

El Paso/ Rands Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

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

Background: The El Paso Rands SRMA consists of 3 separate Recreation Management Zones (RMZ's) - El Paso Mountains, Rand Mountains Management Area, and Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area. These separate areas provide multiple use recreation opportunities that stretch from the northern side of California City, heading north up through the Desert Tortoise Natural Area, connecting through Rand Mountains Management Area, and ending up on the southern boundary of Inyokern California. From east to west, the El Paso Rands SRMA is sandwiched between State Highway 14 and U.S. Highway 395. These paved highways provide several ways to access these areas with multiple routes waiting for users to experience all its glorious landscapes and attractions.

Recreational enthusiasts from Southern and Central California especially flock to this area each year between the months of October and May to take a trip back in time to explore the left over remnants of a society's addiction to gold in 1895. One of the main attractions today is the "living" ghost town of Randsburg. It is known as the living ghost town due to the fact that some of the businesses are still open with a small population living in their houses that were built back in its prime. Friends and family that recreate and camp in the local area navigate to Randsburg for lunch while touring the rest of the RMZ's. On the major holiday weekends approximately 2000 users with their off-highway vehicle are dispersed over the town visiting the open businesses and bringing in revenue to the historic town. The town of Randsburg is one of the major mining attractions that off-highway vehicle users come to see, in addition to Burro Schmidt Tunnel, Bonanza Post Office, Last Chance Canyon, Sheep Springs, designated shooting range, rock hounding sites, the historic town of Garlock, trailheads into El Paso Mountains Wilderness, petroglyph areas outdoor activities, as they escape from the pressures of city life.

Objective Statement: The objective is to designate this area as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), along with this SRMA is to be managed as three separate Recreation Management Zones that provides a wide recreational environment focusing on low to high impact levels of multi-use recreation. These areas should be maintained and enhanced keeping the emphasizes on experiencing the old mining camps by the way of designated route network, motorized touring and education, and desert/nature hikes viewing and experiencing the sensitive wildlife that is the center focus inside the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. The goal is to continue to offer a variety of recreational opportunities that maintain the natural character of the landscape and protect sensitive resources and habitats, while encouraging and enhancing the use of outdoor activities that provide and protect the public's pleasure and protects the use for immediate and future generations.

Activities: The primary activities for the El Paso Rands SRMA are described in each recreation management zone. In the El Paso and Rand Mountains RMZ's shows the primary use being motorized recreation touring, trail riding, off road/tread lightly recreation education, advanced technical routes, four-wheel drive trails, and thrill seeking hill climbs in the Rand Mountains, which only a high skilled motorcycle operator could only use. Continuing with hiking, hunting, exceptional game bird hunting, rock hounding, mountain biking, equestrian rides, wildlife and wild flower viewing, sightseeing, photography, picnicking, stargazing, and several special

recreation permitted activities such as dual sport adventures, equestrian endurance rides, competitive mountain bike races, off-road vehicle education and other special recreation events.

Activities in the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA) are nature walks, hiking, wildlife viewing, educational outings, habitat studies, and photography are the primary uses. The DTRNA is closed to Motorized and Mechanized forms of travel. Additionally all forms of livestock and pets such as dogs are prohibited from entry to protect the wildlife within the area.

Each year the BLM hosts a National Public Lands Day within the field offices jurisdiction to allow the public to embrace and care for their land honoring their special places in the El Paso Mountains that receive the benefit of public volunteer cleanups. One of the biggest cleanup happened at the Burro Schmidt Camp Site, which allows individuals and organized groups from the local community a chance to come out and give a helping hand to their fragile desert where they live.

Experiences: Overall, this SRMA provides a place for friends and family to stop, camp, rest, and enjoy the interpretive materials along the highways, a place to get out and stretch, and to enjoy the panoramic view on top of the ridge tops of the great outdoors away from major metropolitan areas. However, one of the main enjoyments and appreciations are to go back in time to experience the old historic mining settlements and viewing of sensitive wildlife in their habitat. This brings out one's emotions, empathies, and appreciations for the environment. The feeling of being one with nature and a place where family can bond with the environment. The SRMA provides charitable experiences and opportunities for all to enjoy and to stand in awe over what mother nature can do. These multiple types of recreation no matter if it is motorized recreation, motorized dependent recreation, and/or non-motorized recreation gives those that come to visit their habitat closure of how big and important their world is shared with all wildlife.

Benefits: This SRMA relieves other more sensitive areas from for motorized use and offers OHV use people the chance to get away from cities stress and the pressures of modern urban life. They may seek to reconnect with nature, practice primitive skills, and experience what it means to be human in an essentially wild, natural, and undeveloped setting. Families and friends may seek to spend quality time together undistracted by modern conveniences and indoor pursuits.

RMZ LIST OVERVIEW

1. **El Paso Mountains:** This area found south of Inyokern and southwest of Ridgecrest. OHV enthusiasts have used this area intensively for at least the last 35 years. This area has a limited use land classification, identified for prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic mining abandoned communities, and its motorized designated route network. Location is just south of the city of Inyokern and southwest of Ridgecrest, reaching all the way to Red Rock Inyokern Road and Garlock Road. The El Paso Mountains RMZ surrounds El Paso Mountains Wilderness, and joins Red Rock State Park, which allows off highway vehicle connectivity through both areas and to others SRMAs. The main attractions for this area are thriving and frequently visited and used throughout the year. These must-see areas are as follows; Burro Schmidt Tunnel, Bickel Camp (which has a caretaker), petroglyph areas like Sheep Springs and the Historic Bonanza Post Office, Last Chance Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), designated shooting range, rock hounding sites, the historic town of Garlock, trailheads leading into El Paso Mountains Wilderness, upland game bird hunting areas, and experiencing the historic mining communities.

2. **Rand Mountains Management Area (RMMA):** This RMZ is located on the south side of the El Paso Mountains and north of California City. OHV enthusiasts have used this area intensively for at least the last 35 years. The numerous roads and trails have made up this popular area for both OHV casual use and foot traffic. The area is popular for hunting upland game birds, camping, photography, wildflower viewing, and rock collecting. This areas land use classification is “limited use” with 129 miles of designated routes, has the RMMA education permit program, all motor vehicle operators must have an authorized operators permit to operate any motor vehicle within permit program area. RMMA has no wilderness within the area, but on the other hand, since this area is desert tortoise habitat (the official California State reptile and is a threatened species) makes this RMZ a Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA) and also designated as the Rands Mountains/Fremont Valley ACEC. To help with the protection of the desert tortoise there are only 5 designated places posted where camping is allowed, and all target shooting is prohibited, however, hunting is allowed during upland game bird season with shotguns and/or bow and arrows only.

3. **Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTNA):** In 1980, the California District Conservation Area Plan designated this as a natural area for sensitive wildlife mainly the desert tortoise. This location is north of California City, east of Cantil, and west of RMMA education permit program area. Designated as a Desert Wildlife Management Area the following species are found in this area; desert tortoise, Mojave ground squirrel, burrowing owl, desert kit fox, golden eagle, prairie falcon, and chukar. For the protection of sensitive wildlife habitat, motor vehicle use, mountain biking, and horseback riding along with hunting is prohibited. Allowable uses include hiking, wildlife viewing, photography, educational outings, and scientific habitat nature studies.

Activities in the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA) are nature walks, hiking, wildlife viewing, educational outings, habitat studies, and photography are the primary uses. The DTRNA is closed to Motorized and Mechanized forms of travel. Additionally all forms of livestock and pets such as dogs are prohibited from entry to protect the wildlife within the area.

RECREATION SETTING CHARACTERISTICS (RSC) DESCRIPTIONS

RMZ: El Paso Mountains

Physical: Primitive/Back Country to Rural Classifications

Social: Primitive/Back Country to Rural Classifications

Operational: Primitive/Back Country to Rural Classifications

RMZ: Rand Mountains Management Area (Education Permit Program)

Physical: Back/Middle Country to Rural Classifications

Social: Middle /Front Country to Rural Classifications

Operational: Back/Front Country to Rural Classifications

RMZ: Desert Tortoise Natural Area

Physical: Back Country to Front Country Classifications

Social: Primitive to Front Country Classifications

Operational: Primitive to Back Country Classifications

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & ALLOWABLE USES

Acres by Alternative on BLM Lands:

No Action	Preferred Alternative	1	2	3	4
0	199,028	177,096	177,096	177,096	177,096

Recreation and Visitor Services:

El Paso Mountains RMZ

The El Paso Mountains provides great backcountry camping opportunities, which can be found throughout the El Paso Rands SRMA. These primitive campsites are located in a wide variety of environments that are widely dispersed, undeveloped and are generally not signed as campsites. Camping is permitted for up to 14 days at any one site, after this time period occupants must relocate to another site at least 25 miles away. Camping is prohibited within 600 feet from any developed water source such as a guzzler or watering trough, so that the water is accessible to wildlife and livestock. When using a motorized vehicle for camping access within a Limited Use Area, limit vehicle parking and camping to no more than 300 feet from an established road.

Target Shooting: is allowed in the El Paso Mountain RMZ only as per Bureau of Land Management California policy CFR 8365.1-5 (a) (1) & (2).

Special Recreation Permits are authorized for special recreational uses of the public lands. They are issued as a means to manage organized events, protect natural and cultural resources, and provide a mechanism to accommodate commercial recreation. Authorized by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act, there are five types of uses for which these permits are required: commercial, competitive, vending, individual or group use in special areas, and organized group activity and event use.

Rand Mountains Management Area RMZ

The Rand Mountains Management Area provides 5 designated camping areas and multiple recreation opportunities which can be found throughout the El Paso Rands SRMA. These designated campsites are widely dispersed and undeveloped. Camping is permitted for up to 14 days at any one site, after this time period you must relocate to another site at least 25 miles away.

Target shooting is not allowed in the Rand Mountains Recreation Management Zone. No person may discharge a firearm at any time except shotguns and then only for the lawful taking of upland game birds in the upland and mountainous portions of the RMZ.

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Desert Tortoise Natural Area RMZ

Upon completion of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, the BLM designated the DTNA as an ACEC, one of 73 such units within the California Desert. The ACEC designation process includes protective management. Such protection is to be provided on a continuing, priority basis as specified in section 202 (c) (3) of the FLPMA. The special management requirements as specified in the CDCA Plan became effective upon designation of the DTNA as an ACEC in 1980. An ACEC includes only public lands and does not include privately owned land. The CDCA Plan (1980) summarized the values and management requirements as follows:

"Management Prescriptions."

- a. Implement a natural history program.
- b. Permit nature to determine population levels and dynamics.
- c. Eliminate or control vehicle use, grazing, mining, and dumping.
- d. Complete perimeter fencing.
- e. Rehabilitate disturbed areas.
- f. Acquire private inholdings.

Activities in the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA) are nature walks, hiking, wildlife viewing, educational outings, habitat studies, and photography are the primary uses. The DTRNA is closed to Motorized and Mechanized forms of travel. Additionally all forms of livestock and pets such as dogs are prohibited from entry to protect the wildlife within the area.

Other Programs: Continue natural resource multiple use management practices within the area. Allow all types of activities to occur within the area, except those with unacceptable safety concerns or degrade the environment. Develop recreation sites are withdrawn from mineral entry

Manage all routes of travel as open, limited or closed, as designated in the Local TTMP.

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; 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 found to be compatible with the specific SRMA values.

Implementation Decisions: An activity level plan 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 of recreation events, staffing and funding needs, parameters for facility and road/trail maintenance, partnerships, possible recreation fee considerations, and an implementation schedule.

El Paso Mountains RMZ

1. Limit vehicles to open designated routes and prevent user-created routes from developing.
2. Restore closed routes, unauthorized vehicle play areas, and unauthorized hill climbs.
3. Prohibit target shooting in sensitive areas and in areas where people typically congregate in large numbers to park or camp.

4. Increase regular ranger patrols to enforce compliance with fire restrictions, camping limits, and vehicle use on the designated route system.
5. Improve visitor services (maps, brochures, and kiosks), maintain signs, restoration sites, and continue to work with community volunteers to clean-up parking, trail head, and camping areas on a regular basis.

Rand Mountains Management Area RMZ

1. Limit vehicles to open designated routes and prevent new user-created routes from developing.
2. Educate users about the Rand Mountains Management Area Education and Permit Program and enforce that all motor vehicle operators are in possession of this permit.
3. Continue with compliance monitoring and locate and fix any fence cuts on a regular schedule.
4. Restore closed routes, unauthorized denuded areas, and unauthorized hill climbs.
5. Continue to allow hunting of upland game birds when in season with shotguns only.
6. Prohibit target shooting.
7. Increase regular ranger patrols to enforce compliance with fire restrictions, camping limits, and vehicle use on the designated route system.
8. Improve visitor services (maps, brochures, and kiosks), maintain signs, restoration sites, and continue to work with community volunteers to clean-up parking, trail head, and camping areas on a regular basis.

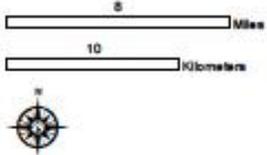
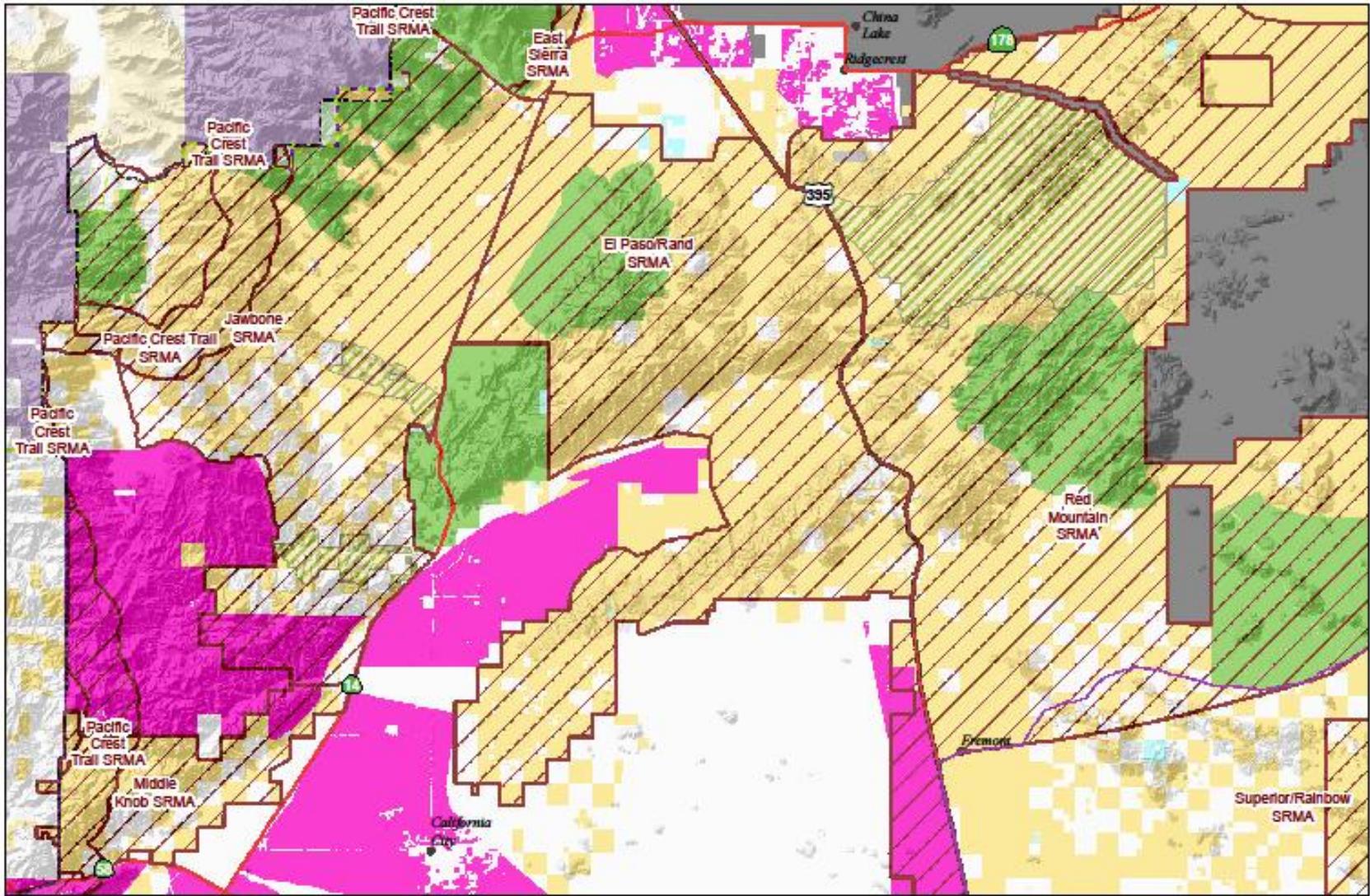
Desert Tortoise Natural Area RMZ

1. Continue working with the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee that helps to oversee and takes care of the property.
2. Ensure that shooting stays prohibited within this RMZ
3. Increase regular ranger patrols to ensure off-highway vehicles do not ride within the area. Vehicle use is prohibited in the DTNA.
4. Improve visitor services (maps, brochures, and kiosks), maintain signs, restoration sites, and continue to work with community volunteers to clean-up parking, trail head, and other areas on a regular basis.
5. Ensure that people do not harass the desert tortoise and educate and enforce that collecting wild tortoises is prohibited by California and Federal laws.
6. Enforce that dogs are prohibited within this RMZ.
7. Educate visitors that plants must not be picked or damaged.
8. Minimize impacts to desert tortoise; provide resource protection for public lands adjacent to the DTNA; acquire inholdings if needed; fence or cover open mine shafts.

Mitigation:

1. Maintain through traffic motorized route network connectivity with roads and trails leading into and through the El Paso Rands SRMA.
2. Manage renewable energy development on adjacent and nearby lands to avoid traffic conflicts with visitors & permitted uses.

El Paso/Rand SRMA



Preferred Alternative SRMAs and ERMAs



Date Printed: 6/25/2014
Prepared by BLM California State Office



ACEC Layers

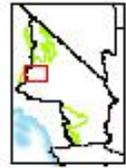
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- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

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

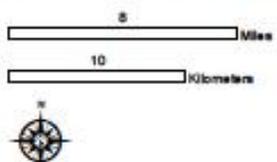
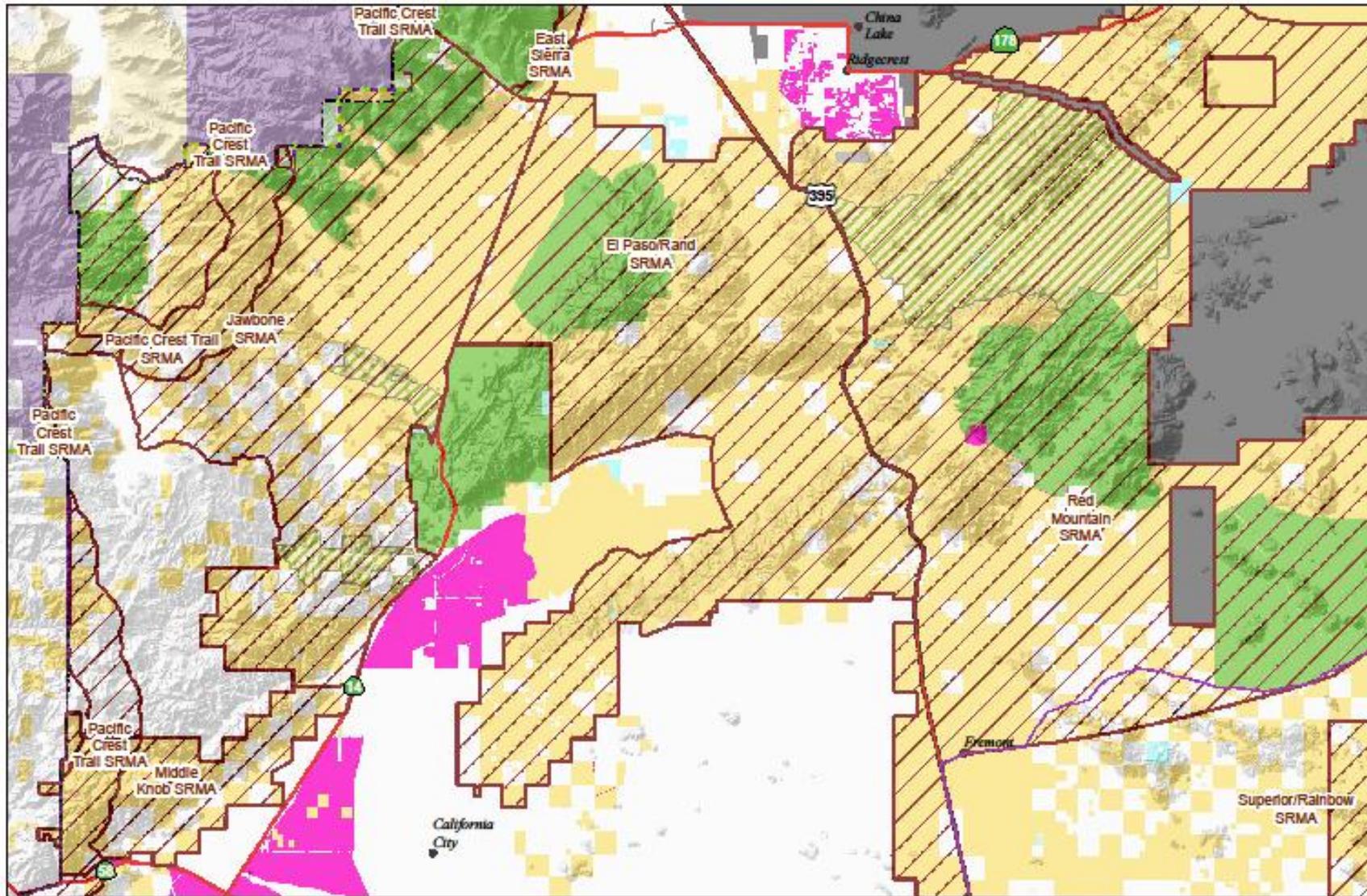
GTLP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



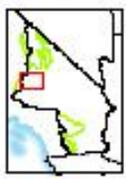
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El Paso/Rand SRMA

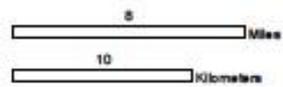
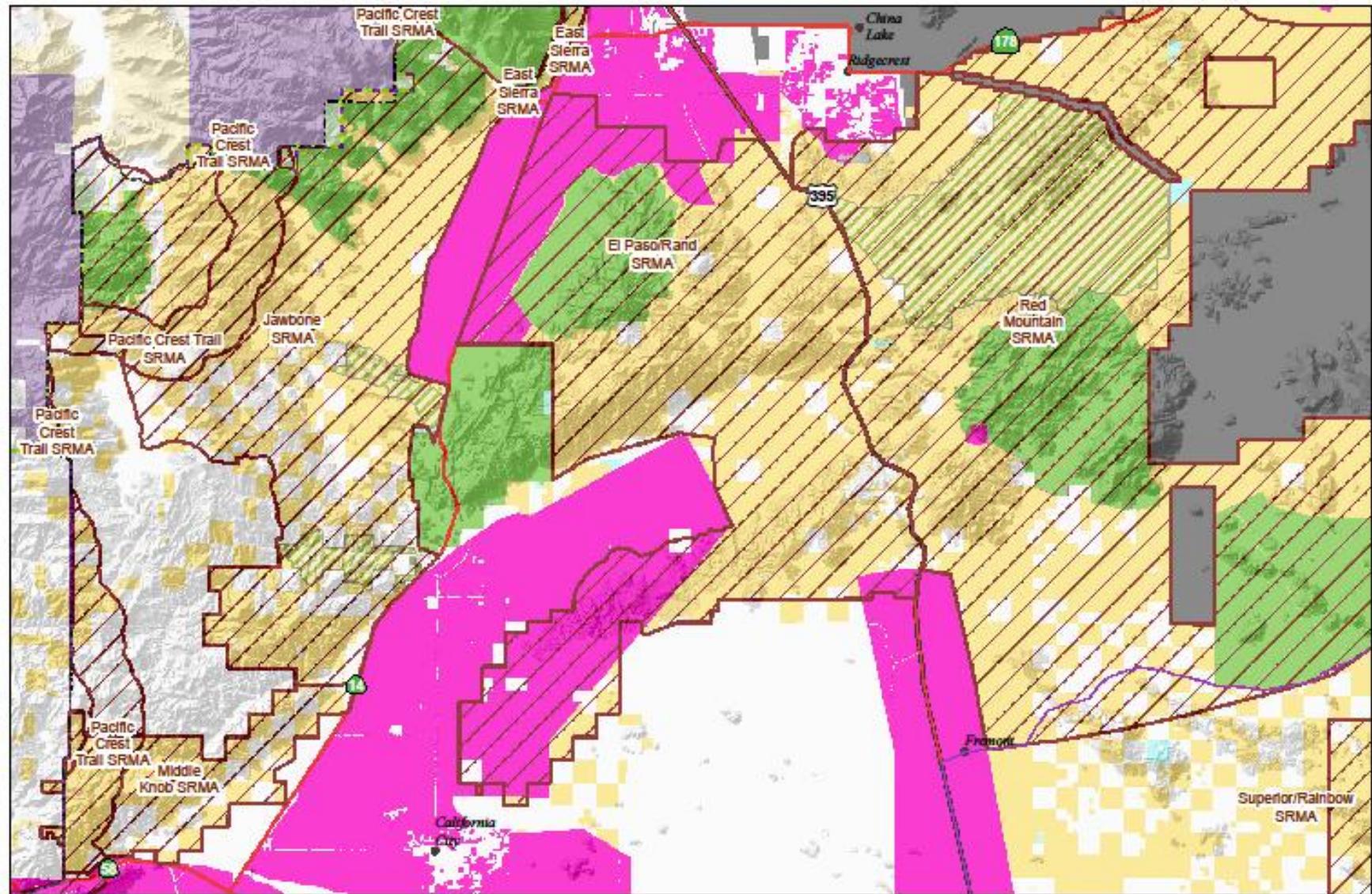


Alternative 1 SRMAs
 Date Printed: 6/25/2014
 Prepared by BLM California State Office

ACEC Layers	Cities	Land Status	GTIF
Proposed SRMA	Cities	Bureau of Land Management	Interstate
Design Focus Areas	CDCA Boundary	State	US Hwy
OHV Areas	DRECP Boundary	Other Federal	CA Hwy
Legislatively and Legally Protected	BLM Field Office	Military	County Hwy
	Private		



El Paso/Rand SRMA



Alternative 2 SRMAs

Date Printed: 6/25/2014
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ACEC Layers

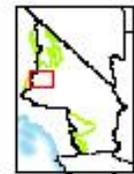
- Proposed SRMA
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

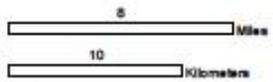
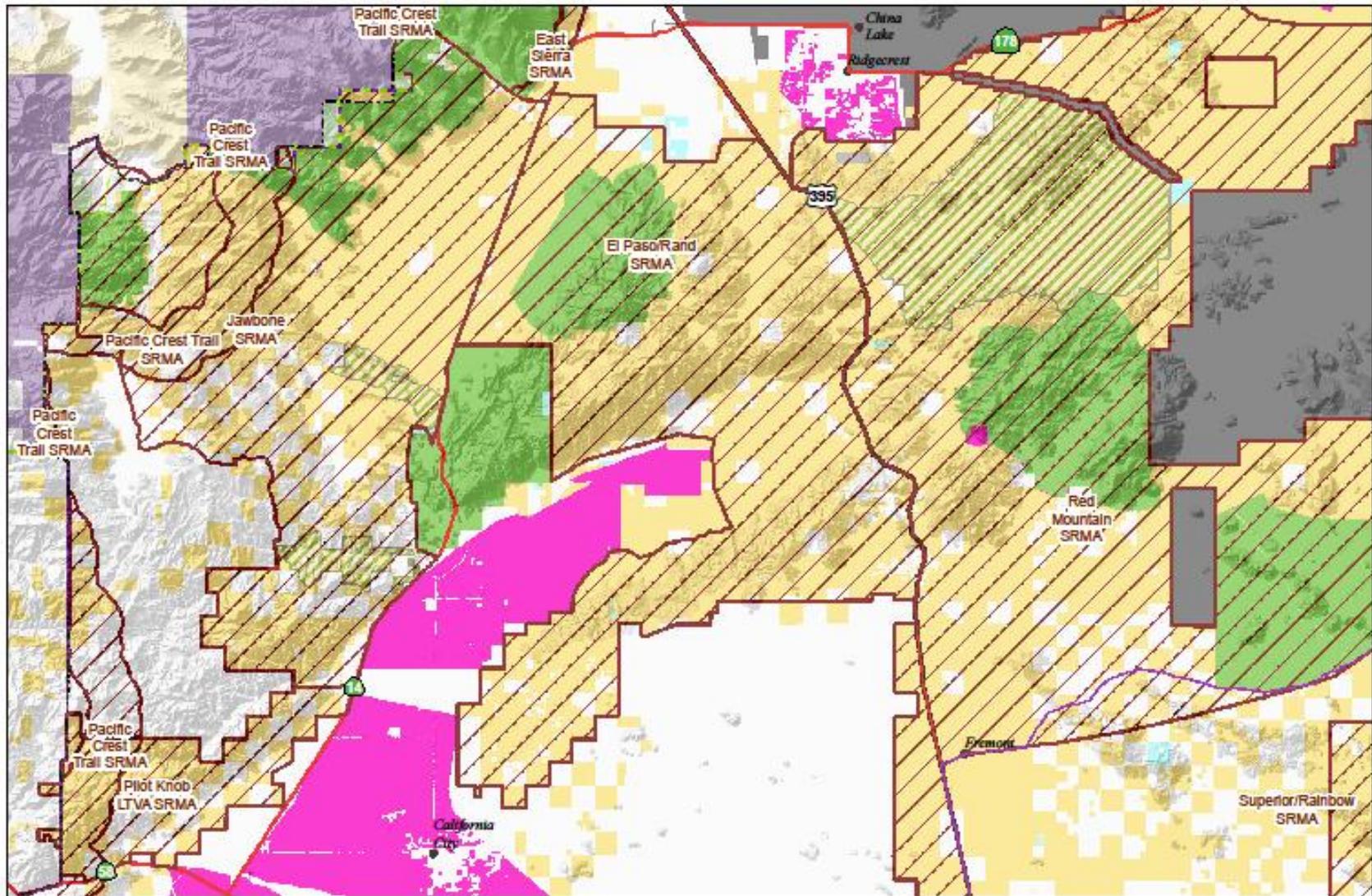
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTIP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



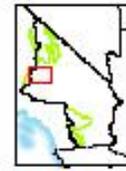
El Paso/Rand SRMA



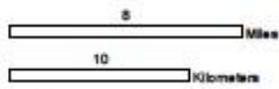
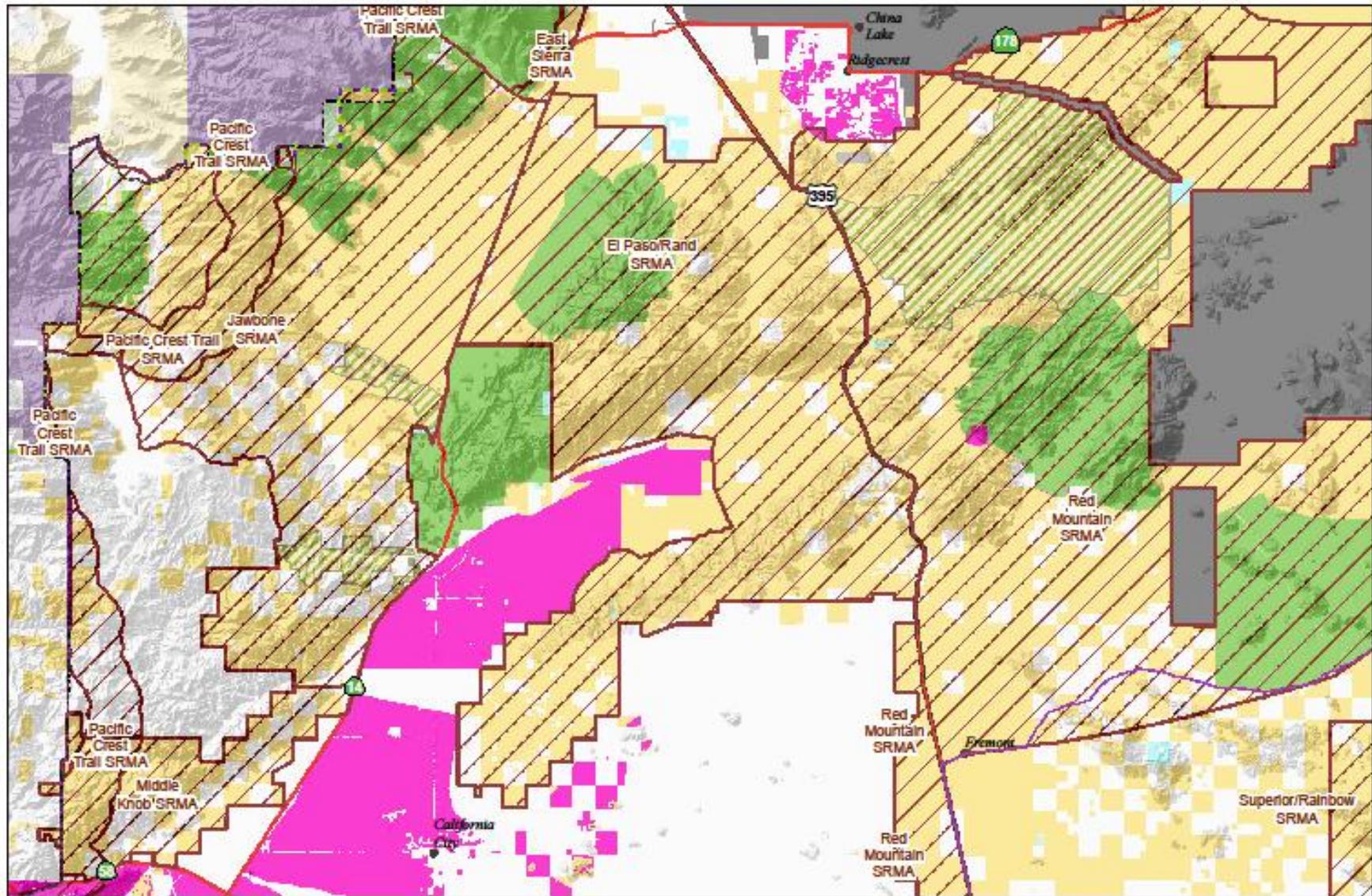
Alternative 3 SRMAs
 Date Printed 6/25/2014
 Prepared by BLM California State Office



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|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------|
| ACEC Layers | Cities | Land Status | GTIF |
| Proposed SRMA | Cities | Bureau of Land Management | Interstate |
| Design Focus Areas | CDCA Boundary | State | US Hwy |
| OHV Areas | DRECP Boundary | Other Federal | CA Hwy |
| Legislatively and Legally Protected | BLM Field Office | Military | County Hwy |
| | | Private | |



El Paso/Rand SRMA



Alternative 4 SRMAs

Date Printed: 6/25/2014

Prepared by BLM California State Office



ACEC Layers

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

Land Status

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

OTIF

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy

