

**Proposed General Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Desert Tortoise
VPM Public Information Gathering Forum Transcript**

US Fish and Wildlife Service

June 14, 2022

1

00:00:16.199 --> 00:00:18.960

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Good morning, the meeting will start in 15 minutes.

2

00:05:50.790 --> 00:05:54.240

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Good morning, the meeting will begin in about 10 minutes.

3

00:09:58.950 --> 00:10:02.760

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Good morning, everyone the meeting will begin in about five minutes.

4

00:15:16.230 --> 00:15:23.520

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Good morning, everyone we're going to give it just a couple more minutes, so that we can allow some other participants to join.

5

00:15:24.750 --> 00:15:26.700

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We'll get started shortly, thank you.

6

00:17:50.970 --> 00:18:02.640

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Well, good morning everyone, welcome. It looks like we have quite a few folks joining us so we're just going to do a little bit of introductions and then we'll get the meeting started.

7

00:18:03.600 --> 00:18:11.040

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you all for coming, good morning. I'd like to welcome you to the virtual public information forum for the Desert Tortoise General Conservation Plan.

8

00:18:11.760 --> 00:18:21.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We're here today to engage the public in the early stages of a proposed environmental impact statement for the general conservation plan for the desert tortoise in California.

9

00:18:22.680 --> 00:18:31.710

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: My name is Theresa Ancell and I work for EMPSi and that stands for Environmental Management and Planning Solutions, Incorporated.

10

00:18:32.610 --> 00:18:49.530

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And I'm here actually I serve as the project manager, public involvement coordinator, and resource specialist for the project. EMPSi is a national environmental consulting firm and we're here today with the US Fish and Wildlife Service to facilitate the forum and manage the Zoom application.

11

00:18:50.700 --> 00:19:07.980

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: With me today on the call are my coworkers Amy Cordle, our senior program manager, and Liza Schill, our public outreach specialist. I will be assisting the Fish and Wildlife Service today with facilitation of the forum, the question and answer response session, and input session.

12

00:19:09.060 --> 00:19:21.000

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Before beginning today's presentation I will briefly review the forum agenda, participation guidelines, and introduce the US Fish and Wildlife specialists assisting with responding to the questions today.

13

00:19:22.230 --> 00:19:29.820

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I would like to take a moment to remind everyone that the forum is being recorded and the recording will be available following the meeting.

14

00:19:31.500 --> 00:19:41.070

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: To enable the use of your closed captions you can click on the live transcript button icon and that's going to be located on your Zoom toolbar.

15

00:19:41.850 --> 00:19:55.560

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Once you click that button, there may be an option that says show subtitles. If you're not seeing the closed caption button, you can also go to the more button, which is typically under a three dot button and you can

16

00:19:57.090 --> 00:20:00.510

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: select show subtitles under that button.

17

00:20:01.920 --> 00:20:08.490

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Also, I want to let everyone know to support this public forum, we have created a virtual public meeting forum website.

18

00:20:09.090 --> 00:20:27.390

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And you will be able to access that website at www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis and we're going to go ahead and put that website in the chat feature, so that you, you can have that easily available. So right now we'll go to the next slide. Liza?

19

00:20:28.410 --> 00:20:39.540

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So we'll review our meeting agenda during today's forum, we will review the forum details, we're going to meet the US Fish and Wildlife specialists, and then we'll provide the project presentation.

20

00:20:40.230 --> 00:20:46.080

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: The presentation will review the planning area and describe the purpose of preparing a general conservation plan.

21

00:20:46.860 --> 00:21:00.720

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Once we've learned more about our planning effort, I'll provide a quick tutorial of our virtual public meeting website and then we'll move on to the question and answer session. That session will be followed by a more formal public input session.

22

00:21:02.430 --> 00:21:03.900

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We're going to go to the next slide. Liza.

23

00:21:05.550 --> 00:21:12.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I just want to provide everyone with a few participation guidelines, just so you know your microphone will remain closed

24

00:21:12.990 --> 00:21:23.970

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: until the public input session. During the public input session we'll be calling on folks that have pre-registered to provide their comments and we'll give you some guidance on that.

25

00:21:24.690 --> 00:21:34.110

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you do have an urgent question or need technical assistance, please enter a message in the chat box and we can get a technician to help you.

26

00:21:34.530 --> 00:21:54.240

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Or if that's not available and you're having a lot of trouble you're welcome to email myself at Theresa.ancell@emp.si.com. Thanks, Liza, let's go on to the next slide.

27

00:21:56.070 --> 00:22:02.040

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, just a few tricks and tips and tricks for Zoom if you're not as familiar with the program.

28

00:22:02.610 --> 00:22:10.410

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: It's pretty basic, but if you don't see your Zoom toolbar you may have to toggle your mouse around or if you're on your phone or an

29

00:22:11.040 --> 00:22:17.820

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: iPad or something you may have to kind of push on the phone to just get that Zoom toolbar to kind of show back up.

30

00:22:18.690 --> 00:22:26.220

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we will provide some more information on the question and answer sessions, as well as the public input session, as we get closer to those.

31

00:22:26.940 --> 00:22:41.220

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We do ask that we avoid any use of inappropriate language and respect all of the participants and viewpoints for the duration of this forum. Really excited to see so many of you attending and we really look forward to gathering all of your input.

32

00:22:42.240 --> 00:22:56.460

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thanks so much for being here and now I'd like to go ahead and turn it over to our project manager from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Ray Bransfield. He's a biologist and he'll provide some introduction to the project and the team. Thanks, Ray.

33

00:22:57.300 --> 00:22:57.960

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Thanks, Theresa.

34

00:22:59.250 --> 00:23:10.350

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Hi there, so some you know me I'm Ray Bransfield. I'm a biologist with the Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office and I'm the project manager for this general conservation plan.

35

00:23:10.860 --> 00:23:19.320

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And I want to introduce the other team members Peter Sanzenbacher and Jessica D'Ambrosio from the Service. You guys should turn your camera on for a second.

36

00:23:20.490 --> 00:23:40.560

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Peter is a biologist also in the Palm Springs office, so hi Peter and Jessica is a public affairs person with our Carlsbad office, which is actually the parent of the main office for Palm Springs, and after that I'd like to introduce Amy Fesnock for the Bureau of Land Management.

37

00:23:44.520 --> 00:23:45.030

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Amy.

38

00:23:47.760 --> 00:24:03.630

Amy Fesnock - BLM Desert District: Hi I'm Amy Fesnock. I am the resource advisor for the California Desert District, one of my primary duties is implementation of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

39

00:24:04.410 --> 00:24:23.700

Amy Fesnock - BLM Desert District: And while the Service's proposed GCP is broader than renewable energy I'm looking at it as essentially being the DRECP part two that had been originally envisioned in the

40

00:24:24.270 --> 00:24:38.580

Amy Fesnock - BLM Desert District: DRECP process where BLM has completed our land use plan amendment and now Fish and Wildlife Service is looking at working towards the general conservation plan for the tortoise.

41

00:24:39.990 --> 00:25:03.510

Amy Fesnock - BLM Desert District: Prior to working in the desert, I was the state lead for T&E species and wildlife with California BLM and have been working with BLM for about 13 years in this California state and was engaged in working with desert tortoise

42

00:25:04.860 --> 00:25:06.990

Amy Fesnock - BLM Desert District: all this time, thank you.

43

00:25:09.630 --> 00:25:11.880

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Liza, if we go the next slide please.

44

00:25:13.410 --> 00:25:14.430

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So.

45

00:25:14.460 --> 00:25:16.770

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Let me give a quick overview

46

00:25:16.830 --> 00:25:27.840

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: of this, this thing that we're doing so, we haven't processed that many habitat conservation plans and incidental take permits for the desert tortoise

47

00:25:28.590 --> 00:25:42.420

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: since its listing in 1990 and basically I'm talking here about things where there's no federal connection that the applicant is applying directly to the Fish and Wildlife Service for some sort of take authorization.

48

00:25:43.440 --> 00:25:54.840

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And what we found is it generally when we meet with applicants, that we can usually figure out what we need to do to minimize and mitigate the take of desert tortoises in fairly short order.

49

00:25:55.380 --> 00:26:04.290

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And then we spend the rest of time after that trying to translate the general agreement in the language that the rest of the world can understand that that is really clear about

50

00:26:04.770 --> 00:26:13.620

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: how the take will be minimized, how we mitigate, the financial stuff, the monitoring, all of that. So we get the general agreement pretty early, but then we spend.

51

00:26:14.040 --> 00:26:30.000

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Lots of time going back and forth with different drafts. So in 2007 the service issued a policy document that said that we should we could consider the concept of a general conservation plan, where we look at

52

00:26:31.110 --> 00:26:39.780

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Where we look at actions more broadly and as a tool to streamline this so streamline the incidental take permitting process.

53

00:26:40.860 --> 00:26:41.310

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So.

54

00:26:42.780 --> 00:26:52.380

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: issuing a general conservation plan would be a federal action so as a federal action we need to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

55

00:26:52.860 --> 00:27:02.130

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So, hence this this pre-scoping meeting, which will lead us into the NEPA process which we'll talk a little bit more about later. So on next slide please.

56

00:27:03.630 --> 00:27:10.200

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So why a general conservation plan? So I've already mentioned that the we can

57

00:27:11.940 --> 00:27:18.480

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We can reach general agreement with people and how to deal with the with tortoises on development projects in fairly short order.

58

00:27:19.830 --> 00:27:34.590

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And, so what we want to do is to try to speed up the process. So the way the Endangered Species Act is written, that people meet certain criteria to minimize and mitigate the take of tortoises, the take of any listed animal species.

59

00:27:35.400 --> 00:27:47.880

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And they provide monitoring and other guidelines, other parts of the incidental take permit, we have to issue them a permit. So one of the things that we want to do with this process is to streamline it such that

60

00:27:49.170 --> 00:27:56.190

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: such that we can cut out a lot of back and forth, a lot of this stuff of playing bring me another rock as we try to

61

00:27:56.640 --> 00:28:05.310

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: figure out the best way to explain what we've already reached sort of general agreement on so that's the aspect of streamlining

62

00:28:05.760 --> 00:28:15.960

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: that we're going to try to reach here, and we think that by streamlining the process and making it more user friendly in terms of how to apply

63

00:28:16.290 --> 00:28:33.150

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: we can have some conservation benefits for the tortoise, where we begin to focus conservation actions that are that are based more directly on how we recovered desert tortoises in terms of guiding applicants into

64

00:28:34.410 --> 00:28:43.800

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: the mitigation side of the equation in approaching things in a more comprehensive fashion to work on recovery of the species.

65

00:28:45.240 --> 00:28:55.860

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And we think we can do that by standardizing the process of applying for incidental take permit. Right now, everybody just looks at the general regulations for

66

00:28:57.450 --> 00:29:04.080

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: applying for an incidental take permit and they submit they meet with us and they submit a document which, as I said before, it goes back and forth

67

00:29:04.830 --> 00:29:12.390

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: between the agency between our agency and the applicants before we get to a final permit issuance if they meet the issuance criteria.

68

00:29:12.900 --> 00:29:20.940

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And we think that by standardizing that that we can improve the efficiency of the process and, hopefully, therefore, and then conservation outcomes for tortoises.

69

00:29:21.720 --> 00:29:30.960

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And, last but not least, we also want to try to provide some standardized guidance on translocating tortoises and one of the

70

00:29:31.350 --> 00:29:38.850

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: key minimization measures for desert tortoises in any incidental take permitting process is what are we going to do with the tortoises.

71

00:29:39.270 --> 00:29:49.290

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And we'd like to sort of integrate these tortoises into overall, general conservation strategy for the tortoise whereby we're maybe augmenting populations that have been depleted.

72

00:29:49.800 --> 00:30:00.450

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: In the past, to try to improve their chances of survival, rather than just moving them across the fence or something like that. Okay, next slide please.

73

00:30:03.090 --> 00:30:12.780

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So the plan area. So you've all seen this slide before in general in terms of lots of land use planning documents, including the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

74

00:30:13.260 --> 00:30:21.090

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So, this map looks a lot like what you've seen there and includes most of the

75

00:30:21.510 --> 00:30:28.980

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: California desert conservation area, except for the Coachella Valley, the Coachella valley has its own multi-species conservation plan.

76

00:30:29.370 --> 00:30:40.620

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And so we're not going to fiddle around with inside that area. So what you're looking at here, the only thing you're seeing new on this map is the cross hatch blue area.

77

00:30:41.250 --> 00:30:52.590

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Which we're calling the permit area. This area generally represents nonfederal lands that are outside of the Bureau of Land Management's

78

00:30:54.750 --> 00:31:18.510

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: land allocations and outside of other federal landholdings. This map, the permit area on here is absolutely not set in stone, but it represents areas that where we have high large areas of non-federal lands where people are most likely to be applying for incidental take permits.

79

00:31:20.010 --> 00:31:30.270

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So the permit area is where this general conservation plan would be in effect in effect in terms of people applying for incidental take permits.

80

00:31:30.690 --> 00:31:41.940

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And, and another key area that we need to look at would be and developed through the general conservation plan itself is a mitigation area, we'll call it the mitigation area.

81

00:31:42.330 --> 00:31:51.900

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Where we will be implementing mitigation strategies for the desert tortoise and we're generally looking at those areas as being Bureau of Land Management Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

82

00:31:52.650 --> 00:32:00.810

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The Bureau's California Desert National Conservation Lands, maybe state parks, maybe National Park Service lands.

83

00:32:01.740 --> 00:32:18.510

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: lands are being held by mitigation banks and maybe by other non-governmental organizations that are managing land out there for wildlife resources. Again, this this boundary is not set in stone, this is, this is our general idea of how it sits right now and.

84

00:32:20.670 --> 00:32:27.930

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The overall final boundary you know we're looking for input from the public on that, on that boundary. Okay next slide, please.

85

00:32:29.940 --> 00:32:34.200

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So what activities would be covered? So first of all.

86

00:32:36.090 --> 00:32:40.230

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We can only issue, the Service can only issue incidental take permits for

87

00:32:41.130 --> 00:32:51.900

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: actions that are otherwise legal. So if there's something out there that's going on that's not legal, we can't even begin to deal with that so we're talking about activities that would be.

88

00:32:52.350 --> 00:33:13.380

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know, otherwise permitted by counties or local agencies or state agencies right. So this is broad, this is a broad plan it's not solely focused on renewable energy, but industrial development, commercial, agricultural, you know all those sorts of things would be

89

00:33:14.940 --> 00:33:20.070

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: at this point we're thinking would be covered by this general conservation plan.

90

00:33:21.510 --> 00:33:28.770

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: it's, it is not, this plan would not be a new allocation of lands.

91

00:33:30.120 --> 00:33:35.160

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The general conservation plan is based on land use allocations, that the Bureau did.

92

00:33:36.090 --> 00:33:44.160

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: As part of its California Desert Conservation Area planning, as modified by the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. We're not looking at rezoning the desert.

93

00:33:44.550 --> 00:33:58.950

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Other than in terms of saying here's a permit area and here's a mitigate, here's an area that where this permit, where permits from the general conservation plan will apply and here are areas where we would focus mitigation. Next, please.

94

00:34:02.070 --> 00:34:11.820

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So why are we doing, why are we looking at environmental impact statement? So, as I stated earlier, the Fish and Wildlife Service is taking

95

00:34:12.210 --> 00:34:22.320

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If we issue such a general conservation plan or incidental take permits based on this general conservation plan we're taking a federal action, so therefore we have to comply with NEPA.

96

00:34:22.740 --> 00:34:36.840

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So the first and primary reason for doing the NEPA document is that we have to satisfy the requirements of NEPA, this is a federal action, it's discretionary, so we have to take a look at that.

97

00:34:37.950 --> 00:34:46.770

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The second thing we want to do is evaluate alternatives, we have the general idea of what we want to do

98

00:34:47.760 --> 00:34:58.800

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And, but we need, we want to consider some other, we need to consider other alternatives that that might achieve the same purpose with ideas that we haven't thought about.

99

00:34:59.190 --> 00:35:11.850

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And that's something where we are we're certainly looking to the public for more input on that. At this point, we have a proposed action in general, our general mindset

100

00:35:12.930 --> 00:35:18.720

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And we have a no action alternative which would be to continue the way we're doing incidental take permits now.

101

00:35:19.230 --> 00:35:24.840

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And so we need to look at some other alternatives for the general conservation plan.

102

00:35:25.590 --> 00:35:32.730

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And lastly, we're going to evaluate the impacts of approving and implementing the general conservation plan. And initially we started

103

00:35:33.240 --> 00:35:45.780

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We thought about handling this as a environmental assessment and we thought just because of the massive scale, where of the area, of the size of the area, where such an incidental take permit

104

00:35:47.370 --> 00:35:58.590

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: would be possible, the permit area is so large that we decided to switch over to do an environmental impact statement rather than starting off with an environmental

105

00:35:59.430 --> 00:36:15.480

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: With an environmental assessment. So yeah, so we would have to look at the primary focus, primary focus would be on effects of the desert tortoise but we'd have to look at also the other effects on the human environment of doing this. So next slide please, Liza.

106

00:36:17.370 --> 00:36:26.190

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So where are we in this process, so right now we're not in the NEPA process yet. We wanted to, because this is such a big undertaking for us, we wanted

107

00:36:26.550 --> 00:36:41.010

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: to start earlier than the normal NEPA process and have these pre-scoping meetings where we just get some really early input from the public to see how we should move through the NEPA process.

108

00:36:41.700 --> 00:36:53.280

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Once we. once we hear back from you guys and formulate that around, we will then publish a notice of intent in the Federal Register, the Federal Register is the

109

00:36:53.790 --> 00:36:57.870

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The federal government's daily newspaper, where we tell the world what we're doing.

110

00:36:58.590 --> 00:37:08.310

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So we publish a notice of intent which would start the clock, we would then go through the official scoping process where we would in part repeat what we're doing here again today.

111

00:37:08.730 --> 00:37:17.520

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We would draft the environmental impact statement, go through public review and based on the comments we get from the public review, from public

112

00:37:18.060 --> 00:37:25.920

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: input, we would issue a final environmental impact statement and have a record of decision, which would show how we would move forward from there.

113

00:37:26.970 --> 00:37:32.760

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So that is it for my comments so I'd like to send it back to Theresa at this point.

114

00:37:35.700 --> 00:37:38.130

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you Ray and thank you for all that great information.

115

00:37:38.160 --> 00:37:39.480

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Such a great presentation.

116

00:37:40.260 --> 00:37:53.400

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, at this time, what we are going to do is go over the website. EMPSi is trying to bridge the gap of in virtual meetings versus internal or in person meetings and so

117

00:37:54.030 --> 00:38:01.020

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: What we've come up with is a website that provides the public a little bit of information about the project.

118

00:38:01.710 --> 00:38:16.980

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: It also has a map that's interactive where you can see where these areas are, and it has a place where you can submit your public input directly. So right now what I'm going to do is share my screen and we're going to walk through.

119

00:38:18.450 --> 00:38:20.400

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Our virtual public website.

120

00:38:21.690 --> 00:38:34.740

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And so, hopefully this helps. I know it's really hard to have these virtual meetings, but we try to make sure we get all the information that we can and try to serve as those stations as you would expect at an in person meeting so.

121

00:38:36.420 --> 00:38:46.500

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: we'll start with our page one, so if you go to this website here which I'll stick in this chat for everyone, oh Taylor already did a great job Taylor.

122

00:38:47.100 --> 00:38:58.230

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you. Okay, so this is where you will land on the homepage here, and as you scroll down you'll see some information about this effort. You'll note that our

123

00:38:58.740 --> 00:39:10.140

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Public input session began on June 1 and it's going to end on July 1 so the more input we can receive before July 1 the better. If you can't get your input together by then.

124

00:39:10.560 --> 00:39:19.650

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Please go ahead and feel free to send it we will consider it as well as much as we can. So there's a little bit of information there.

125

00:39:20.280 --> 00:39:35.070

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: describes the NEPA process. So this is the interactive map, this provides some information about the locations, that the Fish and Wildlife Service are looking. Down below the map you'll see some information on how to use it.

126

00:39:36.330 --> 00:39:48.630

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: But let me show you a couple of key features, so if you click this side panel toggle it provides the legend so you'll see what the permit area is, which is this hatched.

127

00:39:49.200 --> 00:40:02.160

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Line area, and then you can also see what the land management is in particular areas, so the color codes match that and then you'll see the permit area here, you can zoom in and out.

128

00:40:04.020 --> 00:40:14.100

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, you can select a different base map. So if you want to see more of imagery or streets, typography that kind of thing. you can change that.

129

00:40:15.690 --> 00:40:33.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so all these little tools here, and then, if you'd like to find a place or an address so say you're looking for your particular town that you live in, or that you visit or even your own home address you can type here in this.

130

00:40:35.460 --> 00:40:39.240

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And it will take you to that location so.

131

00:40:41.400 --> 00:40:48.300

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: here's Victorville, California, and you can see its location when compared to our.

132

00:40:49.320 --> 00:41:00.390

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Planning area that we're talking about. So just kind of a neat feature, gives you a way to search for where you're located and to see if you're within that area or not.

133

00:41:02.130 --> 00:41:09.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, if you're not comfortable using this map or have any technical problems with it, you can also download.

134

00:41:10.020 --> 00:41:16.110

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: This information as a PDF. You'll just use this link here or if you prefer to use this Google Earth.

135

00:41:16.830 --> 00:41:31.470

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: As a KMZ file in Google Earth, you can download those files here and then you'll have to go ahead and use Google Earth. If you don't have Google Earth, you can use this link here to download that program and then those KMZs will open.

136

00:41:32.670 --> 00:41:43.740

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: here's some information on the virtual information forums today, obviously we are here and we're going to have one more tomorrow June 15th from 6 to 8pm Pacific time.

137

00:41:44.400 --> 00:41:53.460

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: The same material is going to be presented at both meetings and there will be phone and Internet participation options available.

138

00:41:54.120 --> 00:42:09.900

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you know of anyone that's unable to attend the meeting, and they have questions you can reach out Ray Bransfield or Amy Fesnock with BLM via those emails. We also have a way that you can provide your input here on the form.

139

00:42:13.680 --> 00:42:19.590

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so you've already registered, but if you want to register to register for tomorrow, this link will take you there.

140

00:42:20.670 --> 00:42:23.490

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So our next station is our public input.

141

00:42:25.140 --> 00:42:32.700

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: form, so this provides information about the forums when it begins and then, if you'd like to submit your input directly to us.

142

00:42:33.210 --> 00:42:39.960

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Written you can use this form here. Fill out your information, and then provide your question or your comment here.

143

00:42:40.800 --> 00:42:50.160

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you'd like to be added to the project mailing list, please click on this button here. That way when we do scoping and all the other public information

144

00:42:50.700 --> 00:42:59.130

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: sessions in the future you'll be added and will be notified of that information as well. Okay, so one last station.

145

00:43:00.000 --> 00:43:09.270

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: The station here, we thought it would be nice to provide just really nice links, this is probably where the recording will go as well, and the transcripts so.

146

00:43:09.750 --> 00:43:24.630

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: But you can see our original press release here we're going to have that project overview map that was on the previous page and then there's a general conservation plan information sheet and then the revised press release and these buttons here will return you to the homepage.

147

00:43:27.030 --> 00:43:36.600

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so, hopefully, everyone can access that website and can utilize it. It's a simple website, but it's really nice for the public to get in.

148

00:43:36.960 --> 00:43:45.150

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Like I said learn more about the project and then have a really nice one shop one stop shop to go ahead and find that.

149

00:43:45.810 --> 00:43:56.190

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: It looks like the link maybe not working so we'll go ahead and make sure that link is correct and get it back out to you all. At this time I will go ahead and turn it back over to Liza to share her screen.

150

00:43:57.540 --> 00:44:01.170

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And that way we can get going with our question-and-answer session.

151

00:44:06.390 --> 00:44:06.870

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay.

152

00:44:12.090 --> 00:44:15.510

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Alright, so we're just going to give a few more guidance to.

153

00:44:17.010 --> 00:44:17.340

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: To.

154

00:44:18.450 --> 00:44:28.860

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Get the program on Zoom here. So for the question and answer session that is coming up you're going to use your question and answer icon and that's going to be located at the bottom of your toolbar.

155

00:44:30.030 --> 00:44:32.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: you're going to open that box and then.

156

00:44:33.870 --> 00:44:49.320

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: enter your question and that's going to come over to us, we ask that you please don't use the chat feature, other than for a technical urgent questions and then we are not going to use the raise hand feature until our next session, which is going to be the verbal public input session.

157

00:44:51.030 --> 00:44:53.640

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so Liza, if you want to go to the next slide.

158

00:44:56.820 --> 00:45:08.220

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so let's get going on our question and answer session. If everyone wants to go to the bottom of their zoom toolbar and click on the question and answer icon just a little square icon on the bottom.

159

00:45:08.880 --> 00:45:17.580

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: you'll click on that icon it'll pop up in a box and you'll type your answer there in the box that you can see, and then you'll go ahead and send it in.

160

00:45:19.110 --> 00:45:28.770

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Once you've sent your message the panelists Ray, Jessica, Peter, myself will see those messages or those questions and then we will.

161

00:45:29.430 --> 00:45:34.830

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Work on answering them. Some of them will be answered live and some of them will be answered written.

162

00:45:35.730 --> 00:45:45.330

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We would like to try to answer them all live, however, sometimes that just doesn't happen, so we have to answer some of them written, just to be able to get through.

163

00:45:45.900 --> 00:45:53.670

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Right now we're going to leave we're going to accept questions until the top of the hour, so until 11 o'clock Pacific time.

164

00:45:54.930 --> 00:46:04.440

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: noon I'm sorry I'm in mountain time so I'm getting myself confused, but for 30 minutes over here we're going to accept comments or questions and answers so.

165

00:46:06.150 --> 00:46:16.290

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Please use the question and answer icon and we will get going. So while we're waiting for some questions if Ray you want to go ahead and come on camera.

166

00:46:18.180 --> 00:46:25.950

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We'll wait for some questions to come in, in the meantime, we had a couple pre-submitted questions.

167

00:46:27.600 --> 00:46:29.580

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Liza you'll go back to the last slide there.

168

00:46:31.230 --> 00:46:35.880

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: There we go, stay on that one there. So we had some questions that were submitted ahead of time.

169

00:46:36.210 --> 00:46:43.440

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And so we would like to just start with those questions and then we'll get over to your our start with a couple of those questions, while we're waiting.

170

00:46:43.860 --> 00:46:52.650

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So Ray we had a question about why a general conservation plan might be better for the tortoise than current management. Can you explain that to us a little bit more?

171

00:46:53.550 --> 00:46:55.620

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So yeah sure um.

172

00:46:55.800 --> 00:46:58.650

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So the

173

00:46:59.850 --> 00:47:11.580

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: basic issues with current management is that it is basically we were doing everything completely individually on a complete individual basis.

174

00:47:12.390 --> 00:47:26.190

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So we attempted with both the West Mojave Plan and the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan to do a broader-based habitat conservation planning

175

00:47:27.840 --> 00:47:36.600

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: effort, where we would look at the non-Federal Land parts of the desert to involve those in overall conservation strategy and those efforts

176

00:47:37.110 --> 00:47:47.670

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: did not succeed, I think, probably because they were a little bit too broad and we needed it was really hard to build consensus on with so many different landowners and

177

00:47:48.150 --> 00:48:08.520

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And different species, so this is this is really a simpler approach and we think that the reason why this will be the primary reasons why we think that focusing on the desert tortoise would be more efficient, is that it will be a single-species effort to conserve tortoises.

178

00:48:10.020 --> 00:48:13.020

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And we will provide much

179

00:48:14.190 --> 00:48:21.600

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Stricter guidance to applicants in terms of what needs to be in a conservation plan in order to get it issued.

180

00:48:21.990 --> 00:48:35.850

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And, in the end, I think a big efficiency here is it, it will reduce the amount of processing time that the Fish and Wildlife Service spends on it, which allows our staff to then spend more time on recovery actions for the desert tortoise.

181

00:48:36.780 --> 00:48:45.390

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If we're using all of our time if we're spending all of our time processing individual incidental take permits on their own.

182

00:48:46.320 --> 00:49:00.960

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The simplest ones take 12 months to 24 months we don't have time to work on recovery, so we want to redirect our actions from being reactionary to individual permits

183

00:49:02.730 --> 00:49:11.310

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: To having a focused way of doing this and then reallocating our time to work on recovery actions for the desert tortoise.

184

00:49:15.660 --> 00:49:17.760

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks Ray, this is Amy I'm going to go

185

00:49:17.760 --> 00:49:27.870

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: To a question for Amy Fesnock. What protections would be placed on the BLM areas considered for desert tortoise translocation?

186

00:49:30.480 --> 00:49:32.850

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So already existing.

187

00:49:33.930 --> 00:50:04.290

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: With the DRECP land allocations, we have conservation areas designated as ACECs and national conservation lands and essentially all of the tortoise critical habitat falls underneath those two designations. Under each of those designations, there are

188

00:50:05.670 --> 00:50:14.850

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: management plans that identify what activities are or not allowed within a given ACEC or NCL.

189

00:50:16.590 --> 00:50:25.650

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Part of what BLM's participation in the GCP process is

190

00:50:27.450 --> 00:50:50.010

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: identifying or narrowing down areas that would be appropriate for tortoise translocation as part of the GCP so there will be an agreement as to what the GCP areas within BLM administered lands are.

191

00:50:51.420 --> 00:50:58.770

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Once we identify those areas and agree that they coordinate with and.

192

00:51:00.060 --> 00:51:22.650

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: work and are part of the GCP then there's a section under the Dingell Act that would then provide additional protections of these areas that are statute driven instead of land use planning driven.

193

00:51:26.610 --> 00:51:28.110

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And that concludes my answer.

194

00:51:30.360 --> 00:51:39.810

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks Amy. I have a question for you Ray, how does the Apple Valley HCP fit into this or not fit into this effort.

195

00:51:41.820 --> 00:51:42.330

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Yes.

196

00:51:42.390 --> 00:51:43.170

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Hi Illeene.

197

00:51:43.920 --> 00:51:48.330

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: That, that that's a really interesting question um my.

198

00:51:49.410 --> 00:51:58.770

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I think we'll have to discuss with Apple Valley if Apple Valley decides to proceed with its own multi species plan.

199

00:51:59.670 --> 00:52:16.890

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I would, my assumption right now is that we would excise apple valley from the general conservation from the permit area of the general conservation plan. That would be, that is what I think would happen, but we would have to see.

200

00:52:20.610 --> 00:52:27.990

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks, Ray. Next question. Where is the mitigation focus for desert tortoise habitat.

201

00:52:29.850 --> 00:52:30.870

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well, I think.

202

00:52:31.140 --> 00:52:38.220

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I think Amy Fesnock partially answered that question. We, so if you, if you look at.

203

00:52:39.000 --> 00:52:49.590

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: maps of the, look at the maps in the DRECP or other planning documents you'll see that you know in 1994 we designated critical habitat for the desert tortoise.

204

00:52:50.130 --> 00:53:01.770

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And those old in large part will be mitigation, the focus of mitigation areas so there's a really broad areas that cover something like 4 million acres in California.

205

00:53:02.580 --> 00:53:18.000

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Beyond that, since we designated critical habitat we've come to view some other areas as fairly important for the tortoise for the desert tortoise, so the some of the other areas, I mentioned such as the California Desert Natural Conservation Lands.

206

00:53:20.100 --> 00:53:38.940

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: They may also be we would envision also including at least some of those lands as a mitigation area. One thing that we'll look at is, we will certainly be doing some modeling to see where desert tortoise are likely to occur.

207

00:53:40.560 --> 00:53:48.090

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know, for instance, Death Valley National Park, is a wonderful place but large parts of Death Valley National Park are not desert tortoise habitat so.

208

00:53:48.570 --> 00:54:04.620

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know if we were to work with the Park Service and we could be translocating tortoises to say a National Park, we would want to make sure that it's within good tortoise habitat within a National Park but, but those are things that we're looking at evaluating.

209

00:54:07.800 --> 00:54:16.500

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks, Ray maybe a follow on question as a mitigation provider should I be excited or concerned about this.

210

00:54:17.190 --> 00:54:18.630

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Or you should always be excited.

211

00:54:19.110 --> 00:54:22.590

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So I think. I think that.

212

00:54:23.700 --> 00:54:43.140

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know I think it's one of those depends answers. We will be looking for areas that we think, have the biological characteristics, to be to support desert tortoises in the long term, and will also be looking at the.

213

00:54:45.090 --> 00:54:51.540

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: what's the word I'm looking for the defensible. For instance.

214

00:54:53.520 --> 00:54:54.600

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If.

215

00:54:56.790 --> 00:55:08.670

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The poppy preserved in western the far Western Antelope Valley there's no way we would look at that, as a mitigation area for desert tortoise is because there aren't tortoises there now.

216

00:55:09.120 --> 00:55:24.360

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And it's not you know in proximity to any other desert tortoise conservation areas, so I think that you know, selecting your mitigation bank sites well, this would be something to be excited about.

217

00:55:27.990 --> 00:55:45.870

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thank you Ray there's a question that maybe Amy Fesnock might want to do a follow up to your response. Has Fish and Wildlife and BLM figured out why the West Mojave population has declined below sustainable population levels.

218

00:55:56.760 --> 00:56:01.110

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Ray, do you want to start with that one and then we'll go to Amy after you've started. Cool.

219

00:56:01.470 --> 00:56:04.410

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Sure me, I mean.

220

00:56:05.490 --> 00:56:13.860

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Certainly humans have had direct impacts on desert tortoises through their activities.

221

00:56:15.150 --> 00:56:31.170

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And there's no question about that and there's no question that the West Mojave area receives a lot more impact than some of the other areas of the desert, particularly if you look at you know real deep into the Colorado desert like on the chuckwalla bench or in the eastern Mojave desert.

222

00:56:32.250 --> 00:56:41.190

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: But you know something that we talked about, even in 1989 when we were looking at the desert tortoise was the ongoing.

223

00:56:42.360 --> 00:56:45.120

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Just overall habitat conditions of drought.

224

00:56:46.320 --> 00:57:00.840

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: When we looked at listing the desert tortoise back in 1989 you know, we had discussions of whether or not we should even list Eastern populations of the tortoise because of the differences of rainfall between the West Mojave and Eastern desert so.

225

00:57:02.160 --> 00:57:02.760

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know.

226

00:57:04.410 --> 00:57:05.220

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I think.

227

00:57:07.830 --> 00:57:14.130

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So I mean so this so that says like go right back to beginning of that answer we can't.

228

00:57:15.360 --> 00:57:19.950

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: With any sort of local planning effort address drought in the western Mojave desert.

229

00:57:20.970 --> 00:57:41.790

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So yeah until that issue is resolved, you know tortoises I think in the West Mojave are always going to be under more stress than other tortoises, but I think that we have to address the things we can, which is why we want to work on this general contribution plan.

230

00:57:45.540 --> 00:58:06.720

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So in in addition to the comments that Ray provided, and I think the work coming out of the desert tortoise recovery office indicates that there is at least a correlation between density of.

231

00:58:07.740 --> 00:58:20.400

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Travel network areas and lower densities of tortoises. How causal that factor is, I think, is something that's still under investigation.

232

00:58:21.180 --> 00:58:37.860

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: I think, Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM's research and monitoring of ravens has clearly indicated that ravens are a significant

233

00:58:38.490 --> 00:58:52.710

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: factor in mortality of juvenile tortoises. Perhaps the data is suggesting that when there are densities of ravens.

234

00:58:53.520 --> 00:59:11.820

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: At a given level, I'm not going to remember what that number is in this meeting, but that essentially once you get above that number of ravens in a given area, essentially, there is no reproduction, that is occurring because all of the juveniles are being.

235

00:59:14.400 --> 00:59:26.520

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: predated upon. I think there is as Ray mentioned clear indications that climate change is affecting tortoises.

236

00:59:28.140 --> 00:59:37.200

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Specifically, when you're looking at temperature regimes and precipitation regimes and how precipitation.

237

00:59:37.650 --> 00:59:57.510

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: is critical for those first couple of years of the tortoise's life, and I think the data is pretty clear that you need several years of precipitation in order for a juvenile tortoise to develop enough of a body mass to be able.

238

00:59:58.530 --> 01:00:25.590

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: To be likely to be recruited into the adult populations. BLM right now is working with a group of researchers where we are evaluating multiple threats and impacts associated with desert tortoise populations, trying to understand.

239

01:00:28.230 --> 01:00:32.070

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Which of those factors are the.

240

01:00:33.210 --> 01:00:42.210

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Best explainers of tortoise populations on the landscape and we're anticipating.

241

01:00:43.320 --> 01:00:54.240

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: The draft manuscript of that study to be completed in 2023 and I think that that all then becomes.

242

01:00:55.260 --> 01:01:07.800

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: highly informative in how we then work to protect tortoises that are existing in the landscape, as well as accommodate tortoises.

243

01:01:08.280 --> 01:01:31.170

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: That could be moved to BLM managed lands through this GCP process, I appreciate the concern that is raised, and I do think that both Fish and Wildlife Service and BLM are aware of these risk factors and are evaluating these risk factors.

244

01:01:35.520 --> 01:01:36.420

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thank you, Amy.

245

01:01:37.860 --> 01:01:48.960

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Ray I believe you did touch on this a little bit in your presentation, but one viewer would like to know, will all translocations be on BLM managed lands.

246

01:01:50.130 --> 01:01:50.490

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I'm.

247

01:01:50.580 --> 01:02:13.170

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Sure yeah no, we're leaving it open to the concept that some can be as Amy just said to be on Bureau of Land Management lands that have the right habitat and management strategies, we have not talked to the National Park Service yet, but that's a possibility.

248

01:02:14.910 --> 01:02:20.760

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I certainly think that there are other lands, such as those managed by mitigation banks and maybe by.

249

01:02:22.650 --> 01:02:25.860

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Environmental organizations that.

250

01:02:27.180 --> 01:02:35.520

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: That are, might be partners to this effort, or where we use their lands, yes, so it's not be limited to BLM alone yeah.

251

01:02:37.740 --> 01:02:45.480

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks Ray our next question: how the GCP will accommodate tortoise connectivity and linkages.

252

01:02:48.090 --> 01:02:48.480

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: well.

253

01:02:49.290 --> 01:02:58.350

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: we're not going to reallocate, we are not reallocating any land uses on public lands, it's not part of what the GCP is.

254

01:02:59.580 --> 01:03:10.260

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I would say that if we have, and linkages are described on public lands and the Bureau of Land Management.

255

01:03:11.670 --> 01:03:33.720

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: define their management strategies for those areas in the DRECP if such areas would be suitable, otherwise you know for with all other regards to desert tortoises, we would certainly look at moving tortoises into those areas, but we're not going to change any.

256

01:03:35.250 --> 01:03:39.780

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Land use allocations on public lands as a result of this plan.

257

01:03:44.670 --> 01:03:57.210

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thank you Ray next question: how is CDFW being engaged in this planning effort, and is it compatible with their planning efforts, like the Antelope Valley RCIS.

258

01:03:58.410 --> 01:03:58.890

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: So.

259

01:03:58.980 --> 01:04:06.630

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We certainly will coordinate with CDFW as we move through this process, we've talked to them a little bit about it.

260

01:04:07.950 --> 01:04:19.920

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We want to make sure that we don't wind up in scenarios where we're telling developers to you know move to the east, you know.

261

01:04:20.580 --> 01:04:28.440

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Very metaphorically speaking, and CDFW's telling them to move West, you know that that makes things really, really tough on developers so.

262

01:04:29.250 --> 01:04:35.940

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: When we get to individual projects so each be clear that make everybody should understand that is as we if we.

263

01:04:36.420 --> 01:04:49.710

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If we undertake this action is still requires the applicant to come in and talk to us, and we would, our goal would be as we're talking to them, we're also talking to CDFW to make sure we're pointing everybody in the same direction.

264

01:04:50.730 --> 01:05:05.040

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Because it just doesn't work, otherwise, if that doesn't happen, and I am not familiar with the Antelope Valley RCIS, so I have no clue how it would interact that.

265

01:05:09.030 --> 01:05:17.400

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thanks Peter, I mean thanks Ray: will there be habitat acquisition as part of the GCP.

266

01:05:19.710 --> 01:05:28.140

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If an applicant proposes that as the mitigation component for meeting the issuance criteria, yes.

267

01:05:44.280 --> 01:05:51.510

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Sorry, sirens on my end Ray. One more question and I maybe Amy will want to follow on with this.

268

01:05:51.780 --> 01:06:02.820

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: For past projects, one of the key mitigation measures implemented by the Service to reduce predation in the West Mojave was the Raven Management Program.

269

01:06:03.180 --> 01:06:12.930

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Will the success challenges of the program be addressed or be a key component to ensure desert tortoise persist and thrive throughout its range.

270

01:06:14.250 --> 01:06:24.120

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Okay couple of points are so one yeah, every, I certainly envisioned right now that if we.

271

01:06:25.350 --> 01:06:34.920

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: For any project that comes forward that wants an incidental take permit under the GCP we would likely continue with their participation, let me

272

01:06:35.730 --> 01:06:47.760

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: rephrase it. The participation in the Raven Management Program which basically means that at this point they're paying a fee into a, into a fund that's managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

273

01:06:48.330 --> 01:06:58.320

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And the Service is using that money to manage ravens in California not throughout its range. That that Raven Management Strategy at this point

274

01:06:59.520 --> 01:07:13.230

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Is, excuse me, addresses only projects in California. So yeah, we would continue to look at ravens as a major part of managing desert tortoises in California.

275

01:07:17.790 --> 01:07:25.470

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thank you another question: how successful has translocation efforts been in the past.

276

01:07:26.790 --> 01:07:35.910

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So we think that, we think that translocation when done correctly can be a valuable tool in.

277

01:07:36.930 --> 01:07:46.290

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: mitigating the impacts of desert tortoises on projects, you know, because we have something to do with them, we can we have a

278

01:07:46.680 --> 01:08:05.490

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: strategy for dealing with them other than just like you know moving them to the side over the fence, you know we research has shown that the desert tortoise is within a couple years if they're translocated appropriately that they begin to integrate themselves into the local population.

279

01:08:07.500 --> 01:08:21.690

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: What we've seen generally is it translocated tortoises wander around for a couple years before they settled down, we've seen no negative impacts on resident animals.

280

01:08:22.800 --> 01:08:26.610

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Females certainly are breeding with resident males.

281

01:08:27.930 --> 01:08:38.220

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Translocated male tortoises, though, don't seem to be producing offspring, yet, but there's more research going on to see what's going on with that so, so we think that

282

01:08:39.240 --> 01:09:01.020

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: translocation done right will work and basically doing it right means translocating, translocating them to suitable habitat, you know under appropriate temperature conditions and away from very obvious threats to their, to their immediate survival.

283

01:09:02.220 --> 01:09:05.490

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We believe based on research that they will do fine.

284

01:09:09.300 --> 01:09:16.110

Amy Cordle - EMPSi: Thank you. Another question: when would translocation areas be identified.

285

01:09:17.670 --> 01:09:25.740

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: As we move through the, we will identify transportation areas as we move through the planning process.

286

01:09:26.640 --> 01:09:41.760

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: But in general, we're going to be looking at areas that are within critical habitat, primarily, and in some other areas, and some of the other areas we identify as important for long-term survival of tortoises.

287

01:09:43.080 --> 01:09:45.060

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Ray can I add on to your answer.

288

01:09:45.180 --> 01:09:45.930

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Please do.

289

01:09:47.070 --> 01:10:20.760

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: From a BLM perspective, we would, if translocation areas are going to be used on BLM we need them to be identified in this GCP process, so there is a BLM decision about agreeing to the areas where translocation could occur. It is BLM anticipation that there will be

290

01:10:21.870 --> 01:10:34.380

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Multiple translocation areas identified in different areas of the desert and then as projects are appended.

291

01:10:34.830 --> 01:10:44.280

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: or amended, whatever the right word is there, to the GCP that at that point, a specific translocation area

292

01:10:44.700 --> 01:11:00.540

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: would be identified that would be appropriate for that project, but that that project-level translocation would be within the larger zones that are identified in the GCP process.

293

01:11:02.100 --> 01:11:08.640

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: yeah, yeah that yes, that's important and just add on to the process point of it.

294

01:11:09.690 --> 01:11:19.260

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: we've invited and BLM has accepted cooperator status, on the EIS for that specific purpose, and you know coming out of.

295

01:11:19.680 --> 01:11:30.570

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know this meeting, I think that you know, maybe we should probably be talking to the National Park Service to see how interested they are in participating as a cooperator.

296

01:11:39.030 --> 01:11:46.950

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Well, thanks Ray and Amy and both Amy's. Thank you so much. It looks like we have no more open questions from the audience so.

297

01:11:49.500 --> 01:11:56.340

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We did have a couple more that were pre submitted during registration so I'll go ahead and ask a couple of those.

298

01:11:56.880 --> 01:12:03.870

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Until the top of the hour, we have three more minutes, so if you do have another question, please feel free to put it in the question and answer.

299

01:12:04.440 --> 01:12:18.030

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: buckets. If you have a question that pops up during our input period and you would like that answered you can also go ahead and put that in the question and answer bucket and we will work on answering those during the input session.

300

01:12:19.140 --> 01:12:22.800

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So, Ray one question that was pre submitted is.

301

01:12:23.880 --> 01:12:26.610

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Will you support restoration after cleanup.

302

01:12:28.260 --> 01:12:30.660

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Well, actually, I think it was a part of a two part

303

01:12:30.660 --> 01:12:31.350

question.

304

01:12:32.580 --> 01:12:42.180

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: It says, will you address the marijuana farming that is destroying habitat, and will you support restoration after cleanup. I'm not sure if that was directly tied, but it seems like it might be so.

305

01:12:42.960 --> 01:12:45.090

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I wasn't quite sure we were cleaning up.

306

01:12:45.270 --> 01:12:45.630

Okay.

307

01:12:46.650 --> 01:12:48.210

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So first of all.

308

01:12:49.920 --> 01:12:58.290

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So marijuana farming comes in two components as I'll call them, as I understand it, one is where.

309

01:12:59.520 --> 01:13:13.260

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: One is where people are applying for permits to grow marijuana and if they apply for a permit to do that industrial use or agricultural use for the local agency.

310

01:13:14.700 --> 01:13:20.580

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We would address that we can address that you know as part of the GCP.

311

01:13:23.910 --> 01:13:33.090

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: In terms of the illegal stuff, we will not permit illegal activities, so I know there are illegal activities going on out there.

312

01:13:34.410 --> 01:13:35.040

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If.

313

01:13:36.750 --> 01:13:40.860

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: A area that was illegally used for marijuana growing

314

01:13:43.620 --> 01:13:54.480

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: is being reclaimed to restore it somehow, if whoever needs an incidental take permit to do that restoration work.

315

01:13:56.790 --> 01:14:07.560

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If somebody needs a permit to do that legal restoration work, yeah we would cover that. That could be part of the GCP that they could apply for an incidental take permit under GCP for that.

316

01:14:13.890 --> 01:14:14.730

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: That sounds great.

317

01:14:15.870 --> 01:14:22.950

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I think at this point Ray will go ahead and switch to the comment or the public input session, so thank you so much for answering all those questions.

318

01:14:23.640 --> 01:14:32.580

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If we get through our public input and we do have some time left, we may have some questions that we will, if we receive any more questions we'll have.

319

01:14:33.240 --> 01:14:44.010

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: You answer them live if we get to that point or we'll continue to answer some may be written so we'll go ahead and have Liza go to the next slide. Thanks so much Liza.

320

01:14:45.480 --> 01:14:49.710

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Alright, so now we'll transition into our verbal input session.

321

01:14:51.240 --> 01:14:51.870

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And so.

322

01:14:52.950 --> 01:15:00.960

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We just want to kind of provide the process that this goes through, and just some guidance on this verbal input session.

323

01:15:01.380 --> 01:15:09.030

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So I do want to remind you that your microphones are going to remain closed until you have been called on to provide your input.

324

01:15:09.780 --> 01:15:18.600

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We're going to display the list of ways to provide input once more falling input session and the virtual project website will be displayed during the input session.

325

01:15:19.470 --> 01:15:25.140

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I'm going to go ahead and read instructions for participants who indicated, they wanted to offer input when they pre-registered.

326

01:15:25.800 --> 01:15:33.930

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Input will be accepted in the order that in the order of registration, we will also display the name of the next four participants who are in line.

327

01:15:34.800 --> 01:15:42.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I think we have more like 10 participants on our on our next slide so we're going to have those displayed on the screen, so you'll know when your name is going to be called.

328

01:15:43.590 --> 01:15:50.730

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: When you do hear your name called out, please use the raise hand feature, so that we know you're available and ready to offer your input.

329

01:15:51.150 --> 01:15:58.260

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: You can access your raise hand feature by clicking on the participant list icon, which is located on the bottom of your screen on your Zoom screen.

330

01:15:58.800 --> 01:16:08.250

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you toggle your mouse back and forth, you may see those buttons on the bottom of your screen. The participant icon should go ahead and be there.

331

01:16:09.270 --> 01:16:14.610

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: You can click on the participant icon and select the raise hand feature located at the bottom of the participant list.

332

01:16:15.150 --> 01:16:27.900

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: You may need to exit out of your full screen Zoom view to see this icon and to do that you'll go up to the right-hand corner of your Zoom screen and hit the view button and then there should be a prompt that says exit full screen.

333

01:16:31.230 --> 01:16:36.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, once you have your hand raised, you will then be unmuted so that you can provide your verbal input.

334

01:16:36.990 --> 01:16:46.140

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If your audio is not working, you may need to check your mute unmute button on your side on your computer screen or respond to any pop-up message about.

335

01:16:46.620 --> 01:16:54.390

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: unmute your microphone. Once you have confirmed audio, please state your name for the recording before providing your verbal input.

336

01:16:54.900 --> 01:17:08.070

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you're representing an organization or group, please say the name of the group or organization you're representing. Again, we ask that you be mindful and respectful of the length of your verbal public input in order to allow others to participate.

337

01:17:09.660 --> 01:17:17.430

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: After you have provided your input we'll mute you and move on to our next participant. Each participant will have two minutes to provide their verbal input.

338

01:17:18.000 --> 01:17:28.110

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you do not feel like you were able to complete your vertical public input today, the Fish and Wildlife Service strongly encourages you to submit the remainder of your input in writing.

339

01:17:28.590 --> 01:17:35.880

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Should there be more time after the initial round of input those who did not finish may be invited back to finish providing their input.

340

01:17:39.090 --> 01:17:52.560

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so before you begin your input we'll ask you to spell your name or state your name, excuse me, and then we'll give you a notice that you can go ahead and provide your input. Let's go ahead and go to the next slide Liza.

341

01:17:55.230 --> 01:18:03.780

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Alright, so our next slide is where we'll start, so we do have Amy Granat, Amy if you want to go ahead and.

342

01:18:04.980 --> 01:18:06.840

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: raise your hand on our Zoom app.

343

01:18:09.930 --> 01:18:15.180

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Actually, not seeing Amy in the list so we'll move on Ileene Anderson.

344

01:18:17.700 --> 01:18:18.270

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay.

345

01:18:20.490 --> 01:18:23.160

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Alright, Ileene I hope that's your name.

346

01:18:23.880 --> 01:18:24.240

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Nice.

347

01:18:24.390 --> 01:18:25.710

Ileene Anderson: There you go .

348

01:18:25.800 --> 01:18:26.100

Okay.

349

01:18:27.180 --> 01:18:37.500

Ileene Anderson: Ileene Anderson I'm with the Center for Biological Diversity, I don't have a lot of comments at this time and will be submitting more extensive comments.

350

01:18:38.610 --> 01:18:49.380

Ileene Anderson: For sure in a written form, but I do have concerns about you know the using the ACEC and the California Desert National Conservation Lands as

351

01:18:50.460 --> 01:19:07.440

Ileene Anderson: the protective mechanism for mitigation and potentially moving desert tortoises just because you know they're not permanent and we've certainly seen for the attempts to

352

01:19:09.030 --> 01:19:09.900

Ileene Anderson: Basically.

353

01:19:10.920 --> 01:19:33.360

Ileene Anderson: Roll those back. ACECs have been changed in the past, and you know a lot of that area, as well is managed for multiple use and so just very concerned about really the effectiveness of using those lands for

354

01:19:34.590 --> 01:19:35.820

Ileene Anderson: mitigation purposes.

355

01:19:36.840 --> 01:19:40.710

Ileene Anderson: So that's my big comment for today, thank you very much.

356

01:19:42.510 --> 01:19:44.790

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you Ileene, we really appreciate your input.

357

01:19:49.380 --> 01:19:53.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, at this point we have Lisa Patterson. Lisa, are you available.

358

01:19:57.810 --> 01:20:10.920

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, my screen, I do not see Lisa. It looks like we have a couple phone callers on the line, if you are phone caller and I call your name, you can press star nine. Star nine will raise your hand and then we'll.

359

01:20:12.000 --> 01:20:22.350

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: push the button and it should allow you to unmute on your side. So Lisa Patterson or Amy Granat if you're on the phone you're welcome to go ahead and press star nine.

360

01:20:23.760 --> 01:20:31.830

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so I don't see those individuals, so far, so we'll go ahead on to Jack Goldfarb are you on the line Jack.

361

01:20:34.320 --> 01:20:40.860

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, I do see Jack's name on there so Jack you just need to go ahead and raise your hand using the raise hand feature.

362

01:20:43.980 --> 01:20:45.150

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Perfect okay Jack.

363

01:20:49.620 --> 01:20:51.840

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: All right, Jack you should be able to unmute on your side.

364

01:21:08.700 --> 01:21:10.020

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Not seeing Jack

365

01:21:11.490 --> 01:21:23.190

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: able to unmute. So Jack is having some technical issues, he said, so we will go ahead and come back to Jack. Jack don't worry we'll come back to you, and if you still having technical issues

366

01:21:23.580 --> 01:21:33.900

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: you're welcome to go ahead and send me or send me a chat in the chat feature and we'll get Taylor to get ahold of you and see if.

367

01:21:34.920 --> 01:21:35.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We can get you online.

368

01:21:36.930 --> 01:21:43.350

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So while we're helping Jack out let's go on to Ed. Ed LaRue if you're available, you can use the raise hand feature.

369

01:21:45.960 --> 01:21:51.810

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Don't actually see Ed in our list, and if you are on the phone, you can hit star nine.

370

01:21:54.900 --> 01:21:56.490

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay let's move along. Michael Vamstad.

371

01:21:58.950 --> 01:22:01.320

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Michael are you available for a comment today.

372

01:22:05.730 --> 01:22:09.780

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: don't see Michael's name on the list. So Michael if you're on the phone, you can hit star nine.

373

01:22:11.220 --> 01:22:14.010

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: OK, we'll go along to Samuel Easley.

374

01:22:15.090 --> 01:22:21.120

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Samuel if you're on the line you can raise your hand it'll pop you up to the top. There we go Samuel.

375

01:22:22.140 --> 01:22:25.560

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, you should be able to open your microphone on your end Samuel.

376

01:22:26.430 --> 01:22:27.420

Samuel Easley: Alright, can you hear me.

377

01:22:27.780 --> 01:22:28.890

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Yes, Sir we've got you.

378

01:22:29.280 --> 01:22:38.220

Samuel Easley: Thank you, thank you, I don't have a particularly long comment but just a quick kind of addendum to what Ileene Anderson was saying earlier.

379

01:22:39.810 --> 01:22:42.000

Samuel Easley: I just really want there to be a focus on

380

01:22:43.740 --> 01:22:49.620

Samuel Easley: where these tortoises could potentially be translocated to, where these mitigation areas are chosen.

381

01:22:51.180 --> 01:22:53.520

Samuel Easley: Because we work in the Fremont framer area.

382

01:22:54.540 --> 01:23:00.360

Samuel Easley: Where you know, we have some desert tortoise hotspots, but we also are dealing with some really serious management issues.

383

01:23:01.290 --> 01:23:08.820

Samuel Easley: there's a huge excess of route mileage out there, you know that it seems like they keep adding mileage every time there's a decision so.

384

01:23:09.210 --> 01:23:17.940

Samuel Easley: we've got to make sure that we're advocating for either cutting down the number of roads out there, or moving these tortoises into areas where there isn't

385

01:23:18.510 --> 01:23:25.470

Samuel Easley: As much vehicle traffic, and also as we're all familiar with there's a lot of checkerboard land ownership in these areas and

386

01:23:26.010 --> 01:23:33.840

Samuel Easley: That brings its own management issues and that might not be the best spot to move some of these tortoises into, especially with the proliferation of

387

01:23:34.380 --> 01:23:40.110

Samuel Easley: All these marijuana grows that somebody else asked about and I've seen 40 acres of habitat

388

01:23:40.680 --> 01:23:51.060

Samuel Easley: bladed corner to corner in what is effectively an area of critical environmental concern, a desert tortoise critical habitat unit, so these areas are getting designated.

389

01:23:51.570 --> 01:23:58.560

Samuel Easley: But then they're also designated as limited use areas and there's development going on that's unchecked and unpermitted so

390

01:23:59.460 --> 01:24:06.300

Samuel Easley: I just really want to make sure that there is a focus and attention on these real management issues that are happening on the ground.

391

01:24:07.290 --> 01:24:17.940

Samuel Easley: Because we're not going to be doing the tortoise any good if we're moving it into one of these areas or trying to protect habitat that has all of these other pressing concerns right around it so.

392

01:24:18.990 --> 01:24:20.070

Samuel Easley: yeah, thank you for that.

393

01:24:22.710 --> 01:24:24.690

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you so much for your comment, Samuel.

394

01:24:28.230 --> 01:24:34.920

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, next in line we have Elizabeth. Elizabeth Wolff, if you want to go ahead and hit the raise hand feature.

395

01:24:39.420 --> 01:24:54.180

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thanks. Oh, she left okay. Maybe she accidentally hung up, Alright we'll wait for Elizabeth to come back and in the meantime we'll move on to Alexander Sundquist. Alexander, are you available.

396

01:24:58.710 --> 01:25:02.730

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Not seeing Alexander on the line, so Vincent, Vincent James.

397

01:25:04.560 --> 01:25:06.090

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: There we go Vincent okay.

398

01:25:07.320 --> 01:25:09.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: should be able to unmute on your side Vincent.

399

01:25:11.400 --> 01:25:19.230

Vincent James: Vincent James I actually worked at the Palm Springs US Fish and Wildlife Service Office with Ray and Peter, and at this time, I do not have any public input, thanks.

400

01:25:20.160 --> 01:25:21.570

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Perfect. Thanks so much Vincent.

401

01:25:26.250 --> 01:25:36.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we do have some phone callers on the line. I just want to remind everyone that's on the phone, you can press star nine that will allow your

402

01:25:37.500 --> 01:25:47.280

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: hand to, that will indicate that you have, want to provide a comment, for us it looks like we have gone through all of the pre-registered commenters.

403

01:25:47.850 --> 01:25:53.790

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We would like to now open the door or open the floor back up to anyone that did not pre-register.

404

01:25:54.150 --> 01:26:04.350

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you would like to provide a comment you're more than welcome to go ahead and raise your hand that will indicate that you're ready to provide your comment and then we'll open your microphone and you can begin with your comment.

405

01:26:05.190 --> 01:26:19.710

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We do still have about 45 minutes left in our agenda today, so if we get to a point where we have got about 10 minutes without a comment, then we'll open it back up to your question and answer session.

406

01:26:22.620 --> 01:26:30.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, I don't see anyone with their hands raised. Oh, here we go lleene perfect. lleene has already gone, but I was just going to say if anyone went before and would like to provide more.

407

01:26:30.690 --> 01:26:37.410

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: we're more than happy to open that up as well, so lleene I'll go ahead and unmute your microphone and you should be able to unmute on your side now.

408

01:26:38.130 --> 01:26:49.440

Ileene Anderson: Okay, great. Thank you I was remiss in my prior comment about thanking the presenters today. You know the sort of notice didn't have a lot of.

409

01:26:51.060 --> 01:27:09.390

Ileene Anderson: details on what the agency was thinking, and so I appreciated the question and answer piece of it, because that helps to inform how we will be addressing comments, so I just wanted to say that, thank you.

410

01:27:16.290 --> 01:27:18.180

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thanks Ileene, we really appreciate that.

411

01:27:21.780 --> 01:27:25.620

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we still do have quite a bit of time left so.

412

01:27:26.910 --> 01:27:31.830

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I'll remind everyone, you can find the raise hand feature down at the bottom of your list.

413

01:27:33.150 --> 01:27:35.670

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Jack okay, Jack let's go ahead and try oh.

414

01:27:40.470 --> 01:27:43.140

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: There we are Jack. You should be able to unmute on your side Jack.

415

01:27:44.340 --> 01:27:44.760

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: There you go.

416

01:27:45.630 --> 01:27:46.710

Jack Goldfarb: Hi thank you sorry I.

417

01:27:47.220 --> 01:27:56.490

Jack Goldfarb: had some technical difficulties, I just have a question if the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has been engaged at all to see if this.

418

01:27:57.330 --> 01:28:10.290

Jack Goldfarb: moves forward, will there be the potential for a consistency determination on their end or is it still just conceptual at this stage, and that would be determined as the process moves forward.

419

01:28:12.090 --> 01:28:18.360

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we are in the input session but Ray if you would like to answer that question, I think we have plenty of time and not a.

420

01:28:18.900 --> 01:28:29.250

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Real long line of folks that have their hands up. We just have Jack at this point so Ray would you like to answer that question, or would you like Jack to put it in a different format.

421

01:28:29.880 --> 01:28:41.250

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well just for Jack I will answer that question and I'm glad you turned the timer off because if it turned red on me, I would, I would probably faint or something. That was scary.

422

01:28:42.750 --> 01:29:02.790

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So you know we haven't, we haven't talked to CDFW about a consistency determination issue about the you know how we could use it see determination yet. I think, I think it's a it's a good question, I think it's something that that we should definitely address.

423

01:29:04.050 --> 01:29:08.580

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Maybe, as we go a little bit move a little bit more forward in this.

424

01:29:10.050 --> 01:29:26.640

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And for those who don't know there's a section in the California Fish and Game code which allows CDFW to adopt our incidental take permit or biological opinion.

425

01:29:28.080 --> 01:29:36.030

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Probably not phrasing this exactly right, but this is, this is the general idea, they the state can adopt our incidental take permit

426

01:29:36.450 --> 01:29:43.380

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: or biological opinion as sort of its state compliance document, rather than going through the individual.

427

01:29:43.920 --> 01:29:55.290

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: State permitting process, but that means we have to meet both the state issuance criteria and our incidental take criteria. It's been done, it's a little complicated but it's been done, but yeah we haven't gotten there yet Jack.

428

01:29:58.530 --> 01:29:59.490

Jack Goldfarb: Thank you appreciate it.

429

01:30:02.220 --> 01:30:03.660

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you Jack. Thank you Ray.

430

01:30:05.160 --> 01:30:10.890

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we do have 45 minutes left in our public input session so.

431

01:30:11.610 --> 01:30:25.920

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We do encourage everyone all of your input is extremely important to this process. Without your input we cannot successfully complete this process, so thank you so much for all the wonderful questions and all of the very helpful input.

432

01:30:27.780 --> 01:30:37.050

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: So far, so we'll go ahead and give it just a few minutes to see if others have any verbal input to provide.

433

01:30:37.470 --> 01:30:46.470

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: If you're on the phone remember that you can press star nine. That will raise your hand. If you're online, on your iPad computer or on your

434

01:30:47.250 --> 01:30:59.820

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: phone, you can also toggle around and find the raise hand button. It's either under the participations tab or it may be just right on the bottom of your Zoom bar Zoom toolbar depending on what version, you have so.

435

01:31:00.300 --> 01:31:14.700

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I'm going to go ahead and go on mute and we'll just give it a few minutes to see if we have others that would like to provide some public input, otherwise we will just wait for some more questions and wait for someone to raise their hand.

436

01:32:37.680 --> 01:32:47.730

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, everyone I don't want to leave you sitting in silence too long, so if we don't have any more public input verbal public input at this point.

437

01:32:48.930 --> 01:33:05.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We can go ahead and read some more questions and have Ray answer those questions that we that we have prepopulated that will hopefully be informative for all of our participants to hear those answers today. I do encourage you, though, if you would like to.

438

01:33:06.930 --> 01:33:17.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: provide a verbal input at any point, you can use the raise hand feature using star nine on your phone or just the icon to raise the hand.

439

01:33:19.260 --> 01:33:23.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: that's located on your Zoom toolbar. So at this point.

440

01:33:24.870 --> 01:33:27.090

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Ray I'll have you and Amy Fesnock

441

01:33:28.170 --> 01:33:31.470

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: kind of come back on and.

442

01:33:32.730 --> 01:33:40.530

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: let's look at some questions that we that we have prepopulated and that will be informative for our public that are joining us so.

443

01:33:45.540 --> 01:33:46.740

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Let me see.

444

01:33:51.240 --> 01:33:55.980

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: How would you ensure the applicants are meeting the standards of the permit.

445

01:33:57.540 --> 01:34:09.360

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well, one of the one of the components of every incidental take permit, is a monitoring component, the applicant has to show us.

446

01:34:10.440 --> 01:34:11.160

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: How.

447

01:34:12.600 --> 01:34:27.360

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: how their project is going, how the mitigation is working, how the minimization is working, all that sort of stuff. All of that stuff will remain the same under the, under the general conservation plan so.

448

01:34:29.100 --> 01:34:46.830

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: You know, depending on the specific nature of the project, we might be getting monthly reports, annual reports, something like that, until the project is done. So that part really wouldn't change it would they would be reporting to us, and we would be checking up on them.

449

01:34:50.190 --> 01:34:55.350

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Great that sounds good Amy. Do you have anything to add to that or would you like that sounds good.

450

01:35:01.890 --> 01:35:06.270

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: I don't think I have anything to add.

451

01:35:06.420 --> 01:35:11.040

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Sounds good. Um let's go to another question so Ray.

452

01:35:13.140 --> 01:35:18.840

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Do we know how many tortoises there are present in a given area, maybe say.

453

01:35:20.040 --> 01:35:22.680

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: One of those polygons that we already have established.

454

01:35:23.130 --> 01:35:35.040

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well the Service has been conducting what we call range wide monitoring, since their early aughts I think I mid aughts.

455

01:35:36.060 --> 01:35:39.480

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So, so we.

456

01:35:40.800 --> 01:35:50.370

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: regularly do transects through critical habitat and some other areas like Joshua Tree National Park.

457

01:35:51.210 --> 01:35:59.400

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: That are that aren't critical habitat, designated critical habitat, but are still really important for the desert tortoise survival and recovery.

458

01:36:00.330 --> 01:36:11.610

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And so those transects give us a pretty decent idea of what tortoises are doing, what tortoise populations are doing in those general areas, and you know there's a.

459

01:36:12.000 --> 01:36:24.000

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: there's a confidence intervals associated with that so we have a general idea with tortoises are doing in those in those conservation areas, yes.

460

01:36:24.540 --> 01:36:37.020

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: For any specific site on the desert, you know, unless it's a research site that somebody's looking at to answer research questions, we don't have numbers for the entire desert now.

461

01:36:38.640 --> 01:36:48.990

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Sounds good. Let's give Ray a break and go to Amy. Can you kind of further explain what the roles BLM will play in this project.

462

01:36:54.510 --> 01:37:04.560

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So the primary role that BLM will be playing is offering BLM administrative lands.

463

01:37:05.880 --> 01:37:15.060

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: either for habitat enhancement projects that could be incorporated as part of the project's mitigation.

464

01:37:16.680 --> 01:37:35.370

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And areas for tortoises to be moved from the development area to a natural area that would be managed for tortoise conservation. I know that there have been some

465

01:37:37.440 --> 01:37:46.470

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: concerns that have been identified regarding whether ACECS are permanent or not.

466

01:37:48.360 --> 01:37:49.260

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: and

467

01:37:51.390 --> 01:38:14.880

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: In order for BLM to no longer have an ACEC, we have to go through the process of saying that the relevant and important values that were identified in the creation of the ACEC either no longer exist or no longer need special management.

468

01:38:17.250 --> 01:38:39.150

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: I have not seen in my 14 years with California BLM an ACEC deleted or made less. I have seen ACECs increased and I've seen relevant and important values increased.

469

01:38:40.470 --> 01:38:54.510

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: In my comment earlier that I would like to re-address here is that the Dingell Act does have a section that discusses.

470

01:38:55.380 --> 01:39:08.850

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: areas that are identified as part of an HCP or GCP and when we participate in this process, while we are not.

471

01:39:09.570 --> 01:39:19.710

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Changing the land use allocation, because it will still stay in that conservation allocation.

472

01:39:20.580 --> 01:39:49.530

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: we will be adding this layer that it is identified as an area associated with the GCP so all of the protections that are identified in the Dingell Act would then apply to these areas that would be identified and use but used by the GCP process. Because the Dingell Act is a statute.

473

01:39:50.850 --> 01:40:14.340

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: passed by Congress, it is not at the perceived whim of BLM to change, we would have to follow the statute and the conservation direction that is provided in that law associated with this GCP process.

474

01:40:23.160 --> 01:40:24.750

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Great. Thank you so much Amy.

475

01:40:26.340 --> 01:40:36.030

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, we have another question. How will the US Fish and Wildlife Service incorporate public comments into developing the alternatives for the EIS.

476

01:40:37.680 --> 01:40:58.350

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: yeah, so you know, certainly, we have a general idea of what we want to do with this general conservation plan um but I mean the big reason for having this pre-scoping meeting is that you know, the more the merrier in terms of.

477

01:40:59.790 --> 01:41:24.690

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: ideas for us to think about. So we'll look at what the input we get from people here, and that will, when we start drafting the EIS, when we get to the, when we get to the scoping session because that comes before drafting the EIS when we get to the scoping session.

478

01:41:25.800 --> 01:41:41.190

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We will, we will have a more developed plan than we have now and we might have started to incorporate some of those ideas into a proposed plan or an alternative plan so we're.

479

01:41:42.360 --> 01:41:48.780

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: certainly, there have been a couple of questions today that have my brain going a little bit: yeah, we need to address that.

480

01:41:49.800 --> 01:41:53.610

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So yeah we'll just work it in there if they fit.

481

01:41:54.660 --> 01:41:58.350

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: If we think that that's something that fits with where we might want to go.

482

01:42:06.660 --> 01:42:09.210

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Perfect. Okay, Ray, I'm

483

01:42:10.230 --> 01:42:12.780

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: not seeing any more questions and

484

01:42:13.800 --> 01:42:27.390

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: No hands are raised to provide a comment, so would you like to take just a few minutes break and we can come back and we'll get going on answering some more questions and waiting for some more comments.

485

01:42:29.430 --> 01:42:30.690

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Okay.

486

01:42:31.290 --> 01:42:43.980

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: All right, everyone, while we take a five minute break let's be thinking about what comments we might have or additional questions. Ray and I will find some more questions that we come up with and

487

01:42:44.490 --> 01:42:57.210

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Maybe they're informative or will stimulate some other ideas that you might have. So we'll take a five minute break as we retreat into our shells for five minutes and we'll see all of you here just shortly, thank you.

488

01:51:34.410 --> 01:51:36.810

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Hi everyone, hopefully, you had a nice break.

489

01:51:38.490 --> 01:51:40.590

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We will go ahead and get going again.

490

01:51:42.000 --> 01:51:43.200

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We want to.

491

01:51:45.090 --> 01:51:45.750

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We want to.

492

01:51:47.610 --> 01:51:56.700

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: offer the opportunity for anyone that has joined to provide some public input, so, if you would like to provide input, whether you've gone.

493

01:51:57.300 --> 01:52:05.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Previously or not you're welcome to throughout the time. If you decide that you would like to please raise your hand using your Zoom toolbar and we will.

494

01:52:06.870 --> 01:52:17.040

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: open your microphone and switch back to our public input session so at this point, Liza let's go ahead and go back to

495

01:52:17.580 --> 01:52:28.740

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Excuse me, our question session question and answer session. Perfect. Okay, we do have a couple of questions that Ray would like to answer, and then we would also.

496

01:52:29.850 --> 01:52:34.440

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Have a question in the chat feature not really a question but.

497

01:52:35.760 --> 01:52:45.450

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: about the Dingell Act and so we'll have somebody also respond to that chat as well, so okay right it looks like our question.

498

01:52:46.530 --> 01:52:51.090

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Will this project lead to additional take of desert tortoise in the planning area.

499

01:52:52.500 --> 01:53:00.570

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well, the really simple answer to that question is that it, it should not hopefully it should not because.

500

01:53:01.710 --> 01:53:17.280

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: In theory, anybody that's doing anything now that can take tortoises is asking us for a permit. We don't really get a lot of them, to be honest, we have a few going on right now, which are driving up workload.

501

01:53:18.570 --> 01:53:21.450

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: The one way that it might add is

502

01:53:22.560 --> 01:53:32.880

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We know that on occasion project proponents will slightly alter their project area to avoid you know one or two tortoises.

503

01:53:33.450 --> 01:53:52.620

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: That they've found during surveys, and so I could envision that with if the general if the general conservation permit were available to people, and it would really shorten their timeframe for getting this incident take permit from us I could see then possibly not.

504

01:53:53.730 --> 01:54:02.070

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: modifying their permit areas their project areas to avoid a few tortoises and I want to be clear that you know.

505

01:54:03.240 --> 01:54:04.110

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We have.

506

01:54:05.190 --> 01:54:18.960

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Except for I think one project in about 2013, I don't think we have ever translocated more than 10 tortoises from any single project in any incidental take permit we've issued in California.

507

01:54:19.320 --> 01:54:26.400

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So we're not talking hundreds of tortoises per project, we are absolutely not talking about that number of tortoises.

508

01:54:27.600 --> 01:54:43.230

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Oh, and speaking of number of tortoises I think you look thinking back on that question about you know how many tortoises are in an area, um I think I was thinking bigger scale. If we're thinking about on any given project site.

509

01:54:44.370 --> 01:54:44.790

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: and

510

01:54:45.960 --> 01:54:59.580

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: My answer to that question would be is different, and that is, is it you know almost every project we see you know, must go through some sort of local planning, whether it's city county state.

511

01:55:00.750 --> 01:55:19.050

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And those agencies require the applicants to do wildlife surveys, which often include protocol desert surveys those protocols were established by the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2018 or 2019 so they, the proponents hire.

512

01:55:20.370 --> 01:55:29.790

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Qualified biologist to go out and look for tortoises and they scan, they look at the area, according to the protocol, according to the recommendations in the protocol.

513

01:55:30.180 --> 01:55:39.060

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: and the report goes to the local agency, which then often winds up with us and that's how we know tortoises are in a project area.

514

01:55:39.570 --> 01:55:52.110

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Before we get. And those reports, you know they'll find a certain number of resources and then we try to project out how many may be there in an optimal situation by using.

515

01:55:53.520 --> 01:56:07.950

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Complicated equations. So yeah that that's how we look into in a very restricted area in a project site, as opposed to the desert as a whole, so sorry if I misled people on that one question.

516

01:56:10.080 --> 01:56:15.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thanks Ray um, how will applicants mitigate the take of tortoises.

517

01:56:16.560 --> 01:56:23.040

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well, we would like, we want people to mitigate in a manner that.

518

01:56:24.060 --> 01:56:27.300

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: furthers the recovery of the desert tortoise so.

519

01:56:28.620 --> 01:56:37.890

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Fundamentally, for us, for the Fish and Wildlife Service anything that we have identified in the desert tortoise recovery plan.

520

01:56:39.030 --> 01:56:48.450

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: From 2011 as being a tool to promote the survival and recovery of the tortoise is fair game for us.

521

01:56:49.380 --> 01:57:12.000

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: So these usually, I think, because in some ways it's simple calculation. Land acquisition and future management is a key tool, we would also entertain fencing roads to keep tortoises off of roads, one of the biologists in our staff has modeled.

522

01:57:13.050 --> 01:57:22.410

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: desert tortoise habitat, desert tortoise densities, road use to identify those areas where we're we see and expect.

523

01:57:23.550 --> 01:57:34.320

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: tortoises to be killed at higher rates, because of the number of tortoises in the area and the amount of use of those roads.

524

01:57:35.520 --> 01:57:38.520

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: We would look at other things like habitat restoration.

525

01:57:42.090 --> 01:57:54.720

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: And you know all sorts of forms, just restoring disturbed areas, removing livestock grazing from areas that are important for tortoise recovery, so we think there are a whole suite of tools that we would use for that.

526

01:57:58.470 --> 01:57:59.370

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Fantastic Ray.

527

01:58:00.690 --> 01:58:12.720

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay there's a question in the chat about the Dingell Act and Amy Fesnock are you available to answer that or would you like to answer that live.

528

01:58:13.980 --> 01:58:14.370

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: yeah.

529

01:58:14.550 --> 01:58:16.410

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: I am I can provide.

530

01:58:17.160 --> 01:58:20.490

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: guidance as to where to find this information.

531

01:58:21.570 --> 01:58:33.750

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So the first thing that I need to do in answering this is to point interested participants to the California Desert Protection Act.

532

01:58:34.530 --> 01:58:52.710

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Specifically Section 714 of the Desert Protection Act that prohibits certain land use, certain uses of public lands administered by BLM within the California Desert Conservation Area.

533

01:58:54.630 --> 01:59:02.730

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: What Dingell Act does, and Dingell Act is Public Law 116 dash nine.

534

01:59:04.590 --> 01:59:09.570

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: and Dingell Act has section 1453.

535

01:59:10.680 --> 01:59:27.660

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And the section 1453 of the Dingell Act adds a section to the section 714 of the Desert Protection Act, so you have to look at both laws in concert right.

536

01:59:28.680 --> 01:59:42.990

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And in section 714 of the Desert Protection Act, it talks about prohibitions associated with acquired, donated, and conservation lands.

537

01:59:44.010 --> 01:59:51.660

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Acquired lands specifically refers to land purchased using land and water conservation funding.

538

01:59:52.590 --> 02:00:12.480

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Donated lands refer to private lands within the California Desert Conservation Area that were given to the United States for conservation purposes and then but, but the term conservation purposes itself is not defined in 714.

539

02:00:14.340 --> 02:00:19.890

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And, and then this idea of conservation land was not particularly clear.

540

02:00:21.210 --> 02:00:43.800

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So that's the aspect that the Dingell Act provides additional guidance on, where it defines conservation lands as including National Conservation Lands and National Conservation Lands are associated with Public Law 111 11.

541

02:00:45.420 --> 02:00:51.030

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: ACEC designations, which ACECs are described in FLPMA.

542

02:00:53.430 --> 02:01:04.380

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: Within, so if you're looking at NCL lands and ACEC lands within CDCA and then this is the part that the Dingell Act clarifies,

543

02:01:04.920 --> 02:01:19.500

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: That are designated through a land use planning process to satisfy the conditions of a federal Section 10 a1b habitat conservation plan.

544

02:01:19.950 --> 02:01:37.680

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: or a general conservation plan GCP, which is what we're working on right now, pursuant to the federal Endangered Species Act or if California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

545

02:01:38.580 --> 02:01:54.750

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: wanted to do or did an NCCP, a natural communities conservation plan, and designated areas on BLM land those would also then.

546

02:01:56.520 --> 02:02:04.290

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: satisfy the conditions of those lands now being recognized as conservation lands.

547

02:02:05.610 --> 02:02:32.550

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: And then the set of prohibitions that are then applied to those conservation lands prohibit disposal, prohibits right of ways, prohibits leases, prohibits livestock grazing, prohibits infrastructure development, except where that infrastructure supports the conservation purposes.

548

02:02:33.660 --> 02:02:50.430

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: prohibits mineral entry, prohibits OHV vehicle use except on designated routes or in designated OHV areas or designated OHV open areas.

549

02:02:51.870 --> 02:03:06.720

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: So those would be the prohibitions that would that once we go through this GCP process and we identify the lands that are already designated as ACECs or NCLs.

550

02:03:07.140 --> 02:03:22.560

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: That meet the purposes within the GCP and are identified for use in the GCP, the Dingell Act identifies those as conservation lands and that clarifies.

551

02:03:23.370 --> 02:03:34.890

Amy Fesnock-- BLM Desert District: What is or is not allowed, as identified in the California Desert Protection Act. It's a little kind of policy wonky and convoluted but that's how you connect those dots.

552

02:03:38.490 --> 02:03:41.400

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you Amy that's actually really amazing information.

553

02:03:42.870 --> 02:03:47.790

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Way more than I ever could understand, so thanks so much.

554

02:03:48.810 --> 02:03:50.790

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: That really was amazing response so.

555

02:03:52.290 --> 02:04:14.130

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Well, we do have about 11 minutes left in our webinar today, and we would like to encourage anyone that is still on the line to ask a question, or if you'd like to provide some input, you're welcome to raise your hand. At this point Liza let's go to the last slide.

556

02:04:15.270 --> 02:04:33.810

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: I want to make sure everyone has ample opportunity to write down this information about how to submit further input and so as I'm talking about this information and how you can get us your input, if you decide that this really.

557

02:04:34.890 --> 02:04:40.530

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: allowed you to come up with some more information or you have more questions or you'd like to submit your.

558

02:04:41.250 --> 02:04:53.070

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: comment in writing you're welcome to do so, so we do ask that you provide your input by July 1 and we have a few different options for providing that input.

559

02:04:53.460 --> 02:05:02.820

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: you're welcome to mail it, you can write a letter up and mail that over to Peter Sanzenbacher at the Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office.

560

02:05:03.300 --> 02:05:11.430

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And we'll go ahead and put this into the chat box as well, but for those of you that are on the phone and can't see the screen I'm going to go ahead and.

561

02:05:12.750 --> 02:05:13.950

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: and read this off so.

562

02:05:14.970 --> 02:05:35.010

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: The mailing address is 777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way and Ray is laughing at me because I probably did not say that anywhere close so 777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way.

563

02:05:36.030 --> 02:05:37.650

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And that's suite 208.

564

02:05:38.790 --> 02:05:44.820

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Palm Springs, California 92262. Now Ray has to say it correctly.

565

02:05:45.750 --> 02:05:47.340

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: it's easier Tahquitz.

566

02:05:47.580 --> 02:05:50.850

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Tahquitz.

567

02:05:50.910 --> 02:05:51.330

yeah.

568

02:05:52.500 --> 02:06:10.890

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay I'm sorry you guys all right, you can also email Ray and Ray's email is ray_bransfield@fws.gov

569

02:06:12.330 --> 02:06:25.110

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, and you can also call if you'd like to provide a verbal input comment to Ray you can call him at 805-677-3398.

570

02:06:26.250 --> 02:06:39.900

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, so all of that information is in the chat and you're welcome to grab it out of there, we also like to encourage the use of the website www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis

571

02:06:40.380 --> 02:07:07.890

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi:, and as we reviewed earlier, you can you can actually submit a public input right there on our page there you'll go to the second page to do that so.

572

02:07:10.080 --> 02:07:15.330

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Okay, I don't see any more open questions or hands raised so.

573

02:07:16.230 --> 02:07:25.050

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: We only have a few more minutes so I'll go ahead and turn it back over to Ray and Ray will take us out, so thank everyone for their time I thank everyone for their time

574

02:07:25.350 --> 02:07:42.390

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: and attention during this presentation, it was informative I know I learned a lot myself, so thank you so much Ray. Thank you so much Amy Cordle, Amy Fesnock, Peter, Jessica, and the folks from EMPSi we really appreciate it and I'll turn it back over to Ray. Thank you.

575

02:07:42.690 --> 02:07:46.740

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Well yeah I want to thank the EMPSi people including

576

02:07:46.890 --> 02:07:55.890

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Theresa and Liza, as you know, we practiced this a little bit and I amply demonstrated my complete inability to do any of this stuff by myself so

577

02:07:56.220 --> 02:08:03.900

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: I want to thank them; I also want to thank anybody all you public folks you got on to give us input and ask questions because.

578

02:08:04.320 --> 02:08:10.350

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: It certainly is you know caused us to it's going to cause us to think more about this and add some.

579

02:08:10.770 --> 02:08:22.500

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: Add some wrinkles here and there, and so I appreciate that you got on here. We're going to do this again tomorrow night. We envisioned tomorrow night's will be just pretty much the same as this so.

580

02:08:23.880 --> 02:08:29.790

Ray Bransfield - USFWS: join us again if you want. Otherwise, we look forward to hearing from you in the future, take care, all right.

581

02:08:35.850 --> 02:08:36.420

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thanks Ray.

582

02:08:37.020 --> 02:08:40.800

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: we'll just go ahead and leave this slide up for the next few minutes.

583

02:08:42.270 --> 02:08:59.730

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: And that way you can all have a moment to write it down if you do have a public comment or a question, you know we have a few more minutes and you're welcome to either raise your hand or submit that so, otherwise we will see you either tomorrow or soon. Thanks so much.

584

02:14:51.930 --> 02:14:54.600

Theresa Ancell - EMPSi: Thank you for your attendance. The webinar is now ending.