

# **Moving from Prioritization to Implementation:**

*Lessons from the Morongo Basin  
Open Space Group*

Stephanie Weigel  
*Sonoran Institute*



We want to protect, long-term,  
the things that we care about.

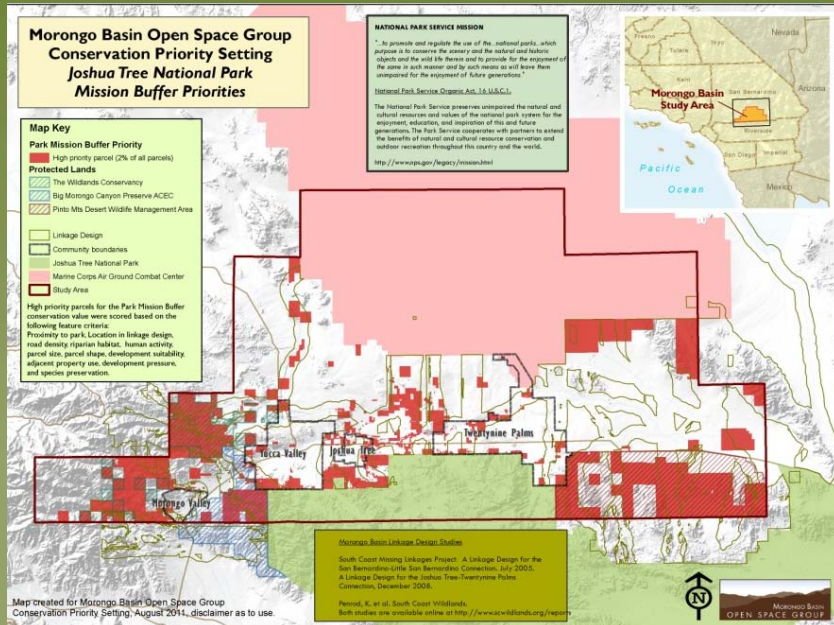
Dan Perlman, October 2009





# Implementation: Long-term protection

## Prioritization: The things we care about



## Mojave Desert Land Trust

Preserving land to enjoy forever

[About Us](#)
[Land Conservation](#)
[Our Partners](#)
[Education](#)
[News & Events](#)
[How to Help](#)

### Quail Mountain

A fundraising campaign  
to save 955 wilderness acres

"The Land Trust's effort to acquire these 955 acres significantly assists the Park with our efforts to [consolidate](#) and perpetuate the ecosystem of the area."

- Curt Sauer, Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Park



### SAVING IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT



Learn more about the Quail Mountain Project (QMP)

This is a rare opportunity to preserve a healthy ecosystem

"These 955 acres were never grazed or developed, and they form pristine habitat and crucial wildlife corridors for animals like tortoises, bobcats,

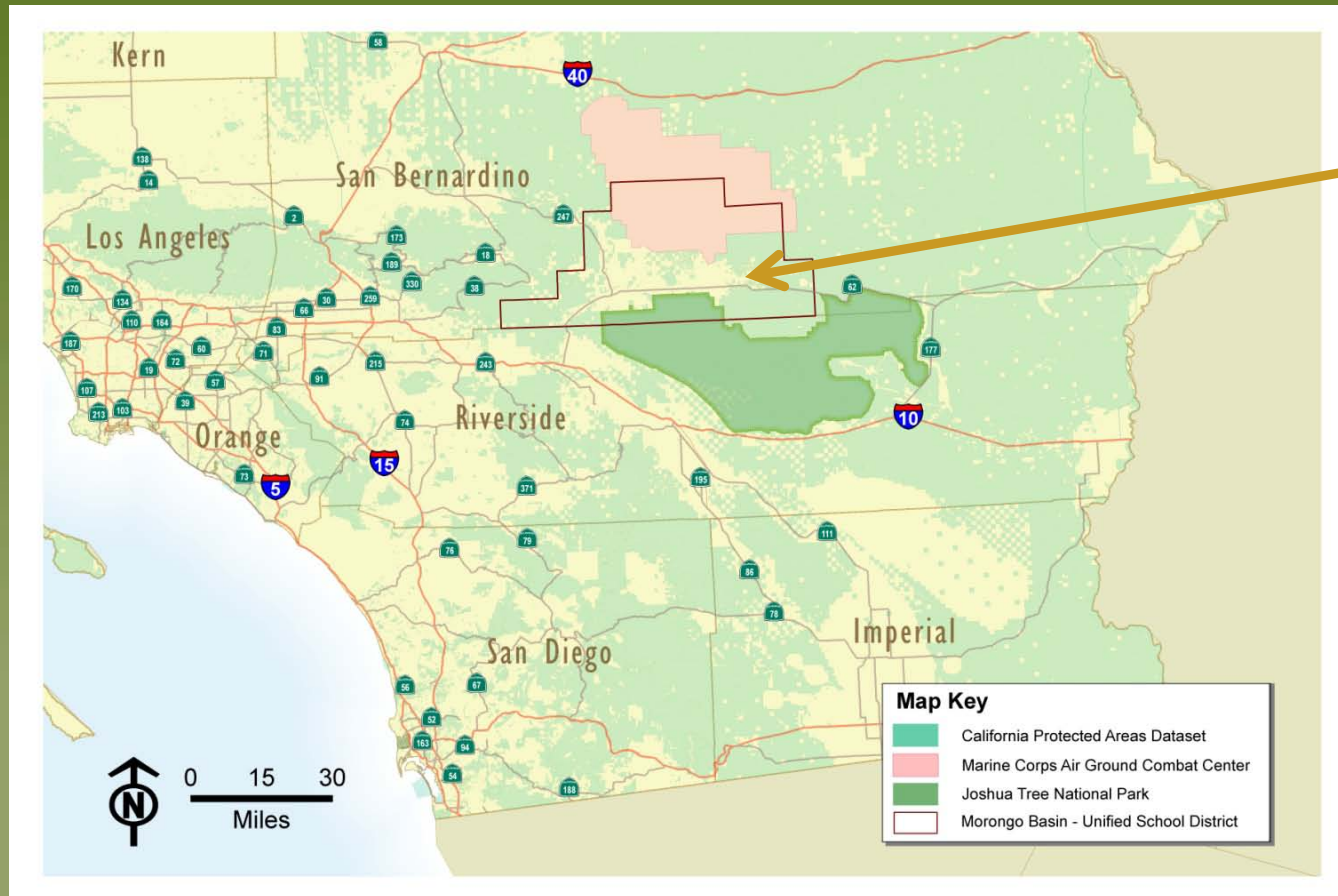
### What is the Quail Mountain Project?

The Quail Mountain Project encompasses 3 parcels totaling 955 acres of pristine wildlife habitat in Joshua Tree, CA. This beautiful land sits adjacent to the northern boundary of Joshua Tree National Park and is comprised of Section 11 and half of Section 13 in [the Joshua Tree Highlands area](#); one of our most scenic hillsides on the south side of Joshua Tree.



# Morongo Basin Conservation Priority Setting

**Goal:** *“To protect, long term, the things that we care about”*





- Rural desert region
- Collaborative regional planning group (2006)
- Staff support, “Community Treasures” outreach (2008)
- Conservation Priority Setting (started in 2009)
  - *Parcel-based priorities analysis for 5 conservation values*
- CPS results online 2011, report 2012

**Implementation** ongoing...

# Implementation: Putting the Priorities Plan (“the maps +”) to use

- Get the word out (*We made some maps!*)
- Distribute results (*Look at our maps!*)
- Put data into action (*You can use the maps!*)
- Add capacity (*Can we help you use these maps?*)



Celebrate **Successes...**





# Success

Protecting, long-term, the things that  
we care about





Park Mission

MCAGCC  
Mission

Wildlife  
Connectivity  
& Habitat

Community  
Identity

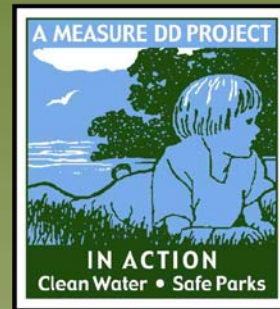
Community  
Views &  
Treasures



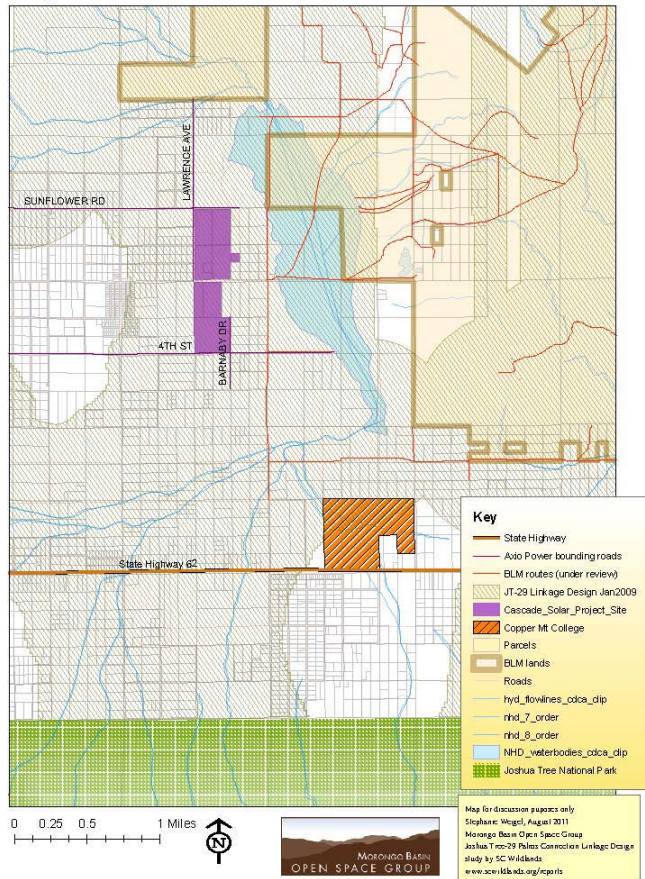
# Success

Using “the maps” to...

- ...protect habitat & wildlife corridors
- ...help pass a wildlife protection ordinance
- ...help site and zone for solar projects
- ...draw funder's attention to area
- ...influence the *<local, state, regional>* plan
- ...protect military airspace
- ...generate support and pass a bond measure
- ...inform & motivate stakeholders



## Cascade Solar Project Location & Linkage Design August 2011



## Morongo Basin Open Space Group Conservation Priority Setting Scores

*H = Highest priority, M = Moderate priority, L = Lower priority*

APN	Conservation Value				
	Community Identity	MCGACC Mission Buffer	JTN Mission Buffer	Community Views & Treasures	Wildlife Connectivity & Habitat
060612144 L	L	M	M	L	M
060612146 L	L	M	M	L	M
060725109 M	M	M	M	L	M
060612147 M	M	M	M	L	M
060612133 M	M	M	M	L	M
060612145 M	M	M	M	L	M
060725134 M	M	M	M	L	M
060612101 L	L	M	M	L	M
060725125 M	M	M	M	L	M





http://gis.spatial.redlands.edu/Cohort17/Renee\_King/MB/YourMorongoBasin.html - Windows Internet Explorer

http://gis.spatial.redlands.edu/Cohort17/Renee\_King/MB/YourMorongoBasin.html

Convert Select

Favorites Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery

http://gis.spatial.redlan... twentynine palms city hall ...

Page Safety Tools

# Preserving California's Morongo Basin

Print Map About Help

MORONGO BASIN OPEN SPACE GROUP

Conservation Values

- ☒ Composite Values
- ☐ Base Buffer
- ☐ Community Separators
- ☐ Park Buffer
- ☐ Views and Treasures
- ☐ Wildlife Habitat

Find Location by Parcel ID or Address

Parcel

Find Parcel

Street

City

State

Find Address

Found:  
6136 Adobe Rd, Twentynine Palms,  
CA, 92277

Overview Map

Number of 'High Priority'

Zoom In Zoom Out Pan

Streets Aerial

Layer Transparency 0% 100%

062002101

Community Separator: Medium  
Wildlife Habitat: Medium  
Park Buffer: High  
Views Treasures: Low  
Base Buffer: High

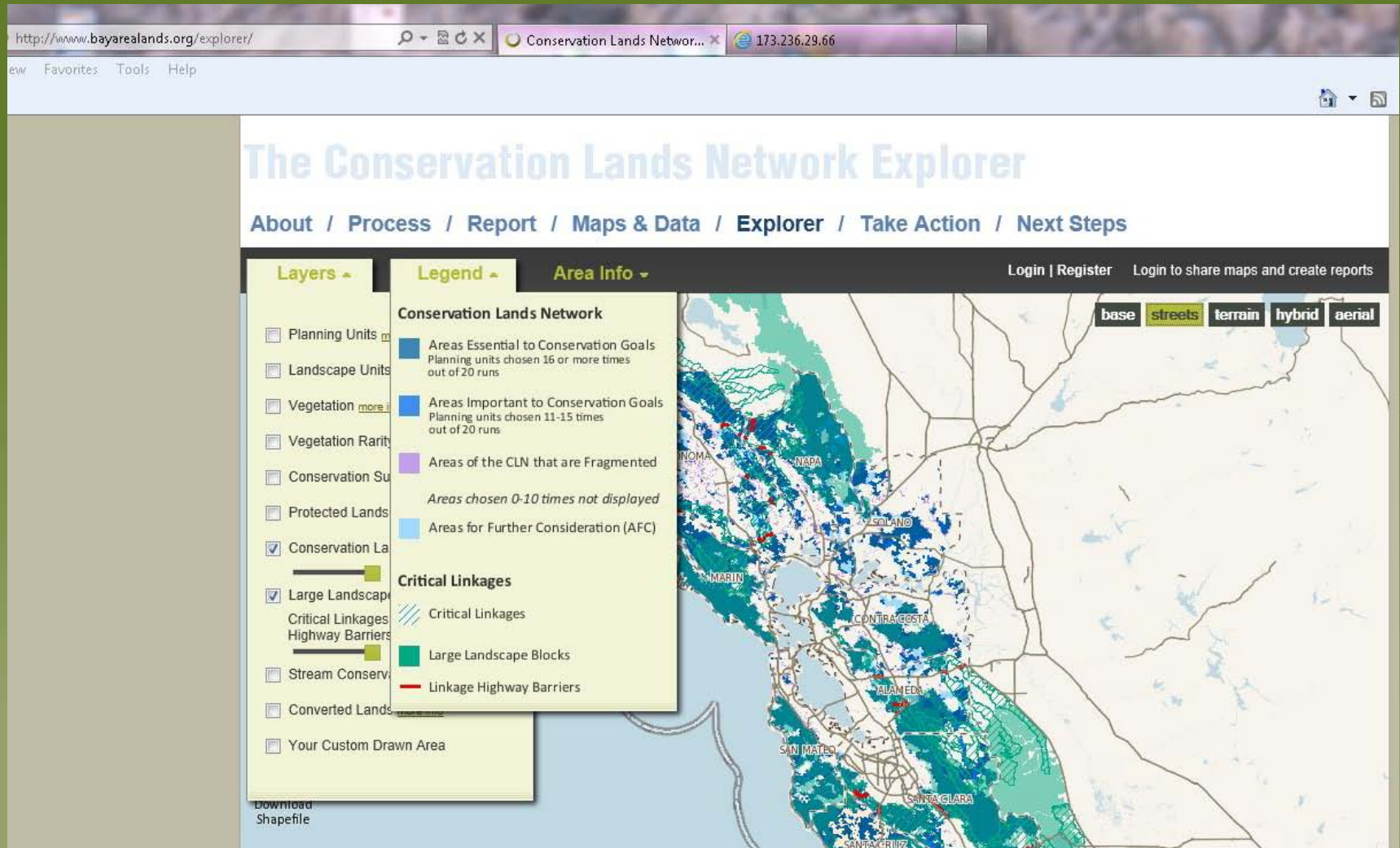
See Help Document for more information

Internet | Protected Mode: On 100%

4:11 PM 3/14/2011



# Conservation Lands Network



[www.bayarealands.org/explorer/](http://www.bayarealands.org/explorer/)

# THE WILDLIFE LINKAGE CAMPAIGN



Through the Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI), the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (the Combat Center), in partnership with The Trust for Public Land and Mojave Desert Land Trust, is preserving Section 33, a section of important desert habitat located within a crucial wildlife linkage and under aircraft training routes used by the Marine Corps.

Wildlife linkages are corridors of land that connect large natural areas and provide wildlife room to roam. Animal movement through these corridors is essential to wildlife survival.

Preserving Section 33 reduces the need for "off-limits" areas of the Combat Center, thus better enabling Marines and sailors to fulfill their national security mission. The REPI program allows military installations to partner with conservation organizations, states, or local governments to preserve lands adjacent to, or ecologically related to, an installation to sustain mission capabilities and requirements, including to meet environmental stewardship responsibilities.

## Community Benefits:

- Supports existing regional open space planning efforts
- Guarantees habitat for threatened species
- Preserves a wildlife linkage to allow for animal migration
- Maintains natural desert views
- Ensures Mojave desert land will remain natural

## Military Benefits:

- Preserves aircraft maneuver and helicopter training capacity
- Provides habitat for threatened species off the installation
- Reduces the need for training limitations
- Encourages compatible land uses under military airspace



The Combat Center, The Trust for Public Land  
& Mojave Desert Land Trust:  
Partnering in Conservation

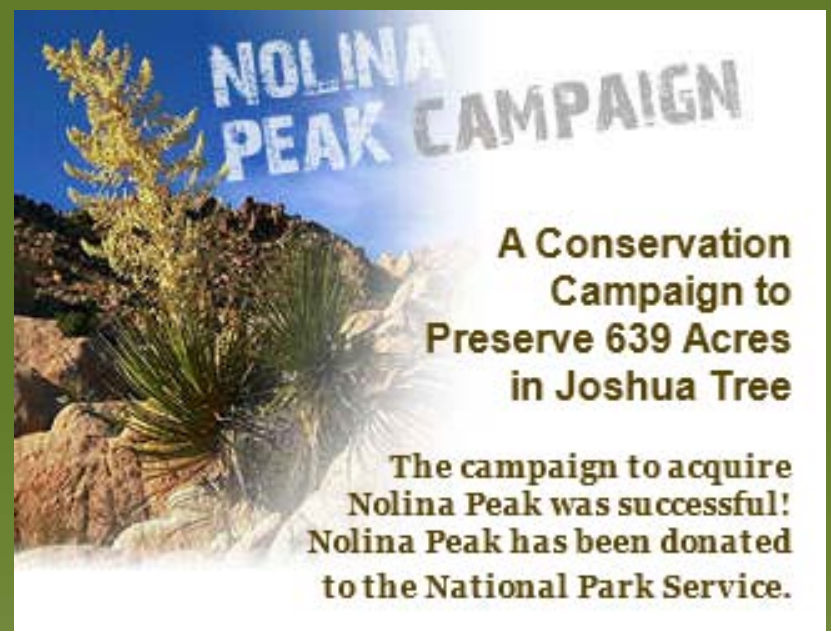


Photography by Julianne Leonard Newhouse

# NOLINA PEAK CAMPAIGN

A Conservation  
Campaign to  
Preserve 639 Acres  
in Joshua Tree

The campaign to acquire  
Nolina Peak was successful!  
Nolina Peak has been donated  
to the National Park Service.



# Implementation Challenges

- “**Authority**” to plan may be questioned
- Private lands-**property rights** issues
- Plan may be seen as a **threat** to certain interest groups or jurisdictions (a measure of success?)
- Costs and time of **updating results** (changes in land ownership, management plans)
- Maintaining **access** (e.g. website) and **capacity** (staff)



**Stephanie Weigel**

[sweigel@sonoraninstitute.org](mailto:sweigel@sonoraninstitute.org)

## **Conservation Priorities Report:**

<http://www.sonoraninstitute.org>

