

Mojave River Conservation Assessment Preliminary Scoping Report



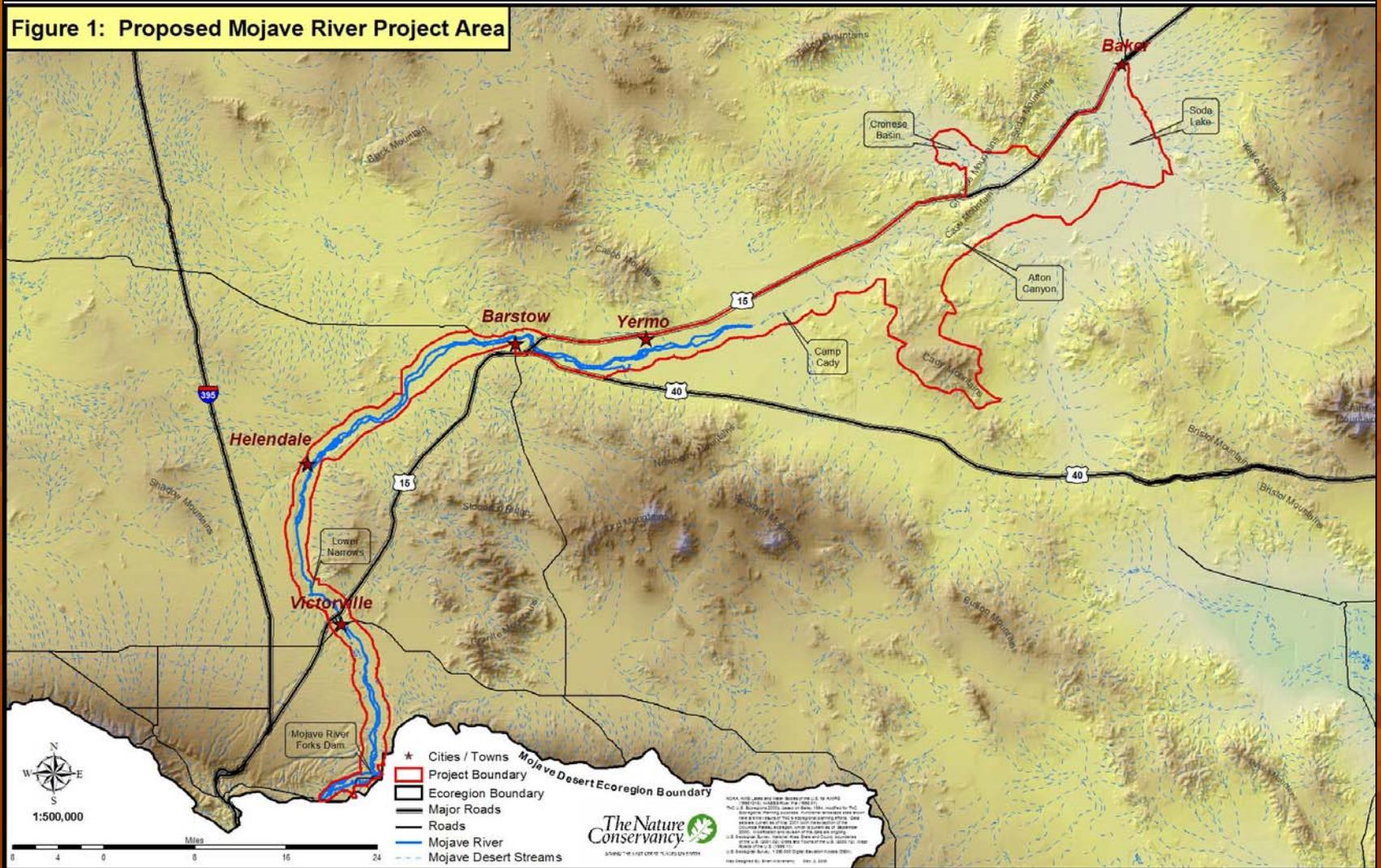
SAVING THE LAST GREAT PLACES ON EARTH

Why here, why now?

- Top Ten of highest ranked sites in TNC's Mojave Desert Ecoregion assessment (2001)
- Conservation partners already well engaged at various “nodes” along the system
- Funding opportunity

Area Assessed

Figure 1: Proposed Mojave River Project Area



Methodology

- **Systems:** meta-populations, species, ecological systems
- **Stresses:** ecological stresses to targeted systems
- **Sources of stress:** threats resulting from human activities, past and present
- **Strategies:** to abate “threats”
- **Success measures:** to allow for tracking conservation success and respond through adaptive management

Potential target systems

- Perennial montane streams and riparian systems (arroyo toad habitat)
- Desert riparian systems near ephemeral river reaches
- Desert riparian systems near permanent surface waters
- Aquatic systems in permanent surface waters
- Blowsand systems (Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat)
- Dry lake bed systems (Cronese Basin and Soda Lake)
- Cady Mountains upland system (bighorn sheep habitat)
- Mojave tui chub

Sources of Stress

- Excessive groundwater withdrawal
- Invasive species
- Conversion to urban development
- Flood control structures
- Flood control practices
- Motorized recreation off trails

Major Players

actively engaged in the area

- Mojave Water Agency
- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish and Game
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Mojave Weed Management Agency and members
- National Park Service
- US Forest Service
- Army Corp of Engineers
- County of San Bernardino
- Municipalities
- Many others, private and public

Needs & Challenges

- Currently no upper limit on total water withdrawals from this groundwater system or for the subbasins, only groundwater monitoring well levels established
- Capacity issues for all agencies & entities
- Headwaters to terminus, ecosystem-level, ecological-process-driven approach
- More funding and effort to protect land and water resources when opportunities arise

Next Steps for TNC

- Refine preliminary scoping assessment
- Assess who is willing/able to address needs and challenges
- Potentially follow-up with a more in-depth conservation assessment if capacity issues are addressed in California-Nevada Joint Venture

