

El Mirage Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)

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

Objective Statement: Designate this area as a Special Recreation Management Area. To manage the El Mirage SRMA for the unique opportunities for motorized recreation, including continued development of on-site visitor services, as well as the non-motorized opportunities; while providing a safe and healthy environment free from restrictive zoning.

El Mirage dry lake bed along with the surrounding uplands and mountains are located in the Mojave Desert of San Bernardino County. The lake is located about nine miles (14 km) west-northwest of the town of Adelanto and ten miles (16 km) north of Highway 18. The dry lake elevation is at 2,840 foot (870 m), it is approximately 5.12 miles (9.7 km) long and covers 3,187 acres. The lakebed is part of the El Mirage Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Open Area. Most visitors ride motorcycles, ATVs, RUVs, or tour in four-wheel drive vehicles. A road network is in place and visitors may camp in most sections of El Mirage. The lakebed is used extensively for competitive racing events and commercial filming by permit. El Mirage's unique flat lakebed is a destination for many visitors. There is a high volume of ultra-light, gyro-copter, and remote controlled aircraft activity. For 50 years the Southern California Timing Association has used the lakebed for timed speed runs. There is a variety of flat and rolling hill terrain for the recreation user. The Friends of El Mirage is an active volunteer group who supports and assists the BLM in administering the area.

The El Mirage Interpretive Trail East and West offers opportunities to explore and enjoy the foothills that rim the El Mirage Dry Lake OHV area and learn about abandoned mines and safety, Joshua trees, wildlife habitat, and historic 1930's Hess ranch site. This is a designated a National Recreation Trail.

Activities: El Mirage likely has the greatest amount of different types of activities of any SRMA because of its location and terrain. Activities include full size aircraft, gyrocopters, hang gliders, ultra lights, parasails, kite flying, land-sailing, remote controlled aircraft, go carts, remote controlled cars, model rockets, mountain biking, mountain climbing, photography, film industry movie filming, scenic four wheel drive touring, ATV play, motorized trail riding, night sky viewing, hiking, camping, organized recreation, interpretive programs, off-road driving, safety training and motorized competitive land speed records.

Experiences: The area is frequented by first time public land visitors because of the sites popularity and long history as a recreation area, and the terrain provides numerous opportunities for learning new sports. Visitors enjoy learning about the natural, historic and abandoned mine resources through interpretive and educational programs. The setting is very social and visitors often appear to receive as much enjoyment from interacting with each other as they do from their primary sport. Here people enjoy the closeness of family and friends and social interaction with other users, group and club events. North of the dry lake bed provides a semi-primitive experience for hiking, scenic and wildlife viewing. The lakebed is often used for experimental vehicle and invention testing. Many private pilots land on the lakebed to spend the day.

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 is difficult and the rewards are increased self-worth, trust, an expanded capacity to travel & experience other areas. This area contributes to community, social, economic and environmental benefits because it generates tourism in this remote area with few roads & services. This SRMA provides connectivity among areas & trails, in location & time, providing outstanding motorized riding & touring experiences sense of accomplishment by setting new land speed records and other competitive records. Greater community ownership and stewardship of desert resources through outreach programs. Sense of community pride, relevance and stability; shared sense of purpose among residents, recreationist, visitors and manufacturers. One of the largest benefits is unrestricted and easy access to large continuous open space.

This area provides a relatively safe & easy setting to direct legal motorized OHV play and therefore reduces pressure & potential impacts to sensitive areas. The site is also a good setting for filming, plus testing and developing new products, ideas, goods, services, and inventions. Increased visitation and interest result from action movies filmed at El Mirage, along with revenue for the local residents.

RECREATION SETTING CHARACTERISTICS (RSC) DESCRIPTIONS

Physical Component: The qualities of the physical component in this area fit the Front Country Classification. El Mirage is set in the rural country side and is one hundred miles from the greater Los Angeles area and five miles from the City of Adelanto. The hills and back country of this area are remote enough for people to get lost, and the night skies are dark enough for groups to gather for night sky viewing. This site is considered front country and marketed to Southern California riders for day and multi-day riding trips. Visitor facilities include developed campgrounds, vault toilets, paved and graded dirt access roads, wildlife drinkers, perimeter fence, interpretive trail, signs and kiosk, OHV training site, 12,000 square foot visitor center, maintenance shop and yard, developed campsites. Northern part of the SRMA is outside the open area and provides an outstanding setting for non-motorized activities.

Social Components: The qualities of the social component in this area meet the Rural Classification. The El Mirage SRMA has the greatest amount of social interaction among visitors, between groups, and between visitors and agency personnel. This site is ideal because the large open lakebed has no speed limit or aircraft restrictions which results with the co-mingling of tinkers from different hobbies and industries such as model rockets, remote controlled aircraft, the film industry, movie stars, the race car industry, NASA (test w/ground sensors and U2 aircraft) venture start-ups experimenting, military exercises, international artists, and world famous musicians. Most visitors are repeat users. Clubs, families and companies visit because of its proximity to cities, good access and history of use.

Seeing others and being seen are important facets of visitor interaction, along with related social and fashion trends. In a day visit users can enjoy observing a multitude of activities including movie filming, model rocketry, and outreach activities. Visitors are highly self-reliant, willing to assist other visitors and

volunteer for the BLM, and enjoy frequent contact among other visitors and staff. Visitors and garage mechanics build or modify motorized vehicles and use the area for testing. This includes both commercial, educational, non-profit, and casual inventors and tinkers.

Operational Components: The operational component conditions in this area meet the Rural Classification. This SRMA is well serviced with good access on a wide paved entry road connected to the county road system. Located two and a half hours northeast of Los Angeles the site is easily accessed by freeways from most points in Southern California, and private airplanes. Access roads support large, heavy eighteen wheel trucks frequently used by the film industry and for special events. The entire area is fenced to control trespass and ensure permit compliance. A visitor center supports staff providing services weekends, holidays, and limited weekdays. Law Enforcement Rangers and Country Sheriff Deputies patrol the area; Junior Ranger program, OHV safety and natural resource presentations are held regularly.

MANAGEMENT ACTIONS & ALLOWABLE USES

Recreation and Visitor Services: Manage the setting for intensive outdoor recreation, free of restrictive zoning; allow the greatest variety of non-recreation activities in minimum conflict with recreation visitors; manage the lakebed to maintain a smooth surface and provide unobstructed open space; provide sufficient visitor services to ensure visitor health and safety, enforce the laws, and distribute visitor information; provide a minimum infrastructure to provide basic visitor services; consolidate land in public ownership to ensure opportunities and resolve issues. Manage Recreation Fee program, commercial filming is handled in accordance with BLM procedures. Manage all routes of travel as open, limited or closed, as designated in the WEMO TTMP.

Acres by Alternative on BLM Lands:

No Action	Preferred Alternative	1	2	3	4
0	27999	17165	17165	17166	17166

Other Programs: Continue with agency 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. Allow commercial filming; product testing; research and development; mining; military exercises; recognize all existing rights-of-way; allow new rights-of-way that have no long-term effect on existing uses; recognize national aircraft and vehicle rights-of-way protocol within recreation area.

Manage the designated National El Mirage Interpretive Trail East as a natural, historic and educational resource open for motorized recreation and interpretative opportunities. The trail wraps around the area and into the adjacent hills. Provide education and Interpretation thru social and web based media, brochures, guided tours, signing and kiosks. This area is proposed for a VRM Class III.

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.

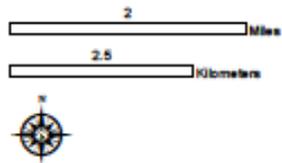
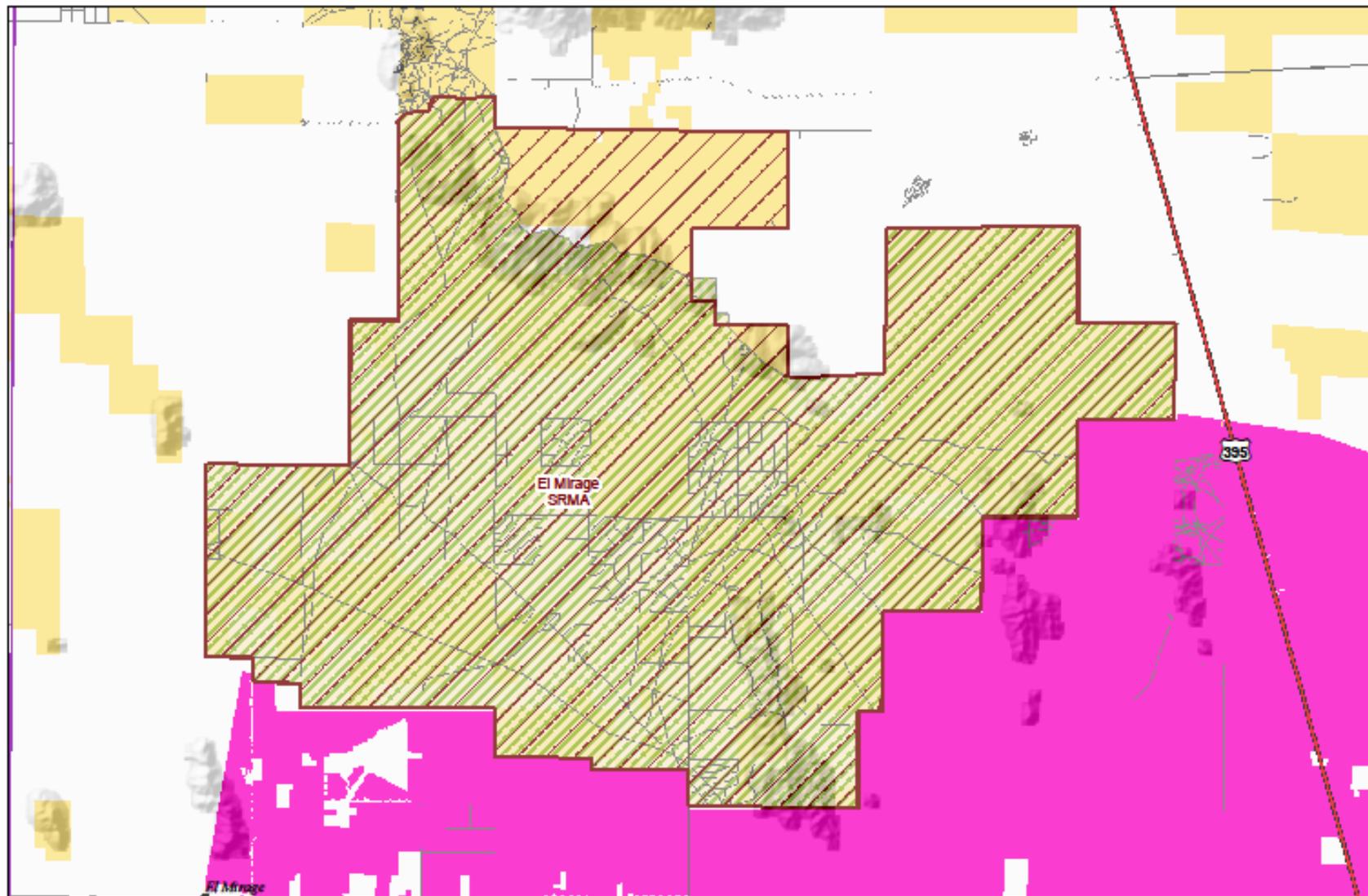
Implementation Decisions: Allow visitors to engage in the activities of their choice at any location on the lakebed, provided they do not interfere with the health and safety of other visitors. Close lakebed to aircraft landing and take-off from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise. Allow camping throughout the area except for open lakebed, adjacent to perimeter, or in facilities; designate sections 14 and 15 for reserved group camping; establish Mountain View Drive as main entry road, pave to minimize dust and provide all weather access. Develop campsites and vault toilets along primary access roads to distribute visitor use throughout area. Provide interpretation and site specific protection measures, including the OHV Ambassador Program for the benefit of wildlife, historic and cultural resources.

Develop a SRMA activity level plan to identify and designate current and future recreational opportunities, appropriate facilities to provide for and manage the proposed uses, parameters for Special Recreation Permitting of recreation events, staffing and funding needs, parameters for facility and road/trail maintenance, partnerships, recreation fee considerations, and an implementation schedule. Until the new plan is approved continue to apply the management actions in the El Mirage Management Plan.

Mitigation:

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

El Mirage SRMA



Preferred Alternative SRMAs and ERMAs



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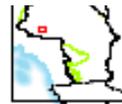
ACEC Layers

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

- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

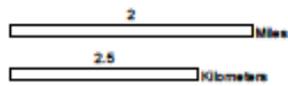
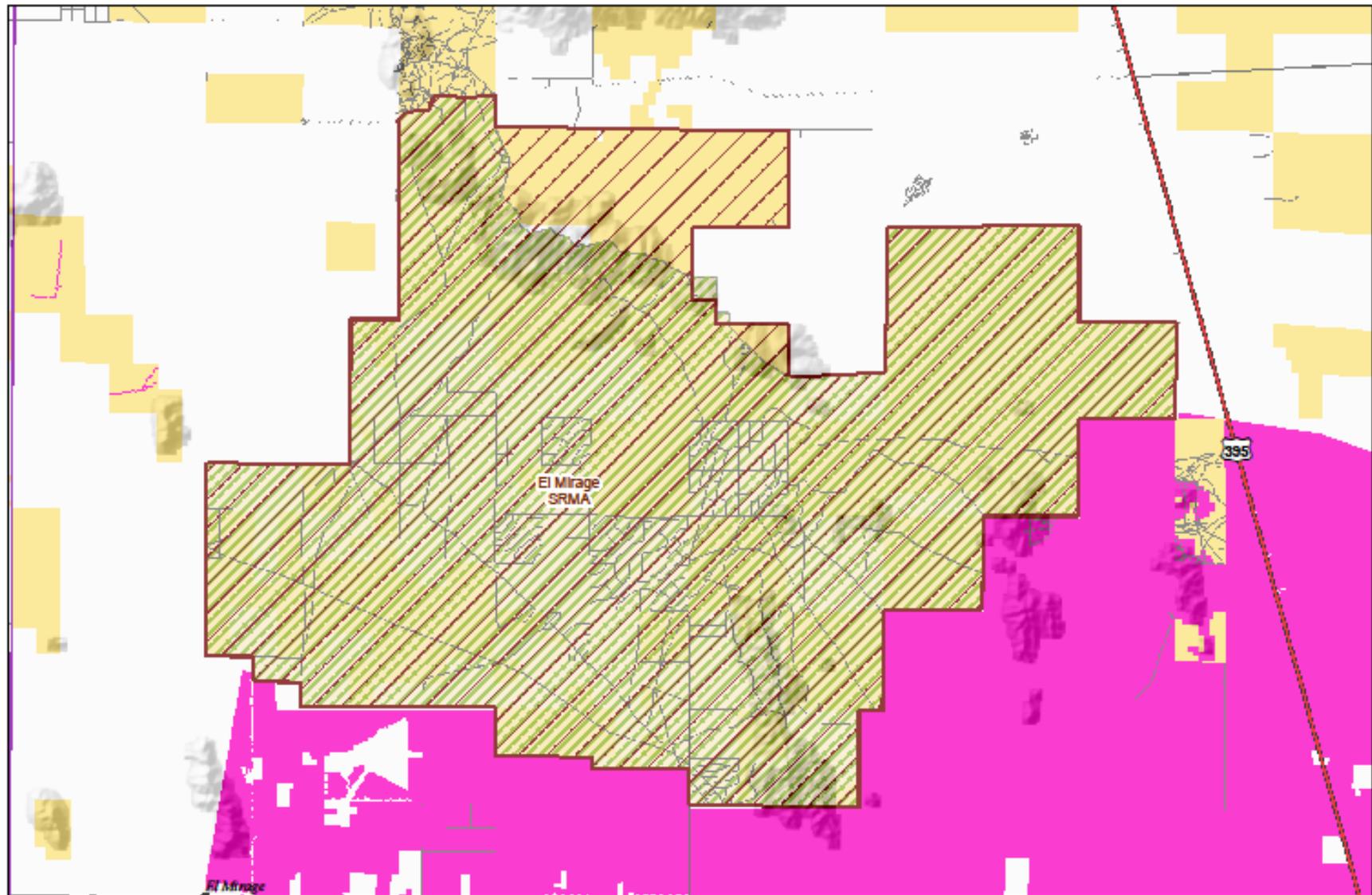
El Mirage

- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



The information and maps shown on this system should be used for planning purposes only. It should not be the sole source for determining map boundary locations.

El Mirage SRMA



Alternative 1 SRMAs

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ACBC Layers

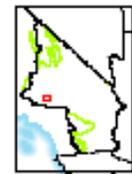
- Proposed SR MA
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

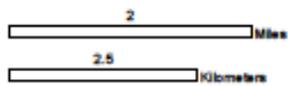
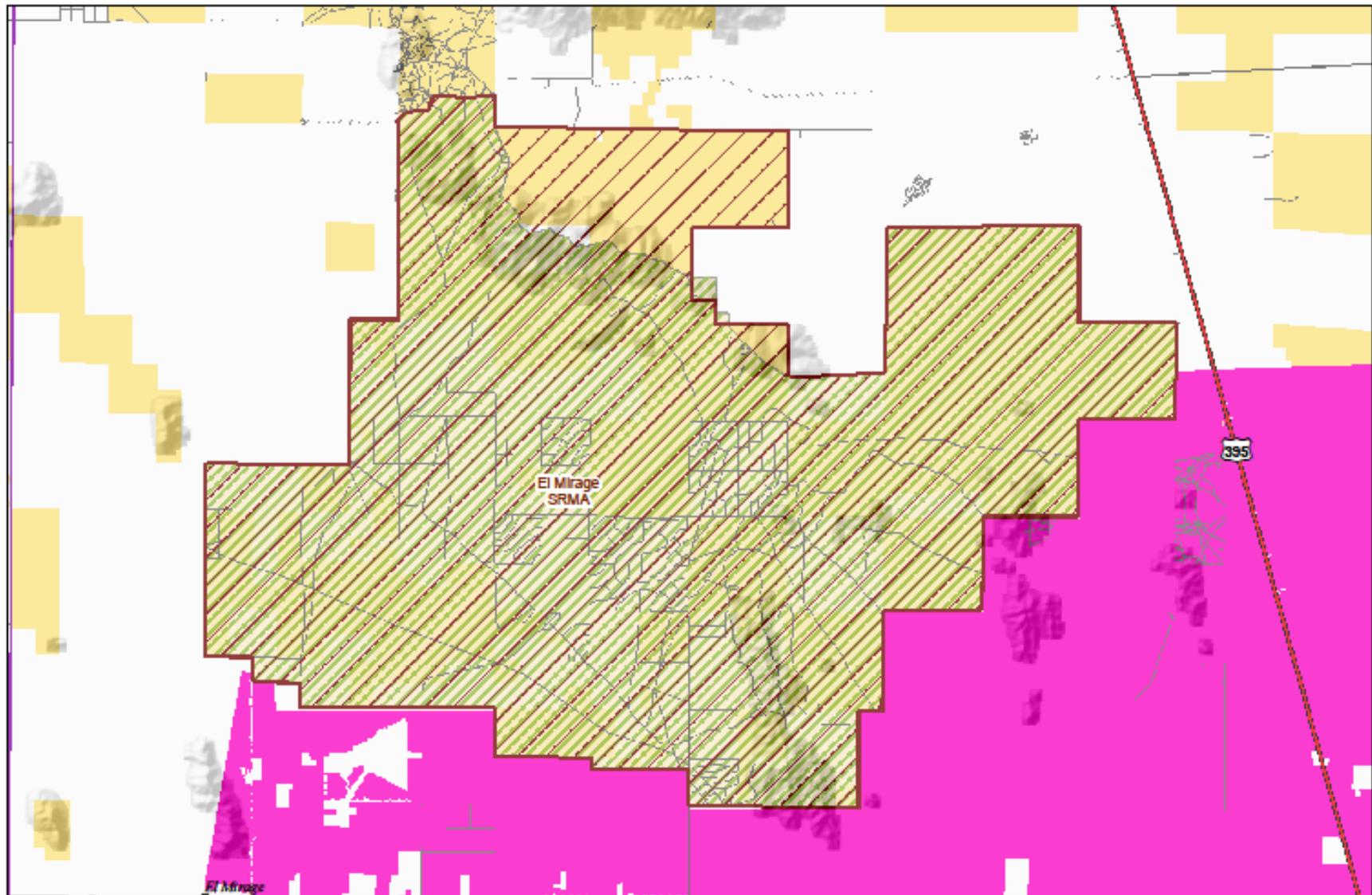
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTLP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



El Mirage SRMA



Alternative 2 SRMAs

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ACCEC Layers

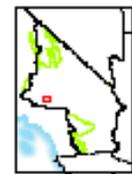
- Proposed SRMA
- Design Focus Areas
- OHV Areas
- Legislatively and Legally Protected
- Cities
- CDCA Boundary
- DRECP Boundary
- BLM Field Office

Land Status

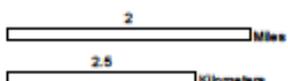
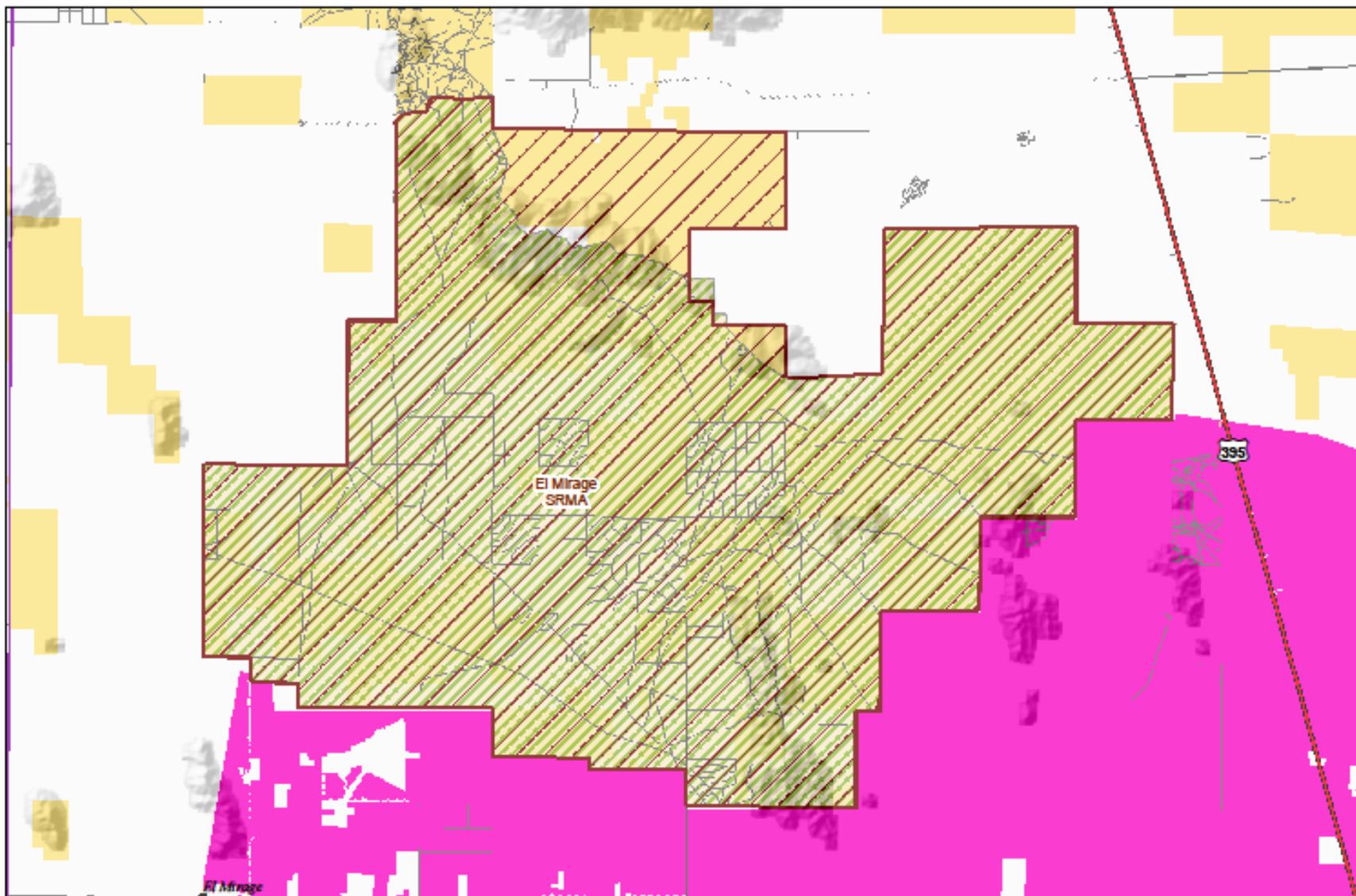
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTLP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



El Mirage SRMA



Alternative 3 SRMAs

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ACBC Layers

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

Land Status

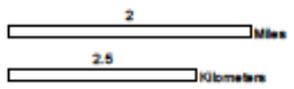
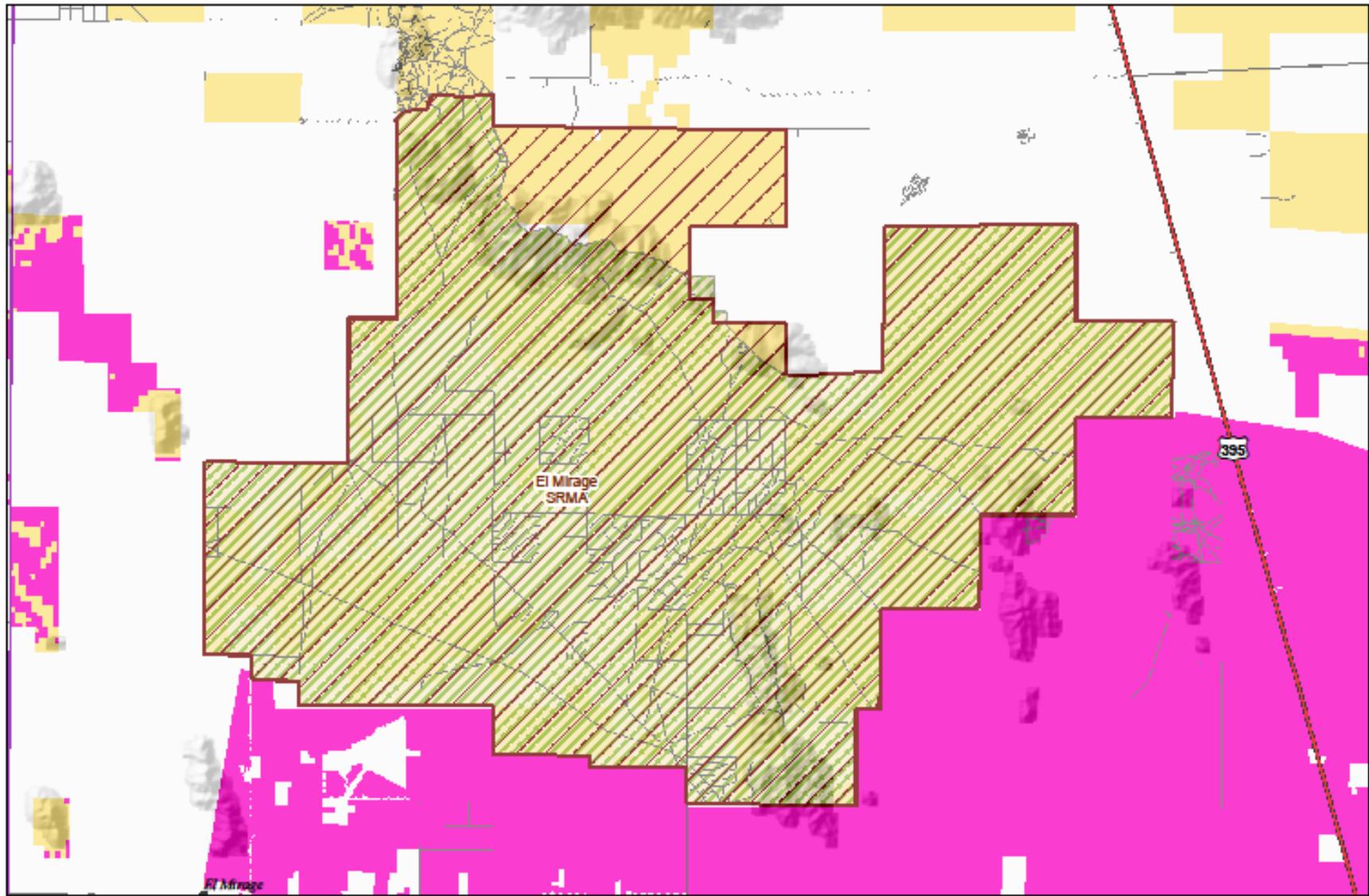
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Other Federal
- Military
- Private

GTIP

- Interstate
- US Hwy
- CA Hwy
- County Hwy



El Mirage SRMA



Alternative 4 SRMAs

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ACCEC 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

