compensate for the impacts of Covered Activities. Additionally, the implementation of existing laws, orders, regulations and standards would reduce the impacts of project development. If significant impacts would still result after implementation of CMAs and compliance with applicable laws and regulations, then specific mitigation measures are recommended in this section.

Conservation and Management Actions

The conservation strategy for Alternative 3 (presented in Volume II) defines specific actions that would reduce the impacts of this alternative. The impact assessment above references applicable avoidance, minimization, and compensation CMAs that would reduce and compensate for the impacts of Covered Activities.

For all Covered Activities throughout the Plan Area, the avoidance and minimization Plan-wide CMAs AM-PW-1 through AM-PW-17 would be required to reduce potential adverse effects through the implementation of Plan-wide standard practices. Resource-specific CMAs would be required for Covered Activities impacting specific resources, including the CMAs under AM-DFA-RIPWET, AM-DFA-DUNE, AM-DFA-ONC, AM-DFA-AG, AM-DFA-BAT, AM-DFA-PLANT, AM-DFA-ICS, and AM-DFA-BLMSS. Additionally, all impacts resulting from Covered Activities in the Plan Area would be required to compensate impacts to biological resources (COMP-1 through COMP-5).

Laws and Regulations

Similar to the No Action Alternative, existing laws and regulations will reduce certain impacts of Covered Activity implementation. Relevant regulations are presented in the Regulatory Setting in Volume III. The requirements of relevant laws and regulations are summarized above for the No Action Alternative in Section IV.7.3.1.1.1.

Mitigation Measures

After implementation of the CMAs and existing laws and regulations, mitigation measures will be applied to further reduce some of the adverse impacts on biological resources. The biological conservation strategy is an essential part of the project description for the DRECP. Implementation of the DRECP, including the CMAs, would avoid, minimize, and compensate for the impacts of the Covered Activities such that additional mitigation measures are not necessary for all but the following resource impacts.

Mitigation Measure for Impact BR-1: Siting and construction of renewable energy and transmission development would result in impacts to rare natural communities. If habitat assessments identify rare natural communities on or within 0.25 miles of a project site, the DRECP shall require the following measure be implemented.

BR-1a: Prepare a Rare Natural Community Avoidance and Mitigation Plan that specifically addresses how rare natural communities would be avoided or mitigated for any ground disturbance impacts sited within 0.25 mile of mapped rare natural communities. The Plan shall be prepared as part of the project-specific environmental review.

For avoidance of rare natural communities, the Plan shall demonstrate that the project facilities have been sited or that the project has implemented appropriate site-specific design features to ensure that the effects of the proposed project would not directly impact or contribute to indirect effects on the rare natural communities on or adjacent to the project site. Avoidance of potential indirect effects on rare natural communities relate to dust, fire management, invasive plants, and degradation of ecological processes (i.e., hydrological processes and soil processes).

For impacts to rare natural communities, the Plan shall demonstrate that the compensation used to offset the impacts of the proposed project through CMAs COMP-1 and COMP-2 also offsets the loss of rare natural community alliances through in-kind acquisition or non-acquisition actions that benefit the rare natural community alliance(s) impacted.

IV.7.3.5.1.2 Impacts from Reserve Design

The impacts of the reserve design collectively refers to the designation and management of existing conservation areas (i.e., LLPAs and MEMLs), BLM LUPA conservation designations, and reserves established within Conservation Planning Areas. These are considered beneficial impacts for biological resources, and this section serves as a biological resources conservation analysis for this alternative. This section is organized by biological resource at the landscape level, natural community level, and species level.

Overall of the 15,161,000 acres within the Alternative 3 Reserve Design Lands, 41% is within BLM LUPA conservation designations, 8% in the Conservation Planning Areas, and the remaining 51% are located in existing conservation areas. The SAA from the Preferred Alternative located in the Silurian Valley would be conserved in NLCS under Alternative 3. The SAA from the Preferred Alternative located north of Kramer Junction in the West Mojave would be conserved in ACEC and Conservation Planning Areas under Alternative 3. Within the Reserve Design Lands, the interagency Plan-wide Conservation Priority Area covers approximately 1,878,000 acres, including 1,688,000 acres of BLM LUPA conservation designations and 190,000 acres of Conservation Planning Areas.

The DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 was developed from the reserve design envelope developed through the reserve design process described in Section I.3.4.4 and Appendix D; however, the extent of the DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 differs from the extent of the envelope described in Volume I because it was integrated with the other elements of the alternative.

Overall, the DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 would include 95% of the conceptual reserve design envelope described in Volume I. The DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 would also include high percentages of the total

reserve design envelope in all of the subareas, ranging from 84% in the Owens River Valley subarea to 98% in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains and Panamint Death Valley subareas.

Areas not included in the DRECP Plan-Wide Reserve Design Envelope for Alternative 3 that are in the conceptual reserve design envelope described in Volume I include:

- Portions of Study Area Lands: The Future Assessment Areas occupy approximately 10,000 acres that were identified in the reserve design envelope that are not designated as Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including the following geographic areas:
 - The Lucerne Valley area along Highway 247
- Portions of the DFAs: Areas in DFAs under Alternative 3 occupy approximately 262,000 acres that were identified in the conceptual reserve envelope that are not be designated as Reserve Design Lands, including the following geographic areas:
 - Palen and Chuckwalla Valley along Interstate 10 in east Riverside County
 - Western and eastern areas of Imperial Valley
 - East and west of Barstow
 - Searles Lake area
 - Coso Range area
- Undesignated Areas: Approximately 537,000 acres were not designated as Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3 that were identified in the reserve envelope, which is primarily comprised of BLM-administered lands in the Plan Area without BLM LUPA conservation designations over them.

Landscape

Habitat Linkages

Figures III.7-26 through III.7-36 in Chapter III.7 of Volume III shows the desert linkage network for the Plan Area and in each ecoregion subarea. Table IV.7-215 shows the Plan-wide conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3. Conservation of the desert linkage network totals more than 2.6 million acres (72%).

The linkage in the northern portion of the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea that extends from the Ward Valley to the Vidal Valley and south to the Big Maria Mountains and the Palen Mountains is almost entirely conserved. The three smaller connections in the Palen Valley are all entirely conserved. Though the majority of the remaining linkages are conserved, there are some DFAs that that may interrupt them (see Section IV.7.3.5.1.1). In the Imperial Borrego Valley, the connection that extends into the Cadiz Valley and

Chocolate Mountains subarea to the east is entirely within conserved areas in this subarea. The remaining linkage along East Mesa is partly conserved. The western most linkages in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains subarea are almost entirely conserved, but the linkage network from Clark Mountain to Ivanpah Lake and into the Ivanpah Mountains is only partly conserved. None of the linkages in the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea are entirely conserved since the middle portion of the subarea is not in Reserve Design Lands. A section of the single linkage in the Owens River Valley subarea is not conserved. The connectivity of the northernmost linkage in the Panamint Death Valley subarea is preserved only through the Searles Range. The connection in the China Lake Naval Weapon Center is not conserved in Reserve Design Lands, but most of the remainder of this linkage to the west is conserved. The majority of the linkage in the eastern portion of the subarea is within Reserve Design Lands. In the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, none of the linkages are completely conserved, but the southern portion of all of them are except for the linkage that extends into the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, which is entirely conserved within the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. Only the linkages along the eastern boundary of the Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subarea would not be in Reserve Design Lands. All of the linkages in the Providence and Bullion Mountains subarea would be largely maintained in Reserve Design Lands. In the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea the connection between the southern boundary of the Plan Area directly north to the Los Angeles/Kern County line is mostly conserved. Although large portions of the other linkages in this subarea are conserved, none of them are wholly conserved in Reserve Design Lands.

In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs (see Section IV.7.3.5.1.1).

**Table IV.7-215
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3**

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	890,000	187,000	505,000	7,000	699,000	78%
Imperial Borrego Valley	156,000	14,000	107,000	200	121,000	78%
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	174,000	28,000	113,000	1,000	142,000	82%
Mojave and Silurian Valley	507,000	179,000	203,000	6,000	388,000	76%

**Table IV.7-215
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3**

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Owens River Valley	19,000	40	12,000	70	12,000	63%
Panamint Death Valley	206,000	109,000	75,000	500	185,000	90%
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	291,000	16,000	134,000	3,000	153,000	52%
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	152,000	14,000	94,000	2,000	110,000	72%
Providence and Bullion Mountains	426,000	144,000	219,000	3,000	365,000	86%
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	860,000	45,000	376,000	50,000	471,000	55%
Grand Total	3,682,000	736,000	1,836,000	73,000	2,645,000	72%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs).

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), which includes BLM and non-BLM inholdings within the designation.

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1.2.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Hydrological Resources

A conservation analysis for hydrological resources is provided below, including playa, seep/spring, and the four major rivers in the Plan Area (i.e., Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave and Owens) for Alternative 3. Conservation of riparian areas and wetlands, which co-occur with many of these hydrological resources, is provided below under Natural Communities.

Playa

Playa totals 322,000 acres in the Plan Area. Overall, 60% (192,000 acres) would be conserved under Alternative 3. Existing Conservation would account for 49% of the conservation, BLM LUPA would account for 50%, and Conservation Planning Areas would

account for 1%. Additionally, playas and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for playas would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Seep/Spring

There are 479 seep/spring locations in the Plan Area. Overall, 64% (306 locations) of the seep/spring locations would be conserved under Alternative 3. The conservation of seep/spring under Alternative 3 would be relatively high in most subareas. These include Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains (100%, 5 locations), Imperial Borrego Valley (48%, 10 locations), Kingston and Funeral Mountains (70%, 58 locations), Mojave and Silurian Valley (71%, 19 locations), Owens River Valley (74%, 29 locations), Panamint Death Valley (93%, 39 locations), Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes (62%, 51 locations), Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains (80%, 15 locations), and Providence and Bullion Mountains (86%, 57 locations). The conservation in the other sub areas would be less than half. These locations are Imperial Borrego Valley (44%, 10 locations), Owens River Valley (93%, 39 locations) and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes (44%, 42 locations)

Overall, Existing Conservation would account for 62% of the conservation of seep/spring, BLM LUPA conservation designations would account for 35%, and Conservation Planning Areas would account for 3%. Additionally, seeps and springs and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. However, it is likely that most, if not all, that all seep/spring locations and associated Covered Species and hydrological functions would be conserved through adherence to site-specific CMAs. CMAs for seep/spring locations would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided wetland natural communities.

Major Rivers

Overall, 72% of the major rivers would be conserved under Alternative 3, including 87% of the Amargosa River, 42% of the Colorado River, 71% of the Mojave River, and 70% of the Owens River. Conservation Planning Areas would account for 34% of the conservation of the major rivers, Existing Conservation would account for 45%, and BLM LUPA conservation designations would account for 22%. Additionally, major rivers and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be

avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks.

Dune and Sand Resources

Overall, 76% (1,133,000 acres) of dunes and sand resources would be conserved under Alternative 3. At least 50% of dunes and sand resources would be conserved in 8 subareas in the Plan Area that contain substantial acreage of dunes and sand resources, including Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains at 84% (503,000 acres), Imperial Borrego Valley at 63% (83,000 acres), Kingston and Funeral Mountains at 66% (46,000 acres), Mojave and Silurian Valley at 81% (163,000 acres), Owens River Valley at 58% (5,000 acres), Panamint and Death Valley at 84% (118,000 acres), Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes at 64% (41,000 acres), and Providence and Bullion Mountains at 66% (163,000 acres). A subarea with lower conservation of dunes and sand resources under Alternative 3 is West Mojave and Eastern Slopes at 34% (12,000 acres). Importantly, dunes and sand resources and associated Covered Species, natural communities and ecological functions would be fully avoided through application of the dune avoidance and minimization CMAs.

Environmental Gradients

The conservation analysis addresses four types of environmental gradients in the Plan Area: elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect.

Elevations are characterized by 1,000-foot interval classes ranging from below sea level to 9,000 feet. Approximately 92% of the Plan Area is between sea level and 5,000 feet, 6% is below sea level, and 2% is above 5,000 feet. Under Alternative 3, the majority of available lands would be conserved at all elevation classes above sea level, ranging from 65% for the 2,000 to 3,000 feet class to 59% of the 7,000 to 8,000 feet class. The average conservation of elevation classes above sea level would be 69%. The majority of Plan Area lands for each elevation class above sea level will be conserved under Alternative 3 optimizing the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions, which may occur in response to climate change. In addition, the conservation of such a high proportion of Plan Area lands across all elevation classes allows for the conservation of the greatest range and diversity of natural communities and Covered Species habitats. Conserving the majority of each elevation class within the Plan Area will also promote ecological processes and help sustain natural communities and Covered Species.

Landforms in the Plan Area include canyons/deeply incised streams, mountain tops/high ridges, open slopes, and plains. Plains are the dominant landform in the Plan Area totaling 13,906,386 acres, or 73% of the Plan Area. Conservation of the plains landform under Alternative 3 would include 69% of plains. As the majority of Covered Species in the Plan Area are associated with plains during part or all of its life cycle, the conservation of the

majority of this landform is of benefit to a large number of Covered Species including those Covered Species that spend its entire life cycle within this type of landform, and those Covered Species that utilize it during parts of its life cycle such as for breeding, migration, or wintering. Open slopes make up about 16% of the Plan Area and canyons/deeply incised streams and mountain tops/high ridges each make up about 5% to 6% of the Plan Area.

Conservation of the remaining landforms under Alternative 3 would include 87% of canyons/deeply incised streams, 87% of mountain tops/high ridges, and 85% of open slopes. As the majority of Plan Area lands for all landforms will be conserved under Alternative 3, it optimizes the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions, which may occur in response to climate change. In addition, the conservation of such a high proportion of Plan Area lands across all landforms allows for the conservation of the greatest range and diversity of natural communities and Covered Species habitats. Conserving the majority of each landform within the Plan Area will also promote ecological processes and help sustain natural communities and Covered Species.

Slopes in the Plan Area are characterized by 5% interval classes. Sixty-one percent of the Plan Area lands are on slopes up to 5%, and 87% of the Plan Area lands are on slopes less than 20%. Conservation of the slope classes under Alternative 3 would range from 66% of slopes up to 5% to 93% of slopes over 100%, with 85% of slopes less than 20% conserved under Alternative 3. The vast majority of Plan Area lands within each slope class will be conserved under Alternative 3 optimizing the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions, which may occur in response to climate change. In addition, the conservation of such a high proportion of Plan Area lands across all slope classes allows for the conservation of the greatest range of natural communities and Covered Species habitats. Conserving the majority of each slope class within the Plan Area will also promote ecological processes and help sustain natural communities and Covered Species.

Aspects in the Plan Area include nine classes: north, northeast, east, southeast, south, southwest, west, northwest, and flat. Except for flat, the remaining eight aspects are fairly evenly distributed in the Plan Area, ranging from 9% for northwest aspects to 15% for northeast aspects. Flat terrains account for only 1% of the Plan Area. Under Alternative 3, conservation of aspects would range from 67% for flat terrain to 85% of south aspect. The majority of Plan Area lands for each aspect class will be conserved under Alternative 3 optimizing the potential for successful species range shifts, contractions, and expansions, which may occur in response to climate change. In addition, the conservation of such a high proportion of Plan Area lands across all aspect classes allows for the conservation of the greatest range of natural communities and Covered Species habitats. As a number of plant Covered Species have specific aspect requirements, the conservation of the majority of lands within each aspect class is beneficial to those species. Conserving the majority of each

aspect class within the Plan Area will also promote ecological processes and help sustain natural communities and Covered Species.

Natural Communities

Table IV.7-216 shows the conservation to natural communities within the reserve design. A conservation summary by general community is provided below. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community conservation by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 63,000 acres (42%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas and approximately 20 acres would be conserved in the Owens River Valley subarea. Conservation would primarily come from BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of California forest and woodlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

California forest and woodlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Tehachapi slender salamander, golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, bighorn sheep, and Bakersfield cactus. California forest and woodlands also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of California forest and woodlands would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 33,000 acres (30%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of conservation would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. There is more conservation in existing conservation than in Conservation Planning Areas or BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of chaparral and coastal scrubs, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Parish's

daisy, and Bakersfield cactus. Chaparral and coastal scrubs also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of chaparral and coastal scrubs would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 187,000 acres (65%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of conservation would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas. Conservation of this general community would primarily come from existing conservation (over 75% of total conservation). In addition to conservation of desert conifer woodlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert conifer woodlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Tehachapi slender salamander, golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, bighorn sheep, and Parish's daisy. Desert conifer woodlands also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of desert conifer woodlands would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 1,285,000 acres (80%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of the conservation would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas. Most (approximately 802,000 acres) of the total conservation of desert outcrop and badlands are in areas of existing conservation. In addition to conservation of desert outcrop and badlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert outcrop and badlands provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and bighorn sheep. Desert outcrop and badlands also provide habitat for desert kit fox (Planning Species). Desert outcrop and badlands also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Covered and Non-Covered Species associated with desert scrub may also be associated with this general community. Therefore, conservation of desert outcrop and badlands would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 9,808,000 acres (74%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3. About half of the conserved acreage would occur in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. However, conservation of desert scrubs is well distributed with conservation in every subarea of the Plan Area. As the most prevalent desert scrub natural community in the Plan Area, lower bajada and fan Mojavean–Sonoran desert scrub accounts for the majority of the conservation of desert scrub communities. The majority (approximately 5,630,000 acres) of the total conservation of desert scrubs would be in existing conservation areas. In addition to conservation of desert scrubs, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert scrubs provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, California condor, Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Mohave ground squirrel, bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, flat-tailed horned lizard, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, triple-ribbed milk-vetch, alkali mariposa-lily, desert cymopterus, Mojave tarplant, Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus, Mojave monkeyflower, and Bakersfield cactus. It also provides habitat for desert kit fox and burro deer (Planning Species). Desert scrubs also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of desert scrubs would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 217,000 acres (77%) of dune natural communities would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Mojave and Silurian Valley, Imperial Borrego Valley, and Panamint Death Valley subareas. The remaining conserved acreage is distributed throughout the remaining subareas. The majority (approximately 146,000 acres) of the total conservation of desert dunes would be in existing conservation. In addition to conservation of desert dunes, application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Dune communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: Mojave fringe-toed lizard and flat-tailed horned lizard. Dune communities also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section

IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of desert dunes would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 57,000 acres (24%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. As the most prevalent grassland natural community in the Plan Area, California Annual and Perennial Grassland accounts for the vast majority of the conservation of grassland communities. Most of the conserved acreage of grasslands would be in existing conservation or BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of grasslands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Grassland communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: golden eagle, burrowing owl, mountain plover, Bendire's thrasher, and Swainson's hawk. Desert kit fox (Planning Species) is also associated with grassland communities. Therefore, impacts to this community may have a negative effect on these species by removing or degrading suitable habitat. Grassland communities also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Therefore, conservation of grasslands would provide conservation of suitable habitat for these species.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 705,000 acres (71%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. As the most prevalent riparian natural community in the Plan Area, Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub accounts for the majority of the conservation of riparian communities. Most of the conservation of riparian communities would occur in BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of riparian communities, impacts to riparian communities would not occur under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. Riparian communities also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern

North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Riparian communities include microphyll woodlands, which include groundwater-dependent vegetation (e.g., mesquite bosques). Under Alternative 3, conservation for microphyll woodland related natural communities would include: 73% of Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, 58% of Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and 79% of Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub.

Riparian communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: California black rail, Gila woodpecker, Yuma clapper rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and Tehachapi slender salamander. Riparian communities also provide habitat for burro deer (Planning Species). In addition, species associated with desert scrub are also associated with Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub. Conservation of riparian communities would benefit these species. Furthermore, there are also CMAs to avoid impacts to riparian species including pre-construction nesting bird surveys for riparian and wetland bird Covered Species and Non-Covered Species.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 457,000 acres (53%) of wetland communities would be conserved under Alternative 3. About half of the conserved acreage would occur in the Panamint Death Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas with the remaining conserved acreage distributed throughout the remaining subareas. As the most prevalent wetland natural communities in the Plan Area, conservation of North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat and Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh account for the majority of the conservation of riparian communities. Most of the conservation of wetland communities would occur in BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of wetland communities, Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback. Also, CMAs for North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat, southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh, and other undifferentiated wetland-related land covers (i.e., "Playa", "Wetland", and "Open Water") would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Wetland communities provide habitat for the following Covered Species: California black rail, Yuma clapper rail, tricolored blackbird, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, Townsend's big-

eared bat, desert pupfish, Mohave tui chub, Owens pupfish, and Owens tui chub. Wetland communities also provide habitat for the Non-Covered Species associated with this community as identified in Table IV.7-50 in Section IV.7.3.2.1. In addition, species associated with desert scrub are also associated with Southwestern North American Salt Basin and High Marsh. Conservation of wetland communities would benefit these species. Furthermore, there are also CMAs to avoid impacts to wetland species including pre-construction nesting bird surveys for riparian and wetland bird Covered Species and Non-Covered Species.

Table IV.7-216
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>California forest and woodland</i>						
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	72,000	1,000	18,000	800	21,000	29%
Californian montane conifer forest	78,000	25,000	16,000	2,000	42,000	54%
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>						
Californian mesic chaparral	4,000	20	600	200	900	22%
Californian pre-montane chaparral	1,000	0	400	10	500	36%
Californian xeric chaparral	24,000	3,000	1,000	3,000	7,000	28%
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	1,000	0	10	50	70	5%
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	54,000	2,000	8,000	4,000	14,000	27%
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	24,000	9,000	200	800	10,000	43%
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>						
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	287,000	159,000	16,000	12,000	187,000	65%

Table IV.7-216
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>						
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	1,613,000	802,000	471,000	12,000	1,285,000	80%
<i>Desert Scrub</i>						
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	57,000	44,000	2,000	800	47,000	82%
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	106,000	30,000	50,000	2,000	82,000	77%
Intermontane seral shrubland	74,000	1,000	4,000	3,000	9,000	12%
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	437,000	110,000	122,000	6,000	238,000	55%
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	76,000	9,000	18,000	900	28,000	38%
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	10,859,000	4,561,000	3,494,000	165,000	8,220,000	76%
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	1,333,000	838,000	203,000	24,000	1,065,000	80%
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	279,000	38,000	64,000	18,000	119,000	43%
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	100	0	40	0	40	35%

Table IV.7-216
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Dunes</i>						
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	282,000	146,000	66,000	5,000	217,000	77%
<i>Grassland</i>						
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	230,000	23,000	19,000	13,000	55,000	24%
California annual forb/grass vegetation	8,000	400	900	1,000	2,000	30%
<i>Riparian</i>						
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	697,000	195,000	309,000	7,000	510,000	73%
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	30,000	7,000	9,000	2,000	18,000	58%
Riparian	600	20	0	300	300	56%
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	191,000	70,000	79,000	3,000	151,000	79%
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	6,000	500	600	2,000	3,000	44%
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	66,000	7,000	9,000	6,000	23,000	35%
<i>Wetland</i>						
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	4,000	40	200	1,000	1,000	32%
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	400	0	0	80	80	20%

**Table IV.7-216
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3**

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	310,000	136,000	76,000	2,000	213,000	69%
Open Water	209,000	23,000	800	24,000	47,000	23%
Playa	78,000	400	35,000	300	36,000	46%
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	261,000	31,000	117,000	10,000	158,000	61%
Wetland	8,000	30	200	500	700	9%
<i>Other Land Cover</i>						
Agriculture	711,000	6,000	3,000	4,000	12,000	2%
Developed and Disturbed Areas	447,000	3,000	3,000	300	7,000	2%
Not Mapped	7,000	200	100	300	700	10%
Rural	114,000	900	3,000	8,000	12,000	11%
Total	19,040,000	7,279,000	5,222,000	342,000	12,843,000	67%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs).

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), which includes BLM and non-BLM inholdings within the designation.

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1.2.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Covered Species Habitat

Table IV.7-217 shows the Plan-wide conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat under Alternative 3 (before the application of CMAs). Generally, the percent conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat in available lands is highly variable, ranging from 1%

for greater sandhill crane (primarily found in agricultural areas) to 84% for mountain habitat for bighorn sheep.

Conservation percentages are in large part related to the location and types of habitat modeled for the Covered Species. For example, modeled habitat for greater sandhill crane, which is primarily freshwater wetland and agriculture, is limited to the Palo Verde and Imperial valleys and is mostly within DFAs.

Much of the modeled habitats for desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard are in the Mojave Desert in areas that are either already in Existing Conservation or occur in the BLM LUPA conservation designations. Flat-tailed horned lizard modeled habitat is only conserved in the Imperial Borrego Valley, mostly in BLM LUPA conservation designations. Tehachapi slender salamander modeled habitat occurs in the Tehachapi Mountains where conservation is primarily composed of BLM LUPA conservation designations. Furthermore, the siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and Tehachapi slender salamander, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat, wetland habitat, and dune habitat would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species.

Conservation of bird species associated primarily with wetland and riparian habitats, including California black rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail would be augmented by CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats.

Conservation of Bendire's thrasher occurs in every subarea of the Plan Area, but is mainly in existing conservation. Burrowing owl, widespread, but mainly associated with open areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and agricultural areas in the Imperial Borrego Valley, would primarily be conserved in the same subareas and most of the conservation would occur in BLM LUPA conservation designations.

California condor mainly occurs in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea so the majority of conservation is also in this subarea with most of the conserved acreage in BLM LUPA conservation designations. Golden eagle modeled suitable habitat and associated conservation is widespread in the Plan Area with most of the conservation in existing conservation areas. Swainson's hawk is primarily associated with the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Imperial Borrego Valley, and Owens River Valley subareas; of these subareas, at least a quarter of suitable habitat is conserved only in the Owens River Valley subarea. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat, CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs.

Most of the modeled suitable habitat for Gila woodpecker is conserved in the Imperial Borrego Valley, mostly in BLM LUPA conservation designations. About half of the

conservation of mountain plover suitable habitat is in Conservation Planning Areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Conservation of suitable habitat for desert pupfish and Mohave tui chub is mostly in existing conservation areas. Although conservation of desert pupfish is relatively low especially in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish. Owens pupfish and Owens tui chub are conserved primarily in Conservation Planning Areas.

Conservation of suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, both inter-mountain and mountain habitat, is widespread and is mainly in existing conservation areas. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. At least half of the conservation of burro deer and Mojave ground squirrel suitable habitat is from BLM LUPA conservation designations. The majority of the available desert kit fox habitat is conserved in each subarea except the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, which has the highest acreage of available suitable habitat for this Planning Species. Suitable habitat for the bat Covered Species—California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat—is widespread and mainly conserved in existing conservation areas. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for covered mammal species, the CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat that would reduce impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat.

Conservation of plant species ranges from 7% of suitable habitat for alkali mariposa-lily to 71% of suitable habitat for triple-ribbed milk-vetch. The proportion of suitable habitat conserved in existing conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas varies by species. However, in addition to the conservation of modeled suitable habitat, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat would further reduce the impacts on these species.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species.

Table IV.7-217
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>						
Agassiz's desert tortoise	9,858,000	3,711,000	3,431,000	187,000	7,328,000	74%
Flat-tailed horned lizard	758,000	151,000	272,000	4,000	427,000	56%
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	1,094,000	403,000	435,000	11,000	848,000	78%
Tehachapi slender salamander	48,000	300	13,000	700	14,000	29%
<i>Bird</i>						
Bendire's thrasher	2,141,000	1,196,000	418,000	28,000	1,642,000	77%
Burrowing owl	5,269,000	479,000	1,319,000	193,000	1,991,000	38%
California black rail	197,000	21,000	13,000	6,000	40,000	20%
California condor	1,240,000	81,000	182,000	50,000	313,000	25%
Gila woodpecker	106,000	10,000	31,000	1,000	43,000	40%
Golden eagle–foraging	10,747,000	5,518,000	3,051,000	110,000	8,680,000	81%
Golden eagle–nesting	4,443,000	2,689,000	861,000	43,000	3,593,000	81%
Greater sandhill crane	617,000	6,000	2,000	1,000	9,000	1%
Least Bell's vireo	226,000	86,000	36,000	18,000	139,000	61%
Mountain plover	828,000	7,000	5,000	14,000	26,000	3%
Southwestern willow flycatcher	317,000	18,000	32,000	17,000	67,000	21%
Swainson's hawk	1,455,000	24,000	60,000	70,000	154,000	11%
Tricolored blackbird	271,000	11,000	7,000	18,000	36,000	13%
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	152,000	15,000	11,000	23,000	49,000	32%
Yuma clapper rail	51,000	10,000	2,000	2,000	13,000	26%
<i>Fish</i>						
Desert pupfish	8,000	900	300	300	1,000	18%
Mohave tui chub	300	200	-	20	200	79%
Owens pupfish	18,000	600	1,000	3,000	5,000	30%

Table IV.7-217
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Owens tui chub	17,000	700	1,000	3,000	5,000	31%
<i>Mammal</i>						
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	3,854,000	1,904,000	1,149,000	23,000	3,077,000	80%
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	6,649,000	4,085,000	1,413,000	56,000	5,555,000	84%
California leaf-nosed bat	7,133,000	3,138,000	2,455,000	50,000	5,643,000	79%
Mohave ground squirrel	2,383,000	216,000	866,000	152,000	1,234,000	52%
Pallid bat	16,412,000	6,836,000	4,901,000	273,000	12,010,000	73%
Townsend's big-eared bat	14,677,000	5,879,000	4,334,000	264,000	10,478,000	71%
<i>Plant</i>						
Alkali mariposa-lily	119,000	200	800	8,000	9,000	7%
Bakersfield cactus	278,000	20,000	63,000	12,000	96,000	34%
Barstow woolly sunflower	154,000	3,000	86,000	12,000	101,000	66%
Desert cymopterus	205,000	7,000	83,000	18,000	108,000	53%
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	289,000	87,000	42,000	5,000	134,000	46%
Mojave monkeyflower	161,000	27,000	92,000	700	120,000	75%
Mojave tarplant	265,000	48,000	90,000	4,000	142,000	54%
Owens Valley checkerbloom	147,000	13,000	7,000	17,000	37,000	25%
Parish's daisy	188,000	82,000	45,000	2,000	128,000	68%
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	8,000	5,000	10	400	5,000	71%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs).

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), which includes BLM and non-BLM inholdings within the designation.

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1.2.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Agassiz's desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-218 provides a conservation analysis for these desert tortoise important areas, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, 87% of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, 91% of the important areas would be conserved Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, 77% of TCAs and linkage habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Table IV.7-218
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	387,000	157,000	153,000	3,000	313,000	81%
	Linkage	469,000	126,000	260,000	4,000	390,000	83%
	TCA	3,130,000	1,544,000	1,209,000	14,000	2,768,000	88%
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		3,986,000	1,827,000	1,622,000	21,000	3,470,000	87%
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	784,000	421,000	256,000	7,000	684,000	87%
	TCA	2,096,000	1,758,000	171,000	9,000	1,938,000	92%
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		2,880,000	2,179,000	427,000	16,000	2,622,000	91%
Western Mojave	Linkage	1,204,000	391,000	260,000	25,000	676,000	56%
	TCA	2,313,000	1,061,000	962,000	7,000	2,030,000	88%
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		3,517,000	1,452,000	1,222,000	32,000	2,706,000	77%
Grand Total		10,383,000	5,458,000	3,272,000	69,000	8,799,000	85%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs).

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), which includes BLM and non-BLM inholdings within the designation.

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1.2.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-219 provides a conservation analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas. Approximately 71% of key population centers and 68% of linkages would be conserved under Alternative 3. Expansion areas and climate change extension areas would be conserved at 72% and 46% respectively. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-219
Plan-Wide Conservation Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas – Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Key Population Center	507,000	47,000	289,000	27,000	362,000	71%
Linkage	386,000	30,000	211,000	21,000	262,000	68%
Expansion Area	552,000	77,000	269,000	52,000	398,000	72%
Climate Change Extension	224,000	28,000	52,000	24,000	104,000	46%
Total	1,669,000	181,000	821,000	124,000	1,126,000	68%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs).

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), which includes BLM and non-BLM inholdings within the designation.

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1.2.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Within the Plan Area, critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the following Covered Species: desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, and Parish’s daisy. For desert tortoise, approximately 87% of the desert tortoise designated critical habitat would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 1,517,000 acres in existing conservation areas, 2,079,000 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 16,000 acres in Conservation Planning Areas. For southwestern willow

flycatcher, approximately 63% of the southwestern willow flycatcher designated critical habitat would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 900 acres in existing conservation areas, 70 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 3,000 acres in Conservation Planning Areas. For desert pupfish, approximately 88% of the desert pupfish designated critical habitat would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 100 acres in existing conservation areas and 500 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations. For Parish’s daisy, approximately 70% of the Parish’s daisy designated critical habitat would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 1,000 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations.

Non-Covered Species Critical Habitat

Ten Non-Covered Species have Critical Habitat within the Plan Area. Table IV.7-220 shows the total amount of Critical Habitat and the amount within each Plan Wide reserve designation for Non-Covered Species. These reserve designations are considered beneficial impacts for biological resources. All or a substantial portion of each species’ Critical Habitat would be within the Reserve Design Lands and within the BLM conservation designations for most species. Critical Habitat for bighorn sheep is predominately within existing conservation and for arroyo toad it would mostly be within Conservation Planning Areas. Critical Habitat for the Pierson’s milk-vetch is managed under the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP), which provides protections for critical habitat within conservation areas and areas designated as closed to motorized (e.g. off-highway vehicle) use.

**Table IV.7-220
Critical Habitat within Plan-Wide Reserve Design for Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3**

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within the DRECP	Acres of Critical Habitat in Existing Conservation	Acres of Critical Habitat in BLM Conservation Designations	Acres of Critical Habitat in Conservation Planning Areas	Acres in Conservation
Amargosa nitrophila	1,000	0	1,000	0	1,000
Amargosa vole	5,000	1,000	3,000	0	4,000
Arroyo toad	4,000	0	20	3,000	3,020
Ash Meadows gumplant	300	0	300	0	300
Cushenbury buckwheat	600	0	600	0	600
Cushenbury milk-vetch	1,000	0	1,000	0	1,000

**Table IV.7-220
Critical Habitat within Plan-Wide Reserve Design for Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3**

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within the DRECP	Acres of Critical Habitat in Existing Conservation	Acres of Critical Habitat in BLM Conservation Designations	Acres of Critical Habitat in Conservation Planning Areas	Acres in Conservation
Cushenbury oxytheca	100	0	100	0	100
Lane Mountain milk-vetch	14,000	3,000	11,000	0	14,000
Pierson’s milk-vetch	12,000	12,000 ²	0	400	12,000
Peninsular Bighorn sheep	47,000	41,000	400	300	41,700

¹ NLCS and ACEC designations overlap, the entire Amargosa Valley, which contains the Amargosa vole critical habitat, is located within an ACEC.

² Pierson’s milk-vetch are protected within areas designated as closed to motorized vehicles in the Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP. The ISDRA RAMP is not considered part of the DRECP decision area.

IV.7.3.5.2 Impacts of DRECP Land Use Plan Amendment on BLM Land: Alternative 3

This section addresses two components of effects of the BLM LUPA: the streamlined development of renewable energy and transmission on only BLM land under the LUPA, and the impacts of the amended land use plans themselves.

IV.7.3.5.2.1 Impacts from Renewable Energy and Transmission Development on BLM Land

On BLM lands under the LUPA, Alternative 3 includes DFAs (approximately 211,000 acres) and transmission corridors where approximately 49,000 acres of ground disturbance related impacts and operational impacts would occur.

Impact BR-1: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of native vegetation.

Table IV.7-221 shows the impacts to natural communities under Alternative 3 within DFAs on BLM Land. An effects summary by general community is provided below in relation to the Plan-wide effects analysis provided in Section IV.7.3.5.1.1. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community effects by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 40 acres (0.1%) of California forest and woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, approximately the same as the Plan-wide effects. All of this impact would be from transmission effects in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs that address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 200 acres (0.8%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which is less than a quarter of the Plan-wide effects to this general community. All of the impacts to chaparral and coastal scrubs would be in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas from solar, wind, and transmission development. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs that address Covered Species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, and AM-RES-BLM-PLANT-1), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 100 acres (0.3%) of desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which is approximately 13% of the Plan-wide effects. Most of the impacts to desert conifer woodlands would be from solar development in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, but would also come from wind and transmission effects in this subarea. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs that address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 5,000 acres (0.4%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which constitutes approximately 1,000 acres less than the Plan-wide effects. Most of these impacts would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-BAT-1), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 37,000 acres (0.5%) of desert scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which is about 40% of the Plan-wide effects. Most of these impacts would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. These include avoidance, setbacks, and/or suitable habitat impact caps for flat-tailed horned lizard (AM-RES-RL-ICS-8 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-9 and AM-DFA-ICS-16), desert tortoise (AM-DFA-ICS-3 through AM-DFA-ICS-15 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-1 through AM-RES-RL-ICS-7), Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43 and AM-RES-BLM-ICS-14 through AM-RES-BLM-ICS-17), bat Covered Species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), and plant Covered Species (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, AM-RES-BLM-PLANT-1, and AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3). Furthermore, soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) CMAs would be implemented that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Dunes

Application of the CMAs would require avoidance of dune communities to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs so there would be no impacts to dunes under BLM LUPA. In addition, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs for dune avoidance and minimization (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3, AM-RES-BLM-DUNE-1, and AM-RES-BLM-DUNE-2) as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 300 acres (0.9%) of grasslands would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which is only about 4% of the Plan-wide effects. The majority of these impacts are from transmission effects in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-AG-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Riparian

Application of the CMAs would require avoidance of riparian communities to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs so there would be no impacts to riparian communities under BLM LUPA. In addition, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA. This includes CMAs for avoidance and minimization from riparian habitat and the Covered Species associated with riparian habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 4,000 acres (1.2%) of wetlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM Land, which is about a third of the Plan-wide effects. Impacts would be primarily to North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat. About half of the impacts would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied on BLM Land with implementation of the BLM LUPA, including avoidance of Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Table IV.7-221
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>California forest and woodland</i>						
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	11,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian montane conifer forest	34,000	0	0	0	40	40
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>						
Californian mesic chaparral	500	0	0	0	0	0
Californian pre-montane chaparral	300	0	0	0	0	0
Californian xeric chaparral	5,000	0	0	0	10	10
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	20	0	0	0	0	0
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	13,000	90	10	0	40	100
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	200	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>						
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	50,000	90	10	0	50	100
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>						
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	1,203,000	2,000	60	500	2,000	5,000
<i>Desert Scrub</i>						
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	3,000	0	0	0	0	0
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	69,000	50	10	0	200	200
Intermontane seral shrubland	5,000	50	0	0	20	70
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	282,000	700	0	600	400	2,000
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	24,000	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	6,114,000	19,000	500	5,000	8,000	33,000

Table IV.7-221
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	406,000	300	30	0	200	500
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	101,000	700	0	300	200	1,000
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	50	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Dunes</i>						
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	127,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Grassland</i>						
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	28,000	90	0	0	200	300
California annual forb/grass vegetation	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Riparian</i>						
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	502,000	0	0	0	0	0
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	11,000	0	0	0	0	0
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	122,000	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	400	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	10,000	0	0	0	0	0
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	502,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Wetland</i>						
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	10	0	0	0	0	0
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	0	0	0	0	0	0
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	147,000	3,000	90	0	100	3,000
Open Water	700	90	10	10	0	100

Table IV.7-221
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Playa	26,000	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	122,000	500	10	0	30	500
Wetland	100	30	0	0	0	30
<i>Other Land Cover – Developed and Disturbed Areas</i>						
Agriculture	6,000	400	0	200	100	700
Developed and Disturbed Areas	44,000	1,000	0	20	100	1,000
Not Mapped	800	900	100	0	0	1,000
Rural	3,000	90	0	50	30	200
Total	9,472,000	29,000	900	7,000	12,000	49,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Rare natural community alliances could be impacted under Alternative 3 on BLM lands, including impacts to Joshua tree woodland. CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection that would help avoid and minimize these effects on rare natural communities. Additionally, AM-DFA-ONC-1 and -2 would require inventorying and preserving or transplanting cactus, yuccas, and succulents. While the compensation CMAs would offset the lost habitat acreage of these impacts, the compensation CMAs do not specifically require the replacement of or mitigation for specific rare natural community alliances. After application of the CMAs, impacts to rare natural communities from Alternative 3 would be adverse and would require mitigation.

Impact BR-2: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of Covered Activities have the potential to result in adverse effects to federal or state jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

In the Plan Area, jurisdictional waters and wetlands would likely include the riparian and wetland communities analyzed under Impact BR-1 and may also include other features including playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainage networks.

All Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Additionally, all impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the riparian CMAs including riparian setbacks. All impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep wetlands would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the wetland CMAs, including wetland setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Approximately 4,000 acres of other wetland communities would be impacted under Alternative 3. See the analysis for the loss of native vegetation provided under BR-1 for a discussion of these potential impacts. All or a portion of the estimated wetland impacts could result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands without compensation. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Additionally, playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainage networks are waters and wetland features that provide hydrological functions and may be determined to be jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Adverse effects to these features would have the potential to impact jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Playa

Approximately 2% (4,000 acres) of playa would be impacted by Covered Activities under Alternative 3 on BLM land. Impacts would be associated with solar (3,000 acres), with 100 acre of wind impacts and 100 acres of transmission impacts. Ecoregion subareas of potential impacts to playas include the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

Avoidance of impacts to wetland communities including playas would benefit Covered Species that utilize these communities. In addition, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize impacts to species associated with playas (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). CMAs would also require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters, including playas (AM-PW-9 and AM-LL-2). Compensation CMAs would offset impacts to these features (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Seep/Spring

Seeps occur within DFAs and transmission corridors and potential impacts to seep/spring have the potential to occur under Alternative 3 on BLM land in the following ecoregion subareas: Owens River Valley and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes. Impacts to seeps and springs would be adverse absent implementation of avoidance measures. Impacts to seep/spring locations and associated Covered Species and hydrological functions would be avoided through adherence to avoidance and minimization CMAs, including habitat assessments and avoidance of seeps with 0.25 mile setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Major Rivers

Under Alternative 3 on BLM land, there would no direct impacts to any of the four major rivers within the Plan Area – Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave, and Owens Rivers. However, development of the DFAs could indirectly impact these resources through alteration of hydrology. Riparian CMAs would require avoidance of these features with setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1).

Ephemeral Drainages

Ephemeral drainages occur throughout the Plan Area, and some of these features could be determined to state or federal jurisdictional waters. Impacts to ephemeral drainages would likely occur from Covered Activities. Application of riparian avoidance CMAs (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) would avoid and minimize impacts to a portion of the ephemeral drainages within DFAs. Additionally, all Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Impact BR-3: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in degradation of vegetation.

Siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants. The degree to which these factors contribute to the degradation of vegetation corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities on BLM Land that would result in dust, fire, and introduction of invasive plants or that would use dust suppressants and implement fire management. The propensity for vegetation to be at risk of degradation was determined by the overlap between natural community models and the likely distribution of Covered Activities across subareas on BLM Land.

Based on the planned renewable energy capacity, the greatest amount of terrestrial operational impacts on BLM Land would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, as shown in Table IV.7-222. As a result, this subarea would have the greatest potential to degrade vegetation as a result in the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants.

Table IV.7-222
BLM LUPA Terrestrial Operational Impacts – Alternative 3

Ecoregion Subarea	Solar Impact¹ (acres)	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	8,000	1,000	-	5,000	14,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	11,000	400	6,000	3,000	20,400
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	600	-	-	500	1,100
Owens River Valley	1,000	-	1,000	500	2,500
Panamint Death Valley	1,000	-	-	500	1,500
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	3,000	1,000	-	2,000	6,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	1,000	-	-	400	1,400
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	4,000	300	-	400	4,700
Total	29,000	4,000	7,000	12,000	52,000

¹ Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Terrestrial operational impacts collectively refers to vegetation degradation impacts (BR-3) from dust, dust suppressants, fire, fire management, and invasive plants and wildlife impacts (BR-4) from creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, lighting and glare. For the purposes of analysis, terrestrial operational impacts were quantified using the project area extent for solar and geothermal, using 25% of the project area for wind, and the right-of-way area for transmission.

Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation, short-term and long-term wind (excluding project area impacts), geothermal project area, and transmission impacts. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Dust and Dust Suppressants

Natural communities, including those with Mojave desert shrubs, are susceptible to vegetation degradation from dust deposition. Impacts to these natural communities would

mostly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea and to a lesser extent in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea. Plant Covered Species, that could also experience vegetation degradation from dust, would mainly be impacted by Covered Activities in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, which contains most of the impacts to plant Covered Species habitat on BLM Land. Therefore, considering the distribution of Covered Activities that would cause dust as well as the sensitive natural communities and plant Covered Species the Imperial Borrego Valley and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas would experience the greatest magnitude of vegetation degradation resulting from dust.

The application of dust suppressants is a common management practice, a Covered Activity under the Plan, and has been shown to effectively reduce dust. Dust-related degradation of vegetation would be further minimized with the incorporation of avoidance and minimization CMAs. The Plan-wide avoidance and minimization CMAs would generally identify vegetation in the project area (AM-PW-1), utilize standard practices to minimize the amount of exposed soils (AM-PW-14) and reduce dust caused by soil erosion (AM-PW-10). Additionally, Alternative 3 would implement CMAs that would identify and protect or salvage specific plant species, reducing their exposure to dust. Setbacks and suitable habitat impact caps would also be implemented for plant Covered Species in DFAs and in the reserve design envelope (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3).

Riparian and wetland natural communities would be susceptible to the adverse effects of dust suppressants including chemical and physical changes to an ecosystem, alter hydrological function of soils and drainage areas, and increase pollutant loads in surface water. The largest amount of impacts from Covered Activities, which corresponds to the potential greatest magnitude of vegetation degradation from adverse dust suppressant effects, would be located in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Plant Covered Species that could also experience vegetation degradation from dust suppressants, would mainly be impacted by Covered Activities in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. Therefore, these subareas would experience the greatest magnitude of impacts from the application of dust suppressants.

Avoidance and minimization CMAs implemented as part of Alternative 3, including AM-PW-9 and AM-PW-10, would utilize standard practices to reduce erosion and runoff of dust suppressant into sensitive vegetation. Setbacks and avoidance requirements for all riparian natural communities and some wetland natural communities that would be implemented as part of the CMAs would minimize potential adverse effects of dust suppressants on these communities (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1).

Fire and Fire Management

Anthropogenic ignitions of fires that could result from operational and maintenance activities associated with renewable energy facilities could destroy the natural communities found in the Plan Area. Desert scrub natural communities are naturally slow to recover from fire episodes, which can lead to permanent community type conversion. On BLM Land, the impacts to desert scrub natural communities would mainly occur within the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea and to a lesser extent in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Construction and maintenance of fire breaks and other fire management techniques would typically result in the removal of vegetation from woodland, chaparral, and grassland natural communities. However, fire management in the form of fuels management, may benefit natural habitats if conducted in areas of non-native, invasive, species infestations (e.g. salt cedar hot spots). California forest and woodlands, chaparral natural communities, and 3 grassland natural communities would be impacted on BLM Land, under Alternative 3. These impacts from Covered Activities, which correspond to the amount of potential vegetation degradation resulting from fire and fire management, would predominantly occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, which would experience approximately 81% of impacts to these natural communities. To a lesser extent, impacts to these natural communities would also occur in the West Mojave and Eastern slopes subarea. Under Alternative 3 avoidance and minimization CMAs would be implemented to minimize the potential adverse effects of fire and fire management, including AM-PW-12 that would require projects to minimize the amount of vegetation clearing and fuel modification.

Invasive Plants

The adverse effects of invasive plants, include increasing the fuel load and the frequency of fires in plant communities and allelopathic effects that hinder the growth or establishment of other plant species. The natural communities and plant Covered Species found on BLM Land are generally at risk of adverse effects from the introduction of invasive plants. Therefore, the most vegetation degradation caused by introduction of invasive plants would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains as well as the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Plant Covered Species found on BLM Land would also experience potential vegetation degradation as a result of Covered Activities. The Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would have the largest amount of impacts to plant Covered Species on BLM Land.

Under Alternative 3 avoidance and minimization CMAs would be implemented to minimize vegetation degradation from invasive plants, including AM-PW-7 that would ensure the timely restoration of temporarily disturbed areas that could otherwise promote invasive plants. Additional CMAs would use standard practices to control weeds and invasive plants

(AM-PW-11) and require the responsible use of herbicides to reduce potential vegetation degradation (AM-PW-15) for all Covered Activities.

Impact BR-4: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of listed and sensitive plants; disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife; and habitat for listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

Impact BR-4 described at the Plan-wide level provides an impact analysis for Covered Species habitat by ecoregion subarea, specific Covered Species impact analyses, an indirect and terrestrial operational impact analysis for Covered Species, and a non-Covered Species impact analysis. The following provides an impact analysis for Covered Species on BLM-administered lands. Most of the impacts to plant and wildlife species and their habitat under the BLM LUPA would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas.

Covered Species Habitat Impact Analysis by Ecoregion Subarea

West Mojave and Eastern Slopes Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would mostly be from solar development, but would also include impacts from wind and transmission development. Typical impacts from these Covered Activities on plant and wildlife species and their habitat is described in Section IV.7.2. Suitable habitat for Agassiz's desert tortoise would be impacted in this subarea. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for this species.

There are impacts to suitable habitat for several bird Covered Species in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, including Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California condor, golden eagle, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, and tricolored blackbird. CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on southwestern willow flycatcher and tricolored blackbird to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs (AM-DFA-AG-2). Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, desert kit fox, Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat would be impacted in this subarea. The siting of the DFAs under the BLM LUPA largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) that would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and

Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for the following plant species would be impacted in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea: alkali mariposa-lily, Bakersfield cactus, Barstow woolly sunflower, desert cymopterus, Mojave monkeyflower, and Mojave tarplant. Although modeled suitable habitat for these species may be impacted by Covered Activities in this subarea, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3) would further reduce the impacts on these species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development within the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea would be primarily from solar energy development, but would also include impacts from wind and transmission. The Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea provides suitable habitat for amphibians and reptiles, including Agassiz's desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard, that would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under the BLM LUPA largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on this species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Impacts would occur to the following covered bird species in this subarea: Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, and mountain plover. In addition, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for the following Covered mammals would be impacted in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea: bighorn sheep, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. Suitable habitat for burro deer and desert kit fox, both Planning Species, would also be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under the BLM LUPA largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further reduce the impacts on those habitats used by California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Imperial Borrego Valley Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development within the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea would be primarily from solar energy development, but would also include impacts from wind,

geothermal, and transmission development. The Imperial Borrego Valley subarea provides suitable habitat for Agassiz’s desert tortoise and flat-tailed horned lizard that would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under the BLM LUPA largely avoid habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard, and CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on this species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223.

Impacts would occur to suitable habitat for the following covered bird species in this subarea: Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson’s hawk, and western yellow-billed cuckoo. CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on southwestern willow flycatcher, California black rail, Yuma clapper rail, and western yellow-billed cuckoo to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson’s hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs (AM-DFA-AG-2).

Only minimal impacts would occur to bighorn sheep mountain habitat (approximately 100 acres) in this subarea. Impacts to suitable habitat for other covered mammals species would occur for California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat, as well as the Planning Species burro deer and desert kit fox. The siting of the DFAs under the BLM LUPA largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-223.

Table IV.7-223
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>						
Agassiz’s desert tortoise	5,799,000	7,000	300	900	4,000	13,000
Flat-tailed horned lizard	428,000	9,000	10	5,000	3,000	17,000
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	731,000	2,000	80	-	2,000	4,000
Tehachapi slender salamander	7,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Bird</i>						
Bendire's thrasher	773,000	900	90	50	300	1,000
Burrowing owl	1,707,000	15,000	400	5,000	4,000	24,000

Table IV.7-223
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
California black rail	31,000	600	-	400	100	1,000
California condor	242,000	2,000	50	90	200	2,000
Gila woodpecker	38,000	100	-	-	20	100
Golden eagle–foraging	6,216,000	8,000	300	900	5,000	14,000
Golden eagle–nesting	2,421,000	400	20	20	1,000	2,000
Greater sandhill crane	3,000	200	-	100	50	400
Least Bell's vireo	69,000	20	-	10	10	40
Mountain plover	7,000	400	-	100	70	600
Southwestern willow flycatcher	46,000	900	30	700	200	2,000
Swainson's hawk	112,000	3,000	70	700	200	4,000
Tricolored blackbird	13,000	200	10	-	50	200
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	19,000	30	-	-	-	40
Yuma clapper rail	5,000	10	-	-	-	10
<i>Fish</i>						
Desert pupfish	500	-	-	-	-	-
Owens pupfish	4,000	-	-	-	20	20
Owens tui chub	4,000	-	-	-	20	20
<i>Mammal</i>						
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	2,243,000	2,000	40	90	1,000	4,000
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	3,568,000	800	90	10	2,000	3,000
California leaf-nosed bat	4,444,000	13,000	300	3,000	6,000	23,000
Mohave ground squirrel	999,000	5,000	100	900	1,000	7,000
Pallid bat	8,943,000	23,000	600	6,000	11,000	41,000
Townsend's big-eared bat	7,599,000	24,000	700	5,000	10,000	40,000
<i>Plant</i>						
Alkali mariposa-lily	2,000	60	10	-	10	80
Bakersfield cactus	77,000	50	-	-	-	50
Barstow woolly sunflower	72,000	40	-	-	-	40
Desert cymopterus	67,000	100	-	-	-	100

Table IV.7-223
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	80,000	300	30	-	10	300
Mojave monkeyflower	116,000	80	10	-	200	300
Mojave tarplant	136,000	60	-	60	100	300
Owens Valley checkerbloom	55,000	-	-	-	60	70
Parish’s daisy	85,000	600	70	-	100	800
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	4,000	-	-	-	-	-

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Specific Covered Species Impact Analyses

For Agassiz’s desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-224 provides an impact analysis for these desert tortoise important areas in the BLM LUPA area, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, 5,000 acres of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, no habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, 4,000 acres of TCAs and linkage habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-1 and AM-DFA-ICS-3 through 15). Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Table IV.7-224
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	354,000	70	-	-	30	100
	Linkage	406,000	400	20	-	30	500
	TCA	1,728,000	700	30	-	3,000	4,000
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		2,489,000	1,000	50	-	3,000	5,000
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	728,000	-	-	-	-	-
	TCA	239,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		967,000	-	-	-	-	-
Western Mojave	Linkage	796,000	2,000	200	-	400	3,000
	TCA	964,000	400	10	-	700	1,000
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		1,759,000	3,000	200	-	1,000	4,000
Total		5,215,000	4,000	200	-	4,000	9,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For golden eagle, a territory-based analysis was conducted (see methods and results in the Chapter IV.7 portion of Appendix R2). Using the golden eagle nest database, golden eagle territories were identified and individually buffered by 1 mile (representing breeding areas around known nests) and 4 miles (representing use areas around known nests). A total of 146 territories occur wholly or partially within the BLM LUPA area. Under Alternative 3, 30 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 1 mile of a nest. Implementation of the CMAs for golden eagles (AM-DFA-ICS-2) would prohibit siting or construction of Covered Activities within 1 mile of an active golden eagle nest; therefore, impacts within 1 mile of these golden eagle territories would be avoided. Under Alternative 3, 68 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 4 miles of nest, and the use area of these territories could be impacted through harassment and reduced foraging opportunities by Covered Activities depending of the siting of specific projects. The CMAs for golden eagles (Section II.3.1.2.5) and the approach to golden eagles (see Appendix H) describes how the impact to golden eagles would be avoided, minimized, and compensated. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year in 2014 would be allowed to be taken within the Plan Area, which would be reassessed annually.

For bighorn sheep, bighorn sheep mountain habitat and intermountain (linkage) habitat have been identified in the Plan Area. Under Alternative 3 on BLM land, approximately 3,000 acres of mountain habitat and 4,000 acres of intermountain habitat would be impacted. Alternative 3 identified DFAs that largely avoid impacts to bighorn sheep mountain and intermountain habitat, and avoidance, minimization, and compensation CMAs have been developed to offset the loss of habitat for bighorn sheep.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-225 provides an impact analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas in the BLM LUPA area. A total of approximately 100 acres of impact would occur in climate change extension areas under Alternative 3. A total of 2,000 acres of impact to linkage and 1,000 acres of impact to expansion areas would occur under Alternative 3. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43). Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-225
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas –
Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Key Population Center	299,000	400	10	100	400	900
Linkage	280,000	500	-	500	600	2,000
Expansion Area	282,000	900	10	400	100	1,000
Climate Change Extension	92,000	-	-	-	90	100
Total	954,000	2,000	10	1,000	1,000	4,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Within the Plan Area, critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the following Covered Species: desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, and Parish’s daisy. For desert tortoise, approximately 5,000 acres of impact designated critical

habitat would result from the development of Covered Activities on BLM-administered lands under Alternative 3 located in the Chuckwalla, Fremont-Kramer, Ord-Rodman, and Superior-Cronese critical habitat units. Under Alternative 3, no impacts to critical habitat designated for southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, or Parish's daisy would occur from the development of Covered Activities on BLM-administered lands.

Indirect and Terrestrial Operational Impact Analysis

Siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities could result in the potential disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare. The degree to which these factors contribute to the disturbance of sensitive wildlife corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities on BLM Land that would result in noise, predator avoidance behavior, or light and glare.

Based on the planned renewable energy capacity on BLM Land, most of the terrestrial operational impacts would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, as shown in Table IV.7-222. The Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would also experience prevalent amounts of terrestrial operational impacts on BLM Land. As a result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to disturbance of sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare.

Noise

Noise can cause physical damage to wildlife as well as behavioral changes in habitat use, activity patterns, reproduction, and foraging. Bird Covered Species, in particular during the nesting seasons, are expected to be sensitive to adverse noise effects. The largest amount of impacts to bird Covered Species habitat on BLM Land would be located in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea and to a lesser extent in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes as well as the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. Smaller mammals, such as the Mohave ground squirrel, and reptiles, such the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and flat-tailed horned lizard, could experience increased predation from noise hindering their ability to detect predators. Overall, impacts on BLM Land to the habitat for these Covered Species would mostly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. As such, the disturbance of wildlife from noise would predominantly occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley as well as the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

The disturbance and injury of wildlife from noise-related effects would be reduced through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs under Alternative 3. The CMA AM-PW-13 would minimize noise generated from Covered Activities using standard practices while other CMAs that would avoid and setback Covered Activities from noise-sensitive wildlife including seasonal setbacks for nesting birds; setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat benefitting birds, amphibians, and small mammals; and avoidance of Mohave ground squirrel's during operations (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-ICS-36).

Predator Avoidance Behavior

The effects of predator avoidance behavior can occur for some wildlife in response to human activities during siting, construction, and operations. Different wildlife species may have varying sensitivities to predator avoidance behavior and may experience different magnitudes of responses to Covered Activities. However, Covered Activities are expected to generally result in predator avoidance and other behavioral changes in most wildlife species that are spread throughout BLM Land. Therefore, the most disturbance of wildlife from predator avoidance behavior would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley as well as the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas, where most of the terrestrial operational impacts on BLM Land are anticipated.

Under Alternative 3, avoidance and minimization CMAs for siting Covered Activities away from sensitive wildlife habitat would be implemented for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for particular species such as the Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, AM-DFA-AG-2, and AM-DFA-ICS-36). Additional CMAs would inform workers of actions that could potentially affect wildlife behavior and restrict activities that could disturb wildlife and their access to water and foraging habitat (AM-PW-5, AM-PW-13 and AM-RES-RL-DUNE-2). Further seasonal restrictions would also be implemented for recreational activities that might affect Bighorn sheep in the reserve design envelope (AM-RES-BLM-ICS-11). The potential disturbance of wildlife from predator avoidance behavior caused by siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities would be minimized by these measures, which are applicable on BLM Land.

Light and Glare

Exposure of wildlife to light and glare can alter wildlife behavior including foraging, migration, and breeding. Solar projects would produce increased levels of glare due to the large amount of reflective panel or heliostat surfaces and would have greater effects on wildlife than other renewable energy technologies. Potential adverse effects associated with light and glare from solar projects, including solar flux and bird collisions from the lake effect are analyzed in BR-9. As described above, most of the terrestrial operational impacts from all renewable energy technology types would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. Similarly, impacts from solar projects on BLM Land would primarily occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea while the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would also experience prevalent terrestrial operational impacts from solar development. As a result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to disturbance of sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare.

Bats and other diurnal predators may exploit night lighting that increases prey detectability, but would also be attracted to areas of greater development that increase potential hazards such as collision. Impacts to habitat for bats would as a result of Covered

Activities on BLM Land would mainly be located in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea and to a lesser extent in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. Migratory birds that fly during the night may be affected by aviation safety lighting. For bird Covered Species the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea is primarily affected, containing the most impacts to bird Covered Species habitat on BLM Land. Therefore, considering the distribution solar and other renewable energy technologies and impacts on habitat for species sensitive light and glare the greatest wildlife disturbance is anticipated to occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas.

Alternative 3 would implement avoidance and minimization CMAs on BLM Land specifically intended to reduce effects of lighting and glare including AM-PW-14, which would implement standard practices for shielding and reducing the use of lights, as well as AM-DFA-RIPWET-4, which specifically restricts lighting within one mile of riparian or wetland vegetation. Other CMAs applicable to BLM Land would implement setbacks for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for smaller mammals, which would minimize their exposure to light and glare from Covered Activities (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-AG-2,).

Non-Covered Species

Potential impacts to Non-Covered Species on BLM Land were analyzed as described in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Table IV.7-226 provides an estimation of the impacts to natural communities associated with Non-Covered Species. While estimation of impacts to natural communities likely overestimates the potential impacts to Non-Covered Species habitats, it provides a general range of level of impact.

Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs, so impacts to potential habitat for each of these species is likely greater than would actually occur. For some species, impacts would be further minimized through avoidance of the specific natural communities required for those species, e.g. dune-, spring-, or cave-restricted invertebrates, or riparian-obligate bird species. The total impact to potential habitat across all technology types is less than 1%, with the exception of the grassland community at approximately 1% and within the agriculture/rural land cover areas at approximately 10%.

Under the Alternative 3, impacts to approximately 60 acres of Lane Mountain milk-vetch critical habitat on BLM lands would have the potential to occur from transmission. This calculation of impacts from transmission is derived from the transmission corridors overlapped with designated critical habitat, thus resulting is an overestimation of actual ground disturbance.

The results of impacts on Non-Covered Species from the creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare would be similar to those described for the Covered Species.

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
California forest and woodland/ Desert conifer woodlands	Coast horned lizard, grey vireo, loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, American badger, bighorn sheep, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, Amargosa beardtongue, Charlotte’s phacelia, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, Kern buckwheat, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, San Bernardino Mountains dudleya, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Tracy’s eriastrum, Cushenbury buckwheat	64,000	100	10	0	100	210	0.3%
Desert Scrub/ Chaparral	Arroyo toad, banded gila monster, Coast horned	7,023,000	21,000	600	6,000	9,100	36,700	0.5%

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
Communities	lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch’s spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, Ferruginous hawk, gilded flicker, grey vireo, Le Conte’s thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, Lucy’s warbler, northern harrier, yellow warbler, American badger, Arizona myotis, big free-tailed bat, bighorn sheep, cave myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, Palm Springs pocket mouse, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, western yellow bat, yellow-eared pocket mouse, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows							

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, bare- stem larkspur, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Kelso Creek monkeyflower, Kern buckwheat, Las Animas colubrina, Lane Mountain Milk-Vetch, Mojave Desert plum, Mojave milkweed, Munz’s Cholla, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt’s woody aster, Orocopia sage, Parish’s club cholla, Pierson’s milk-vetch, pink fairy-							

Table IV.7-226
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	duster, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant, Robinson’s monardella, Rusby’s desert-mallow, sand food, Sodaville milk-vetch, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Thorne’s buckwheat, Tracy’s eriastrum, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, White-margined beardstongue, Wiggin’s croton, Flat-seeded spurge, Parish’s phacelia, Parish’s alkali grass							
Dunes ³ / Desert Outcrop and Badlands	Banded gila monster, barefoot gecko, Coast horned lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch’s spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Le Conte’s thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl,	1,330,000	2,000	100	500	2,000	4,600	0.3%

Table IV.7-226
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	northern harrier, Amargosa vole, big free-tailed bat, bighorn sheep, cave myotis, bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, Amargosa niterwort, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Las Animas colubrina, Mojave Desert plum, Mojave milkweed, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt’s woody aster, Orocopia sage, Palmer’s jackass clover, Parish’s club cholla, Pierson’s							

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	milk-vetch, pink fairy-duster, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant, Robinson’s monardella, Rusby’s desert-mallow, sand food, Spanish needle onion, Thorne’s buckwheat, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, Wiggin’s croton, Palmer’s jackass clover, white-margined beardtongue, flat-seeded spurge							
Grassland	Coast horned lizard, American peregrine falcon, bank swallow, Ferruginous hawk, long-eared owl, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, Amargosa vole, American badger, spotted bat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, short-joint beavertail cactus	29,000	100	0	0	200	300	1%

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
Riparian/ Wetlands	Arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, Coast horned lizard, Couch’s spadefoot, Western pond turtle, American peregrine falcon, Arizona Bell’s vireo, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, gilded flicker, elf owl, Inyo California towhee, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, Lucy’s warbler, northern harrier, redhead, vermilion flycatcher, white-tailed kite, yellow-breasted chat, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Amargosa vole, Mojave River vole, Arizona myotis, cave myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat, Yuma myotis, Ash Meadows	1,443,000	3,500	100	0	100	3,700	0.3%

Table IV.7-226

BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	gum plant, Inyo County star-tulip, Parish’s alkali grass, Parish’s phacelia, Amargosa pupfish, Amargosa speckled dace, Amargosa spring snails							
Agriculture/ Rural Land Cover	American peregrine falcon, Bank swallow, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, northern harrier, redhead, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Arizona myotis, hoary bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat	9,000	500	0	300	100	900	10%

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

³ Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs. Only impacts determined to be unavoidable would occur in these natural communities.

⁴ This amount assumes the loss of conservation value for all land fragmented by the well fields.

Notes: The natural community classification system is described in Chapter III.7 and follows CDFG 2012. Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. Totals may not sum due to rounding. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Impact BR-5: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities could result in loss of nesting birds (violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513).

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of renewable energy and transmission projects would result in the removal of vegetation and other nesting habitat and cause increased human presence and noise that has the potential to cause the loss of nesting birds, which would be a violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The potential loss of nesting birds resulting from these activities would be adverse without application of CMAs. Avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-4, 13, 14; AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, 3, 5; AM-DFA-AG-1 through 6; AM-DFA-ICS CMAs for bird species) include the season restrictions, survey requirements, and setbacks necessary to avoid and minimize the loss of nesting birds.

Impact BR-6: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would adversely affect habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors, the movement of fish, and native wildlife nursery sites.

Species-specific habitat linkages and wildlife movement areas are a component of analysis conducted under Impact BR-4 above. Suitable habitat for each species includes areas of habitat linkages and wildlife movement. Analysis under BR-4 specifically incorporates habitat linkage information for desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and desert bighorn sheep. In addition to the species-specific analysis of impacts to suitable habitat supporting habitat linkages and wildlife movement for species, landscape level information on habitat linkages (i.e., Desert Linkage Network) and migratory bird movement are analyzed below.

Desert Linkage Network

Table IV.7-227 shows the impact analysis for the desert linkage network for Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA. Overall, over 9,000 acres of desert linkage network could be adversely impacted in DFAs and transmission corridors in seven different subareas. In the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, DFAs are located in the portion of the desert linkage network that connects the Colorado River to the northern part of the McCoy Mountains. There are also DFAs in the linkage network that extends along the McCoy Mountains and connects south to the Palo Verde Mesa. There are also DFAs in linkages in the Chuckwalla Valley that extend west and south. In the Imperial Borrego Valley, there are DFAs in the northern portion of the desert linkage network that extends along East Mesa. In the Mojave and Silurian Valley, there are DFAs in the Mojave Valley in a linkage that connects the area east of Barstow north to the Superior Valley. In the Owens River Valley, there are DFAs in the desert linkage network that connects the Haiwee Reservoir to Indian Wells. In the Panamint Death Valley there is a DFA in the Searles Valley in a linkage that connects the Argus and Searles Ranges. In the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes

subarea, there are DFAs in the desert linkage network that connects the Grapevine Canyon Recreation Lands to the Granite Mountains and the Ord Mountains. There are also DFAs in the linkage that connects Quartzite Mountain to the Mojave River. In the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, there are DFAs in the linkage that connects the area around Baldy Mesa along the southern edge of the Plan Area to Helendale. DFAs also occur in the Brisbane Valley and in the linkages around Barstow. Farther west in the Plan Area, there are DFAs in the linkages that connect Fremont Valley and Soledad Mountain to the Tehachapi Mountains.

To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is presented in Table IV.7-227, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered on Wiley’s Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

**Table IV.7-227
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3**

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	709,000	3,000	100	-	3,000	6,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	146,000	100	-	70	60	200
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	138,000	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	368,000	200	-	-	300	400
Owens River Valley	15,000	200	-	200	100	600
Panamint Death Valley	112,000	80	-	-	-	80
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	168,000	500	50	-	700	1,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	111,000	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	377,000	-	-	-	-	-

Table IV.7-227
BLM LUPA Impact Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	386,000	600	10	-	200	800
Total	2,530,000	11,000	900	300	8,000	21,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Migratory Birds

Migration patterns and the potential impacts of different technologies are discussed, in the typical impacts section (Section IV.7.2.1.3), with direct habitat loss quantified in BR-4, and operational impacts quantified in BR-10. The following analysis focuses on the anticipated distribution of different technology types in relation to known migratory corridors, and migratory resources in each subarea.

In Alternative 3 wind generation is a small proportion of the overall generation mix. Impacts from wind generation would mostly occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley, and Cadiz and Chocolate Mountain Subareas, with very small quantities in other subareas. Wind development would also occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea to the north west of Blythe in the McCoy wash area, and north of the I-10. Key bird migration areas affected include Migratory corridor between the Colorado River and the Coachella Valley.

Solar development would be constructed throughout the West Mojave and Eastern slopes, Pinto Lucerne Valley, Cadiz and Chocolate Mountain subareas, but would be mostly focused in Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. Alternative 3 would result in new solar PV and solar thermal generation facilities in the BLM SEZ along the I-10 corridor to the west side of the Colorado River. This may give the appearance of a string of lakes on known migratory linkages for birds between the Colorado River and Coachella Valley. Similarly, development in the West Mojave and Eastern slopes, Pinto Lucerne Valley would occur in DFAs between the passes of the Tehachapi and San Bernardino Mountains, and dry lakes on Edwards AFB, as well as, the North Mojave dry lakes of China Lake, Koehn Lake, Harper Lake and Searles

Lake. Development, around the Salton Sea and in the Imperial Valley, would be on the west side of the East Mesa ACEC, and include areas to the west of the Salton Sea that include the Truckhaven geothermal resource area and areas to the east of the Salton Sea in the foothills of the Chocolate Mountains.

Application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied habitat and suitable habitat for Covered Species to the maximum extent feasible. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Further, proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind solar and geothermal projects. CMAs would negate direct loss of riparian and wetlands habitats, result in no directly loss of riparian and wetland a habitats. Further, implementation of species specific CMAs would ensure impacts to bird species would be reduced and compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species. The compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions. Application of CMAs would reduce the overall impacts to migratory bird populations.

Impact BR-7: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in habitat fragmentation and isolation of populations of listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

As discussed in the Plan-wide analysis, the construction and operation of renewable energy and transmission projects can have the potential to fragment intact and interconnected landscapes resulting in isolated patches of habitat, isolated species populations, reduced gene flow, and remaining habitat that is more exposed to the edge effects of adjacent developments. The DRECP integrated planning process, as described in Volume II, avoids and minimizes this impact through the siting of DFAs and through the reserve design. In order to minimize habitat fragmentation and population isolation, DFAs were sited in less intact and more degraded areas. Measures of fragmentation and population isolation effects include the amount of impacts on environmental gradients such as elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect. The impacts to these four environmental gradients under Alternative 3 within DFAs under the GCP would follow the same overall pattern as Plan-wide impacts (AM-LL-1 through AM-LL-4).

Impact BR-8: Construction of generation facilities or transmission lines would result in increased predation of listed and sensitive wildlife species.

Higher predator densities and hence high predation rates are a documented effect of increased human development in the Plan Area. The extent to which Covered Activities contribute to increasing predation through phenomena like predator subsidization is linked to the likely extent of Covered Activities in undisturbed parts of desert.

Agricultural landscapes in the west Mojave, Lucerne Valley and Imperial Borrego Valley or surrounding Blythe are already disturbed, with relatively high levels of human activity that supplement predators such as ravens and coyotes, and support covered predator species such as burrowing owls and Swainson's hawk. Therefore, covered operational activities in already disturbed rural and agricultural landscapes are would result in a little increase in predation.

However, Covered Activities in undisturbed desert habitat are likely to disproportionately supplement predators, increase predator density and consequently increase predation rates on Covered Species. Alternative 3 would result in approximately 46,000 acres of long-term conversion of natural desert communities with approximately 3,000 acres of impacts (6% of the total ground disturbance) within areas characterized by disturbed land cover types. 35% of impacts leading to increased predation would occur in Imperial Borrego Valley, with 25% in Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains, 11% in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and a further 12% in Pinto and Lucerne Valley subareas. The remaining 15% would be spread across BLM DFAs in other subareas.

Most impacts associated with BLM managed DFAs would occur in natural desert communities. Impacts in Imperial Borrego Valley, would occur on the west side of the East Mesa ACEC, in areas to the west of the Salton Sea that include the Truckhaven geothermal resource area and in areas to the east of the Salton Sea in the foothills of the Chocolate Mountains. Development in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains would be expected in the BLM Solar SEZ area adjacent to the I-10 corridor. This area may already experience increased predator densities as a consequence of human development, the additional impact of further development would therefore be attenuated. However, development in more remote parts to the subarea would likely increase predation. Susceptible species would include desert tortoise, flat-tailed horned lizard and nesting birds.

Wind and solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea may supplement predators in undisturbed environments including parts of the Tehachapi Mountains or areas to the north of Edwards AFB. In these areas, susceptible species would include nestlings and eggs of Covered Species like golden eagle and Swainson's hawk, reptiles like the desert tortoise, and mammals like the Mohave ground squirrel. Impacts in Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas would impact golden eagle and desert tortoise.

Application of a Common Raven management plan (AM-PW-6), approved by the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group would reduce project activities that increase predator subsidization. Including, removal of trash and organic waste; minimize introduction of new water sources including pooling of water from dust control; removal of carcasses from bird and bat collisions; and reduction in new nesting and perching sites where feasible.

The level of impact on Non-Covered Species would be similar to that discussed for the Covered Species.

Impact BR-9: Operational activities would result in avian and bat injury and mortality from collisions, thermal flux or electrocution at generation and transmission facilities.

The impacts of operation activities on avian and bat injury and mortality are analyzed below for wind turbines, solar, and transmission.

Wind Turbine

This section summarizes wind turbine operational impacts to bird and bat species within BLM managed DFAs. The range of collision rates calculated in Table IV.7-228 are indicative of the overall annual collision rates for all bird and bat species, not just Covered Species. The range of collision rates is estimated for the final full build-out of wind over the life of the Plan, and is based on the range of collision rates in existing published and gray literature. While it is possible to provide a range of possible collision rates, it is not feasible to estimate the collision rate for each Covered Species, but only infer the propensity for a species to be at risk of collision from its expected distribution and life history of the birds in the Plan Area.

Overall, Alternative 3 would result in a median of 900 collisions per year for birds and 4,000 collisions per year for bats across the BLM LUPA DFAs. The expected distribution of wind generation indicates that 45% of all collisions in DFAs on BLM lands would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea and 44% of collision, would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, 11 % spread between Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Susceptible avian species in Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains would include riparian and wetland birds like the western yellow-billed cuckoo, Yuma clapper rail and the southwest willow flycatcher, as well as resident species like burrowing owl and golden eagle, and wintering species like the mountain plover, and great sandhill crane. Susceptible species in Pinto Lucerne Valley include golden eagle and Bendire's thrasher. Pallid bat, Townsend's big eared bat and California leaf-nosed bat would all be susceptible to collision across most of the BLM LUPA DFAs.

Pre-construction CMAs require habitat assessments and pre-construction surveys for covered riparian and wetland birds, burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane, Swainson’s hawk, Bendire’s thrasher, golden eagle Covered Species.

Application of siting CMAs would avoid or minimize the risk to species localities. Setbacks from active nests would be required for Bendire’s thrasher, California condor, Gila woodpecker, and golden eagle. In addition, projects would be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species to the maximum extent feasible. Implementation of bat specific CMAs include 0.5-mile setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied pallid bat and Townsend’s big-eared bat roosts would reduce impacts to bat Covered Species.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar, geothermal, or transmission project. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Further, the compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee will be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions.

Similarly, a Condor Operations Strategy (COS) would be developed on a project-specific basis with the goal of avoiding mortality from operations of wind, solar and geothermal projects. No take for condors will be permitted in the form of kill from project operations. Any actions taken to encourage condors to leave an area that might result in harassment, injury, or mortality to the bird will be conducted by a Designated Biologist.

Table IV.7-228
BLM LUPA Estimated Range of Bird and Bat Collisions per Year for Birds and Bats by Subarea – Alternative 3

Ecoregion Subarea	# Turbines	Birds (Collisions/Yr) ¹			Bats (Collisions/Yr) ¹		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	73	100	400	1,000	100	2,000	10,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	5	-	-	100	-	100	700
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table IV.7-228
BLM LUPA Estimated Range of Bird and Bat Collisions per Year for Birds and Bats by Subarea – Alternative 3

Ecoregion Subarea	# Turbines	Birds (Collisions/Yr) ¹			Bats (Collisions/Yr) ¹		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Mojave and Silurian Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Owens River Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Panamint Death Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	72	100	400	1,000	100	2,000	10,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	13	-	100	300	-	300	2,000
Grand Total	164	200	900	3,000	200	4,000	23,000

¹ Method for estimation of annual bird and bat collision rates described in Section IV.7.1.1.2 and discussed in more detail in Section IV.7.2.1.3.

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table

Solar

Under the Alternative 3, impacts to avian and bat species from solar development based on the planned solar capacity. BLM administered DFAs would see a 3-fold increase in collision risks relative to baseline. 28% of the collision risks would occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains, with, 36% in Imperial Borrego Valley, 14% in West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, 9% in Pinto Lucerne Valley, and the remaining 14 % spread across the rest of the plan area.

The development in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea would occur in the solar PEIS SEZ adjacent to the I-10 corridor, and in the McCoy Wash. Species impacted by Covered Activities include Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, and mountain plover. Anticipated impacts in Imperial Borrego Valley would occur in three BLM managed areas: the western foothills of the Chocolate Mountains; land along the western edge of East Mesa ACEC; and in BLM managed lands on the west side of the Salton Sea species. Birds and bats at risk from solar impacts include burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, and Yuma clapper rail, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed

bat, Townsend's big-eared bat. Development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would occur in the Tehachapi Mountains and areas to the north of Edwards AFB. In these areas, susceptible species would include tricolored blackbird, golden eagle, mountain plover, Bendire's thrasher, Burrowing owls and Swainson's hawk, as well as pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat. Development in Pinto and Lucerne would mainly affect golden eagle and Bendire's thrasher.

To offset potential impacts, the application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species, to the maximum extent feasible. Further, siting and construction CMAs require setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats which would minimize direct loss of important migratory bird habitat. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Any proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meet the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar and geothermal projects. The compensation requirements of AM-LL-4 would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to AM-LL-4. In combination, the application of siting, monitoring, operational and compensation CMAs would minimize impacts to resident and migratory birds.

Bat mortality from solar facilities may occur because of collision or solar flux injury. No DFAs are known to be specifically sensitive areas for bat foraging, and implementation of bat specific CMAs include 500 feet setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied pallid bat and Townsend's big-eared bat roosts would reduce impacts to bat Covered Species. Further, the development of Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) as discussed above would greatly reduce the risk to bat populations. Consequently, application of CMAs would reduce the overall impacts to bat populations.

Transmission

The transmission collision and electrocution impacts would occur from generation tie lines (collector lines), new substations, and major transmission lines (delivery lines) that deliver power to major load centers. The distribution of impacts from collector lines would mostly occur within DFAs and be similar in distribution to the generation facilities. Most of the affected areas would be in Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, with 5,000 acres, 3,000 acres, and 2,000

acres of terrestrial impacts anticipated respectively. The remaining 2,000 acres of terrestrial impacts would be spread throughout the remaining subareas.

Both large transmission lines and the network of smaller gen-tie lines would present collision and electrocution hazard to covered bird species. In particular, lines running perpendicular to migratory corridors, and/or close to bird refuges would represent a greater hazard. Such lines include those anticipated to run parallel to the Tehachapi Mountains and those that would cross the Tehachapi mountain passes, which would represent additional risk to migrating and overwintering birds. Golden eagle would be particularly susceptible to lines in both the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and the Mojave and Silurian Valley subareas, as there are numerous territories in these areas. Other areas would include impacts from anticipated delivery lines in Chuckwalla Valley that would run parallel to I-10 corridor in the designated BLM/368 transmission corridors. In the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, lines would run along the eastern side of Salton Sea in existing transmission corridors that are parallel to the foothills of the Chocolate Mountains. Furthermore, collector lines would run along the western side of the Salton Sea from the Truckhaven geothermal resource areas. All these lines would represent additional risk to migrating and overwintering covered avian species, due to their location, especially in bad weather when flocks of migratory birds may be forced down.

All covered bird species may be impacted by additional transmission infrastructure. To ameliorate potential hazards, transmission projects would reduce impacts to Covered Species by implementing Plan-wide, landscape-level, natural community, and Covered Species CMAs where feasible, as discussed under the wind impacts section.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar, geothermal, or transmission project. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Further, the compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will determine the biological basis for the fee.

In addition, transmission projects would implement transmission specific CMAs that would: where feasible, bury electrical collector lines along roads (AM-TRANS-1); fit flight diverters on all transmission projects spanning or within 1,000 feet of water bodies and watercourses (AM-TRANS-2); avoid siting transmission projects that span canyons or are

located on ridgelines (AM-TRANS-3); restrict transmission projects to within designated utility corridors (AM-TRANS-4). With the implementation of CMAs impacts to Covered Species would be minimized.

The level of impact on Non-Covered Species would be similar to that discussed for the Covered Species.

Operational Impacts Take Estimates for Covered Avian and Bat Species

The following section summarizes the initial estimates for take of Covered Species by operational activities that would require compensatory mitigation. Take estimates integrate all sources of mortality for each technology discussed above.

**Table IV.7-229
BLM LUPA Estimated Total Take for Covered Avian and Bat Species – Alternative 3**

Covered Bird and Bat Species	Solar Impact	Wind Impact	Geothermal Impact	Total Impact
Bendire’s thrasher	20	0	0	20
Burrowing owl	40	10	10	60
California condor ¹	0	0	0	0
California black rail	10	0	0	10
Gila woodpecker	10	0	0	10
Golden eagle ²	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Least Bell’s vireo	30	0	0	30
Mountain plover	30	10	10	50
Greater sandhill crane	0	0	0	0
Southwestern willow flycatcher	20	0	0	20
Swainson’s hawk	20	0	0	20
Tricolored blackbird	20	0	0	20
Western yellow billed cuckoo	10	0	0	10
Yuma clapper rail	10	0	0	10
Grand Total Avian Species	220	20	20	260
California leaf-nosed bat	10	10	0	20
Pallid bat	0	10	0	10
Townsend’s big-eared bat	10	0	0	10
Grand Total Bat Species	20	20	0	40

¹ Take for California condor would not be permitted under the DRECP.

² Take of Golden Eagle would be permitted on a project basis. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year would be authorized for 2014 for any new activity within the Plan Area. Take limits for the DRECP area will be re-evaluated annually based on the amount of ongoing take and population estimates of eagles within the local-area population of eagles.

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the

nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table

IV.7.3.5.2.2 Impacts of Changes to BLM Land Designations

The BLM LUPA would establish conservation designations on BLM-administered lands under each alternative that would conserve biological resources, including NLCS, ACEC, and wildlife allocations. On BLM-administered lands under Alternative 3, the BLM LUPA would designate approximately 5,023,000 acres of BLM LUPA conservation designations, including 3,380,000 acres of NLCS, 1,630,000 acres of ACEC, and 13,000 acres of wildlife allocation. Additionally, existing conservation areas occur on BLM-administered lands that conserve biological resources. Appendix L provides unit-specific ACEC and NLCS worksheets that identify relevant resources, specific resources goals, objectives, and prescribed management actions. The following provides an analysis of the conservation that would be provided in these BLM LUPA conservation designations, organized by landscape, natural communities, and species.

The BLM LUPA would also establish Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) and would identify lands to be managed to protect Wilderness Characteristics. These BLM LUPA land designations are overlays that specify particular management and uses for specific areas. Unit-specific SRMA worksheets are provided in Appendix L and the CMAs specific to lands managed to protect Wilderness Characteristics are provided as part of the Volume II descriptions of the DRECP alternatives. These land designations may co-occur with the BLM LUPA conservation designations (NLCS, ACECs, and wildlife allocations). Where these land designations do not co-occur with the BLM LUPA conservation designations, they were not included as part of the reserve design envelope and were not included in the conservation analysis for biological resources provided in this section.

Landscape

Habitat Linkages

Desert Linkage Network

Table IV.7-230 shows the conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA. Conservation of the desert linkage network totals more than 2.6 million acres (72%). None of the linkages in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea are entirely conserved under the BLM LUPA. In the Imperial Borrego Valley, the connection that extends into the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea only includes small disjunct areas that are not conserved. The remaining linkage along East Mesa is partly conserved. The connectivity in the linkages in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains subarea along Shadow Valley, between Halloran Springs and the Shadow

Mountains, and west into the Silurian Valley are maintained with most of these areas in conservation. None of the linkages in the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea are entirely conserved since the middle portion of the subarea is not in Reserve Lands. Portions of the single linkage in the Owens River Valley subarea are not conserved. The connectivity of the northernmost linkage in the Panamint Death Valley subarea along the Searles Range is conserved. The connection in the China Lake Naval Weapon Center is not conserved in Reserve Lands, but most of the remainder of this linkage to the west is conserved. Most of the linkage in the eastern portion of the subarea is not in Reserve Lands. In the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, none of the linkages are completely conserved. Only the linkages along the eastern boundary of the Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subarea and pockets of the remaining linkages would not be in Reserve Lands. All of the linkages in the Providence and Bullion Mountains subarea would be largely maintained in Reserve Lands. In the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, although large portions of the other linkages in this subarea conserved, none of them are wholly conserved in Reserve Lands.

In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs (see Section IV.7.3.5.2.1).

Table IV.7-230

BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres)²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	890,000	187,000	356,000	149,000	-	699,000	78%
Imperial Borrego Valley	156,000	14,000	106,000	900	-	121,000	78%
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	174,000	28,000	81,000	32,000	-	142,000	82%
Mojave and Silurian Valley	507,000	179,000	53,000	150,000	-	388,000	76%
Owens River Valley	19,000	40	12,000	-	-	12,000	63%
Panamint Death Valley	206,000	109,000	38,000	38,000	-	185,000	90%
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	291,000	16,000	47,000	87,000	-	153,000	52%

Table IV.7-230
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	152,000	14,000	93,000	1,000	-	110,000	72%
Providence and Bullion Mountains	426,000	144,000	165,000	54,000	-	365,000	86%
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	860,000	45,000	92,000	280,000	3,000	471,000	55%
Grand Total	3,682,000	736,000	790,000	806,000	10,000	2,419,000	66%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on BLM-administered land

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), on BLM-administered land

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Overlaps of ACECs or Wildlife Allocations with NLCS designations are reported as NLCS designations. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Hydrological Resources

A conservation analysis for hydrological resources is provided below, including playa, seep/spring, and the four major rivers in the Plan Area (i.e., Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave and Owens) for Alternative 3 on BLM land. Conservation of riparian areas and wetlands, which co-occur with many of these hydrological resources is provided below under Natural Communities.

Playa

Playa totals approximately 163,000 acres in the Plan Area. Overall, 58% (94,000 acres) would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM land. Existing Conservation would account for 11% of the conservation, NLCSs would account for 37%, and ACECs would account for 52%. Additionally, playas and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for playas would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Seep/Spring

There are 176 seep/spring locations in the Plan Area under Alternative 3 on BLM land. Overall, 78% (137 locations) of the seep/spring locations would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM land. The conservation of seep/spring under Alternative 3 on BLM land would be above half in all subareas except in the Imperial Borrego Valley location (33%, 1 location). These include Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains (100%, 5 locations), Kingston and Funeral Mountains (67%, 20 locations), Mojave and Silurian Valley (86%, 9 locations), Owens River Valley (57%, 6 locations), Panamint Death Valley (87%, 10 locations), Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains (89%, 14 locations), Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes (76%, 29 locations), Providence and Bullion Mountains (95%, 18 locations), and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes (77%, 25 locations).

Overall, Existing Conservation would account for 39% of the conservation of seep/spring, NCLSs would account for 44%, ACECs would account for 16%, and wildlife allocations would account for 1%. Additionally, seeps and springs and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for seep/spring locations would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided wetland natural communities.

Major Rivers

Overall, 87% of the major rivers would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM land, including 90% of the Amargosa River and 81% of the Mojave River. Existing Conservation would account for 40%, NLCSs would account for 45%, and ACECs would account for 15%. Additionally, major rivers and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks.

Dune and Sand Resources

Overall, 81% (797,000 acres) of dunes and sand resources would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM land. At least 50% of dunes and sand resources would be conserved in all subareas that contain substantial acreage of dunes and sand resources in the Plan Area except for in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slope at 48% (9,000 acres). These subareas include Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains at 91% (479,000 acres), Imperial Borrego Valley at 67% (79,000 acres), Kingston and Funeral Mountains at 65% (29,000 acres), Mojave and Silurian Valley at 78% (33,000 acres), Owens River Valley at 87% (4,000 acres), Panamint and Death Valley at 54% (17,000 acres), Providence and Bullion Mountains at 76% (142,000 acres), and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes at 79% (7,000

acres. Dunes and sand resources and associated Covered Species, natural communities and ecological functions would be avoided through application of the dune avoidance and minimization CMAs.

Environmental Gradients

The conservation analysis addresses four types of environmental gradients in the Plan Area: elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect. The conservation of these four environmental gradients under Alternative 3 within DFAs on BLM Land would follow the same overall pattern as Plan-wide conservation.

Natural Communities

Table IV.7-231 shows the conservation to natural communities within the reserve design. A conservation summary by general community is provided below. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community conservation by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 38,000 acres (86%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas and approximately 10 acres would be conserved in the Owens River Valley subarea. Conservation would primarily come from BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of California forest and woodlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 11,000 acres (62%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of conservation would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. There is more conservation in BLM LUPA conservation designations than in existing conservation. In addition to conservation of chaparral and coastal scrubs, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 41,000 acres (82%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of conservation would occur

in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas. Conservation of this general community would primarily come from existing conservation. In addition to conservation of desert conifer woodlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 1,020,000 acres (85%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of the conservation would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas. Most (approximately 566,000 acres) of the total conservation of desert outcrop and badlands are in areas of existing conservation. In addition to conservation of desert outcrop and badlands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 5,917,000 acres (84%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. About half of the conserved acreage would occur in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. However, conservation of desert scrubs is well distributed with conservation in every subarea of the Plan Area. As the most prevalent desert scrub natural community in the Plan Area, lower bajada and fan Mojavean–Sonoran desert scrub accounts for the majority of the conservation of desert scrub communities. The majority of the total conservation of desert scrubs would be in existing conservation areas or NLCSs. In addition to conservation of desert scrubs, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 96,000 acres (75%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley, and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas. The remaining conserved acreage is distributed throughout the remaining subareas. The majority of the total conservation of desert dunes would be in NLCSs. In addition to conservation of desert dunes, application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In

addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 24,000 acres (84%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. As the most prevalent grassland natural community in the Plan Area, California Annual and Perennial Grassland accounts for the vast majority of the conservation of grassland communities. Most of the conserved acreage of grasslands would be in existing conservation. In addition to conservation of grasslands, CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 519,000 acres (80%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. The majority of the conserved acreage would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. As the most prevalent riparian natural community in the Plan Area, Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub accounts for the majority of the conservation of riparian communities. Most of the conservation of riparian communities would occur in NLCSs. In addition to conservation of riparian communities, impacts to riparian communities would not occur under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 203,000 acres (68%) of wetland communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 on BLM Lands. About half of the conserved acreage would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas with the remaining conserved acreage distributed throughout the remaining subareas. As the most prevalent wetland natural communities in the Plan Area, conservation of North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat and Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh account for the majority of the conservation of riparian communities. Most of the conservation of wetland communities would occur in ACECs. In addition to conservation of

wetland communities, Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback. Also, CMAs for North American warm desert alkaline scrub and herb playa and wet flat, southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh, and other undifferentiated wetland-related land covers (i.e., “Playa”, “Wetland”, and “Open Water”) would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Table IV.7-231
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities - Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres)²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>California forest and woodland</i>							
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	11,000	600	300	2,000	6,000	9,000	86%
Californian montane conifer forest	34,000	18,000	6,000	3,000	3,000	29,000	86%
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>							
Californian mesic chaparral	500	0	0	30	300	300	57%
Californian pre-montane chaparral	300	0	10	40	200	300	89%
Californian xeric chaparral	5,000	2,000	200	80	400	3,000	59%
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	20	0	0	10	0	10	76%
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	13,000	2,000	2,000	4,000	0	8,000	62%
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	200	20	80	0	0	100	50%

Table IV.7-231
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres)²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>							
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	50,000	27,000	11,000	3,000	300	41,000	82%
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>							
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	1,203,000	566,000	358,000	96,000	0	1,020,000	85%
<i>Desert Scrub</i>							
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	3,000	1,000	400	100	0	2,000	63%
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	69,000	16,000	14,000	33,000	0	63,000	91%
Intermontane seral shrubland	5,000	10	900	2,000	0	3,000	61%
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	282,000	86,000	96,000	13,000	10	195,000	69%
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	24,000	5,000	8,000	2,000	2,000	17,000	70%
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	6,114,000	2,003,000	2,101,000	1,104,000	0	5,208,000	85%
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	406,000	165,000	138,000	52,000	0	355,000	87%
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	101,000	17,000	42,000	15,000	0	74,000	73%

Table IV.7-231
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres)²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	50	0	0	40	0	40	82%
<i>Dunes</i>							
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	127,000	34,000	50,000	12,000	0	96,000	75%
<i>Grassland</i>							
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	28,000	10,000	6,000	8,000	500	24,000	85%
California annual forb/grass vegetation	1,000	0	200	500	0	700	58%
<i>Riparian</i>							
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	502,000	104,000	244,000	53,000	0	402,000	80%
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	11,000	1,000	3,000	6,000	0	9,000	86%
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	122,000	28,000	61,000	13,000	0	102,000	83%
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	400	0	80	100	80	300	72%
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	10,000	600	4,000	1,000	0	6,000	57%
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	502,000	104,000	244,000	53,000	0	402,000	80%

Table IV.7-231
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Wetland</i>							
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	10	0	0	0	0	0	18%
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	0	0	0	0	0	0	60%
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	147,000	13,000	33,000	37,000	0	84,000	57%
Open Water	700	0	60	50	0	100	18%
Playa	26,000	300	200	24,000	0	25,000	94%
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	122,000	2,000	29,000	63,000	0	94,000	77%
Wetland	100	0	0	10	0	10	4%
<i>Other Land Cover</i>							
Agriculture	6,000	0	800	100	0	900	16%
Developed and Disturbed Areas	44,000	200	1,000	600	10	2,000	4%
Not Mapped	800	0	50	10	0	60	8%
Rural	3,000	0	100	100	0	200	8%
Total	9,472,000	3,101,000	3,211,000	1,548,000	12,000	7,872,000	83%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on BLM-administered land

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), on BLM-administered land

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Overlaps of ACECs or Wildlife Allocations with NLCS designations are reported as NLCS designations. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Covered Species Habitat

Table IV.7-232 shows the conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat under the Alternative 3 (before the application of CMAs) under the BLM LUPA. Generally, the percent conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat in available lands is highly variable, ranging from 24% for greater sandhill crane to 91% for triple-ribbed milk-vetch.

Much of the modeled habitats for desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard are in the Mojave Desert in areas that are either already in Existing Conservation or occur in NLCs. Flat-tailed horned lizard modeled habitat is mainly conserved in the NLCs. Tehachapi slender salamander modeled habitat occurs in the Tehachapi Mountains where conservation is primarily composed of wildlife allocations. Furthermore, the siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoids habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and Tehachapi slender salamander, and CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat, wetland habitat, and dune habitat would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species.

Conservation of bird species associated primarily with wetland and riparian habitats, including California black rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail would be augmented by CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats.

Conservation of suitable habitat for Bendire's thrasher is mainly in existing conservation areas and NLCs. Burrowing owl, widespread, but mainly associated with open areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and agricultural areas in the Imperial Borrego Valley, would primarily be conserved in ACECs and NLCs under Alternative 3.

California condor mainly occurs in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea so the majority of conservation is also in this subarea with most of the conserved acreage in NLCs. Golden eagle modeled suitable habitat and associated conservation is widespread in the Plan Area with most of the conservation in existing conservation areas and NLCs. Swainson's hawk is primarily associated with the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Imperial Borrego Valley, and Owens River Valley subareas; the majority of suitable habitat conserved is in ACECs. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat, CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs.

Most of the modeled suitable habitat for Gila woodpecker is conserved in the Imperial Borrego Valley in NLCs. Conservation of mountain plover suitable habitat in BLM LUPA under Alternative 3 is almost entirely within the ACECs and NLCs.

Conservation of suitable habitat for desert pupfish is mainly in NLCs. Avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish. Owens pupfish and Owens tui chub are conserved almost equally between existing conservation areas and NLCs.

Conservation of suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, both inter-mountain and mountain habitat, is in existing conservation areas, NLCSs and ACECs. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The total percent conservation from BLM LUPA conservation designations for burro deer (84%), desert kit fox (82%), and Mojave ground squirrel (78%) is divided between existing conservation areas, NLCSs, and ACECs. Suitable habitat for the covered bat species—California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat—is widespread and mainly conserved in existing conservation areas and NLCSs. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for covered mammal species, CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat would reduce impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend’s big-eared bat.

Conservation of plant species ranges from 31% of suitable habitat for Owens Valley checkerbloom to 91% of suitable habitat for triple-ribbed milk-vetch. The proportion of suitable habitat conserved in existing conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations varies by species. However, in addition to the conservation of modeled suitable habitat, the CMAs requiring surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat would further reduce the impacts on these species.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species.

Table IV.7-232
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>							
Agassiz's desert tortoise	5,799,000	1,869,000	2,045,000	1,090,000	-	5,004,000	86%
Flat-tailed horned lizard	428,000	36,000	233,000	15,000	-	284,000	66%
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	731,000	214,000	218,000	197,000	-	629,000	86%
Tehachapi slender salamander	7,000	-	700	2,000	4,000	6,000	83%
<i>Bird</i>							
Bendire's thrasher	773,000	266,000	298,000	88,000	-	652,000	84%
Burrowing owl	1,707,000	144,000	612,000	482,000	90	1,239,000	73%
California black rail	31,000	1,000	9,000	2,000	-	12,000	40%
California condor	242,000	37,000	91,000	36,000	12,000	176,000	73%
Gila woodpecker	38,000	700	30,000	400	-	31,000	83%
Golden eagle–foraging	6,216,000	2,539,000	1,979,000	853,000	11,000	5,383,000	87%
Golden eagle–nesting	2,421,000	1,334,000	524,000	253,000	12,000	2,124,000	88%
Greater sandhill crane	3,000	-	700	90	-	700	24%
Least Bell's vireo	69,000	28,000	21,000	8,000	600	57,000	82%
Mountain plover	7,000	80	1,000	1,000	-	2,000	33%
Southwestern willow flycatcher	46,000	5,000	11,000	6,000	2,000	25,000	54%
Swainson's hawk	112,000	6,000	12,000	21,000	-	39,000	35%
Tricolored blackbird	13,000	5,000	2,000	3,000	200	9,000	70%
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	19,000	4,000	3,000	3,000	-	10,000	52%

Table IV.7-232
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Yuma clapper rail	5,000	30	1,000	600	-	2,000	35%
<i>Fish</i>							
Desert pupfish	500	20	300	-	-	300	56%
Owens pupfish	4,000	600	600	60	-	1,000	32%
Owens tui chub	4,000	600	600	50	-	1,000	32%
<i>Mammal</i>							
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	2,243,000	785,000	750,000	345,000	500	1,880,000	84%
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	3,568,000	1,821,000	1,071,000	273,000	-	3,165,000	89%
California leaf-nosed bat	4,444,000	1,442,000	1,637,000	704,000	-	3,783,000	85%
Mohave ground squirrel	999,000	104,000	162,000	516,000	-	783,000	78%
Pallid bat	8,943,000	3,024,000	3,078,000	1,408,000	12,000	7,522,000	84%
Townsend's big-eared bat	7,599,000	2,330,000	2,595,000	1,355,000	12,000	6,292,000	83%
<i>Plant</i>							
Alkali mariposa-lily	2,000	-	700	-	-	700	45%
Bakersfield cactus	77,000	3,000	41,000	9,000	2,000	55,000	71%
Barstow woolly sunflower	72,000	400	400	63,000	-	64,000	89%
Desert cymopterus	67,000	4,000	1,000	52,000	-	57,000	86%
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	80,000	6,000	35,000	1,000	-	42,000	53%
Mojave monkeyflower	116,000	23,000	58,000	21,000	-	102,000	88%
Mojave tarplant	136,000	29,000	57,000	19,000	2,000	108,000	79%
Owens Valley checkerbloom	55,000	12,000	2,000	2,000	-	17,000	31%

Table IV.7-232
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Parish’s daisy	85,000	34,000	30,000	7,000	-	71,000	83%
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	4,000	4,000	-	-	-	4,000	91%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on BLM-administered land

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), on BLM-administered land

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Overlaps of ACECs or Wildlife Allocations with NLCS designations are reported as NLCS designations. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Agassiz's desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-233 provides a conservation analysis for these desert tortoise important areas, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, 92% of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, 92% of the important areas would be conserved Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, 86% of TCAs and linkage habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Table IV.7-233
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	354,000	156,000	82,000	64,000	-	302,000	85%
	Linkage	406,000	126,000	51,000	201,000	-	377,000	93%
	TCA	1,728,000	454,000	1,095,000	73,000	-	1,622,000	94%
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		<i>2,489,000</i>	<i>735,000</i>	<i>1,228,000</i>	<i>338,000</i>	-	<i>2,301,000</i>	<i>92%</i>
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	728,000	418,000	225,000	28,000	-	670,000	92%
	TCA	239,000	56,000	167,000	800	-	224,000	94%
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		<i>967,000</i>	<i>474,000</i>	<i>391,000</i>	<i>29,000</i>	-	<i>894,000</i>	<i>92%</i>
Western Mojave	Linkage	796,000	387,000	154,000	76,000	-	617,000	78%
	TCA	964,000	129,000	240,000	530,000	-	900,000	93%
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		<i>1,759,000</i>	<i>517,000</i>	<i>394,000</i>	<i>606,000</i>	-	<i>1,517,000</i>	<i>86%</i>
Grand Total		5,215,000	1,726,000	2,014,000	973,000	-	4,713,000	90%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on BLM-administered land

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), on BLM-administered land

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Overlaps of ACECs or Wildlife Allocations with NLCS designations are reported as NLCS designations. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-234 provides a conservation analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas. Approximately 88% of key population centers and 74% of linkages would be conserved under Alternative 3. Expansion areas and climate change extension areas would be conserved at 90% and 67% respectively. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-234
BLM LUPA Conservation Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas – Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	NLCS (acres) ²	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocation (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Key Population Center	299,000	18,000	103,000	142,000	-	264,000	88%
Linkage	280,000	24,000	25,000	158,000	-	207,000	74%
Expansion Area	282,000	45,000	46,000	163,000	-	254,000	90%
Climate Change Extension	92,000	14,000	43,000	4,000	-	62,000	67%
Total	954,000	101,000	217,000	468,000	-	786,000	82%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on BLM-administered land

² Existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations), on BLM-administered land

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Overlaps of ACECs or Wildlife Allocations with NLCS designations are reported as NLCS designations. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Within the Plan Area, critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the following Covered Species: desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, and Parish’s daisy. For desert tortoise, approximately 94% of the desert tortoise designated critical habitat on BLM-administered lands would be conserved under Alternative 3, including 606,000 acres in existing conservation areas and 1,881,000 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations. For southwestern willow flycatcher, approximately 95% of the southwestern willow flycatcher designated critical habitat on BLM-administered lands

would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 300 acres in existing conservation areas and 40 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations. For desert pupfish, approximately 95% of the desert pupfish designated critical habitat on BLM-administered lands would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 20 acres in existing conservation areas and 400 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations. For Parish’s daisy, approximately 93% of the Parish’s daisy designated critical habitat on BLM-administered lands would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 900 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations.

Non-Covered Species Critical Habitat

Ten Non-Covered Species have Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Lands. Table IV.7-235 shows the total amount of Critical Habitat and the amount within each LUPA conservation designation for Non-Covered Species. These conservation designations are considered beneficial impacts for biological resources. With the exception of arroyo toad all or a substantial portion of each species’ Critical Habitat in the BLM LUPA Lands would be within one of the conservation designations. Critical Habitat for bighorn sheep occurs mostly within existing conservation, but mostly within National Conservation Lands for the other species. Critical Habitat for Pierson’s milk-vetch and bighorn sheep occurs mostly within existing conservation, but mostly within National Conservation Lands for the other species. Critical Habitat for the Pierson’s milk-vetch is managed under the Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP, which provides protections for critical habitat within conservation areas and areas designated as closed to motorized (e.g. off-highway vehicle) use.

**Table IV.7-235
Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Conservation Designations for Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3**

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Lands	Existing Conservation	NLCS (acres)	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total in Conservation
Amargosa nitrophila	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	1,000
Amargosa vole	4,000	1,000	2,000	0	0	3,000
Arroyo toad	30	0	0	0	0	0
Ash Meadows gumplant	300	0	300	0	0	300
Cushenbury buckwheat	400	0	400	0	0	400
Cushenbury milk-vetch	900	0	800	10	0	810
Cushenbury oxytheca	80	0	80	0	0	80

Table IV.7-235
Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Conservation Designations for Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Lands	Existing Conservation	NLCS (acres)	ACEC (acres)	Wildlife Allocations (acres)	Total in Conservation
Lane Mountain milk-vetch	10,000	50	9,000	900	0	9,950
Pierson’s milk-vetch ¹	12,000	12,000 ²	0	0	0	12,000
Peninsular Bighorn sheep	7,000	5,000	400	0	0	5,400

¹ NLCS and ACEC designations overlap, the entire Amargosa Valley, which contains the Amargosa vole critical habitat, is located within an ACEC.

² Pierson’s milk-vetch are protected within areas designated as closed to motorized vehicles in the Imperial Sand Dunes RAMP. The ISDRA RAMP is not considered part of the DRECP decision area.

IV.7.3.5.3 Impacts of Natural Community Conservation Plan: Alternative 3

The impacts and mitigation measures for renewable energy and transmission development of the NCCP for Alternative 3 would be the same as those defined in Section IV.7.3.5.1 for the Plan-wide analysis.

As described in Section II.3.3 of Volume II, the NCCP would establish conservation designations within the Reserve Design Lands under each alternative. To reflect the conservation that would occur under the NCCP, the NCCP elements of each alternative define the following means of providing conservation within Reserve Design Lands:

- An **NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design**, which defines the areas that are considered to be the highest priority for biological conservation. These priority conservation areas include both BLM lands and other lands, including private land and nonfederal public land. These priority conservation areas are consistent with those identified in the interagency plan-wide alternatives.
- A **DRECP NCCP Reserve Design**, which nested within the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. The DRECP NCCP Reserve Design identifies those lands within BLM LUPA conservation designations that would be protected, maintained, and managed to preserve their conservation value for Covered Species for at least the duration of the NCCP. Within non-BLM lands, areas identified within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design would be given a high priority for conservation through the purchase of private lands from willing sellers or placement of conservation easements on public lands. BLM lands and non-BLM Lands included in the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design would receive long-term protection and would be conserved and managed to preserve and enhance habitat for Covered Species.

- **Other conservation actions**, which would occur outside of the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design and NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and include the maintenance and management of all of the BLM LUPA conservation designation lands in accordance with the BLM LUPA conservation designations.

The following provides the conservation analysis for the NCCP.

Landscape

Habitat Linkages

Table IV.7-236 shows the conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3 for the NCCP. Conservation of the desert linkage network totals more than 2.6 million acres (71%). Approximately 222,000 acres of the desert linkage network would be inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (183,000 acres on BLM Land and 39,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 654,000 acres of the desert linkage network would be inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and 1,255,000 acres would be outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs (see Section IV.7.3.2.2.1).

Table IV.7-236
NCCP Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Existing Conservation (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non- BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>BLM LUPA Conservation Designations</i>	<i>Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands</i>	
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	187,000	39,000	39,000	7,000	11,000	398,000	18,000	699,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	14,000	-	28,000	-	800	77,000	900	121,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	28,000	-	-	-	-	111,000	3,000	142,000
Mojave and Silurian Valley	179,000	-	51,000	-	15,000	134,000	7,000	388,000
Owens River Valley	40	-	-	-	-	11,000	800	12,000
Panamint Death Valley	109,000	20	33,000	-	2,000	40,000	600	185,000
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	16,000	55,000	28,000	15,000	7,000	28,000	4,000	153,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	14,000	-	-	-	2,000	92,000	2,000	110,000
Providence and Bullion Mountains	144,000	-	300	-	50	213,000	9,000	365,000
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	45,000	89,000	130,000	17,000	85,000	81,000	24,000	471,000
Grand Total	736,000	183,000	309,000	39,000	123,000	1,186,000	69,000	2,645,000

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation and BLM LUPA conservation designations reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Hydrological Resources

A conservation analysis for hydrological resources is provided below, including playa, seep/spring, and the four major rivers in the Plan Area (i.e., Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave and Owens) for Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Conservation of riparian areas and wetlands, which co-occur with many of these hydrological resources is provided below under Natural Communities.

Playa

Overall, approximately 192,000 acres would be conserved under the Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 600 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 300 on BLM land and approximately 300 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 12,000 acres of the playa acreage conserved is inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 86,000 acres are outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Additionally, playas and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for playas would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Seep/Spring

Overall, 306 locations of the seep/spring locations would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 16 seep/spring locations are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (9 on BLM land and 7 on non-BLM land). Approximately 36 seep/spring locations are inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 80 seep/spring locations are outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Seeps and springs and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for seep/spring locations would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided wetland natural communities.

Major Rivers

None of the major rivers are conserved within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. Approximately 673,000 feet of the major rivers (Owens, Colorado, and Mojave) are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 103,000 feet of the Amargosa River are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve

Design. Major rivers and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks.

Dune and Sand Resources

Approximately half of the dunes and sand resources would be conserved in existing conservation areas under the NCCP. Approximately 17,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 14,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 3,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 133,000 acres of the dunes and sand resources are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 476,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Dunes and sand resources and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and ecological functions would be avoided through application of the dune avoidance and minimization CMAs.

Environmental Gradients

The conservation analysis addresses four types of environmental gradients in the Plan Area: elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect. The conservation of these four environmental gradients under Alternative 3 under the NCCP would follow the same overall pattern as Plan-wide conservation.

Natural Communities

Table IV.7-237 shows the conservation to natural communities under the NCCP. A conservation summary by general community is provided below in comparison to Plan-wide conservation discussed in Section IV.7.3.2.1.2.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 63,000 acres (42%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 2,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 2,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 200 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 2,000 acres of California forest and woodlands are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 34,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of California forest and woodlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 33,000 acres (30%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 3,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 2,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 1,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 6,000 acres of chaparral and coastal scrubs are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 13,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of chaparral and coastal scrubs, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 187,000 acres (65%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 2,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 2,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 300 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 2,000 acres of desert conifer woodlands are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 26,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of desert conifer woodlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 1,285,000 acres (80%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 16,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 14,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 2,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 83,000 acres of desert outcrop and badlands are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 400,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of desert outcrop and badlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 9,808,000 acres (74%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 316,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 253,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 63,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 1,319,000 acres of desert scrubs are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 2,859,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of desert scrubs, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 217,000 acres (77%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 600 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 300 acres on BLM land and approximately 300 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 34,000 acres of dunes are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 36,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of all dunes and prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 57,000 acres (24%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 6,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 5,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 700 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 15,000 acres of grasslands are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 18,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition to conservation of grasslands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 705,000 acres (71%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 11,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 9,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 2,000

acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 77,000 acres of riparian are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 349,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of and setbacks from all riparian communities as well as to other CMAs that would benefit riparian communities beyond simply conservation.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 457,000 acres (53%) of wetland communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the NCCP. Approximately 21,000 acres are within the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (approximately 16,000 acres on BLM land and approximately 6,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 94,000 acres of wetlands are conserved inside NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and approximately 173,000 acres are conserved outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of and setbacks from Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep as well as other CMAs that would benefit riparian communities beyond simply conservation.

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>California forest and woodland</i>								
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	1,000	0	20	0	10	9,000	11,000	21,000
Californian montane conifer forest	25,000	2,000	90	200	0	9,000	6,000	42,000
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>								
Californian mesic chaparral	20	0	0	0	0	300	600	900
Californian pre-montane chaparral	0	0	0	0	0	300	200	500
Californian xeric chaparral	3,000	30	10	0	10	700	3,000	7,000
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	0	0	0	0	0	10	50	70
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	2,000	2,000	2,000	1,000	700	2,000	4,000	14,000

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	9,000	0	0	0	0	80	900	10,000
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>								
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	159,000	2,000	200	300	200	12,000	13,000	187,000
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>								
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	802,000	14,000	62,000	2,000	5,000	378,000	22,000	1,285,000
<i>Desert Scrub</i>								
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	44,000	0	0	0	400	2,000	400	47,000

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>BLM LUPA Conservation Designations</i>	<i>Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands</i>	
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	30,000	13,000	27,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	2,000	82,000
Intermontane seral shrubland	1,000	2,000	800	500	1,000	700	3,000	9,000
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	110,000	22,000	2,000	2,000	3,000	85,000	15,000	238,000
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	9,000	0	60	0	40	12,000	7,000	28,000
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	4,561,000	183,000	662,000	56,000	247,000	2,365,000	145,000	8,220,000
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	838,000	34,000	33,000	3,000	8,000	124,000	26,000	1,065,000

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	38,000	40	10,000	10	7,000	47,000	17,000	119,000
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	0	0	0	0	0	40	0	40
<i>Dunes</i>								
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	146,000	300	30,000	300	3,000	31,000	5,000	217,000
<i>Grassland</i>								
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	23,000	5,000	3,000	700	6,000	6,000	11,000	55,000
California annual forb/grass vegetation	400	80	400	60	300	200	1,000	2,000

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Riparian</i>								
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	195,000	200	28,000	20	4,000	270,000	14,000	510,000
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	7,000	700	4,000	300	2,000	4,000	1,000	18,000
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	70,000	8,000	12,000	2,000	3,000	54,000	3,000	151,000
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	500	10	10	50	1,000	300	500	3,000
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	7,000	0	4,000	0	8,000	1,000	2,000	23,000

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Wetland</i>								
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	40	0	0	0	800	0	400	1,000
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	0	0	0	0	0	0	80	80
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	136,000	300	6,000	200	2,000	64,000	4,000	213,000
Open Water	23,000	0	30	0	1,000	90	23,000	47,000
Playa	400	0	0	0	2,000	24,000	10,000	36,000
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	31,000	15,000	38,000	5,000	22,000	38,000	8,000	158,000
Wetland	30	0	0	200	40	10	400	700

Table IV.7-237
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Other Land Cover</i>								
Agriculture	6,000	80	600	400	2,000	200	3,000	12,000
Developed and Disturbed Areas	3,000	30	200	20	100	1,000	2,000	7,000
Not Mapped	200	0	30	0	10	20	400	700
Rural	900	10	10	100	600	200	10,000	12,000
Total	7,279,000	304,000	925,000	76,000	333,000	3,550,000	376,000	12,843,000

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs)

Notes: Conservation acreages reported reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Covered Species Habitat

Table IV.7-238 shows the conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat under Alternative 3 before the application of CMAs under the NCCP. Generally, the percent conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat in available lands is highly variable, ranging from 1% for greater sandhill crane (primarily found in agricultural areas) to 84% for bighorn sheep mountain habitat.

None of the modeled habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard and Tehachapi slender salamander is inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. Less than 5% each of the total suitable habitats for Agassiz's desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard are inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. None of the suitable habitat for Tehachapi slender salamander is inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Flat-tailed horned lizard is the only amphibian/reptile species with a substantial acreage of suitable habitat inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Almost half of the conserved suitable habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard is outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Over 90% of the conserved suitable habitat for Tehachapi slender salamander is outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Furthermore, the siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoids habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and Tehachapi slender salamander, and CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat, wetland habitat, and dune habitat would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species.

California condor has the greatest proportion of its conserved suitable habitat conserved inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design compared to other bird species, including California black rail, Gila woodpecker, greater sandhill crane, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail, which have no suitable habitat conserved inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. Conservation of bird species habitat conserved inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design ranges from 6% of conserved suitable golden eagle nesting habitat to 47% of western yellow-billed cuckoo conserved suitable habitat. Conservation outside of the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design ranges from 3% of conserved greater sandhill crane suitable modeled habitat to 69% of conserved Gila woodpecker suitable modeled habitat. Conservation of bird species associated primarily with wetland and riparian habitats (i.e., California black rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail) would be augmented by CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat, CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs.

None of the modeled suitable habitat for fish Covered Species is inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. Approximately 10% of the modeled suitable habitat for desert pupfish and Mojave tui chub is inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. While 50% of the

conserved suitable habitat for desert pupfish is outside of the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design, none of the conserved suitable habitat for Mohave tui chub is outside of the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design with the remaining conserved acreage in existing conservation areas. About 60% of the conserved suitable habitat for Owens pupfish and Owens tui chub is inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and 34% is outside. Avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish.

Only 1-3% of the conserved suitable habitat for bat Covered Species and bighorn sheep is inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design while 14% of conserved suitable habitat for Mohave ground squirrel is inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design. About 63% of the conserved suitable habitat for Mohave ground squirrel is inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (20% outside). Conserved suitable habitat for bat Covered Species are 6-13% inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (31-38% outside). Approximately 4-8% of the conserved suitable habitat for bighorn sheep (inter-mountain and mountain habitat) is inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design while 22-30% is outside of it. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for covered mammal species, the CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat that would reduce impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Conservation of suitable habitat for plant species inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design ranges from 0% for triple-ribbed milk-vetch to 34% for Barstow woolly sunflower. Conservation of suitable habitat for plant species inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design ranges from 0% for triple-ribbed milk-vetch to 92% for Barstow woolly sunflower. In addition to the conservation of modeled suitable habitat, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat would further reduce the impacts on these species.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species.

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>								
Agassiz's desert tortoise	3,711,000	203,000	529,000	62,000	257,000	2,403,000	164,000	7,328,000
Flat-tailed horned lizard	151,000	-	223,000	-	23,000	25,000	4,000	427,000
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	403,000	13,000	43,000	2,000	9,000	358,000	20,000	848,000
Tehachapi slender salamander	300	-	-	-	-	6,000	7,000	14,000
<i>Bird</i>								
Bendire's thrasher	1,196,000	54,000	34,000	11,000	8,000	298,000	41,000	1,642,000
Burrowing owl	479,000	126,000	435,000	40,000	244,000	534,000	132,000	1,991,000
California black rail	21,000	-	5,000	-	5,000	6,000	2,000	40,000

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
California condor	81,000	40,000	7,000	8,000	5,000	92,000	80,000	313,000
Gila woodpecker	10,000	-	2,000	-	1,000	29,000	700	43,000
Golden eagle–foraging	5,518,000	219,000	433,000	39,000	112,000	2,197,000	161,000	8,680,000
Golden eagle–nesting	2,689,000	66,000	126,000	10,000	20,000	601,000	81,000	3,593,000
Greater sandhill crane	6,000	-	600	-	2,000	100	200	9,000
Least Bell's vireo	86,000	1,000	4,000	900	14,000	24,000	9,000	139,000
Mountain plover	7,000	200	2,000	600	7,000	600	10,000	26,000
Southwestern willow flycatcher	18,000	2,000	3,000	200	15,000	14,000	14,000	67,000
Swainson's hawk	24,000	5,000	11,000	700	36,000	17,000	61,000	154,000

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
Tricolored blackbird	11,000	2,000	800	300	9,000	2,000	12,000	36,000
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	15,000	20	2,000	-	21,000	3,000	8,000	49,000
Yuma clapper rail	10,000	-	600	-	2,000	1,000	400	13,000
<i>Fish</i>								
Desert pupfish	900	-	90	-	10	200	300	1,000
Mohave tui chub	200	-	-	-	20	-	-	200
Owens pupfish	600	-	-	-	3,000	700	1,000	5,000
Owens tui chub	700	-	-	-	3,000	700	1,000	5,000

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Mammal</i>								
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	1,904,000	47,000	162,000	9,000	18,000	888,000	48,000	3,077,000
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	4,085,000	72,000	130,000	20,000	21,000	1,145,000	82,000	5,555,000
California leaf-nosed bat	3,138,000	67,000	245,000	11,000	41,000	2,034,000	107,000	5,643,000
Mohave ground squirrel	216,000	136,000	366,000	41,000	230,000	177,000	68,000	1,234,000
Pallid bat	6,836,000	276,000	847,000	69,000	304,000	3,382,000	296,000	12,010,000
Townsend's big-eared bat	5,879,000	245,000	779,000	54,000	271,000	2,945,000	304,000	10,478,000

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
<i>Plant</i>								
Alkali mariposa-lily	200	700	-	70	30	10	8,000	9,000
Bakersfield cactus	20,000	21,000	600	1,000	900	30,000	22,000	96,000
Barstow woolly sunflower	3,000	25,000	37,000	9,000	22,000	2,000	2,000	101,000
Desert cymopterus	7,000	1,000	41,000	1,000	36,000	11,000	10,000	108,000
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	87,000	10,000	-	2,000	-	26,000	9,000	134,000
Mojave monkeyflower	27,000	7,000	68,000	2,000	11,000	4,000	400	120,000
Mojave tarplant	48,000	23,000	2,000	2,000	3,000	53,000	11,000	142,000
Owens Valley checkerbloom	13,000	300	10	10	8,000	4,000	12,000	37,000

Table IV.7-238
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>BLM LUPA Conservation Designations</i>	<i>Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands</i>	
Parish's daisy	82,000	13,000	90	4,000	50	23,000	5,000	128,000
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	5,000	-	-	-	-	-	400	5,000

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs)

Notes: Conservation acreages reported reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Agassiz's desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-239 provides a conservation analysis for these desert tortoise important areas under the NCCP, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Overall, approximately 238,000 acres of the desert tortoise important areas are inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (182,000 acres on BLM land and 56,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 884,000 acres of desert tortoise important areas are inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and 2,456,000 acres are outside of it. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Table IV.7-239
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
			Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations	Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands	
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	157,000	25,000	19,000	5,000	700	102,000	4,000	313,000
	Linkage	126,000	13,000	4,000	1,000	100	234,000	11,000	390,000
	TCA	1,544,000	40,000	7,000	6,000	1,000	1,122,000	48,000	2,768,000
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		<i>1,827,000</i>	<i>78,000</i>	<i>30,000</i>	<i>12,000</i>	<i>2,000</i>	<i>1,458,000</i>	<i>64,000</i>	<i>3,470,000</i>
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	421,000	-	-	-	-	253,000	10,000	684,000
	TCA	1,758,000	-	-	-	-	168,000	13,000	1,938,000
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		<i>2,179,000</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>420,000</i>	<i>23,000</i>	<i>2,622,000</i>
Western Mojave	Linkage	391,000	36,000	28,000	14,000	21,000	166,000	21,000	676,000
	TCA	1,061,000	68,000	418,000	31,000	147,000	285,000	20,000	2,030,000
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		<i>1,452,000</i>	<i>104,000</i>	<i>446,000</i>	<i>44,000</i>	<i>168,000</i>	<i>451,000</i>	<i>41,000</i>	<i>2,706,000</i>
Grand Total		5,458,000	182,000	476,000	56,000	170,000	2,329,000	127,000	8,799,000

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs)

Notes: Conservation acreages reported reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-240 provides a conservation analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas under the NCCP. Approximately 182,000 acres of the Mohave ground squirrel important areas are inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design (144,000 acres on BLM land and 38,000 acres on non-BLM land). Approximately 645,000 acres of Mohave ground squirrel important areas are inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design and 300,000 acres are outside of it. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-240
NCCP Conservation Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas – Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	BLM LUPA Conservation Designations Inside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Biological Conservation Priority Areas on Non-BLM Lands (acres)		Outside the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design (acres)		Total Conservation (acres)
		<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Inside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>Outside the DRECP NCCP Reserve Design</i>	<i>BLM LUPA Conservation Designations</i>	<i>Biological Conservation Planning Areas on Non-BLM Lands</i>	
Key Population Center	47,000	86,000	76,000	20,000	38,000	83,000	12,000	362,000
Linkage	30,000	17,000	101,000	8,000	35,000	66,000	6,000	262,000
Expansion Area	77,000	27,000	111,000	9,000	93,000	71,000	10,000	398,000
Climate Change Extension	28,000	14,000	30	500	9,000	33,000	19,000	104,000
Total	181,000	144,000	288,000	38,000	175,000	253,000	47,000	1,126,000

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs)

Notes: Conservation acreages reported reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

IV.7.3.5.4 Impacts of General Conservation Plan: Alternative 3

IV.7.3.5.4.1 General Conservation Plan Impacts and Mitigation Measures from Renewable Energy and Transmission Development

The impacts of the GCP for Alternative 3 would be similar to those defined in Section IV.7.3.2.1 for the Plan-wide analysis, but they would occur on nonfederal lands only. On nonfederal lands under the GCP, Alternative 3 includes DFAs (approximately 1,175,000 acres) and transmission corridors where approximately 131,000 acres of ground disturbance related impacts and operational impacts would occur.

Impact BR-1: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of native vegetation.

Table IV.7-241 shows the impacts to natural communities under Alternative 3 under the GCP. An effects summary by general community is provided below in relation to the Plan-wide effects analysis provided in Section IV.7.3.2.1.1. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community effects by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

No more than 5 acres (less than 0.01%) of California forest and woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 within the GCP. Furthermore, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs that address roosting covered bat species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs would offset that effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 800 acres (1.0%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 within the GCP Area, which is the majority of the Plan-wide effects to this general community. Most of the impacts are from solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas, but there would also be impacts from wind and transmission development in these subareas. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-2, AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, and AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3), soil resources

(AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs would offset that effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 700 acres (0.7%) of desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is the majority of the Plan-wide effects. Most of the impacts are from solar and transmission development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but there would also be impacts in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes that would also come mostly from solar and transmission development. In addition, wind development accounts for 40 acres of impacts to desert conifer woodlands. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs would offset that effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 2,000 acres (0.7%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which constitutes only about one third of the Plan-wide effects. Most of the impacts would be in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, but there would also be relatively substantial impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Owens River Valley subarea. About 30 acres or less of impacts to desert outcrop and badlands would occur in other subareas. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs would offset that effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 55,000 acres (1.9%) of desert scrubs would be impacted under the Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is over half of the Plan-wide effects. Most of the impacts to desert scrubs under the GCP are in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but impacts occur in all subareas except for the Kingston and Funeral Mountains and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas. The same CMAs that would be

applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. These include avoidance, setbacks, and/or suitable habitat impact caps for flat-tailed horned lizard (AM-RES-RL-ICS-8 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-9 and AM-DFA-ICS-16), desert tortoise (AM-DFA-ICS-3 through AM-DFA-ICS-15 and AM-RES-RL-ICS-1 through AM-RES-RL-ICS-7), Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43 and AM-RES-BLM-ICS-14 through AM-RES-BLM-ICS-17), bat Covered Species (AM-DFA-BAT-1, AM-RES-RL-BAT-1, and AM-RES-RL-BAT-2), and plant Covered Species (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3, AM-RES-BLM-PLANT-1, and AM-RES-RL-PLANT-1 through AM-RES-RL-PLANT-3). Furthermore, soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) CMAs would be implemented that would help avoid and minimize these effects and compensation CMAs would offset the effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Dunes

Application of the CMAs would require avoidance of dune communities to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs so there would be no impacts to dunes under the GCP. In addition, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes the implementation of dune avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3, and AM-RES-RL-DUNE-1 through AM-RES-RL-DUNE-3) as well as compensation CMAs that would offset any unavoidable impacts (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres (3.3%) of grasslands would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is about the same as the Plan-wide effects. Most impacts are from solar development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slope subarea, but would also occur from wind development and transmission in this subarea and occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Mojave and Silurian Valley, and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. In addition, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs that address breeding, nesting, or roosting species (AM-DFA-AG-2), soil resources (AM-PW-10), weed management (AM-PW-11), and fire prevention/protection (AM-PW-12) that would help avoid and minimize these effects as well as compensation CMAs would offset that effect (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Riparian

Application of the CMAs would require avoidance of riparian communities to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs so there would be no impacts to riparian communities under the GCP. In addition, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community and the plant and wildlife species it supports would also be applied under the GCP. This includes CMAs for avoidance and minimization from riparian habitat and the Covered Species associated with riparian habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres (2.0%) of wetlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is more than half of the Plan-wide effects. Impacts would be mostly from renewable energy development on open water at the Salton Sea in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. The same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide to reduce impacts to this general community would also be applied under the GCP, including avoidance of Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) as well as compensation CMAs (COMP-1 and COMP-2) that would offset the effect.

**Table IV.7-241
 GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3**

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>California forest and woodland</i>						
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	61,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian montane conifer forest	44,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>						
Californian mesic chaparral	3,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian pre-montane chaparral	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian xeric chaparral	19,000	0	0	0	30	30
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	42,000	500	40	0	200	700

Table IV.7-241
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	15,000	0	0	0	40	40
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>						
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	104,000	500	40	0	200	700
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>						
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	220,000	900	10	200	500	2,000
<i>Desert Scrub</i>						
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	8,000	0	0	0	0	0
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	24,000	500	30	0	80	600
Intermontane seral shrubland	68,000	2,000	100	0	100	2,000
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	152,000	200	0	0	100	300
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	48,000	0	0	0	0	0
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	2,254,000	36,000	2,000	800	5,000	45,000
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	228,000	3,000	300	0	400	4,000
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	157,000	3,000	80	200	500	4,000
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	70	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Dunes</i>						
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	34,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Grassland</i>						
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	196,000	6,000	300	0	300	7,000
California annual forb/grass vegetation	7,000	70	0	0	0	70

Table IV.7-241
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Riparian</i>						
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	96,000	0	0	0	0	0
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	17,000	0	0	0	0	0
Riparian	600	0	0	0	0	0
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	34,000	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	6,000	0	0	0	0	0
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	47,000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Wetland</i>						
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	4,000	0	0	0	0	0
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	400	0	0	0	0	0
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	36,000	600	20	0	100	800
Open Water	114,000	2,000	0	1,000	700	4,000
Playa	52,000	0	0	0	10	10
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	112,000	1,000	50	0	100	1,000
Wetland	8,000	100	0	0	20	100
<i>Other Land Cover – Developed and Disturbed Areas</i>						
Agriculture	693,000	39,000	500	8,000	8,000	55,000
Developed and Disturbed Areas	399,000	400	0	30	2,000	2,000
Not Mapped	4,000	10	0	0	10	20
Rural	110,000	1,000	10	300	700	2,000
Total	5,420,000	98,000	4,000	10,000	19,000	131,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Rare natural community alliances could be impacted under Alternative 3 on nonfederal lands, including impacts to Joshua tree woodland. CMAs would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection that would help avoid and minimize these effects on rare natural communities. Additionally, AM-DFA-ONC-1 and -2 would require inventorying and preserving or transplanting cactus, yuccas, and succulents. While the compensation CMAs would offset the lost habitat acreage of these impacts, the compensation CMAs do not specifically require the replacement of or mitigation for specific rare natural community alliances. After application of the CMAs, impacts to rare natural communities from Alternative 3 would be adverse and would require mitigation.

Impact BR-2: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of Covered Activities have the potential to result in adverse effects to federal or state jurisdictional waters and wetlands. In the Plan Area, jurisdictional waters and wetlands would likely include the riparian and wetland communities analyzed under Impact BR-1 and may also include other features including playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainage networks.

All Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Additionally, all impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the riparian CMAs including riparian setbacks. All impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep wetlands would be avoided under Alternative 3 through application of the wetland CMAs, including wetland setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Approximately 6,000 acres of other wetland communities would be impacted under Alternative 3. See the analysis for the loss of native vegetation provided under BR-1 for a discussion of these potential impacts. All or a portion of the estimated wetland impacts could result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands without compensation. Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable.

Additionally, playas, seeps/springs, major rivers, and ephemeral drainages are waters and wetland features that provide hydrological functions and may be determined to be jurisdictional waters and wetlands. Adverse effects to these features would have the potential to impact jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Playa

Approximately 1% (600 acres) of playa would be impacted by Covered Activities under Alternative 3 within the GCP. The majority of impacts would be associated with solar (400 acres), with 30 acres of wind impacts, and 100 acres of transmission impacts. Ecoregion subareas of potential impacts to playas include the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

Avoidance of impacts to wetland communities including playas would benefit Covered Species that utilize these communities. In addition, application of species-specific CMAs would help avoid and minimize impacts to species associated with playas (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). CMAs would also require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters, including playas (AM-PW-9 and AM-LL-2). Compensation CMAs would offset impacts to these features (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Seep/Spring

Seeps occur within DFAs and transmission corridors and potential impacts to seep/spring have the potential to occur under Alternative 3 within the GCP in the following ecoregion subareas: Imperial Borrego Valley, Mojave and Silurian Valley, Owens River Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes. Impacts to seeps and springs would be adverse absent implementation of avoidance measures. Impacts to seep/spring locations and associated Covered Species and hydrological functions would be avoided through adherence to avoidance and minimization CMAs, including habitat assessments and avoidance of seeps with 0.25 mile setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9). Compensation CMAs would offset any impacts determined to be unavoidable (COMP-1 and COMP-2).

Major Rivers

Under Alternative 3 within the GCP, there would no direct impacts to any of the four major rivers within the Plan Area – Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave, and Owens Rivers, but there could be indirect effects associated with modification of hydrology resulting from

development. Riparian CMAs would require avoidance of these features with setbacks (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1).

Ephemeral Drainages

Ephemeral drainages occur throughout the Plan Area, and some of these features could be determined to state or federal jurisdictional waters. Impacts to ephemeral drainages would likely occur from Covered Activities. Application of riparian avoidance CMAs (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1 through AM-DFA-RIPWET-9) would avoid and minimize impacts to a portion of the ephemeral drainages within DFAs. Additionally, all Covered Activities would be required to comply with existing, applicable federal and state laws and regulations related to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Impact BR-3: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in degradation of vegetation.

Siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants. The degree to which these factors contribute to the degradation of vegetation corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities within the GCP that would result in dust, fire, and introduction of invasive plants or that would use dust suppressants and implement fire management. The propensity for vegetation to be at risk of degradation was determined by the overlap between natural community models and the likely distribution of Covered Activities across subareas in the GCP.

Based on the planned renewable energy capacity, the greatest amount of terrestrial operational impacts within the GCP would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and the Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, as shown in Table IV.7-242. As a result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to degrade vegetation as a result in the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants.

**Table IV.7-242
 GCP Terrestrial Operational Impacts – Alternative 3**

Ecoregion Subarea	Solar Impact (acres) ¹	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	12,000	1,000	-	3,000	16,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	33,000	200	10,000	10,000	53,200

Table IV.7-242
GCP Terrestrial Operational Impacts – Alternative 3

Ecoregion Subarea	Solar Impact (acres)¹	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	3,000	-	-	400	3,400
Owens River Valley	1,000	-	-	400	1,400
Panamint Death Valley	400	-	-	-	400
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	9,000	5,000	-	3,000	17,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	1,000	-	-	300	1,300
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	37,000	10,000	-	2,000	49,000
Total	98,000	16,000	10,000	19,000	143,000

¹ Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Terrestrial operational impacts collectively refers to vegetation degradation impacts (BR-3) from dust, dust suppressants, fire, fire management, and invasive plants and wildlife impacts (BR-4) from creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, lighting and glare. For the purposes of analysis, terrestrial operational impacts were quantified using the project area extent for solar and geothermal, using 25% of the project area for wind, and the right-of-way area for transmission.

Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation, short-term and long-term wind (excluding project area impacts), geothermal project area, and transmission impacts. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Dust and Dust Suppressants

Natural communities, and in particular natural communities containing Mojave desert shrubs, are susceptible to vegetation degradation from dust. Impacts to these natural communities would mostly occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slope subarea, but would also occur from wind development and transmission and occur in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea. Plant Covered Species, that could also experience vegetation degradation from dust, would mainly be impacted by Covered Activities in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea and to a lesser extent in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, which contain most of the impacts to plant Covered Species habitat within the GCP. Considering the distribution of Covered Activities that would cause dust as well as the sensitive natural communities and plant Covered

Species the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would experience the greatest magnitude of vegetation degradation resulting from dust.

The application of dust suppressants is a common management practice, a Covered Activity under the Plan, and has been shown to effectively reduce dust. Dust-related degradation of vegetation would be further minimized within the GCP through the incorporation of avoidance and minimization CMAs. The Plan-wide avoidance and minimization CMAs would generally identify vegetation in the project area (AM-PW-1), utilize standard practices to minimize the amount of exposed soils (AM-PW-14) and reduce dust caused by soil erosion (AM-PW-10). Additionally, Alternative 3 would implement CMAs that would identify and protect or salvage specific plant species, minimizing their exposure to dust. Setbacks and suitable habitat impact caps would also be implemented for plant Covered Species in DFAs and in the reserve design envelope (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3).

Riparian and wetland natural communities would be susceptible to the adverse effects of dust suppressants including chemical and physical changes, altered hydrological function, and increased pollutant loads in surface water. The Imperial Borrego Valley subarea would experience most of the impacts to riparian and wetland natural communities in the GCP, which corresponds to the potential greatest magnitude of vegetation degradation from adverse dust suppressant effects. Plant Covered Species, which would also be affected by the use of dust suppressants would mostly be impacted by Covered Activities in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Avoidance and minimization CMAs implemented as part of Alternative 3, including AM-PW-9 and AM-PW-10, would utilize standard practices to reduce erosion and runoff of dust suppressant into sensitive vegetation. Setbacks and avoidance requirements for all riparian natural communities and some wetland natural communities that would be implemented as part of the CMAs would minimize potential adverse effects of dust suppressants on these communities (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1).

Fire and Fire Management

The increased presence of flammable invasive annual plants and anthropogenic ignitions of fires can cause the conversion of natural communities and degrade vegetation. Due to their slower speed of recovery, desert scrub natural communities are more susceptible to natural community conversion from fires. The impacts to desert scrub natural communities within the GCP would primarily occur within the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea and to a lesser degree in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Under Alternative 3, construction and maintenance of fire breaks and other fire management techniques would impact California forest and woodlands, chaparral natural

communities, and grassland natural communities within the GCP. In combination these impacts to woodlands, chaparral, and grasslands, which correspond to the amount of potential vegetation degradation resulting from vegetation removal during fire management, would predominantly occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Avoidance and minimization CMAs would be implemented to reduce the potential adverse effects of fire and fire management, including AM-PW-12 that would require projects to minimize the amount of vegetation clearing and fuel modification, under the Alternative 3.

Invasive Plants

Invasive plants can result in vegetation degradation by increasing the fuel load and the frequency of fires in plant communities as well hindering the growth or establishment of other plant species. Overall, the natural communities and plant Covered Species in the GCP are generally at risk of adverse effects from the introduction of invasive plants. The most vegetation degradation caused by the introduction of invasive plants would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. Plant Covered Species in the GCP would also experience potential vegetation degradation as a result of Covered Activities with most of impacts occurring in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

Avoidance and minimization CMAs would be implemented to minimize vegetation degradation from invasive plants under Alternative 3, including AM-PW-7 that would ensure the timely restoration of temporarily disturbed areas that could otherwise promote invasive plants. Additional CMAs would use standard practices to control weeds and invasive plants (AM-PW-11) and require the responsible use of herbicides to reduce potential vegetation degradation (AM-PW-15) for all Covered Activities.

Impact BR-4: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of listed and sensitive plants; disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife; and habitat for listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

Impact BR-4 described at the Plan-wide level provides an impact analysis for Covered Species habitat by ecoregion subarea, specific Covered Species impact analyses, an indirect and terrestrial operational impact analysis for Covered Species, and a non-Covered Species impact analysis. The following provides an impact analysis for Covered Species on nonfederal GCP lands. Most of the impacts to plant and wildlife species and their habitat under Alternative 3 would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas.

Covered Species Habitat Impact Analysis by Ecoregion Subarea

West Mojave and Eastern Slopes Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would mostly be from solar development, but would also include impacts from wind and transmission development. Typical impacts from these Covered Activities on plant and wildlife species and their habitat is described in Section IV.7.2. This subarea provides suitable habitat for amphibians and reptiles that would be impacted, including Agassiz's desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard. The siting of the DFAs under the GCP largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

There are impacts to suitable habitat for several bird Covered Species in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, including Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California condor, golden eagle, least Bell's vireo, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, and tricolored blackbird that would be impacted. CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, and tricolored blackbird to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs (AM-DFA-AG-2). Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, desert kit fox, Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat would be impacted in this subarea. The siting of the DFAs under the GCP largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) that would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Suitable habitat for the following plant species would be impacted in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea: alkali mariposa-lily, Bakersfield cactus, Barstow woolly sunflower, desert cymopterus, Mojave monkeyflower, and Mojave tarplant. Although modeled suitable habitat for these species may be impacted by Covered Activities in this subarea, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat (AM-DFA-PLANT-1 through AM-DFA-PLANT-3) would further reduce the impacts on these species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for these species.

Imperial Borrego Valley Ecoregion Subarea

Renewable energy development within the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea would be primarily from solar energy development, but would also include impacts from geothermal, wind and transmission development. The Imperial Borrego Valley subarea provides suitable habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard that would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under the GCP largely avoid habitat for flat-tailed horned lizard, and CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from dune habitat (AM-DFA-DUNE-1 through AM-DFA-DUNE-3) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on this species to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243.

Impacts would occur to suitable habitat for the following covered bird species in this subarea: Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, least Bell's vireo, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, tricolored blackbird, and Yuma clapper rail. CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further avoid and minimize the impacts on southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, least Bell's vireo, California black rail, and Yuma clapper rail to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243. Additionally, the CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs (AM-DFA-AG-2).

Impacts to suitable habitat for desert pupfish, the only fish species with suitable habitat in this subarea, would total approximately 200 acres. The avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish.

Only minimal impacts (approximately 20 acres) would occur to bighorn sheep mountain habitat in this subarea. Impacts to suitable habitat for other covered mammals species would occur for California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. In addition, suitable habitat for the Planning Species desert kit fox would be impacted. The siting of the DFAs under the GCP largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. The CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat and wetland habitat (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1) would further reduce the impacts on these habitats used by California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat to less than the acreage reported in Table IV.7-243.

Table IV.7-243
GCP Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>						
Agassiz's desert tortoise	2,248,000	33,000	2,000	-	4,000	39,000
Flat-tailed horned lizard	310,000	5,000	10	2,000	2,000	9,000
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	168,000	4,000	40	-	1,000	5,000
Tehachapi slender salamander	41,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Bird</i>						
Bendire's thrasher	405,000	4,000	300	500	2,000	6,000
Burrowing owl	3,244,000	84,000	3,000	9,000	15,000	111,000
California black rail	127,000	2,000	-	600	800	3,000
California condor	997,000	16,000	800	-	1,000	18,000
Gila woodpecker	56,000	400	-	100	300	700
Golden eagle–foraging	1,498,000	10,000	500	30	1,000	12,000
Golden eagle–nesting	676,000	400	20	-	300	700
Greater sandhill crane	601,000	34,000	300	7,000	7,000	49,000
Least Bell's vireo	104,000	200	10	10	80	300
Mountain plover	811,000	42,000	700	7,000	8,000	58,000
Southwestern willow flycatcher	258,000	4,000	50	1,000	1,000	6,000
Swainson's hawk	1,339,000	35,000	1,000	4,000	5,000	45,000
Tricolored blackbird	257,000	9,000	400	20	200	9,000
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	111,000	300	10	-	40	400
Yuma clapper rail	31,000	40	-	10	10	60
<i>Fish</i>						
Desert pupfish	7,000	100	-	50	60	200
Mohave tui chub	100	-	-	-	-	-
Owens pupfish	13,000	50	-	-	10	60
Owens tui chub	13,000	50	-	-	10	60

Table IV.7-243
GCP Impact Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
<i>Mammal</i>						
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	465,000	1,000	60	-	500	2,000
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	807,000	3,000	300	-	2,000	4,000
California leaf-nosed bat	979,000	7,000	60	500	3,000	11,000
Mohave ground squirrel	1,319,000	22,000	1,000	-	2,000	26,000
Pallid bat	3,775,000	48,000	3,000	1,000	8,000	60,000
Townsend's big-eared bat	3,510,000	44,000	2,000	2,000	8,000	56,000
<i>Plant</i>						
Alkali mariposa-lily	117,000	3,000	200	-	100	3,000
Bakersfield cactus	200,000	900	40	-	60	1,000
Barstow woolly sunflower	82,000	600	40	-	10	700
Desert cymopterus	137,000	1,000	40	-	10	1,000
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	130,000	900	100	-	100	1,000
Mojave monkeyflower	41,000	300	40	-	50	400
Mojave tarplant	129,000	20	-	-	70	100
Owens Valley checkerbloom	92,000	400	-	-	100	500
Parish's daisy	72,000	800	100	-	300	1,000
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	3,000	-	-	-	-	-

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Specific Covered Species Impact Analyses

For Agassiz’s desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-244 provides an impact analysis for these desert tortoise important areas in the GCP area, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, approximately 800 acres of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, no habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, approximately 10,000 acres of TCAs and linkage habitat would be impacted under Alternative 3. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-1 and AM-DFA-ICS-3 through 15). Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

**Table IV.7-244
GCP Impact Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3**

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	31,000	-	-	-	-	-
	Linkage	63,000	10	-	-	10	10
	TCA	269,000	90	-	-	700	800
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		363,000	100	-	-	700	800
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	56,000	-	-	-	-	-
	TCA	66,000	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		122,000	-	-	-	-	-
Western Mojave	Linkage	407,000	7,000	600	-	1,000	9,000
	TCA	392,000	500	20	-	200	700
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		798,000	8,000	700	-	1,000	10,000
Total		1,283,000	8,000	700	-	2,000	11,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For golden eagle, a territory-based analysis was conducted (see methods and results in the Chapter IV.7 portion of Appendix R2). Using the golden eagle nest database, golden eagle territories were identified and individually buffered by 1 mile (representing breeding areas around known nests) and 4 miles (representing use areas around known nests). A total of 157 territories occur wholly or partially within the GCP area. Under Alternative 3, 27 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 1 mile of a nest. Implementation of the CMAs for golden eagles (AM-DFA-ICS-2) would prohibit siting or construction of Covered Activities within 1 mile of an active golden eagle nest; therefore, impacts within 1 mile of these golden eagle territories would be avoided. Under Alternative 3, 61 territories have DFAs or transmission corridors within 4 miles of nest, and the use area of these territories could be impacted through harassment and reduced foraging opportunities by Covered Activities depending of the siting of specific projects. The CMAs for golden eagles (Section II.3.1.2.5) and the approach to golden eagles (see Appendix H) describes how the impact to golden eagles would be avoided, minimized, and compensated. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year in 2014 would be allowed to be taken within the Plan Area, which would be reassessed annually.

For bighorn sheep, bighorn sheep mountain habitat and intermountain (linkage) habitat have been identified in the Plan Area. Under Alternative 3 on nonfederal land, approximately 4,000 acres of mountain habitat and 2,000 acres of intermountain habitat would be impacted. Alternative 3 identified DFAs that largely avoid impacts to bighorn sheep mountain and intermountain habitat, and avoidance, minimization, and compensation CMAs have been developed to offset the loss of habitat for bighorn sheep.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-245 provides an impact analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas in the GCP area. A total of approximately 1,000 acres of impact would occur in climate change extension areas under Alternative 3. A total of approximately 300 acres of impact to linkage and approximately 2,000 acres of impact to expansion areas would occur under Alternative 3. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages (AM-DFA-ICS-36 through AM-DFA-ICS-43). Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-245
GCP Impact Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas –
Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Key Population Center	193,000	1,000	60	-	100	2,000
Linkage	103,000	200	-	-	80	300
Expansion Area	258,000	2,000	80	-	60	2,000
Climate Change Extension	131,000	900	-	-	200	1,000
Total	684,000	5,000	100	-	500	6,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Within the Plan Area, critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the following Covered Species: desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, and Parish’s daisy. For desert tortoise, approximately 1,000 acres of impact designated critical habitat would result from the development of Covered Activities on nonfederal lands under Alternative 3 located in the Chuckwalla, Fremont-Kramer, Ord-Rodman, and Superior-Cronese critical habitat units. Under Alternative 3, no impacts to critical habitat designated for southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, or Parish’s daisy would occur from the development of Covered Activities on nonfederal lands.

Indirect and Terrestrial Operational Impact Analysis

Siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities could result in the potential disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare. The degree to which these factors contribute to the disturbance of sensitive wildlife corresponds to the distribution of Covered Activities within the GCP that would result in noise, predator avoidance behavior, or light and glare. Based on the planned renewable energy capacity in the GCP, most of the terrestrial operational impacts would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and the Imperial Borrego Valley subareas respectively, as shown in Table IV.7-242. The Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes as well as the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas would also experience prevalent amounts of terrestrial operational impacts within the GCP. As a

result, these subareas would have the greatest potential to disturbance of sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare.

Noise

noise can cause physical damage to wildlife as well as behavioral changes in habitat use, activity patterns, reproduction, and foraging. Nesting birds are expected to be particularly sensitive to noise effects. The largest amount of impacts to bird Covered Species habitat in the GCP would be located in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. Smaller mammals, such as the Mohave ground squirrel, and reptiles, such as the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and flat-tailed horned lizard, could experience increased predation from noise hindering their ability to detect predators. The combined impacts in the GCP to the habitat for these Covered Species would mostly occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, and to a lesser extent in the Pinto Lucerne and Eastern Slopes subarea. As such, the disturbance of wildlife from noise would predominantly occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas.

Implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs under Alternative 3 would minimize the disturbance and injury of wildlife from noise-related effects. The CMA AM-PW-13 would reduce noise generated from Covered Activities using standard practices while other CMAs that would avoid and setback Covered Activities from noise-sensitive wildlife including seasonal setbacks for nesting birds; setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat benefiting birds, amphibians, and small mammals; and avoidance of Mohave ground squirrel's during operations (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-ICS-36).

Predator Avoidance Behavior

The effects of predator avoidance behavior include wildlife experiencing behavioral changes due to human activities during siting, construction, and operations. Although different wildlife species may have varying sensitivities to predator avoidance behavior and may experience different magnitudes of responses to Covered Activities, Covered Activities are expected to generally result in predator avoidance and other behavioral changes in most wildlife species that are spread throughout the GCP. Therefore, the most disturbance of wildlife from predator avoidance behavior would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas, where a most of the terrestrial operational impacts within the GCP are anticipated.

Avoidance and minimization CMAs for siting Covered Activities away from sensitive wildlife habitat would be implemented for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for particular species such as the Mohave ground squirrel (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, AM-DFA-AG-2, and AM-DFA-ICS-36).

Under Alternative 3, additional CMAs would inform workers of actions that could potentially affect wildlife behavior and restrict activities that could disturb wildlife and their access to water and foraging habitat (AM-PW-5, AM-PW-13, and AM-RES-RL-DUNE-2). Seasonal restrictions would also be implemented for recreational activities that might affect Bighorn sheep in the reserve design envelope (AM-RES-BLM-ICS-11). The potential disturbance of wildlife from predator avoidance behavior caused by siting, construction, and operational Covered Activities in the GCP would be minimized by these measures.

Light and Glare

Exposure of wildlife to light and glare can alter wildlife behavior including foraging, migration, and breeding. Solar projects are expected to have greater effects on wildlife compared to other renewable energy technologies because they would produce increased levels of glare due to the large amount of reflective panel or heliostat surfaces. Potential adverse effects associated with light and glare from solar projects, including solar flux and bird collisions from the lake effect are analyzed in BR-9. Most of the terrestrial operational impacts in the GCP resulting from development of all technology types of renewable energy would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. The Imperial Borrego Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would experience most of terrestrial operational impacts from solar projects in the GCP. Therefore, these subareas would have the greatest potential to disturbance of sensitive wildlife from noise, predator avoidance behavior, as well as light and glare.

Bats and other diurnal predators may exploit night lighting that increases prey detectability, but would also be attracted to areas of greater development that increase potential hazards such as collision. Impacts to habitat for bats would as a result of Covered Activities in the GCP would mainly be located in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas. Migratory birds that fly during the night may be affected by aviation safety lighting. For bird Covered Species the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley are the subareas primarily affected, containing most of the impacts to bird Covered Species habitat in the GCP. As such, wildlife disturbance is anticipated to occur primarily in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea and to a lesser extent in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes as well as the Imperial Borrego Valley subareas.

Alternative 3 would implement avoidance and minimization CMAs within the GCP specifically intended to reduce effects of lighting and glare including AM-PW-14, which would implement standard practices for shielding and reducing the use of lights, as well as AM-DFA-RIPWET-4, which specifically restricts lighting within one mile of riparian or wetland vegetation. Other CMAs applicable in the GCP would implement setbacks for riparian and wetland habitat, wildlife species that inhabit agricultural lands, and for

smaller mammals, which would minimize their exposure to light and glare from Covered Activities (AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, AM-DFA-RIPWET-5, and AM-DFA-AG-2).

Non-Covered Species

Potential impacts to Non-Covered Species on GCP Land were analyzed as described in Section IV.7.3.2.1. Table IV.7-246 provides an estimation of the impacts to natural communities associated with Non-Covered Species. While estimation of impacts to natural communities likely overestimates the potential impacts to Non-Covered Species habitats, it provides a general range of level of impact.

Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs, so impacts to potential habitat for each of these species is likely greater than would actually occur. For some species, impacts would be further minimized through avoidance of the specific natural communities required for those species, e.g. dune-, spring-, or cave-restricted invertebrates, or riparian-obligate bird and amphibian species. The total impact to potential habitat across all technology types is less than 1%, with the exception the desert scrub/chaparral communities at approximately 1.5%, grassland communities at approximately 3%, and within the agriculture/rural land cover areas at approximately 7%.

Critical habitat for the federally-listed Non-Covered Species would essentially be avoided across all renewable energy types.

The results of impacts on Non-Covered Species from the creation of noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare would be similar to those described for the Covered Species.

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
California forest and woodland/ Desert conifer woodlands	Coast horned lizard, grey vireo, loggerhead shrike, yellow warbler, American badger, bighorn sheep, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, Amargosa beardtongue, Charlotte’s phacelia, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, Kern buckwheat, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, San	209,000	500	40	0	200	740	0.4%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	Bernardino Mountains dudleya, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Tracy's eriastrum, Cushenbury buckwheat							
Desert Scrub/ Chaparral Communities	Arroyo toad, banded gila monster, Coast horned lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch's spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, Ferruginous hawk, gilded flicker, grey vireo, Le Conte's thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, Lucy's warbler, northern harrier, yellow warbler, American badger, Arizona myotis, big free-tailed bat, bighorn sheep, cave	3,020,000	45,200	2,600	1,000	6,500	55,300	1.8%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, Palm Springs pocket mouse, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western small-footed myotis, western yellow bat, yellow-eared pocket mouse, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, bare-stem larkspur, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, Cushenbury buckwheat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury							

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	oxytheca, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Kelso Creek monkeyflower, Kern buckwheat, Las Animas colubrina, Lane Mountain Milk-Vetch, Mojave Desert plum, Mojave milkweed, Munz’s Cholla, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt’s woody aster, Orocopia sage, Parish’s club cholla, Pierson’s milk-vetch, pink fairy-duster, Piute Mountains jewel-flower, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant,							

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	Robinson’s monardella, Rusby’s desert-mallow, sand food, Sodaville milk-vetch, short-joint beavertail cactus, Spanish needle onion, Thorne’s buckwheat, Tracy’s eriastrum, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, White-margined beardtongue, Wiggin’s croton, Flat-seeded spurge, Parish’s phacelia, Parish’s alkali grass							
Dunes3/ Desert Outcrop and Badlands	Banded gila monster, barefoot gecko, Coast horned lizard, Colorado Desert fringe-toed lizard, Couch’s spadefoot, rosy boa, bald eagle, bank swallow, Le Conte’s thrasher, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl,	254,000	1,000	0	200	500	1,700	0.7%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	northern harrier, Amargosa vole, big free-tailed bat, bighorn sheep, cave myotis, bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, Yuma myotis, Algodones Dunes sunflower, Ash Meadows gum plant, Amargosa beardtongue, Amargosa niterwort, Charlotte’s phacelia, Cima milk-vetch, Coachella Valley milk-vetch, creamy blazing star, desert pincushion, Emory’s crucifixion-thorn, flat-seeded spurge, forked buckwheat, Harwood’s eriastrum, Harwood’s milkvetch, Inyo County star-tulip, Las Animas colubrina, Mojave Desert plum, Mojave							

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	milkweed, nine-awned pappus grass, Orcutt’s woody aster, Orocopia sage, Palmer’s jackass clover, Parish’s club cholla, Pierson’s milk-vetch, pink fairy-duster, purple-nerve cymopterus, Red Rock poppy, Red Rock tarplant, Robinson’s monardella, Rusby’s desert-mallow, sand food, Spanish needle onion, Thorne’s buckwheat, Utah beardtongue, white bear poppy, Wiggin’s croton, Palmer’s jackass clover, white-margined beardtongue, flat-seeded spurge							
Grassland	Coast horned lizard, American peregrine falcon, bank swallow, Ferruginous hawk,	203,000	6,100	300	0	300	6,700	3.3%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	long-eared owl, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, Amargosa vole, American badger, spotted bat, Cushenbury milk-vetch, Cushenbury oxytheca, short-joint beavertail cactus							
Riparian/ Wetlands	Arroyo toad, California red-legged frog, Coast horned lizard, Couch's spadefoot, Western pond turtle, American peregrine falcon, Arizona Bell's vireo, bald eagle, bank swallow, Crissal thrasher, gilded flicker, elf owl, Inyo California towhee, loggerhead shrike, long-eared owl, Lucy's warbler, northern harrier, redhead, vermillion	413,000	2,000	100	0	200	2,300	0.6%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	flycatcher, white-tailed kite, yellow-breasted chat, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Amargosa vole, Mojave River vole, Arizona myotis, cave myotis, fringed myotis, hoary bat, long-eared myotis, pocketed free-tailed bat, spotted bat, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat, Yuma myotis, Ash Meadows gum plant, Inyo County star-tulip, Parish's alkali grass, Parish's phacelia, Amargosa pupfish, Amargosa speckled dace, Amargosa spring snails							
Agriculture/ Rural Land Cover	American peregrine falcon, Bank swallow, loggerhead shrike,	803,000	40,000	500	8,300	9,000	48,800	6.1%

Table IV.7-246
GCP Impact Analysis for Natural Communities and Associated Non-Covered Species – Preferred Alternative

Natural Community	Primary Associated Non-Covered Species	Available Lands (acres) ¹	Solar Impact (acres) ²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres) ⁴	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)	Percent Impact
	long-eared owl, northern harrier, redhead, yellow-headed blackbird, yellow warbler, Arizona myotis, hoary bat, Tehachapi pocket mouse, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat							

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

³ Impacts to the dune community, riparian communities, arid west freshwater emergent marsh, and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would be avoided through implementation of CMAs. Only impacts determined to be unavoidable would occur in these natural communities.

⁴ This amount assumes the loss of conservation value for all land fragmented by the well fields.

Notes: The natural community classification system is described in Chapter III.7 and follows CDFG 2012. Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. Totals may not sum due to rounding. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Impact BR-5: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities could result in loss of nesting birds (violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513).

Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operations of renewable energy and transmission projects would result in the removal of vegetation and other nesting habitat and cause increased human presence and noise that has the potential to cause the loss of nesting birds, which would be a violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The potential loss of nesting birds resulting from these activities would be adverse without application of CMAs. Avoidance and minimization CMAs (AM-PW-4, 13, 14; AM-DFA-RIPWET-1, 3, 5; AM-DFA-AG-1 through 6; AM-DFA-ICS CMAs for bird species) include the season restrictions, survey requirements, and setbacks necessary to avoid and minimize the loss of nesting birds.

Impact BR-6: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would adversely affect habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors, the movement of fish, and native wildlife nursery sites.

Species-specific habitat linkages and wildlife movement areas are a component of analysis conducted under Impact BR-4 above. Suitable habitat for each species includes areas of habitat linkages and wildlife movement. Analysis under BR-4 specifically incorporates habitat linkage information for desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and desert bighorn sheep. In addition to the species-specific analysis of impacts to suitable habitat supporting habitat linkages and wildlife movement for species, landscape level information on habitat linkages (i.e., Desert Linkage Network) and migratory bird movement are analyzed below.

Desert Linkage Network

Table IV.7-247 shows the impact analysis for the desert linkage network for Alternative 3 for the GCP. Overall, over 12,000 acres of desert linkage network could be adversely impacted in DFAs and transmission corridors in mainly six different subareas. In the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, DFAs are located in the portion of the desert linkage network that connects the Colorado River to the northern part of the McCoy Mountains. There are also DFAs in the linkage network that extends along the McCoy Mountains and connects south to the Palo Verde Mesa. There are also DFAs in linkages in the Chuckwalla Valley that extend west and south. In the Mojave and Silurian Valley, there are DFAs in the Mojave Valley in a linkage that connects the area east of Barstow north to the Superior Valley. In the Owens River Valley, there are DFAs in the desert linkage network that connects the Haiwee Reservoir to Indian Wells. In the Panamint Death Valley there is a DFA in the Searles Valley in a linkage that connects the Argus and Searles Ranges. In the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, there are DFAs in the desert linkage network that connects the Grapevine Canyon Recreation Lands to the Granite Mountains and the Ord Mountains. There are also DFAs in the linkage that connects

Quartzite Mountain to the Mojave River. In the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, there are DFAs in the linkage that connects the area around Baldy Mesa along the southern edge of the Plan Area to Helendale. DFAs also occur in the Brisbane Valley and in the linkages around Barstow. Farther west in the Plan Area, there are DFAs in the linkages that connect Fremont Valley and Soledad Mountain to the Tehachapi Mountains.

To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is presented in Table IV.7-247, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered on Wiley’s Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

**Table IV.7-247
GCP Impact Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3**

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)¹	Solar Impact (acres)²	Wind Impact (acres)	Geothermal Impact (acres)	Transmission Impact (acres)	Total Impact (acres)
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	148,000	1,000	30	-	1,000	2,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	10,000	100	-	30	10	100
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	12,000	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	101,000	1,000	-	-	80	1,000
Owens River Valley	4,000	60	-	-	30	90
Panamint Death Valley	15,000	30	-	-	-	30
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	122,000	2,000	200	-	1,000	3,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	24,000	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	49,000	-	-	-	-	-
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	468,000	5,000	300	-	300	5,000
Total	952,000	9,000	500	30	3,000	12,000

¹ Available lands include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas.

² Solar impacts include ground-mounted distributed generation.

Notes: Total reported acres are ground disturbance impacts associated with siting, construction, and decommissioning. The total includes solar and ground-mounted distributed generation project area, wind ground disturbance, geothermal project area, and transmission right-of-way area. The geothermal project area impacts reported here include all associated geothermal facilities including the geothermal well field area, as detailed in the description of Covered Activities provided in Volume II. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Migratory Bird

Migration patterns and the potential impacts of different technologies are discussed, in the typical impacts section (Section IV.7.2.1.3), with direct habitat loss quantified in BR-4, and operational impacts quantified in BR-9. The following analysis focuses on the anticipated distribution of different technology types in relation to known migratory corridors, and migratory resources in each subarea.

In Alternative 3, wind generation is a small proportion of the overall generation mix. Nonfederal land DFAs are divided between the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Cadiz and Chocolate Mountain Subareas. Wind development would mostly occur on the eastern slopes of the Tehachapi Mountains and in the mountainous areas around Lucerne Valley. Key bird migration areas affected would include routes between the Tehachapi and San Bernardino passes, and the temporary lakes and wetland refuges on and to the north of Edwards AFB. Wind development would also occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea to the north west of Blythe in the McCoy wash area, and north of the I-10. These areas are near to the Colorado River migratory corridor, and may affect migratory bird movement to and from the Coachella Valley.

As with the plan-wide impacts, solar development would be constructed throughout the West Mojave and Eastern slopes, and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. With smaller quantities of development in nonfederal DFAs in the Pinto Lucerne Valley, Mojave and Silurian Valley and Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subareas. Affected migratory resources would be the same as for wind development, namely, routes between mountain passes and dry lakes in the north Mojave, and foraging areas for overwintering birds in Imperial Borrego Valley, as well as migratory routes between the Colorado River and the Coachella Valley.

Application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied habitat and suitable habitat for Covered Species to the maximum extent feasible. Further, siting and construction CMAs would minimize direct loss of riparian and wetland habitats. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Further, proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational

Actions that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar and geothermal projects. Siting and construction CMAs would minimize direct loss of riparian and wetlands habitats. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. The compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the AM-LL-4. In combination, the application of siting, monitoring, operational and compensation CMAs would minimized impacts to migratory birds. Application of CMAs would reduce the overall impacts to migratory bird populations.

Impact BR-7: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in habitat fragmentation and isolation of populations of listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

As discussed in the Plan-wide analysis, the construction and operation of renewable energy and transmission projects can have the potential to fragment intact and interconnected landscapes resulting in isolated patches of habitat, isolated species populations, reduced gene flow, and remaining habitat that is more exposed to the edge effects of adjacent developments. The DRECP integrated planning process, as described in Volume II, avoids and minimizes this impact through the siting of DFAs and through the reserve design. In order to minimize habitat fragmentation and population isolation, DFAs were sited in less intact and more degraded areas. Measures of fragmentation and population isolation effects include the amount of impacts on environmental gradients such as elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect. The impacts to these four environmental gradients under Alternative 3 within DFAs under the GCP would follow the same overall pattern as Plan-wide impacts (AM-LL-1 through AM-LL-4).

Impact BR-8: Construction of generation facilities or transmission lines would result in increased predation of listed and sensitive wildlife species.

As discussed in the Plan-wide analysis, Covered Activities in undisturbed desert habitat are likely to supplement predators, and increase predation rates on Covered Species. The GCP Alternative 3 would result 72,000 acres of permanent conversion of natural desert communities and with 60,000 acres of impacts (44% of the total ground disturbance) within areas characterized by disturbed land cover types.

Development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas may supplement predators in undisturbed habitats including parts of the Tehachapi Mountains and DFAs to the north of Edwards AFB. However, much of the development would be expected in disturbed and agricultural land around Lancaster and in the Antelope Valley. In the West Mojave and

Eastern Slopes subareas, susceptible species would include nestlings and eggs of Covered Species like tricolored blackbird and golden eagle, mountain plover, Bendire's thrasher, Swainson's hawk, as well as reptiles like the desert tortoise and the Tehachapi slender salamander, and mammals like the Mohave ground squirrel. Covered Activities associated with solar and wind generation in the Pinto and Lucerne Valley subarea would affect areas in Lucerne Valley to the East of Victorville. Species impacted would include golden eagle, and other nesting birds as well as reptiles like desert tortoise. The development in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea would be expected in both agricultural and disturbed lands around Blythe and along the I-10 corridor. Impacts are likely to increase predation on susceptible species including desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, desert tortoise and, nesting bird species. Impacts from solar and geothermal development area anticipated in Imperial Borrego Valley. Impacts would occur in agricultural habitats south of and west side of the Salton Sea. Increased predation may affect nesting birds; impacts may affect flat-tailed horned lizard, desert tortoise, and nesting birds.

Application of a Common Raven Management Plan (AM-PW-6), approved by the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group would reduce project activities that increase predator subsidization. Activities include: removal of trash and organic waste; minimize introduction of new water sources including pooling of water from dust control; removal of carcasses from bird and bat collisions; and reduction in new nesting and perching sites where feasible.

Impact BR-9: Operational activities would result in avian and bat injury and mortality from collisions, thermal flux or electrocution at generation and transmission facilities.

The impacts of operation activities on avian and bat injury and mortality are analyzed below for wind turbines, solar, and transmission.

Wind Turbine

This section summarizes wind turbine operational impacts to bird and bat species within the private lands DFAs. The range of collision rates calculated in Table IV.7-248 is indicative of the overall annual collision rates for all bird and bat species, not just Covered Species. The range of collision rates is estimated for the final full build-out of wind over the life of the Plan, and is based on the range of collision rates in existing published and gray literature. While it is possible to provide a range of possible collision rates, it is not feasible to estimate the collision rate for each Covered Species, but only infer the propensity for a species to be at risk of collision from its expected distribution and life history of the birds in the Plan Area.

Overall, Alternative 3 would result in a median of 4,000 collisions per year for birds and 19,000 collisions for bats in DFAs on nonfederal lands. The expected distribution of wind

generation indicates that 60% of all collisions would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, 31% in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, 8% in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, and 1% in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea.

Wind operation in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea would impact Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California condor, golden eagle, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, and tricolored blackbird. Whereas, wind operations in the Pinto and Lucerne Valley subarea would affect golden eagle territories and important Bendire's thrasher habitat. Wind operations in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas would result in a higher risk of collisions for Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail. Covered bat species including California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat and Townsend's big eared bat would be impacted in all subareas.

Pre-construction CMAs require habitat assessments and pre-construction surveys for covered riparian and wetland bird, burrowing owl, greater sandhill crane, Swainson's hawk, Bendire's thrasher, golden eagle, and covered plant species.

Application of siting CMAs would avoid or minimize the risk to species localities. Setbacks from active nests would be required for Bendire's thrasher, California condor, Gila woodpecker, and golden eagle. In addition, projects would be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied habitat, and suitable habitat for Covered Species to the maximum extent feasible. Implementation of bat specific CMAs include 0.5 mile setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied Pallid bat and Townsend's Big eared Bats roosts would reduce impacts to covered bat species.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar, geothermal, or transmission project. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Further, the compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee will be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions.

Similarly, a Condor Operations Strategy (COS) would be developed on a project-specific basis with the goal of avoiding mortality from operations of wind, solar and geothermal

projects. No take for condors will be permitted in the form of kill from project operations. Any actions taken to encourage condors to leave an area that might result in harassment, injury, or mortality to the bird will be conducted by a Designated Biologist.

Table IV.7-248
GCP Estimated Range of Bird and Bat Collisions
per Year by Subarea – Alternative 3

Ecoregion Subarea	# Turbines	Birds (Collisions/Yr) ¹			Bats (Collisions/Yr) ¹		
		Low	Median	High	Low	Median	High
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	63	100	300	1,000	100	2,000	9,000
Imperial Borrego Valley	12	-	100	200	-	300	2,000
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mojave and Silurian Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Owens River Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Panamint Death Valley	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	253	400	1,000	5,000	500	6,000	35,000
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Providence and Bullion Mountains	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	486	700	2,000	9,000	1,000	11,000	68,000
Grand Total	813	1,000	4,000	16,000	2,000	19,000	114,000

¹ Method for estimation of annual bird and bat collision rates described in Section IV.7.1.1.2 and discussed in more detail in Section IV.7.2.1.3

Note: The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table

Solar

Under Alternative 3, impacts to avian and bat species from solar development based on the planned solar capacity. The distribution of impacts under the GCP would be similar to that which is found in the Plan-wide analysis. Nonfederal DFAs would see a 5.2-fold increase in collision risks relative to baseline. 13% of the collision risks would occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains, with, 33% in Imperial Borrego Valley, 42% in West Mojave and

Eastern Slopes, and 7% at Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and the remaining 5% would be spread across the rest of the plan area.

Development in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea under the GCP would occur in the agricultural lands around Blythe. Species habitat impacted by Covered Activities include Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Anticipated impacts in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea under the GCP would occur in agricultural and wetland habitats south and west side of the Salton Sea. Birds at risk from solar impacts include Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Swainson's hawk, Yuma clapper rail, pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat. Development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas would occur in the Tehachapi Mountains, areas to the north of Edwards AFB, and agricultural land around Lancaster and in the Antelope Valley. In these areas, susceptible species would include pallid bat, California leaf-nosed bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, tricolored blackbird, golden eagle, mountain plover, Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owls and to a lesser extent Swainson's hawk. Covered Activities associated with solar generation in the Pinto and Lucerne Valley subarea would mostly occur in nonfederal DFAs in the western part of Lucerne Valley. Species impacted would include golden eagle and Bendire's thrasher.

To offset potential impacts, the application of CMAs would require projects to be sited and designed to avoid impacts to occupied and suitable habitat for Covered Species, to the maximum extent feasible. Further, siting and construction CMAs require setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats which would minimize acres of impacts of important migratory bird habitat. Compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for Covered Species. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program would be implemented during operations. Any proposed projects that are likely to impact bird and bat Covered Species during operation would develop and implement project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meet the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar and geothermal projects. The compensation requirements of AM-LL-4 would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the biological basis for the fee would be determined by the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to AM-LL-4. In combination, the application of siting, monitoring, operational and compensation CMAs would minimize impacts to resident and migratory birds.

Bat mortality from solar facilities may occur because of collision or solar flux injury. No DFAs are known to be specifically sensitive areas for bat foraging, and implementation of bat specific CMAs include 500 feet setbacks from all bat maternity roosts and 5% disturbance caps on desert scrub and woodland habitats in the vicinity of occupied pallid bat and Townsend's big-eared bat roosts would reduce impacts to bat Covered Species.

Further, the development of Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) as discussed above would greatly reduce the risk to bat populations. Consequently, application of CMAs would reduce the overall impacts to bat populations

Transmission

The transmission collision and electrocution impacts would occur from generation tie lines (collector lines), new substations, and major transmission lines (delivery lines) that deliver power to major load centers. The distribution of impacts from collector lines would mostly occur within DFAs and be similar in distribution to the generation facilities. Most of the affected areas on nonfederal lands would be in Imperial Borrego Valley, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, subareas, with 10,000 acres, 3,000 acres, 3,000 acres, and 2,000 acres of terrestrial impacts anticipated respectively. The remaining 1,000 acres of terrestrial impacts would be spread throughout the remaining subareas.

Both large transmission lines and the network of smaller gen-tie lines would present collision and electrocution hazard to covered bird species. In particular, lines running perpendicular to migratory corridors, and/or close to bird refuges would represent a greater hazard. Such lines would include those anticipated to run parallel to the Tehachapi mountains and those that would cross the Tehachapi mountain passes. In addition, anticipated delivery lines in Chuckwalla Valley would run parallel to I-10 corridor in the existing transmission corridors. In the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, lines would run along the eastern side of Salton Sea in existing transmission corridors that run parallel to the foothills of the Chocolate Mountains. All these lines would represent additional risk to migrating and overwintering covered avian species, due to their location, especially in bad weather when flocks of migratory birds may be forced down.

All bird Covered Species may be impacted by additional transmission infrastructure. To ameliorate potential hazards, transmission projects would reduce impacts to Covered Species by implementing Plan-wide, landscape-level, natural community, and Covered Species CMAs where feasible, as discussed under the wind impacts section.

Applicants would develop and implement a project-specific Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions (AM-LL-4) that meets the approval of the appropriate DRECP Coordination Group. The goal of the project-specific BBOS will be to avoid and minimize direct mortality of birds and bats from the operation of the specific wind, solar, geothermal, or transmission project. A bird and bat use and mortality monitoring program will be implemented during operations using current protocols and best procedures available at time of monitoring. Further, the compensation requirements in the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions would be based on ongoing/annual fees and the mortality effects as annually measured and monitored according to the Bird and Bat Covered Species Operational Actions will determine the biological basis for the fee.

In addition, transmission projects would implement transmission specific CMAs that would, where feasible, bury electrical collector lines along roads (AM-TRANS-1); fit flight diverters on all transmission projects spanning or within 1,000 feet of water bodies and watercourses (AM-TRANS-2); avoid siting transmission projects that span canyons or are located on ridgelines (AM-TRANS-3); restrict transmission projects to within designated utility corridors (AM-TRANS-4). With the implementation of CMAs impacts to Covered Species would be minimized.

Operational Impacts Take Estimates for Covered Avian and Bat Species

The following section summarizes the initial estimates for take of Covered Species by operational activities that would require compensatory mitigation. Take estimates integrate all sources of mortality for each technology discussed above.

**Table IV.7-249
GCP Estimated Total Take for Covered Avian and Bat Species – Alternative 3**

Covered Bird and Bat Species	Solar Impact	Wind Impact	Geothermal Impact	Total Impact
Bendire’s thrasher	30	20	0	50
Burrowing owl	140	10	10	160
California condor ¹	0	0	0	0
California black rail	30	0	0	30
Gila woodpecker	30	0	0	30
Golden eagle ²	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Least Bell’s vireo	60	0	0	60
Mountain plover	70	10	10	90
Greater sandhill crane	10	0	0	10
Southwestern willow flycatcher	60	0	0	60
Swainson’s hawk	40	10	0	50
Tricolored blackbird	60	30	0	90
Western yellow billed cuckoo	30	0	0	30
Yuma clapper rail	30	0	0	30
Grand Total Avian Species	590	80	20	690
California leaf-nosed bat	20	10	0	30
Pallid bat	10	40	0	50
Townsend’s big-eared bat	40	10	10	60
Grand Total Bat Species	70	60	10	140

¹ Take for California condor would not be permitted under the DRECP.

² Take of Golden Eagle would be permitted on a project by project basis. Based on the 2013 analysis, no more than 15 golden eagles per year would be authorized for 2014 for any new activity within the Plan Area. Take limits for the DRECP area will be re-evaluated annually based on the amount of ongoing take and population estimates of eagles within the local-area population of eagles.

Note: Totals may not sum due to rounding

IV.7.3.5.4.2 Impacts of the Reserve Design under the General Conservation Plan

In the nonfederal GCP portion of the Plan Area for Alternative 3, the Reserve Design Lands include existing conservation areas on nonfederal lands (434,000 acres), nonfederal lands within BLM LUPA conservation designations (1,222,000 acres), and Conservation Planning Areas on nonfederal lands (1,174,000 acres). The following provides an analysis of the conservation that would be provided by these areas, organized by landscape, natural communities, and species.

Landscape

Habitat Linkages

Table IV.7-250 shows the conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3 for the GCP. Conservation of the desert linkage network totals more than 286,000 acres (30%). None of the linkages are entirely conserved under the GCP. However, the majority of the linkage from the southern end of the Plan Area directly north to the Los Angeles/Kern County line in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea is conserved, as well as the part of the linkage across the Mojave Desert farther north. In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs (see Section IV.7.3.5.4.1).

**Table IV.7-250
GCP Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3**

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains	148,000	2,000	29,000	7,000	38,000	26%
Imperial Borrego Valley	10,000	-	2,000	200	2,000	17%
Kingston and Funeral Mountains	12,000	30	2,000	400	2,000	17%
Mojave and Silurian Valley	101,000	5,000	17,000	6,000	28,000	28%
Owens River Valley	4,000	-	700	70	800	17%

Table IV.7-250
GCP Conservation Analysis for the Desert Linkage Network – Alternative 3

Desert Linkage Network by Ecoregion Subarea	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Panamint Death Valley	15,000	6,000	2,000	500	8,000	57%
Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes	122,000	12,000	23,000	3,000	39,000	32%
Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains	24,000	-	2,000	2,000	4,000	17%
Providence and Bullion Mountains	49,000	4,000	6,000	3,000	13,000	27%
West Mojave and Eastern Slopes	468,000	26,000	75,000	50,000	152,000	32%
Grand Total	952,000	56,000	158,000	72,000	286,000	30%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on nonfederal land

² Includes nonfederal inholdings within existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations)

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Hydrological Resources

A conservation analysis for hydrological resources is provided below, including playa, seep/spring, and the four major rivers in the Plan Area (i.e., Amargosa, Colorado, Mojave and Owens) under Alternative 3 within the GCP. Conservation of riparian areas and wetlands, which co-occur with many of these hydrological resources is provided below under Natural Communities.

Playa

Playa totals 74,000 acres in the Plan Area. Overall, 23% (17,035 acres) would be conserved under Alternative 3 within the GCP. Existing Conservation would account for 13% of the conservation, BLM LUPA would account for 75%, and Conservation Planning Areas would account for 11%. Additionally, playas and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for playas would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided riparian or wetland natural communities.

Seep/Spring

There are 178 seep/spring locations in the Plan Area under Alternative 3 within the GCP. Overall, 29% (52 locations) of the seep/spring locations would be conserved under Alternative 3 within the GCP. The conservation of seep/spring under Alternative 3 would be below half in all subareas. These include Imperial Borrego Valley (46%, 9 locations), Kingston and Funeral Mountains (17%, 3 locations), Mojave and Silurian Valley (35%, 3 locations), Owens River Valley (17%, 5 locations), Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes (38%, 13 locations), Providence and Bullion Mountains (28%, 3 locations), and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes (27%, 17 locations).

Overall, Existing Conservation would account for 40% of the conservation of seep/spring, BLM LUPA conservation designations would account for 42%, and Conservation Planning Areas would account for 19%. Additionally, seeps and springs and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks. CMAs for seep/spring locations would require compliance with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to wetlands and waters. In addition, CMAs would require maintenance of hydrological function of the avoided wetland natural communities.

Major Rivers

Overall, 61% of the major rivers would be conserved under Alternative 3 within the GCP, including 25% of the Amargosa River, 33% of the Colorado River, 67% of the Mojave River, and 70% of the Owens River. Conservation Planning Areas would account for 79% of the conservation of the major rivers, Existing Conservation would account for 8%, and BLM LUPA conservation designations would account for 12%. Additionally, major rivers and associated Covered Species, natural communities, and hydrological functions would be avoided through application of avoidance and minimization CMAs within DFAs and transmission corridors, including resource setbacks.

Dune and Sand Resources

Overall, 23% (50,000 acres) of dunes and sand resources would be conserved under Alternative 3 within the GCP. Less than 50% of dunes and sand resources would be conserved in all subareas in the Plan Area that contain substantial acreage of dunes and sand resources, including Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains at 31% (22,000 acres), Imperial Borrego Valley at 28% (3,000 acres), Mojave and Silurian Valley at 18% (5,000 acres), Kingston and Funeral Mountains at 21% (2,000 acres), Owens River Valley at 20% (700 acres), Panamint and Death Valley at 31% (1,000 acres), Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes at 19% (3,000 acres), Providence and Bullion Mountains at 18% (8,000 acres) and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes at 19% (5,000 acres). Additionally, dunes and sand resources and associated Covered Species, natural communities and ecological functions would be avoided through application of the dune avoidance and minimization CMAs.

Environmental Gradients

The conservation analysis addresses four types of environmental gradients in the Plan Area: elevation, landforms, slope, and aspect. The conservation of these four environmental gradients under Alternative 3 within the GCP would follow the same overall pattern as Plan-wide conservation.

Natural Communities

Table IV.7-251 shows the conservation to natural communities under the GCP. A conservation summary by general community is provided below in comparison to Plan-wide conservation discussed in Section IV.7.3.2.1.2. Appendix R2 provides a detailed analysis of natural community conservation by ecoregion subarea.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 24,000 acres (23%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Conservation would primarily come from BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of California forest and woodlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 13,000 acres (16%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP. The majority of conservation would occur in Conservation Planning Areas. In addition to conservation of chaparral and coastal scrubs,

the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 20,000 acres (20%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is less proportionally than would be conserved Plan-wide. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Conservation would primarily come from Conservation Planning Areas. In addition to conservation of desert conifer woodlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 97,000 acres (44%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3 in the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands than is conserved Plan-wide. The majority of conservation would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. Conservation would primarily come from existing conservation. In addition to conservation of desert outcrop and badlands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 831,000 acres (28%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands than is conserved Plan-wide. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. Conservation would be relatively well distributed among existing conservation areas, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas. In addition to conservation of desert scrubs, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 8,000 acres (24%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands conserved

Plan-wide. Most of the dunes would be conserved in the Mojave and Silurian Valley, Imperial Borrego Valley, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas. About half of the total conservation would come from Conservation Planning Areas. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of all dunes and prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 27,000 acres (13%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands compared to that conserved Plan-wide. The majority of conservation would occur in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. Over half of the conservation would be in Conservation Planning Areas. In addition to conservation of grasslands, the same CMAs that would be applied Plan-wide would be implemented to address breeding, nesting, or roosting species, soil resources, weed management, and fire prevention/protection to benefit these natural communities and the species they support.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 60,000 acres (30%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands than is conserved Plan-wide. Most of the conservation would occur in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas. Conservation would come from existing conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas in almost equal measure. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of and setbacks from all riparian communities as well as to other CMAs that would benefit riparian communities beyond simply conservation.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 76,000 acres (23%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which is a lesser proportion of available lands than is conserved Plan-wide. Most of the conservation would occur in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Owens River Valley, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Conservation would primarily come from BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition, CMA application would require avoidance of and setbacks from Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep as well as other CMAs that would benefit riparian communities beyond simply conservation.

Table IV.7-251
GCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>California forest and woodland</i>						
Californian broadleaf forest and woodland	61,000	800	10,000	800	11,000	19%
Californian montane conifer forest	44,000	7,000	5,000	2,000	13,000	30%
<i>Chaparral and coastal scrub community (Cismontane scrub)</i>						
Californian mesic chaparral	3,000	20	400	200	600	17%
Californian pre-montane chaparral	1,000	0	200	10	200	19%
Californian xeric chaparral	19,000	600	600	3,000	4,000	20%
Central and south coastal California seral scrub	1,000	0	0	50	50	4%
Central and South Coastal Californian coastal sage scrub	42,000	300	2,000	4,000	7,000	16%
Western Mojave and Western Sonoran Desert borderland chaparral	15,000	600	100	800	2,000	10%
<i>Desert conifer woodlands</i>						
Great Basin Pinyon - Juniper Woodland	104,000	7,000	2,000	12,000	20,000	20%
<i>Desert outcrop and badlands</i>						
North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop	220,000	68,000	17,000	11,000	97,000	44%
<i>Desert Scrub</i>						
Arizonan upland Sonoran desert scrub	8,000	3,000	0	800	4,000	49%
Intermontane deep or well-drained soil scrub	24,000	2,000	3,000	2,000	7,000	30%

**Table IV.7-251
GCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3**

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Intermontane seral shrubland	68,000	500	1,000	3,000	5,000	7%
Inter-Mountain Dry Shrubland and Grassland	152,000	21,000	14,000	6,000	41,000	27%
Intermountain Mountain Big Sagebrush Shrubland and steppe	48,000	1,000	6,000	900	9,000	18%
Lower Bajada and Fan Mojavean - Sonoran desert scrub	2,254,000	246,000	282,000	164,000	691,000	31%
Mojave and Great Basin upper bajada and toeslope	228,000	13,000	13,000	23,000	49,000	21%
Shadscale - saltbush cool semi-desert scrub	157,000	1,000	6,000	18,000	26,000	17%
Southern Great Basin semi-desert grassland	70	0	0	0	0	5%
<i>Dunes</i>						
North American warm desert dunes and sand flats	34,000	800	3,000	4,000	8,000	24%
<i>Grassland</i>						
California Annual and Perennial Grassland	196,000	8,000	5,000	13,000	25,000	13%
California annual forb/grass vegetation	7,000	400	200	1,000	2,000	24%
<i>Riparian</i>						
Madrean Warm Semi-Desert Wash Woodland/Scrub	96,000	3,000	11,000	6,000	21,000	21%
Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub	17,000	3,000	900	2,000	6,000	36%

Table IV.7-251
GCP Conservation Analysis for Natural Communities – Alternative 3

Natural Community	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Riparian	600	20	0	300	300	57%
Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub	34,000	11,000	4,000	3,000	17,000	51%
Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland	6,000	400	300	2,000	2,000	42%
Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub	47,000	3,000	3,000	6,000	13,000	27%
<i>Wetland</i>						
Arid West freshwater emergent marsh	4,000	40	200	1,000	1,000	33%
Californian warm temperate marsh/seep	400	0	0	80	80	20%
North American Warm Desert Alkaline Scrub and Herb Playa and Wet Flat	36,000	2,000	5,000	2,000	9,000	25%
Open Water	114,000	800	600	14,000	16,000	14%
Playa	52,000	20	11,000	300	11,000	22%
Southwestern North American salt basin and high marsh	112,000	3,000	25,000	10,000	38,000	34%
Wetland	8,000	30	200	500	700	9%
<i>Other Land Cover</i>						
Agriculture	693,000	5,000	2,000	4,000	10,000	2%
Developed and Disturbed Areas	399,000	500	2,000	300	2,000	1%
Not Mapped	4,000	50	70	300	400	10%
Rural	110,000	400	3,000	8,000	11,000	10%
Total	5,420,000	412,000	440,000	329,000	1,181,000	22%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on nonfederal land

² Includes nonfederal inholdings within existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations)

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Covered Species Habitat

Table IV.7-252 shows the conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat under Alternative 3 (before the application of CMAs) GCP. Generally, the percent conservation of Covered Species modeled habitat in available lands is highly variable, ranging from 1% for greater sandhill crane (primarily found in agricultural areas) to 63% for Mohave tui chub.

Conservation percentages are in large part related to the location and types of habitat modeled for the Covered Species. For example, modeled habitat for greater sandhill crane, which is primarily freshwater wetland and agriculture, is limited to the Palo Verde and Imperial valleys and is mostly within DFAs.

Much of the modeled habitats for desert tortoise and Mojave fringe-toed lizard are in the Mojave Desert in areas that occur in the BLM LUPA conservation designations. Flat-tailed horned lizard modeled habitat is only conserved in the Imperial Borrego Valley, mostly in Conservation Planning Areas. Tehachapi slender salamander modeled habitat occurs in the Tehachapi Mountains where conservation is primarily composed of BLM LUPA conservation designations. Furthermore, the siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for Mojave fringe-toed lizard and Tehachapi slender salamander, and CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian habitat, wetland habitat, and dune habitat would further avoid and minimize the impacts on these species.

Conservation of bird species associated primarily with wetland and riparian habitats, including California black rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, and Yuma clapper rail would be augmented by CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitats.

Conservation of Bendire's thrasher occurs in nearly every subarea of the Plan Area, but is mainly in BLM LUPA conservation designations. Burrowing owl, widespread, but mainly associated with open areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes would primarily be conserved in BLM LUPA conservation designations and existing conservation areas.

California condor mainly occurs in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea so the majority of conservation is also in this subarea. Golden eagle modeled suitable habitat and associated conservation is widespread in the Plan Area with most of the conservation in BLM LUPA conservation designations and existing conservation areas. Swainson's hawk is primarily associated with the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Imperial Borrego Valley, and Owens River Valley subareas; of these subareas, over 20% of suitable habitat is conserved only in the Owens River Valley subarea. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat, CMAs would require avoidance of Swainson's hawk nests with setbacks within the DFAs.

About half of the modeled suitable habitat for Gila woodpecker is conserved in the Imperial Borrego Valley in existing conservation areas. Conservation of mountain plover suitable habitat is mostly in Conservation Planning Areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Conservation of suitable habitat for desert pupfish and Mohave tui chub is mostly in existing conservation areas. Although conservation of desert pupfish is relatively low especially in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, avoidance and setback provisions for managed wetlands and agricultural drains would conserve wetland and riparian features within the agricultural matrix and provide conservation benefits to desert pupfish. Owens pupfish and Owens tui chub are conserved primarily in Conservation Planning Areas.

Conservation of suitable habitat for bighorn sheep, both inter-mountain and mountain habitat, is widespread and is mainly in BLM LUPA conservation designations. The siting of the DFAs under Alternative 3 largely avoid habitat for bighorn sheep. At least about half of the conservation of burro deer and Mojave ground squirrel suitable habitat is from BLM LUPA conservation designations. Conservation of desert kit fox is mainly conserved in existing conservation areas and BLM LUPA conservation designations. Suitable habitat for the covered bat species—California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat—is widespread and mainly conserved in BLM LUPA conservation designations. In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for covered mammal species, the CMAs require avoidance of and setbacks from riparian and wetland habitat that would reduce impacts on these habitats used by Mohave ground squirrel, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, and Townsend's big-eared bat.

Conservation of plant species ranges from 7% of suitable habitat for alkali mariposa-lily to 43% of suitable habitat for triple-ribbed milk-vetch. The proportion of suitable habitat conserved in existing conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas varies by species. However, in addition to the conservation of modeled suitable habitat, the CMAs require surveys for plant Covered Species for all Covered Activities, and the CMAs requiring avoidance of and setbacks from occupied habitat would further reduce the impacts on these species.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species.

Table IV.7-252
GCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Amphibian/Reptile</i>						
Agassiz's desert tortoise	2,248,000	140,000	296,000	184,000	620,000	28%
Flat-tailed horned lizard	310,000	112,000	20,000	3,000	135,000	44%
Mojave fringe-toed lizard	168,000	3,000	20,000	11,000	34,000	20%
Tehachapi slender salamander	41,000	300	7,000	700	8,000	19%
<i>Bird</i>						
Bendire's thrasher	405,000	35,000	31,000	26,000	92,000	23%
Burrowing owl	3,244,000	73,000	221,000	192,000	486,000	15%
California black rail	127,000	5,000	600	6,000	11,000	9%
California condor	997,000	43,000	43,000	50,000	137,000	14%
Gila woodpecker	56,000	4,000	600	1,000	6,000	10%
Golden eagle–foraging	1,498,000	154,000	202,000	109,000	465,000	31%
Golden eagle–nesting	676,000	108,000	69,000	42,000	219,000	32%
Greater sandhill crane	601,000	5,000	500	1,000	7,000	1%
Least Bell's vireo	104,000	9,000	7,000	18,000	33,000	31%
Mountain plover	811,000	6,000	2,000	14,000	23,000	3%
Southwestern willow flycatcher	258,000	6,000	13,000	17,000	36,000	14%
Swainson's hawk	1,339,000	15,000	27,000	70,000	112,000	8%
Tricolored blackbird	257,000	6,000	2,000	18,000	27,000	10%
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	111,000	2,000	5,000	23,000	30,000	28%
Yuma clapper rail	31,000	3,000	10	2,000	5,000	16%

Table IV.7-252
GCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
<i>Fish</i>						
Desert pupfish	7,000	800	10	200	1,000	14%
Mohave tui chub	100	70	-	20	90	63%
Owens pupfish	13,000	-	600	3,000	4,000	30%
Owens tui chub	13,000	-	600	3,000	4,000	30%
<i>Mammal</i>						
Bighorn sheep – inter-mountain habitat	465,000	40,000	52,000	23,000	115,000	25%
Bighorn sheep – mountain habitat	807,000	149,000	67,000	56,000	271,000	34%
California leaf-nosed bat	979,000	137,000	108,000	48,000	294,000	30%
Mohave ground squirrel	1,319,000	51,000	187,000	152,000	390,000	30%
Pallid bat	3,775,000	393,000	394,000	271,000	1,058,000	28%
Townsend's big-eared bat	3,510,000	308,000	363,000	252,000	922,000	26%
<i>Plant</i>						
Alkali mariposa-lily	117,000	200	70	8,000	8,000	7%
Bakersfield cactus	200,000	17,000	12,000	12,000	41,000	21%
Barstow woolly sunflower	82,000	3,000	22,000	12,000	37,000	45%
Desert cymopterus	137,000	2,000	29,000	18,000	49,000	36%
Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus	130,000	5,000	6,000	5,000	16,000	12%
Mojave monkeyflower	41,000	100	13,000	700	14,000	34%
Mojave tarplant	129,000	19,000	12,000	4,000	35,000	27%
Owens Valley checkerbloom	92,000	200	2,000	17,000	20,000	22%

Table IV.7-252
GCP Conservation Analysis for Covered Species Habitat – Alternative 3

Species	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Parish’s daisy	72,000	19,000	8,000	2,000	28,000	39%
Triple-ribbed milk-vetch	3,000	900	10	400	1,000	43%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on nonfederal land

² Includes nonfederal inholdings within existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations)

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Agassiz’s desert tortoise, desert tortoise important areas were identified that include tortoise conservation areas (TCAs), desert tortoise linkages, and desert tortoise high priority habitat (see desert tortoise BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-253 provides a conservation analysis for these desert tortoise important areas, organized by desert tortoise Recovery Units: Colorado Desert, Eastern Mojave, and Western Mojave. Within the Colorado Desert Recovery Unit, 26% of TCAs, linkage habitat, and high priority habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. Within the Eastern Mojave Recovery Unit, 26% of the important areas would be conserved Alternative 3. Within the Western Mojave Recovery Unit, 35% of TCAs and linkage habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3. CMAs would require avoidance of TCAs, except for impacts associated with transmission or impacts in disturbed portions of TCAs. Additionally, the CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of desert tortoise linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to desert tortoise, including desert tortoise important areas.

Table IV.7-253
GCP Conservation Analysis for Desert Tortoise Important Areas – Alternative 3

Recovery Unit	Desert Tortoise Important Areas	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Colorado Desert	High Priority Habitat	31,000	800	7,000	3,000	11,000	35%
	Linkage	63,000	100	9,000	4,000	13,000	20%
	TCA	269,000	16,000	41,000	14,000	71,000	26%
<i>Colorado Desert Total</i>		363,000	17,000	56,000	21,000	94,000	26%
Eastern Mojave	Linkage	56,000	4,000	4,000	7,000	14,000	25%
	TCA	66,000	6,000	3,000	8,000	18,000	27%
<i>Eastern Mojave Total</i>		122,000	10,000	7,000	15,000	32,000	26%
Western Mojave	Linkage	407,000	2,000	30,000	25,000	57,000	14%
	TCA	392,000	23,000	191,000	7,000	221,000	56%
<i>Western Mojave Total</i>		798,000	25,000	222,000	32,000	278,000	35%
Grand Total		1,283,000	52,000	285,000	67,000	404,000	32%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on nonfederal land

² Includes nonfederal inholdings within existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations)

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

For Mohave ground squirrel, Mohave ground squirrel important areas were identified that include key population centers, linkages, expansion areas, and climate change extension areas (see Mohave ground squirrel BGOs in Appendix C). Table IV.7-254 provides a conservation analysis for these Mohave ground squirrel important areas. Approximately 44% of key population centers and 51% of linkages would be conserved under Alternative 3. Expansion areas and climate change extension areas would be conserved at 51% and 32% respectively. The CMAs would prohibit impacts that affect the viability of linkages. Compensation CMAs would be required for impacts to Mohave ground squirrel, including Mohave ground squirrel important areas.

Table IV.7-254
GCP Conservation Analysis for Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Areas –
Alternative 3

Mohave Ground Squirrel Important Area Type	Available Lands (acres)	Existing Conservation ¹ (acres)	Nonfederal Inholdings in BLM LUPA Conservation Designations ² (acres)	Conservation Planning Areas ³ (acres)	Total Conservation (acres)	% of Available Lands
Key Population Center	193,000	14,000	44,000	27,000	84,000	44%
Linkage	103,000	3,000	28,000	21,000	52,000	51%
Expansion Area	258,000	21,000	60,000	52,000	133,000	51%
Climate Change Extension	131,000	13,000	5,000	24,000	41,000	32%
Total	684,000	50,000	136,000	124,000	310,000	45%

¹ Legislatively and Legally Protected Lands (LLPAs) and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands (MEMLs) on nonfederal land

² Includes nonfederal inholdings within existing and proposed BLM Land Use Plan Amendment Conservation Designations (NLCS, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations)

³ Conservation Planning Areas include areas of the reserve design from which reserve areas would be assembled on private and other public land.

Notes: Conservation acreages reported for Existing Conservation, BLM LUPA conservation designations, and Conservation Planning Areas reflect application of the conservation percentage assumptions as described in Section IV.7.1.1. Overlaps of BLM LUPA conservation designations with Existing Conservation are reported in the Existing Conservation acreages. Acreages are reported within available lands, which include the entire Plan Area excluding military lands, tribal lands, and BLM Open OHV Areas. The following general rounding rules were applied to acreage values: values greater than 1,000 were rounded to nearest 1,000; values less than 1,000 and greater than 100 were rounded to the nearest 100; values of 100 or less were rounded to the nearest 10, and therefore totals may not sum due to rounding. In cases where subtotals are provided, the subtotals and the totals are individually rounded. The totals are not a sum of the rounded subtotals; therefore the subtotals may not sum to the total within the table.

Within the Plan Area, critical habitat has been designated by the USFWS for the following Covered Species: desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, desert pupfish, and Parish’s daisy. For desert tortoise, approximately 44% of the desert tortoise designated critical habitat on nonfederal lands would be conserved under Alternative 3, including 30,000 acres in existing conservation areas, 198,000 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 14,000 acres in Conservation Planning Areas. For southwestern willow flycatcher, approximately 60% of the southwestern willow flycatcher designated critical habitat on nonfederal lands would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 600 acres in existing conservation areas, 30 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 3,000 acres in Conservation Planning Areas. For desert pupfish, approximately 76% of the desert pupfish designated critical habitat on nonfederal lands would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 100 acres in existing conservation areas and 100 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations. For Parish’s daisy, approximately 36% of the Parish’s daisy designated critical habitat on

nonfederal lands would be conserved in Reserve Design Lands under Alternative 3, including 200 acres in BLM LUPA conservation designations.

Non-Covered Species Critical Habitat

Eight Non-Covered Species have Critical Habitat within GCP Lands. Table IV.7-255 shows the total amount of Critical Habitat and the amount within each reserve designation for Non-Covered Species. These reserve designations are considered beneficial impacts for biological resources. All or a substantial portion of each species' Critical Habitat in the GCP Lands would be within one of the conservation designations. Critical Habitat for bighorn sheep occurs mostly within existing conservation and within Conservation Planning Areas for arroyo toad, but mostly within nonfederal inholdings on BLM land for the other species.

**Table IV.7-255
 Critical Habitat within GCP Lands for Non-Covered Species – Alternative 3**

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within GCP Lands	Acres of Critical Habitat in Existing Conservation	Acres of Critical Habitat in BLM LUPA Lands (Nonfederal Inholdings)	Acres of Critical Habitat in Conservation Planning Areas	Acres in Conservation
Amargosa vole	600	0	300	0	300
Arroyo toad	4,000	0	20	3,000	3,020
Cushenbury buckwheat	200	0	100	0	100
Cushenbury milk-vetch	200	0	100	0	100
Cushenbury oxytheca	30	0	30	0	30
Lane Mountain milk-vetch	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000
Pierson's milk-vetch	400	0	0	400	400
Peninsular Bighorn sheep	40,000	36,000	0	300	36,300

IV.7.3.5.5 Impacts Outside of Plan Area

IV.7.3.5.5.1 Impacts of Transmission Out of Plan Area

The impacts of Out of Plan Area transmission on biological resources would be the same under all alternatives. These impacts are as described for the No Action Alternative in Section IV.7.3.1.6.1 (Impacts of Transmission Out of Plan Area in No Action Alternative).

IV.7.3.5.5.2 Impacts of BLM LUPA Decisions Outside of Plan Area

Natural Communities and Other Land Covers

There are 1,057,874 acres of natural communities in BLM LUPA lands outside the plan area. Of these, 172,179 acres would be proposed NLCS lands and 266,088 would be existing and proposed ACECs, for a total of 317,641 acres (accounting for overlapping designations) of natural communities in BLM LUPA conservation under Alternative 3.

Table IV.7-256
Estimated Acres of Natural Communities in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area –
Alternative 3

Natural Communities	Natural Communities within BLM LUPA Lands Outside Plan Area (acres)	BLM LUPA Designation†		Total Natural Communities in BLM LUPA Conservation (acres)
		Proposed NLCS (acres)	Existing & Proposed ACECs (acres)	
<i>Dune/Rocky, Barren, and Un-vegetated Communities</i>				
Barren	23,402	506	2,841	3,139
<i>Forest/Woodland Communities</i>				
Closed-Cone Pine-Cypress	287	0	231	231
Jeffrey Pine	27	0	0	0
Juniper	31,590	217	6,963	6,975
Montane Hardwood	282	0	0	0
Pinyon-Juniper	73,444	7,821	10,089	11,237
Ponderosa Pine	1,445	0	0	0
Sierran Mixed Conifer	120	0	0	0
Subalpine Conifer	189	0	0	0
<i>Grassland Communities</i>				
Annual Grassland	6,353	0	0	0
<i>Riparian/Wetland Communities</i>				
Desert Riparian	205	2	205	205
Desert Wash	22,414	5,653	9,106	9,169

Table IV.7-256
Estimated Acres of Natural Communities in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area –
Alternative 3

Natural Communities	Natural Communities within BLM LUPA Lands Outside Plan Area (acres)	BLM LUPA Designation†		Total Natural Communities in BLM LUPA Conservation (acres)
		Proposed NLCS (acres)	Existing & Proposed ACECs (acres)	
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	952	877	0	877
Lacustrine	99	0	19	19
<i>Scrub and Chaparral Communities</i>				
Alkali Desert Scrub	189,771	19,946	10,689	24,156
Chamise-Redshank Chaparral	8,317	2,345	4,117	5,461
Coastal Scrub	12	0	0	0
Desert Scrub	572,907	115,348	208,440	231,431
Desert Succulent Shrub	35,115	2,868	957	3,311
Joshua Tree	21,034	2,399	2,135	2,820
Low Sage	3,035	2,995	895	2,995
Mixed Chaparral	12,821	2,950	5,465	7,209
Sagebrush	48,566	7,989	3,673	8,143
<i>Other Land Covers</i>				
Cropland	3,617	0	0	0
Irrigated Hayfield	421	0	0	0
Urban	1,449	263	263	263
Total	1,057,874	172,179	266,088	317,641

Source: State of California GAP GIS data for vegetation classifications (CDFG 1998).

Special-Status Species

Many special-status species are known to occur within proposed or existing conservation areas within the BLM LUPA lands outside of the Plan Area. See Table IV.7-257 below for the list of special-status species within conservation areas. Refer to Table IV.7-256 above to see the natural communities present within the conservation areas that provide habitat for these species. Table IV.7-50 provides a cross-walk for the special-status species and the natural communities that provide habitat for these species.

In order to analyze how the preservation and conservation of the BLM LUPA lands outside of the Plan Area will affect the special-status species listed below, the preferred BLM LUPA conservation land boundaries within the CDCA but outside of the DRECP plan area were

applied to the species' occurrence data available from CNDDDB. Based on this analysis, Alternative 3 is expected to beneficially affect the 93 species shown in Table IV.7-257 that are known to occur within the NLCS and ACECs on BLM LUPA lands outside of the Plan Area, and the natural communities that provide habitat for these species shown in Table IV.7-256 above. Under Alternative 3, 58 species, dominated by plant species, are not present within existing and proposed BLM LUPA conservation lands.

**Table IV.7-257
Special-Status Species Occurring in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area – Alternative 3**

Special-Status Species Present	Federal Status ¹	State Status ²	Present in BLM LUPA Conservation Lands (Proposed NLCS and Existing and Proposed ACECs)
<i>Amphibians/Reptiles</i>			
Agassiz's desert tortoise	FT	ST	Y
Arroyo toad	FE	CSC	Y
Barefoot gecko	BLM	ST	Y
Coast horned lizard	-	CSC	Y
Coachella fringe-toed lizard	FE	SC	Y
Couch's spadefoot	BLM	CSC	N
flat-tailed horned lizard	BLM, FS	CSC	Y
Rosy boa	BLM, FS	-	Y
Sierra Madre yellow-legged frog	FE	SC, CSC	Y
<i>Fish</i>			
desert pupfish	FE	SE	Y
Mohave tui chub	FE	SE	Y
<i>Birds</i>			
burrowing owl	-	CSC	Y
California black rail	BLM, BCC	ST	Y
Crissal thrasher	BLM, BCC	CSC	N
Gray vireo	BLM, BCC	CSC	N
golden eagle	BGEPA	FP	Y
Inyo California towhee	FT	SE	Y
Le Conte's thrasher	BLM	CSC	Y
Least Bell's vireo	FE	SE	N
Loggerhead shrike	BCC	CSC	N
Long-eared owl	BLM	CSC	Y
prairie falcon	BCC	-	Y
Swainson's hawk	BLM	ST	N
southwestern willow flycatcher	FE	SE	Y
Vermilion flycatcher	-	CSC	N

Table IV.7-257
Special-Status Species Occurring in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area – Alternative 3

Special-Status Species Present	Federal Status ¹	State Status ²	Present in BLM LUPA Conservation Lands (Proposed NLCS and Existing and Proposed ACECs)
western snowy plover	FT	CSC	Y
Yellow warbler	BCC	CSC	Y
Yuma clapper-rail	FE, BCC	ST, FP	Y
<i>Mammals</i>			
American badger	-	CSC	Y
big free-tailed bat	-	CSC	N
Hoary bat	-	WBWG	Y
Long-eared myotis	BLM	-	N
Mojave ground squirrel	-	ST	Y
Nelson’s bighorn sheep	BLM	-	Y
Palm Springs pocket mouse	BLM	CSC	Y
pallid bat	BLM	CSC	Y
Peninsular bighorn sheep	FE, BLM	ST, FP	Y
pocketed free-tailed bat	-	CSC	N
Spotted bat	BLM	CSC	Y
Townsend’s big-eared bat	BLM	CSC	Y
Western mastiff bat	BLM	CSC	N
Western small-footed myotis	BLM	-	Y
western yellow bat	-	CSC	N
<i>Plants</i>			
Abrams’ spurge	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Amargosa beardtongue	BLM	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
annual rock-nettle	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
Arizona pholistoma	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Arizona spurge	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Ash Meadows buckwheat	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Bailey’s greasewood	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Barneby’s phacelia	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
black bog-rush	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
bristly scaleseed	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
brown turbans	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
California ayenia	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
California satintail	-	(CRPR 2.1)	Y
California saw-grass	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
chaparral sand-verbena	-	(CRPR 1B.1)	Y

Table IV.7-257
Special-Status Species Occurring in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area – Alternative 3

Special-Status Species Present	Federal Status ¹	State Status ²	Present in BLM LUPA Conservation Lands (Proposed NLCS and Existing and Proposed ACECs)
Charlotte's phacelia	BLM	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Chimney Creek nemacladus	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	FE	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Cove's cassia	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
creamy blazing star	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
curly herissantia	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Cushenbury buckwheat	FE	(CRPR 1B.1)	N
Cushenbury oxytheca	FE	(CRPR 1B.1)	N
Death Valley sandpaper-plant	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Dedecker's clover	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
desert beauty	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
desert spike-moss	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
dwarf germander	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Emory's crucifixion-thorn	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
forked buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
Geyer's milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Gilman's buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Gilman's cymopterus	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Gilman's goldenbush	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
glandular ditaxis	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Greene's rabbitbrush	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
hairy stickleaf	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Hall's daisy	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Harwood's milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
Hoffmann's buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Holmgren's lupine	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Inflated Cima milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
intermontane lupine	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Inyo blazing star	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Inyo County star-tulip	-	(CRPR 1B.1)	N
Inyo rock daisy	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
jackass-clover	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
Jacumba milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
July gold	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Kelso Creek monkeyflower	BLM	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y

**Table IV.7-257
Special-Status Species Occurring in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area – Alternative 3**

Special-Status Species Present	Federal Status¹	State Status²	Present in BLM LUPA Conservation Lands (Proposed NLCS and Existing and Proposed ACECs)
Kern Plateau bird's-beak	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Kern River evening-primrose	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
King's eyelash grass	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
knotted rush	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Lancaster milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 1B.1)	N
Las Animas colubrina	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Latimer's woodland-gilia	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
little-leaf elephant tree	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
long-stem evening-primrose	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Mexican hulsea	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Mormon needle grass	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Mountain Springs bush lupine	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Muir's tarplant	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Nevada oryctes	-	(CRPR 2.1)	N
Nine Mile Canyon phacelia	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Orcutt's linanthus	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Orcutt's woody-aster	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Orocopia sage	BLM	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Owen's Valley checkerbloom	BLM	SE (CRPR 1B.1)	Y
Owens Peak lomatium	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Palmer's mariposa-lily	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
Panamint daisy	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Panamint dudleya	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Panamint Mountains buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Panamint Mountains lupine	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Panamint rock-goldenrod	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Parish's daisy	FT	(CRPR 1B.1)	Y
Parish's desert-thorn	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Parry's monkeyflower	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N
Parry's spineflower	-	(CRPR 1B.1)	Y
Pierson's milk-vetch	FT	SE	N
pink fairy-duster	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Pinyon Mesa buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
pinyon rockcress	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y

**Table IV.7-257
Special-Status Species Occurring in BLM LUPA Outside of Plan Area – Alternative 3**

Special-Status Species Present	Federal Status ¹	State Status ²	Present in BLM LUPA Conservation Lands (Proposed NLCS and Existing and Proposed ACECs)
prairie wedge grass	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
pygmy lotus	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Ripley's aliciella	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
Robison's monardella	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
Robbins' nemacladus	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
San Bernardino aster	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
San Bernardino milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
San Diego button-celery	FE	SE, (CRPR 1B.1)	Y
sanicle cymopterus	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	N
Santa Rosa Mountains leptosiphon	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Shockley's milk-vetch	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
Shockley's rockcress	-	(CRPR 2.2)	Y
slender cottonheads	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
slender-leaved ipomopsis	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
southern jewel-flower	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
Spanish needle onion	BLM	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
spear-leaf matelea	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
spiny-hair blazing star	-	(CRPR 2.1)	Y
sticky geraea	-	(CRPR 2.3)	Y
sweet-smelling monardella	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	N
triple –ribbed milk-vetch	FE	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Wheeler's dune-broom	-	(CRPR 2.2)	N
white-bracted spineflower	-	(CRPR 1B.2)	Y
Wildrose Canyon buckwheat	-	(CRPR 1B.3)	Y
yellow ivesia	-	(CRPR 2.3)	N

Notes:

CRPR = California Rare Plant Rank; Y = yes, present; N = not present

¹ Federal Status – FE: Federally Endangered; FT: Federally Threatened; FD: Federally Delisted; FS: Forest Service Sensitive; BLM: Bureau Land Management Sensitive; BCC: Service Bird of Conservation Concern; BGEPA: Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

² State Status – SE: California Endangered; ST: California Threatened; SC: California Candidate for listing; CSC: California Species of Concern; FP: Fully Protected; WBWG: Western Bat Working Group species. California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR, formerly known as the CNPS List) - CRPR 1B: Considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; CRPR 2: Considered rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere; CRPR 3: Plants which need more information; CRPR 4: Limited distribution – a watch list.

Critical Habitat for Special-status Species

Six Special-status Species have Critical Habitat within BLM Lands outside the Plan Area. Table IV.7-258 shows the total amount of Critical Habitat and the amount within each BLM land designation for each species. No Critical Habitat for the least Bell’s vireo would occur within BLM Conservation Designation. The largest portion of Critical Habitat for the remaining species would be within Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, with additional amounts within National Conservation Lands, with both designations providing specific protections for biological resources. Critical Habitat for all species except Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard and least Bell’s vireo would occur within Special Recreation Management Areas, which would also be managed to protect Critical Habitat.

Table IV.7-258
Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Conservation Designations for Special-Status Species – Alternative 3

Common Name	Acres of Critical Habitat within BLM LUPA Lands	NLCS (acres)	ACEC (acres)	SRMA (acres)	Total ¹ in BLM Designations
Coachella Valley milk-vetch	10,000	500	500	1,000	2,000
Inyo California towhee	2,000	20	800	500	1,320
Peninsular Bighorn sheep	317,000	0	9,000	200	9,200
Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard	12,000	2,000	2,000	0	4,000
Desert tortoise	173,000	30,000	99,000	55,000	184,000
Least Bell’s vireo	600	0	0	0	0

¹ Includes overlapping designations

Landscape Habitat Linkages and Wildlife Movement Corridors

As detailed in Vol. III.7.13.2.4, Landscape Habitat Linkages and Wildlife Movement Corridors, there are important linkages and corridors North of the Plan Area within the Owens Valley, and Inyo Mountains, and Southwest of the Plan Area within and adjacent to the Coachella Valley. The NCLS lands and ACECs proposed for Alternative 3 offer protection at critical locations within these corridors, providing a benefit to Landscape Habitat Linkages and Wildlife Movement Corridors outside of the Plan Area.

IV.7.3.5.6 CEQA Significance Determination for Alternative 3

Impact BR-1: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of native vegetation.

Alternative 3 would result in loss of native vegetation that would be an adverse impact to natural communities and the species these communities support. These impacts would be concentrated in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas and would predominantly impact desert scrubs, wetlands, grasslands, and desert outcrop and badlands. The adverse effects of the loss of native vegetation would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. These CMAs would contribute to the overall DRECP conservation strategy, which includes conservation within Reserve Design Lands and a coordinated Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy, plus implementation of Mitigation Measure BR-1a for rare natural communities, would reduce the adverse effects from the loss of native vegetation to a less than significant impact with mitigation.

Impact BR-2: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands.

Alternative 3 would result in adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands. These impacts would occur in saltbush scrub and playa natural communities determined to be jurisdictional and open water areas of the Salton Sea. The adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands would be avoided and minimized through the implementation existing applicable laws and regulations, through implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs, and through compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. These CMAs would contribute to the overall DRECP conservation strategy, which includes conservation within Reserve Design Lands and a coordinated Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects to jurisdictional waters and wetlands to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-3: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in degradation of vegetation.

Alternative 3 would result in degradation of vegetation that would be an adverse impact to natural communities and the species these communities support. These impacts would be concentrated in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas and would predominantly impact desert scrubs, wetlands, grasslands, and desert outcrop and badlands. The adverse

effects of vegetation degradation would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. These CMAs would contribute to the overall DRECP conservation strategy, which includes conservation within Reserve Design Lands and a coordinated Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects of degradation of vegetation to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-4: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in loss of listed and sensitive plants; disturbance, injury, and mortality of listed and sensitive wildlife; and habitat for listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

Alternative 3 would result in an adverse impact to listed and sensitive plants and wildlife and habitat for listed and sensitive plant and wildlife. These impacts would be concentrated in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. The adverse effects plant and wildlife species loss and habitat loss would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. These CMAs would contribute to the overall DRECP conservation strategy, which includes conservation within Reserve Design Lands and a coordinated Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects from the loss plants and wildlife and their habitat to a less than significant impact.

Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would also reduce the adverse effects from the loss of plant and wildlife Non-Covered Species and their habitat to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-5: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities could result in loss of nesting birds (violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513).

Alternative 3 has the potential to result in an adverse impact resulting from the loss of nesting birds. These impacts have the potential to occur anywhere Covered Activities are implemented. This potential adverse would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs developed to comply with existing applicable laws and regulations related to nesting birds. Implementation of the CMAs would reduce the potential adverse effects of the loss of nesting birds to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-6: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would adversely affect habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors, the movement of fish, and native wildlife nursery sites.

Alternative 3 would result in adverse impacts to habitat linkages and wildlife movement corridors. These impacts to habitat linkages and movement of migratory birds would be concentrated in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. The potential adverse effects to habitat linkages and wildlife movement would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of the DRECP conservation strategy, including the reserve design envelope and the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Additionally, impacts of habitat fragmentation and population isolation would be avoided and minimized through requiring renewable energy development to occur within DFAs and through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects on habitat linkages and wildlife movement to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-7: Siting, construction, decommissioning, and operational activities would result in habitat fragmentation and isolation of populations of listed and sensitive plants and wildlife.

Alternative 3 would have the potential to result in adverse impacts of habitat fragmentation and population isolation. The potential adverse effects of habitat fragmentation and population isolation would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of the DRECP conservation strategy, including the reserve design envelope and the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Additionally, impacts of habitat fragmentation and population isolation would be avoided and minimized through requiring renewable energy development to occur within DFAs and through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. Implementation of the DRECP and the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects of habitat fragmentation and population isolation to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-8: Construction of generation facilities or transmission lines would result in increased predation of listed and sensitive wildlife species.

Alternative 3 would result in an increase in predator populations in the Plan Area, which would adversely affect susceptible Covered Species. As part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy, implementation of a Common Raven management actions (AM-PW-6) would reduce the adverse effects to Covered and Non-Covered Species to a less than significant impact.

Impact BR-9: Operational activities would result in avian and bat injury and mortality from collisions, thermal flux or electrocution at generation and transmission facilities.

Alternative 3 would result in loss of avian and bat Covered Species that would be an adverse impact to avian and bat populations. These impacts would be concentrated in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. The adverse effects of avian and bat injury and mortality would be avoided and minimized through the implementation of avoidance and minimization CMAs and compensation CMAs established to offset the impacts of Covered Activities. These CMAs would contribute to the overall DRECP conservation strategy, which includes conservation within Reserve Design Lands and a coordinated Monitoring and Adaptive Management Program. Implementation of the CMAs as part of the overall DRECP conservation strategy would reduce the adverse effects to a less than significant impact.

The level of impact on avian and bat Non-Covered Species would be as discussed for the Covered Species.

IV.7.3.5.7 Comparison of Alternative 3 with Preferred Alternative

Chapter IV.27 presents a comparison of all action alternatives and the No Action Alternative across all disciplines. This section summarizes the comparison of Alternative 3 with the Preferred Alternative.

IV.7.3.5.7.1 Alternative 3 Compared with Preferred Alternative for Plan-Wide DRECP

Alternative 3 would concentrate renewable energy development into over 1.4 million acres of DFAs (6% of the Plan Area) as compared to the approximately 2 million acres of DFAs (9% of the Plan Area) under the Preferred Alternative. Under Alternative 3, 89% of the DFAs are characterized by low terrestrial intactness as compared to the 87% of the DFAs in the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative would result in roughly equivalent conservation acreage within Reserve Design Lands; however, the BLM LUPA conservation designations vary between these alternatives. Alternative 3 BLM LUPA conservation designations would include 36% ACEC designations, 61% NLCS designations, and 2% wildlife allocation designations, whereas the Preferred Alternative BLM LUPA conservation designations would include 32% ACEC designations, 65% NLCS designations, and 3% wildlife allocation designations. The following provides a comparative analysis for specific biological resources.

Natural Communities

A summary of the differences between effects under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 40 acres of California forest and woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 100 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from transmission in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, but much fewer impacts from solar, transmission, and wind development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 900 acres of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 2,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from solar and transmission in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea and fewer impacts from solar and wind in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 800 acres of desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 1,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from solar development and transmission in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea and transmission in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but fewer impacts from solar and wind in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 6,000 acres of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 10,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are fewer impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, but about the same or more impacts in the remaining subareas.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 93,000 acres of desert scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 92,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are fewer impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas under Alternative 3, but

greater or about the same impacts in all other impacted subareas. Much of the difference is a result of less solar, wind, and transmission development in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains under Alternative 3.

Dunes

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres of grasslands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 6,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts across all four subareas impacted. Overall, there are more impacts from solar development under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Riparian

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 12,000 acres of wetlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 10,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are fewer impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and no impacts in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains subarea. However, there are more impacts to open water at the Salton Sea in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea under Alternative 3, mostly from solar development. All of the other

remaining subareas with impacts also have greater impacts under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Conservation of Natural Communities

A summary of the differences between conservation under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 63,000 acres (42%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 62,000 acres (41%) under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are more California forest and woodland areas conserved mostly in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 33,000 acres (30%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 31,000 acres (28%) under the Preferred Alternative. The largest difference between the alternatives is in more conserved acreage, from Conservation Planning Areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 187,000 acres (65%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 186,000 acres (65%) under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conservation, mostly from Conservation Planning Areas, in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 1,285,000 acres (80%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 1,295,000 acres (80%) under the Preferred Alternative. Although conservation between these subareas is similar overall, the distribution of conservation varies substantially. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is greater conservation of this general community in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea. There is less conserved acreage in the Owens River Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley, and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas, with the greatest difference in the Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subarea.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 9,808,000 acres (74%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 9,729,000 acres (74%) under the Preferred Alternative. Most subareas in the Plan Area have greater conservation of desert scrubs under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. The largest differences are in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas, but there is also more conservation of desert scrubs in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Of the remaining subareas with less conservation under Alternative 3, the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea has the largest difference between the two alternatives.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 217,000 acres (77%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 209,000 acres (74%) under the Preferred Alternative. The most substantial differences between the alternatives are more BLM LUPA conservation designations in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and Imperial Borrego Valley subareas, and fewer BLM LUPA conservation designations in the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

In addition to conservation, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 57,000 acres (24%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 54,000 acres (22%) under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conservation of grasslands in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, but much less in the West Mojave and Eastern Slope subarea under Alternative 3.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 705,000 acres (71%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 715,000 acres (72%) under the Preferred Alternative. The

most substantial difference between the alternatives is much less conservation in BLM LUPA conservation designations in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains under Alternative 3.

In addition to conservation, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 457,000 acres (53%) of wetlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 433,000 acres (50%) under the Preferred Alternative. There is more conserved acreage of wetlands primarily in the Providence and Bullion Mountains, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. There are fewer impacts primarily in the Mojave and Silurian Valley and Panamint Death Valley subareas.

In addition to conservation, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Impacts to Covered Species

Overall, there are greater impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. Less suitable habitat for Covered Species would be impacted under Alternative 3 in only two subareas: Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas with the greatest difference in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea.

More suitable habitat for Covered Species would be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for two of the four amphibian/reptile species—Agassiz's desert tortoise and flat-tailed horned lizard. Alternative 3 would result in less impact to desert tortoise important areas than would the Preferred Alternative. Most of the covered bird species have greater impacts to their suitable habitat under Alternative 3 including some birds associated with riparian/wetland areas (i.e., California black rail, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, tricolored blackbird, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Yuma clapper rail) and birds associated with other habitats (Bendire's thrasher, burrowing owl, mountain plover, Swainson's hawk, greater sandhill crane). Suitable habitat

for all of the covered fish species except Mohave tui chub, which would not be impacted under either alternative, would have greater impacts under Alternative 3, but the impacts would not differ by more than 100 acres for any of the species. Suitable habitat for bighorn sheep (both mountain and inter-mountain), Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat and Townsend's big-eared bat would be impacted more under Alternative 3 than under the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 3 would impact more Mohave ground squirrel important areas than would the Preferred Alternative. Six of the ten covered plant species would have greater impacts under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative, including alkali mariposa-lily, Barstow woolly sunflower, desert cymopterus, Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus, Owens Valley checkerbloom, and Parish's daisy. However, CMA application would further avoid and minimize impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under both alternatives as described in Section IV.7.3.3.1.1.

Impacts to Non-Covered Species

Overall, Alternative 3 could result in greater potential impacts to suitable habitat for approximately half of the Non-Covered Species evaluated as compared to the Plan-wide Preferred Alternative.

More suitable habitat for Non-Covered Species has the potential to be impacted under the Preferred Alternative compared to the Alternative 3 for all of the invertebrates evaluated. However, under both alternatives, application of CMAs and general siting design would further protect spring-, cave-, and dune-restricted species by avoiding renewable development in these habitats. More suitable habitat for Non-Covered Species could be impacted under Alternative 3 for less than half the amphibian/reptile species compared to the Preferred Alternative. The majority of bird Non-Covered Species would have greater potential impacts to suitable habitat under Alternative 3 as compared to the Preferred Alternative. Both of the fish Non-Covered species could potentially have greater impacts under Alternative 3; however, implementation of CMAs would preclude development within the habitat for the fish, thus further protecting this species under either Alternative. Greater potential impacts to suitable habitat for the majority of mammal Non-Covered Species would occur under Alternative 3 as compared to the Preferred Alternative. Less than half of the plant Non-Covered Species could have greater potential impacts under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Conservation of Covered Species

Overall, there is greater conservation of Covered Species habitat under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. There is more conservation in both BLM LUPA conservation designations and Conservation Planning Areas under Alternative 3. Compared to the Preferred Alternative there is greater conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species in the Cadiz Valley and Eastern Slopes, Imperial Borrego Valley, Kingston

and Funeral Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas under Alternative 3.

More suitable habitat for the following species would be conserved under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3: Bendire's thrasher, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, Owens pupfish, Owens tui chub, bighorn sheep, Little San Bernardino Mountains linanthus, Mojave monkeyflower, Owens Valley checkerbloom, and Parish's daisy. For the remaining species, more or about the same suitable habitat would be conserved under Alternative 3.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species under both alternatives. CMAs also require avoidance and minimization of Covered Species in DFAs and CMAs would be applied in the Reserve to benefit Covered Species.

Impacts to the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, fewer acres of the desert linkage network would be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. There are more DFAs under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3 in linkages along East Mesa, in the Chuckwalla Valley, between the Chocolate Mountains and the Palo Verde Mesa, in the areas near Iron Mountain and Bell Mountain, and in the Indian Wells Valley.

To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is presented in Table IV.7-212, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered on Wiley's Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

Conservation of the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, there is greater conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. Some areas with more conservation under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative include the linkage along East Mesa in the Imperial Borrego Valley, in the linkage from Palo Verde Mesa to the McCoy Mountains, and the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs.

Operational Impacts

The operation of renewable energy would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants as well as the disturbance of wildlife due to noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare. Alternative 3 would result in slightly larger terrestrial operational impacts in the Plan Area when compared with the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the distribution of vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance as a result of operational impacts would be distributed differently under the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3. The degradation of vegetation and disturbance of wildlife during operations in Alternative 3 would be more slightly more distributed in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, whereas the Preferred Alternative would have a slightly larger distribution of terrestrial operational impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea. Both the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3 would direct renewable energy development to DFAs that are designed to minimize impacts to biological resources and both would implement CMAs to avoid, minimize, and compensate for operational impacts from vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance.

Alternative 3 would result in an estimated 5,200 fewer bird collisions and 24,200 fewer bat collision with wind turbines than the Preferred Alternative. However, this would result in a 9,832 acres increase in solar development, with a proportional increase in the associated operational impacts to covered avian and bat species and resources. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 3 would increase impacts in West Mojave and Eastern slopes and the Pinto Lucerne Valley subareas, while reducing impacts from solar operations in Cadiz and Chocolate Mountain, and Kingston and Funeral Mountains subareas. Impacts in the Imperial Borrego Valley would be broadly similar to the Preferred Alternative

IV.7.3.5.7.2 Alternative 3 Compared with Preferred Alternative for the BLM Land Use Plan Amendment

Alternative 3 would concentrate renewable energy development in approximately 211,000 acres of DFAs on BLM-administered lands as compared to the approximately 367,000 acres of DFAs on BLM-administered lands under the Preferred Alternative. Alternative 3 would designate 5.0 million acres of BLM LUPA conservation designations on BLM-administered lands, including 3.4 million acres of NLCS, 1.6 million acres of ACEC, and 13,000 acres of wildlife allocation, whereas the Preferred Alternative would designate 4.9 million acres of BLM LUPA conservation designations on BLM-administered lands, including 3.5 million acres of NLCS, 1.4 million acres of ACEC, and over 18,000 acres of wildlife allocation under the Preferred Alternative. The following provides a comparative analysis for specific biological resources.

Impacts to Natural Communities

A summary of the differences between effects under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 40 acres of California forest and woodlands would be impacted under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from transmission in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, but no impacts in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 200 acres of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA, compared to 300 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from solar and transmission in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes. There are also fewer impacts from solar and wind development in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, which account for the greatest difference between the impacts for each Alternative.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 100 acres of desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 400 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes. However, there are no impacts in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea under Alternative 3, which is the greatest difference between the impacts for each Alternative.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 8,000 acres of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA, compared to 5,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts mostly in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea. However, there are much fewer impacts (mostly from solar development) in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea that make up the biggest difference between the two alternatives.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 37,000 acres of desert scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA, compared to 46,000 acres under the Preferred

Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are actually greater impacts in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas. However, total impacts are fewer under this Alternative primarily because there are fewer impacts from solar in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains. There are also fewer impacts in the Mojave and Silurian Valley and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas and no impacts in Kingston and Funeral Mountain subarea under this Alternative.

Dunes

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 300 acres of grasslands would be impacted under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA, compared to 500 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Impacts to grasslands are fewer under this Alternative primarily because there are fewer impacts from solar in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but there are also fewer impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea and greater impacts in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Riparian

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 for the BLM LUPA since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 4,000 acres of wetlands would be impacted under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are fewer impacts in only the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea with

most of the difference in solar development. Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Conservation of Natural Communities for the BLM LUPA

A summary of the differences between conservation under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 38,000 acres (86%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative for BLM LUPA.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 11,000 acres (62%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 41,000 acres (82%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 1,020,000 acres (85%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 1,017,000 acres (85%) under the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. Although conservation between these subareas is similar overall, the distribution of conservation varies. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is greater conservation of this general community in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Imperial Borrego Valley, with the greatest difference in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea. There is the same or less conserved acreage in the remaining subareas, with the greatest difference by far in the Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subarea.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 5,917,000 acres (84%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 5,835,000 acres (83%) under the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. Over half of the subareas in the Plan Area have greater conservation of

desert scrubs under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. The biggest difference is in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea, but there is also more conservation of desert scrubs in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. Of the remaining subareas with less conservation under Alternative 3, the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea has the largest difference between the two alternatives.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 96,000 acres (75%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 89,000 acres (70%) under the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. The only subarea with conservation of dunes with fewer conserved acres under Alternative 3 is the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea. The greatest difference in conserved dune acreage is in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea.

In addition to conservation, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 24,000 acres (84%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 23,000 acres (80%) under the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conservation of grasslands in NLCS areas in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 519,000 acres (80%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 515,000 acres (80%) under the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. The most substantial differences between the alternatives is much more conservation in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea and less conserved acreage in the Mojave and Silurian Valley and Piute Valley and Sacramento Mountains subareas under Alternative 3.

In addition to conservation, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert

wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 203,000 acres (68%) of wetlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 184,000 acres (62%) under the Preferred Alternative. There is more conserved acreage of wetlands primarily in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas. All of the other subareas, except the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea, have the same or fewer conserved acres of wetland communities.

In addition to conservation, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Impacts to Covered Species Habitat

Overall, there are lesser impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. The only subareas where more suitable habitat for Covered Species would be impacted under Alternative 3 would be the Imperial Borrego Valley, Owens River Valley, Panamint Death Valley, Pinto Lucerne and Eastern Slopes, and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas. Alternative 3 has less impacts to suitable habitat for the following Covered Species: Agassiz's desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Tehachapi slender salamander, tricolored blackbird, California black rail, Mojave tarplant, golden eagle, California condor, California leaf-nosed bat, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Bakersfield cactus, and Mojave tarplant. However, CMA application would further avoid and minimize impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under both alternatives as described in Section IV.7.3.3.1.1.

Impacts to Non-Covered Species Habitat

Overall, Alternative 3 only has the potential for greater impacts to suitable habitat for two Non-Covered Species compared to the BLM LUPA Preferred Alternative.

More suitable habitat for Non-Covered Species has the potential to be impacted under the Preferred Alternative compared to the Alternative 3 for all of the invertebrates evaluated. However, under both alternatives, application of CMAs and general siting design will further protect spring-, cave-, and dune-restricted species by avoiding renewable development in these habitats. More suitable habitat for Non-Covered Species could be

impacted under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3 for all amphibian/reptile species. All of the bird Non-Covered Species have greater potential impacts to suitable habitat under the Preferred Alternative as compared to Alternative 3. Both of the fish Non-Covered species could potentially have greater impacts under the Preferred Alternative; however, implementation of CMAs would preclude development within the habitat for the fish, thus further protecting this species under either Alternative. Greater potential impacts to suitable habitat for all of the mammal Non-Covered Species could occur under the Preferred Alternative as compared to Alternative 3. Only two plant Non-Covered Species could have greater potential impacts under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Conservation of Covered Species Habitat

Overall, there is more conservation of Covered Species habitat under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. There is less conservation in NLCS areas and wildlife allocations under Alternative 3, but more conservation in ACECs. The only subarea with wildlife allocations under both the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3 is the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea. There is greater conservation of Covered Species habitat in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, Imperial Borrego Valley, Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. The greatest difference between alternatives among the remaining subareas would be in the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea.

More suitable habitat for the following Covered Species would be conserved under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative: Agassiz's desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, flat-tailed horned lizard, greater sandhill crane, mountain plover, southwestern willow flycatcher, Yuma clapper rail, California condor, Swainson's hawk, California black rail, burrowing owl, golden eagle (foraging), bighorn sheep (mountain habitat), California leaf-nosed bat, Mohave ground squirrel, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, Bakersfield cactus, Mojave tarplant, and Barstow woolly sunflower. For the remaining species, more or the same suitable habitat would be conserved under the Preferred Alternative.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species under both alternatives. CMAs also require avoidance and minimization of Covered Species in DFAs and CMAs would be applied in the Reserve to benefit Covered Species.

Impacts to the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, fewer acres of the desert linkage network would be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for the BLM LUPA. There are more DFAs under the

Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3 in linkages along East Mesa, in the Chuckwalla Valley, and between the Chocolate Mountains and the Palo Verde Mesa.

To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is presented in Table IV.7-227, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered on Wiley's Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

Conservation of the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, there is greater conservation of the desert linkage network under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. Some areas with more conservation under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative include the linkage along East Mesa in the Imperial Borrego Valley, in the linkage from Palo Verde Mesa to the McCoy Mountains, and the Chuckwalla Valley. In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs.

Operational Impacts

The operation of renewable energy would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants as well as the disturbance of wildlife due to noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare. Alternative 3 would result in a smaller amount of terrestrial operational impacts on BLM Land when compared with the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the distribution of vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance as a result of operational impacts would be distributed differently under the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3. The degradation of vegetation and disturbance of wildlife during operations in Alternative 3 would be more heavily distributed in the Imperial Borrego Valley subarea, while the Preferred Alternative would have a greater distribution of terrestrial operational impacts in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea on BLM Land. Both the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3 would direct renewable energy development to DFAs that are designed to minimize impacts to biological resources and both would implement CMAs to avoid, minimize, and compensate for operational impacts from vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance.

Alternative 3 would result in an estimated 3,100 fewer bird collisions and 14,700 fewer bat collision with wind turbines than the Preferred Alternative. There would also be a decrease

of 7,935 acres of terrestrial solar impacts, with a proportional decrease in the associated operational impacts to covered avian and bat species and resources. The major decrease in impacts would occur in the Cadiz and Chocolate Mountains subarea, with a reduction of 10,179 acres. However, avian impacts from solar generation would increase in both Imperial Borrego Valley and Pinto Lucerne Valley.

IV.7.3.5.7.3 Alternative 3 Compared with Preferred Alternative for NCCP

The impacts of the NCCP for Alternative 3 are the same as those defined in Section IV.7.3.2.1 for the Plan-wide analysis. As a result, the comparison of Alternative 3 with the Preferred Alternative for the NCCP is the same as described above for Plan-wide DRECP.

IV.7.3.5.7.4 Alternative 3 Compared with Preferred Alternative for the GCP

Alternative 3 would allow renewable energy development on approximately 1.2 million acres of DFAs on nonfederal lands as compared to the approximately 1.6 million acres of DFAs on nonfederal lands under the Preferred Alternative. Under Alternative 3, the Reserve Design Lands would include approximately 2.8 million acres on nonfederal lands, including 434,000 acres within existing conservation areas, 1.2 million acres within BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 1.2 million acres within Conservation Planning Areas. This compares to the Preferred Alternative that includes approximately 2.7 million acres of Reserve Design Lands on nonfederal lands, including 434,000 acres within existing conservation areas, 1.2 million acres within BLM LUPA conservation designations, and 1.1 million acres within Conservation Planning Areas. The following provides a comparative analysis for specific biological resources.

Impacts to Natural Communities

A summary of the differences between effects under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, no impacts to California forest and woodlands would be expected under Alternative 3 under the GCP, compared to approximately 80 acres of impacts to California forest and woodlands under the Preferred Alternative.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 800 acres of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, compared to 1,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts in the Pinto

Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subarea, but fewer impacts in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 700 acres of desert conifer woodlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 900 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes and fewer impacts in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 2,000 acres of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 1,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Owens River Valley, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas, with the greatest difference being in the Imperial Borrego Valley. There are fewer impacts in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea under Alternative 3 under the GCP than under the Preferred Alternative.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 55,000 acres of desert scrubs would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, compared to 45,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there are greater impacts from solar development in all impacted subareas, but fewer or about the same impacts from wind development in all impacted subareas. The Imperial Borrego Valley is the only subarea with geothermal effects under Alternative 3 under the GCP, which exceed those of the Preferred Alternative. GCP impacts from transmission are greater under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative overall.

Dunes

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under Alternative 3 under the GCP since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres of grasslands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 6,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 3 has more total impacts in all impacted subareas.

Riparian

Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under Alternative 3 under the GCP since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 7,000 acres of wetlands would be impacted under Alternative 3 under the GCP, compared to 5,000 acres under the Preferred Alternative. Like the Preferred Alternative, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under Alternative 3 since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Conservation of Natural Communities for the GCP

A summary of the differences between conservation under this Alternative and the Preferred Alternative is provided below.

California forest and woodlands

Overall, approximately 24,000 acres (23%) of California forest and woodlands would be conserved under both Alternative 3 and the Preferred Alternative for the GCP.

Chaparral and coastal scrubs (Cismontane scrub)

Overall, approximately 13,000 acres (16%) of chaparral and coastal scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 11,000 acres (13%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conserved acreage, mostly from Conservation Planning Areas, in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert conifer woodlands

Overall, approximately 20,000 acres (20%) of desert conifer woodlands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 19,000 acres (18%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conservation, mostly from Conservation Planning Areas, in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea.

Desert outcrop and badlands

Overall, approximately 97,000 acres (44%) of desert outcrop and badlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 110,000 acres (50%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is less conservation of this general community in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Owens River Valley subareas, with the greatest difference in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea.

Desert scrubs

Overall, approximately 831,000 acres (28%) of desert scrubs would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 833,000 acres (28%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Three of the subareas in the Plan Area have substantially greater conservation of desert scrubs under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. The largest difference is in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subarea, but there is also more conservation of desert scrubs in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains and Panamint Death Valley subareas. Of the remaining subareas with less conservation under Alternative 3, the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and Owens River Valley subareas have the largest difference between the two alternatives.

Dunes

Overall, approximately 8,000 acres (24%) of dunes would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 7,000 acres (21%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. There is more conservation of dunes in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes subareas, and less in the Owens River Valley subarea under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

In addition to conservation, impacts to dune communities would be minimized under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that dune communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, CMA application would prohibit Non-Covered Activities within Aeolian transport corridors, except as needed to maintain existing development or improve land management capabilities.

Grasslands

Overall, approximately 27,000 acres (13%) of grasslands would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 24,000 acres (12%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Compared to the Preferred Alternative, there is more conservation of grasslands in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas. The biggest difference between the alternatives is in more Conservation Planning Areas in the West Mojave and Eastern Slope subarea under Alternative 3.

Riparian

Overall, approximately 60,000 acres (30%) of riparian communities would be conserved under Alternative 3, compared to 74,000 acres (37%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. The most substantial difference between the alternatives is much less conservation in BLM LUPA conservation designations in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea. There is also less conservation in the Mojave and Silurian Valley subarea.

In addition to conservation, impacts to riparian communities would be avoided under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that riparian communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs. In addition, setbacks from riparian communities would be required that range from 200 feet for Madrean warm semi-desert wash woodland/scrub, Mojavean semi-desert wash scrub, and Sonoran-Coloradan semi-desert wash woodland/scrub to 0.25 mile for Southwestern North American riparian evergreen and deciduous woodland and Southwestern North American riparian/wash scrub.

Wetlands

Overall, approximately 76,000 acres (23%) of wetlands would be impacted under Alternative 3, compared to 72,000 acres (22%) under the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. There is more conserved acreage of wetlands primarily in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains, and Providence and Bullion Mountains subareas. All of the other subareas have the same or fewer conserved acres of wetland communities.

In addition to conservation, impacts to Arid West freshwater emergent marsh and Californian warm temperate marsh/seep would not occur under both alternatives since application of the CMAs would require that these communities be avoided to the maximum extent feasible in DFAs, including a 0.25-mile setback.

Impacts to Covered Species Habitat

Overall, there are greater impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. Less suitable habitat for Covered

Species would be impacted under Alternative 3 only in the Kingston and Funeral Mountains subarea. More suitable habitat for Covered Species would be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative except for the following species: Tehachapi slender salamander, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle (nesting), Bakersfield cactus, Mojave monkeyflower, and Mojave tarplant. However, CMA application would further avoid and minimize impacts to suitable habitat for Covered Species under both alternatives as described in Section IV.7.3.3.1.1.

Impacts to Non-Covered Species Habitat

Overall, Alternative 3 only has the potential for greater impacts to suitable habitat for the Non-Covered Species as compared to the GCP Preferred Alternative.

Potential impacts to dune-restricted species would be the same for both Alternatives. In addition, application of CMAs and general siting design would further protect spring-, cave-, and dune-restricted species by avoiding renewable development in these habitats under both alternatives. More suitable habitat for Non-Covered Species could be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to Preferred Alternative for the majority of amphibian/reptile species. All of the bird Non-Covered Species have greater potential impacts to suitable habitat under Alternative 3 as compared to the Preferred Alternative. Greater potential impacts to suitable habitat for the majority of mammal Non-Covered Species could occur under Alternative 3 as compared to the Preferred Alternative. In addition, the majority of plant Non-Covered Species could have greater potential impacts under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative.

Conservation of Covered Species Habitat

Overall, there is slightly less conservation of Covered Species habitat under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. There is less conservation in BLM LUPA conservation designations and more conservation in Conservation Planning Areas under Alternative 3. There is greater conservation of Covered Species habitat in the Imperial Borrego Valley, Kingston and Funeral Mountains, Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, Panamint Death Valley, Providence and Bullion Mountains, and West Mojave and Eastern Slopes subareas under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative. The difference between conservation to Covered Species suitable habitat is the greatest in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subarea.

More suitable habitat for the following species would be conserved under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3: Agassiz's desert tortoise, Bendire's thrasher, California black rail, Gila woodpecker, golden eagle, southwestern willow flycatcher, western yellow-billed cuckoo, Owens pupfish, Owens tui chub, bighorn sheep, Owens

Valley checkerbloom, and Parish's daisy. The remaining species would have the same amount or more suitable habitat conserved under the Alternative 3.

In addition to conservation of suitable habitat for Covered Species, compensation CMAs would offset habitat loss for all Covered Species under both alternatives. CMAs also require avoidance and minimization of Covered Species in DFAs and CMAs would be applied in the Reserve to benefit Covered Species.

Impacts to the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, more acres of the desert linkage network would be impacted under Alternative 3 compared to the Preferred Alternative for the GCP. The biggest differences between the Alternatives would be in the West Mojave and Eastern Slopes and Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern slopes subareas.

To avoid and minimize impacts to the desert linkage network beyond what is presented in Table IV.7-247, Covered Activities will be sited and designed to maintain the function of wildlife connectivity in the following linkage and connectivity areas: (1) across Interstate 10 centered on Wiley's Well Road to connect the Mule and McCoy mountains, (2) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla and Palen mountains, (3) across Interstate 10 to connect the Chuckwalla Mountains to the Chuckwalla Valley east of Desert Center, and (4) the confluence of Milpitas Wash and Colorado River floodplain. In addition, the Riparian and Wetland Natural Communities and Covered Species CMAs will contribute to maintaining and promoting habitat connectivity and wildlife movement.

Conservation of the Desert Linkage Network

Overall, there is greater conservation of the desert linkage network under the Preferred Alternative compared to Alternative 3 for the GCP. The biggest difference in acreage would be in the Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas. In addition to conservation of the desert linkage network, CMAs provide for the avoidance and minimization of certain linkages in the DFAs.

Operational Impacts

The operation of renewable energy would result in the degradation of vegetation through the creation dust, use of dust suppressants, exposure to fire, implementation of fire management techniques, and the introduction of invasive plants as well as the disturbance of wildlife due to noise, predator avoidance behavior, and light and glare. Alternative 3 would result in a greater amount of terrestrial operational impacts within the GCP when compared with the Preferred Alternative. Additionally, the distribution of vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance as a result of operational impacts would be

distributed differently under the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3. The degradation of vegetation and disturbance of wildlife during operations in Alternative 3 would be more heavily distributed in the Pinto Lucerne Valley and Eastern Slopes, West Mojave and Eastern Slopes, and Cadiz Valley and Chocolate Mountains subareas than in the Preferred Alternative; however, both alternatives would have a similar distribution of terrestrial operational impacts in the GCP. Both the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3 would direct renewable energy development to DFAs that are designed to minimize impacts to biological resources and both would implement CMAs to avoid, minimize, and compensate for operational impacts from vegetation degradation and wildlife disturbance.

Alternative 3 would result in an estimated 2,000 fewer bird collisions and 9,400 fewer bat collisions with wind turbines than the Preferred Alternative. There would also be an increase of 17,294 acres of terrestrial solar impacts, with a proportional increase in the associated operational impacts to covered avian and bat species and resources. Almost all nonfederal DFAs would see more development and consequently greater impacts to avian and bat Covered Species in Alternative 3 when compared to the Preferred Alternative. Only the Kingston and Funeral Mountain DFAs would see a slight reduction in impacts.

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