

Chapter 2

Management Framework

Introduction

This chapter describes the management framework within and adjacent to the study area and the existing policies and management responsibilities of involved agencies that may influence development of the study area in the future. Administration of the land areas and associated environmental resources within the study area requires a coordinated effort among several entities that have varying degrees of management responsibility. In addition, Reclamation has issued several existing land use authorizations to second parties to use Project lands within the study area. Existing land uses, as well as existing environmental conditions, can be described as “limiting factors” to development. Reclamation cannot interfere with the legal rights previously granted to another party. Reclamation coordinates its planning activities with adjacent private and public landowners when compatible with Project needs and as required by applicable laws and regulations. (**Map 2.1, Coachella Canal Land Ownership**, shows land ownership in the study area and immediate area.)

Reclamation Responsibilities Within the Study Area

Reclamation maintains primary jurisdiction of the lands and associated resources within the study area; however, management of some resources, such as wildlife, are the responsibilities of other entities, as discussed later in this chapter. Reclamation is responsible for implementing and enforcing all Federal laws, regulations, and Executive orders dealing with natural resources on its lands. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
- National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1958, as amended
- Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
- Executive Orders 11644 and 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands, 1972 and 1977
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands, 1977

- Executive Order 12962, Recreational Fisheries, 1995
- Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites, 1996
- Executive Order 13186, Conservation of Migratory Birds 2001

Land Use Authorizations

Section 10 of the Reclamation Project Act of 1939 (53 Stat. 1187) authorizes Reclamation to grant leases, licenses, permits, easements, and rights-of-way. All land use activities for specific use of Reclamation lands and water areas are authorized and managed under land use authorizations, such as lease agreements, license agreements, permits, rights-of-way easements, and other legal and binding contracts. Each land use authorization is subject to specific terms and conditions covering the use of the Federal estate. Reclamation's Yuma Area Office has copies of all authorized conveyance documents dealing with second party use of Reclamation lands. Lessees are restricted from conveying their permitted use to another party without Reclamation's approval. Land use authorizations may be issued only when they will not interfere with Reclamation project purposes. They are to be, for the most part, temporary in nature and contain restrictive language that protects current and future Federal land interests.

Reclamation's Land Use Authorization Directives and Standards state that Reclamation will prohibit any new exclusive/semiprivate use of Reclamation land unless directed otherwise in specific authorizing legislation and that existing private/semiprivate use will be eliminated when the use authorization expires, unless a formal planning process determines that there is a significant public need and benefit for the exclusive private/semiprivate use and the land is not needed for other public or project purposes. The Land Use Authorization Directives and Standards discussed here do not apply to private exclusive use, which may exist within concession areas. See "Concessions," discussed later in this chapter, for details regarding exclusive use within concession areas.

In addition, Reclamation issues right-of-use authorizations for all improvements within easements, such as culverts and bridges, pipelines, and utilities. Right-of-use authorizations are also considered for rock collecting, archeological investigation, airports, wells, mineral exploration and extraction (including sand and gravel), and material storage. Pesticide and herbicide application on Reclamation lands requires a plan and appropriate permits.

Acquisition of Reclamation Lands

A project's authorized purpose and related general laws provide the basis for Reclamation to both acquire and retain title to all land and land rights. The original agency purposes of irrigation, power, and navigation were supplemented

Coachella Canal Area Land Ownership

August 2006

LEGEND



City Boundary

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Reclamation
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- National Park Service
- Military
- California Fish and Game
- State Land in Joshua Tree National Park
- Nature Conservancy

This map is for general reference only. Data layers that appear on this map may or may not be accurate, current, or otherwise reliable.

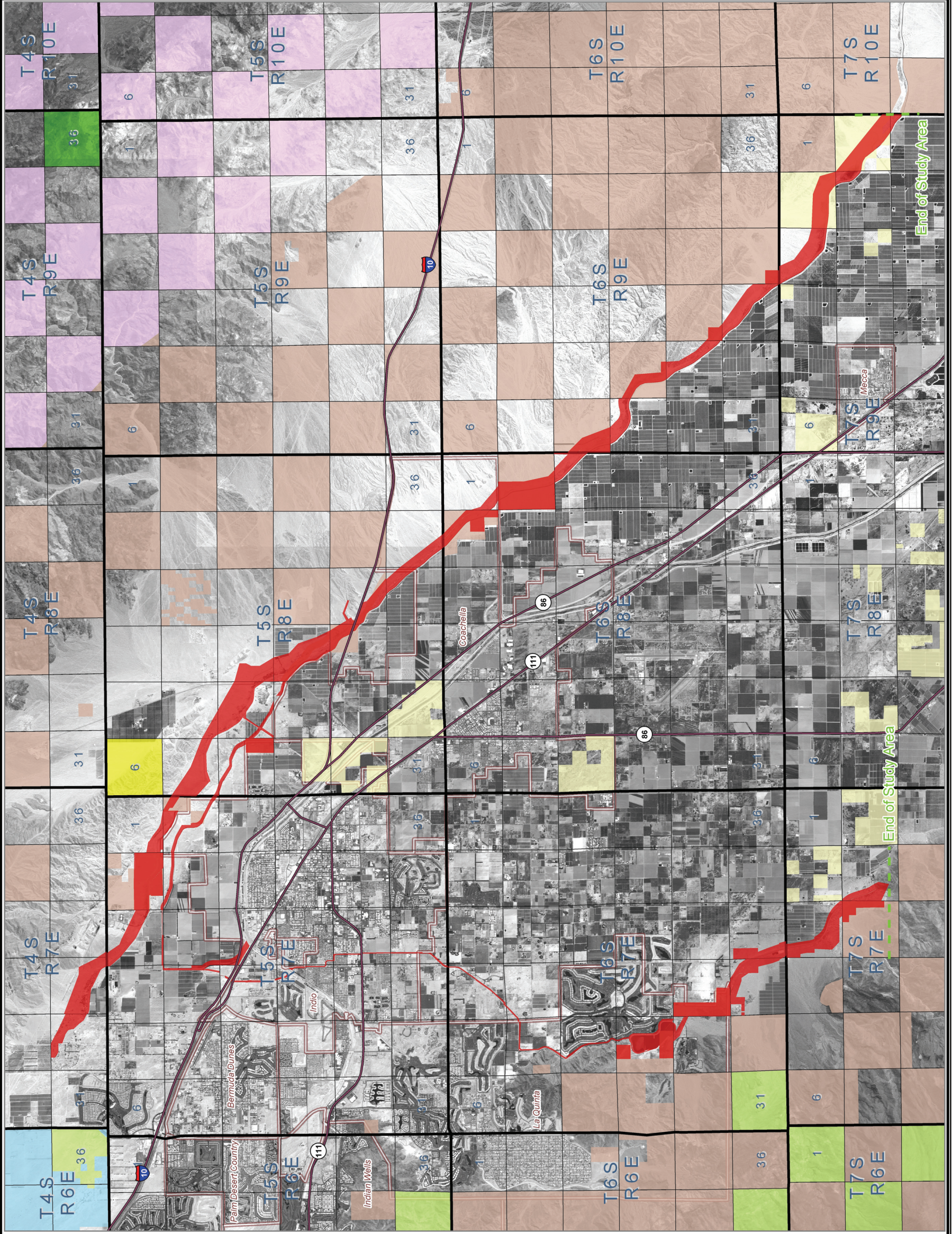
Map 2.1



0 1 2 3 Miles

RECLAMATION
Managing Water in the West

Produced by the Bureau of Reclamation
Remote Sensing and GIS Group
Denver Technical Service Center - Denver, CO



later with fish and wildlife conservation and recreation when these latter purposes became pressing national issues. To accommodate these added public purposes, the Congress, in the 1950s, recommended a joint acquisition policy for Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, published in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 8. Reclamation has closely followed the joint policy since that time.

Disposition of Reclamation Lands

Pursuant to section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976, Reclamation must review all its withdrawn lands to determine if they are needed for project purposes. Withdrawn lands not needed for project purposes should be returned to the public domain for administration by BLM.

In the case of acquired lands, Reclamation must determine if they are no longer needed for project purposes. These lands are reported as excess to the General Services Administration (GSA). GSA first offers the lands for sale to other Federal, State, or local public entities. If these entities do not want the lands, they are put up for sale through public bid at established fair market and competitive prices.

Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Use

Unless officially designated, Reclamation lands are closed to OHV use. Forty-three CFR, Part 420, formulated OHV use policy to protect the land resource, promote the safety of all users, minimize conflicts among land users, and ensure that any permitted use would not result in significant adverse environmental impact or cause irreversible damage to existing ecological balances. The policy states, "Reclamation lands are closed to off highway vehicle use, except for an area or trail specifically opened to use of off highway vehicles." Areas permitted for OHV uses are to be evaluated and the use to be judged compatible with adjacent private and public lands. Executive Orders 11644, February 8, 1972, and 11989, May 24, 1977, provide further guidance on managing OHVs.

Activity-Based Costing/Management

To satisfy a commitment to the President's Management Agenda, the Department of the Interior (Interior) directed its bureaus and offices to implement a methodology that links the full costs of resources to business processes and outputs. This methodology was first implemented in 2003 and is commonly referred to as Activity-Based Costing/Management (ABC/M). By linking costs of resources to business processes and outputs, Reclamation and other Interior agencies will be able to demonstrate the following:

- How funds were used
- What was produced with those funds
- How that work contributes to achieving Interior goals
- How to better estimate future work and accomplishment with available resources

To implement an ABC/M approach to cost management, Reclamation will do the following:

- Link our work to Interior activities
- Track the costs associated with those activities
- Align cost and activities to strategic goals
- Link costs to performance data, namely outputs and outcomes

Reclamation will link its activities through an 18-digit cost authority account. Each applicable cost account will tie to an ABC activity in Interior's four goal areas. As described in Interior's 2003–2008 Strategic Plan, its four primary mission areas are (1) resource protection, (2) resource use, (3) recreation, and (4) serving communities. Each Reclamation cost account must link to one Interior-level ABC activity that best reflects the work performed using that cost account.

Comprehensive Condition Assessments

In accordance with applicable Interior requirements and Real Property Executive Order 13327, all Interior bureaus are required to conduct Comprehensive Condition Assessments (CCA) of all constructed assets that meet a \$50,000 threshold in current replacement value. Under Interior's Strategic Plan, performance measures exist that require the computation of the Facility Condition Index (FCI), which is an indicator of the general condition of a building or facility computed as the ratio of the cost of identified maintenance needs compared to its current replacement value. In fiscal year 2004 (October 1, 2003, to September 30, 2004), Reclamation completed an initial inventory of its buildings and recreation sites and determined which facilities met the \$50,000 current replacement value threshold.

As part of this initial review, Reclamation exempted any buildings and facilities that are being reviewed under an existing field review or examination program (i.e., facility reviews, review of operation and maintenance [RO&M], or power RO&M programs). Facilities such as dam and powerplants are currently being addressed under Reclamation's Facility Reliability Rating system. The remaining facilities and buildings, including recreation sites, are being inventoried as part of CCA. CCA inventories are to be limited to those reserved works that are operated

and maintained by Reclamation. The CCA will identify the relative condition of the reserved works and assist in determining the amount and priority of maintenance needs associated with these facilities for budgeting, funding, and possible disposal.

In addition to the initial 2004 inventory of recreation area buildings and facilities, Reclamation conducted a preliminary CCA of these facilities and calculated the FCI of each. The objective of conducting the preliminary inventories was to establish baseline FCI values. On the basis of the scope of the initial inventory, each building or recreation site with a current replacement value of over \$50,000 is to receive a CCA field review every 5 years, beginning in fiscal year 2005.

Government Performance and Results Act

The Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (GPRA) was enacted to improve program effectiveness and accountability. GPRA encompasses management themes and objectives implemented by business and Government for continuous improvement:

- Management of change
- Focus on the customer
- Finding and maintaining a competitive advantage
- Continual performance improvement

To achieve these objectives, GPRA requires Government agencies to do the following:

- Set strategic and annual performance goals
- Measure and report annually on their progress of achieving annual goals
- Use performance information to improve management decisionmaking and resource allocation to address the most critical issues that are supportive of the organizational mission

Specifically, GPRA requires that Federal agencies submit the following items to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Congress:

- A **Five-Year Strategic Plan**, with revisions every 3 years
- **Annual Performance Plans** establishing performance goals
- An **Annual Performance Report** that describes the success or failure in achieving annual goals and identified areas in which activities or goals need to be revised in the future

- **Periodic Evaluations** of program performance, efficiency, effectiveness, and intent
- **Linkage to the Budget** as required by OMB Circular A-11, which calls for agencies to link their budgets to their goals to demonstrate the level of discretionary appropriations used to achieve goals

Reclamation is currently operating under its 2000–2005 Strategic Plan. Reclamation is currently revising its Strategic Plan to streamline the mission goals and to better link the goals with the budget and to focus on accomplishing Reclamation’s mission.

Reclamation’s mission and three primary mission goals as defined in its 2000–2005 Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Management of water and related resources: Mission Goal 1 calls for Reclamation to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources to meet the needs of current and future generations.
- Management of facilities: Mission Goal 2 ensures that Reclamation operates and maintains facilities safely, reliably, and efficiently to provide project benefits.
- Management of the workplace, human resources, and focus on the customer: Mission Goal 3 recognizes the need for Reclamation to work with customers and employees to advance its organizational effectiveness.

As stated previously, GPRA requires agencies to develop Strategic Plans that include the comprehensive mission of the organization; general goals and objectives, including outcomes; and a description of how goals will be achieved. Annual performance plans must include annual goals, performance indicators, data validation, and a discussion of how the annual goals relate to strategic goals.

Recreation program goals and other resource related goals have been established that apply indirectly to how Coachella Canal Area lands are managed now and how they will be managed in the future. Annual goals address conducting recreation compliance reviews, preparing Action Plans, and identifying corrective actions over a specified period of time. Accomplishing the annual program goals will improve the quality of recreation areas. Annual performance goals are periodically adjusted as the need arises and will likely be modified pending the completion of a new Strategic Plan.

Concessions

Reclamation authorizes and manages concessions on its lands pursuant to its Policies and Directives and Standards for Concessions Management.

Reclamation and any managing partners would ensure that concessions are developed and managed to meet public needs, protect natural and heritage resources, provide stewardship of all lands and waters, and to provide a variety of goods and services to the public while being consistent with authorized project purposes. All concessionaires make individual business decisions to enter into legal, binding contracts with Reclamation for operating commercial businesses on Federal lands for a specified period of time. Among other things, the right of renewal, fixed assets, trailer lease sites, and the length of a contract are governed by the existing terms and conditions of a contract. The terms and conditions of an existing contract are not changed without mutual consent of both parties. Reclamation policy determines who is entitled to the new concession opportunity upon expiration of an existing contract. Any existing concessionaire will have to compete with other bidders who officially respond to a bid package (prospectus) sent out by Reclamation. A prospectus will contain enough detailed information to allow bidders to submit respective proposal(s) for the operation of a commercial business to Reclamation for evaluation and selection.

Before issuing a concession prospectus and request for proposal, Reclamation would complete a formal Commercial Services Plan (CSP). At a minimum, the CSP must determine the number of concessions necessary to meet the public needs, the type of facilities and services to be provided, the financial feasibility of the concession(s), and the location(s) appropriate for commercial activities. The complexity of CSPs will vary according to location, past visitor use, anticipated revenues, and other factors. Public involvement would be an integral part of any commercial services planning effort. Public involvement would be initiated early and continued throughout the commercial services planning process. An appropriate level of environmental analysis would also be conducted.

If a concession operation were contemplated, a financial feasibility evaluation would be conducted, and pertinent data documented in the CSP. The evaluation should be commensurate with the types of facilities, goods, and services to be provided and other factors that may influence the incoming concession operation. Information such as estimated fees to be returned to the United States, justification for the proposed length of the concessions contract, and any underlying assumptions regarding the concessionaire's capital investment in the concession operation should be addressed in the CSP.

Reclamation's Concessions Management policy states, "Exclusive use¹ of the Federal estate will not be allowed, and existing exclusive use will be removed as soon as possible." Exclusive use, as discussed here, applies only to concession operated areas. Exclusive private/semiprivate use outside of a concession area is

¹ Exclusive use is any use that excludes other appropriate recreation use or users for extended periods of time. Exclusive use includes, but is not limited to, boat docks, cabins, trailers, manufactured or mobile homes, structures, roads, or other amenities that are determined by Reclamation to be exclusive use.

addressed in separate Reclamation directives and standards. See “Land Use Authorizations” previously discussed in this chapter, for a discussion on exclusive private/semiprivate land use authorizations.

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) has prepared a report, dated May 2000 (Report No. 00 I 376), that addresses all concessions managed by Reclamation. At all Reclamation areas and pursuant to the OIG report, Reclamation has agreed to the following:

- Establish and implement an oversight process to ensure that concessions comply with existing contract provisions, especially in the areas of building improvements, annual inspections, and prices charged to the public.
- Complete and issue detailed guidance and procedures to fully implement the new Policies and Directives and Standards.
- Develop a formal action plan to assess and correct the health and safety deficiencies and degradation of land and water resources within the concessionaire area.
- Establish a review process to ensure that all new concessions and newly issued and reissued contracts are in compliance with Reclamation’s Policies and Directives and Standards.
- Develop a formal action plan to bring Reclamation managed contracts into compliance with its Policies and Directives and Standards.

In addition, OIG identified the 10 most significant contract provisions that each concession permit must contain:

- Contractor default
- Building improvements
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) plans
- Title to fixed assets
- Franchise fees
- Exclusive use
- Prices charged for services
- Safety program
- Recordkeeping
- Operations review and evaluation

Fire Management

Pursuant to the Secretary of the Interior’s policy letter dated January 18, 2001, Reclamation must address the implementation actions contained in the updated

2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy document. The 2001 Wildland Fire Management Policy states, among other things, that every area with burnable vegetation must have an approved fire management plan, which is a strategic plan that defines a program to manage wildland and prescribed fires based on the areas's approved land management plan. Fire management plans must provide for firefighter and public safety; include fire management strategies, tactics, and alternatives; address values to be protected and public health issues; and be consistent with resource management objectives, activities of the area, and environmental laws and regulations. Fire management planning, preparedness, prevention, suppression, fire use, restoration and rehabilitation, monitoring, research, and education will be conducted on an interagency basis with the involvement of cooperators and partners. Accordingly, Reclamation will work with State, tribal, and non-Federal organizations, as well as other Federal agencies, to implement the 2001 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Recreation

P.L. 89-72, as amended, encourages Reclamation to seek State and local partners to manage the recreation resources on its lands. Throughout the 17 Western States, Reclamation has numerous successful partnerships with non-Federal entities. In other instances and pursuant to P.L. 89-72, as amended, Reclamation has transferred to other Federal agencies the jurisdiction of its lands, such as national recreation areas, national wildlife refuges, or national forest lands if the Reclamation project is within or adjacent to a National Forest System. If Reclamation lands are transferred to another Federal agency, all resources, including recreation, are managed using the rules, regulations, and funding sources of that agency. When Reclamation cannot obtain either a non-Federal or Federal partner, Reclamation manages its lands and resources pursuant to existing laws and regulations and specific Reclamation authorities and limitations. Chapter 3, "Planning Issues, Opportunities and Constraints," provides additional discussion of opportunities and constraints in securing managing partners.

Responsibilities of Other Entities Within the Study Area

In addition to Reclamation, several agencies have responsibilities within the study area.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

BIA's responsibility is "the administration and management of 55.7 million acres of land held in trust by the United States for American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives. There are 562 Federal recognized tribal governments in the United States. Developing forestlands, leasing assets on these lands, directing

agricultural programs, protecting water and land rights, developing and maintaining infrastructure and economic development are all part of the agency's responsibility" (BIA, 2005).

Reclamation works with BIA and area Indian tribes in identifying Indian trust assets that may exist on Reclamation lands. When implementing any ground-disturbing activities, Reclamation contacts BIA and area tribes. If trust assets are found, BIA works with Reclamation in identifying potential impacts, analyzing those impacts, and developing a strategy to avoid adverse impacts. If impacts cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation measures are implemented.

Bureau of Land Management

BLM manages 262 million acres of public lands, primarily in the 12 Western States. BLM's vision is to "enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources" (BLM, 2005).

BLM and Reclamation regularly coordinate on matters of mutual concern. For example, pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, Reclamation works with BLM to review the status of the public lands Reclamation withdrew from the public domain for Reclamation project purposes. If the withdrawn lands are not needed for project purposes, BLM and Reclamation work together following a process that will return Reclamation lands back to BLM.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The mission of the Service is to "work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continued benefit of the American people."

The Service and Reclamation regularly cooperate on Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and ESA compliance activities. These activities are usually associated with Reclamation's project planning efforts in preparing NEPA compliance documents such as environmental assessments and environmental impact statements for Federal actions occurring on lands under the administration of Reclamation.

California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)

The mission of CDFG is to "manage the State's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public."

CDFG provides expertise and assistance to Reclamation on special status species and critical habitat as well as other wildlife related matters. As the State agency that enforces fish and game regulations within the State of California, CDFG would conduct law enforcement activities on Project lands, if necessary.

California State Historic Preservation Office

The California SHPO and area Indian tribes have an interest in the Coachella Canal Area because Reclamation is required to consult with SHPO and area tribes concerning the identification of cultural resources within the study area. Cultural resources include archeological sites or traditional cultural properties, including Indian sacred sites. During specific planning periods and prior to any implementation efforts, SHPO and Reclamation work together to identify implementation actions that could potentially affect the cultural resources within the study area.

Riverside County

Within the Coachella Canal Area, Riverside County Regional Parks and Open Space District operates and maintains Lake Cahuilla County Park, located 4 miles southeast of La Quinta. Park lands are leased by the county from CVWD, which leases the lands from BLM and Reclamation. The park consists of about 845 acres—710 acres of land and the 135-acre Lake Cahuilla. The Riverside County Regional Parks and Open Space District is an independent agency governed by the board of supervisors (County of Riverside, 2005).

Coachella Valley Water District

The Coachella Valley Water District provides five water-related services: domestic water, sanitation (wastewater), recycled water, irrigation and drainage, and stormwater protection. CVWD has a deep history and dates back to 1915. CVWD was also one of the original signatories to the Party of Seven Agreement of 1931, which divided California's share of the Colorado River.

CVWD's mission is "To meet the water related needs of the people through dedicated employees providing high quality at reasonable cost." With headquarters located in the city of Coachella and urban water functions centered in Palm Desert, CVWD has nearly 640,000 acres within its boundaries. Most of the service area is in Riverside County, but CVWD also extends into Imperial and San Diego Counties. A governing five-member Board of Directors is elected from five general divisions for terms of 4 years each.

The 123-mile-long Coachella Canal delivers Colorado River water from the All-American Canal to irrigate agricultural land in the Coachella Valley, primarily to

an area known as Improvement District 1, where virtually all of the valley's nearly 60,000 acres of cultivated farmland are located. A 500-mile-long underground delivery system of concrete pipes conveys the water to the crops.

Coachella Valley Recreation and Park District

Currently, CVRPD has a lease agreement with Reclamation (No. 1-07-34-L1222) for the development of three separate areas on Coachella Canal Area lands for recreation. The agreement expires April 23, 2026. The agreement is subject to and subordinate to Project purposes and needs of Reclamation and CVWD.

Responsibilities of Other Entities Adjacent to the Study Area

Following are descriptions of the responsibilities of other agencies and entities for lands adjacent to the study area.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The Torres-Martinez Indian Reservation consists of approximately 24,800 acres of land, located in scattered tracts within and adjacent to the study area. The reservation was established by Executive order on May 15, 1876. An Act of February 11, 1903 (32 Stat. 822) added 640 acres of State lands to the reservation in exchange for lands to be set apart for the Torres Band under the Act of January 12, 1891 (26 Stat. 712-14). The governing body of the Desert Cahuilla Tribe is the general council, which consists of all enrolled adult voting members of the tribe 18 years of age or older. The tribal council implements all ordinances, resolutions, and motions of the general council and represents the tribe in all negotiations with local, State, tribal, and Federal governments and private entities and their agencies (Torres-Martinez Indian Reservation, 2005).

Bureau of Land Management

BLM manages large parcels of land adjacent to the study area, with emphasis on providing a wide range of natural resource based recreation activities. Types of recreational use typically found on BLM managed lands include hiking, horseback riding, camping, nature study, hunting, and OHV use. BLM maintains a system of hiking and equestrian trails that traverse the Santa Rosa Mountains.

BLM also manages the Desert National Scenic Area, which consists of approximately 200,000 acres of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains southwest of the Coachella Valley. BLM has also designated two Areas of

Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) near the northwestern end of the Coachella Valley: Big Morongo Canyon and White Water Canyon near ancient Lake Cahuilla. The ACEC designation is intended to protect significant natural and cultural resources, to provide compatible uses, and to provide monitoring. Special management prescriptions are created specific to each site. Prescriptions include signing and control of user and vehicle access, increased field presence, and restricted mineral exploration and development.

BLM is also a participant in the Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Habitat Conservation Plan, which called for the establishment of three preserves, each containing sand dune habitat vital to the survival and propagation of the lizard. The Coachella Valley Preserve, at 15,000 acres, is the largest of the preserves. It is located in Thousand Palms Canyon, which is within Indio Hills, bordering on the northern edge of the Coachella Valley, halfway between Palm Springs and Indio. It contains the last undisturbed watershed in Coachella Valley and the sources of water-carried and wind-borne sand that create the dune habitat of the federally endangered Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. BLM participates in the staffing and operation of a visitor center located at the entrance to the Coachella Valley Preserve. In addition to BLM, the Coachella Valley Preserve System is managed collectively by the Service, BLM, CDFG, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and The Nature Conservancy.

In addition, BLM manages more than one-third of the Santa Rosa Mountains Wildlife Habitat Area. Remaining lands are managed by CDFG, U.S. Forest Service, and the University of California. BLM also helps manage the Santa Rosa Mountains Wilderness, which consists of 64,340 acres, and may include other Federal, State, and private lands. The wilderness is contained within the Santa Rosa/San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, which is variously managed by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, State and local agencies, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, and private entities and landowners.

Orocopia Mountains Wilderness is located southeast of the study area; it consists of 40,735 acres of open desert valleys, ridges, and eroded canyons. Mecca Hills Wilderness, located immediately west of the Orocopia Mountains Wilderness, consists of 26,036 acres of badlands.

The Whitewater River Floodplain Preserve, located south of Interstate 10 and east of Indian Avenue, consists of 1,230 acres of BLM and CVWD land. One of the primary purposes of this preserve is to protect and enhance the habitat of the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. Dos Palmas Preserve is an oasis of fan palms located about 10 miles southeast of Mecca.

National Park Service

This mission of the National Park Service is to “promote and regulate the use of the . . . national parks. . . which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural

and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” The National Park Service’s 557,802-acre Joshua Tree Wilderness is located northeast of the study area. The lower, drier Colorado Desert dominates the eastern half of the wilderness, while the slightly cooler, moister Mojave Desert covers the western half.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The Service manages the 13,000-acre Coachella Valley National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), located just west of Indio. Coachella NWR contains the majority of critical habitat within the Coachella Valley Preserve (see “Bureau of Land Management”) for the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. Habitat consists of palm oasis woodlands, perennial desert pools, and blow-sand habitat, as well as the State’s second largest grove of native fan palms and Coachella milk-vetch, a species of special concern. The refuge also provides for the only significant acreage that is not subject to several multiple uses from the recreating public. It is almost entirely closed to the public to protect the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard. However, horseback riding and hiking are allowed on designated trails.

California Department of Fish and Game

CDFG helps manage the 104,000-acre Santa Rosa Mountains Wildlife Habitat Area, located about 15 miles southwest of Indio in the foothills and upper elevations of the Santa Rosa Mountains. The primary goal of this wildlife habitat area is to manage the population of Peninsular bighorn sheep within the Santa Rosa Mountains by preserving the essentially pristine character of its habitat. CDFG has designated much of the Santa Rosa Mountain range as a State game refuge. The Coachella Valley Ecological Reserve, located east of Indio, about 1 mile north of Highway 10, also was established to protect this species and its habitat (CDFG, 2005).

Riverside County

The Coachella Canal Area is contained within Riverside County, the fourth largest county in California. The county, which stretches nearly 200 miles across and comprises more than 7,200 square miles, shares borders with densely populated Los Angeles, Imperial, Orange, San Diego, and San Bernardino Counties. Between 1980 and 1990, the population grew by more than 76 percent, making it the fastest-growing county in California (County of Riverside, 2003, 2005).

The five-member board of supervisors is the county’s governing body, serving as both legislative and executive branches of the county government. In its

legislative role, the Board passes local laws (called ordinances) which govern activities ranging from land use, to building and safety codes. In its executive role, the board collectively creates and guides operation of programs to serve the county. The board oversees an annual budget of over \$1 billion and appoints a county executive officer who manages the day-to-day activities of all county departments.

Although Riverside County has only one developed trail that it maintains, trails are discussed here because the county serves to coordinate connectivity in an effort to prevent fragmentation. Some communities have trails that have been built and are maintained by another entity such as a homeowners' association, a community service area, or a local park and recreation district. However, often these trails lack connectivity to other parts of the county and other trail systems. Providing connectivity between trails within the county and State and Federal trails, historic trails, and trails in other jurisdictions is addressed within the County of Riverside General Plan.

In general, the County of Riverside General Plan recognizes the following types of recreational trails:

Regional Trails: Regional trails are the main trails within the county; they are generally maintained and operated by the Riverside County Parks and Open Space District. Regional trails are designed to provide linkages between communities and other areas. They are also designed to connect with State and Federal trails as well as trails within other jurisdictions. Generally, the county strives to designate an easement of 14 to 20 feet wide and a width of 10 feet for regional trails.

Community Trails: Community trails are designed to link areas of a community to the regional trail system and link areas of a community with each other. Community trails are typically maintained and operated by a local parks and recreation district. Easements for community trails are generally 10 to 14 feet wide with a trail width of 8 feet.

Historic Trails: Historic trails are designated routes that feature the historic resources found within the area. Historic trails generally have regional or community trail designations that either follow or parallel the route. This often provides the opportunity to recognize the historic significance of the route and affords the opportunity to develop interpretive centers and signage.

BLM manages and maintains BLM trails, but they are included within the County of Riverside General Plan to indicate connectivity.

Coachella Valley Recreation and Park District

CVRPD, the largest recreation service provider in the Coachella Valley, provides public park and recreation facilities for an area that extends from Palm Desert to the Salton Sea. CVRPD, which is overseen by a five-member elected board, is funded by a mixture of property taxes, Quimby fees, grants, special assessments, redevelopment tax-increment funds, in-lieu fees, voter-approved bonds, program revenues, and maintenance agreements. CVRPD funds are used for facility maintenance, program development, and community activities.

CVRPD adopted a Five-Year Capital Improvement Program in 2000 and is now in the process of updating it. The plan lists capital improvements, costs, priorities, and methods of financing. CVRPD currently has commitment for new facilities. However, due to the recent budget deficits, these commitments “exceed current and expected revenues,” as stated in CVRPD’s *Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2004*. Therefore, no capital improvements are planned for the 2004-2005 fiscal year (Municipal Service Review, 2005).

CVRPD owns and maintains numerous facilities throughout the Coachella Valley, including community centers, gymnasiums, health and fitness centers, pools, and ball fields. Working in partnership with the management of the agencies within its boundary, CVRPD strives to coordinate planning and avoid the duplication of services. CVRPD’s objective is to “fill the gaps” in the provision of park and recreation services. For example, within the city of Indio, the city provides the park facilities, and CVRPD provides recreational programs. CVRPD also provides recreational-oriented facilities such as community centers, aquatic parks, and golf centers.

In addition, Riverside County provides numerous facilities within CVRPD’s boundary, including parks and community centers.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments

As discussed in chapter 1, the Coachella Valley Association of Governments has prepared a draft of the *Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan and Natural Communities Conservation Plan*, which is designed to conserve large, contiguous undeveloped habitat areas for a wide range of plant communities and special status species animals. The plan covers more than 1.1 million acres in the Coachella Valley and surrounding mountains. The plan is intended to standardize mitigation and compensation measures for species of concern on a regional basis and to satisfy the requirements of Federal and State endangered species protection laws.

La Quinta

The city of La Quinta is located in the central Coachella Valley about 2 miles south of Interstate 10; it borders Indian Wells to the west, Indio to the east, and unincorporated communities to the north and south. La Quinta is in the center of the highest-growth area of the valley, but its borders with parts of unincorporated Riverside County allow for expansion. La Quinta is primarily a resort residential community, and it is one of the fastest growing communities in California. Since its incorporation in 1982, La Quinta's population has increased from 5,260 to 32,500 full-time residents, plus another 12,000 part-time residents during the winter and spring. With its international reputation for resort and golf amenities, resort and commercial development generates a majority of the city's revenues. The city's most recent economic development plan focuses on "attracting and enhancing revenue-generating enterprises, protecting open space and environmental attributes, and expanding recreation opportunities for La Quinta's residents" (City of La Quinta, 2002, 2005).

Coachella

The city of Coachella, located at the southernmost end of the urbanized Coachella Valley, has an estimated population 27,655 (January 2004). It covers 32 square miles of mixed urban, agricultural, commercial, and vacant land. Coachella is experiencing rapid growth (30 percent since 1990) fueled by expanding tourist-oriented resort facilities, Indian gaming, agricultural production, and its location at major highways, Interstate 10 and State Highways 86 and 111. Currently, much of the area surrounding the city is under cultivation, and the city is pursuing an extensive program of planning, design, and construction to respond to continuing growth (City of Coachella, 2001, 2005).

Indio

Indio, Coachella Valley's first incorporated city (1930), is located on Interstate 10, northwest of La Quinta. It is the geographic mid-point of both Riverside County and the Coachella Valley. Like other communities in the study area, Indio is growing rapidly. It has a population of 54,221 (July 2002) and covers about 27 square miles. In addition to its permanent residents, Indio adds 8,800 part-time residents during the winter and spring, and its festivals and special events attract more than 500,000 visitors annually. The city is experiencing rapid residential, commercial, and industrial growth (City of Indio, 2005).

Mecca

The community of Mecca, located in the southeast portion of the study area, has a population of 5,402 (2000) and covers 1.3 square miles. Industries providing

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employment include agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining. Mecca's median household income is substantially below the State average, and its unemployment rate is above the State average.