

April 4
2024

NEXT STEPS FOR DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS

Kerry L. Holcomb, FWS-DTRO

ROADMAP



**PURPOSE OF
THE RITS**



QUESTION 1



**SUMMARY OF
SPRING 2024
RIT MEETINGS**



QUESTION 2

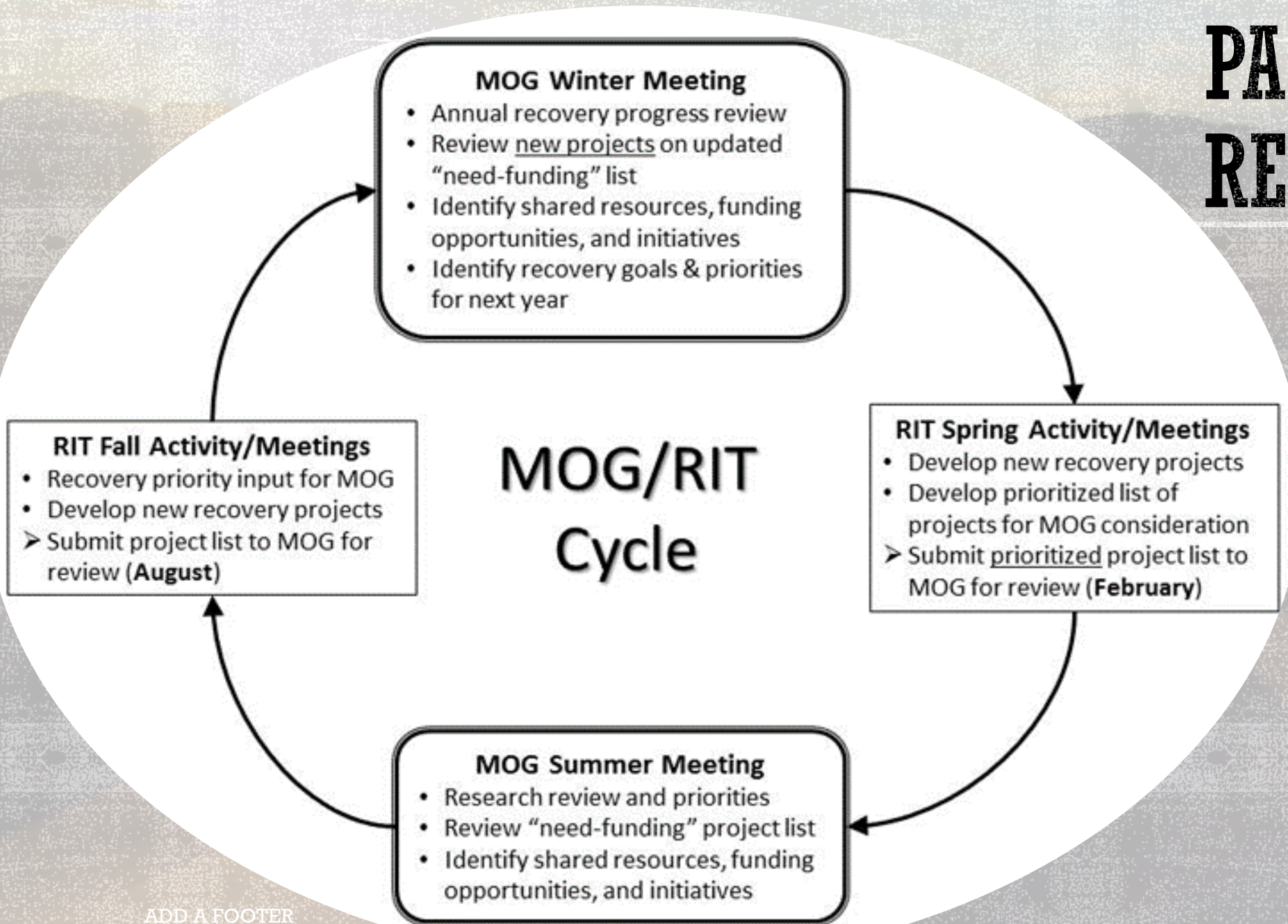


NEXT STEPS

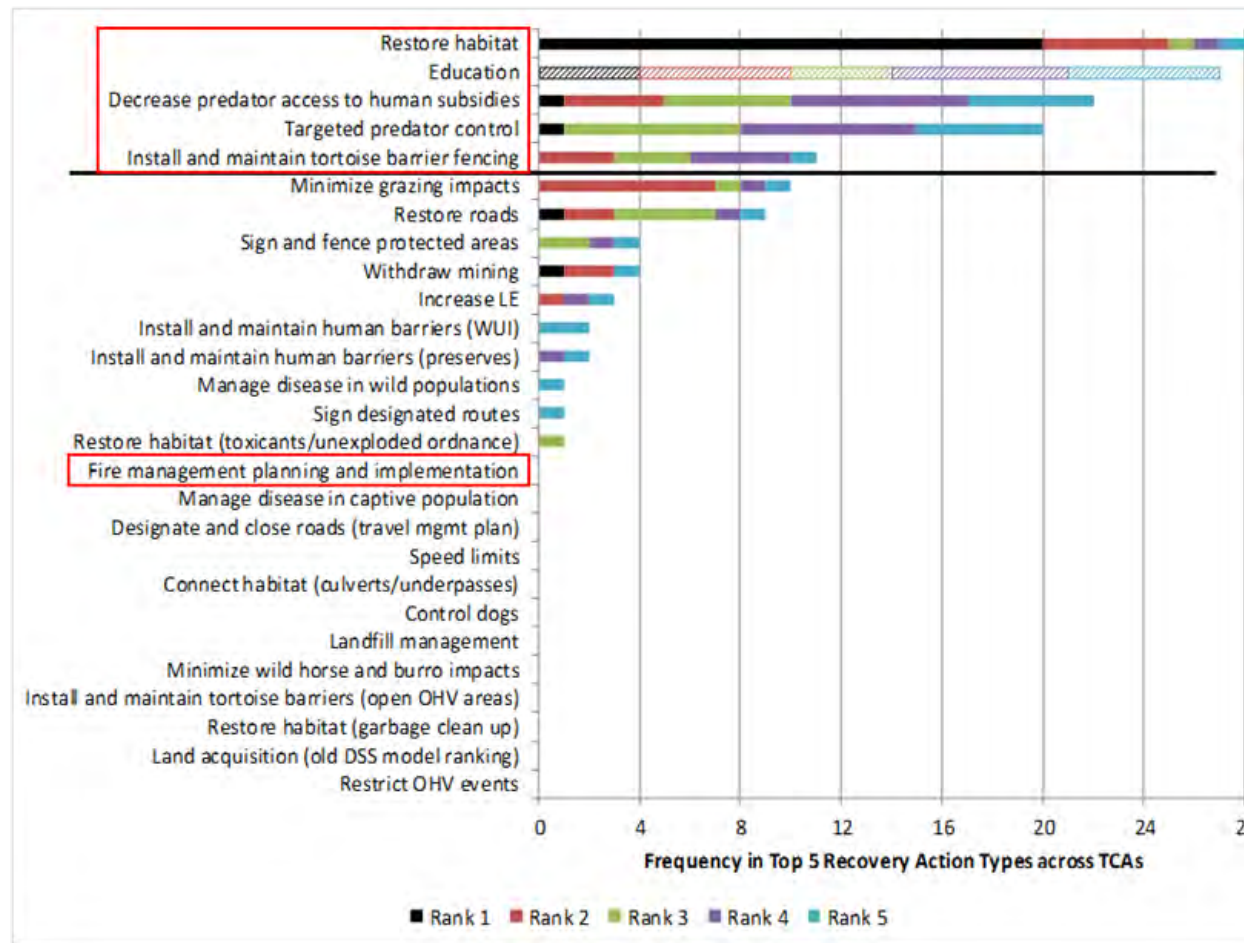


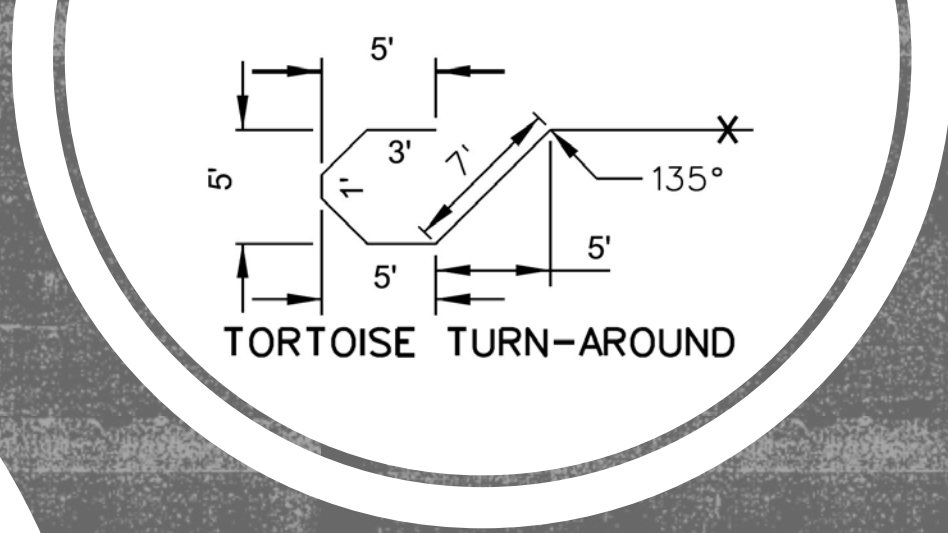
**QUESTIONS
3 & 4**

PAST MOG-RIT RELATIONSHIP



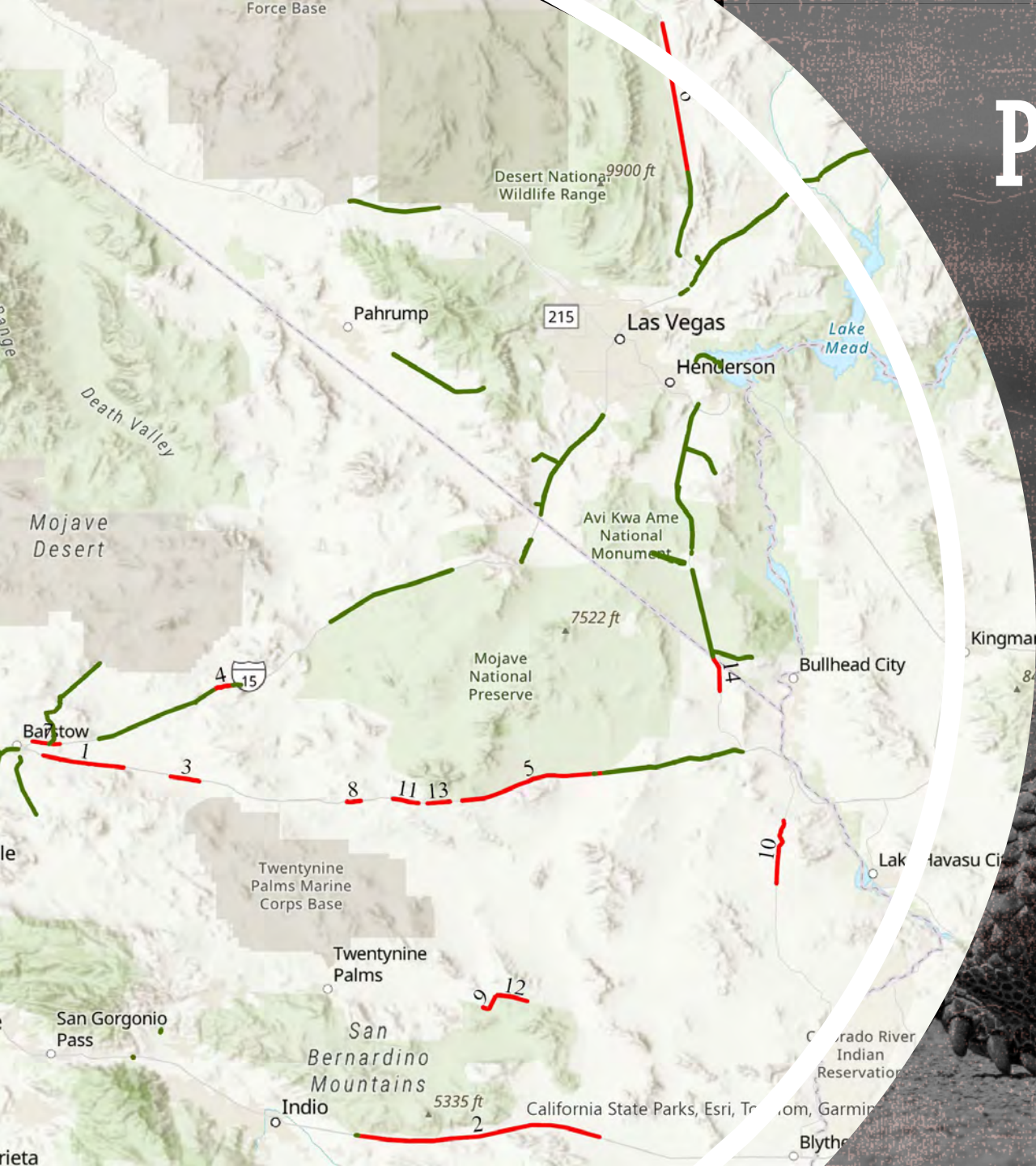
PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS





PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS



PROPOSED MOG-RIT RELATIONSHIP

MOG

RIT

- Priorities
- Opportunities
- Impasses

- Progress Reports
- Policy/Funding/Capacity Needs
- Endangered Species Act 7(a)(1) program development & implementation for all federal agencies

STATUTORY PURPOSE

Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as Amended, Section 4(f)(2):

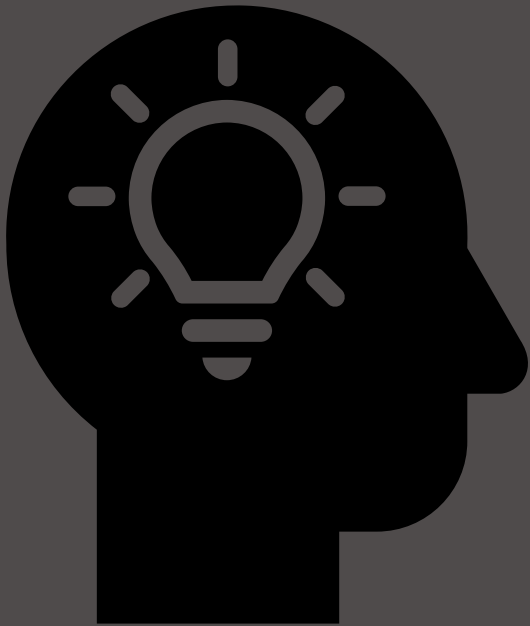
“The Secretary, in developing and implementing recovery plans, may procure the services of appropriate public and private agencies and institutions, and other qualified persons. Recovery teams appointed pursuant to this subsection shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act.”

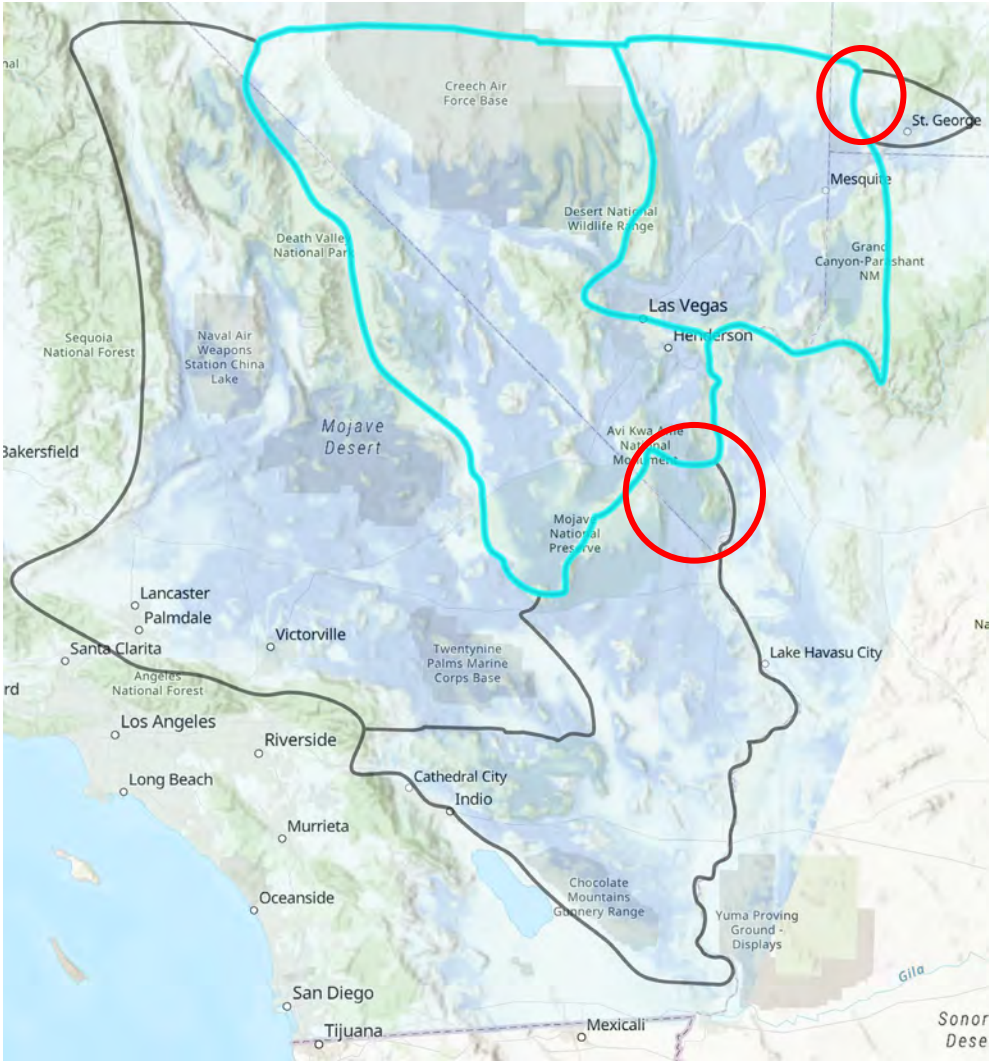
PROPOSED PURPOSE

- Facilitate communication, project implementation, and data sharing
- Identify policies, funding, and capacity needs
- Aid in the Development & Implementation of Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(1) programs for federal agencies
- Federal Advisory Committee Act Exemption would not be exercised to ensure participation from all partners

QUESTION 1 (10 MIN)

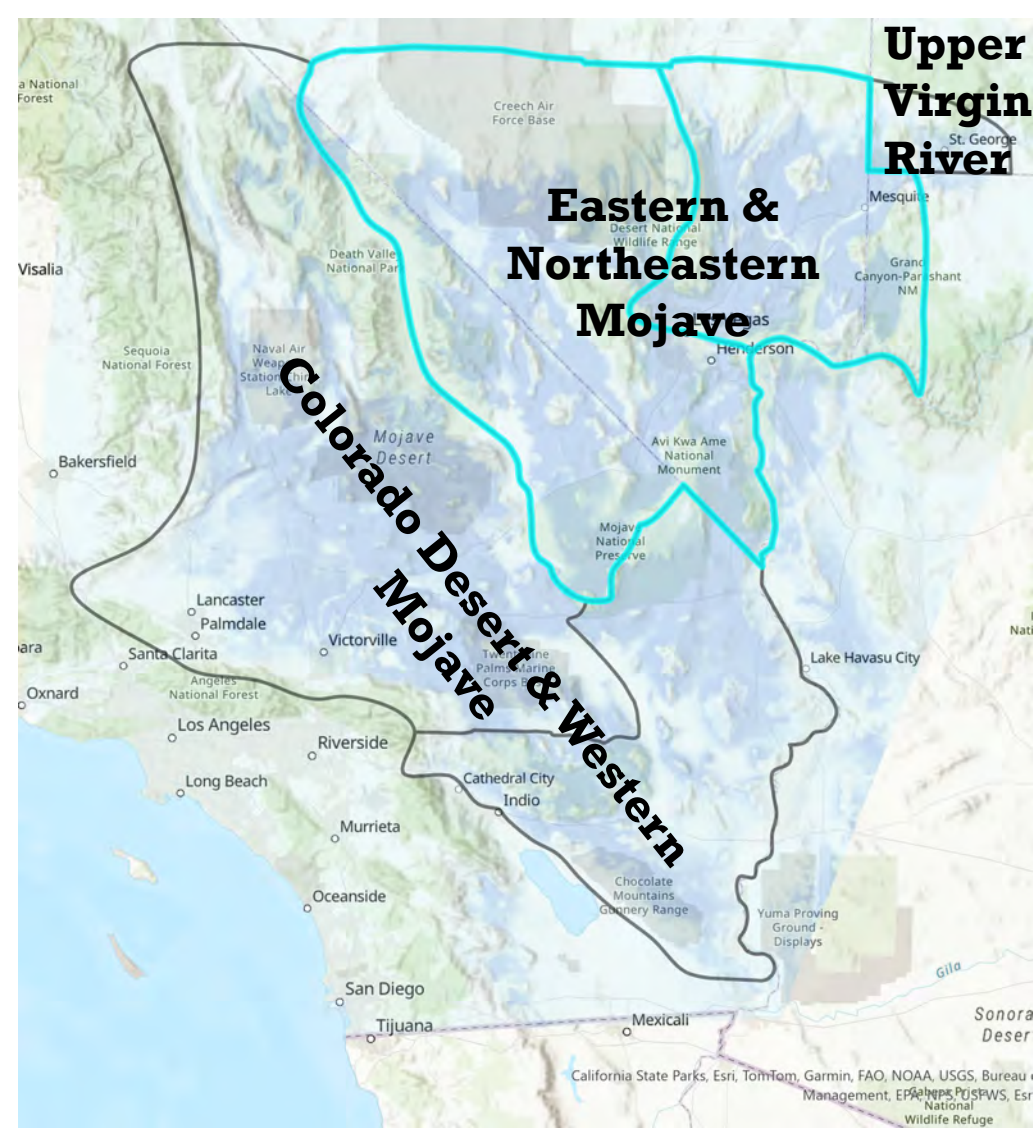
Among the Endangered Species Act's strongest provisions, at least as written, is the requirement under section 7(a)(1) that federal agencies use their authorities to help recover imperiled species. What are your agency's authorities or organization's priorities and how could these be fine-tuned to maximize desert tortoise recovery. If you don't know off-hand, please work within your organization and email Kerry Holcomb (Kerry_Holcomb@fws.gov) by April 30, 2024,





RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAMS

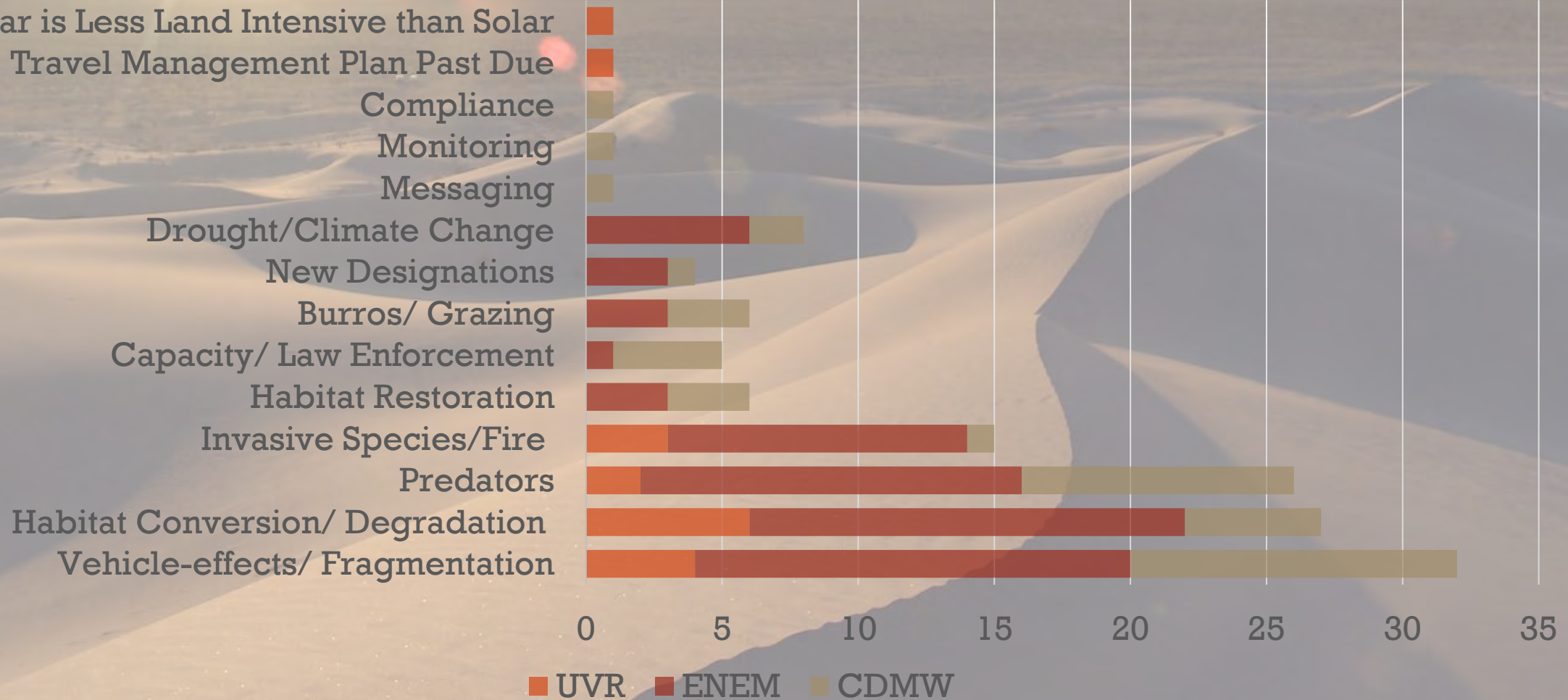
- Colorado Desert & Western Mojave
- Eastern & Northeastern Mojave
- Upper Virgin River



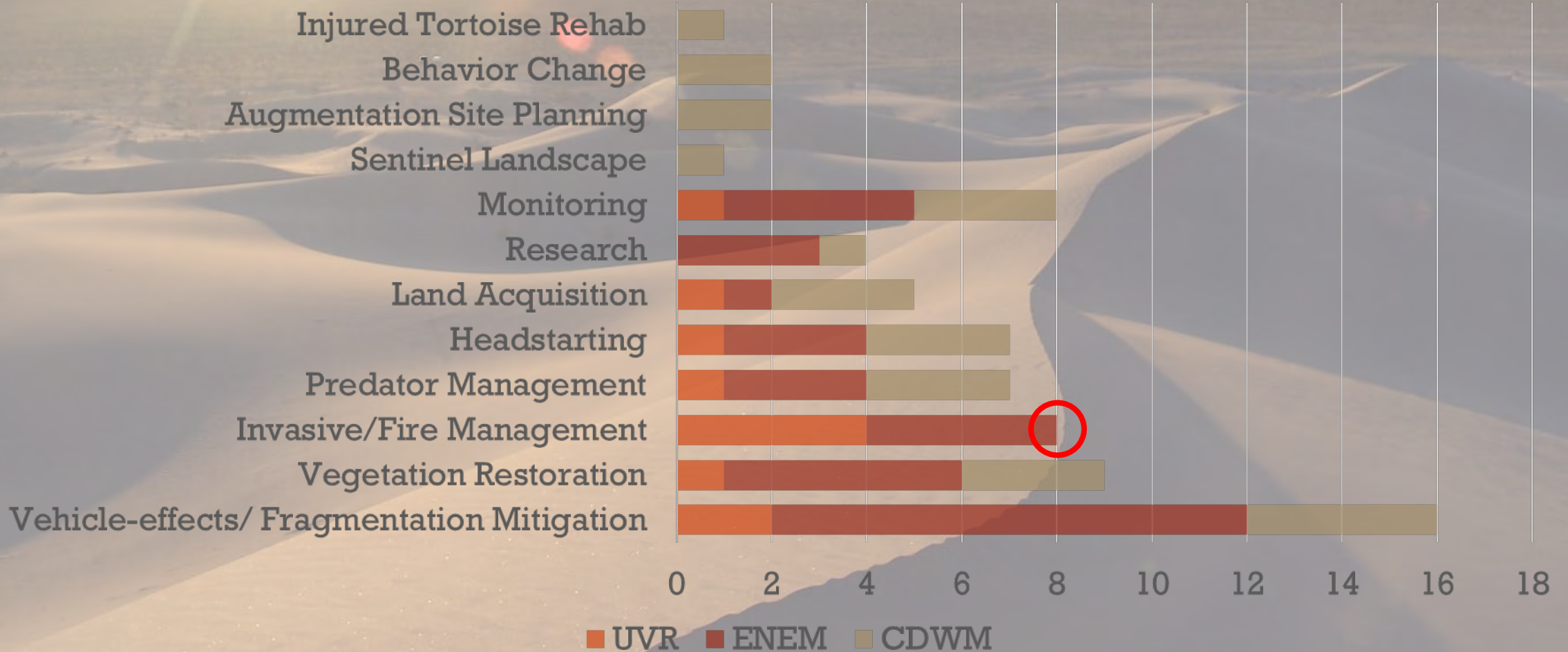
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM UNITS

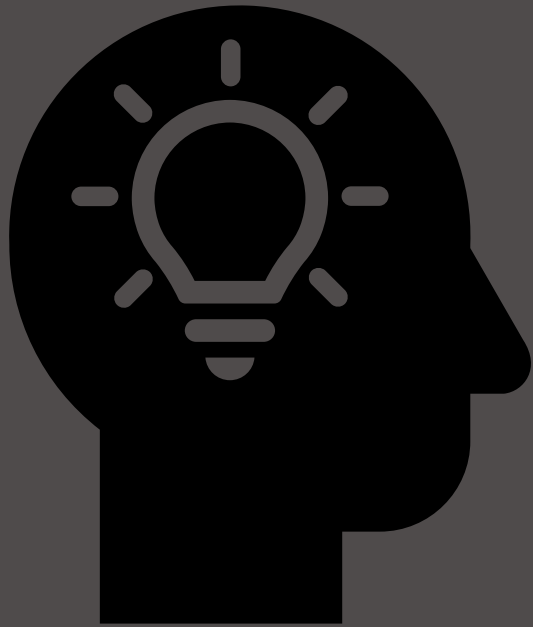
- Colorado Desert & Western Mojave
- Eastern & Northeastern Mojave
- Upper Virgin River

CONCERNS



ACTIONS





QUESTION 2 (10 MIN)

Identify a policy, funding, or capacity issue that is currently preventing recovery implementation in your organizations area of jurisdiction or interest and provide a potential solution.

NEXT STEPS

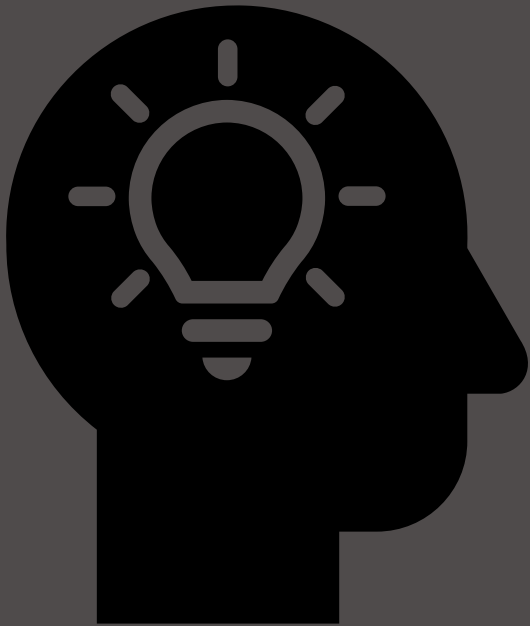
- **Predator Management:**
 - Subsidy Control
 - Raven Nest Documentation
 - Predator density component to recipient site surveys (PIR camera capture-recapture powered by AI)

https://tortoisegroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ROaDS_Public-Road-Warriors-App.pdf



QUESTION 3 (10 MIN)

Provide a general address, parking lot name, or UTM of dumpsters or other predator subsidies that you feel your organization can make progress mitigating through either wildlife proof dumpsters, modified container lids, trash-cleanup, or laser hazing. Funding for dumpsters is currently available throughout the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA); the DTRO can aid in the process of finding funding in all other areas within the range of the Mojave desert tortoise.



NEXT STEPS

Potential Administrative Flexibility – Categorical Exclusion

- The construction of new, or the addition of, small structures or improvements, including structures and improvements for the restoration of wetland, riparian, instream, or native habitats, which result in no or only minor changes in the use of the affected local area. The following are examples of activities that may be included.
 - (a) The installation of fences.
 - (b) The construction of small water control structures.
 - (c) The planting of seeds or seedlings and other minor revegetation actions.
 - (d) The construction of small berms or dikes.
 - (e) The development of limited access for routine maintenance and management purposes.

NEXT STEPS

Potential Administrative Flexibility

- **Example:** NDOT is now willing to consider other organizations for fence monitoring and maintenance activities
- Project mitigation with actions other than land acquisition
- Increasing the \$105.00 per acre fee “raven” fee to match inflation in addition to actual costs



NEXT STEPS

- **Road Mitigation:**

- Fence Maintenance: Adopt-A-Highway (AZ & CA, 2 miles for 5 years), keeping Utah Beautiful, and we need to start a program in Nevada
- AB2344 – Wildlife Connectivity - Requires Caltrans to develop and publish an inventory of funded transportation projects with wildlife passage features by July 1, 2024. Caltrans will then update the inventory at least once every 2 years



NEXT STEPS

- **Fire prevention:**
 - Fire response and break plans
 - Priority fire support

NEXT STEPS

- **Restoration:**
 - NDOT transplanted Yucca and Cacti are available for out-planting
 - Get Judy a list of plant materials needs for the next five year and as new projects are developed
- RASP



QUESTION 4

To assist BLM's native seed bank program, Judy Perkins has requested a list of the specify plant materials that are needed over the next five years, if any. If you don't know off-hand, please work within your organization to generate a list and email it to Judy Perkins (jlperkins@blm.gov) and Kerry Holcomb (Kerry_Holcomb@fws.gov) by April 30, 2024, and then again as new projects are developed.





THANK YOU!

Kerry L. Holcomb, DTRO

Phone

(442) 222-4300

Email

kerry_holcomb@fws.gov