

Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation

P.O. Box 747 • 1103 South Main Street

Lone Pine, CA 93545

(760) 876-1034

Fax (760) 876-8302

Web Site: www.lppsr.org

February 23, 2015

California Energy Commission
Dockets Office, MS-4
Docket No. 09-RENEW EO-01
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

California Energy Commission

DOCKETED

09-RENEW EO-1

TN 74772

FEB 23 2015

RE: Draft Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

The Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation (LPPSR) appreciates the opportunity to comment on this unprecedented project. We appreciate the intent as a statewide effort to confront the damaging effects of excessive greenhouse gas emissions in our environment. California's leadership in clean energy will motivate other jurisdictions. The approach should channel developers to DFAs and reduce the time and costs of permit requests on non-DFA properties. The scope is ambitious.

The Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation (LPPSR) is commenting, for the most part, on lands in our historic territory and within Inyo County where a concurrent Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA) may be competing with the DRECP. We would like to see consistency in these overlapping plans.

The California deserts are described as having 'an abundance of some of the best solar, wind, and geothermal resources in the nation'. We appreciate both the urgency to eliminate fossil fuel dependency and the protection of fragile environments where development should not occur. The balance should be carefully considered. With the emphasis on utility-scale development, irreversible damage can result. Destruction of desert environments is essentially forever. Once the land is scraped of native plants, the delicate balance cannot be returned to its native state by planting and watering as in wet climates. Wind quickly erodes the soils along with ancient lichens, fungi and mosses. Many plants hundreds and thousands of years old have root systems well beyond their above ground extent. The carbon sequestered in these plants and calcium-carbonate soil may counter much of the GHG savings from solar electric generation (Allen, Michael F. et al, November 2013, Carbon Balance in California Deserts: Impact of Widespread Solar Power Generation, Center for Conservation Biology, University of California, Riverside, CEC-500-2013-063).

The Preferred Alternative most effectively protects the important cultural landscapes and viewsheds that make the Owens Valley and surrounding deserts attractive as a world-class tourist destination. This is a world treasure that has no duplicate. The highest point in the contiguous United States, Mt. Whitney,

looks directly onto the Owens Valley. The 100 mile drive from there to the lowest point in the western hemisphere, Death Valley, is through spectacular undisturbed desert and mountain ranges. The economy of the entire county is dependent on tourism. Large scale PV, thermal solar, wind turbines and transmission lines in these areas would be ruinous to the experience that people come so far to enjoy.

Much of the Owens Valley is designated as a Serious Non-Attainment Area for criteria pollutant of PM₁₀ dust. Owens Lake was dried within 10 years of building of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. River water diversion left a 110 square mile lake (largest in California) to evaporate. Subsequent erosion produced the nation's largest PM₁₀ source. With mitigation nearly completed, any large scale development on undisturbed lands in the Valley would set back gains made to cleanest air since 1923.

A DFA is described around the Lone Pine and LPPSR communities (see page 4). The polygon must have been made in error as it encapsulates housing, businesses, an airport, groundwater pumping mitigation areas and more. Additional errors show narrow strips along highways 395 and 136. We request that the DFA be removed to allow Inyo County's REGPA to address community based renewable sites with direct resident input.

Variance lands (see page 5) north and west of Independence contradict the draft REGPA. Any development along this scenic corridor will be detrimental to the viewshed which sustains Inyo County's tourist economy.

Rose Valley DFA (see page 6) contains some disturbed areas that may be coordinated with Inyo County's REGPA for photovoltaic development. Specifically, the Hay Ranch area is abandoned agriculture (disturbed) and could be visibly screened from highway 395. There may be other specific, disturbed locations in the vicinity that would also be appropriate for energy production. Wind power is excluded by China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) requirements. Therefore, foothills should be eliminated. Inyo County's draft REGPA removes sites adjacent to highway 395 scenic corridor. This should be coordinated with Inyo County to redefine DFA boundaries. However, we are concerned that the DFA size encourages development in what may be the richest and most significant cultural landscape in the entire DRECP boundaries. Your own cultural analysis (CHAPTER II.3.PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, pgs. 322-325) describes the importance of this unique and ancient cultural landscape where much has yet to be discovered. There is no off-site mitigation possible for destruction of this land, and impacts would be a grave loss to Native American heritage as well as archaeological science.

We object to any new or upgraded transmission lines through the Owens Valley and highway 395 corridor. LPPSR is working with Inyo County and other stakeholders on the REGPA draft. In that, renewable energy development will be limited to the 250 MW currently available on the Inyo-Rinaldi Transmission line.

Owens Lake bed (see page 7) has become an industrial landscape for the piecemeal dust mitigation projects. The designation of 'critical environmental concern' is a possible error in its extent over the entire lake bed. Important habitat has been established through shallow flooding and salt grass dust mitigation. Other areas are covered with gravel and confining berms. Much of the land requiring mitigation is not suitable habitat and may be suitable for solar PV development. Transmission lines are near the northwestern lake shore. We encourage possible development on these disturbed, engineered and sterile mitigation sites.

Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) owns most of the land on the Owens Valley floor. In 2010 the entire area was approved as a watershed conservation area, Owens Valley Land Management Plan.(see page 8) However, LADWP's electric arm has proposed a utility-scale PV 'ranch' within a 2 square mile area wholly inside the conservation area. The DRECP overlay of a Conservation Planning Area on these Los Angeles owned lands would provide the assurance that the land would not be developed. LADWP land seems to defy definition of private or public. Los Angeles would likely not sell or trade these lands. We propose that the BLM somehow compensate Los Angeles for the CPA overlay so that the valley will be preserved and LADWP can fill their transmission line capacity outside Owens Valley. Additionally, private land adjacent to LADWP and BLM at Mazourka Cyn Rd. is private land previously acquired from BLM (see page 9). It is within DRECP's CPA for Owens Valley. We encourage the trade of that property in exchange for other private land within Inyo County to avoid a net loss of lands in private hands.

The DRECP's Conservation and Management Actions, section II.3.2.3.4.2, provides for sale or exchange of lands under Section 203(a) (1), 203(a) (3), 206 and 209 of FLPMA. These exchanges are prioritized for California State Lands Commission (CSLC). We request prioritization to include Indian Tribes within DFAs for solar economic development.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on Draft Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

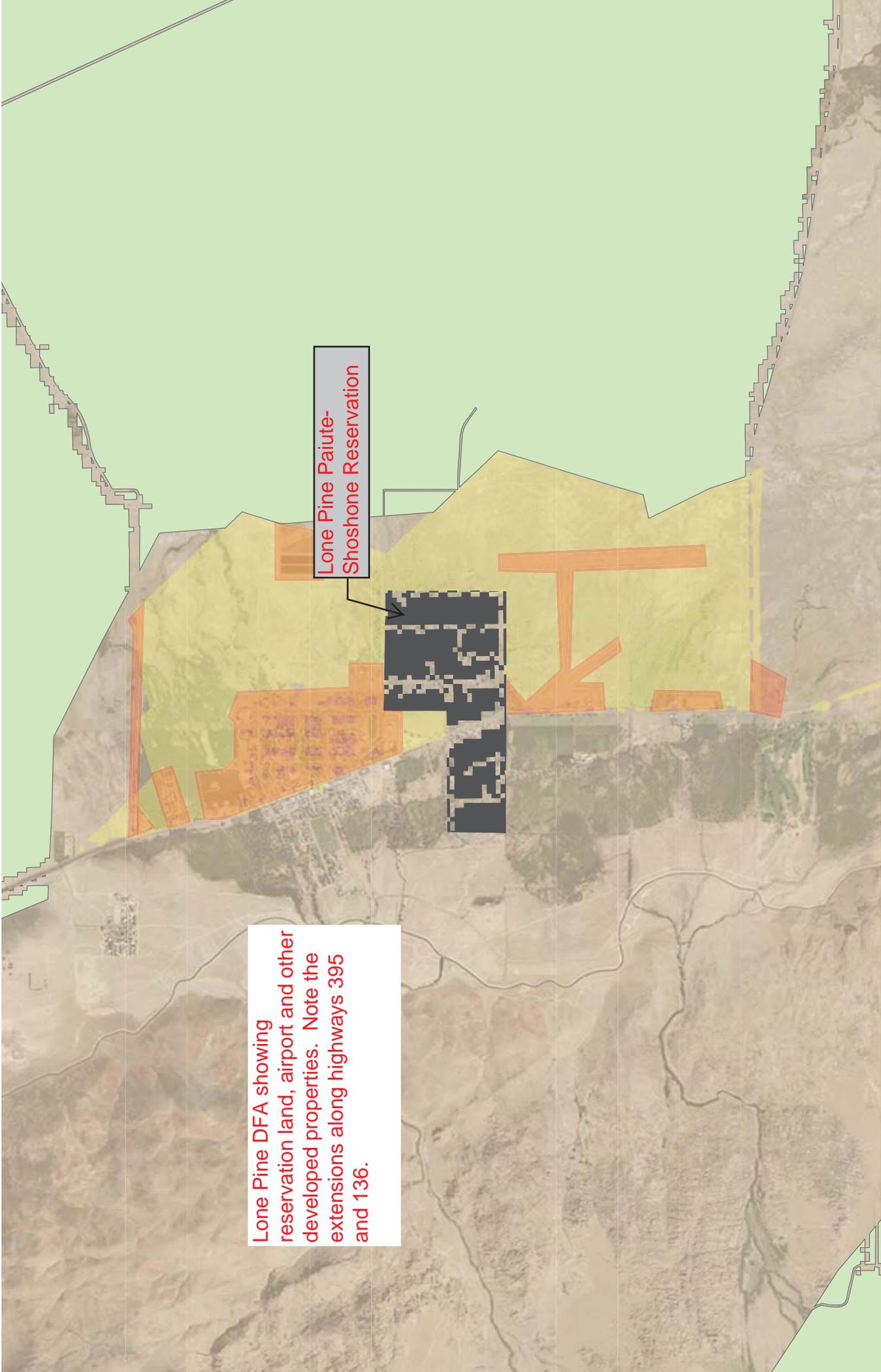
Sincerely,

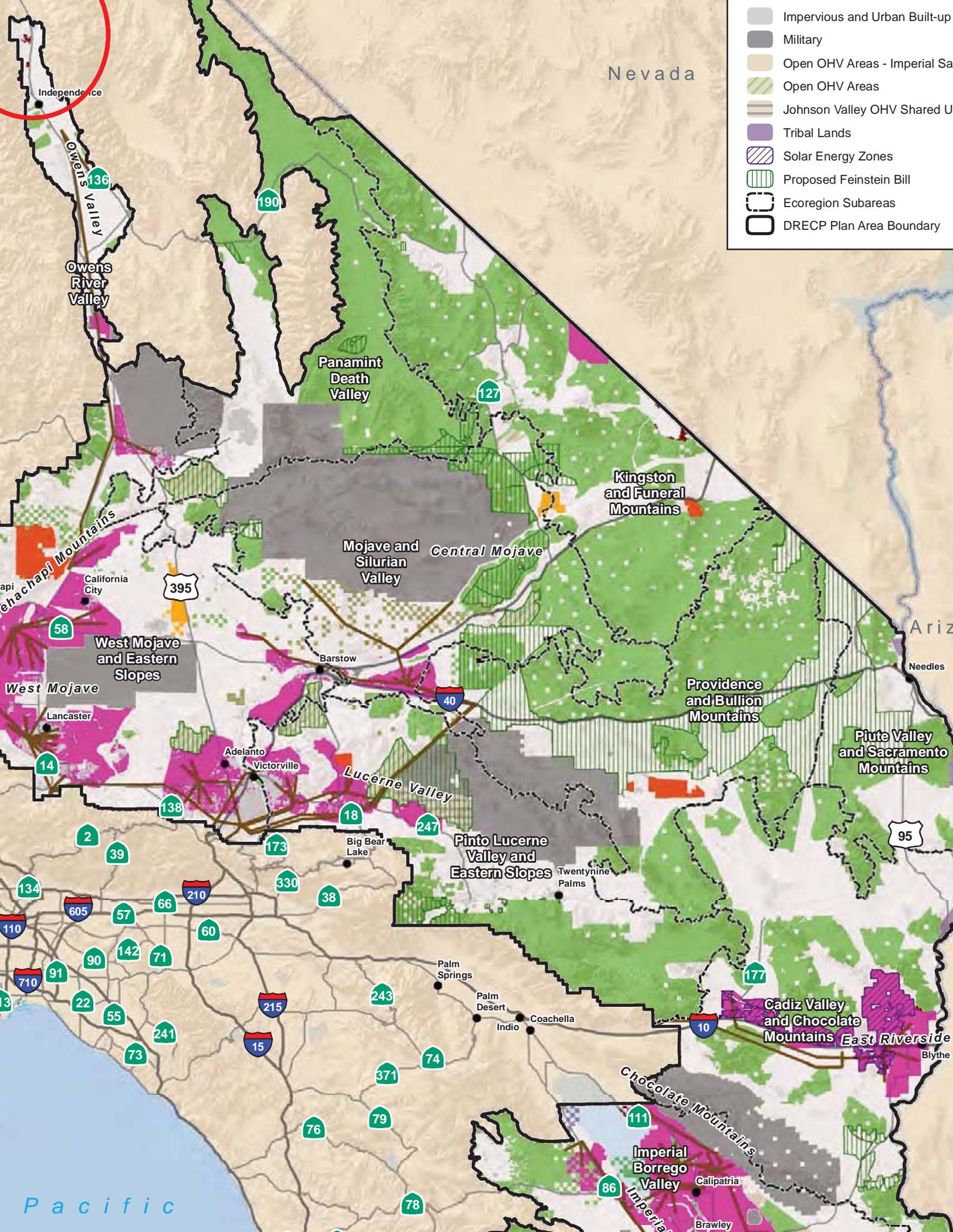


Mary L. Wuester, Tribal Chairperson
Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation.

Lone Pine DFA showing reservation land, airport and other developed properties. Note the extensions along highways 395 and 136.

Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation

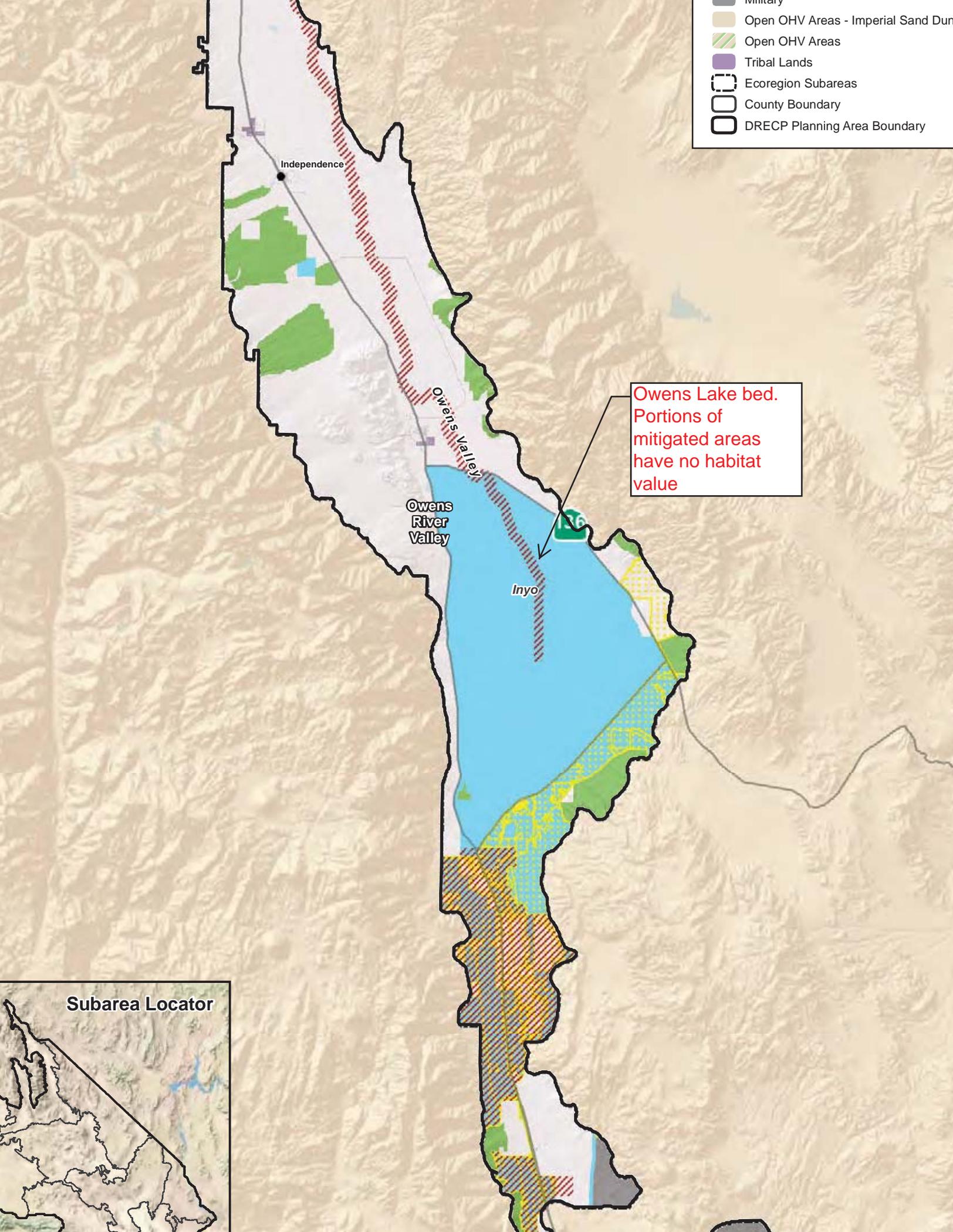






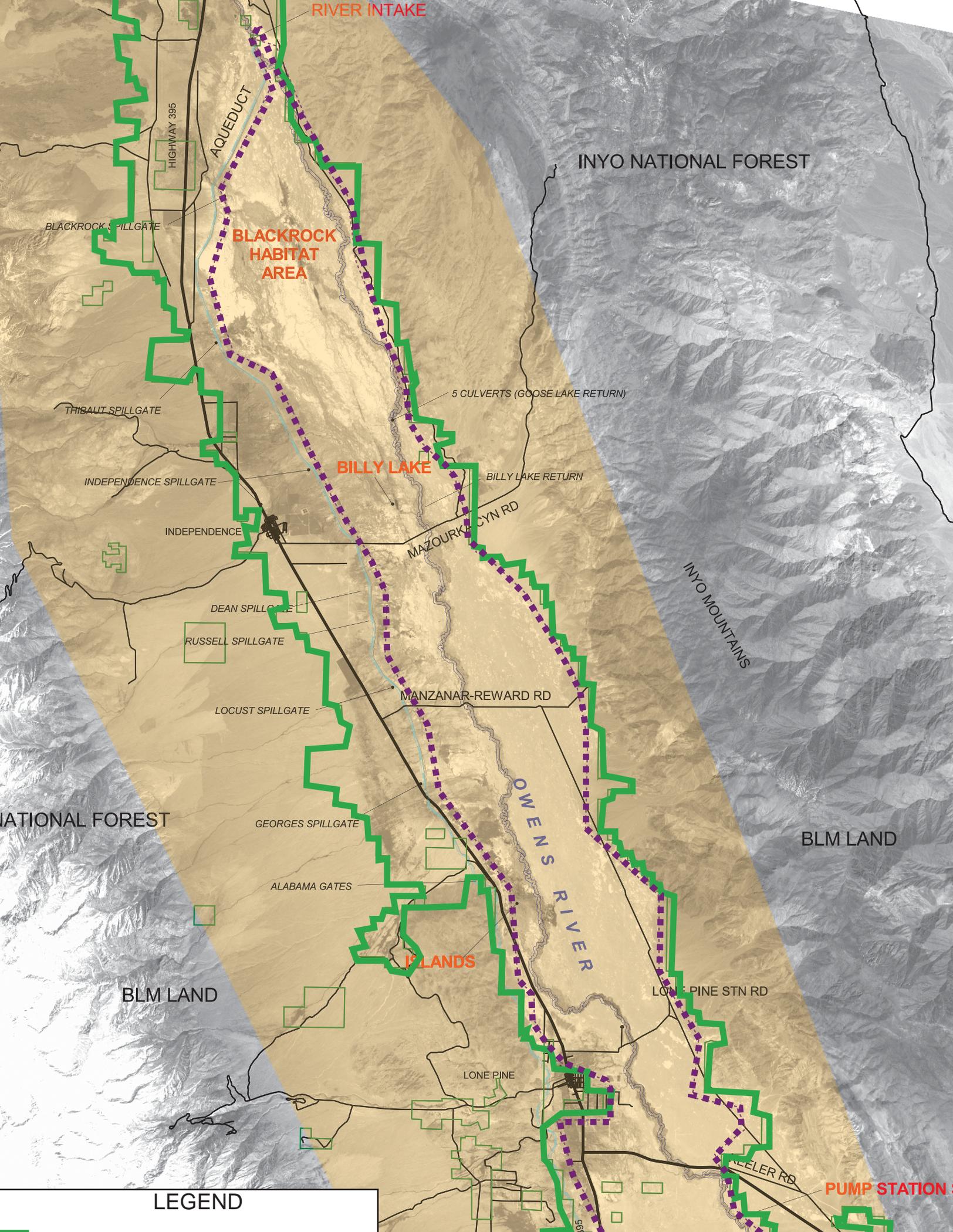
Hay Ranch and
Coso Junction area

-  Military
-  Open OHV Areas - Imperial Sand Dunes
-  Open OHV Areas
-  Tribal Lands
-  Ecoregion Subareas
-  County Boundary
-  DRECP Planning Area Boundary



Owens Lake bed.
 Portions of mitigated areas have no habitat value





RIVER INTAKE

INYO NATIONAL FOREST

BLACKROCK HABITAT AREA

AQUEDUCT

HIGHWAY 395

BLACKROCK SPILLGATE

THIBAUT SPILLGATE

INDEPENDENCE SPILLGATE

INDEPENDENCE

DEAN SPILLGATE

RUSSELL SPILLGATE

LOCUST SPILLGATE

NATIONAL FOREST

GEORGES SPILLGATE

ALABAMA GATES

BLM LAND

ISLANDS

OWENS RIVER

LONE PINE

LONE PINE STN RD

BLM LAND

INYO MOUNTAINS

MAZOURKACYN RD

MANZANAR-REWARD RD

5 CULVERTS (GOOSE LAKE RETURN)

BILLY LAKE RETURN

LONE PINE

WHEELER RD

PUMP STATION

LEGEND

Paiute Wilderness
Study Area -BLM

BLM
Public
Domain

private property
-include within
proposed CPA

Conservation Planning Area
in Owens Valley

