

MBCA News
Tuesday, January 14, 2014

Our most important message for you today is an update about our Annual Meeting. In addition to our special guest speaker Angelina Galiteva, who will address renewable energy from a statewide perspective, we have added two regional speakers to elaborate on renewable energy and water issues that affect us in the Morongo Basin.

April Sall, the Conservation Director and Preserve Manager for The Wildlands Conservancy, will speak about Renewable Energy on Public and Private Lands.

Marina West, General Manager of Bighorn-Desert View Water Agency, will speak on the Ames Basin Groundwater Storage and Recovery Program, and also summarize water issues as they relate to desert solar projects.

More details about the meeting can be found [here](#) in our Press Release, and additional background biographical information on our speakers can be found [here](#).

And if you don't want to wait for the Annual Meeting to pay membership dues, you can use your PayPal or credit card to complete that transaction [here](#).

Here are updates on recent issues of concern to MBCA.

1. [Alta Loma Solar Project – Comment Deadline January 16](#)

Some of you will remember the multiple "Coronus" solar projects mentioned in an email from MBCA some months ago. After many subsequent corporate ownership turnovers, the latest owners are continuing their plan to impose a 4.5 megawatt solar plant onto a Joshua Tree Woodland that borders neighborhoods and Mojave Desert Land Trust protected land. It does not meet the guidelines of the new San Bernardino County Renewable Energy ordinance, which you can view [here](#). Neighborhood concerns include loss of property value from degradation of views and current excellent rural living conditions, dust, water usage, and blockage of wildlife corridors.

If this project seems inappropriate to you, please notify the County of your concern. While a unique personal letter carries the most weight, because of the short deadline there is a form letter you can use.

IF you find yourself short on time to meet the deadline, or want to get some ideas to start your own letter, you can use the excellent form letter developed by our friends at the California Desert Coalition, available [here](#).

IF you choose to write your own unique letter please follow the instructions below:

Be sure to refer to the project as "CF SBC OWNER ONE LLC" (also known as "Clean Focus"). Your letter or email must be RECEIVED by Thursday, January 16 at close of business to be considered.

Chris Conner
San Bernardino County, Land Use Services,
385 North Arrowhead Avenue, First Floor,
San Bernardino, CA92415-0182.

2. Soda Mountain Solar Project

We alerted you in a previous email about this project near Baker that is adjacent to the Mojave National Preserve and could affect desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, unobstructed desert views, and water availability for a rare desert fish (tui chub). Over 50 concerned citizens attended a BLM Public Meeting held in Yucca Valley on January 11. Most of those present gave passionate and informed comments about their concerns. Although the BLM was not officially recording verbal comments at this session, both the BLM and Bechtel representatives (project owners) appeared to take substantial notes.

In addition to wildlife and water issues, concerns were expressed about the need to site such projects on disturbed or developed land; incompatibility with the new San Bernardino County Renewable Energy Ordinance; the need to focus more on distributed and rooftop power generation; and the fact that this site is NOT among lands already designated in the federal and state solar zone maps.

The deadline for comments on this project is March 3, 2014.

[Here](#) is information about the project by the owners/proponents.

[Here](#) is the BLM site concerning this project.

3. Dollar General Store in Joshua Tree

While MBCA is not affiliated with the lawsuit against the approval of this store, the actions of Joshua Tree residents who have banded together against the project are aligned with MCBA's mission to "preserve the economic and environmental welfare of the Morongo Basin against exploitation deemed not in the best interest of the residents thereof." Several legal documents have been filed by a citizens group, and a judge will hear the case this Friday in San Bernardino. Key issues center around invalid interpretation of the Joshua Tree General Plan, possible urban decay because of resulting closed businesses, and an incomplete traffic study. Here are details about the hearing:

Joshua Tree v. Dollar General Court Hearing
Superior Court of the State of California for the County of San Bernardino
Honorable Donald Alvarez
Time & Date: 10 a.m., Friday, January 17, 2014
Location: Courtroom 32
303 West 3rd Street, San Bernardino (SW corner of West 3rd St. and N. Arrowhead)

And finally, if you are interested in some hands-on conservation work in our delightfully cool winter weather, please consider joining the good folks of Transition Joshua Tree for the "Joshua Tree Back Roads Clean Up" this Saturday, January 18. More information can be found [here](#).

Thank you for your support of MBCA and "the good life" in the Morongo Basin.

Your 2013 MBCA Board
(The 2014 Board of Directors and Officers will be announced at the Annual Meeting)

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