Appendix S

Approach to Assigning Plan-Wide Conservation Assumptions in the Reserve

S APPROACH TO ASSIGNING PLAN-WIDE CONSERVATION ASSUMPTIONS IN THE RESERVE

S.1 Introduction

This appendix describes the approach to assigning Plan-wide conservation assumptions to the various categories of reserve design lands. This supplemental information supports the biological conservation analysis conducted for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP or Plan) alternatives in DRECP Chapter IV.7, Biological Resources.

S.2 Approach to Assigning Plan-Wide Conservation Assumptions

For the purposes of the Plan-wide DRECP conservation analysis for each DRECP alternative, conservation assumptions were assigned to the various reserve design land categories. The reserve design land categories include:

- Existing Conservation Areas (i.e., Legally and Legislatively Protected Areas [LLPAs] and Military Expansion Mitigation Lands [MEMLs])
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Land Use Plan Amendment (LUPA) conservation designations (i.e., National Landscape Conservation System [NLCS] lands, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern [ACECs], and Wildlife Allocations)
- Conservation Planning Areas on private and non-BLM public lands

The following sections describe the approach to conservation assumption assignments for these reserve design lands.

S.2.1 Existing Conservation Areas

Existing Conservation Areas include LLPAs and MEMLs, which include—as described in Volume I, Chapter I.3, Planning Process—Wilderness Areas, State and National Parks, and other areas where biological resources are considered protected. For analytical purposes, acreage within Existing Conservation Areas was calculated as 95% conserved.

S.2.2 BLM LUPA Conservation Designations

BLM LUPA conservation designations include NLCS lands, ACECs, and Wildlife Allocations, as described for each alternative in Volume II, Description of Alternatives. Through the conservation designations of the LUPA, the BLM will protect and manage these areas for their resource value pursuant to the BLM NLCS specifications and ACEC unit worksheets, as described in Volume II. NLCS and ACEC lands have disturbance caps

ranging from 0.1% to 1.0%, which would limit the amount of ground disturbance allowable within these land allocations. For analytical purposes, acreage within BLM LUPA conservation designations on BLM-administered lands was calculated as 95% conserved for the action alternatives. Inholdings (non-BLM lands within the BLM LUPA conservation designations) were calculated at the corresponding conservation percentage used for Conservation Planning Areas.

S.2.3 Conservation Planning Areas

Conservation Planning Areas represent the reserve design outside of Existing Conservation Areas and BLM LUPA conservation designations where reserve areas would be established from willing sellers. These include public (non-BLM) and private lands. It is not reasonable to assume that all of the Conservation Planning Areas would be conserved. Under each action alternative, interagency Plan-wide Conservation Priority Areas have been identified that serve as the NCCP Conceptual Plan-Wide Reserve Design. Certain Conservation Planning Areas are located within these priority areas, and certain Conservation Planning Areas are located outside these priority areas. For analytical purposes, acreage within priority Conservation Planning Areas was calculated as 70% conserved, and acreage outside priority Conservation Planning Areas was calculated as 20% conserved.

S.3 Application to the Conservation Analysis for the DRECP Alternatives

For all analyses of the conservation of biological resources at the landscape, natural community, and Covered Species levels for the action alternatives (the Preferred Alternative and Alternatives 1–4), the acreages reported within reserve design lands were calculated using the assigned conservation percentages. For the No Action Alternative, Existing Conservation Areas were calculated as 95% conserved. For the No Action Alternative, acreage conserved within existing ACECs was calculated as 95% conserved on BLM-administered lands and non-BLM inholdings; however, the portion that occurs on BLM-administered lands and the portion that occurs on non-BLM lands is also reported.