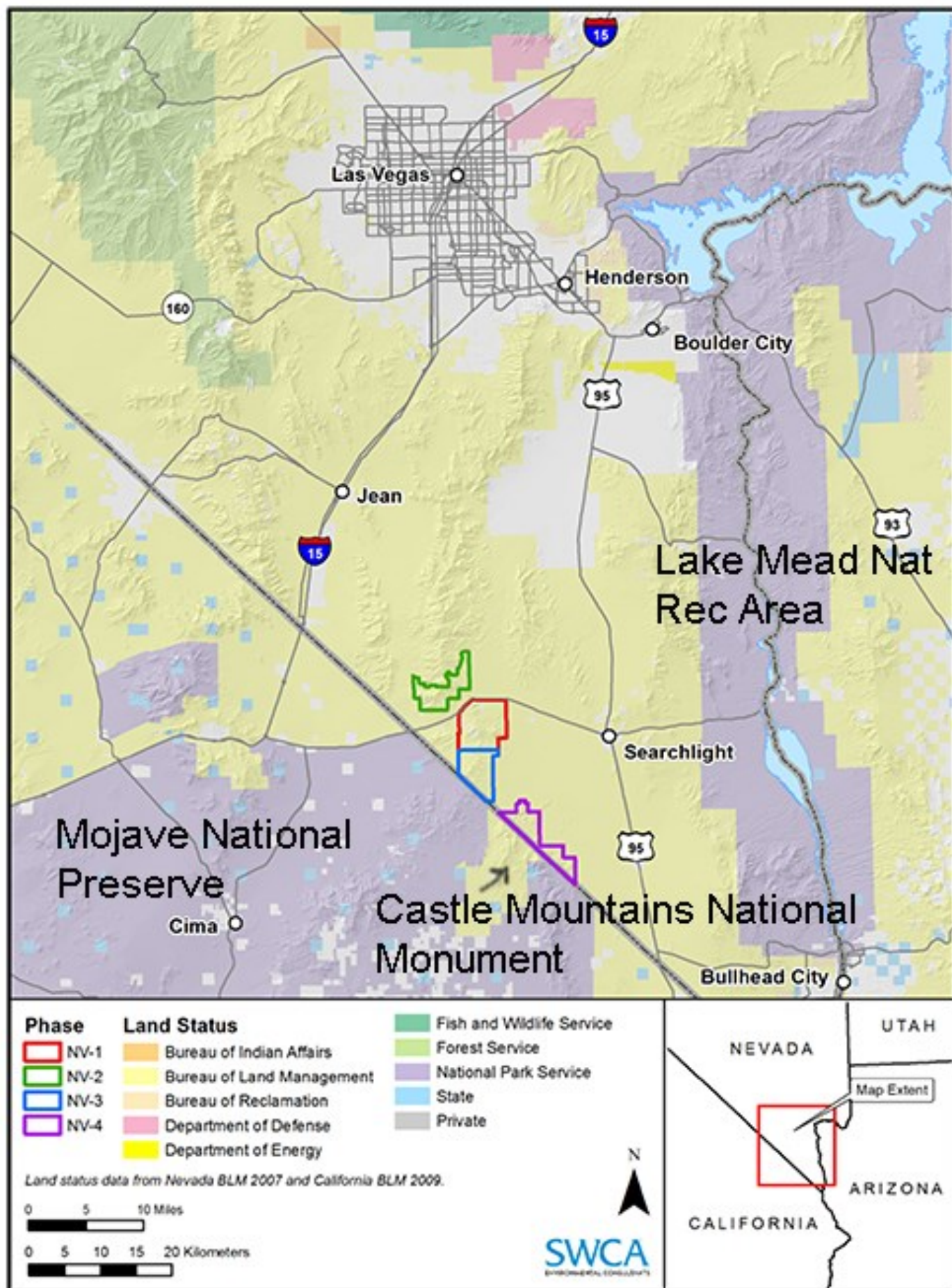


# **Crescent Peak Wind Project**

## **(Briefing Document)**





Las Vegas

Henderson

Boulder City

Jean

Searchlight

Bullhead City

Cima

Lake Mead Nat  
Rec Area

Mojave National  
Preserve

Castle Mountains National  
Monument

15

160

95

93

95

N

SWCA  
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS

UTAH

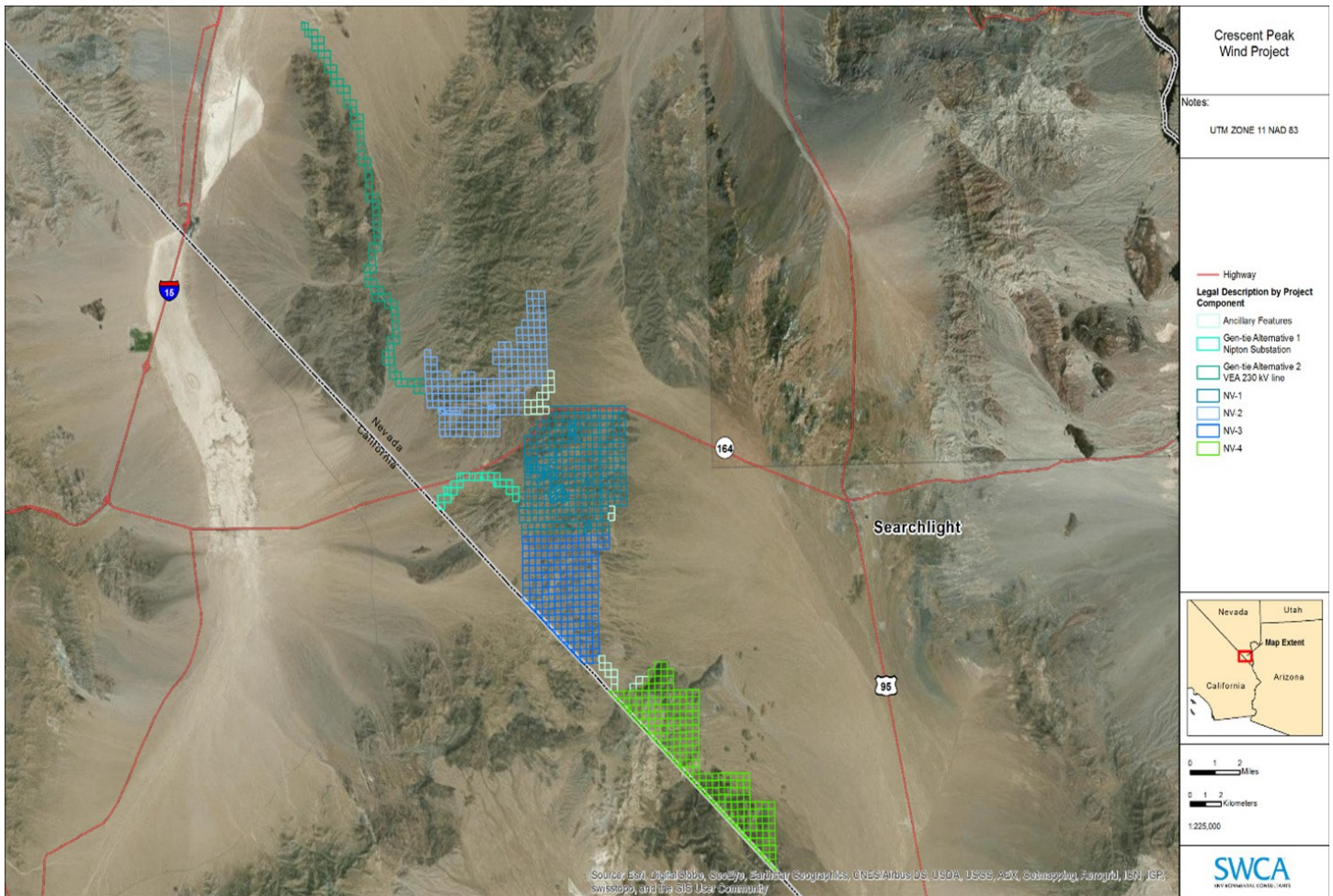
NEVADA

ARIZONA

CALIFORNIA

Map Extent

# Project Footprint



## Crescent Peak Wind Project—Regional Context

- Few places in the American Southwest can rival the pristine quality of the region.
- Critically important ecological area because of the work done over the years to provide permanent protection for key components of the ecosystem such as the Wee Thump and South McCullough Wilderness Areas, Castle Mountains National Monument, Mojave National Preserve, Spirit Mountain Traditional Cultural Property, Piute/Eldorado Valley ACEC, Walking Box Ranch conservation easements, and the recent work to restore the cultural integrity of the Walking Box Ranch itself.
- Provides critical habitat for Mojave Desert wildlife like the desert bighorn sheep, mule deer, bobcat, mountain lion, golden eagle, Swainson’s hawk, desert tortoise, Gila monster, prairie falcon, Bendire’s thrasher, grey vireo, and Townsend’s big-eared bat, among others.



- The area also has a unique Sonoran bird fauna that is more typical of Arizona --Gilded flickers, Harris’ Hawks and a possible resident population of curved-billed thrashers. The area has been designated by Audubon as an “Important Birding Area.”
- Contains one of the highest known density of golden eagles in Nevada.
- The area contains habitat for the desert tortoise. Moreover, this high-density population of desert tortoise is contiguous with a large, high-density area in California. Eastern terminus of the world’s largest Joshua Tree forest.
- The area has a unique Sonoran desert grasslands and Joshua tree savanna with many species of native grasses found only in a small region of the East Mojave in Nevada and California, and more related to similar grasslands in southern Arizona and Mexico.



Gilded Flicker



Harris Hawk



Curve Billed Thrasher



Unique Sonoran Desert Grasslands



Castle Mountains

## Project Background

- Sweden-based Eolus purchased the rights to the proposed project in 2015 after the release of the 2014 BLM Draft Southern Nevada RMP. They paid only \$50,000 for these rights, and that included a second wind project in northern Nevada.
- There were serious holes in BLM's draft RMP so they agreed to do a Supplemental RMP to address the primary areas of deficiencies, one being how renewable energy was handled.
- In April 2017, a consortium of conservation organizations submitted a joint letter to BLM urging them to defer processing the Crescent Peak Renewables application until the Supplemental Southern Nevada RMP was completed.
- The BLM conducted a series of public meetings in January 2018 to get public input on their Supplemental Southern Nevada RMP. One of those meetings was in Searchlight.
- As part of that input process, a consortium of 19 conservation organizations from Nevada & California prepared a nomination petition to the BLM asking for a no-wind alternative in Southern Clark County and the designation of the area as a 38,000 acre Castle Mountains ACEC.
- Despite these comments & request, BLM proceeded to prepare a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the Crescent Peak Wind Project that initiated the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the project. That NOI was issued by DOI on March 15, 2018.
- According to the new Department of the Interior Secretarial Order # 3355, BLM is required to have a final EIS for the Crescent Peak Wind Project completed within one year from the issuance of the Notice of Intent and the document is limited to 150 pages. This is a ridiculously short time-frame for a project of this magnitude and a limit of 150 pages assures that the EIS will not adequately address the impacts.



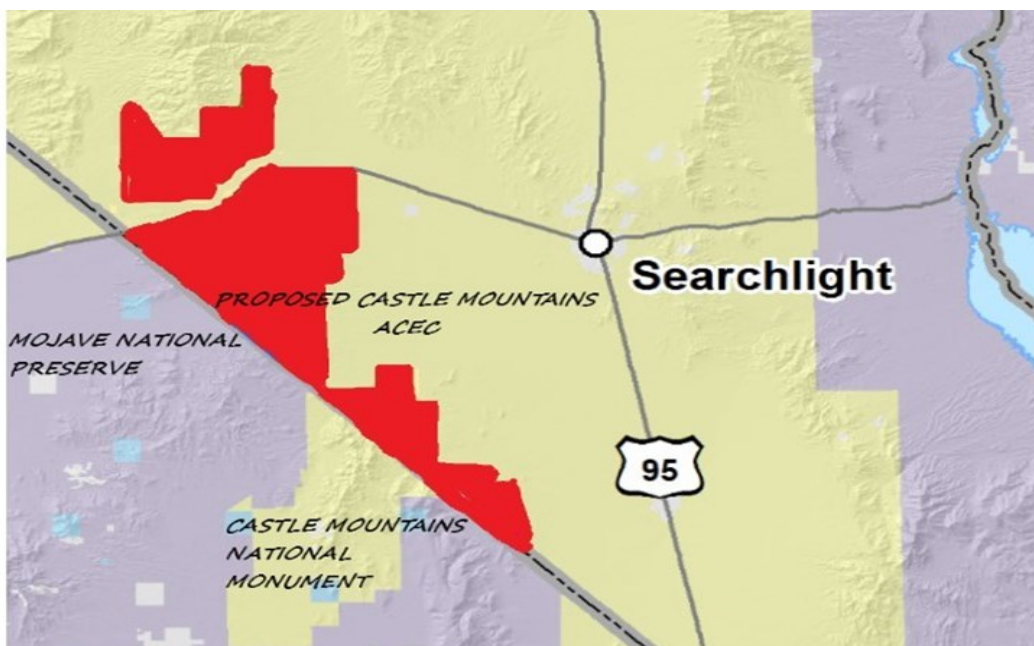
Walking Box Ranch Dining Room



Barrel Cactus

## Project Background (continued)

- BLM hosted 4 Crescent Peak Wind Project public scoping meetings the week of April 9, 2018 in Las Vegas, Henderson, Searchlight & Needles. There was a 90-day scoping period with comments due this past June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- On July 13, 2018 Eolus gave a presentation to the Searchlight Town Advisory Board and presented their revised project proposal. This was the first time that the revised project proposal was presented publicly. This was a somewhat scaled down project than what was presented at the Crescent Peak scoping meetings, but still has significant unmitigatable impacts.
- Subsequent to the Town Advisory Board meeting, Eolus conducted two workshop meetings in Searchlight to go over the revised alternatives and show some visual simulations of the turbines. Notice of these workshops was only posted in the Searchlight area and no outreach occurred with other stakeholders that presented comments at the scoping meetings.
- The conservation community sent BLM extensive comments with details on what needed to be addressed in the Crescent Peak EIS. The groups argued that the EIS must define the purpose and need for this 32,500-acre area in a broader way, not just to build a wind project. The request was for BLM to establish an independent set of objectives that do not unreasonably limit the EIS's analysis of feasible alternatives including alternative sites.
- The conservation community is pushing for a truly conservation alternative that designates the area as a new Castle Mountains ACEC as well as upgrading the visual resource classification. The conservation alternative would include the creation of a 38,000-acre Castle Mountains ACEC and upgrades to the visual categories.



## Key Scoping Comments Presented to BLM by Conservation Organizations

- The impacts to native flora and fauna, including federal, state and county protected species, are **extensive and most cannot be mitigated**. Likewise, there would be significant impacts to cultural features and sacred Native American values. These impacts need to be addressed fully by BLM in the EIS.
- The **economic viability** of the wind project needs to be addressed so that BLM can fairly evaluate a potentially marginal project against the enormous environmental and social costs of building an industrial-scale energy development in a very fragile ecosystem. Eo-lus even admits that this is not a good wind area.
- The spectacular viewsapes in this area are certainly one of the key resource values that needs extensive analysis in the EIS. Existing **visual classifications** should not be downgraded to accommodate the wind project. The bottom line is that current visual classification of the area makes it impossible to allow the Crescent Peak Wind Project to proceed unless BLM downgrades the classification.
- The impacts to **socioeconomics** of this rural area needs to be addressed fully as an industrial level wind project would completely change the character of the area.
- Impact on existing and future **recreational** use of the area must be fully analyzed as the project would create a major disruption to existing recreation uses such as hunting and OHV use.
- The EIS needs to analyze the **health hazards** associated with major disturbance of soils with high levels of naturally occurring asbestos.





## Key Scoping Comments Presented to BLM (continued)

- The EIS must address the impact of nighttime safety lighting on **dark night skies** which is one of the important resource values of the area, and one of the stated reasons for establishing the Castle Mountains National Monument.
- The EIS needs to analyze the increased **fire risk** associated with the project as evidence shows that wind projects increase the chance of fires and fires in this rich and diverse habitat could be devastating.
- The EIS needs to address the impact of the project on **noxious weeds and spread of exotics**.
- The impacts of the project on **solitude** should be fully evaluated. Solitude is one of the primary reasons for establishing the adjacent three wilderness areas and development of the wind project could jeopardize their designation.
- The EIS needs to address how **rehabilitation** would be done in case of project failure and who would pay those costs.



- Serves as an important migratory corridor for desert bighorn sheep.
- Important for migratory birds due to its proximity to foraging habitat, nesting habitat, and to the Colorado River, one of the most significant features in the Pacific Flyway.
- Cultural landscapes in this area include Ethnographic Landscapes of heritage resources, old trails, views to Spirit Mountain and aboriginal clan relationships in the animal, plants & natural features.
- The remote nature of the area protects the ability to enjoy increasingly rare natural quiet and dark night sky and solitude.



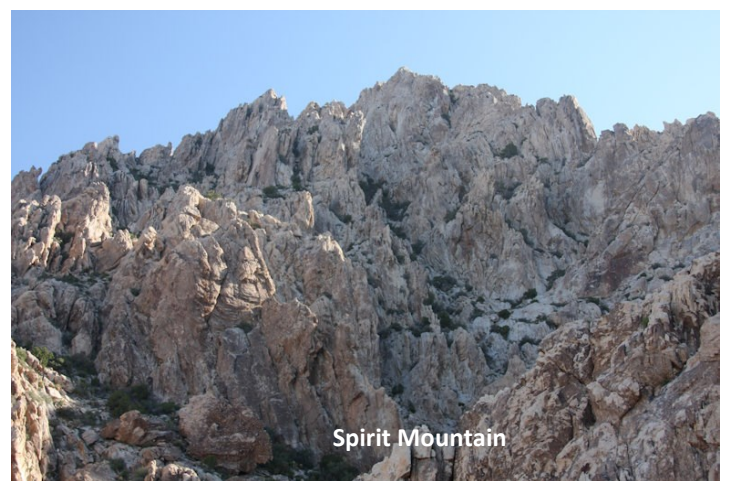
Walking Box Ranch



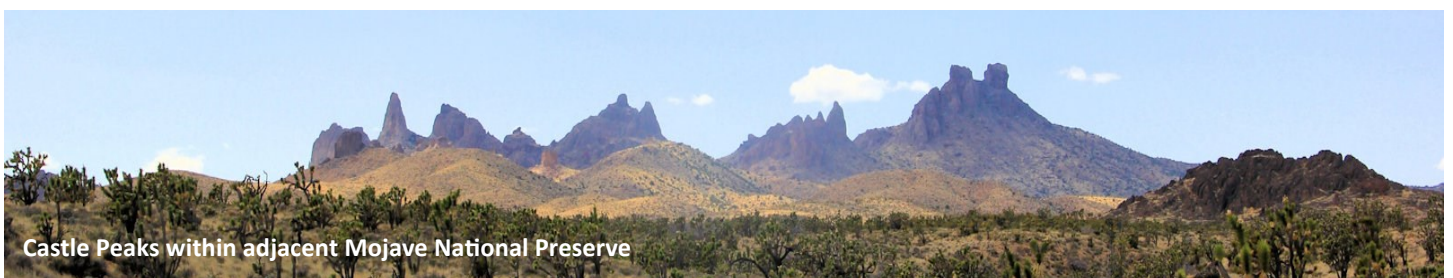
South McCullough Wilderness Area in Distance



Wee Thump Joshua Tree Wilderness Area

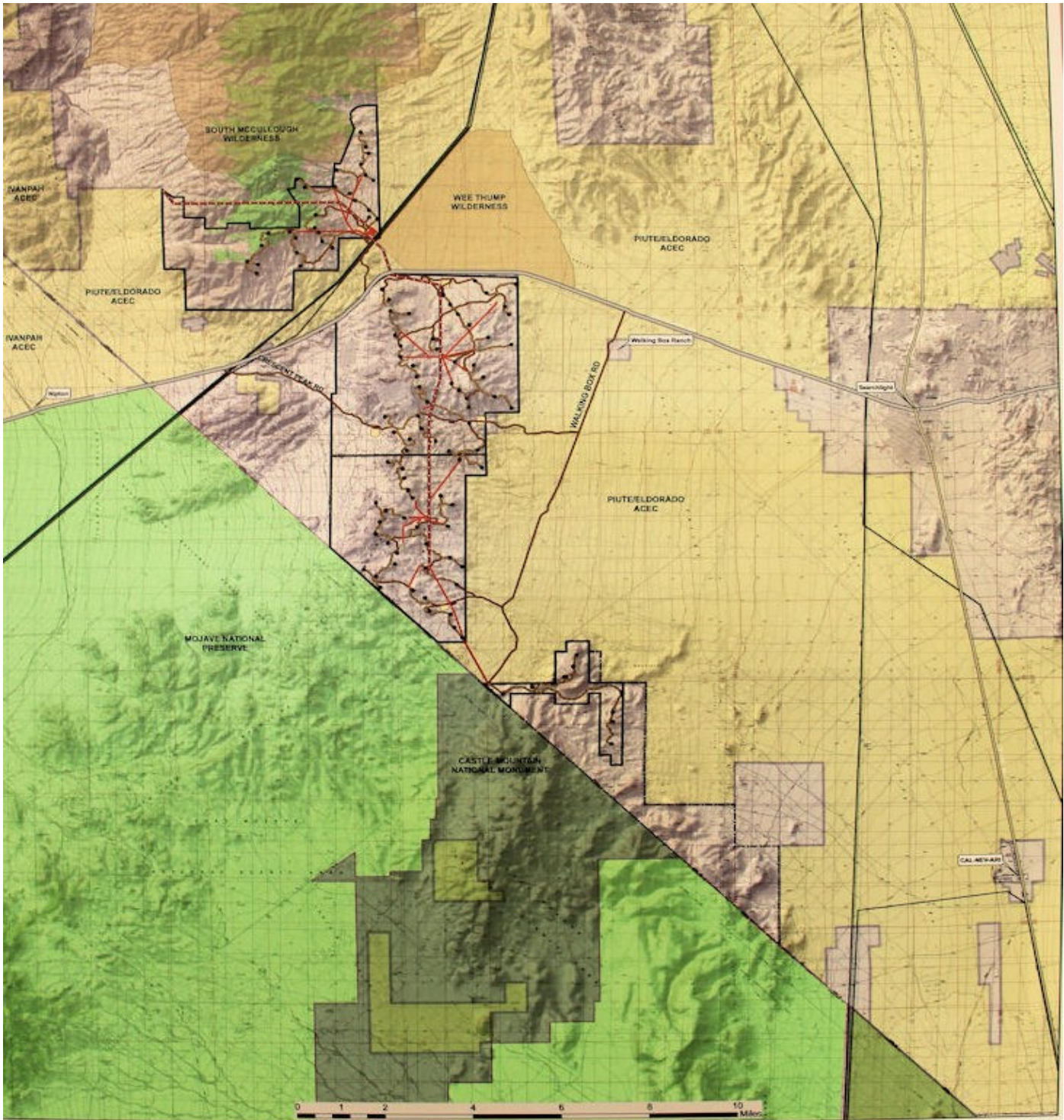


Spirit Mountain



Castle Peaks within adjacent Mojave National Preserve

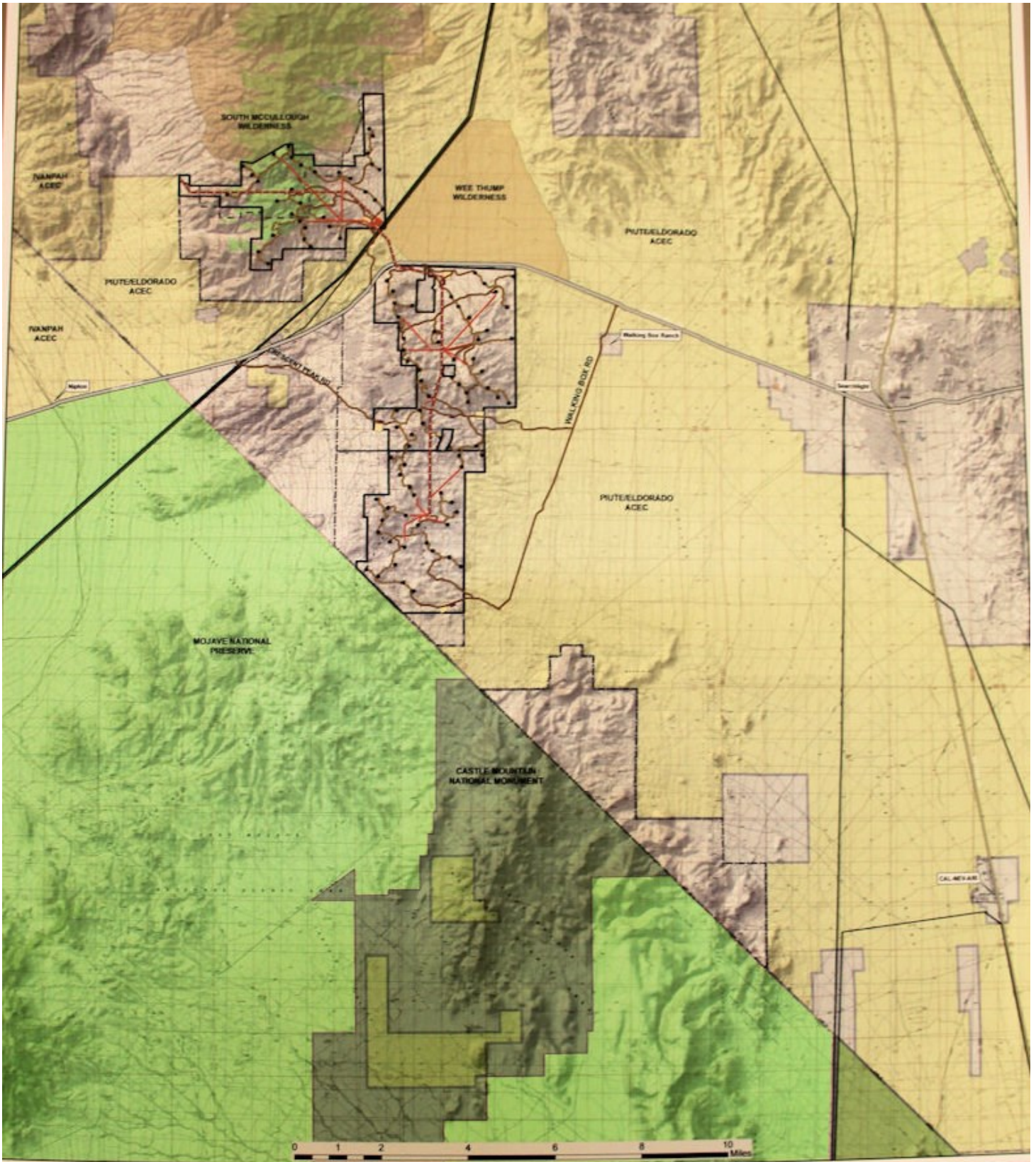
Note: Alternatives 1&2 were developed by Eolus and presented at the Searchlight public workshops and include a range of between 106 & 114 turbines. These numbers could increase in the draft EIS and be distributed differently.



**CRESCENT PEAK WIND  
ALTERNATIVE ONE  
WIND PROJECT  
STUDY AREA**

- Legend**
- Wind Turbines
  - 230KV OH Transmission
  - 34.5KV OH Collector
  - UG Collector
  - Road Centerline
  - Batch Plants
  - Site Substations
  - Laydown Areas
  - Wilderness Areas
  - ACEC
  - Mojave Trails National Monument
  - National Parks & Monuments
  - Mojave National Preserve
  - Transmission Lines
  - Project Boundary (26,038 acres)
  - 2015 PGD Boundary (32,185 acres)
  - Mineral Patents





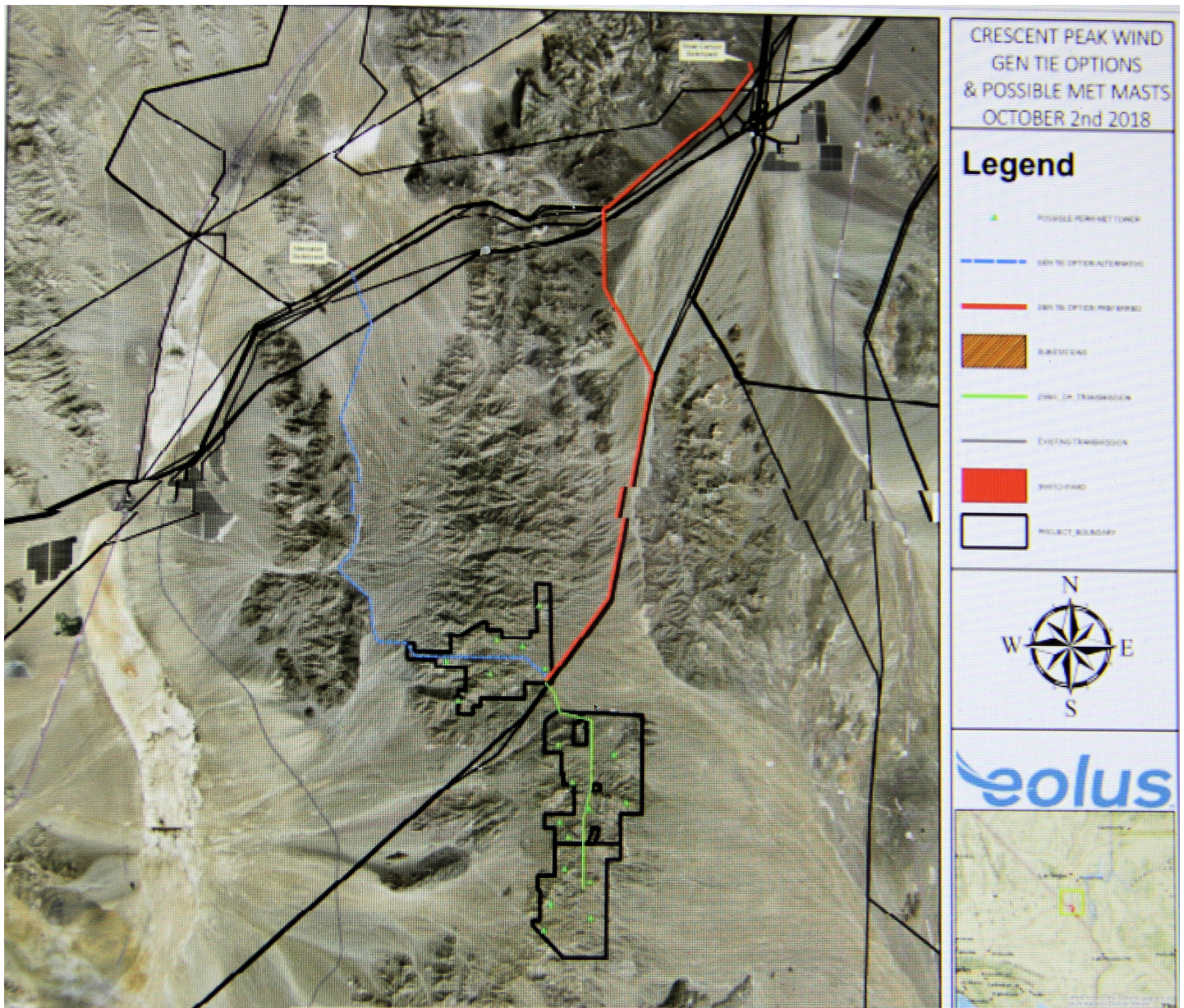
# CRESCENT PEAK WIND ALTERNATIVE TWO WIND PROJECT STUDY AREA

## Legend

- |                         |                                  |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Wind Turbines         | Wilderness Areas                 |
| ~ 230kV OH Transmission | ACEC                             |
| ~ 34.5kV OH Collector   | Mojave Trails National Monument  |
| ~ UG Collector          | National Parks & Monuments       |
| ~ Road Centerline       | Mojave National Preserve         |
| Mineral Patents         | Transmission Lines               |
| Batch Plants            | Project Boundary (17,622 acres)  |
| Site Substations        | 2015 POD Boundary (32,185 acres) |
| Laydown Areas           |                                  |



# Transmission Line Options



Red - Eolus Preferred Generation tie-in

Blue- Eolus Alternative Generation tie-in

Green - 230 KV Transmission Line

Green Triangles - Proposed met tower locations

Black - Existing Transmission Lines

**Photos Taken in Crescent Peak Wind Project Unit 2 adjacent to Wee Thump  
Joshua Tree Wilderness Area & South McCullough Wilderness Area**



**Photos Taken Within Crescent Peak Wind Project Unit 1 adjacent to Mojave National Preserve**



**Photos Taken in Crescent Peak Wind Project Unit 3 adjacent to Mojave National Preserve**





**Photos Taken in Crescent Peak Project Unit 4 adjacent to Castle Mountains National Monument**



**Most exciting backcountry roads are 10' wide. The Walking Box Ranch Road is 20' wide. These roads would be expanded to 36' and up to an additional 93 miles of new roads at 36' wide would be built.**

