

# Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study

National Park Service  
Department of the Interior



## Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study Draft Study Report and Environmental Assessment

*Spring, 2015*



***Santa Susana Mountains***

# Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study

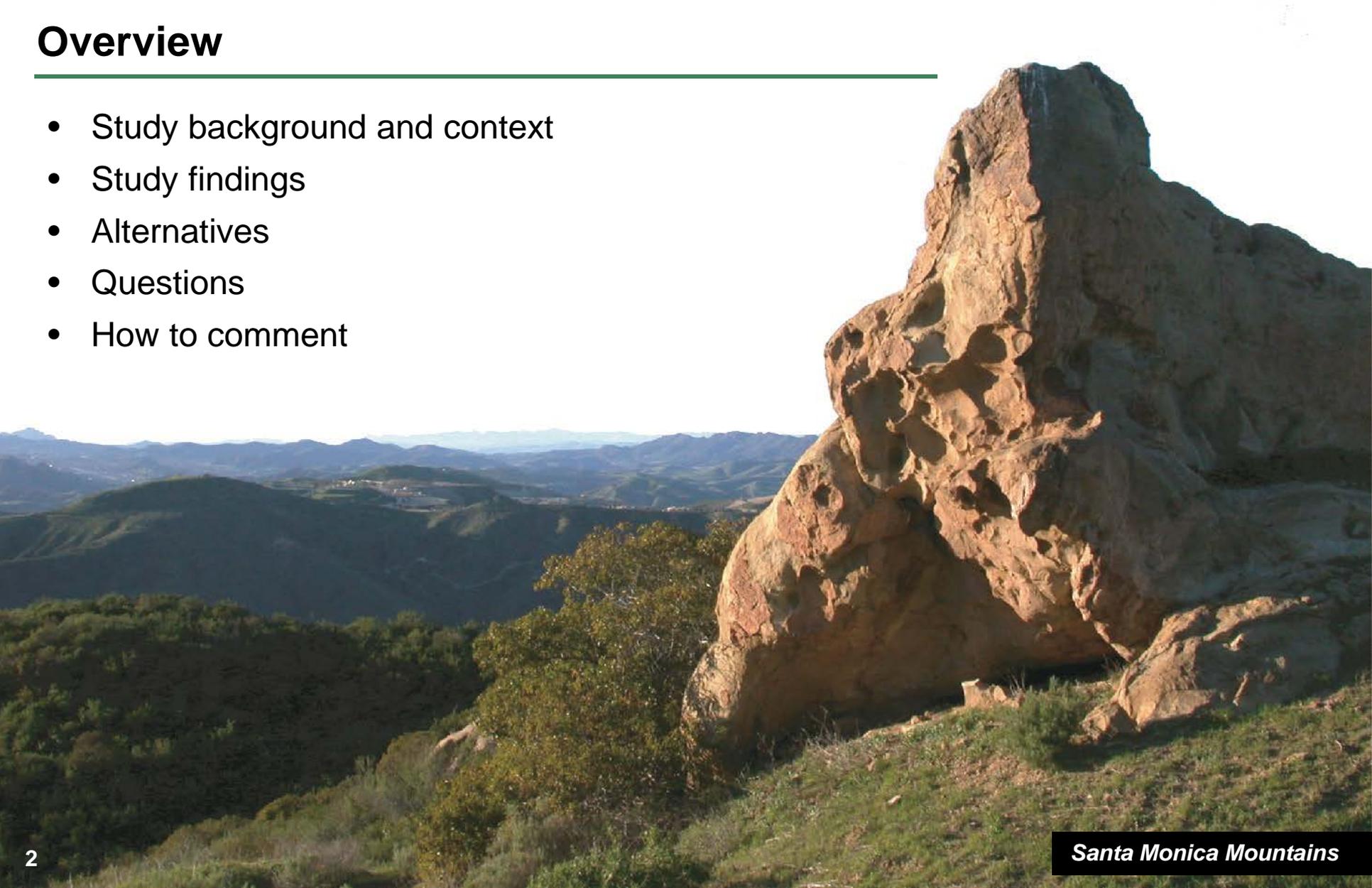
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## Overview

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- Study background and context
- Study findings
- Alternatives
- Questions
- How to comment





## Background – Study Authorization

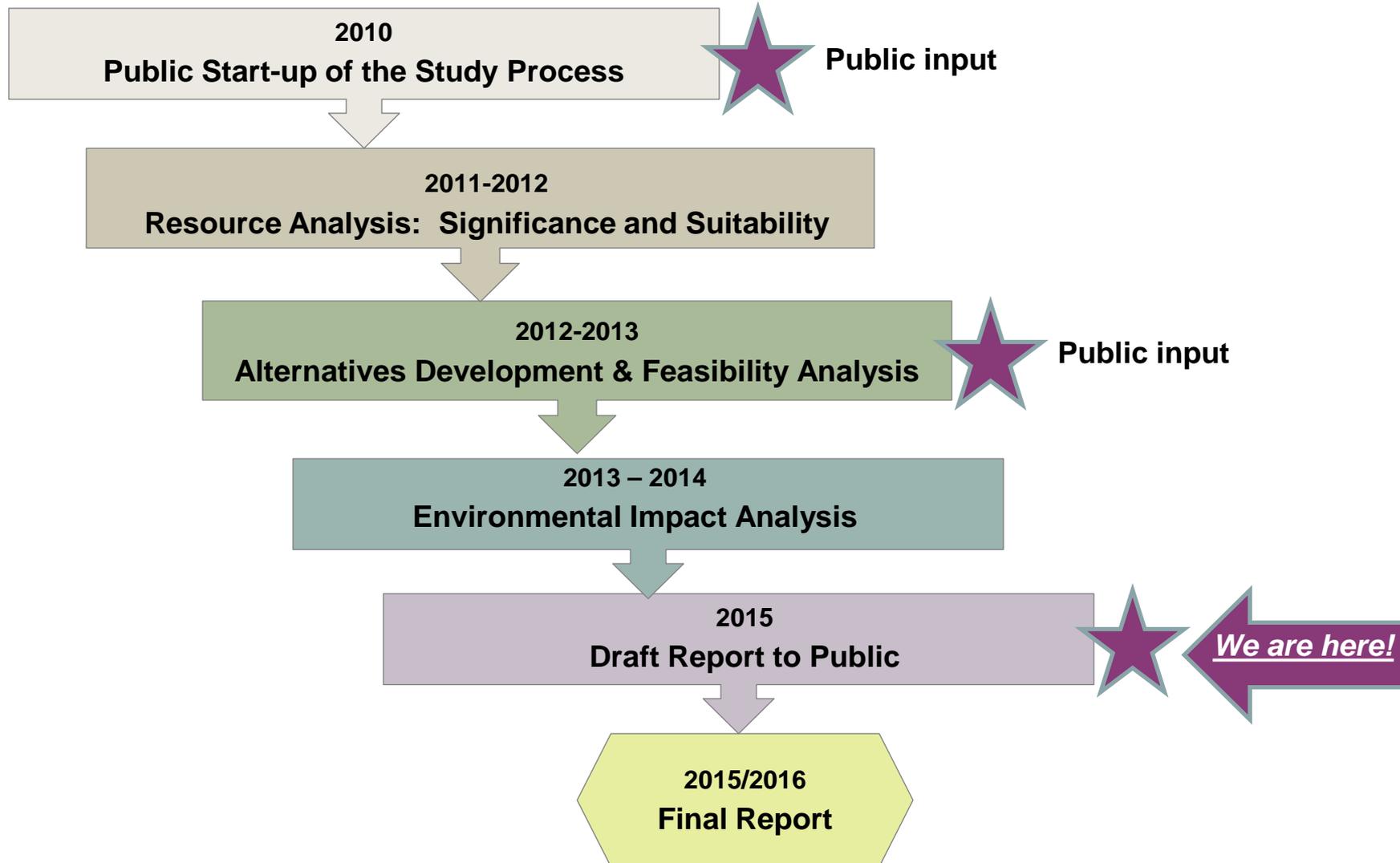
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- In 2008, Congress directed NPS to prepare study to evaluate:
  1. **Eligibility as a new unit** of the national park system
  2. **Boundary adjustment** to add study area to Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
  3. **Other opportunities** for protection and interpretation of the area
- Report is submitted to Congress





## Background – Study Process Timeline



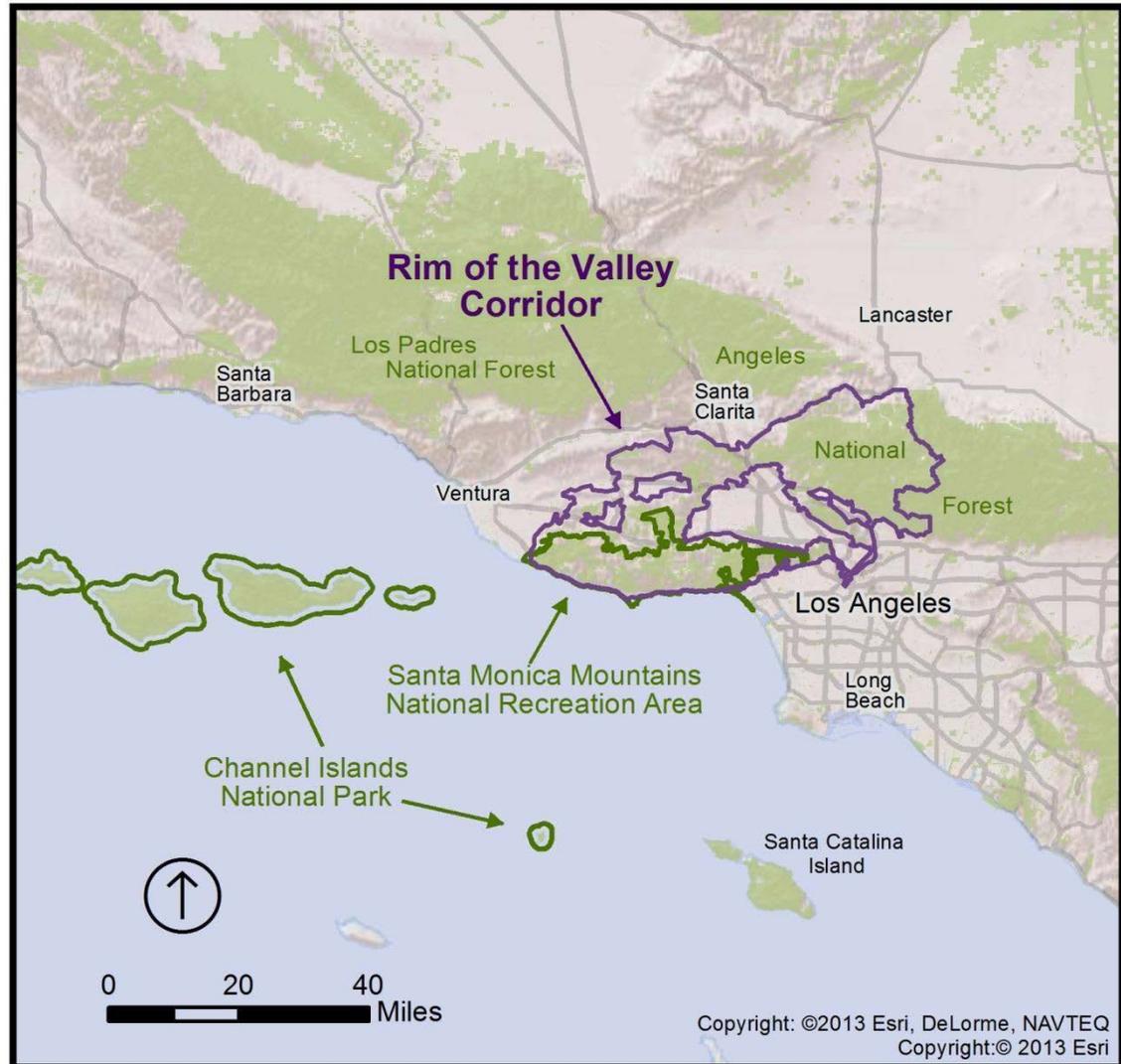


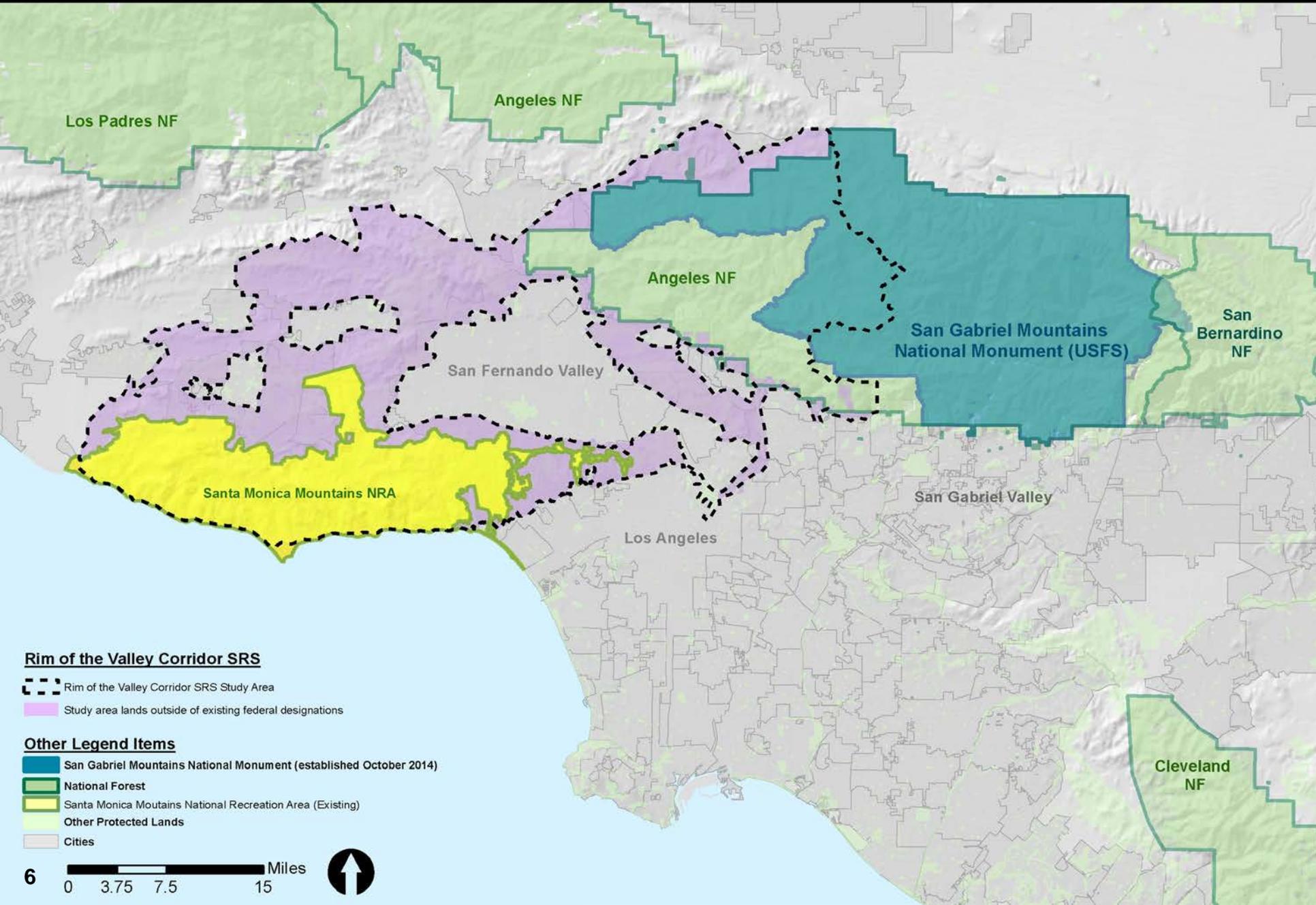
## Background – Study Area

*“The area known as the Rim of the Valley Corridor, generally including the mountains encircling the San Fernando, La Crescenta, Santa Clarita, Simi, and Conejo Valleys”*

### Study Area Facts:

- 650,000 acres
  - 153,000 acres SMMNRA
  - 180,000 acres USFS
  - Over 80% undeveloped and/or protected open space
- 18 million people in LA metro area
- Los Angeles County population larger than that of 42 states
- 47% of Californians (6% of U.S.) live within 2 hours





### Rim of the Valley Corridor SRS

- Rim of the Valley Corridor SRS Study Area
- Study area lands outside of existing federal designations

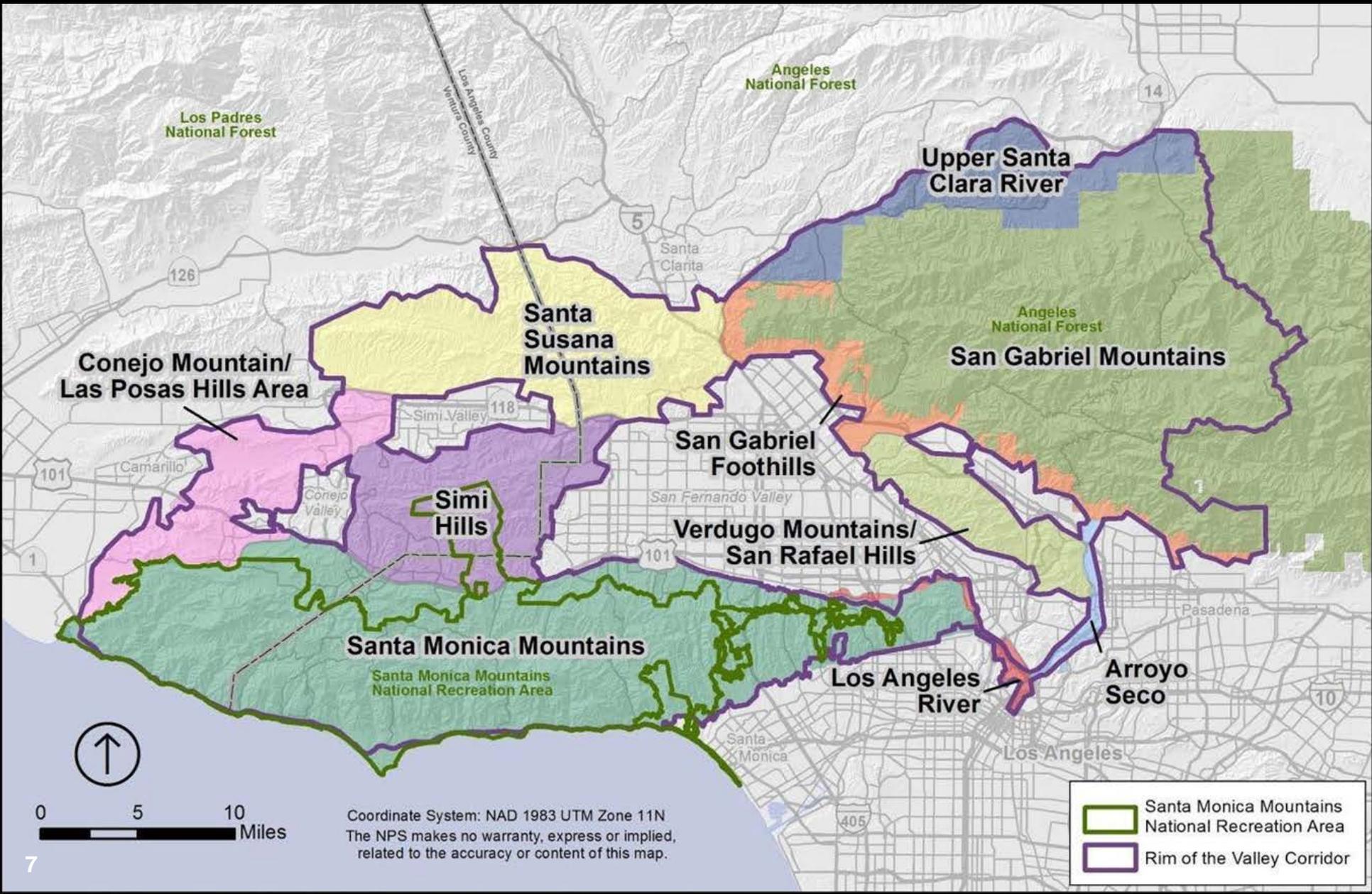
### Other Legend Items

- San Gabriel Mountains National Monument (established October 2014)
- National Forest
- Santa Monica Moutains National Recreation Area (Existing)
- Other Protected Lands
- Cities



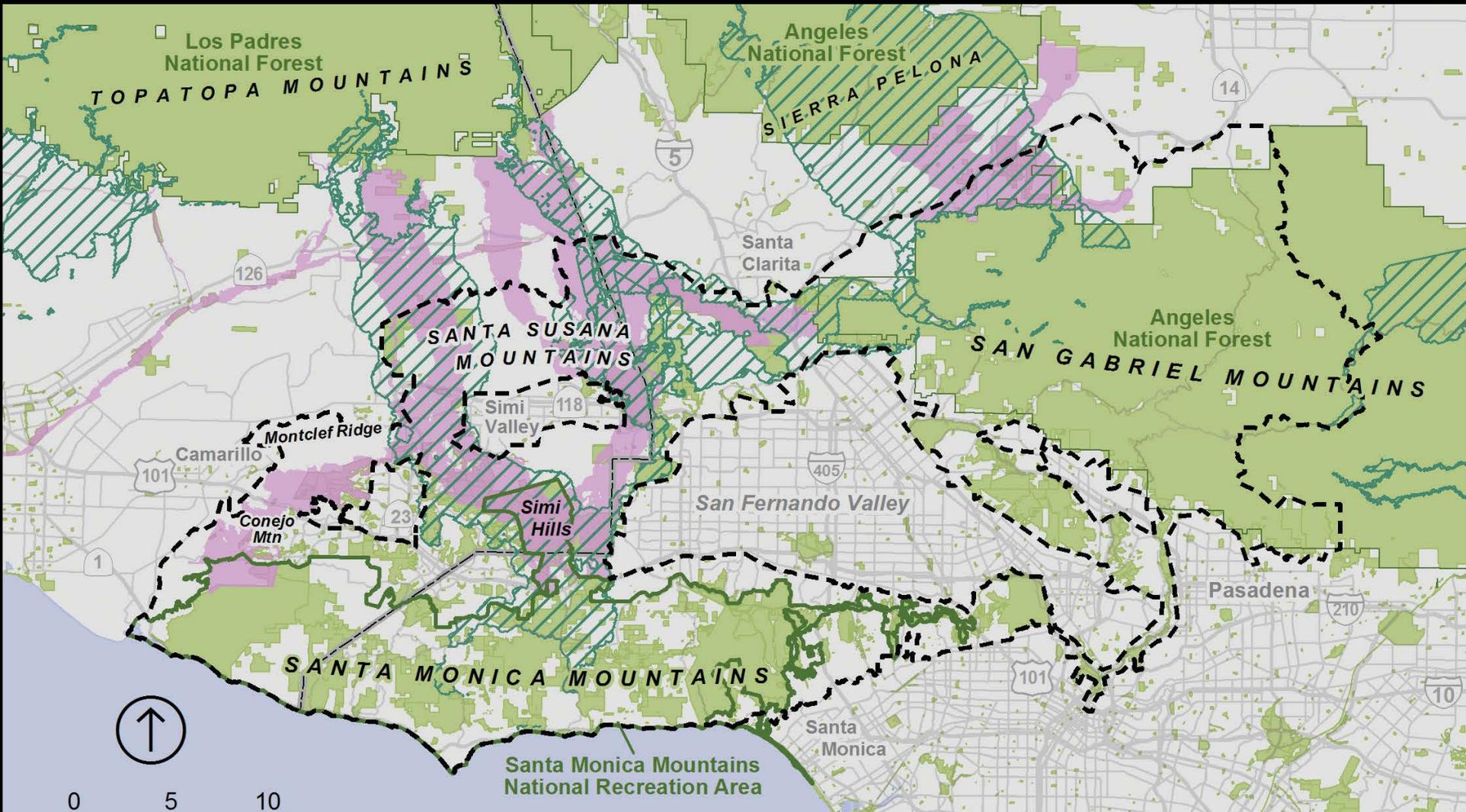
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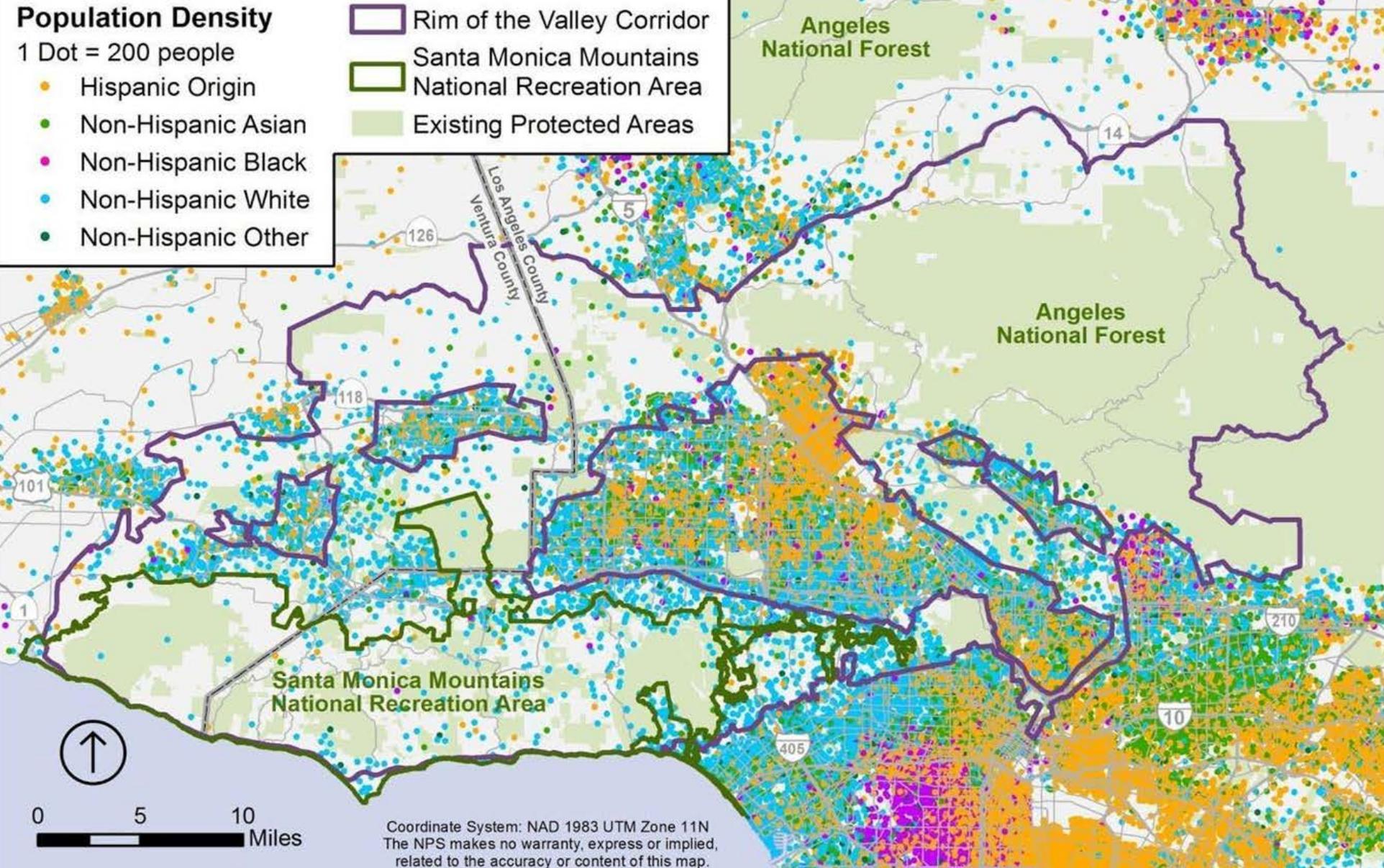


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- Essential Connectivity Areas
- South Coast Missing Linkages Linkage Design
- Study Area
- Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
- Existing Protected Areas

# Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study

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## Draft Study Findings

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### Two analyses:

- Special Resource Study criteria
- Boundary Adjustment criteria



*Santa Monica Mountains (Hollywood Hills)*



## Draft Study Findings – Special Resource Study Criteria

- Contains nationally significant resources suitable for inclusion in the national park system
- A new national park unit is less feasible than a SMMNRA boundary adjustment
- Study area resources augment SMMNRA's significance and park purpose
- Provides habitat connectivity essential to maintain SMMNRA's biodiversity



*Transverse Ranges*



*Fossils*



*Biodiversity hot spot*



*Archeological resources*



*National Historic Landmarks*



## Draft Study Findings – Boundary Adjustment Criteria

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A boundary adjustment to SMMNRA would:

- Enhance protection of significant resources
- Expand opportunities for outdoor recreation
- Be feasible using SMMNRA's partnership-based management model
- Provide widest range of tools and NPS authorities





## Alternatives in Draft Study Report

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Alternative A: Continuation of Current Management (No Action)

Alternative B: Cooperative Conservation Partnership

Alternative C: Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment (*NPS Preferred Alternative*)

Alternative D: Regional Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment and Cooperative Conservation Areas





## Alternatives in Draft Study Report

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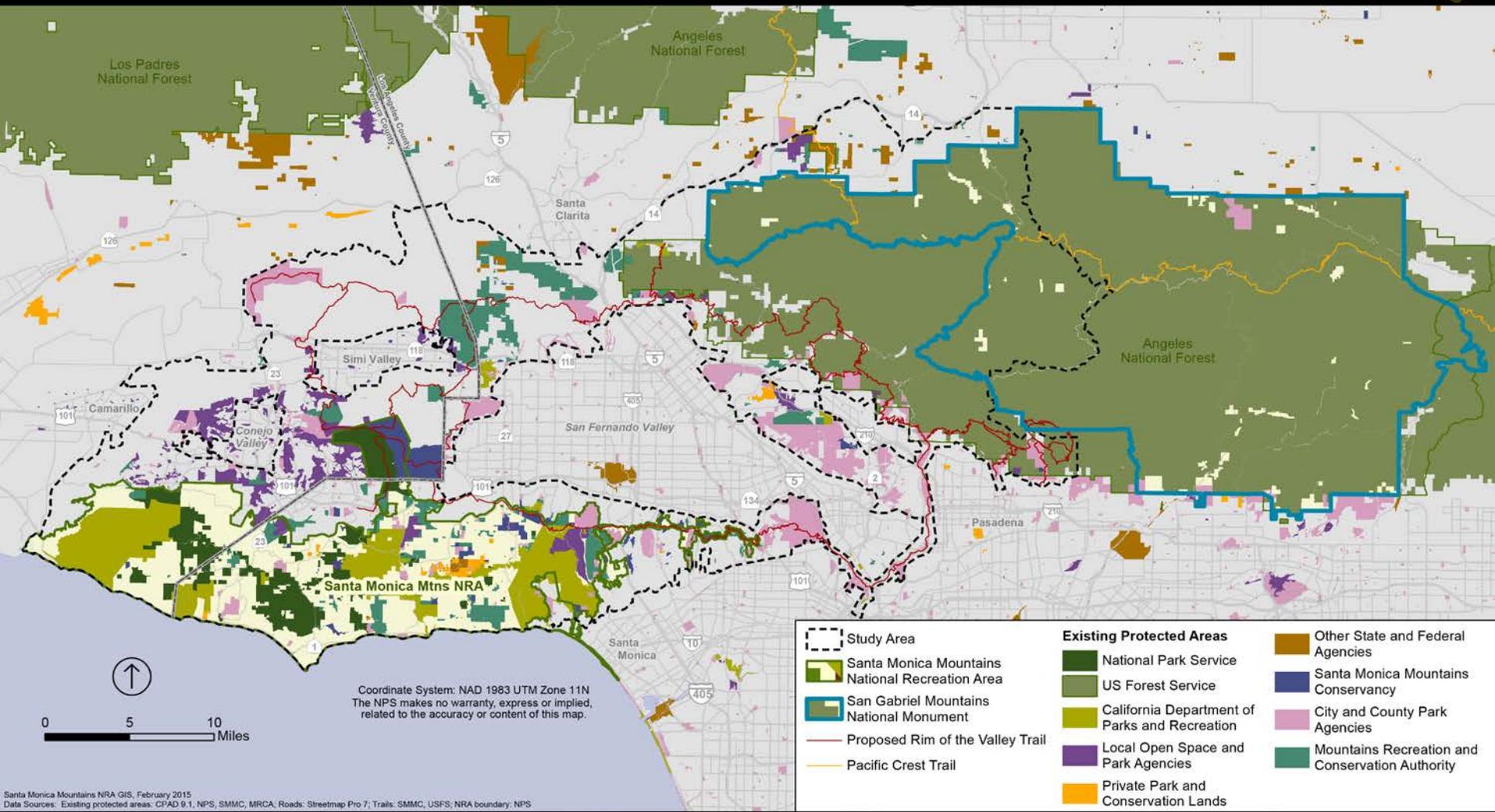
### Common to All Alternatives:

- SMMNRA partnership-based management approach with limited NPS land ownership
- USFS areas would continue to be managed by USFS
- Respects complex mix of local land use and existing regulatory authorities



# Alternative A

Continuation of Current Management (No Action)



## Concept:

NPS roles would continue:

- Existing national park and historic trail units.
- Existing financial and technical assistance programs.



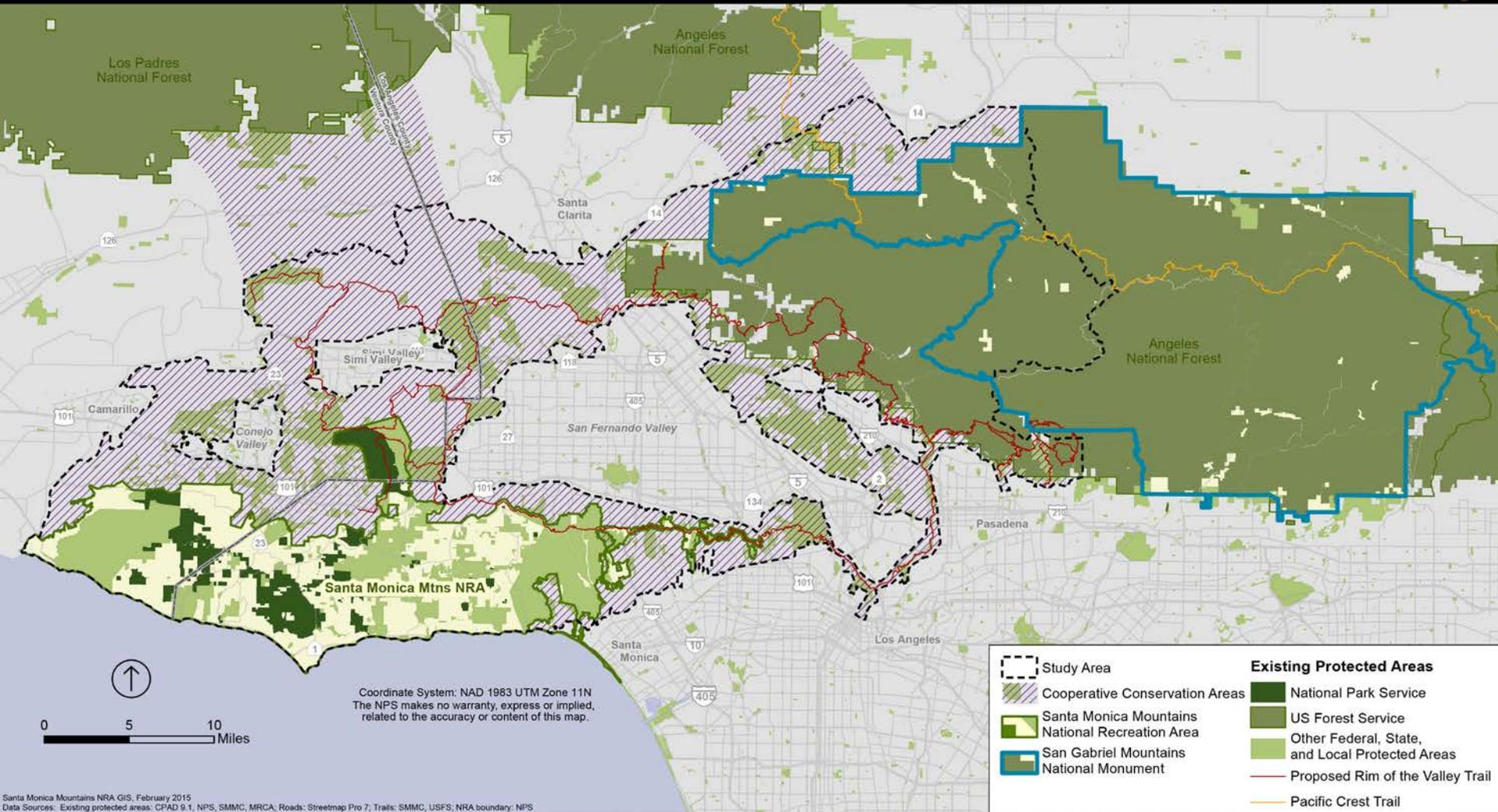
## Alternative A: Continuation of Current Management

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### Key elements:

- Within SMMNRA boundary, 55% of land is publicly-owned
- Within SMMNRA 15% of land is owned by NPS
- Many public and private landowners
- NPS coordinates with diverse range of partners to achieve common resource protection and visitor enjoyment goals





## Concept:

- Partnership authorization
- No new NPS areas or boundary adjustment
- Includes study area and landscape linkages to the north providing for habitat connectivity



## Alternative B: Cooperative Conservation Partnership

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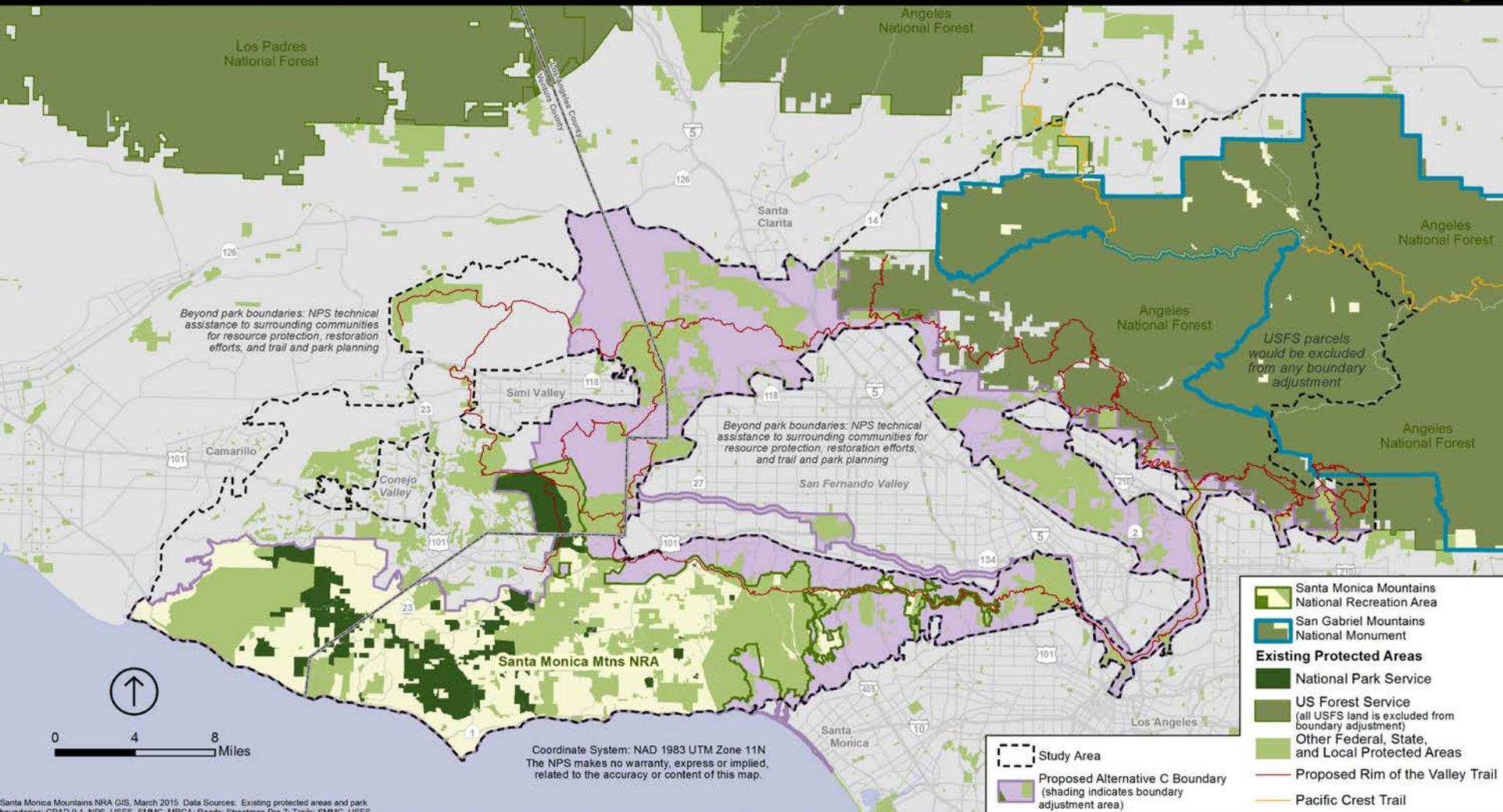
### Key elements:

- SMMNRA facilitated partnership
- Cooperative conservation plan to establish an interconnected system of parks, habitat, and open space
- Voluntary implementation by state and local governments, private entities, and other federal agencies
- NPS technical assistance to communities and organizations
- Public engagement through interpretation and citizen science



# Alternative C (NPS Preferred Alternative)

## Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment



Santa Monica Mountains NRA GIS, March 2015. Data Sources: Existing protected areas and park boundaries: CPAD 9.1, NPS, USFS, SMMC, MRCAL, Roads, Streetmap Pro 7, Trails, SMMC, USFS

### Concept:

- SMMNRA boundary adjustment
- Focus on areas closest to densest urban populations
- Los Angeles River corridor
- Landscape linkage to San Gabriel Mountains



## Alternative C: Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment (NPS Preferred Alternative)

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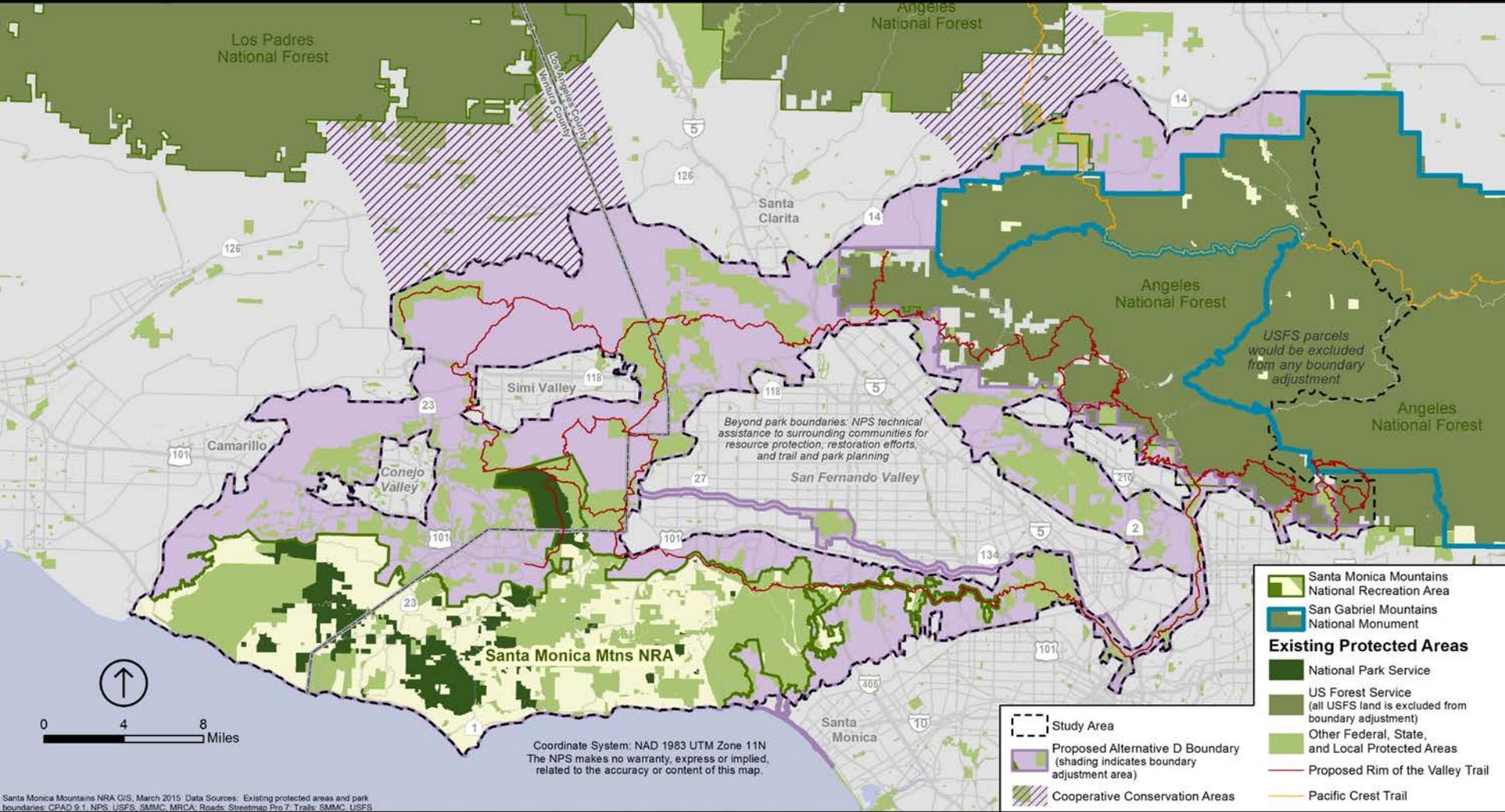
### Key elements:

- Boundary adjustment, focus on connecting people to parks
- Provides for protection of significant resources and habitat connections within the study area using a full range of NPS tools and authorities.
- Opportunities for expanding and providing better access to recreation, education and interpretation. Examples include:
  - Trail connections and public transportation options
  - Coordination of interpretive and educational messaging and programs with partners
- Authorization for NPS to partner and provide technical assistance in surrounding communities beyond boundary. Examples include:
  - Coordinate and collaborate with the USFS to conduct outreach with schools and youth
  - Emphasize and promote the public health benefits of outdoor recreation



# Alternative D

## Regional Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment and Cooperative Conservation Areas



Santa Monica Mountains NRA GIS, March 2015. Data Sources: Existing protected areas and park boundaries: CPAD 9.1, NPS, USFS, SMMC, MRCA; Roads: Streetmap Pro 7; Trails: SMMC, USFS

### Concept:

- SMMNRA boundary adjustment
- Partnership authority for landscape connections to north
- Focus on large natural areas
- Includes expanded recreation opportunities



## Alternative D: Regional Rim of the Valley Boundary Adjustment and Cooperative Conservation Areas

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### Key Elements:

- Includes components of Alternative C, with addition of:
  - Larger areas within boundary adjustment provide more opportunities for resource protection and public enjoyment
  - Additional landscape connections (both within boundary, and outside of boundary adjustment)

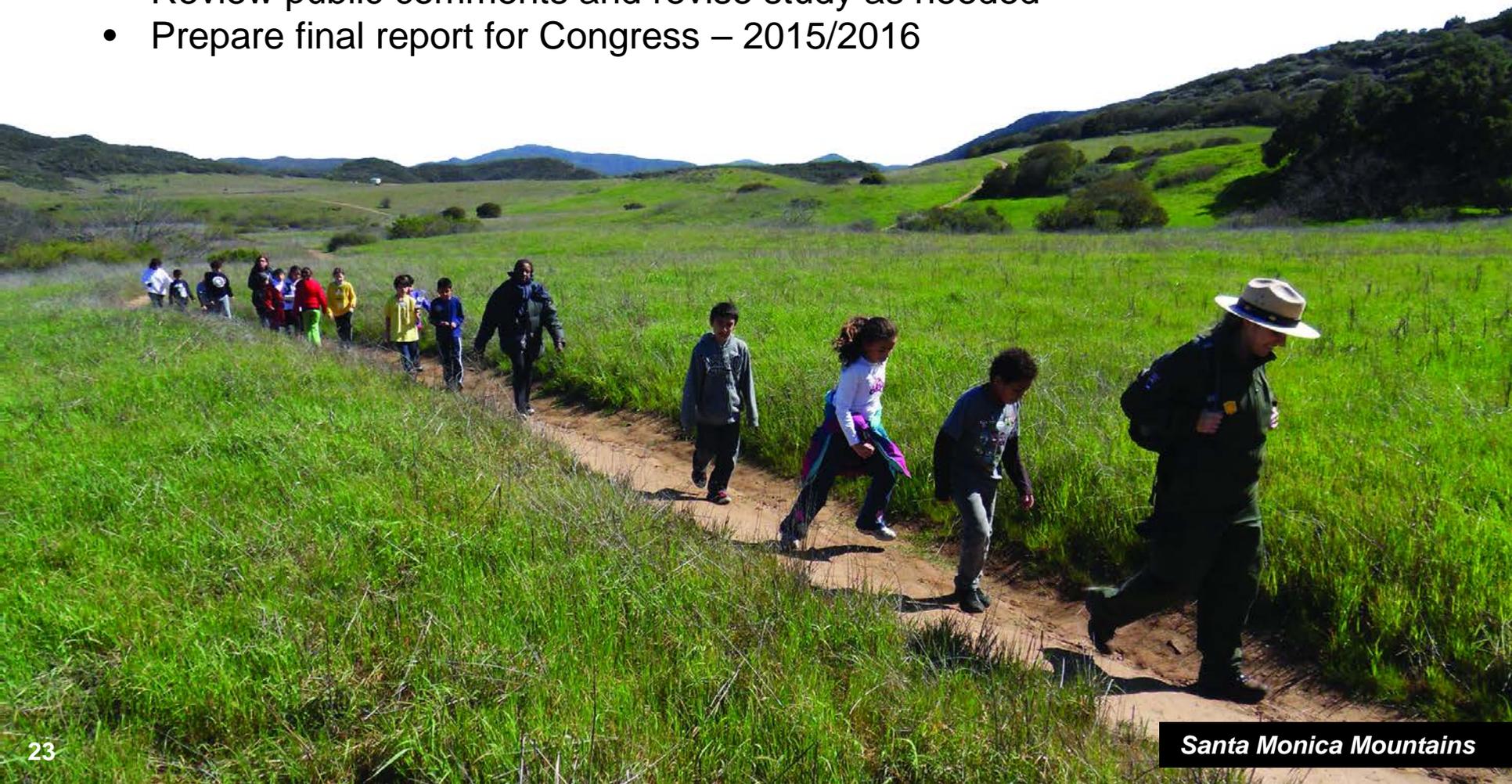




## Next steps

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- Public Comment period through June 30, 2015
- Review public comments and revise study as needed
- Prepare final report for Congress – 2015/2016





# Questions?

