

# **CONSERVATION PLANNING IN THE SOUTH COAST ECOREGION**

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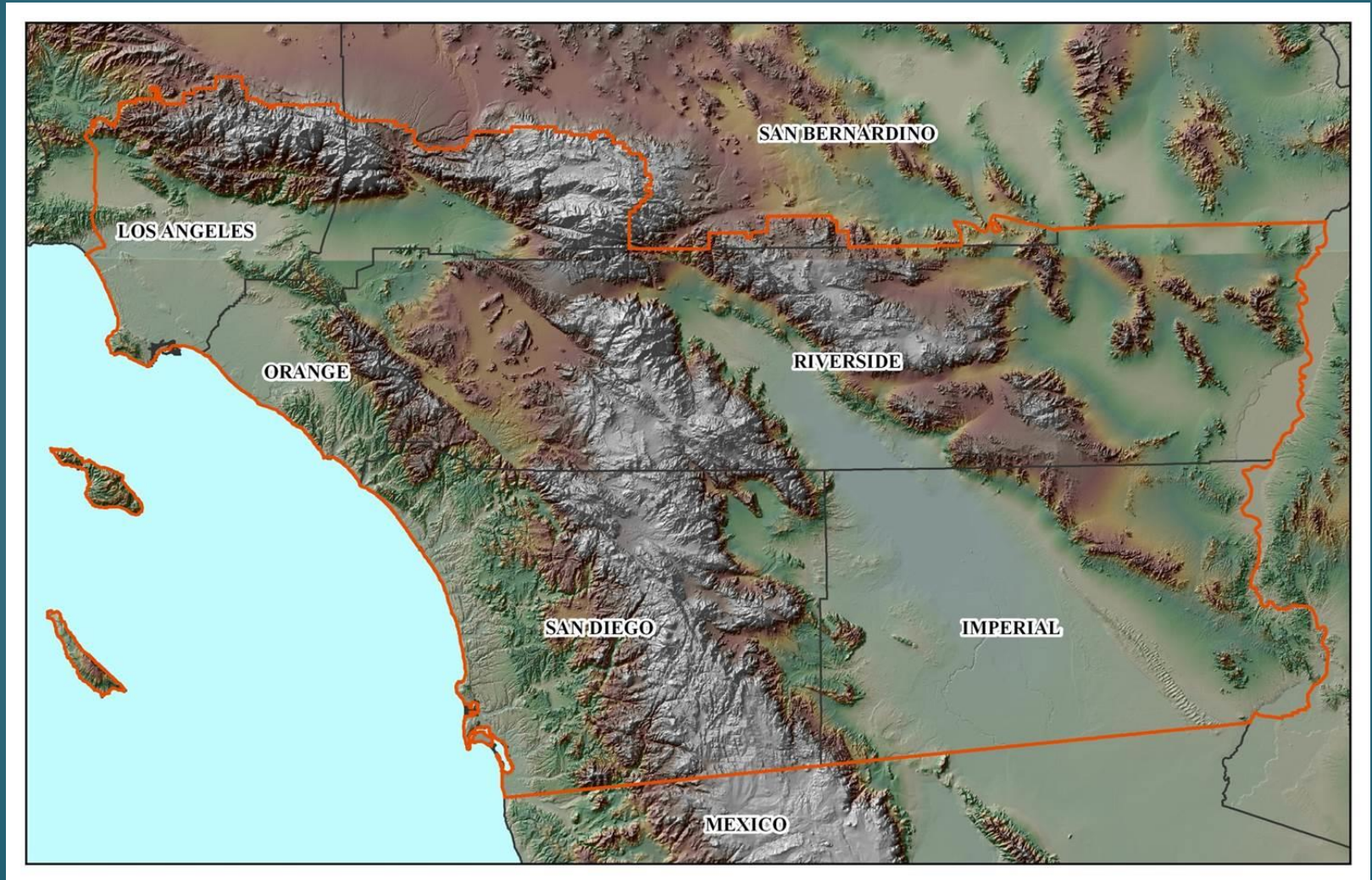


# Biological Setting

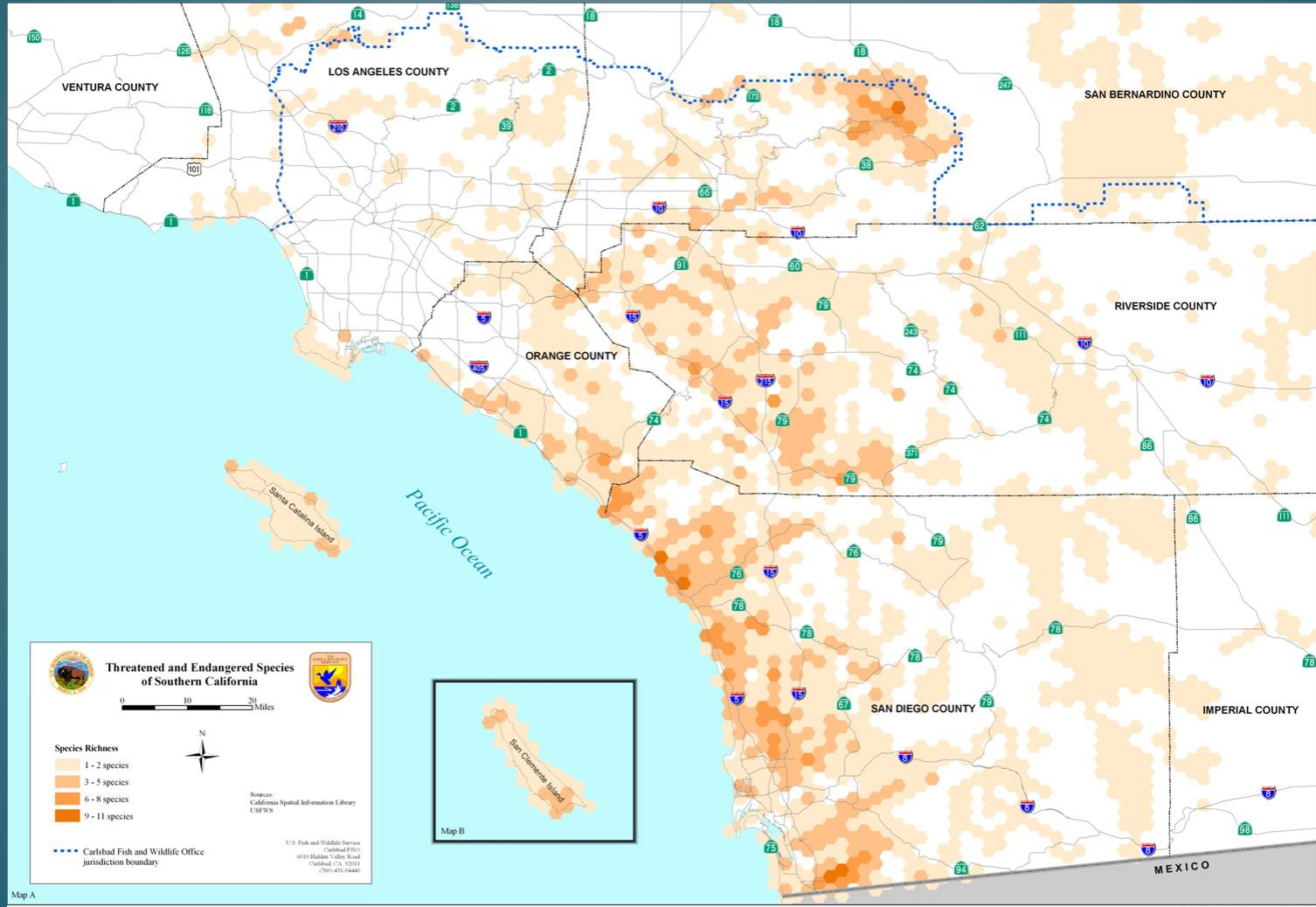


- *Over 100 federally listed species*
- *High biological diversity*
- *High degree of endemism*
- *35 vegetation communities within San Diego County alone*
- *Diverse geography and climate – beaches, mountains, deserts*

# Topography



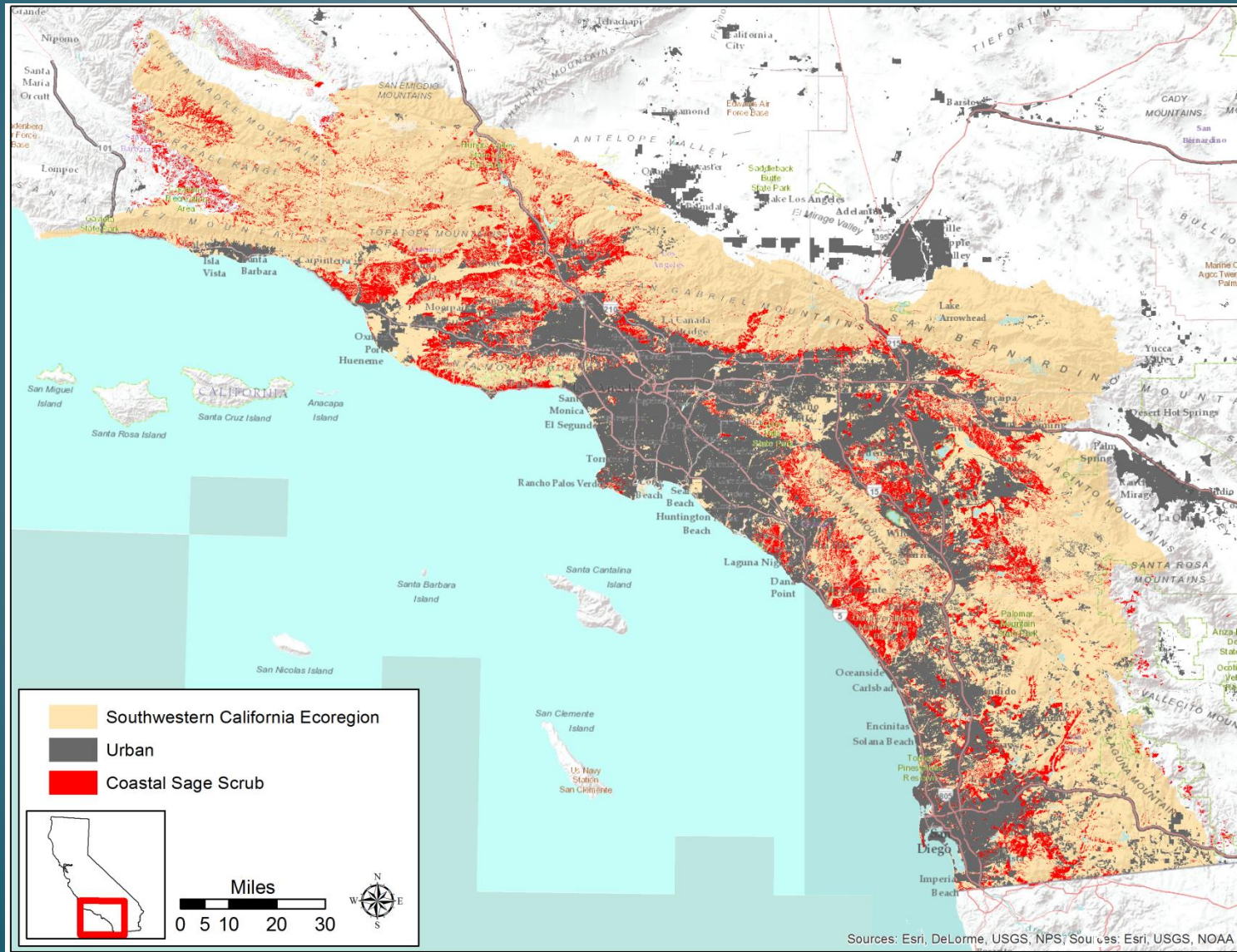
# Listed Species



# Vegetation



# Urban Setting



# Threats to Wildlife

- *Fragmentation from development*
- *Human use*
- *Increased wildfire*
- *Altered hydrology*
- *Spread of invasive species*
- *Loss of connectivity*
  - *Infrastructure*
  - *Border patrol activities*

# Legal Framework

- **Federal Endangered Species Act**
  - Listing of the California Gnatcatcher
    - Non-migratory; Upland species - Habitat is coastal sage scrub (CSS); distributed from Ventura into Mexico
- **State Natural Community Conservation Planning Act**
  - Developed out of recognition that CA population growth would result in the continuing decline of State's wildlife
  - Adopted to provide an ecosystem approach to conservation of natural communities and promote coordination among government, landowners and other private interests
  - Provides a voluntary conservation planning framework
  - Initial guidelines focused on conservation of CSS

# Why Coastal Sage Scrub (CSS)?

- *CSS is a type of vegetation restricted to the Pacific Coast of North America, where it ranges from the central California coast to northern Baja*
- *High diversity of species*
- *Approximately 85-90% of historical CSS in southern California has been lost (Westman 1981)*
- *Remaining acreage highly threatened by urban development and degradation from grazing, weeds, recreation, human uses, fire, etc*



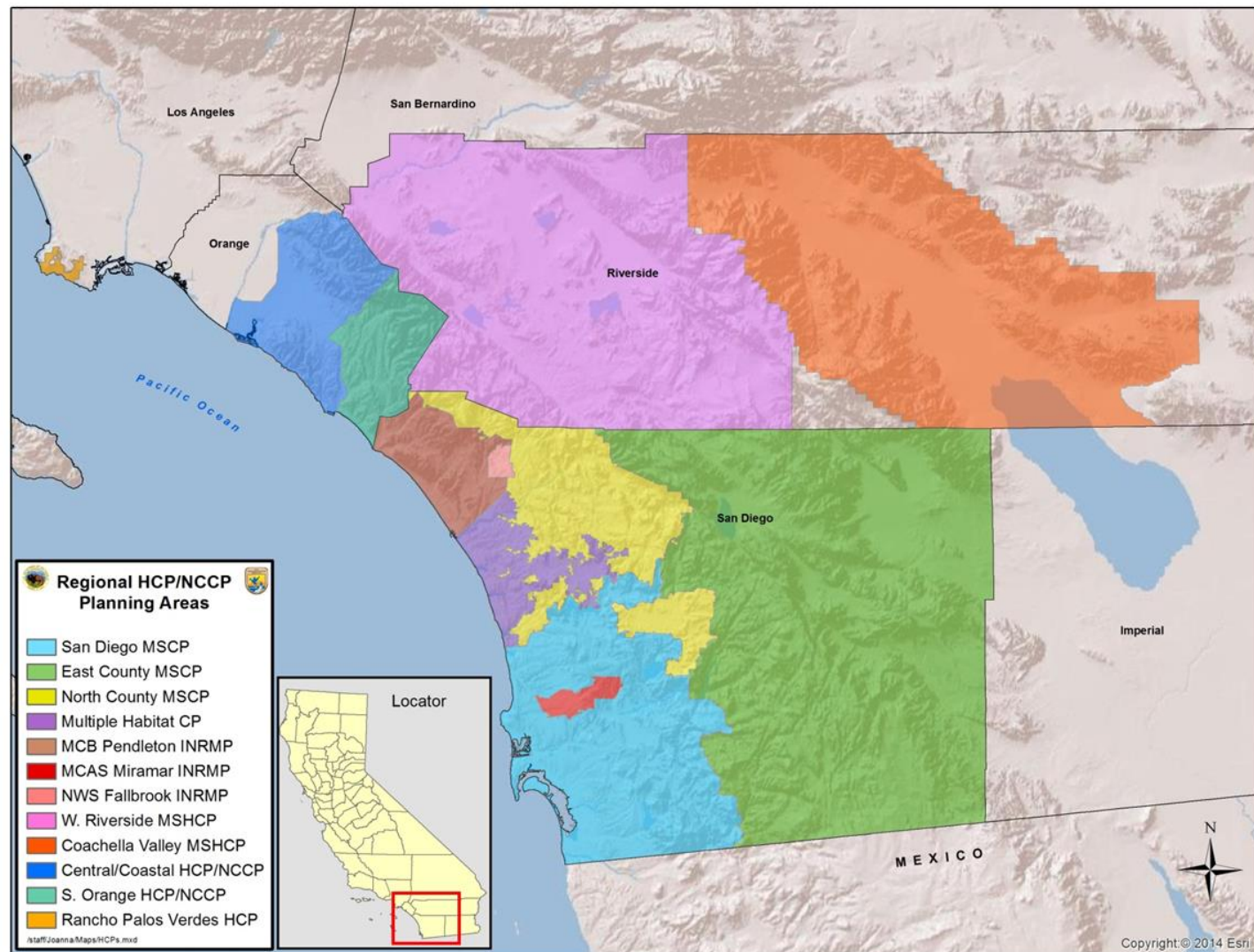
Photo K.Preston

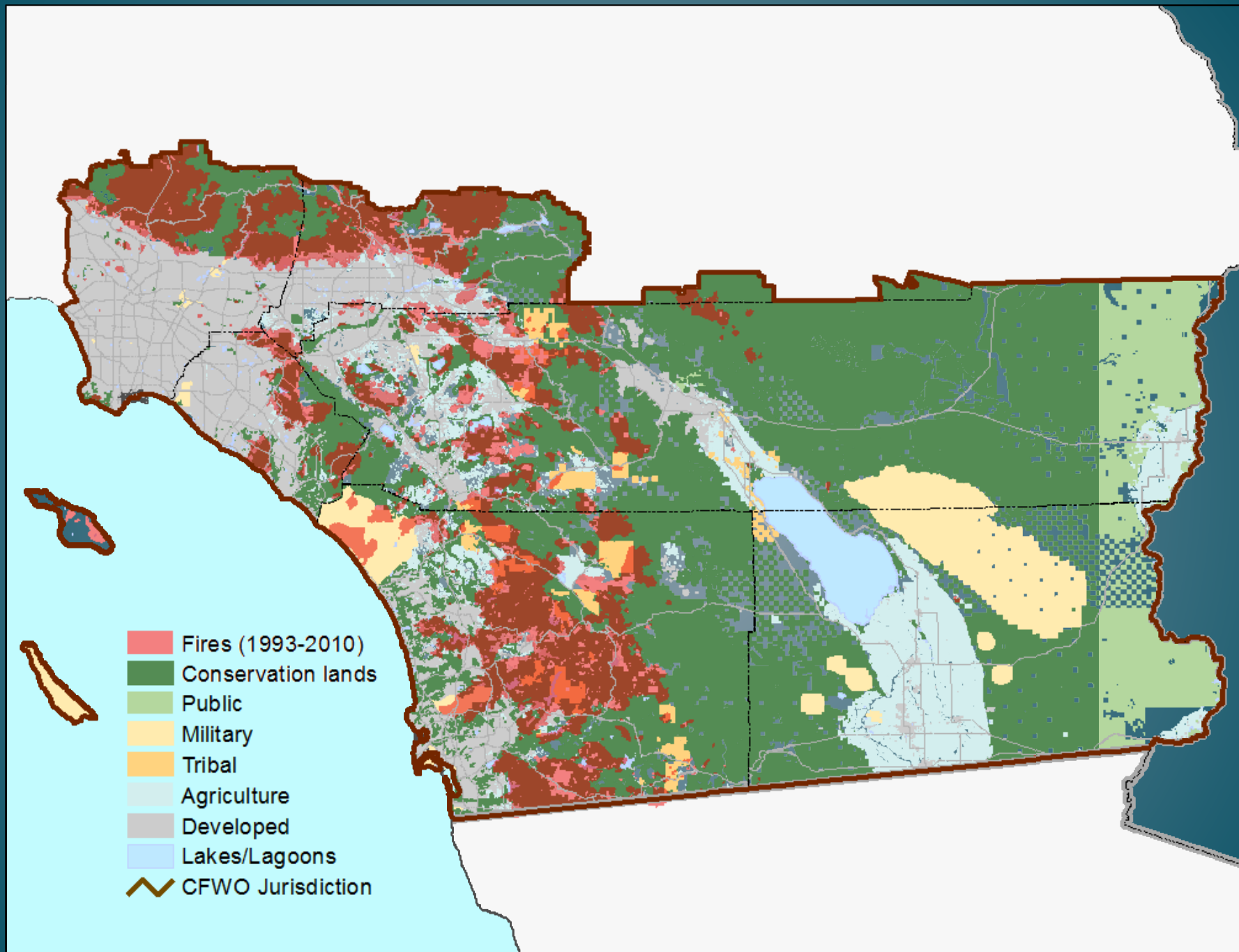
# Focal Species

- *Coastal California Gnatcatcher*
- *Orange-throated Whiptail*
- *Cactus Wren*



# Southern California Regional Plans





# Opportunities/Challenges

- **Similarities/Opportunities:**

- Covered Species list
- Conserved lands in core and linkage configuration
- Management & monitoring requirements



- **Differences/Challenges:**

- Timelines for conservation, management & monitoring
- Species/habitat goals & objectives
- Budgets
- Ability to cross landownerships
- Monitoring protocols
- Data management/storage

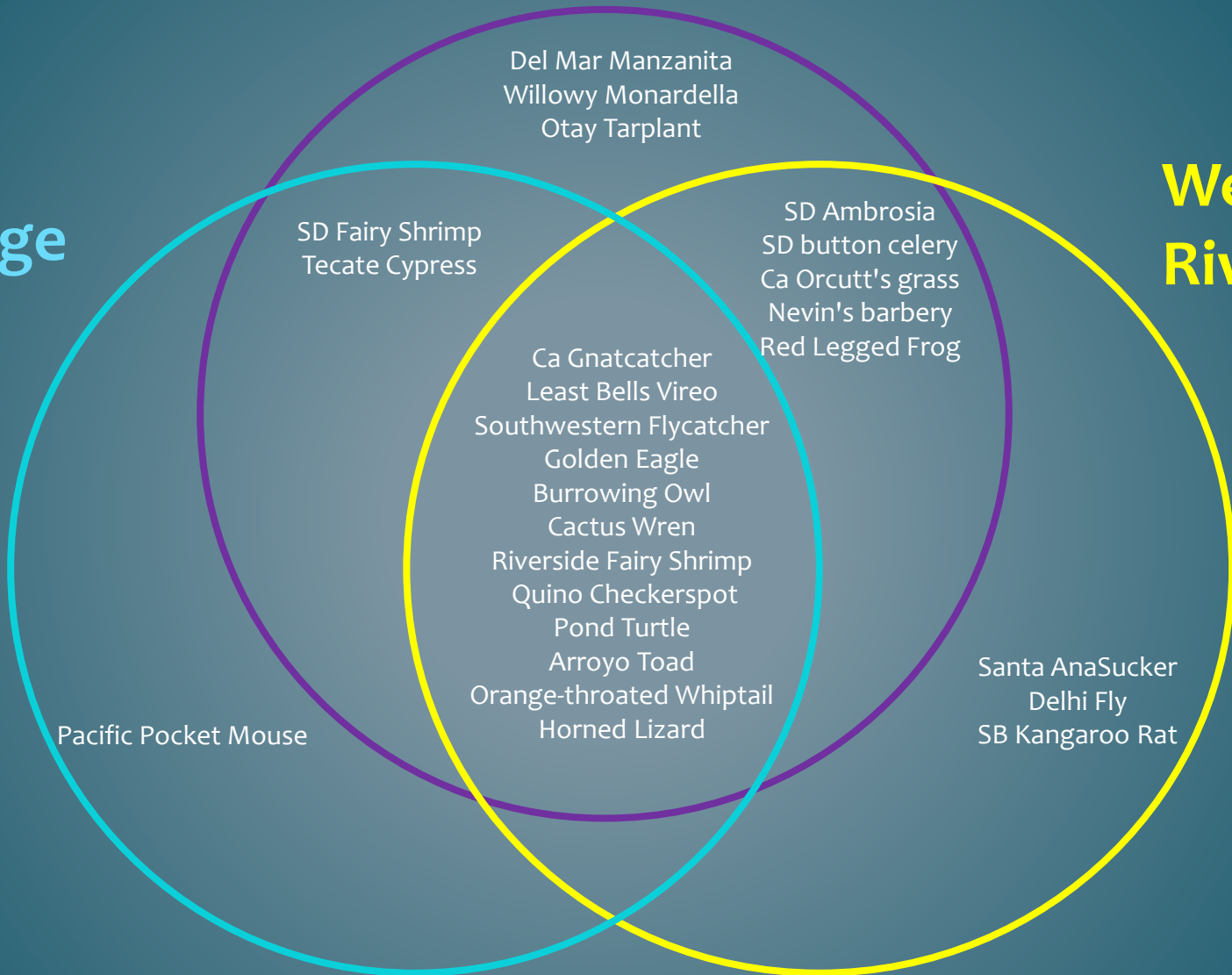


# OPPORTUNITY

## San Diego

## Orange

## Western Riverside



Spencer et al. 2010

# CALIFORNIA ESSENTIAL HABITAT CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

**FIGURE 3.7.  
SOUTH COAST ECOREGION**

Essential Connectivity Areas\*

Less Cost

More Cost

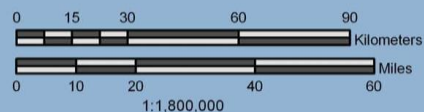
Natural Landscape Blocks

Potential Riparian Connections

Interstate Connections

Ecoregion

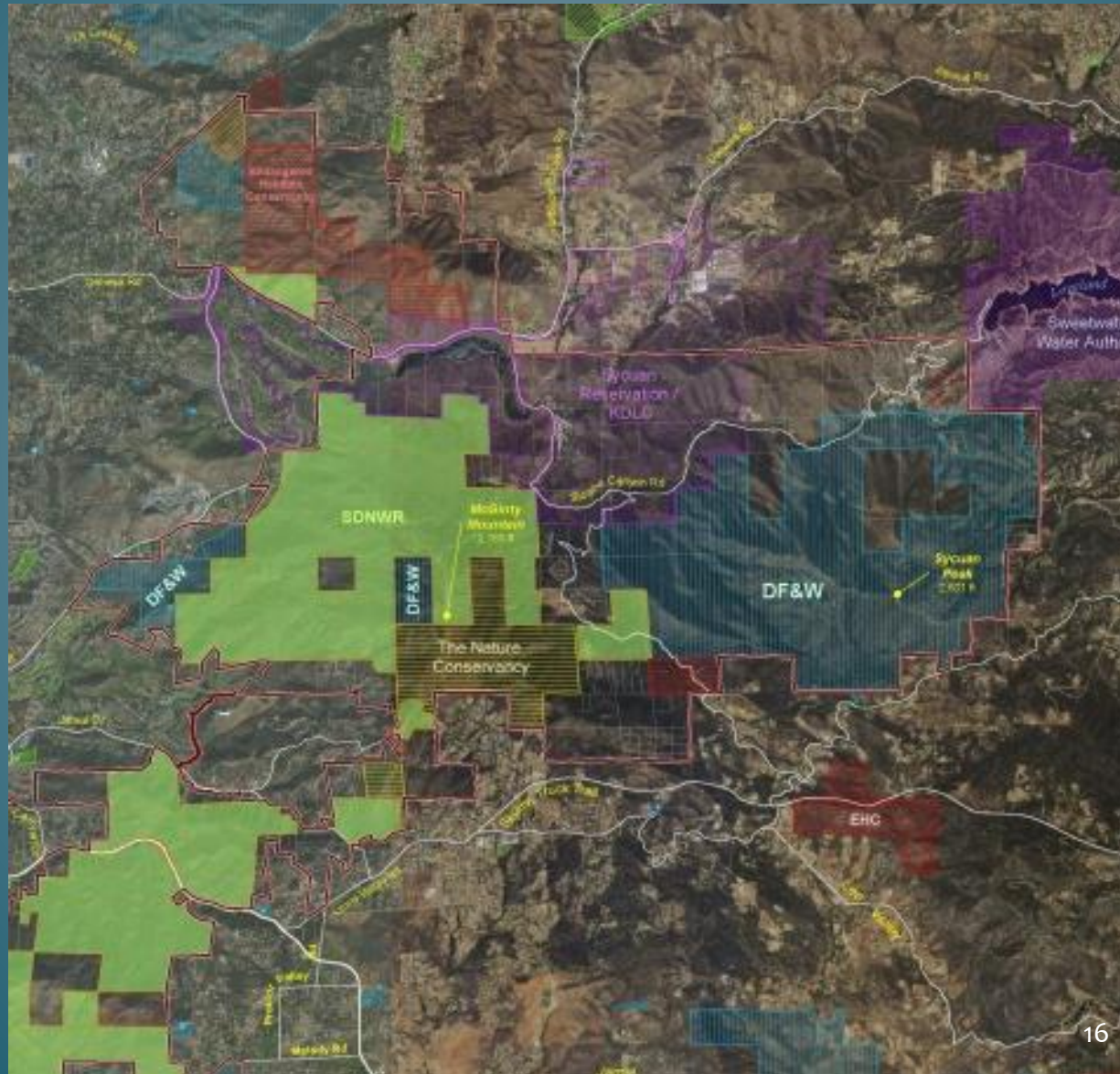
\*Cumulative cost to ecological flows



The Essential Habitat Connectivity map delineates lands likely important to wildlife movement between large, mostly natural areas at the statewide scale based on available data and assumptions provided in this report. It omits small natural areas and does not reflect movement needs of particular species. It is a decision-support tool to be refined by finer-scale analyses and local linkage designs. **DO NOT assume that lands outside Natural Landscape Blocks or Essential Connectivity Areas are unimportant to wildlife populations or movements.**



# Challenge - Multiple ownerships



# Information Needs

- *Scientific support for regional monitoring*
  - *Defining and measuring ecosystem function*
  - *Standardization of monitoring methodology*
    - *Gnatcatcher Regional Monitoring*
  - *Role of nitrogen deposition*
  - *Climate change (fire, drought)*
  - *Effects of recreation*
  - *Vegetation mapping for Northern portion of Ecoregion*
- *Data synthesis, analysis, and reporting*
  - *Measurement of success in achieving regional goals and objectives*

# Opportunities for Collaboration

- *California LCC*
- *San Diego Climate Science Alliance*
- *Interagency Working Group*
- *Regional monitoring studies – CAGN (genetics and monitoring), CACW (genetics), golden eagle, vegetation, badger, mountain lion*



# Information Sharing

- **Existing Databases and Websites**

- *Habitrak (Tracks the assembly of the NCCP/HCP reserves in San Diego County)*
- *South Coast Multi-Taxa Database (Publically accessible data base that houses both land management and biological monitoring data)*
- *San Diego Management and Monitoring Program Portal*

- **Public Meetings/Workshops**

- *NCCP/HCP annual reporting*
- *Sub-regional management and monitoring coordination*
- *Focused Research Symposia on gnatcatcher, grasslands, rare plants, and fire*

# PARTNERSHIPS

