

Conservation Designations

The California desert is home to unique species and habitats, a rich cultural and historical heritage and recreational opportunities that attract visitors from around the world. A major goal of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is to develop a comprehensive conservation strategy that identifies conservation areas for plant and wildlife species and provides a framework for adaptive management in the face of climate change. Additionally, the DRECP provides protection for recreation, cultural, scenic and other natural resource values.

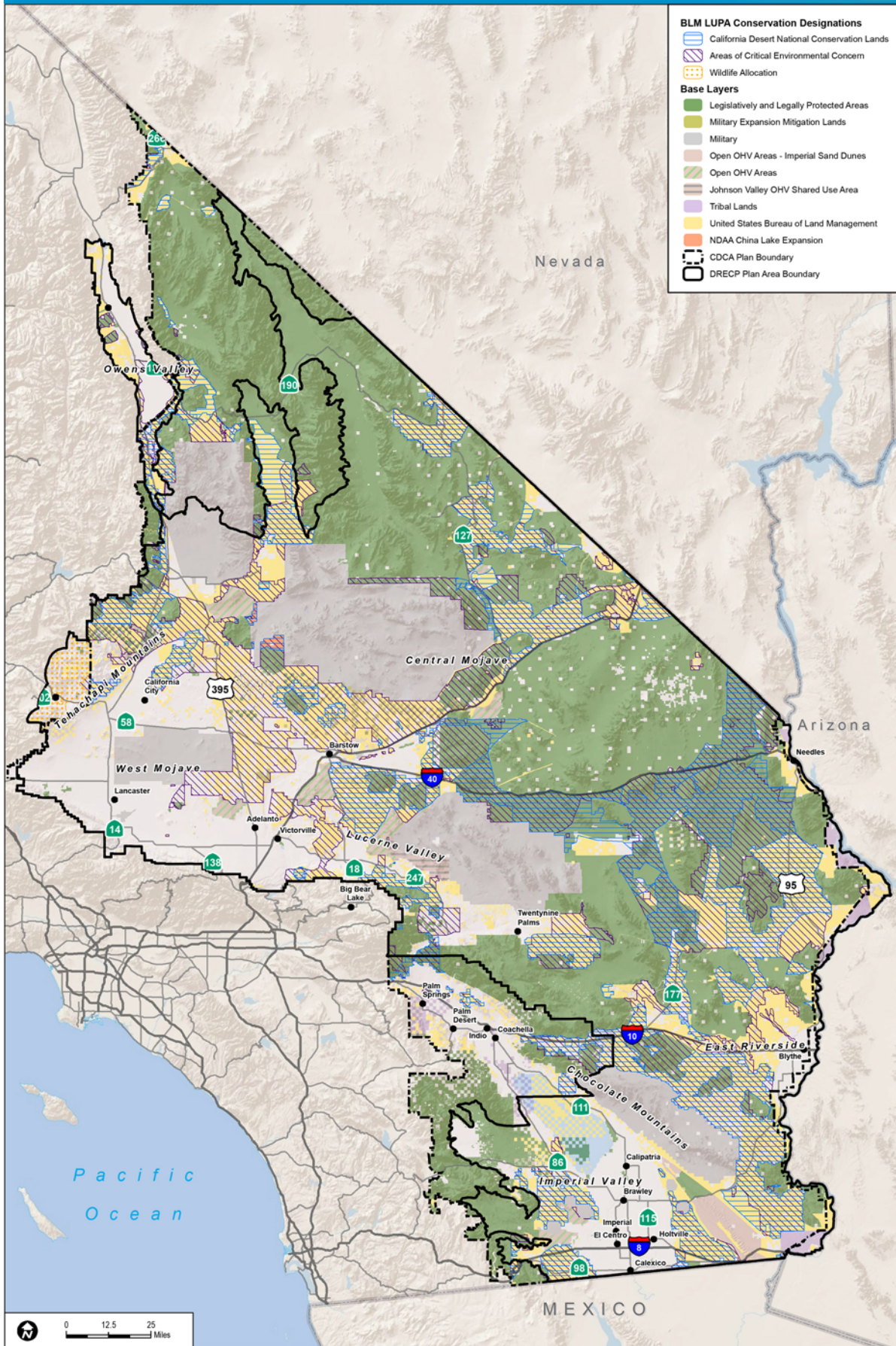
More than 5 million acres of BLM-managed lands in the California desert have already been protected through wilderness, wilderness study area and national monument designations. Phase I of the DRECP identifies an additional 4.2 million acres of lands with new or strengthened protections that include California Desert National Conservation Lands, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wildlife Allocations. These areas are an integral part of the DRECP's overall conservation strategy, and will be closed to renewable energy development. These conservation lands provide important wildlife corridors across the landscape, enabling wildlife to move across the desert, helping maintain populations and supporting adaptation to a changing climate. In addition to being closed to renewable energy development, these areas also include limitations on overall ground disturbance, called disturbance caps, to protect sensitive resources such as desert tortoise.

The California Desert National Conservation Lands identified in the DRECP meet the requirements of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which directed the BLM to include lands managed for conservation purposes in the California Desert Conservation Area.

Conservation Designations by the Numbers

- **5 million acres of existing conservation areas** (unchanged by the DRECP);
- **4.2 million new acres of conservation areas** with new or strengthened protections;
 - 2.8 million acres of California Desert National Conservation Lands identified to protect nationally significant cultural, ecological and scientific values
 - 3.9 million acres of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern that need special management to protect important historic, cultural, scenic and/or wildlife values
 - 18,000 acres of Wildlife Allocations to protect wildlife habitat
- Wildlife corridors and linkages connecting 3 national parks, 5 national forests, 3 national monuments, and 70 BLM wilderness areas; and
- Protection for 50 sensitive animal and plant species; and
- Preservation of 37 unique habitats





Sources: ESRI (2016); CEC (2013); BLM (2016); CDFW (2013); USFWS (2013)

FIGURE 5

DRECP LUPA Conservation Designations