



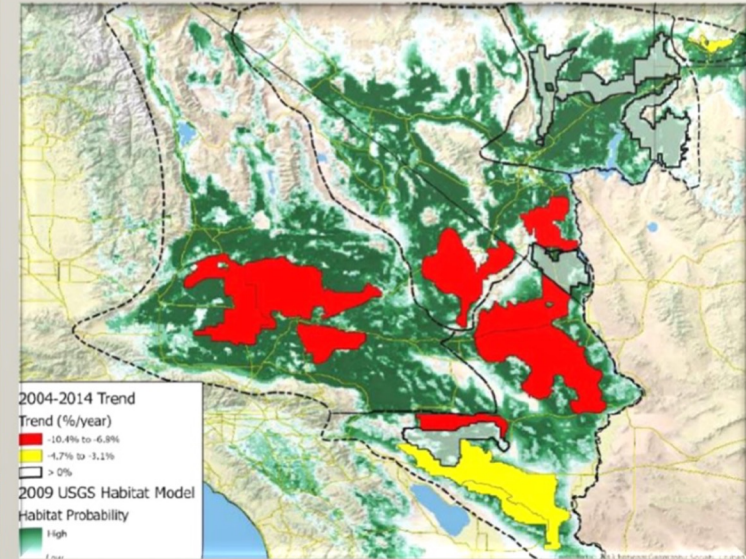
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Desert Tortoise Recovery





## Despite Ongoing Recovery Efforts...





## What Can We Do Better...

How are we stepping down recovery goals?

- Focused
- Intentional

How are individual efforts rolling up?

How are we ensuring we are doing the most important things?

- Cross state
- Cross jurisdictional

Can we gain better traction for funding (BIL, IRA)?

Can we improve recovery results?



- Strategic Plan
- Focal Areas/Project Area
- 10 Year Action Plan/Project Plan





## Strategic Planning

### Inspiring through common:

- Vision
- Mission
- Goals



## Focal/Project Areas

- Focus resources
- Show success
- High threats, Low threats



## 10 Year Project Plans

- Identify specific targets
- Identify needs (staffing, funding partners)
- Track progress
- Adaptively manage
- Tell our story



U.S. Department of the Interior  
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# CONSERVATION SCIENCE PARTNERS



**ecolibrium**



CONSERVATION  
SCIENCE PARTNERS

## Developing and deploying a strategic plan for recovery of the Mojave desert tortoise on BLM lands

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[csp-inc.org](http://csp-inc.org)

# CSP-BLM co-production - Acknowledgements



BLM Mojave Desert Tortoise Workgroup  
5 district offices  
9 field offices  
National and State T&E leads  
External collaborators



Site visits, webinars, workshops, small group discussions and more.





Goal: Assist BLM in developing a coherent, agency-wide approach to desert tortoise management

1. Facilitate effective **communications** within BLM and between BLM and partner agencies
2. Promote **standardization** of BLM's MDT management efforts
3. Provide **technical support and analytical tools** to inform BLM MDT management decisions



# Key elements of BLM MDT strategic plan and action plan

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Strategic plan



Action plan



1. Strategic Plan Goals
2. Project areas
3. Projects
4. (Climate change considerations)
5. (Adaptive Management Framework)
6. Next steps



# Key elements of BLM MDT strategic plan and action plan

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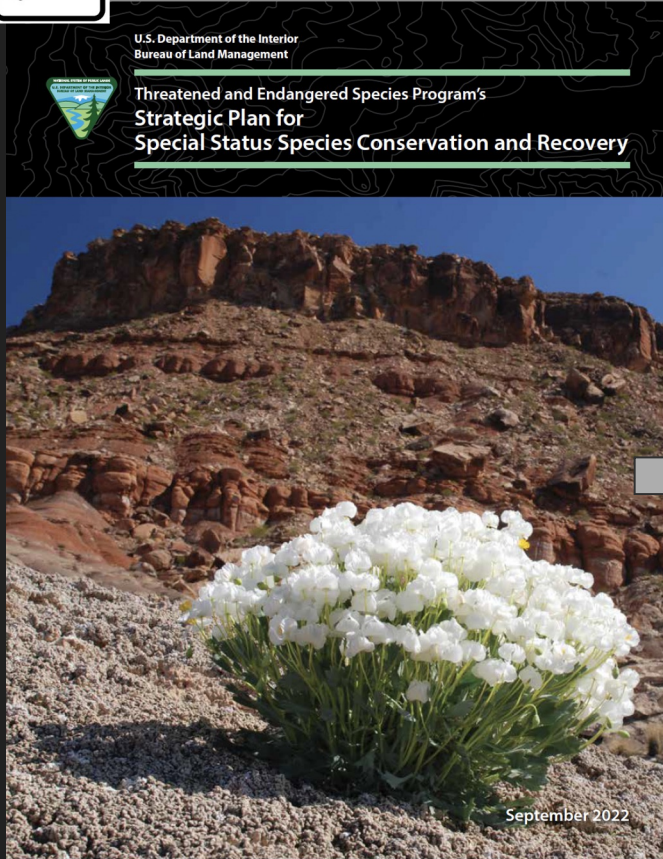


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# Strategic plan - goals



- 1) Conserve Mojave desert tortoise populations on BLM lands such that they contribute substantially to recovery of the species
- 2) Increase success through collaboration with partners
- 3) Prioritize budget and staffing
- 4) Effectively communicate BLM's tortoise recovery efforts

# Key elements of BLM MDT strategic plan and action plan

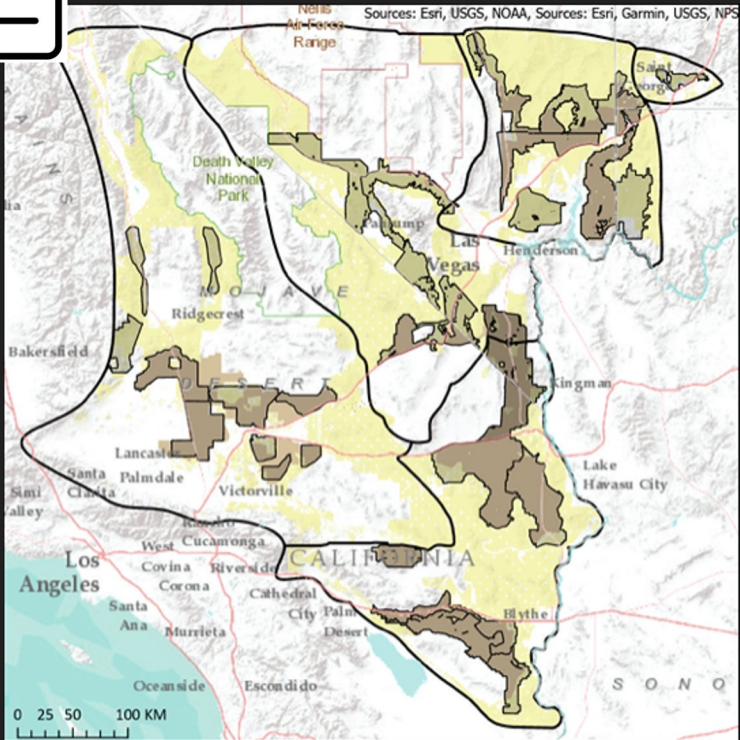
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# Strategic plan – project area definition



**BLM Mojave Desert Tortoise Project Areas**

Recovery Units	Tortoise Conservation Areas
BLM Project Areas	Bureau of Land Management



**Delineated areas believed to be important to the long-term persistence of the MDT across its range within which**

- a) recovery resources can be concentrated such that threats can be meaningfully reduced or eliminated within 5-10 years so that
- b) local tortoise populations can be stabilized or augmented, thereby creating strongholds from which longer-term, range-wide recovery criteria can be approached.



# Strategic plan – project area delineation & characterization



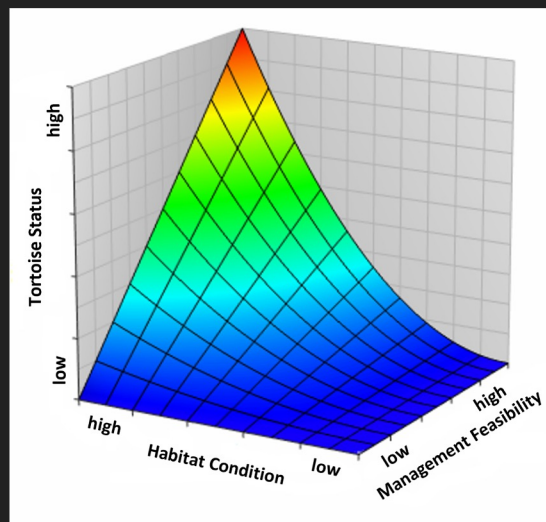
- i) Consider where historically implemented or should be implementing tortoise management and recovery actions
- ii) identify specific areas where continuation of these actions holds significance for species status improvement



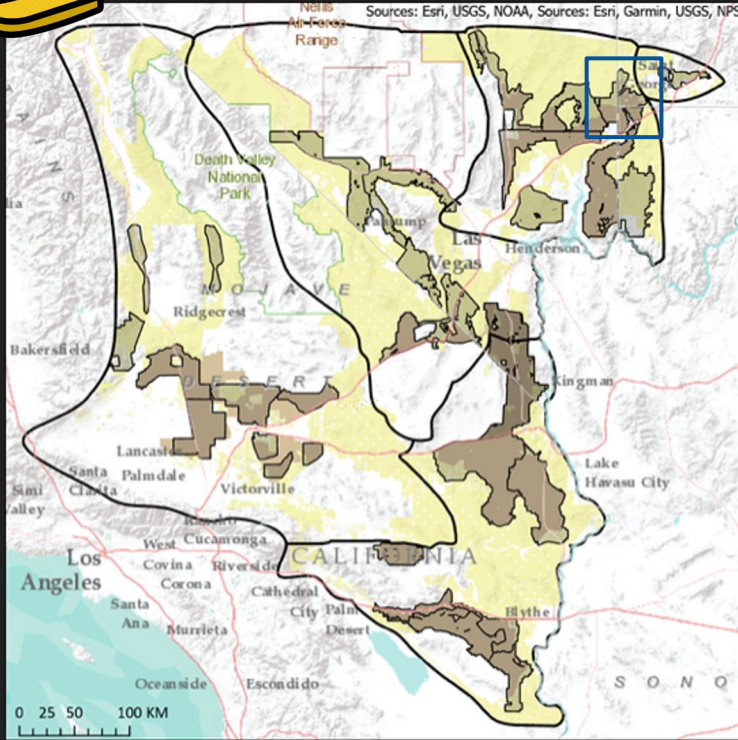
Tortoise status

Habitat condition

Management feasibility



# Action plan - final project areas



26 project areas!

Coordinated approach

## BLM Mojave Desert Tortoise Project Areas

- Recovery Units
- BLM Project Areas
- Tortoise Conservation Areas
- Bureau of Land Management

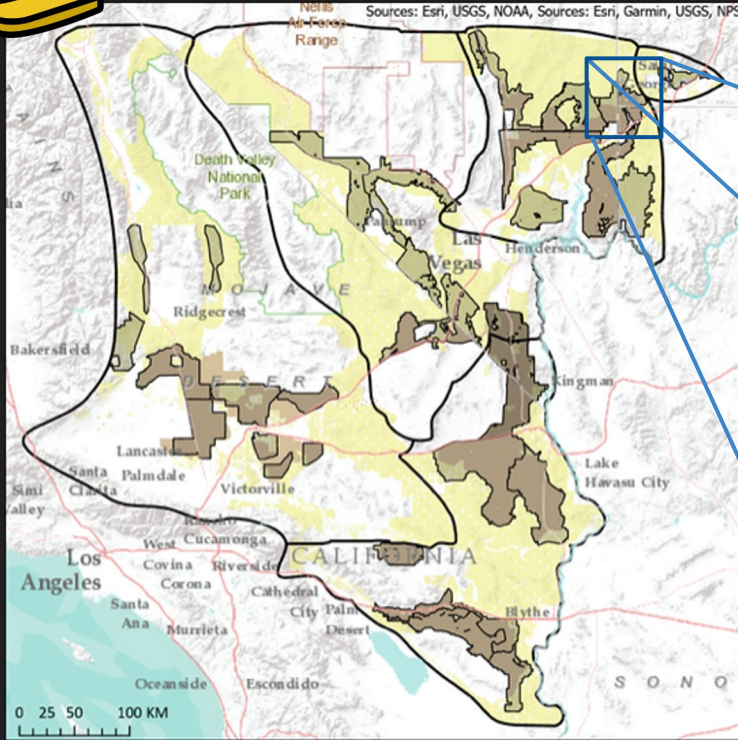


# Action plan - final project areas



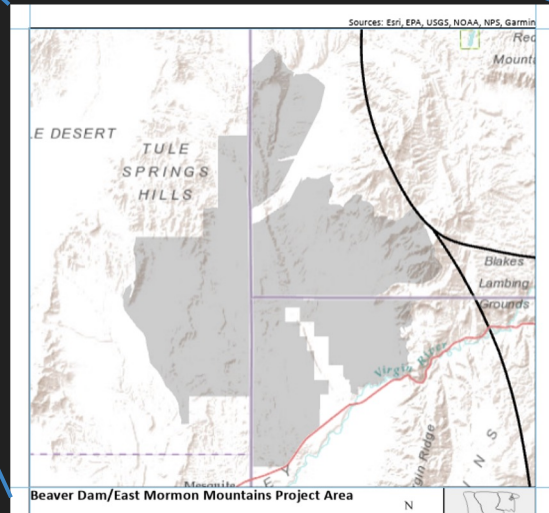
26 project areas!

Coordinated approach



## BLM Mojave Desert Tortoise Project Areas

- Recovery Units
- Tortoise Conservation Areas
- BLM Project Areas
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# Action plan – project area profile



## Beaver Dam/East Mormon Mountains Project Area

The Beaver Dam/East Mormon Mountains Project Area lies within the Northeastern Mojave Recovery Unit (Caliente, St. George, and Arizona Strip Field Offices). Its boundaries are defined by the Beaver Dam Slope ACEC in Nevada and Arizona and the Beaver Dam Wash National Conservation Area (NCA) in Utah. The area also comprises portions of designated Critical Habitat Units in all three states (Beaver Dam Slope), as well as certain areas identified in the 2008 Ely Resource Management Plan with increasing tortoise occupancy trends (Kissel et al. 2023). The inclusion of areas further to the north in the Tule Desert and Tule Spring Hills during subsequent revisions of the action plan may be an important consideration in response to plausible range shifts caused by climate change.

### • Recovery actions supported:

- Protect existing population and habitat
- Develop, support, and build partnerships to facilitate recovery

- Achievement Goal: Prioritize projects that resolve conflicts or work within management constraints by increasing success through collaboration with partners and/or prioritizing budget and staff, that result in increasing/self-sustaining populations of tortoises, and that proactively restore, protect, and manage tortoise habitats.

### • Project Area Characteristics

- Tortoise Status: Low-Moderate
- Habitat Condition: Low-High
- Management Feasibility: Low-Moderate

### • Project Partners

- American Conservation Experience
- AZ Department of Fish and Game
- Conserve Southwest Utah
- Department of Transportation
- Lincoln County Habitat Conservation Plan
- Lincoln County sheriff's office
- National Park Service
- NV Department of Wildlife
- UT Division of Wildlife Resource

### • Staffing Needs

- Volunteers/interns
- Additional 1-2 Wildlife Biologist(s)
- Permanent seasonal position(s)
- Groundsperson
- Contracting staff
- Law Enforcement Officer(s)

### • Non-Target Species Benefit

- The designated critical habitat in the Beaver Dam Wash NCA also supports populations of BLM Sensitive species, including kit fox, Gila monster, common chuckwalla, desert night lizard, western banded gecko, zebra-tailed lizard, desert iguana, western threadsnake, sidewinder, speckled rattlesnake, Mojave rattlesnake, monarch butterfly, western bumble bee, Allen's big-eared bat, big free-tailed bat, fringed myotis, Spotted bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, western red bat, western burrowing owl, Lewis's woodpecker, ferruginous hawk, long-billed curlew, American white pelican, bald eagle, black swift, short-eared owl, three-toed woodpecker, northern goshawk, desert sucker, and flannel-mouth sucker. Designated critical habitat in the Beaver Dam Wash NCA also supports populations of bighorn sheep, mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, coyote, quail, and wild turkey, and provides important foraging and nesting habitat for Migratory Birds.

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# Action plan - putting strategic plan goals into action



Strategic Plan Goal	Information to be considered for project development
Goal 1: Conserve Mojave desert tortoise populations on BLM lands such that they contribute substantially to recovery of the species	Main threat Project and project description Location Timeframe Regulatory compliance Obstacles
Goal 2: Increase success through collaboration with partners	Project partners* Is this a past project? Non-target species benefit*
Goal 3: Prioritize budget and staffing	Cost estimate Staffing needs*
Goal 4: Effectively communicate BLM's tortoise recovery efforts	The elevator pitch* Who is the audience?*

## BLM Rangewide Mojave Desert Tortoise Action Plan is designed to support Strategic Plan goals





# Action plan - putting strategic plan goals into action



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Goal 3: Prioritize budget and staffing	Cost estimate Staffing needs*
Goal 4: Effectively communicate BLM's tortoise recovery efforts	The elevator pitch* Who is the audience?*

- Adhere to strategic plan goals
- Consider a 5-10 year timeframe
- Prioritize return on investment
- Consider climate adaptability & resiliency
- Scale up to a comprehensive approach
- Think creatively
- Monitor & manage adaptively





# Action plan – proposed projects



15  
project  
types

8  
threats  
addressed

Project Type	Main Threat	Project Description
Weed Management	Invasive grasses	Control/eradication of nonnative noxious and invasive plant species
Fencing	Roads/routes	New tortoise exclusion fence construction; monitoring and repair of existing fencing
Access Regulation	Roads/routes	Install signage
Culverts	Roads/routes	Install new culverts
Land Acquisition	Development	Acquire private land
Wildfire mitigation	Wildfire	Install and maintain fuel breaks
Habitat restoration	Wildfire	Restore/propagate/outplant native plants to previously burned areas
Environmental Education	Human visitation	Renewed kiosk signs; public outreach
Predator Control	Predators	FWS egg oiling
Wild horse management	Grazing	Continue with burro removal constantly
Rights-of-Way	Roads/routes	Ensure that ROW holders conduct proper road maintenance
Livestock management	Grazing	Field office enforcement
Cattle and Burro Removal	Grazing	Fence construction to contain livestock
Law Enforcement	Human visitation/OHV recreation	Hire new ranger position
Population monitoring	Predators	Conduct raven population surveys

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# Key features of success

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## Clear, open channels of communication

- In-person gatherings (e.g. annual)
- Facilitated discussions

## Push boundaries, explore options

- Consider novel techniques
- Plan for climate change

## Record and retain

- Consider monitoring metrics
- Manage landscapes, not jurisdictions

## Understand/consider realistic limitations

- Listen to needs
- Work within the system



## Next steps - how can MOG get involved?

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- Work with BLM to help determine priority projects
- Partner to help fund projects
- Coordinate on landscape-level, cross-jurisdictional conservation efforts
- Collaborate on research, monitoring and adaptive management strategies





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Thank you  
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