

OCOTILLO WELLS EAST Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

RMA/RECREATION MANAGEMENT ZONE (RMZ) OBJECTIVE(S) DECISIONS

Ocotillo Wells East SRMA is partially managed by Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (OWSVRA) in the areas west of Highway 86 and between Highway 78 and County Road S-22, including section 24 of the Seventeen Palms Quadrangle, township 10 South, range 9 East, San Bernardino Base Meridian. Within that area, BLM ownership and California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) ownership is a checkerboard pattern by sections with some private parcels intermingled. South of Highway 78, portions of BLM land is contiguous and portions of private land are intermingled. This area is not part of the OWSVRA.

Objective Statement: Designate this area as a Special Recreation Management Area. To manage the Ocotillo Wells East SRMA for the unique recreational opportunities for both non-motorized and as an open Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) motorized recreation area. Manage the aesthetic quality of the landscape to minimize degradation and provide a scenic backdrop for residents & visitors. As this SRMA is interspersed within the OWSVRA, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DPR should be continued. Those areas within OWSVRA would also be subject to the DPR Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division policies and programs for recreational use and resource protection.

Activities: Casual recreation with motorized vehicles is the main activity here. Ocotillo Wells East SRMA is managed as an open OHV area and route designation as “Open”, “Limited” or “Closed” is analyzed in the WECO TTMP. Visitors ride all types of motorized vehicles specially built or modified for sand or OHV based recreation; plus camping, scenic touring, trail riding, and dune play. Activities include special & competitive events; family, friend and club gatherings; amateur, student & commercial filming and photography. Hiking, wildflower viewing, picnicking and exploring historic ruins.

Experiences: Visitors frequent Ocotillo Wells East primarily for the unique OHV opportunities. Visitors vary from those from North America to those from abroad, with majority of users coming from California & Nevada, who come to experience this beautiful & remote desert system. They come here to ride together with family, friends, and like-minded people. A major draw for this site is the open desert nature of the area, winter climate, and rugged terrain. Most visitors come to enjoy their vehicles and camping with extended family and friends. They enjoy the various destination points of interest, terrain challenges, and learning about the area’s natural and cultural history. The long distance OHV trail opportunities provide people a sense of freedom and openness to explore and go into desolate areas.

Benefits: This area provides personal benefits that are tied to personal accomplishment and perseverance in this remote and inhospitable environment. Individuals are challenged to build, borrow, buy, modify or rent vehicles to travel here; everything about coming here and traveling through the area is difficult and the rewards are increased self-worth, trust, an expanded capacity to travel and experience other areas. This area with its remoteness and few roads and services, contributes to community, social, economic and environmental benefits in its ability to generate tourism. This SRMA provides connectivity among areas and trails, in location and time, providing outstanding motorized riding and touring experiences. Here

people learn to appreciate the subtle links and connections between all living things and water. In this stark landscape people become aware and grow to appreciate the beauty, creativity & tenacity of nature; leading to feelings of well-being and inspiration for life. This area provides a relatively safe & easy setting for legal motorized OHV play and therefore reduces pressure and potential impacts to sensitive areas.

RECREATION SETTING CHARACTERISTICS (RSC) DESCRIPTIONS

Physical Components: The qualities of this landscape have the characteristics fitting the *Front Country Classification*. A beneficial feature of this SRMA is extensive access, combined with this areas location within a couple hours' drive of the Los Angeles and San Diego areas. This SRMA stretches along Highways 86 from Indio to El Centro. The Ocotillo Wells SRMA area is a bit more remote, yet is adjacent to rural communities. This entire SRMA shares a common natural semi-remote look and connectivity. Several maintained county roads, and power lines bisect the area, with scattered residents, mines and communication sites interspersed throughout the area. In combination with the SVRA, visitor facilities are located along primary access roads and at popular staging sites in the OHV open areas. They include kiosks, vault toilets and shower facilities, vehicle barriers and camping areas.

Social Components: The sheer size of this area allows visitors to disperse and therefore not appear often in large concentrations. However, on a given weekend the proximity and size of this area draws a large number of people, moving around the area, or riding the main roads will generally result in on-going contacts throughout the day. This pattern results from the geography, existing trail locations and land use management prescriptions.

Organized events range from a dozen to 1,000 participants. Most casual use is dispersed and varies from single users to large family and friend groups that may involve a couple dozen primary vehicles and several dozen off-highway vehicles. User data is monitored by DPR within OWSVRA.

Operational Components: Through an interagency MOU, OWSVRA is to manage all recreational activities within its borders, protect recorded natural and cultural resources and provide law enforcement and emergency services. Interpretive panels are dispersed are dispersed throughout the area and rules are clearly posted; temporary, permanent and emergency closures and use restrictions are common for sensitive resources, health and safety purposes, and to avoid conflicts among visitors. Visitor services consist of law enforcement patrols and emergency services, park and trail maintenance, trash service and an interpretive program. State park resources staff monitors and restores natural and cultural resources according to OHMVR guidelines. Visitor use facilities within OWSVRA include restrooms and showers, developed and open camping, vault toilets, ramadas and picnic tables. The park's interpretive facilities include a Discovery Center complex and youth training tracks.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & ALLOWABLE USES

Recreation and Visitor Services Program:

The OWSVRA will:

- Provide opportunities for an open OHV area, organized and unorganized; as well as other compatible, natural resource uses.
- Provide education, information and interpretation about resource values; balance organized & unorganized uses.
- Provide for other resource uses compatible with organized and unorganized events.
- Provide organized and unorganized OHV recreation opportunities.
- Minimize resource impacts, ensuring continued use.
- Provide a safe, challenging environment and a low level of dispersed facility development
- Provide access, desert travel information, staging and camping opportunities,
- identify the boundaries,
- Manage human waste and to minimize negative impacts to natural and cultural resources.
- Determine and enforce fees, Camping limits and Regulations.

The majority of Ocotillo Wells East SRMA is managed as an open OHV area (See WECO TTMP). All routes of travel will be managed as open, limited or closed as designated in the WECO TTMP. BLM will consider leasing these lands to retain the recreational values that are provided.

Acres by Alternative on BLM Lands:

No Action	Preferred Alternative	1	2	3	4
0	58004	21336	21351	21351	21351

Other Programs: Renewable energy development is not an allowable use in SRMAs due to the incompatibility with the values of the SRMA. Two exceptions to this management action are: 1) geothermal development is an allowable use if a geothermal-only DFA overlays the SRMA designation and complies with a “no surface occupancy” restriction (except for those areas already under lease, which may have surface occupancy); and, 2) in the Preferred Alternatives if a DRECP variance land designation overlays the SRMA, renewable energy may be allowed on a case-by-case basis if the proposed project is compatible with the specific SRMA values. Alternative 2 – Maximum Development Flexibility Alternative will allow for “surface occupancy” for existing and future permits.

Implementation Decisions: Through an interagency MOU, OWSVRA manages all recreational activities, protect recorded natural and cultural resources and provide law enforcement and emergency services.

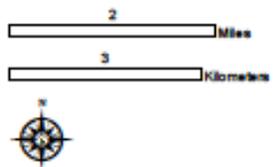
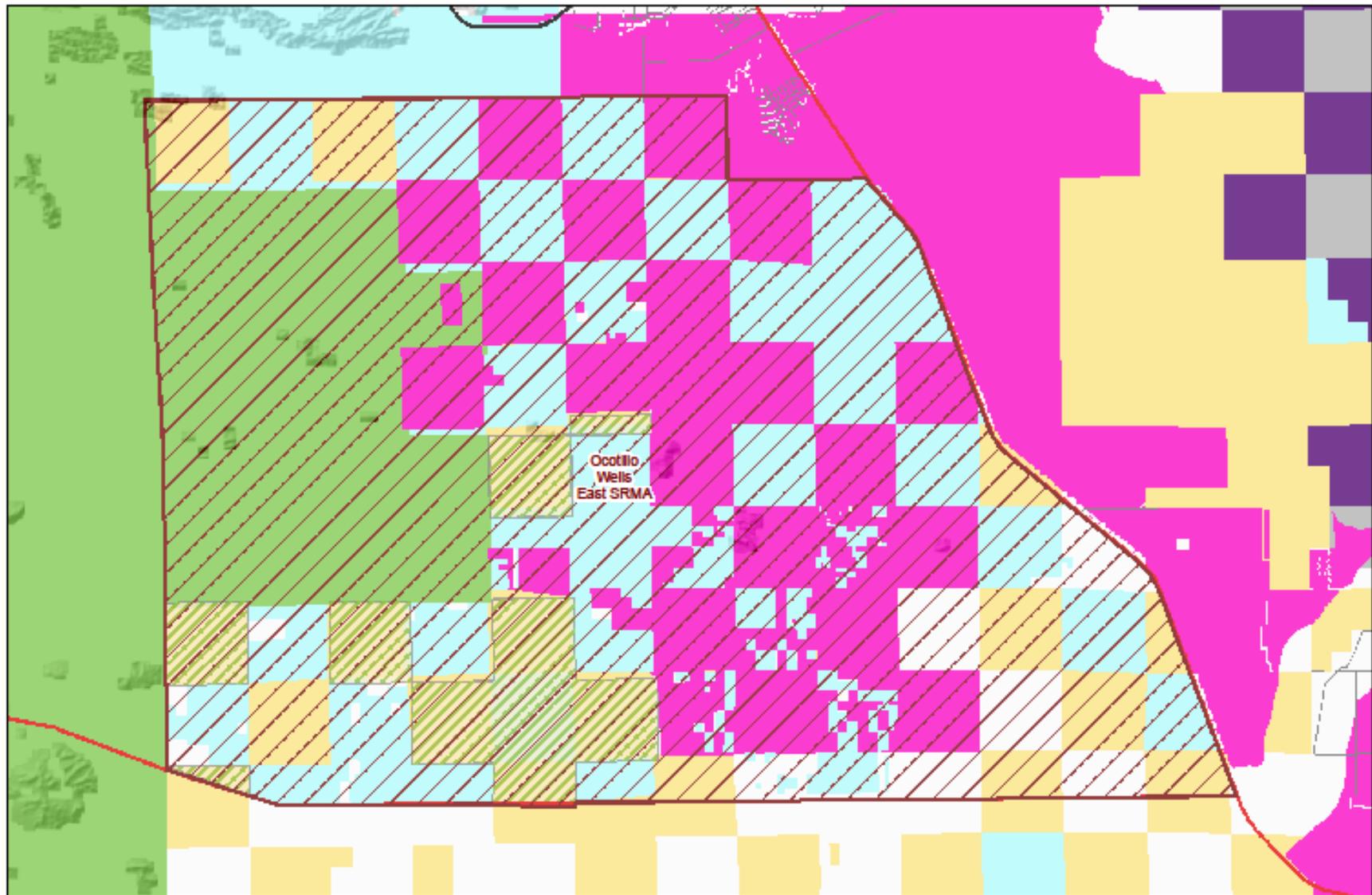
An activity level plan (BLM) and/or a General Plan/EIR would be developed to identify and designate current and future recreational opportunities, appropriate facilities to provide for and manage the proposed uses, parameters for streamlined Special Recreation Permitting, staffing and funding needs,

parameters for facility and road/trail maintenance, partnerships, possible recreation fee considerations, and an implementation schedule. This plan will identify potential impacts to eligible archaeological properties within the SRMA and protect eligible sites due to impacts from OHV use and camping.

Mitigation:

1. Maintain through traffic motorized route network connectivity with roads and trails leading into and through the Ocotillo Wells East SRMA.
2. Manage renewable energy development on adjacent and nearby lands to avoid traffic conflicts with visitors & permitted uses.
3. The proponent will manage “surface occupancy” to consider public health and safety by providing education, signage, fencing, etc. as determined by OWSVRA and the BLM.
4. The proponent will replace any existing facilities that are no longer accessible by the public due to renewable energy development.

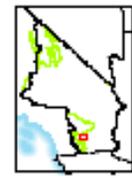
Ocotillo Wells East SRMA



Preferred Alternative SRMAs and ERMAS
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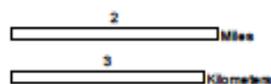
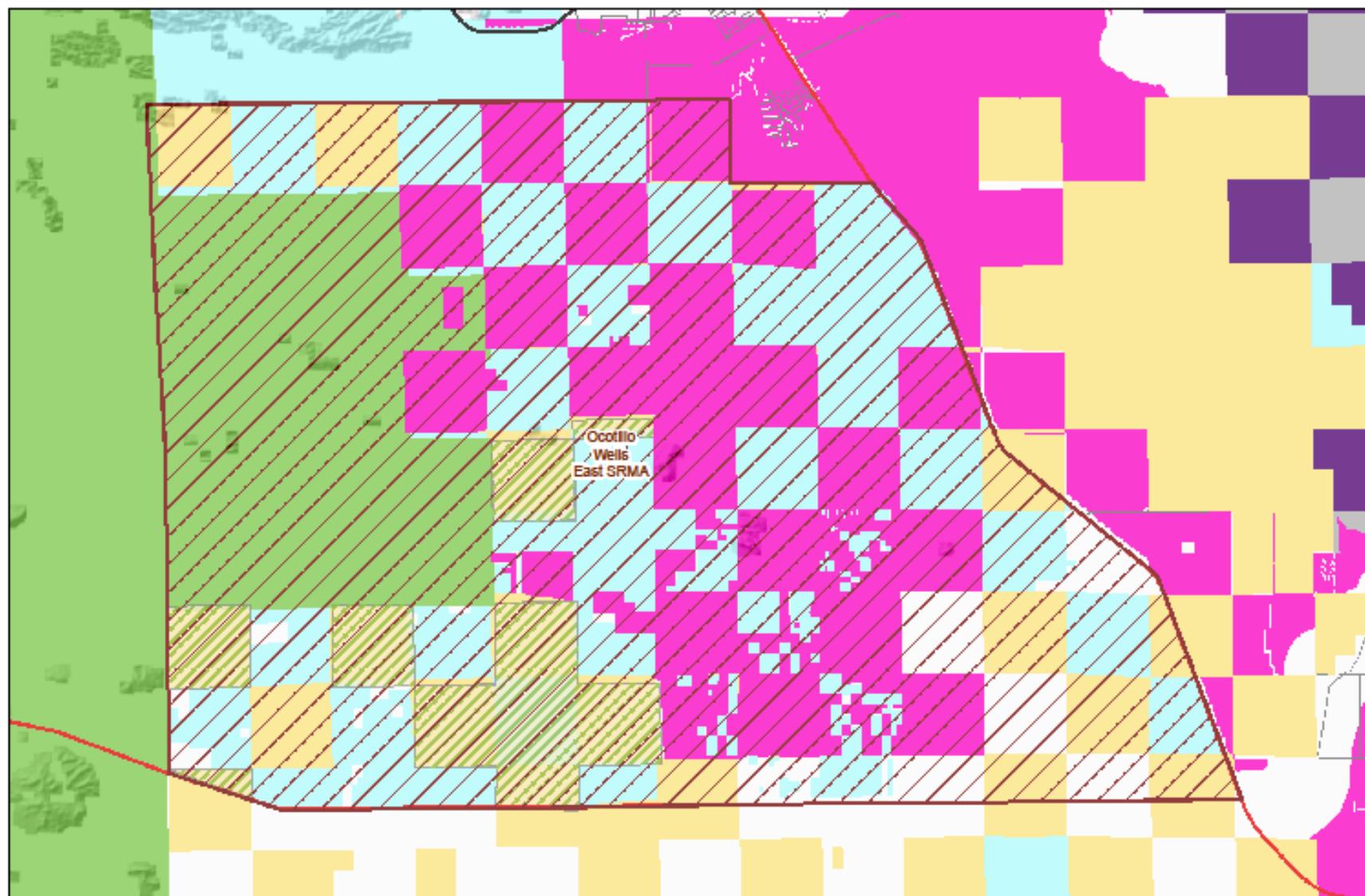
- ACEC Layers**
- Proposed SRMA
 - Design Focus Areas
 - OHV Areas
 - Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Boundaries**
- CDCA Boundary
 - DRECP Boundary
 - BLM Field Office

- Land Status**
- Bureau of Land Management
 - State
 - Other Federal
 - Military
 - Private
- GTLP**
- Interstate
 - US Hwy
 - CA Hwy
 - County Hwy



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Ocotillo Wells East SRMA



Alternative 1 SRMAs

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ACEC Layers

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

Land Status

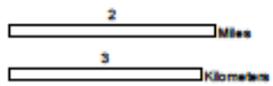
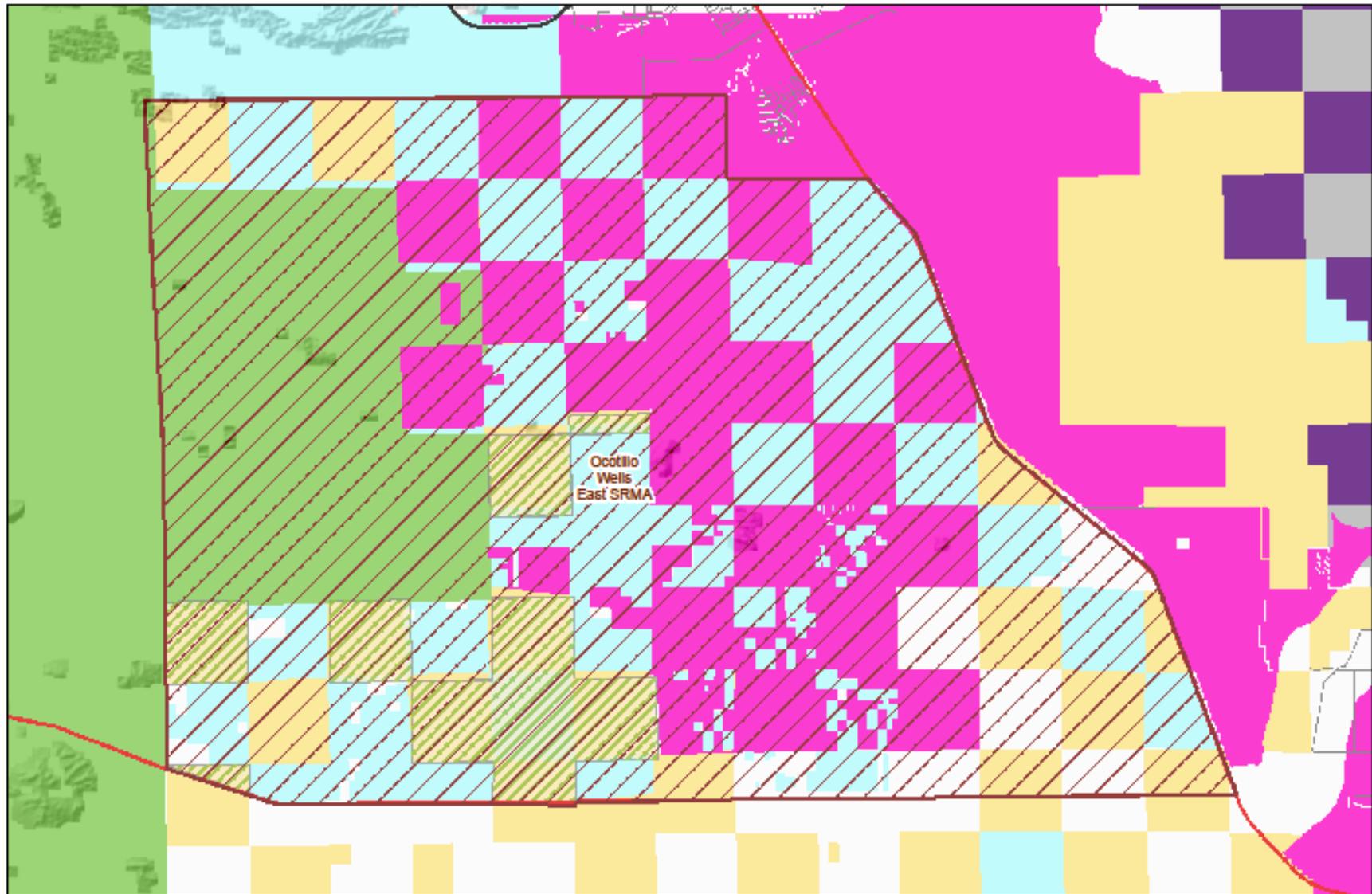
- Bureau of Land Management
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- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTIP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



Ocotillo Wells East SRMA



Alternative 2 SRMAs

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ACEC Layers

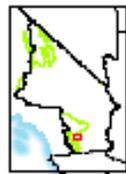
- Proposed SRMA
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

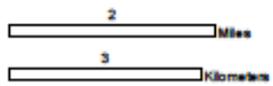
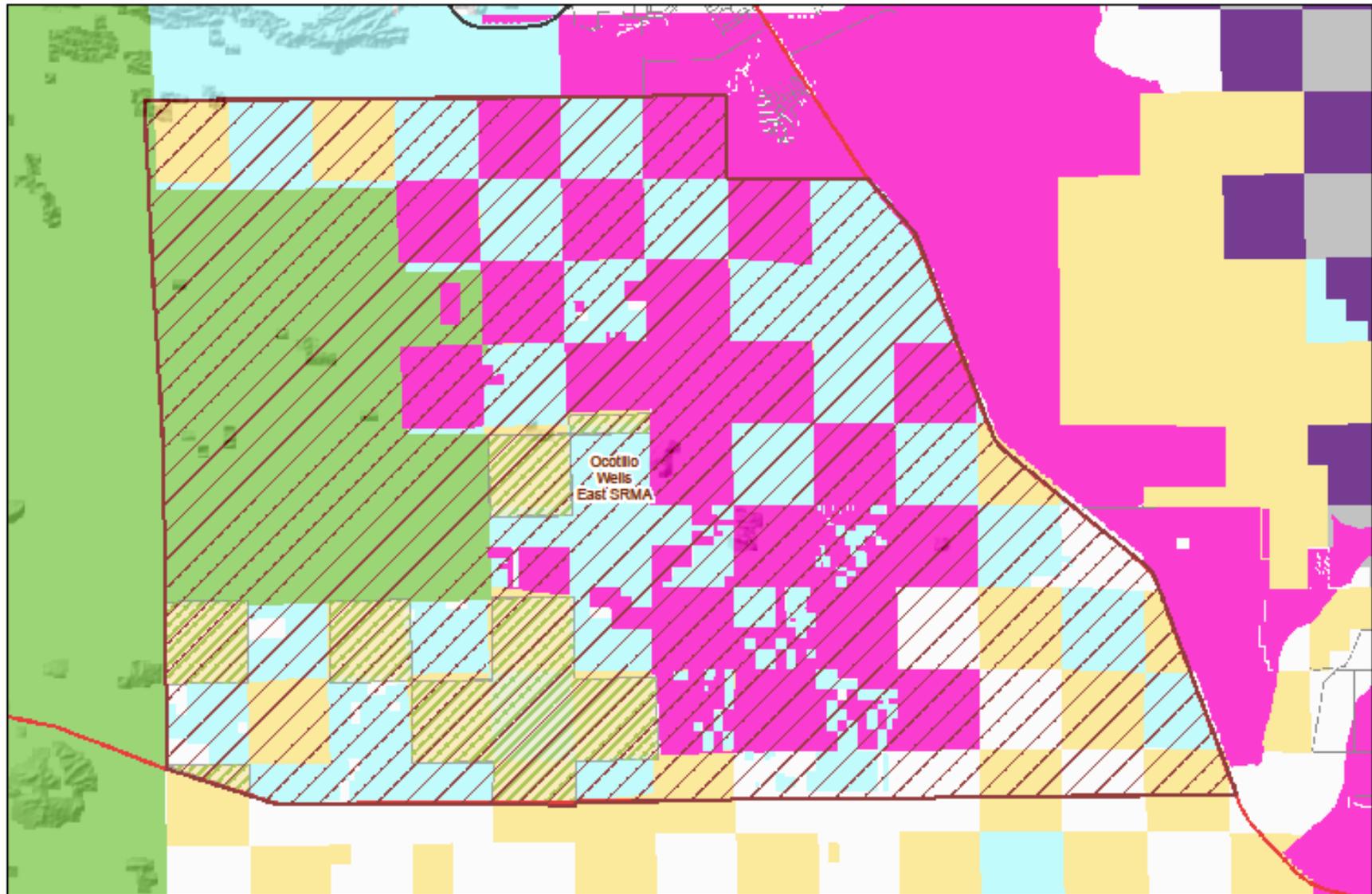
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
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- Military
- Private

GTLP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



Ocotillo Wells East SRMA



Alternative 3 SRMAs

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ACEC Layers

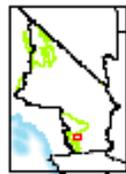
- Proposed SRMA
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

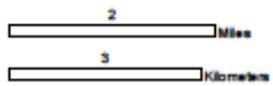
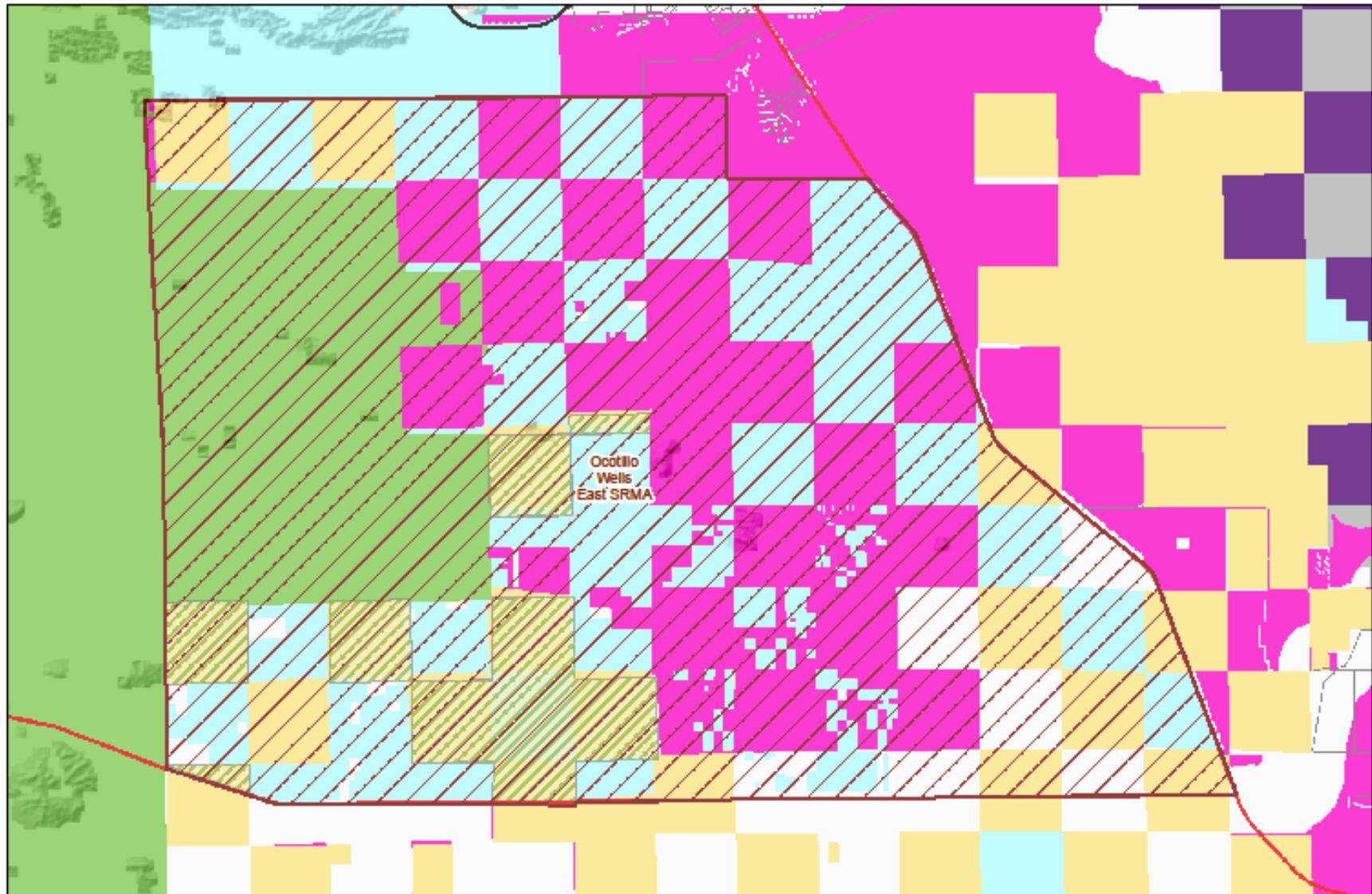
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTLP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



Ocotillo Wells East SRMA



Alternative 4 SRMAs

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ACEC Layers

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

Land Status

- Bureau of Land Management
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- Private

GTLP

- Interstate
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- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

