

ROCKHOUND ACCESS AT RISK

Tell the BLM to leave the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan alone

The BLM is accepting comments until March 22, 2018

or sign onto [SDMG's comment letter](#) by March 19th, contact editor@sdmg.org

WHAT IS THE DRECP?

Adopted in 2016, the **Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)** is a multiple use land use plan covering 10.8 million acres of California Desert public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The **DRECP** established a balance between designations for recreation, conservation, and renewable energy development – uses that are critically important to desert communities and local economies. It was adopted after eight years of tough negotiation and consensus building among 50 stakeholder groups – including local, state, and federal government; tribal interests; conservation and recreation interests; and renewable energy developers – and comment letters from 16,000 members of the public.

THE HISTORY

A decade ago, renewable energy projects were landing scattershot across the California Desert's public lands. These projects limited recreation access and damaged the region's natural and cultural resources. Desert residents spoke up to demand a change.

After more than eight years of planning and tough negotiation among many stakeholders and competing interests over the same areas, the DRECP was adopted.

THE RESULTS

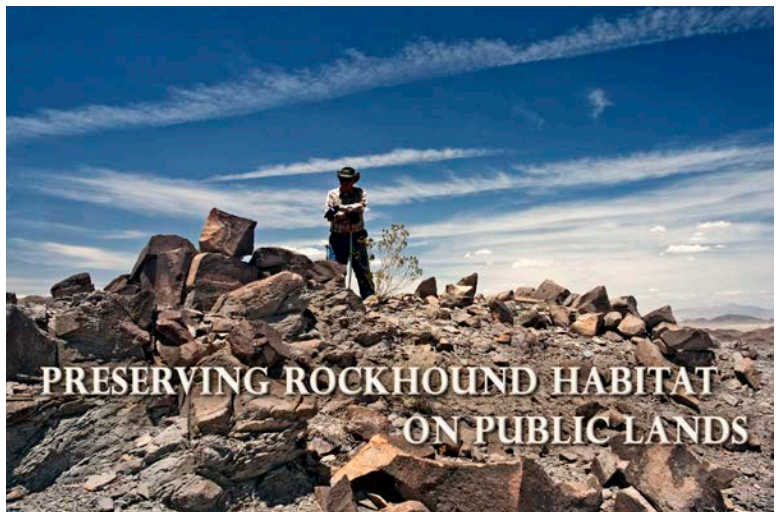
3.6 million acres that had been open for energy development were protected for recreational uses, such as hiking, camping, rockhounding, horseback riding, and off-road touring. The plan also protected 4.2 million acres of the desert's most sensitive natural and cultural landscapes, including Native American cultural sites, critical habitat, and the desert's most iconic landscapes. **Recreational rock collection is allowed on every one of these acres.**

The plan also reduced the land available for renewable energy projects to 800,000 acres, which is approximately ten times as much land as is needed to meet the State's renewable energy goals.

In total, the plan protected more land from energy projects than the area of all three of the Desert's national parks, combined. **This is an incredible achievement for those residents and visitors who cherish this landscape.**



The Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System is a concentrated solar thermal plant located at the base of Clark Mountain in California's Mojave Desert, across the state line from Primm, Nevada. It is the largest solar farm of its kind in the world. Photo: Camden Bruner, BLM, 13 July 2008.



THE DRECP & ROCKHOUNDING

Recreation and conservation were big winners of the DRECP. The plan protected over 6 million acres from industrial-scale energy projects which had not been protected previously.

The **DRECP** supports multiple use recreation, both motorized and non-motorized. **The plan has not shut down a single road, trail, or mine, and all designated recreation and conservation lands continue to be open to public access and existing off-road trails remain open.**

Here are some specific wins rockhounds achieved:

- **The BLM did not limit hobby collecting anywhere in the DRECP conservation or recreation areas, and no existing routes of access to collecting areas have been closed.**
- Several Development Focus Areas were eliminated – and others were changed – to allow continued access to rockhounding sites.
- The plan established 2.6 million acres of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA). This designation directs the BLM to prioritize recreation in future management decisions.



THE THREAT: Why should the DRECP be left alone?

The BLM has announced its intent to amend this plan with one goal in mind: to make more land available for utility-scale energy projects and industrial mining. Their announcement specifically calls for the review of the millions of acres of recreation and conservation lands designated by the DRECP, identifying these designations as potential burdens to energy development. **Opening these lands to large-scale energy development would irreparably harm public access – including accommodations for recreational rockhounding – and erode the desert's most sensitive and cherished landscapes.**

PROTECT ROCKHOUNDING: TELL THE BLM TO LEAVE THE DRECP INTACT!

- ◆ The DRECP currently protects public lands in the desert for conservation, recreation, and public access that could be lost forever if the plan is amended. **I don't want any of these protected areas harmed or compromised - leave the plan alone.**
- ◆ Tens of thousands of people worked tirelessly and spoke up loud and clear over 8 years. The result is a plan that protects recreational access, fragile natural and cultural resources, and provides more than enough land to meet California's renewable energy goals. The effort to reopen the plan shows disrespect for the voices of desert residents and the public, to whom all federal lands belong. **I want the BLM to respect our input and leave the plan as it is.**
- ◆ Preserving the DRECP is about preserving our quality of life and the local economies of gateway communities in the desert that are powered by a well-managed landscape to support tourism. **If the BLM cares about rural economies, it will leave this plan alone.**
- ◆ The California Energy Commission is on record saying that it does not need more desert land designated for utility-scale renewable energy projects to meet California's long-term needs. The plan was adopted only 16 months ago, and there are no new data to justify amending the DRECP at this time. **Amending the plan is totally unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer dollars. I oppose the effort to revise the DRECP.**

Submit your comment letters to BLM by March 22nd

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or electronically to BLM_CA_DRECP@blm.gov.

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