Chuckwalla Dune Thicket

Description/Location: Eastern Riverside County, South of I-10, 18 miles West of Blythe within the Chuckwalla ACEC).

Nationally Significant Values:
Ecological Values: The Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket is characterized by unusually dense pockets of palo verde woodland. The dense vegetation is the result of sand dunes damming several small washes and creating wetter soil conditions. It is noted for having the highest density winter bird populations in the California Desert. It is also noted for dense mammal and reptile populations. The diversity of habitats within this ACEC provides a unique mix of species in a very small area.

Cultural: The Dunes were a place where soft deep soils provided prehistoric Native Americans an advantageous area to inter cremated remains. Several cremation sites have been discovered along the Edison and Blythe Energy transmission line corridor in recent years. Disturbance of any Native American cremation sites raises serious Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) concerns and should be avoided. A major prehistoric trails network passed through the area and although the actual trails are no longer visible due to drifting sands, the remaining artifacts scattered along the trails are still present and may or may not be buried within the dunes. Surface-only cultural resource (Class III) surveys are unreliable as a determinant of presence or absence, as shifting sands and high wind events can change the visibility status on almost a daily basis. Any surveys performed in the past should be resurveyed here after any high wind event and before any planned disturbance.

Mgmt. Plan/Date of Designation – ACEC Plan No. 57, 06/08/1982

Relevance and Importance Criteria : Relevant biological resources. Unique geology and biology related to sand dunes, washes, and palo verde woodlands.

Goals: To protect wildlife resource values while providing for compatible public uses.

Designation and Acreage by Alternative:

Alternative	BLM Acres of NLCS within ACEC or Wildlife Allocation	BLM Acres within ACEC	BLM Acres within Wildlife Allocation	ACEC Disturbance Cap
No Action	0	2,200	0	1%
Preferred Alternative	1,800	2,200	0	0.5%
1	1,600	2,200	0	0.5%
2	2,200	2,200	0	0.5%
3	1,800	2,200	0	0.5%
4	1,600	2,200	0	0.5%

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

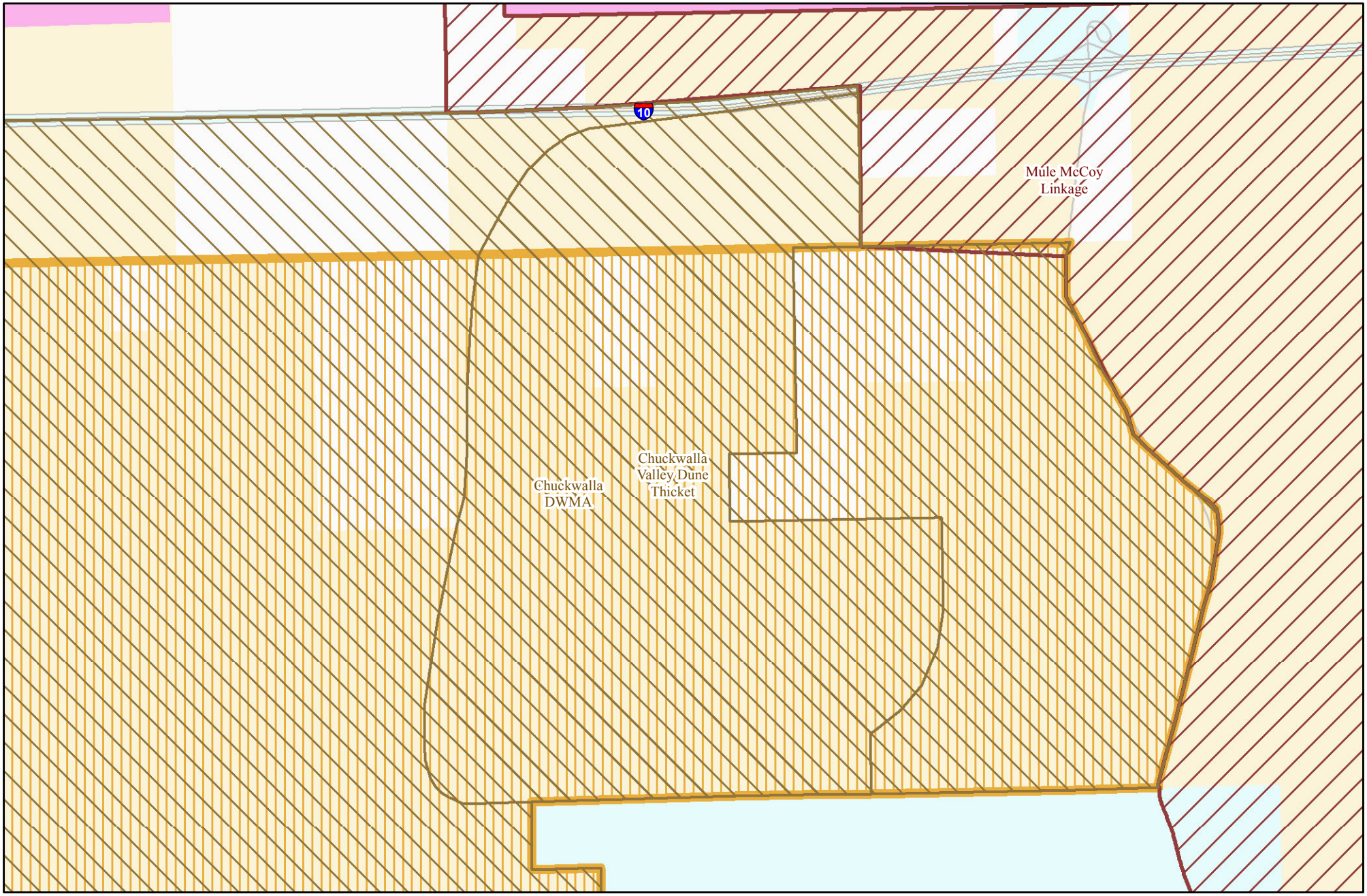
Alternatives :
All Action Alternatives: This ACEC lies entirely within the Chuckwalla ACEC. To resolve this dual designation, all action alternatives will remove the overlap area from Chuckwalla. Management of this ACEC will continue as it is currently being managed.

No Action: This existing ACEC would continue to be managed as it is and the portion that has dual designation would remain.

Objectives (desired future conditions)/Allowable Uses/Management Actions	**Resource**
Objective: Protect Palo verde	Vegetation (incl. special status species)
Special Status Species: Desert Tortoise Kit Fox Ferruginous Hawk Mojave Fringe Toed Lizard Burro Deer Objective: Enhance value of thicket for wildlife Management Action: Provide wildlife water source at thicket Designate drinker an official wildlife water source Objective: Encourage cavity nesting birds Management Action: Install nest boxes Objective: Prevent vehicle use from degrading habitat quality Management Action: Close dunes and immediate thicket area to vehicle use	Fish and Wildlife (incl. special status species)
Allocation: OHV closed There are no designated hiking trails within this ACEC at this time	Trails and Travel Management
Allocation: OHV closed Objective: Increase coordination with CDF&G in management and patrol of ACEC Management Action: Enter into cooperative agreement with CDF&G Objective: Control unauthorized and illegal use within ACEC Management Action: Increase BLM patrols Allow for primitive, low-impact dispersed recreation (hiking, wildlife watching, etc.) opportunities that do not conflict with wildlife conservation measures	Recreation
Objective: Consolidate Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket under public ownership Management Action: Contact landowners and write feasibility report on the land exchange options *largest threat to area is development of surrounding private lands, therefore increasing access and visibility to the dunes	Land Tenure

New proposals will need to be analyzed on a case-by-case basis and cumulatively, to assess whether they can be accommodated within the ACEC and its management goals	Rights of Way
Closed to renewable energy development **Geothermal:** Area is closed to geothermal leasing and development	Renewable Energy
Recommend withdrawal of the area from locatable mineral entry. Continue to allow mineral material disposals on a case by-case basis subject to site specific environmental analysis. Allow no disposal of mineral material in Lands with Wilderness Characteristics. No-surface occupancy leasable minerals.	Locatable Minerals Mineral Materials Non-energy Leaseables

Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket



0.7 Miles

0.95 Kilometers

N

Preferred Alternative ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers

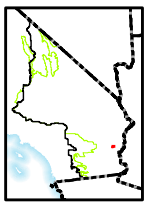
- Existing ACEC
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Design Focus Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- OHV Areas
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

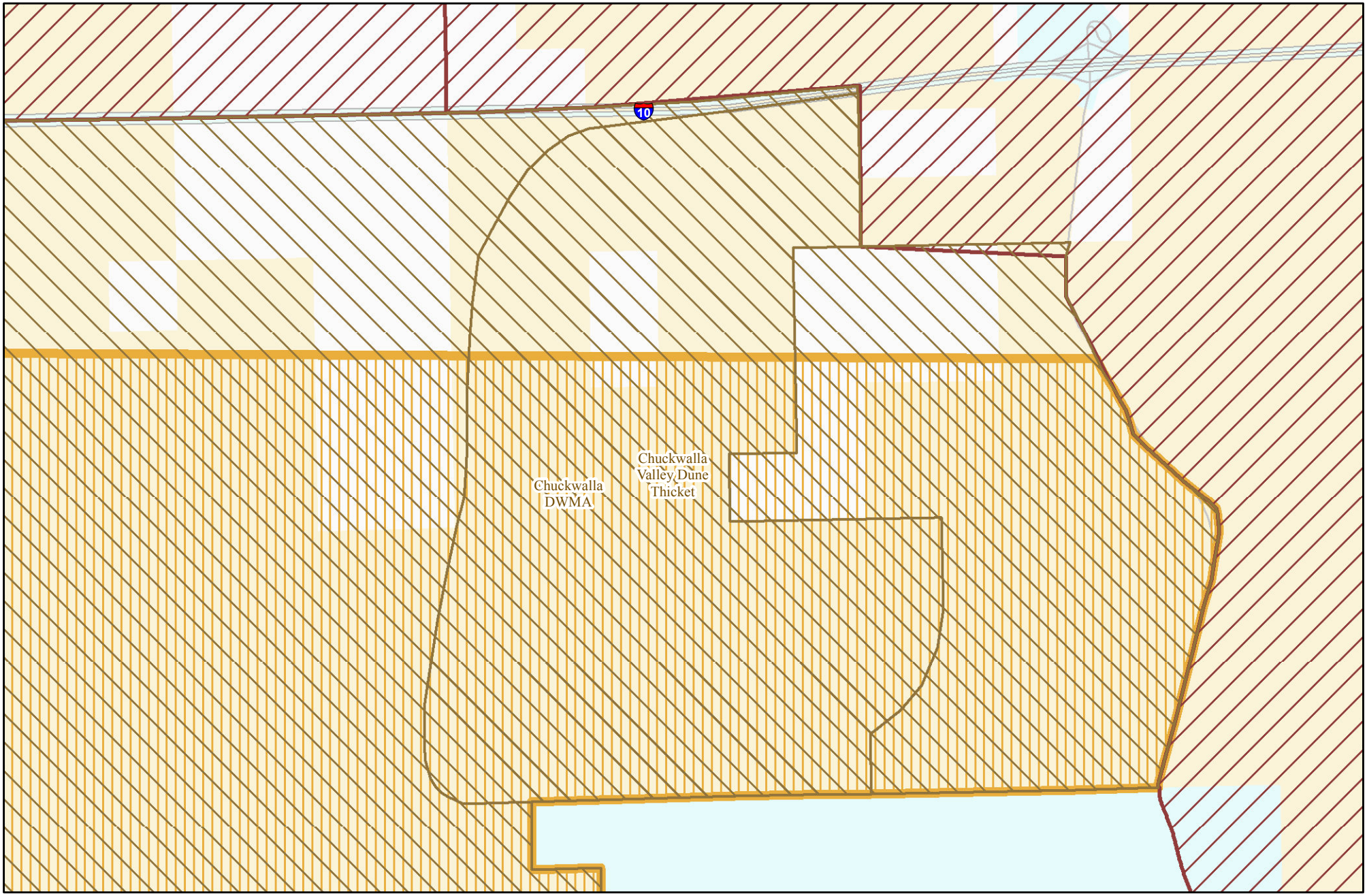
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTLF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket



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Alternative 1 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

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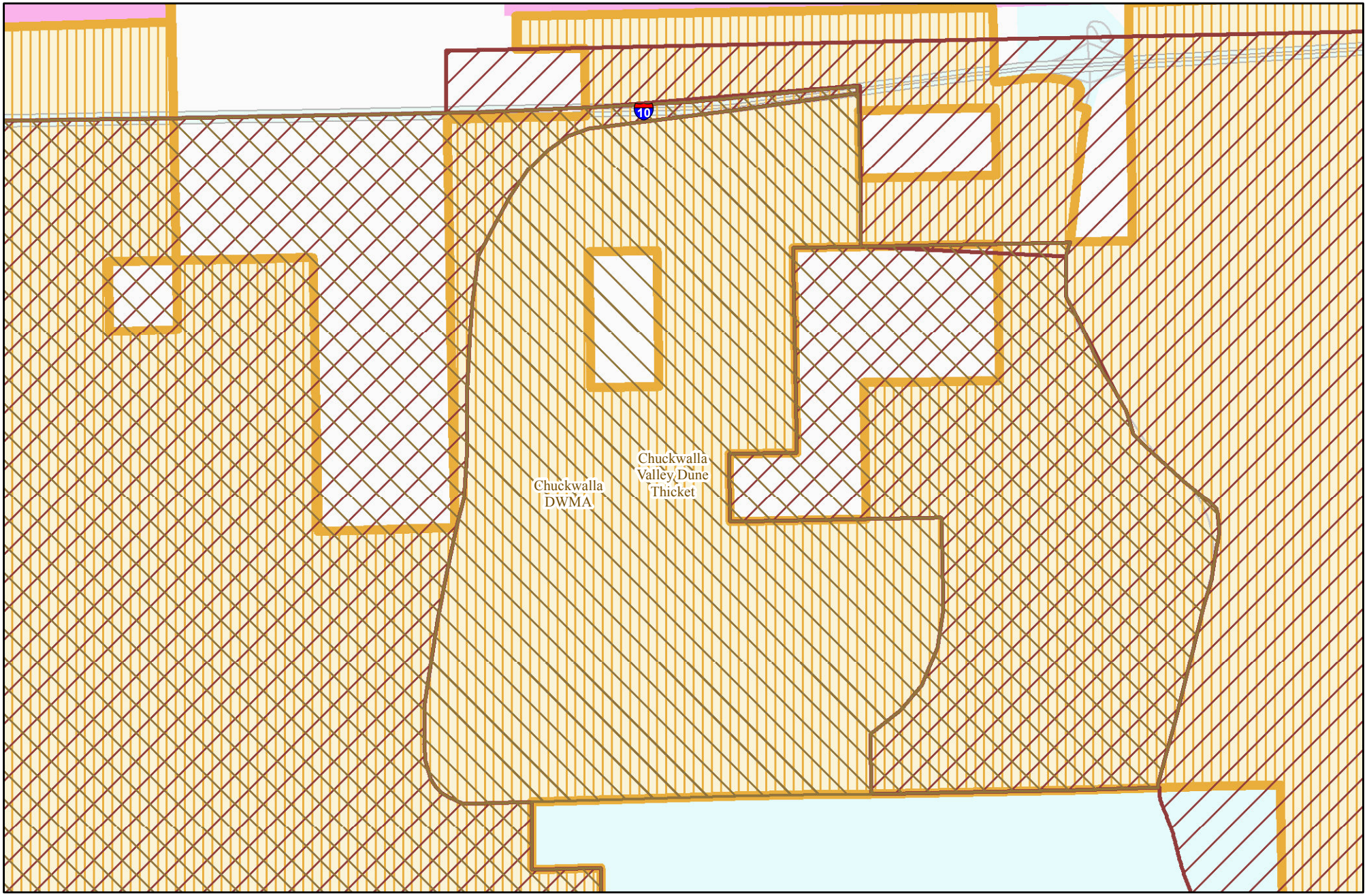
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket



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Alternative 2 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers

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Land Status

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GTLF

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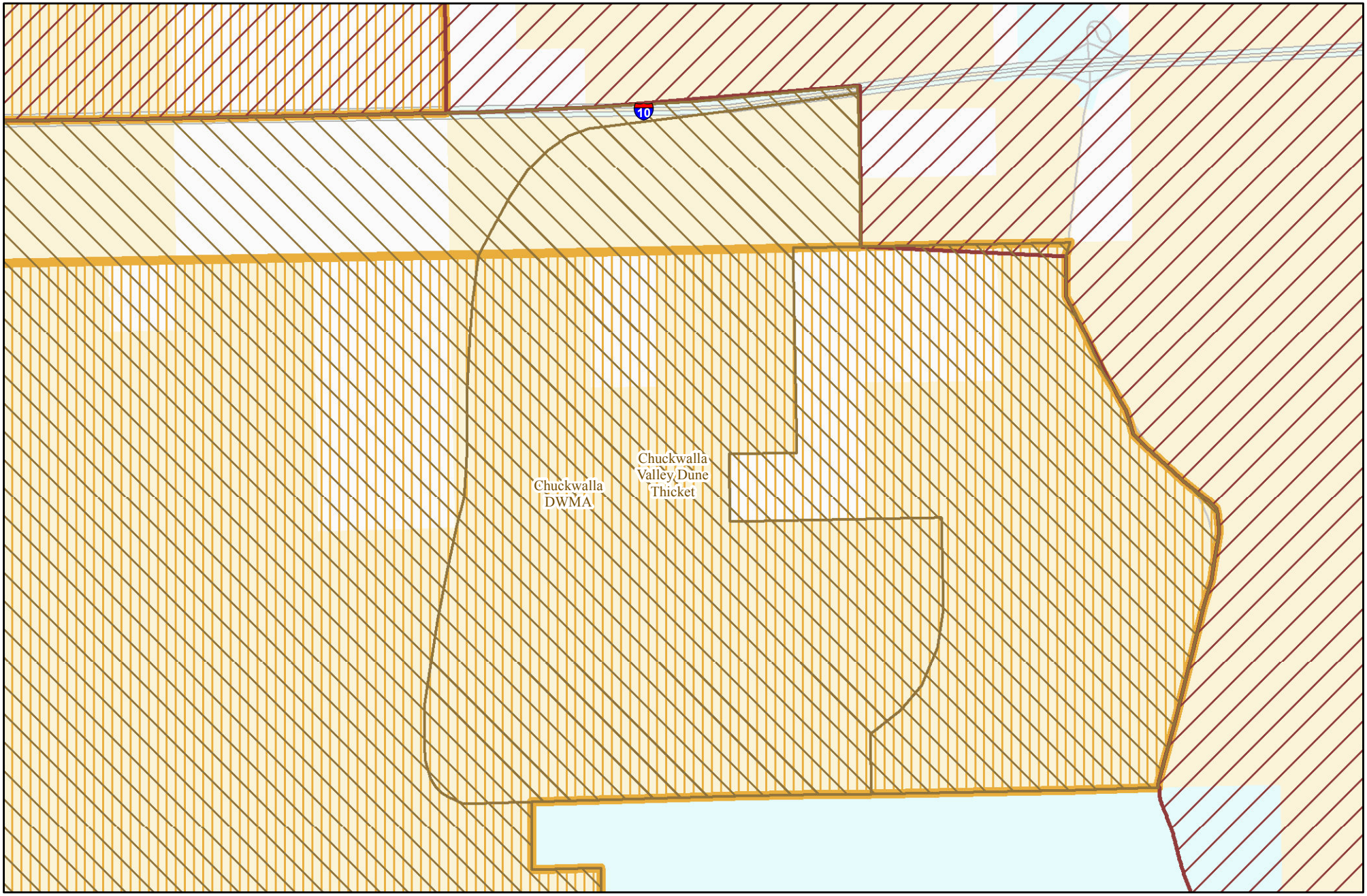
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket



0.7 Miles

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Alternative 3 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers

- Existing ACEC
- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
- Design Focus Areas
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- Cities
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- CDCA Boundary
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- BLM Field Office

Land Status

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GTLF

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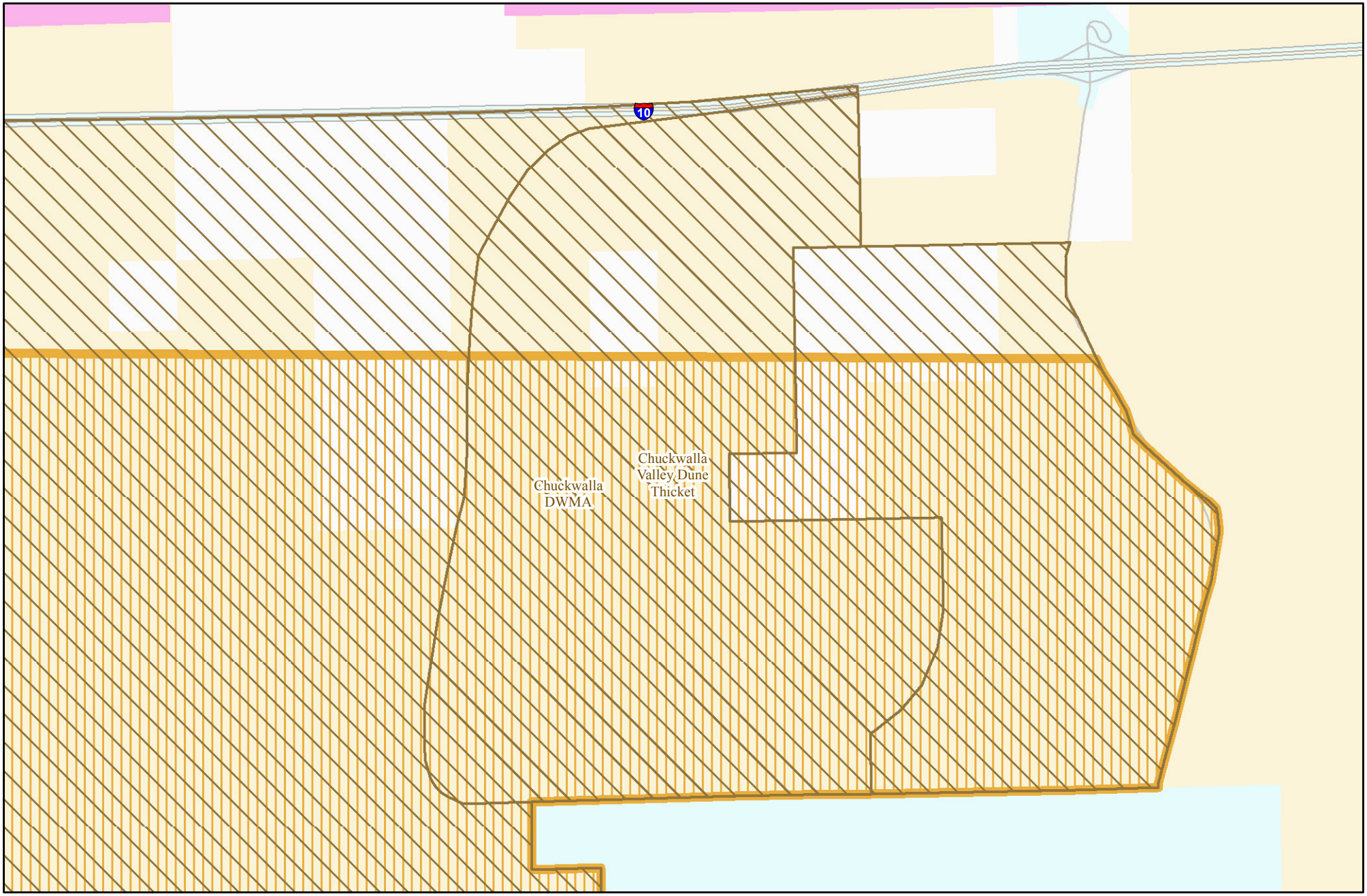
Chuckwalla Valley Dune Thicket



0.7 Miles

0.95 Kilometers

N

Alternative 4 ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers

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- Proposed ACEC
- Proposed NLCS
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- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
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- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
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Land Status

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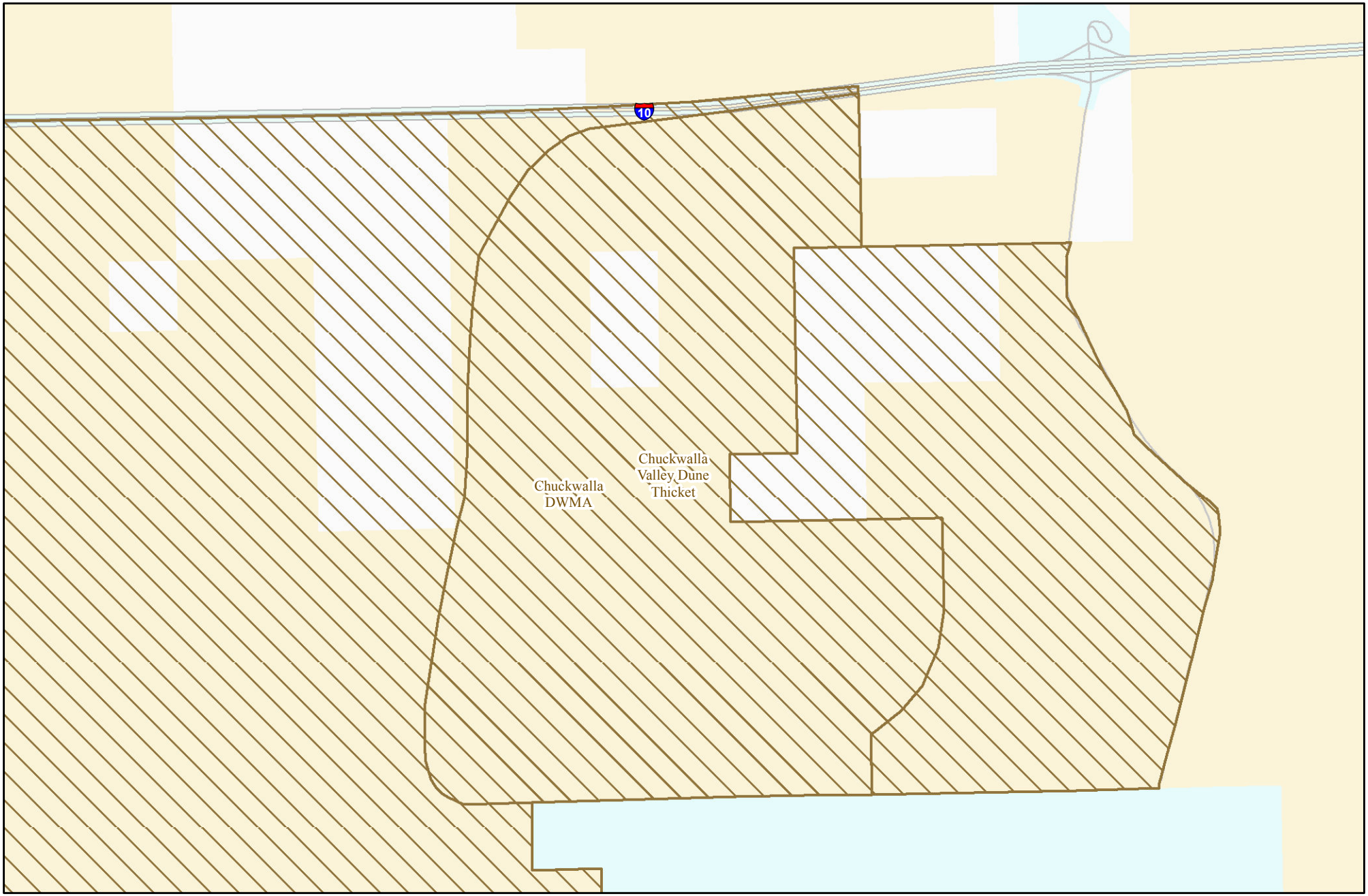

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N

No Action ACECs

Date Printed: 5/29/2013

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