

Renewable Energy in the Mojave Desert

For those planning to use the Mojave Desert as a platform for installation of industrial-scale solar or wind energy development, enough time has passed to see how actual projects on both public lands and private property failed to match the developers' applications and study results.

Lorrie Steely of the Mojave Community Collaborative Coalition sent a report to the HVCC meeting of yet another large solar project surrounding a ranch property near Barstow that even yet seems to be filing a mitigated negative declaration somehow. More info to come.

She also reported that comments on the DRECP are over 20,000 and counting.

Lorrie said a member of the BLM Desert Advisory Council wrote a letter saying, DRECP proposes to change the Multi-Use designation and there is/was not appropriate public notification. His letter makes a great point. How can the BLM say they are going to move ahead with the BLM's element before the public comments have even been addressed?

Route Network = Many Problems

At the April 20 meeting of the HVCC in Yucca Mesa, Pat Flanagan presented a painstaking analysis of some difficult-to-understand maps, and pros and cons of the alternative plans for the West Mojave (WeMo) Route Management Project by the Bureau of Land Management. She addressed violation of the County OHV Ordinance, the lack of coordination with the County and Sheriff, CEQA, community disruption, property values and tax revenues.

Using details of the Project maps of the Copper Mountain-Wonder Valley area, Pat showed how the BLM has numbered routes as appropriate for off highway travel, yet they were in many cases a disconnected scattering of old roads and trails through public lands, artificially made into a "network" by linking them with county roads and community roads.

The same type of network has been planned for the Homestead Valley. Numbered routes lead unwary trail users onto our dirt roads, wilderness areas and the Marine Base.

Issues of Trespass, Vandalism and Environmental Damage

Mike Hawkins of the Friends of Giant Rock OHV club pointed out the County Off-road Ordinance allows OHV use by property owners in residential areas. Many of these roads are maintained by the owners themselves, and OHV use is common.

Pat's comments on the failures of the BLM Route Network Project were directed toward the deficiencies in this huge Master

Plan for management of illegal activities, trespass and environmental damage. The BLM preferred alternative greatly increases the number of miles in the Route network from the WeMo plan of 2006.

Those who had attended the BLM meeting in Yucca Valley on April 15 expressed their



dissatisfaction with the BLM presentation, lack of answers and defects in the plan both recreational as well as environmental.

How will BLM manage over 10,000 miles of off-highway travel through public and private lands? Where will they get the funding to make it all work? As Pat asked, isn't this a land use change that is the County's responsibility? This is NOT about legal OHV riders and riding.

West Mojave Route Network Project
http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/west_mojave_wemo/wmDEIS.html

The Project is in the same area as the DRECP and conflicts are possible.

See Pat's presentation, as seen at the Morongo Basin MAC and HVCC, at <http://drecr.com/>

COMMENT DUE BY JUNE 4

Email to cawemopa@blm.gov
Or mail to: BLM California Desert District,
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