



# Programmatic NEPA for Roadway Fencing to Reduce Mojave Desert Tortoise Mortality – **UPDATE**



**Nancy E. Army**  
**BLM Nevada, Acting Great Basin NEPA Support Team**

# Presentation Overview

- ✓ Update on what has been completed on this initiative since April 2020
- ✓ Upcoming tasks for October/November 2020
- ✓ Questions/Tasks for MOG members interested in becoming a cooperating agencies

# Project Status Update

## Completed since April

- Project governance structure (Memorandum of Understanding)
  - Initiated cooperating agency communications with a majority of MOG members.
- Drafted third party contract for baseline environmental data gathering
  - cultural resource records inventory report for all fence segments,
  - botany surveys and report for priority fence segments,
  - collection of GIS and non-GIS data for other environmental resources.
    - Currently awaiting subject matter expert input.
- Drafted an initial description of the proposed action and alternatives
  - No Action, Proposed Action, and Reduced Project Area
- Cultural resources strategy for satisfying the Section 106 of the NHPA requirements

# BLM Interdisciplinary Team Update

## BLM Project Sponsors/Leadership

- Danielle Chi, BLM Deputy State Director(DSD) for Resources, California will be the DSD representative
- Jon Raby, BLM State Director, Nevada, will act as the BLM decision maker.

## Current team vacancy filled

- Kerry Holcomb will act as the wildlife biologist for this project
- Pending archaeologist has been tentatively identified

The Great Basin NEPA Support Team was notified that it would be disbanded on October 12, 2020.

- Danielle Chi is working with Nancy E. Army to identify BLMers who will fill subject matter expert roles on the project interdisciplinary team. They are at about 50% complete.

# Next Steps

## **October/November 2020**

- Finalize outreach to potential cooperators (invitations) and finalize cooperator agreements
- Award 3rd party contract for environmental baseline data gathering
- Continue to fill vacancies on the project interdisciplinary team
- Revise and update fencing segment GIS data and refine proposed action and alternatives.

## **Winter 2020**

- Cultural resources contractors begin data gathering
- Reach out, as needed, to agencies to discuss routes identified
- Initial cooperators meetings to refine purpose and need and alternatives.

# Draft Alternatives

**The No Action Alternative** describes the current level of desert tortoise exclusion fence (fence) construction and fence repair and maintenance. This alternative would maintain the status quo and would not involve an overall approach or strategy to construct fences, shade structures, cattle guards, and fence repair or maintenance. Federal and state agencies would continue to construct new fences and repair or maintain existing fences as agency funding and staffing become available. Fence construction projects and repair or maintenance projects would require a site-specific environmental review to include the NEPA process, and/or the CEQA process as appropriate.

**The Proposed Action Alternative** would provide for the construction or installation of the priority and programmatic fence segments as well as the desert tortoise shade structures and cattle guards. These actions would occur within the highway right-of-way (ROW) with fences installed at the edge of the ROW. The maintenance activities, as described above and conducted on an as-needed basis, would be funded using the method or process for maintenance reimbursement of maintenance activities described below.

## Relationship Between the Priority and the Programmatic Fence Segments

- Describe how and when priority segments would be fenced
- Describe how and when programmatic segments would be fenced

**The Reduced Project Area Alternative** would be the same as Alternative 2, with the following exceptions:

- There would be a 50% reduction in priority fence segments with only priority segments 1-7 being analyzed site-specifically and segments 8-15 would be excluded from the action.
- The numbers and lengths of programmatic road segments would be reduced by calculating a 70% chance or greater of containing a tortoise rather than the 50% calculation used in the proposed action alternative.

# Any Questions?

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