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Docket Number:	15-RETI-02
Project Title:	Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative 2.0
TN #:	212757
Document Title:	Presentation - Environmental and Land Use Technical Group Presentation 8-15-16
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Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
Submission Date:	8/12/2016 9:55:33 AM
Docketed Date:	8/12/2016

Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative 2.0

Environmental and Land Use Technical Group Update

August 15, 2016

Scott Flint, Eli Harland, and Tom Gates

Siting, Transmission, and Environmental Protection Division

California Energy Commission

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Technical Group Contributions
Environmental and Land Use Technical Group

- Identify, compile, document, and make available state-wide data (and west-wide to the extent feasible) relevant to renewable energy planning.

- Discuss, and recommend methodologies, to use the assembled data to assess areas and combinations of areas to evaluate environmental sensitivities and land use considerations.

- Work interactively with RETI Plenary Group to evaluate conceptual-level combinations of potential renewable energy generation areas, transmission and potential transmission corridors.

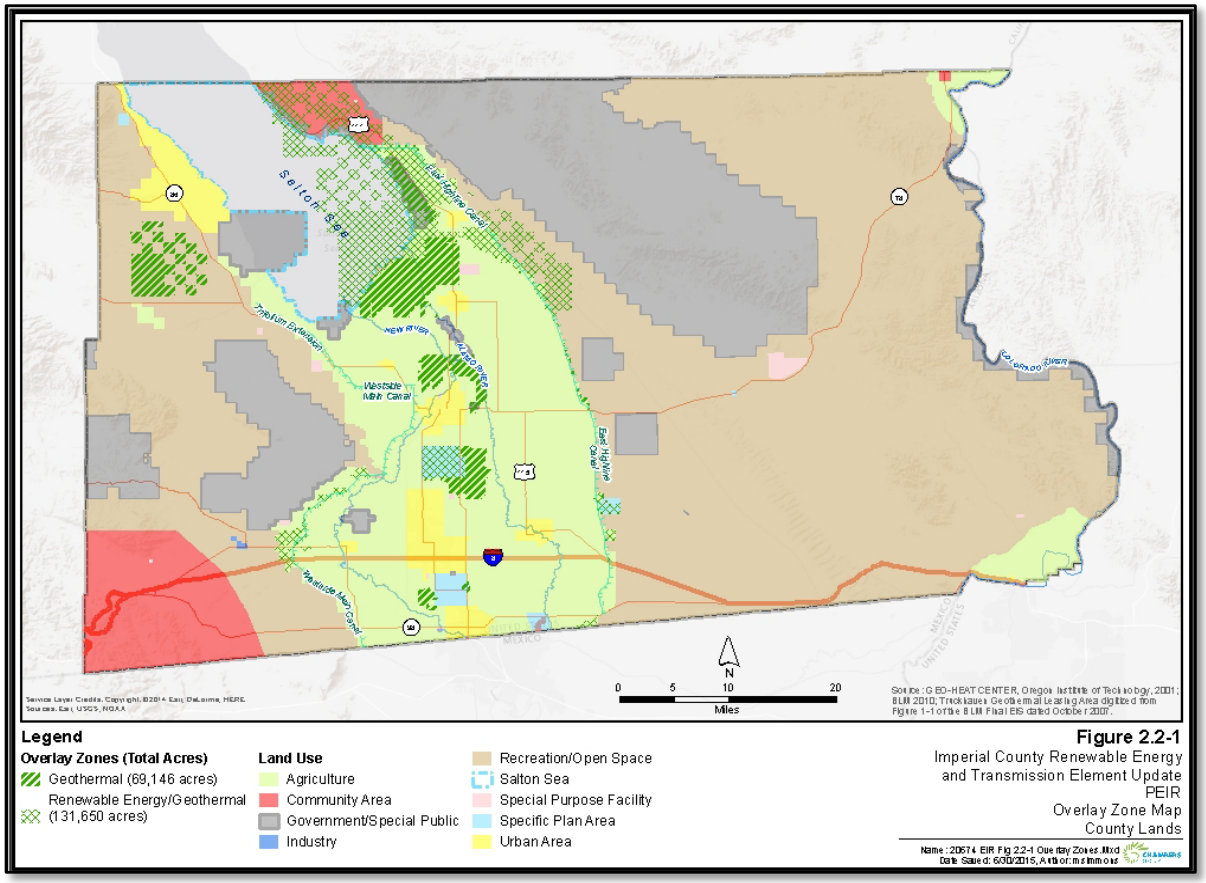
Local Government Land Use Planning: Background and Overview

- Rules and policies at the local level influence development patterns of renewables and development potential
- RETI 2.0 work plan includes efforts to incorporate local government information, like county land use planning
- RETI 2.0 coordination with counties builds off of ongoing efforts
- Timeline and steps for gathering county information:
  - Created a county contact list using TAFAs and reached out to counties
  - Held two informational webinars for counties
  - ELUTG public meeting on July 21, 2016 to discuss county planning and RETI 2.0

Local Government Land Use Planning: Broad Overview

- Most county engagement during RETI 2.0 with desert counties and some northern counties
  - Desert counties more experienced with renewable planning and development
  - Northern counties less experienced, especially with state energy planning
  - San Joaquin Valley counties are experienced, less so within RETI 2.0
- Counties of Imperial, Kern and San Bernardino
- Counties of Yolo, Lassen, Modoc, and Tehama
- Comments from “Conservation Parties” and Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Local Government Land Use Planning: Imperial County



- Adopted general plan amendment and certified EIR for renewable energy overlay zones
  - ~69K acres specifically for geothermal and ~131k acres for geothermal, solar PV and other renewable technologies.
- Balancing irrigated water use, addressing the Salton Sea, and economic development are important drivers of facilitating renewable energy development in the county.

Local Government Land Use Planning: Kern County

<u>Recommendations made during ELUTG meeting:</u>

- Improve intertie planning and access to substations
- Layers on maps that show critically over drafted water basins to begin identifying farmed land that might be retired in the future

<u>Indian Wells Valley:</u>

- June 16, 2016 request
- Water balanced land use plan in the Ridgecrest and China Lake communities
- Solar PV a viable option for rebalancing land uses and offering landowners alternative land uses

Local Government Land Use Planning: San Bernardino County

- Released draft general plan element in August 2016
  - General plan element includes an integrated energy strategy
  - Developed with extensive public input
- County Comment Letter
  - Very interested in participating in state energy planning
  - Reiterated positions from the DRECP EIR/EIS and the Final DRECP LUPA
  - Degraded lands that are transmission aligned should be prioritized for utility-scale development
  - Expressed confusion between the relationship of DRECP and RETI 2.0

Local Government Land Use Planning: Northern Counties

- Yolo County developed a standards based ordinance for all sizes of wind energy and possibly “over planned”.
  - Experience mostly distributed renewables and avian issues with distributed wind. One large scale wind project that didn't progress beyond scoping. Williamson Act and solar
- Lassen County is experiencing wind energy interest on private and public land and last updated energy element in 2003
  - Eagles and sage grouse could be an issue and potential visual impacts in scenic areas
- Modoc County focus on smaller scale technologies
- Tehama County lots of distributed growth, suggest revising renewable assumption down by 70 percent

Local Government Land Use Planning: Findings and Next Steps

Key Findings:

- Keeping information current and coordinated planning requires time and resources
- Counties either zone or use a standards based approach
- Counties interested in understanding next steps for RETI 2.0

Next Steps:

- Continue to add county data in DataBasin, focus outside of the desert
- Organize county information by TAFA, and where applicable, present the information geographically

Environmental and Land Use Technical Group

Work Completed

- Data Basin Gateway
- Assemble statewide environmental datasets
  - Biological Data for Bird Species – in process
  - Land use data sets – in process
- Identify focus environmental data sets for reporting
- Identify reporting format

Selected Environmental Data

1. Protected Areas
2. Terrestrial Landscape Intactness
3. Federal Designated Critical Habitat
4. California Natural Diversity Database
5. Areas of Conservation Emphasis
6. Essential Habitat Connectivity Assessment
7. Important Bird Areas
8. Climate Site Sensitivity
9. Climate Change Exposure

Land Use Datasets

1. Statewide County Land Use Plans
2. Statewide Agricultural Land Use Dataset
3. Local Information from Energy and Conservation Elements
4. DRECP BLM Land Use Plan Amendment
5. Federal Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans

RETI 2.0 Data Basin Gateway

https://reti.databasin.org

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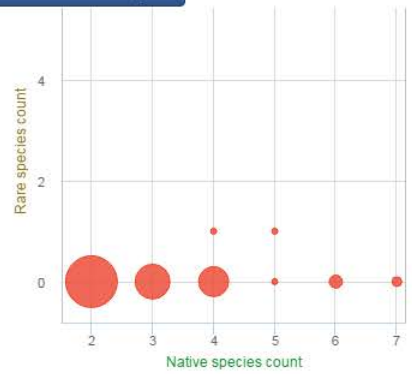
Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) 2.0

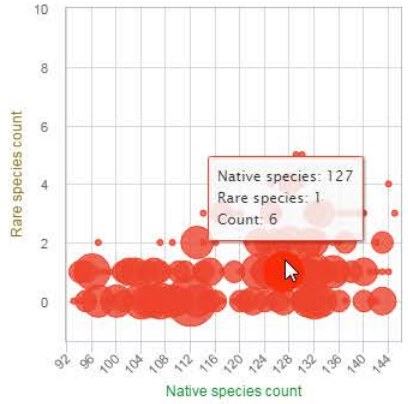
Environmental / Land Use Reporter

DATA BASIN

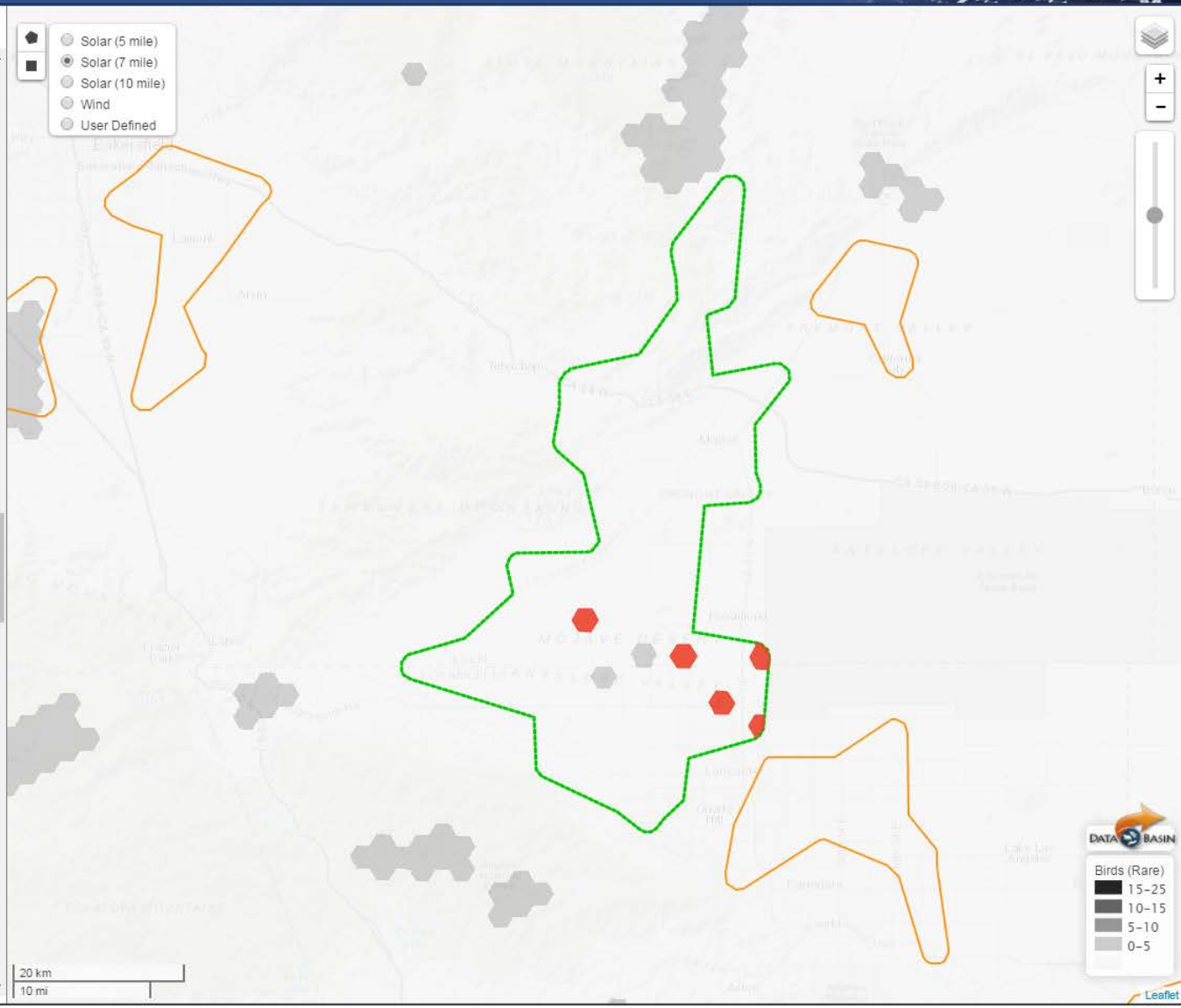
Download PDF report



Birds



Fish



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Environmental / Land Use Reporter

DATA BASIN

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Protected Areas

Strict (GAP 1)
0 ha

Managed for... (GAP 2)
49 ha

Managed for extractive uses (GAP 3)
4 ha

Not protected (GAP 4)
221,080 ha

Easement
5,888 ha

Unknown
456 ha

Terrestrial Intactness

Very Low
41,103 ha

Low
180,485 ha

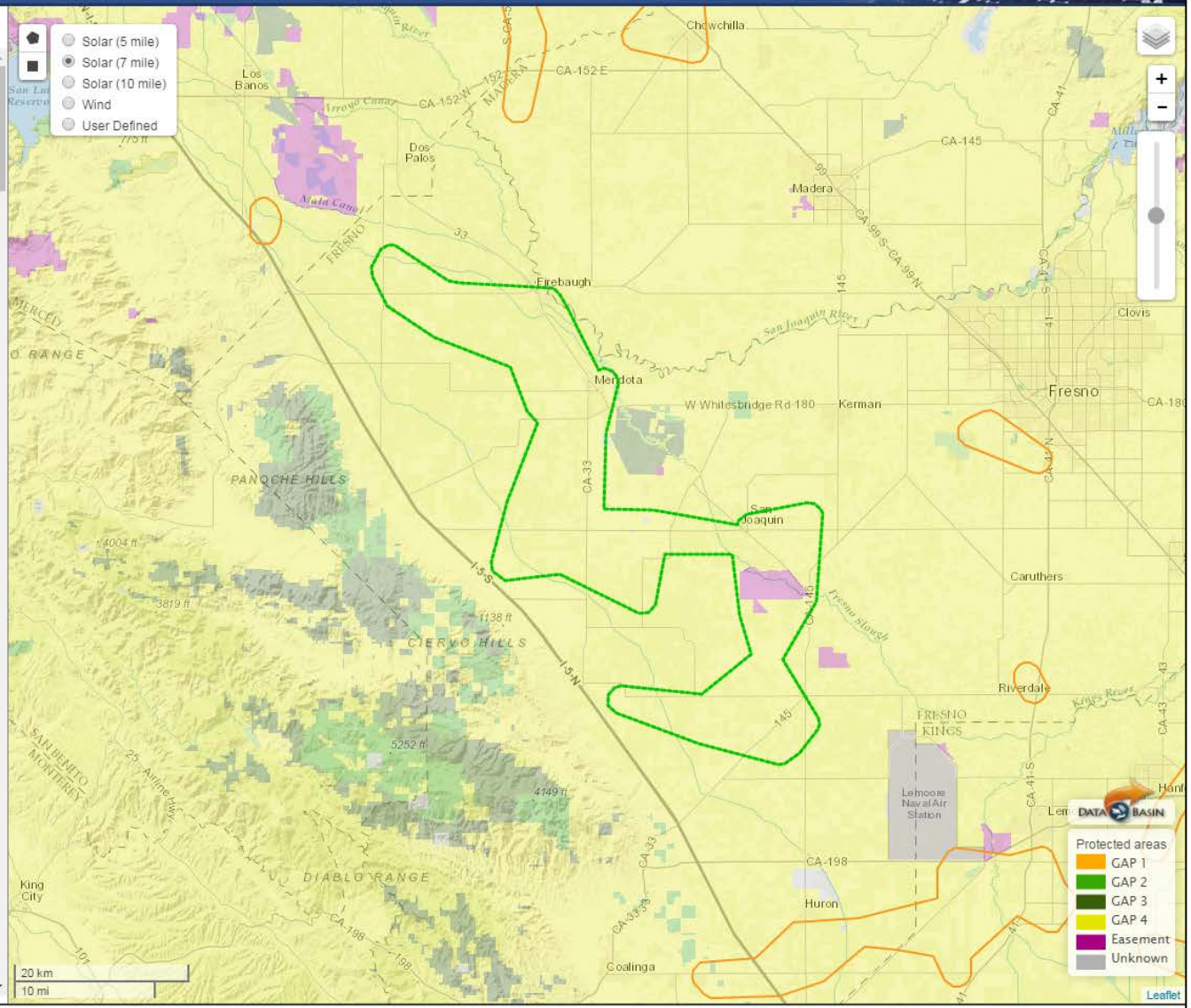
Moderately Low
0 ha

Moderately High
0 ha

High
0 ha

Very High
0 ha

Designated Critical Habitat



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Environmental / Land Use Reporter

DATA BASIN

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Protected Areas

Strict (GAP 1)
0 ha

Managed for... (GAP 2)
26,728 ha

Managed for extractive uses (GAP 3)
341 ha

Not protected (GAP 4)
323,771 ha

Easement
0 ha

Unknown
2,714 ha

Terrestrial Intactness

Very Low
95,384 ha

Low
84,300 ha

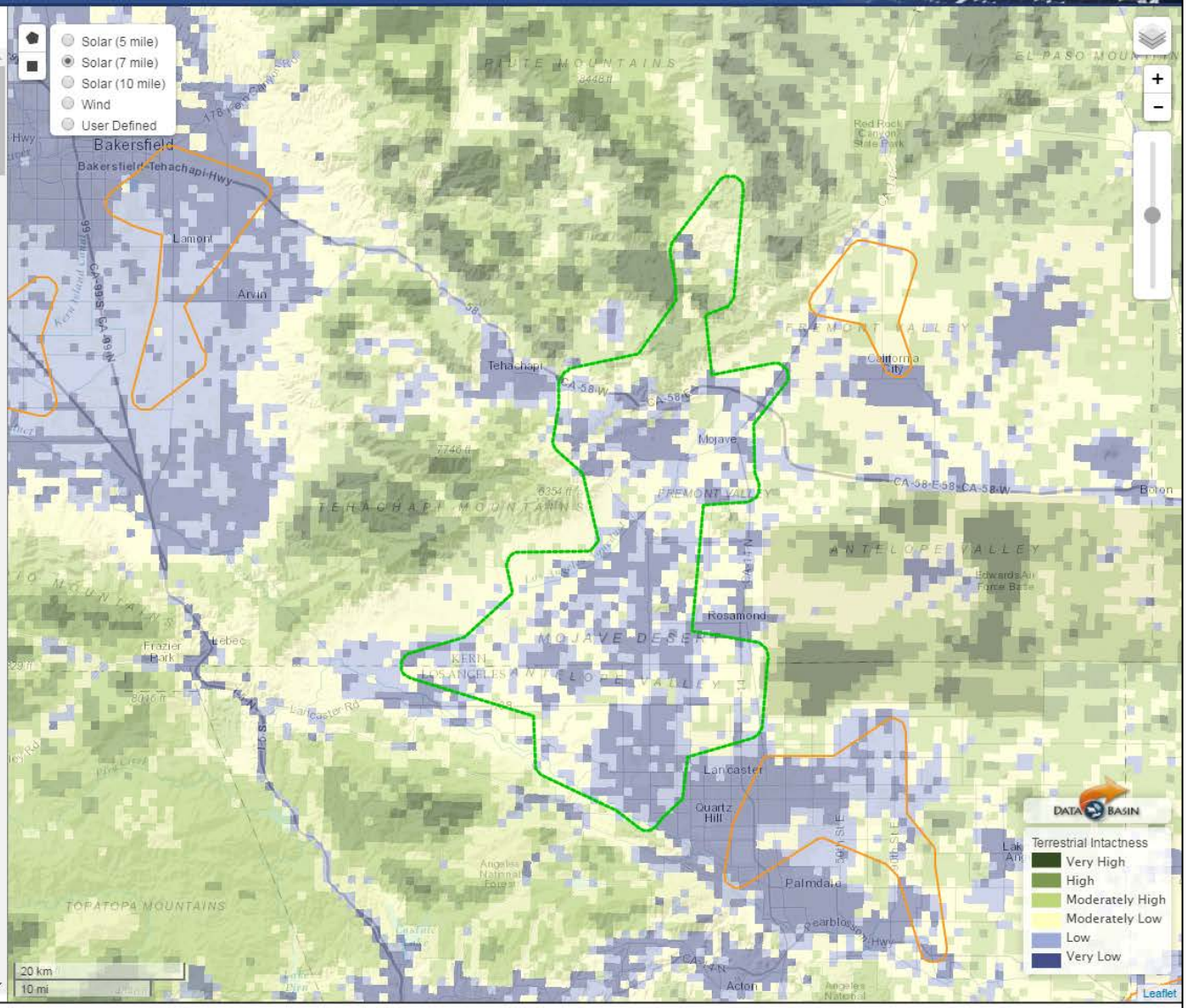
Moderately Low
122,154 ha

Moderately High
41,205 ha

High
9,329 ha

Very High
1,181 ha

Designated Critical Habitat

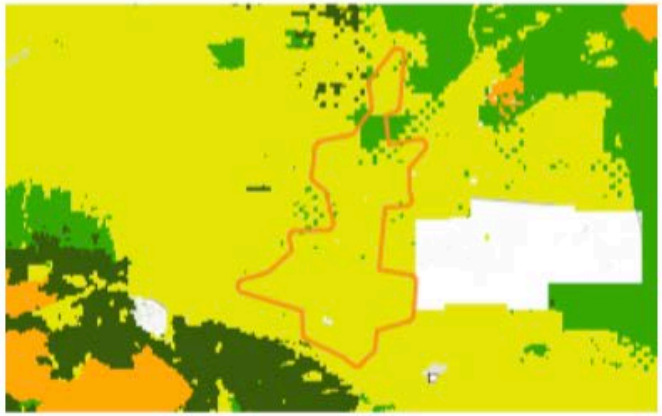


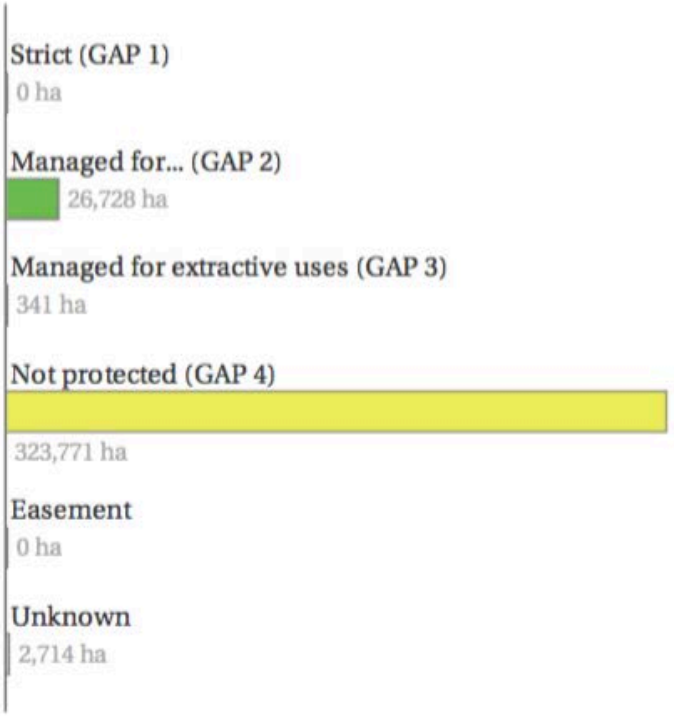
RETI 2.0 Environmental Profile Report

Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative

1. Protected Areas (PAD-US CBI Edition version 2.1a, California)

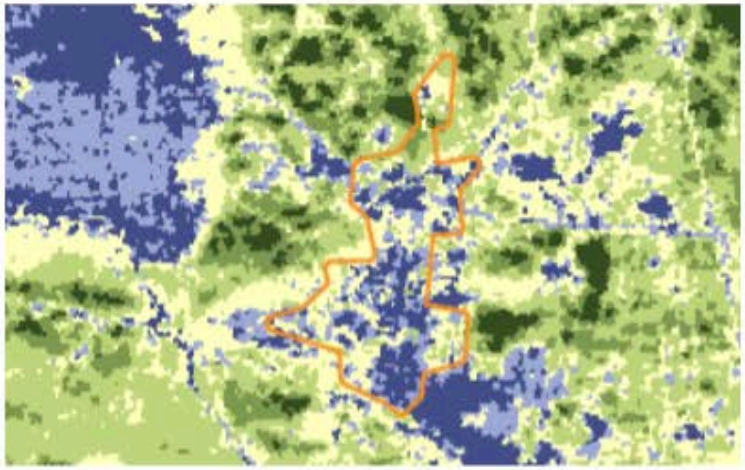
https://databasin.org/datasets/69fa420b5b674d31bce7cf4f6237ceea

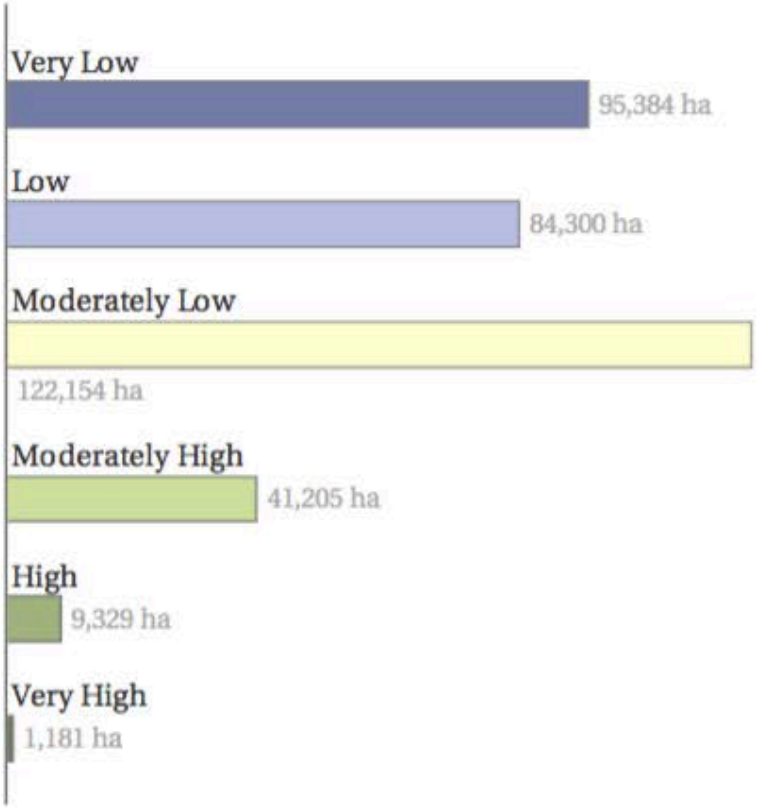




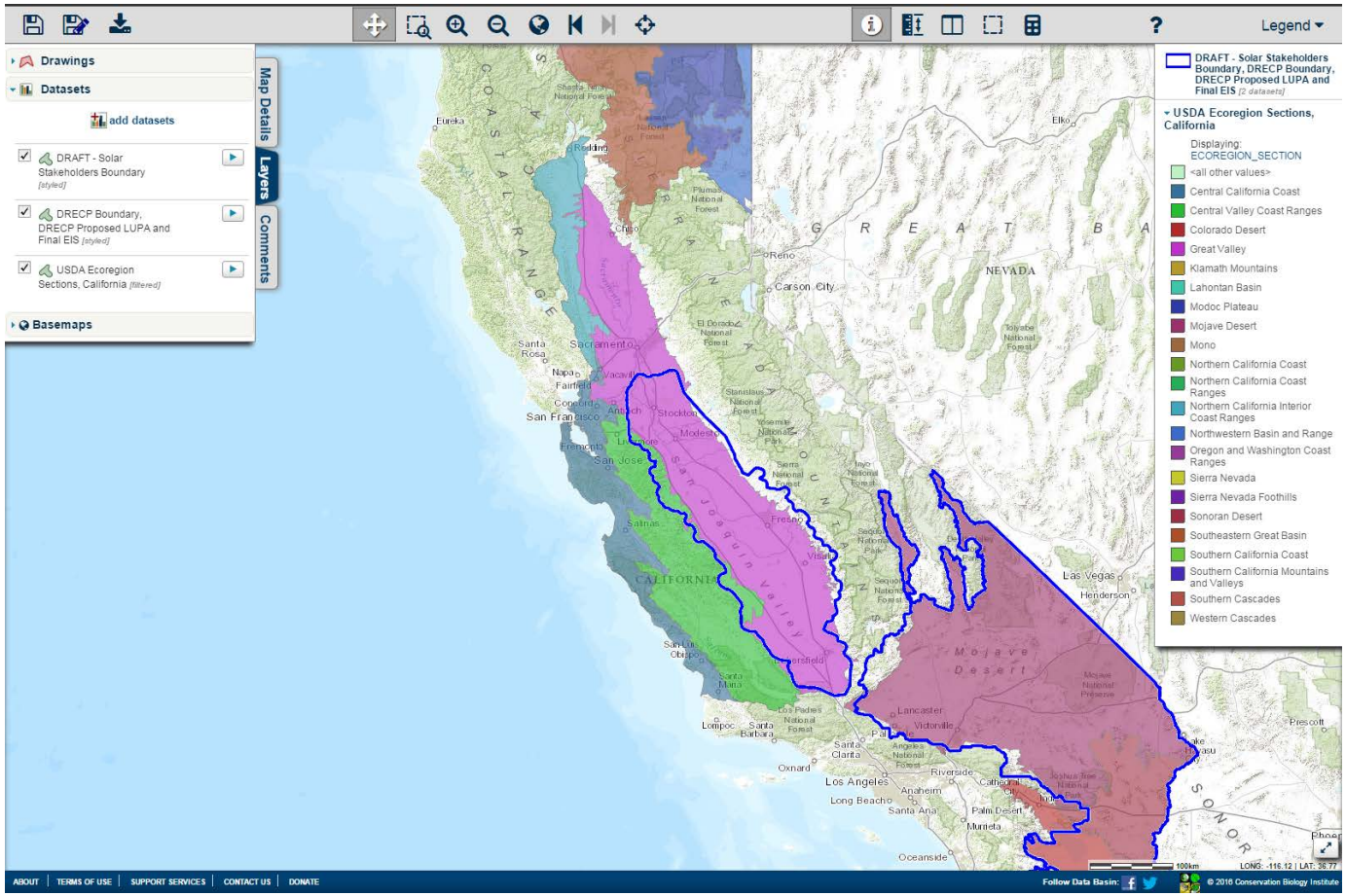
GAP Status 1: An area having permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover and a mandated management plan I operation to maintain a natural state within which disturbance events are allowed to proceed without interference.
GAP Status 2: An area having permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover and a mandated management plan in operation to maintain a primarily natural state, but which may receive uses or management practices that degrade the quality of existing natural communities.
GAP Status 3: An area having permanent protection from conversion of natural land cover for the majority of area. Subject to extractive uses.
GAP Status 4: No known public/private institutional mandates/legally recognized easements.

2. Terrestrial Landscape Intactness





Statewide Datasets



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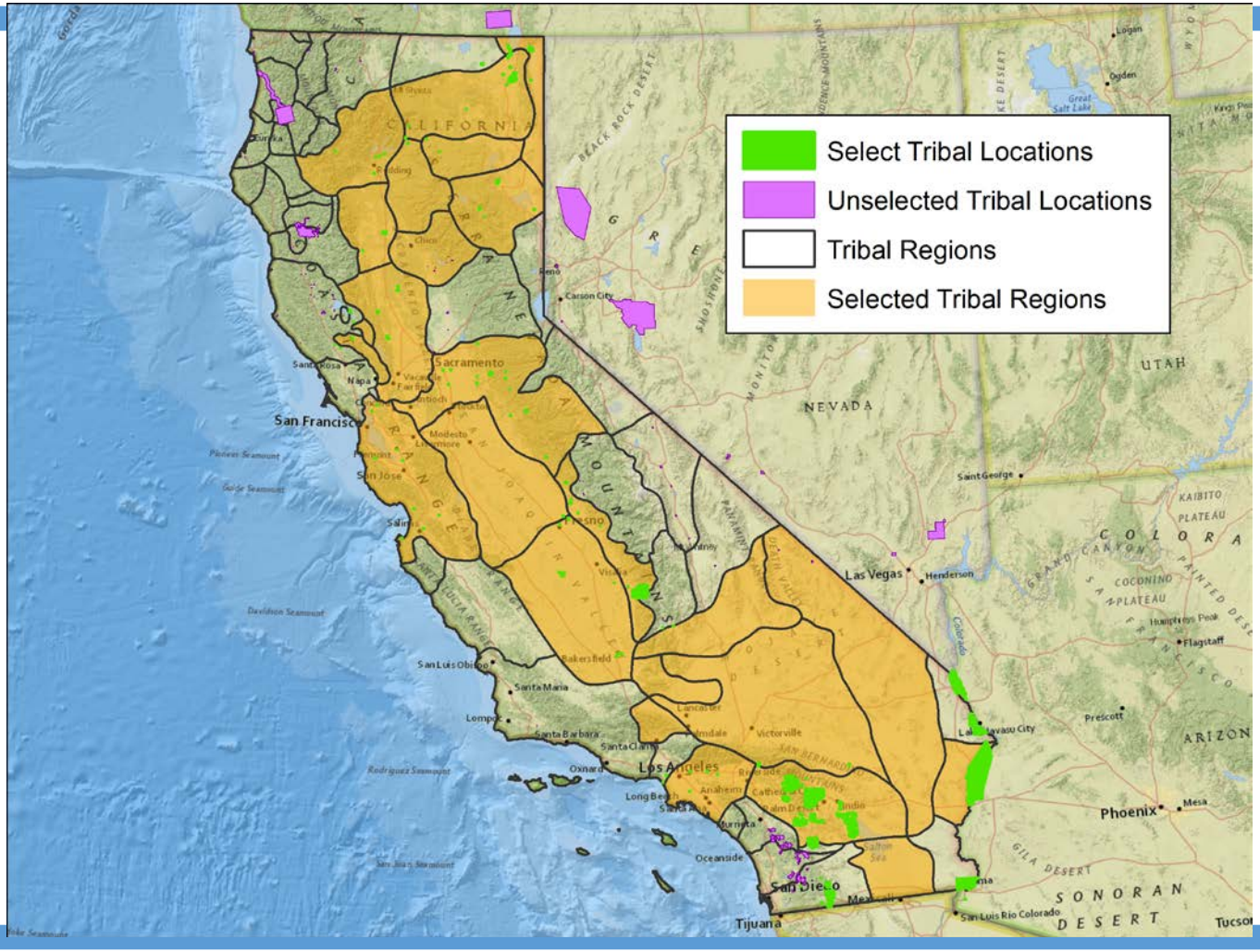
- Next Steps
  - Identify additional land use data
  - Integrate local agency land use data
    - Build land use data report
  - Finalize datasets for use in future evaluations

Consultation with Native American Tribes



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Consultation with Native American Tribes

- Total of 97 Tribes Contacted
- Responses tended to fit into 4 broad categories
  - Non-response
  - Not interested
  - Awaiting response
  - Interested
    - Keep informed of project progress
    - Have questions
    - Concern for cultural and biological resources
    - Desire for transmission infrastructure to allow electricity to reservations or to enhance tribal renewable energy production