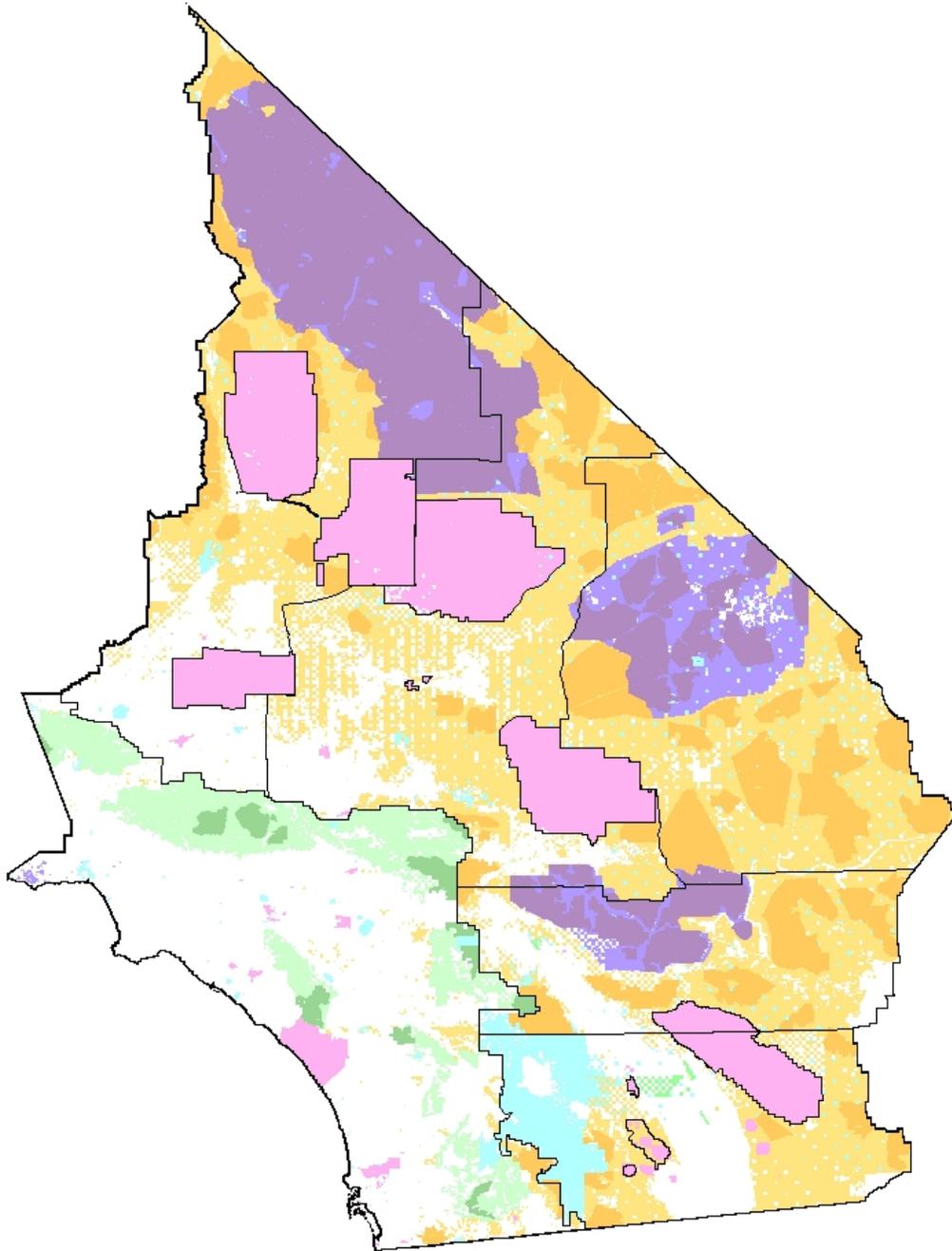


California Desert

Wilderness Context & Current Legislative Initiatives

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Desert Managers Group
February 29, 2008



The Federal Land
Policy and
Management Act
designated the

California Desert
Conservation Area.

This 25 million acre
expanse covers $\frac{1}{4}$
of the state.

Agencies and Wilderness

- NPS - 4.4 million acres in 3 NPS units.
- USFS - No acreage in CDCA; Over 400,000 acres on San Bernardino, Cleveland, & Inyo National Forests contiguous and adjacent to CDCA
- BLM - 65 wilderness areas [3.3 million acres] in CDCA and 68 in CDD; 15,000 acres managed by BLM-AZ [west of Colorado River]
- FWS - None in CDCA, but 9,000 acres of Wilderness west of Colorado River

Previous Acts of Designation within the region

- Wilderness Act [PL 88-577]
- Public Law 93-632: Aqua Tibia
- Public Law 94-567: 1st Joshua Tree wilderness
- California Wilderness Act of 1984 [PL 98-425]
- California Desert Protection Act of 1994 [PL 103-433]
- Otay Wilderness Act of 1999 [PL 106-145]
- SRSJMtns NM Act of 2000 [PL 106-351]

107th to 110th Congresses

- Bills have been
 - Introduced since the 107th Congress in 2003
 - California State-wide, Regional, County, or Congressional District in scope
 - Often have several Co-Sponsors
- At least one passed: The Thompson bill in northern California [Con Dist #1]

Current/Possible Future Acts

- Sen. Boxer & Rep. Solis
- Sen. Feinstein
- Rep. Bono Mack & Sen. Boxer

110th: Sen. Boxer & Rep. Solis

- 110th S. 493 and H.R. 860
 - State-wide in scope
 - Similar to bills in previous three Congresses
- Would:
 - designate 63 FS & BLM wilderness areas or additions and NPS wilderness.
 - Adjust NP and SRSJMtns NM boundaries
 - Designate 196 W&S Rivers
- In Committee

110th: Senator Feinstein

- There is “No commitment to introduce a bill”
- However, the Senator is analyzing proposals as a possible follow-up to the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 related to:
 - the NPS [e.g., Cracker Lake Exclusion in Death Valley NP]
 - DOD [e.g., Ft. Irwin].
 - Perhaps other areas

110th Rep. Bono Mack & Sen. Boxer

- 110th H.R. 3682 & S. 2109
 - [Preceded by 109th H.R. 6270, introduced late in that Congress]
- The ONLY bill, of approximately 12 introduced since 2002, affecting the Desert for which [Sub-committee] Hearings have been held [11/13/07]
- Neither bill provides dates for the referenced maps

Would Designate as Wilderness

- AGUA TIBIA WILDERNESS ADDITION - **Cleveland NF and the BLM** - 1,950 acres
- CAHUILLA MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - **San Bernardino NF** - 7,131 acres
- SOUTH FORK SAN JACINTO WILDERNESS - **San Bernardino NF** - 21,540 acres
- SANTA ROSA WILDERNESS ADDITION - **San Bernardino NF and BLM** - 3,300 acres
- BEAUTY MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS - **BLM** -16,700 acres
- JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK WILDERNESS ADDITION - **JTNP** - 40,078 acres
- OROCOPIA MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS ADDITION - **BLM** - 3,760 acres
- PALEN/MCCOY WILDERNESS ADDITIONS - **BLM** - 20,320 acres
- PINTO MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS - **BLM** - 24,080 acres

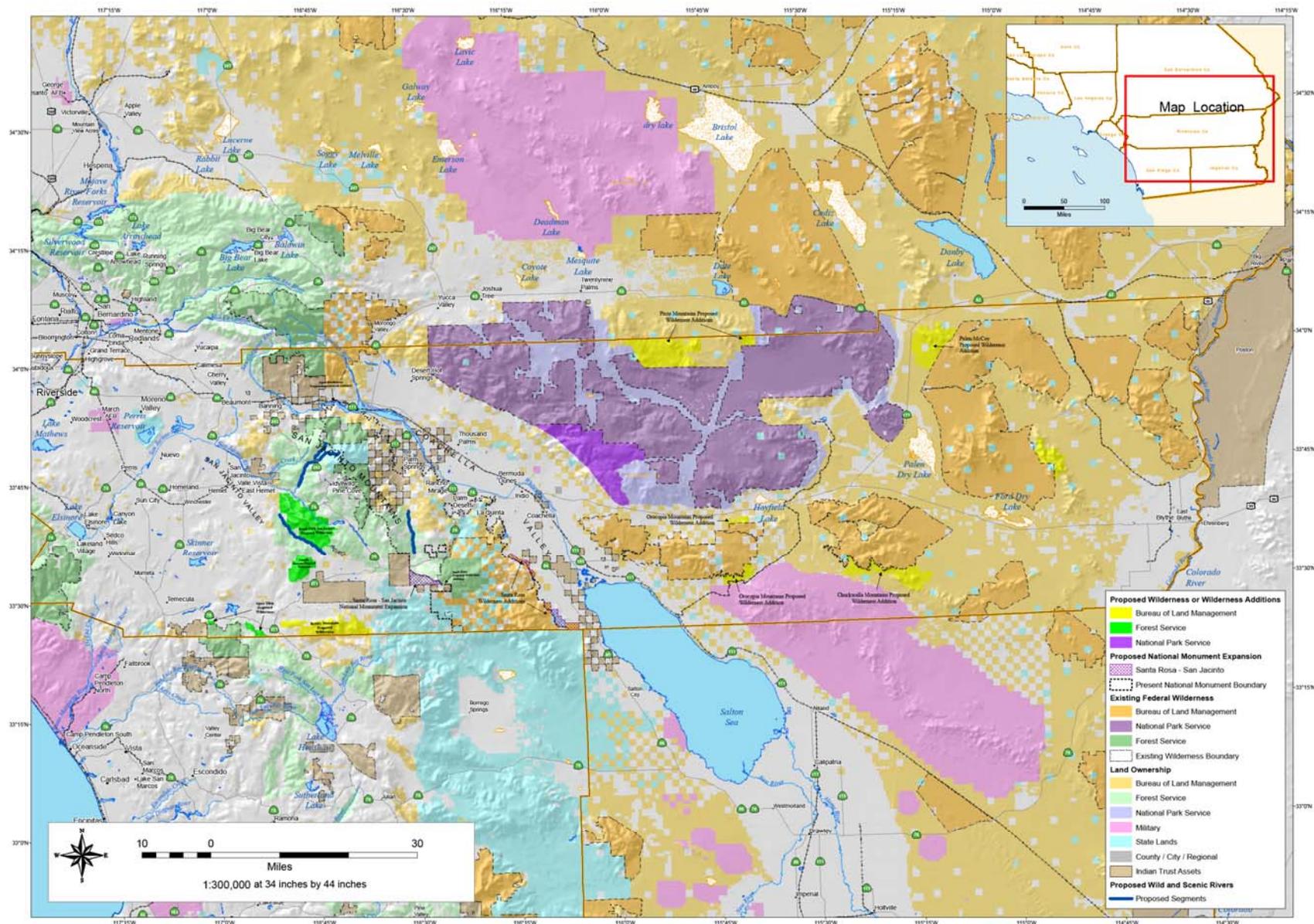
Other:

- **Joshua Tree National Park potential** wilderness. Requires the Secretary to manage such land as wilderness until it is incorporated into the Joshua Tree Wilderness
- Provides for **access** to the Cahuilla Mountain Wilderness **by Indian tribes** for traditional cultural and religious purposes
- Designate as **wild, scenic, or recreational rivers** segments of the North Fork San Jacinto River, Fuller Mill Creek, Palm Canyon Creek, and Bautista Creek
- **Amends the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument** Act of 2000 to include additional lands

Riverside County, California Wilderness Proposal

September 20, 2007

This map prepared at the request of Congresswoman Bono



Agency Roles

- May be asked by a Member to provide 'Mapping Services' or 'Legislative Drafting'
- Agencies/Departments will be requested to provide information and invited to testify at Hearings
- May be requested to provide technical info so that the Member may respond to constituent queries

Actions on the Bono-Mack Bill

- Rep. Bono Mack requested Mapping Services of USDI [late 2006]
- Testimony at 11/17/07 hearings:
 - Interior-BLM
 - Generally supported, although had several technical reservations
 - Agriculture FS

Expectations

- Bill will be reported/marked from Subcommittee
- Maps will be dated [e.g., no longer ambiguous as to which maps are appropriate]
- May have hearings in Full Committee

A photograph of a hillside covered in a dense carpet of colorful wildflowers, including orange, yellow, and purple blooms, interspersed with green and greyish shrubs. The hillside slopes upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. The sky is a deep blue with a few wispy white clouds. The word "END" is overlaid in the center of the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

END

Issues: pre and post Designation

- Diverse Recreational User Preferences
- Fire
 - Health and Human Safety
 - Ecological succession/type conversion

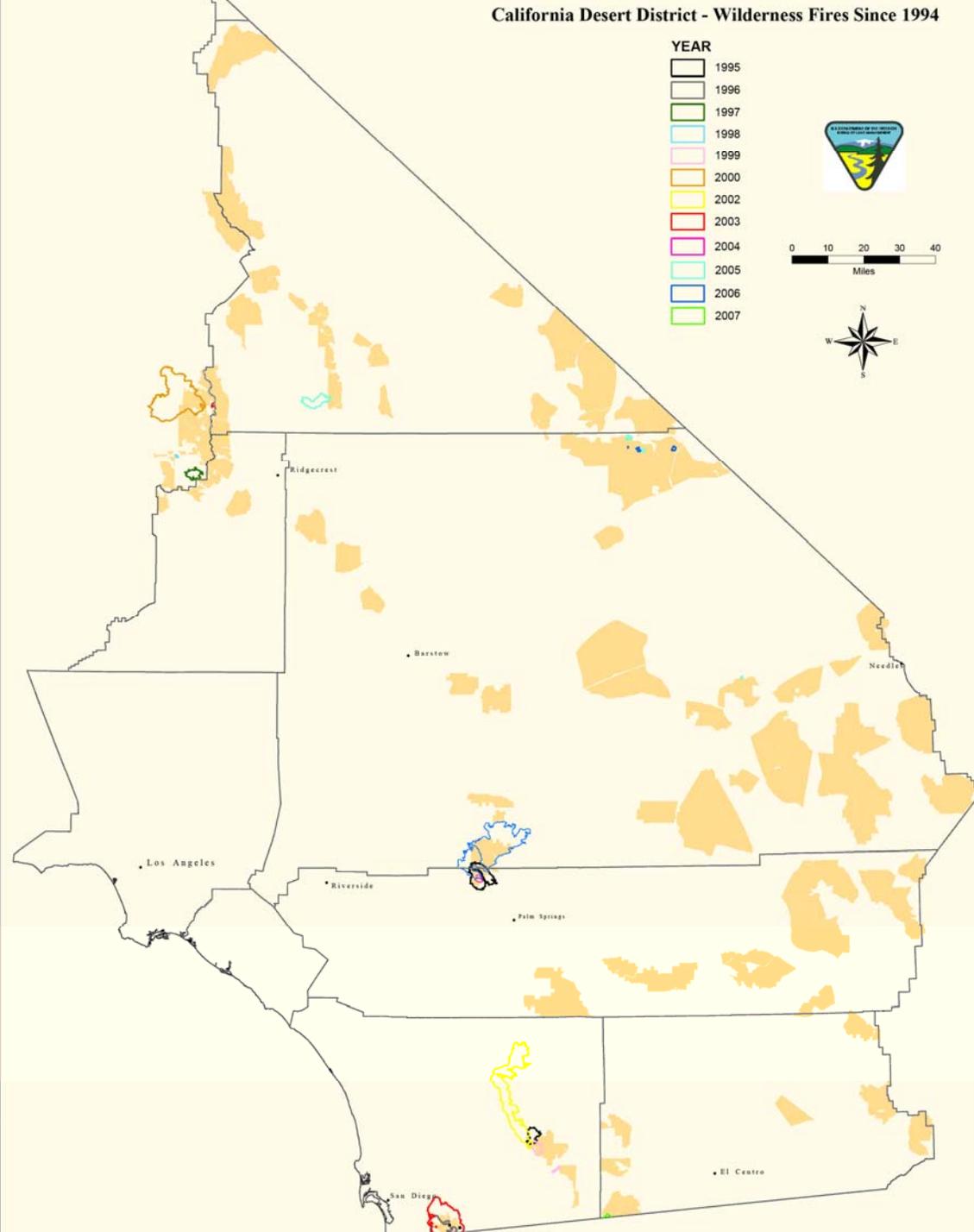
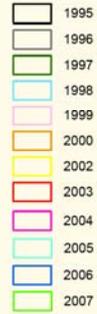
CDD Eco-Types

Two fundamentally different broad Eco-Types:

- Mountainous Terrain – Mostly FS, but BLM too
 - The Coastal Range and
 - Southern Sierra
- Deserts – primarily BLM & NPS
 - Mojave
 - Colorado-Sonoran

California Desert District - Wilderness Fires Since 1994

YEAR



Shows BLM
Wilderness Fires
since 1994

Does not show
significant recent
fires in JTNP and
MNP [NPS]

Nor FS nor State
Parks

Wilderness Act Language

4(d) The following special provisions are hereby made:

(1) Within wilderness areas, such measures may be taken as may be necessary in the control of fire, insects, and diseases, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.

Summary of Issues

- Deserts
 - Mostly fast moving/low fuel level fires
 - Vegetative type conversion is a major concern, especially as it affects habitats

- Mountainous – Coastal/Peninsular Range
 - Human health and safety is paramount
 - Mostly moderate speed/longer duration//higher fuel level fires
 - Vegetative type conversion is a major concern, especially as it affects habitats

A photograph of a hillside covered in a dense carpet of wildflowers. The flowers are in shades of orange, yellow, and purple, interspersed with green and greyish-brown shrubs. The hillside slopes upwards from the bottom left towards the top right. The sky is a deep blue with some light, wispy clouds near the horizon.

Final END