



DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN

PREPARING THE DRECP – A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

The REAT was formed by California Executive Order S-14-08 to streamline permit review and issuance time for renewable energy projects, and recommend avoidance measures or alternatives when appropriate. The State of California and the Department of the Interior signed a Memorandum of Understanding to ensure implementation of California Executive Order S-14-08 and Interior Secretarial Order 3285 (www.drecp.org/whatisdrecp/mou.html) in a cooperative and timely manner, including the development of the DRECP.

A stakeholder committee was created to provide a forum for public participation and input to the DRECP Director and the REAT on Plan development. The Stakeholder Committee was comprised of:

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- Imperial County
- Inyo County
- Kern County
- Los Angeles County
- Riverside County
- San Bernardino County
- City of Lancaster

RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECT DEVELOPERS

- Brightsource
- EDF Renewable Energy (formerly EnXco)
- First Solar
- Iberdrola Renewables
- K Road
- SunPower Corporation
- Terra Gen

RENEWABLE ENERGY INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

- CALWEA
- Geothermal Energy Association
- Large Scale Solar Association

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

- California Council of Land Trusts
- California Native Plant Society
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Technologies
- Defenders of Wildlife

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (CONT'D)

- Friends of the Desert Mountains
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- The Wildlands Conservancy

ELECTRIC UTILITIES

- Imperial Irrigation District
- Los Angeles Department of Water and Power
- Pacific Gas & Electric
- Sempra Energy Utilities
- Southern California Edison

NATIVE AMERICAN ORGANIZATION

- Desert Renewable Energy Tribal Coalition

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ASSOCIATIONS/RECREATION

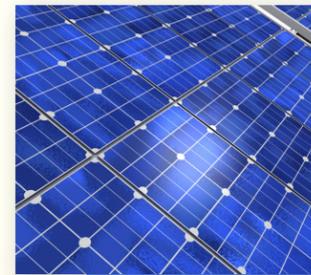
- California Off-Road Vehicle Association
- Off-Road Business Association

FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCY PARTICIPANTS (EX-OFFICIO STAKEHOLDERS)

- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- California Energy Commission
- California Independent System Operator
- California Public Utilities Commission
- California State Lands Commission
- Governor Brown's Office
- National Park Service
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Planning for renewable energy development while protecting habitat in the California Desert



The California desert is home to unique species and natural communities, a rich cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities that attract visitors from around the world. The California desert also has an abundance of solar, wind, and geothermal energy resources that will play a critical role in addressing climate change and promoting energy independence in the coming decades.

State and federal agencies are working with a wide variety of stakeholders to develop the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). A cooperative effort led by the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Renewable Energy Action Team – REAT), the DRECP will allow for streamlined environmental review and permitting of renewable energy and transmission projects in appropriate areas while also conserving sensitive species, functioning ecosystems, and other desert resources and values.

DRECP PLANNING GOALS

- Identify the most appropriate locations within the Plan Area for the development of utility-scale renewable energy projects.
- Conserve, restore, and manage Covered Species and their habitats within the Plan Area.
- Provide a framework to coordinate the environmental review and standardize the mitigation requirements of renewable energy projects under the DRECP and future tiered plans.
- Apply a landscape approach to planning, as opposed to a project-by-project, species-by-species review.



- Provide durable and reliable regulatory assurances, as appropriate, under the California Natural Community Conservation Planning Act and the Endangered Species Act for renewable energy and transmission development that occur within the Plan Area.
- Provide a basis for the issuance of “take” authorizations for Covered Species incidental to renewable energy and transmission development.
- Provide for conservation of non-biological resources and values in the Plan Area, including cultural, recreation, visual, wilderness characteristics, and mineral extraction.
- Develop a plan that incorporates scientific and climate change adaptation research.

DRECP PLAN AREA

The DRECP Plan Area spans 22.5 million acres in California’s Mojave and Colorado/Sonoran desert regions. The Plan Area includes private, state, and federal lands within seven counties – Imperial, Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego.



RENEWABLE ENERGY

The DRECP will identify areas where utility-scale renewable energy development will have fewer environmental impacts and may benefit from a streamlined permitting process. Development areas identified in the DRECP may include areas of immediate commercial interest, as well as areas that could be viable for future development.



BIOLOGICAL CONSERVATION PLAN

The Plan will identify areas where biological resource values are high and where habitat conservation and management actions should occur to conserve, enhance, restore, and protect the 31 Natural Communities and 37 Covered Species. The list of Covered Species was developed as part of the DRECP’s conservation planning process and reflects input from the public, stakeholders, and scientists.



Burrowing Owl



Mohave Ground Squirrel



Townsend’s Big-Eared Bat



Alkali Mariposa Lily

THE ROLE OF SCIENCE IN DEVELOPING THE DRECP

The DRECP is based on the best available scientific knowledge of desert communities and the plants and wildlife they support. In November 2010 an Independent Science Advisory Panel developed recommendations on scientific elements to consider in the planning process. In August 2012, a second science panel reviewed interim work products and made recommendations that have improved the scientific approach of the DRECP. The REAT agencies continually seek, consider, and incorporate scientific input and best available information for the DRECP.

DRECP OUTCOMES

- **Streamlined Environmental Review and Permitting:** The DRECP will identify Development Focus Areas where biological resource values are lower and where environmental review and endangered species permitting for renewable energy and transmission projects can be streamlined.
- **Biological Conservation:** A coordinated Plan will be more cost-effective and achieve better conservation results than piecemeal mitigation that results from project-by-project permitting.
- **Resource Conservation:** A coordinated Plan will include public land management that will conserve resource values and uses, including cultural resources, recreation, and scenic values.



- **Agency Coordination:** Standardized and predictable processes for endangered species permits will provide greater regulatory and economic certainty.
- **Open, Transparent Process:** Public workshops, stakeholder meetings, and regular communications ensure interested parties are informed and offered opportunities to provide input.
- **Science:** Best available science was used to develop the DRECP, and will guide decision-making and adaptive management during Plan implementation.
- **Funding:** The Plan will identify reliable funding sources for ecosystem conservation and restoration.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please visit the DRECP website for more detailed information about the Plan and to sign-up to receive messages from the DRECP list serve: www.drecp.org.



DESERT **RENEWABLE ENERGY** CONSERVATION PLAN

Climate Change

The draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) presents innovative solutions at a landscape-scale that are critical to preparing for the impacts of climate change--change that is putting desert ecosystems and endangered species at risk. The plan is one of the first large-scale efforts of its kind to incorporate current and emerging research and strategies related to future climate risk.

Renewable Energy to Reduce Emissions

The DRECP is a key component of California's goal of reducing the 1990 level of greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050. It also is a part of the President's Climate Action Plan, which directs the Department of the Interior to prioritize renewable energy permitting on public lands. Energy generation from renewable solar, wind and geothermal resources lessens our dependence on fossil fuels and reduces climate change contributing greenhouse gas emissions.

Increasing the amount of generation from renewables, both large utility-scale and smaller scale distributed generation, is one important piece of an overall strategy that also includes energy efficiency improvements, energy conservation and greenhouse gas reduction efforts from other sectors of the economy.

Climate Adaptation in DRECP's Conservation Strategy

Climate change presents new challenges for managing natural resources and protecting biodiversity. One way species are likely to respond to climate change is to migrate as their habitats shift, making habitat connectivity critical to facilitate the movement of species. The DRECP conservation strategy applies conservation land designations to key areas in order to create habitat connectivity and conserve important landscape and ecological processes. In addition, the DRECP uses modeling data to predict how the landscapes may change over time. The DRECP monitoring and adaptive management program creates the flexibility to integrate new climate change data and research into management decisions.

Climate change impacts include:

- ▶ Higher temperatures
- ▶ Changes in how much and where it rains
- ▶ Reduction or loss of plant communities
- ▶ Change in the use of the desert by plants and animals

DRECP Plan Area

