



# Proposed General Conservation Plan and Environmental Impact Statement for the Desert Tortoise

## Virtual Public Information Gathering Forum



# Meeting Agenda



**Introductions**



**Presentation**



**Question-and-  
answer  
Session**



**Public Input  
Session**

- Focused on  
gathering public  
input -



FWS will record public input to inform development of a proposed Desert Tortoise General Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement

# Participation Guidelines



This meeting is being recorded.

Microphones will remain on mute until the public input session.

Questions will be received using the Q&A box.

Verbal input will be received by pre-registrants first, who indicated they would like to provide input.

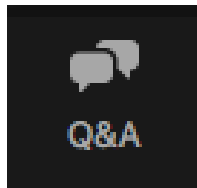
Opportunity will then be given to other participants to provide input.

Please refrain from using inappropriate language.

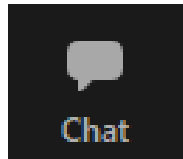
Closed captioning is available using the Live Transcript box at the bottom of your screen.

# Tips and Tricks for Zoom

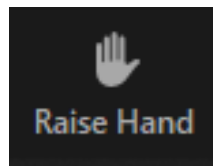
Use the Q&A icon for the question-and-answer session



Use the Chat icon only for urgent technical questions



Use the raise hand feature during the public input session



Mute/Unmute will be controlled by the host for the entirety of the meeting

Phone caller instructions - \*9 to raise your hand to ask a question or provide input during the appropriate sessions

For technical assistance, contact Theresa at the following email: [theresa.ancell@emp.si.com](mailto:theresa.ancell@emp.si.com)

# Introductions

## **PRESENTERS**

### USFWS

Ray Bransfield

### EMPSi

Theresa Ancell

## **TEAM MEMBERS**

### USFWS

Peter Sanzenbacher

Jessica D'Ambrosio

### BLM

Amy Fesnock

### EMPSi

Amy Cordle

Liza Schill



# Overview

A General Conservation Plan is a conservation tool developed by the Service which suits the needs of a certain area and fulfills the NEPA requirements for issuance of an incidental take permit.

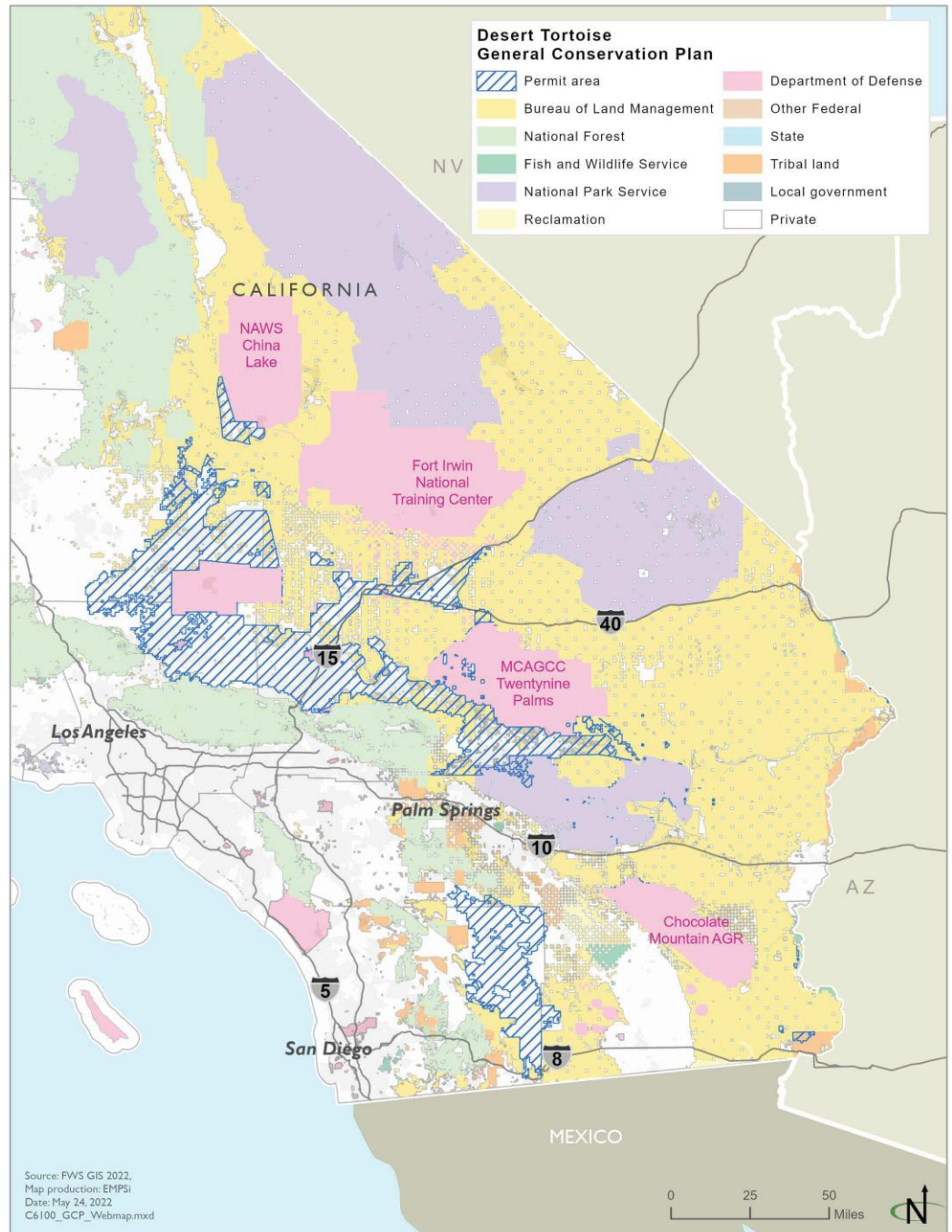
The Service is proposing to develop a General Conservation Plan to provide a streamlined mechanism for local agencies and proponents engaged in covered activities that lack a federal nexus to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, while promoting conservation of the federally threatened desert tortoise.



# Why a Conservation Plan?

Streamline	Provide a streamlined mechanism for local agencies and proponents engaged in covered activities that lack a federal nexus to meet ESA requirements
Conservation	Promote conservation of the federally threatened desert tortoise
Standardize	Standardize the issuance of incidental take permits that cover take of the desert tortoise
Translocation	Identify areas on BLM-managed lands that could be used for translocation of desert tortoises displaced by covered activities

# What is the Plan Area?





# What activities would be covered?

- Initial ideas for covered activities:
  - Commercial
  - Agricultural
  - Residential
  - Industrial
  - Infrastructure development
  - Recreational activities
- This Plan is based on the land use allocations in the Bureau's California Desert Conservation Area Plan as amended by the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan; the Service's General Conservation Plan would not alter land use allocations in any area.



# Why an Environmental Impact Statement?



1

**Satisfy the requirements  
of the National  
Environmental Policy Act  
of 1969, as amended**

2

**Evaluate alternatives for  
the General Conservation  
Plan**

3

**Evaluate impacts from  
approving and  
implementing the  
General Conservation  
Plan**

# Information Gathering Forum (Pre-NEPA)

**\*We are here**

## EIS Process

### National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA) - EIS Process

Notice of Intent

Scoping Process

Draft Environmental Impact  
Statement

Public Review

Final Environmental Impact  
Statement

Record of Decision

Public Participation



# USFWS Desert Tortoise General Conservation Plan Virtual Public Information Forum



## Public Involvement

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that federal agencies engage the public during preparation of an EIS. Scoping is the process that continues throughout the planning and early stages of EIS preparation. Agencies use scoping to engage various stakeholders including the public, state, local, and Tribal governments in the early identification of affected resources, issues to be considered, and potential alternatives. As part of the scoping process, the Service is hosting two virtual information forums, and has

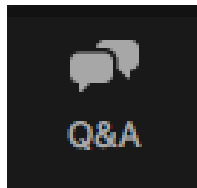


# Website Tutorial

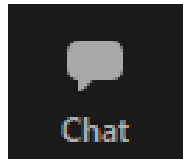
[www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis](http://www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis)

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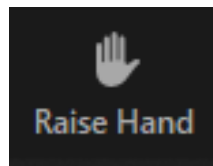
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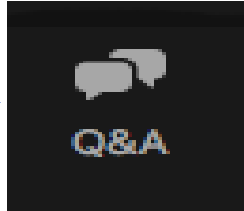
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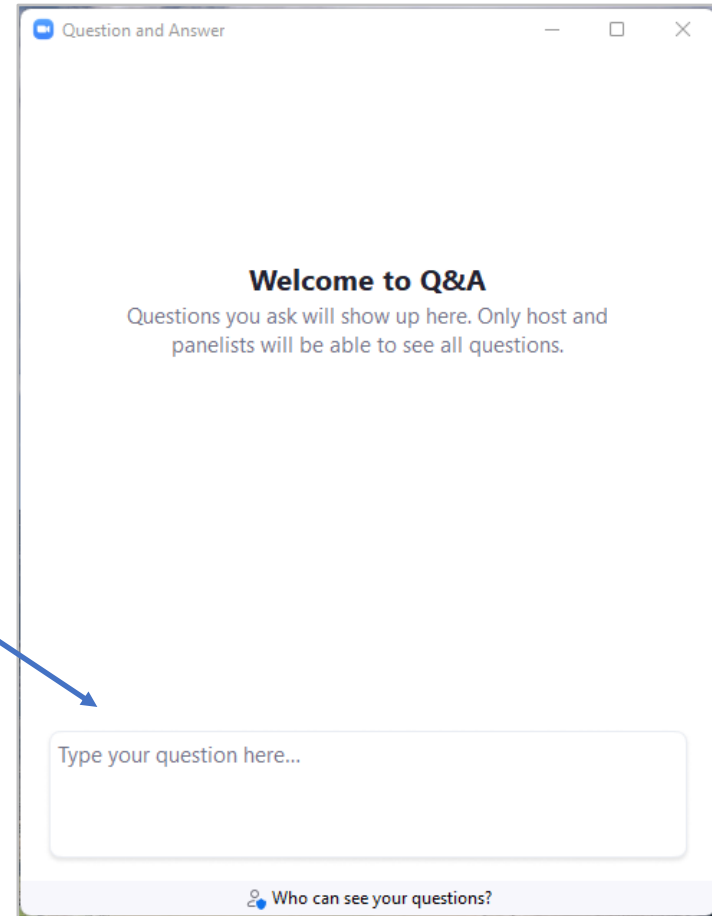
# Question and Answer Session

Step 1:  
Click the “Q&A” button  
at the bottom of your  
screen



Step 2:  
Type your question  
and press the send  
button

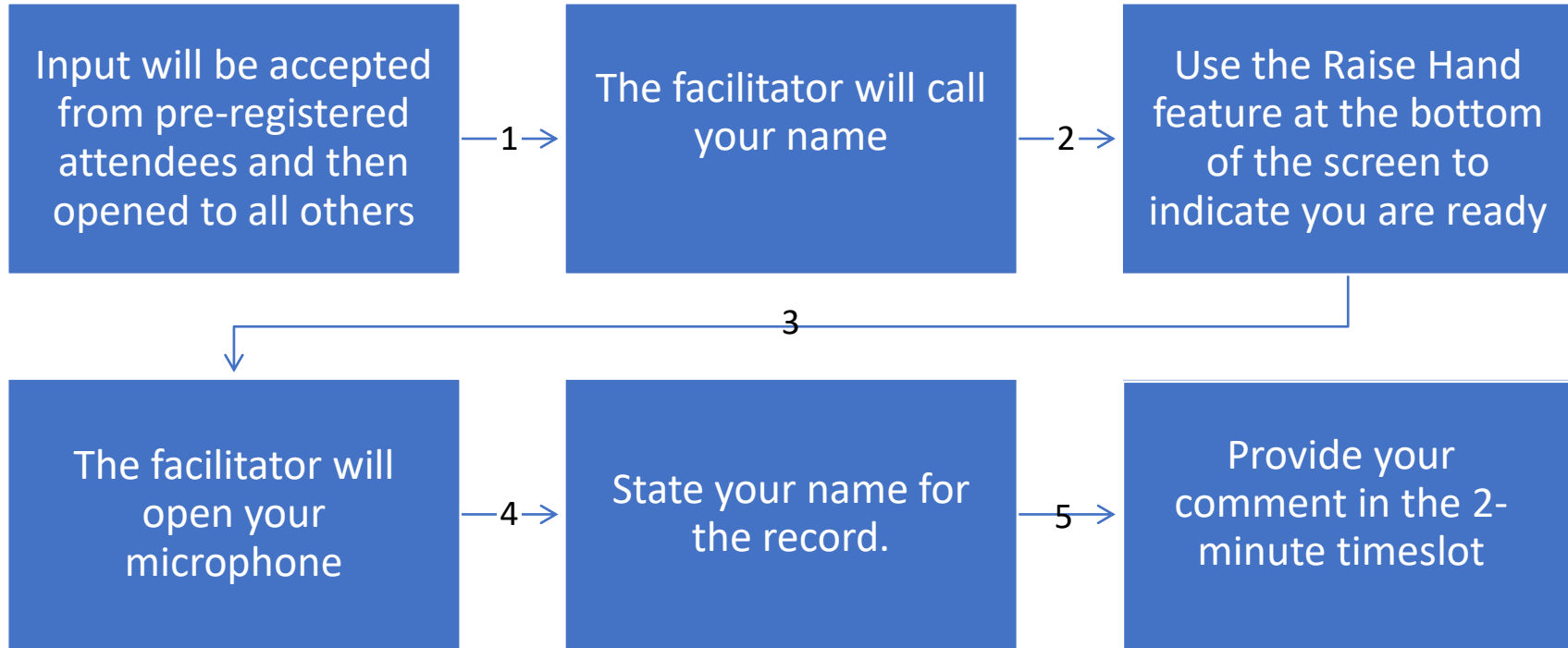
Step 3:  
Wait for USFWS to  
answer your question  
live or written



More project information is available at the project website:

[www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis](http://www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis)

# How to Provide Verbal Input



All public input will be considered during development of the General Conservation Plan and EIS.

# Public Input Session

2:00



Raise Hand



# How to Submit Further Input

The Service is in the initial stages of gathering input for the General Conservation Plan and associated Environmental Impact Statement.

**Submit Input by July 1, 2022**

**Mail:**

Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office  
Attn: Peter Sanzenbacher  
777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208  
Palm Springs, California 92262

**Email:**

ray\_bransfield@fws.gov

**Phone:**

805-677-3398



Comments can be submitted at the following website:

**[www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis](http://www.virtualpublicmeeting.com/usfws-desert-tortoise-gcp-eis)**