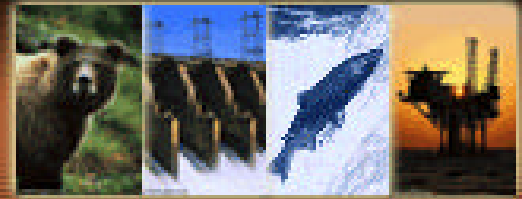




# Land Letter

THE NATURAL RESOURCES WEEKLY REPORT



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## ORVs ordered off 570,000 acres of desert tortoise habitat

A federal court in San Francisco last week ordered the Bureau of Land Management to ban off-road vehicles from more than a half-million acres of California desert to protect the desert tortoise and other endangered species.

"The court's ruling checks the abuses of the executive branch, and upholds the recovery intent of the Endangered Species Act, America's most important wildlife law," Daniel Patterson, an ecologist with the Center for Biological Diversity, said in a statement. "Critical habitat works, and the Bush administration must follow the law and the public interest to protect critical habitat for endangered species recovery, not just survival."

The injunction imposed by U.S. District Judge Susan Illston will remain in place until the Fish and Wildlife Service issues a new biological opinion in compliance with the court's ruling. FWS Ventura Field Office Supervisor Diane Noda estimates that the new biological opinion, already under way, will be issued by the end of next month.

BLM Desert District Manager Linda Hansen said in a statement that the public still has off-road access to more than 1,700 miles of designated routes covering 1.7 million acres of public land in the desert.