

MBCA News  
Thursday, November 6, 2014

RENEWABLE ENERGY REPORTS:

***Great turn out for DRECP Scoping Meeting in Victorville!***

Over 320 people turned out for the October 29<sup>th</sup> DRECP comment meeting in Victorville, including good representation from the Morongo Basin. The auditorium filled to capacity – standing room only! Residents spoke intelligently and passionately as they addressed state and federal officials present & comments were recorded into the public record. The audience responded in support of each and every speaker with resounding applause.

Speakers focused requests on the need for additional time for public review and comment on the DREC Plan (at least 30, ideally 60 days or more,) an additional round of meetings to inform communities impacted and allow for informed comment, and to include distributed generation into energy calculations. Comments also included concerns over impacts of new transmission, the need to add additional conservation areas, to guarantee long-term protections (secure provisions for the length of project impacts vs. life of project), as well as health and human welfare issues.

Special thanks to the National Park Conservation Association (NPCA) for hosting the pre-meeting that provided insights and guidelines for making substantive comments that will effectively affect positive changes to the final Plan.

Seth Shteir, NPCA commended: *"The quality of the context and form of public comment was absolutely fantastic and I believe we really made an impression on agency staff. There's much more work to be done on this issue, but the Victorville meeting was a good start and something we can build on."*

***NEW OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE DRECP COMMENTS!***

San Bernardino County Supervisor Lovingood addressed the audience at the DRECP meeting in Victorville to announce that an additional meeting would be scheduled in the Morongo Basin to allow public comment on the DRECP Draft. **This will be another great opportunity for Basin residents to make our positions loud and clear to the BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Energy Commission and California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife about the future of renewable energy in the desert!**

**Plan to attend: prepare comments & get them on the record!**

When: Wednesday, November 19, 5: 30 PM – 8:00 PM  
Location: Joshua Tree Community Center, 6171 Sunburst St., Joshua Tree

**Pick-up a Free DVD copy of DRAFT DRECP**

Available at Oasis Office Supply, Yucca Valley & Wind Walkers, Joshua Tree.

**Solar Projects in the Morongo Basin "Withdrawn" & "Expired"**

MBCA Director David Fick reports very good news, particularly for 29 Palms and Joshua Tree residents. The three solar projects that Coronus/Clean Focus had been proposing have been withdrawn:

1.) P201300559 0588-131-02; 0588-131-74: South side of Alta Loma Dr.,

approximately 700 feet west of Olympic Road, Joshua Tree 55 5  
Withdrawn

2.) P201300556 0620-021-01: SE corner of Raymond Dr. & Mesquite Springs Rd., 29 Palms 160 2 Withdrawn

3.) P201300558 0608-161-20; 0608-161-21; 0608-161-22: East of Cascade Rd., approximately 650 ft. north of Hwy 62, Joshua Tree 56 6.5 Withdrawn

In addition, no permits were issued for the "Wonder Valley SECP" project on 560 acres. The project's status, formerly "conditionally approved," is now "expired."

**SPARC Reminder:**

(SPARC: San Bernardino Partnership for Renewable Energy and Conservation)

There are a host of questions posed for County residents to provide input into the SPARC Forum ([www.sparcforum.org](http://www.sparcforum.org)). MBCA Director Marina West notes that VERY FEW responses have been submitted to the online SPARC Forum. She reminds us that this is the only way the County will listen to our concerns about the impacts of renewal energy. We should FLOOD the Forum and prepare the SPARC Project Team for the Round 3 SPARC Forum. Specific date for the Yucca Valley Forum will be announced as soon as it is available.

The SPARC website explains: *To minimize impacts to stakeholders participating in both processes, the Workshops will take place after the January 9, 2015 deadline for public comment on the DRECP EIR/EIS.*

**Palen Solar Project**

A previous E-Blast reported: "Palen was Dead." As much as we may wish it were so, there is still some life remaining in that deadly project. More correctly, as MBCA Director Claudia Sall reports: *Brightsource withdrew its application to amend California Energy Commission's (CEC) prior approval in order to allow the construction of two 750' high power towers, twice as tall (and presumably deadly, etc.) as Ivanpah. The CEC has already approved a solar thermal trough project for the site. That approval still stands.*

CONSERVATION ISSUE:

**Eagle Mountain on the State Mining & Geology Board Meeting**

When: Thursday, November 13, 2014, 10:00 A.M.

(or immediately following the Policy & Legislation Committee)

Location: City Council Chambers Palm Springs City Hall, 3200 E.

Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs, CA 92262

The Desert Protection Society has information that they contend shows that certain supervisors within the Department of Conservation falsified a mine inspection report that paved the way for the "abandoned" Eagle Mountain mine to gain mining status again. State Assemblyman Manuel Perez made a formal request to The State Mining and Geology Board (SMGB) to address this. SMGB is in a position to correct the seemingly criminal behavior occurring at the Department of Conservation and the Office of Mine Reclamation. **Attend this critical meeting to secure the future of Eagle Mountain and to advocate that the lands are restored back to Joshua Tree National Park as Congress intended.**

Contact Donna Charpiet, Executive Director of the Desert Protection Society for meeting "talking points" & any questions: **760-987-1363**, [laronna@earthlink.net](mailto:laronna@earthlink.net)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS TO ATTEND:

**CA Desert Protection Act Anniversary (1994 – 2014) Events**

Twenty years ago this fall, the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) enlarged and re-designated Joshua Tree and Death Valley national monuments as national parks, established the Mojave National Preserve, and designated 69 new Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness areas. The CDPA 20th anniversary in Fall 2014 presents an opportunity to celebrate! Events will be held in the Morongo Basin, as well other locations across the desert. Check the CDPA website for the full schedule of [events](#).

**Local CDPA Anniversary events include:**

**Kick-off event at the Joshua Tree Railroad Museum**

When: Saturday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM - 2 PM

Location: Joshua Tree Railroad Museum, off Park Blvd., near the west entrance of Joshua Tree National Park

Hosted by the Mojave Desert Land Trust: interpretive talks on the CDPA and protection of desert habitat, storytellers, desert history narratives, vintage trains, and anniversary cake cutting in the historic dining car at the museum.

Admission free. RSVP requested: MDLT (760) 366-5440

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**Eco-Discovery Walk in Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Morongo Valley**

When: Thursday, Nov. 13<sup>th</sup>, 10 AM - 12 PM.

Location: Begins and ends at Covington Park, Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, Morongo Valley.

Interpretive stroll on the boardwalk: explore the marsh and riparian woodlands with botanist and wildlife biologist Robin Kobaly of The SummerTree Institute. Walk ends around noon, with lunch, music, and art by Morongo Valley Art Colony.

Hosted by The SummerTree Institute and Morongo Valley Community Services District. (760) 363-6454. [www.bigmorongo.org](http://www.bigmorongo.org)

Admission free. Limited seating. Wheelchair-accessible boardwalk.

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**Guided hike on the Mojave Desert Land Trust's Quail Mountain property, JT**

When: Friday, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Location: MDLT's Quail Mountain property near Joshua Tree National Park west entrance, at the top of Park Blvd., Joshua Tree, CA 92252.

The hike is designed for the public with all levels of hiking abilities and includes interpretive signs, brochures, and dialogue about desert ecosystems and the importance of the CDPA. Snacks and beverages available at the trailhead.

Hosted by Mojave Desert Land Trust. (760) 366-5440

[www.mojavedesertlandtrust.org](http://www.mojavedesertlandtrust.org)

Admission free.

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**CDPA 20th Anniversary Exhibit Opening reception**

When: Friday, Nov. 14th, 5 PM - 8 PM

Location: Joshua Tree National Park Visitor Center, 6554 Park Blvd., JT

Featuring artwork from Joshua Tree National Park and Death Valley National Park Artist-in-Residence programs, and a "Crazy Cactus" exhibit from Mojave National Preserve courtesy of Main Street Murals Environmental Arts Youth Program and Desert Discovery Center. Live music, beverages, and refreshments.

Hosted by Joshua Tree Chamber of Commerce, Joshua Tree National Park Interpretive Staff, and Joshua Tree National Park Association. Admission free.

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**Dedication of Mural Celebrating the CDPA Anniversary & JTNP**  
(Muralists: Chuck Caplinger and Art Mortimer)

When: Saturday, Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Location: Old Schoolhouse Museum, 6760 National Park Drive, 29 Palms, near Joshua Tree NP Headquarters.

Hosted by Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts, Public Arts Advisory Committee of the City of Twentynine Palms, Action Council for 29 Palms Inc., and 29 Palms Historical Society. Information: (760) 217-8839. Directions to Museum: (760) 367-2366. [www.JTNPArts.org](http://www.JTNPArts.org) and [www.29palmshistorical.org](http://www.29palmshistorical.org)

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**Desert Sky Dinner & Dancing**

When: Saturday, November 15th, Social Hour 5:00 – 6:00 PM., Dinner 6:00 PM

Location: Smith's Ranch, 4584 Adobe Road, Twentynine Palms

Southwestern fare, wine/beer & margarita bar, music by country singer Jann Browne and Band. VIP guests including Joshua Tree National Park Superintendent David Smith, program featuring keynote speaker Dr. Bruce Pavlik, author of "The California Deserts: An Ecological Discovery," stargazing.

Hosted by the 29 Palms Chamber of Commerce.

Tickets: \$25/single, \$40/couple, \$150/Table of 8. Purchase tickets online through the 29 Palms Chamber of Commerce [website](#) or call Chamber: 760-367-3445.

**[Desert Institute / CMC Black Rock Lecture Series 2014-2015:](#)**

*Renewable Energy Development*

Moderator: Frazier Haney, Mojave Desert Land Trust

Panelists: Chris Clarke, KCET Environmental Writer, James Andre, Director, Granite Mountain Desert Research Center, April Sall, California Desert Coalition

When: Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 7:00 PM

Location: Copper Mountain College's Bell Center Community Room Symposium, park in North parking lot and enter building from North Free, but pre-registration required & seating limited ([click on lecture topic](#))

THANK YOU'S

Thanks to MBCA Director Laraine Turk and her committee for organizing MBCA's Virtual Candidates Forum. Their hard work allowed us to evaluate how local candidates viewed issues related to the MBCA Mission and the quality of life in the Basin. Congratulations to the winning candidates. We look forward to working with you to protect our rural life style.

Kudos also to MBCA Director Pat Flanagan for recent comment letters to decision makers regarding the [Altamira Gated Housing Project](#) and the Palen Solar Project. These awesome efforts represent Pat's insights, expertise and an impressive depth of research. Boy, are we grateful to have Pat on OUR side!

Thanks again for YOUR attention, support and participation!

Sincerely,  
Sarah Kennington, President

Your 2014 MBCA Board

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[www.mbconservation.org](http://www.mbconservation.org)

*MBCA advocates for a healthy desert environment  
that nurtures our rural character, cultural wealth,  
and economic well-being.*