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limited to specific topics such as “public lands”)*

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*Presentation made at the Hi-Desert Nature Museum,  
town of Yucca Valley, 20 September 2018*

*View/download the PowerPoint slide deck as a PDF at:  
[http://www.sdmg.org/pdf/public-lands/Thoresen\\_Hi-Desert\\_Museum\\_20180920\\_fin.pdf](http://www.sdmg.org/pdf/public-lands/Thoresen_Hi-Desert_Museum_20180920_fin.pdf)  
(it's a big file – 12MB )*

## Southern California's Deserts

### *Selected Resources for Rockhounds*

updated 10/5/2018

***Public Lands use policy in California and many states throughout the U.S. is being driven by planning efforts of immense complexity and long term consequence. They impact all users concerned about preserving wildlands and access to them.***

***Listed below (in date order) are some references and resources about the Mojave Desert and its minerals, as well as Op-Eds on Land Use Policy.***

- S.P. Mulqueen. 1 October 2018. The Mojave Desert, A Highly Mineralized Region of California. The Pegmatite, bulletin of the San Diego Mineral & Gem Society, Inc. pp. 13–14. Available online at:  
<http://www.sdmg.org/peg-online/sdmg-pegmatite-2018-oct.pdf#page=13>
- SDMG. 2018 [updated]. Preserving Rockhound habitat on federal lands. Preparing Comment Letters – What's effective, what's not. Available online at:  
[http://www.sdmg.org/pdf/public-lands/comment\\_letters\\_whats\\_effective\\_whats\\_not.pdf](http://www.sdmg.org/pdf/public-lands/comment_letters_whats_effective_whats_not.pdf)
- L. Thoresen. 1 December 2017. Rockhounds could hit rock bottom in 2018. www.sdmg.org. Available online at:  
[http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201712/201712\\_Rockhounds\\_could\\_hit\\_rock\\_bottom\\_in\\_2018.pdf](http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201712/201712_Rockhounds_could_hit_rock_bottom_in_2018.pdf)
- F. Haney. 9 September 2017. Cooperation is key to success in Mojave Trails National Monument's future. www.sdmg.org. Available online at:  
[http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201710/201710\\_Cooperation\\_key\\_to\\_success\\_in\\_Mojave\\_Trails\\_future.pdf](http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201710/201710_Cooperation_key_to_success_in_Mojave_Trails_future.pdf)
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<http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201705/the-rime-of-the-mojave-mariner-sdmg-pegmatite-201705.pdf>
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<http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201702/what-it-means-to-be-a-stakeholder/>
- A. Hoekstra. 1 January 2017. New rules proposed for fossil collecting on federal lands. www.sdmg.org. Available online at: [http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201701/SDMG\\_201701\\_Pegmatite\\_fossil\\_reg\\_PRPA.pdf#page=2](http://www.sdmg.org/articles/201701/SDMG_201701_Pegmatite_fossil_reg_PRPA.pdf#page=2)
- K. Stringfellow. 2015. The Mojave Project: Rockhounding 101. Available online at:  
<https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/the-mojave-project-rockhounding-101>
- D. Kasper. 2016. Popular Myths of Agate Formation. Available online at:  
<http://donaldkasper.com/Popular%20Myths%20of%20Agate%20Formation.pdf>
- D. Kasper. 4 July 2014. A Student Study Guide on Agate and Geode Formation. Kasper Jasper Press. Available at Amazon.com
- D. Kasper. May 2012. The World of Jasper, rev 2. Available online at:  
<http://donaldkasper.com/The%20World%20of%20Jasper.pdf>
- R.E. Reynolds, Ed. 2005. Old Ores: Mining History in the Eastern Mojave Desert. 2005. Available online at:  
<http://nsm.fullerton.edu/dsc/images/DSCdocs/2005oldores.pdf>

#### **Guide Books**

- Gem Guides Book Company. [http://www.gemguidesbooks.com/pdfs\\_2018/2018\\_Rocks\\_Gems\\_Minerals.pdf](http://www.gemguidesbooks.com/pdfs_2018/2018_Rocks_Gems_Minerals.pdf)
- J.R. Mitchell. 1996. Gem Trails of Southern California. Gem Guides Book Company, 176 pp.

#### **Other online resources.**

- Desert Minerals and Geology. <https://www.desertusa.com/thingstodo/geo/geology.html>
- Gator Girl Rocks. <http://www.gatorgirlrocks.com/state-by-state/california.html>

#### **mindat.org**

- Rare Gems and Minerals in California. <http://www.goldrushnuggets.com/rageandmiofc.html>

#### **Deep dive into Agates.**

- D, Kile, T. Michalski, and P. Modreski, Eds. 2005. Symposium on Agate and Cryptocrystalline Quartz. Sponsored by Friends of Mineralogy, Colorado Chapter, Colorado School of Mines Geology Museum, and USGS.  
[http://friendsofmineralogycolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2005\\_FMCC\\_Agate\\_Symposium.pdf](http://friendsofmineralogycolorado.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/2005_FMCC_Agate_Symposium.pdf)

## *Some At Risk Hobby Collecting areas in Southern California's Deserts (9/2016)*

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The **Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)** is the largest Land Use Planning Amendment (LUPA) in California state history. Eight years in the making, the Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on September 14, 2016. The ROD reflects changes to previously proposed Development Focus Areas (DFAs). For the first time, the **DRECP** enshrined a new protective designation – Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). SRMAs were specifically applied to some, but not all hobby collecting areas. Areas designated as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) do not always forbid hobby collecting, but they preclude motorized access to some collecting areas. Areas designated ACEC are a point of tension with the Conservation community where they exclude hobby collecting or motorized access to collecting areas.

During the drafting of the **DRECP**, Rockhounds requested changes to avoid encroachment of collecting areas and/or motorized routes of access to them. Many areas have been popular with Rockhounds dating back to the 1930s, some even earlier. Those areas vulnerable to closure or encroachment from proposed DFAs in the **Draft DRECP** are listed below. In the **DRECP ROD**, all changes related to DFAs that were requested by Rockhounds were made at the expense of industry interests, showing that Rockhound activism really can make a difference. However, new plans and proposals constantly make these favorite collecting areas vulnerable to incursions from development.

*Credit for preparing the list below: American Lands Access Association and San Diego Mineral & Gem Society, with significant help from Randy Banis, public lands activist, and Shaun Gonzales, desert conservation advocate.*

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### **Afton Canyon**

The Afton Canyon collecting area is located at the I-15, at the Afton Turnoff about 32 miles east of Barstow and 25 miles west of Baker. This area has long been a rockhound area that has many types of agate, sagenite, jasper and opalite. Rockhounds have asked the BLM to designate this area as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). Also, roads and trails providing access to these areas, including roads and trails passing through adjacent lands, including DFAs, should be maintained for vehicular access.

### **Blythe**

The Blythe collecting area is located at T4S, R20E (Blythe DAG), north of the Palen McCoy Wilderness and south of the Little Maria Mountains. DFAs should avoid this psilomelane collecting area, with at least a 1,000-foot radius around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

### **Boron**

The Boron collecting area is located between Saddleback Mountain and California City Boulevard, north of Highway 58 and south of Twenty Mule Team Parkway (Cuddeback Lake DAG). This collecting area contains petrified wood, chapenite, jasper and agate. DFAs should exclude the Boron collecting area, with at least a 1,000-foot radius buffer around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

### **Brown Butte (aka Lonely Butte)**

The Brown Butte collecting area is located at T10N, R11W, Sections 2, 3, 10 & 11 (Lancaster DAG). This collecting area, which is good for petrified reeds, agate, jasper, and jasp-agate. DFAs should avoid this area, with at least a 1,000-foot radius buffer around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

### **Cadiz**

The "Future Assessment Area" designations in the Cadiz Valley should be removed once and for all, and the areas should be included as NLCS to protect the natural setting of the desert for enjoyment of unconfined recreation, and to be consistent with the objective of managing the Route 66 corridor to protect the relatively undisturbed viewshed. This area has been persistently under threat of water harvesting proposals since the 1980s.

**Chambless**

The Chambless fossil collecting site is adjacent to the Trilobite Wilderness/Marble Mountain area. It is off the National Trails Highway, about 2 miles west of Amboy. The current roads to the collecting sites are outside the Wilderness Area and are used as a staging area to walk into the collecting sites. Roads in this area should be left open so hobbyists can access the fossil sites.

**Cinco**

The Cinco collecting area is located at T31S, R11W, south/southwest of Jawbone Station (Tehachapi DAG). In the past, a DFA encroached some or all of this collecting area for quartz and feldspar crystals. This area should be permanently excluded from any DFA contemplated, with at least a 1,000-foot radius buffer around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

**Gem Hill**

The Gem Hill collecting area is located at T10N, R13W, Sections 26, 27, 34, and 35 (Lancaster DAG). This collecting area for agate, jasper, rhyolite, common opal, and petrified wood, was formerly located within a DFA. Any DFA contemplated in the future should exclude this area, and at least a 1,000 foot radius around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

**Hector Hills and Pisgah Crater**

A DFA had been located near the Hector Hills collecting area, located at T8N, R5E, Sections 4, 5, 6, 15, 16, 21 and 22 (Newberry Springs DAG). This DFA posed a problem if it blocked or constrained access to Pisgah Crater Road. The Pisgah and Hector Hills area should be protected with NLCS designation (with exception for rockhounding activity) because of its importance to a variety of desert wildlife and unique geological features, including the Pisgah lava flow.

**Hauser Geode Beds**

The Hauser Beds collecting area is located at T 8 ½ S, R 19 E, Sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, and 28; T 8 ½ S, R 19 E, Section 16; T 8 ½ S, R 20 E, Sections 6, 7, and 18 (Trigo DAG). Not only is this area one of the best collecting areas in the California desert, it is covered by a Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the California Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. The MOU was signed on February 22, 2000, and has never been terminated by either party. The MOU recognizes the importance of the Hauser Geode Beds area as a major recreation area for dispersed rockhounding recreation. It appears that the Mule Mountain LTVA SRMA partially covers this collecting area. In 2015, the BLM was asked to expand this SRMA to include the entire Hauser Beds area as described above. Further, BLM was asked to acknowledge the MOU at the District and State Office levels and expressly state in the SRMA that this MOU shall continue. This MOU was signed and entered into the minutes of the DAC meeting held in Barstow on May 21, 2016. View the final draft version of the MOU on the SDMG website at: <http://goo.gl/sR6qyl> (short url)

**Kramer Junction**

The Kramer Junction area (Victorville DAG) is periodically targeted for development or land swaps related to proposed plans for development. Rockhounds oppose DFA being placed on the southeast corner of Kramer Junction (south of Highway 58 and east of Highway 395), as this is a collecting area for dendritic agate, common opal, and obsidian.

**Lavic Siding and Jasper Hill**

The Lavic and Jasper Hill collecting areas located at T8N, R5E, Sections 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36 and T8N, R6E, Sections 18, 19, 20, 30, 29, 31, 32, and T9N, R4E, Sections 29, 30, 31, and 32 (Newberry Springs DAG). These jasper collecting areas are located within the Route 66 viewshed, between Ludlow and Newberry Springs. BLM proposed creation of the National Trails Viewshed SRMA, which protects various recreational activities along Route 66. Rockhounds appreciate that the BLM has recognized the importance of collecting in the Trilobite and Ship Mountains and has created a Recreation Management Zone to protect collecting in those areas. However, the SRMA did encompass some very special collecting places along Route 66. BLM was asked to increase the size of the National Trails Viewshed SRMA, so that it would include the Lavic and Jasper Hill collecting areas and specifically allows collecting in these areas.

**Newbury**

The Newbury collecting area is located at T8N, R3E (Newbury Springs DAG). It is north of Newberry Mountains Wilderness and south of Route 66. A DFA covered and/or surround this collecting area for nodules and agate. BLM was asked to redraw the DFA boundary so that it would not cover this area, with at least a 1,000-foot radius around it. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

**Rainbow Rock**

BLM was asked to remove DFA designations from lands in the Rainbow Rock area west of State Route 86 in Imperial County. DFA status would be inconsistent with protecting the natural setting of the area that is important to visitors seeking dispersed and unconfined recreation opportunities in the Ocotillo Wells and Anza-Borrego area.

**Sperry Wash**

The Sperry Wash collecting area is located in the Dublin Hills, west of Shoshone (Owlshead DAG). Given this area's close proximity to the Amargosa River Valley/Grimshaw SRMA and because rock collecting is a legitimate use within this SRMA, the BLM was asked to expand this SRMA to include the Sperry Wash collecting area in order to protect this important recreational activity.

**Stoddard Wells**

The Stoddard Wells collecting area is located at T11N to the 15 Freeway, R1W to R3W, up to the southern boundary of Stoddard OHV Area (Victorville DAG). The area includes Black Mountain and Sidewinder Mountain. The BLM was asked to ensure that no development blocks open route access to the Stoddard Wells rockhounding area in the vicinity of Sidewinder Ridge, west of the Lucerne Valley Cutoff Road. Rockhounds asked the DRECP to designate this area as a new Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

**Yermo**

The Yermo collecting area is located at T10N to T11N, R1E to R2E (Newberry Springs DAG), in the Calico Mountains between the two Superior Cronese ACECs. This area is important to rockhounds. The greater collecting area overlaps approximately six sections of the western edge of the eastern Superior Cronese ACEC. A DFA appears to cover some of this excellent collecting area, where agate, petrified palm root, jasper and chert are found. BLM was asked to designate this area as a new SRMA and protect collecting activities in it. Debarring that possibility, BLM was asked to expand the Superior/Rainbow SRMA to include it, with specific provision for rock collecting as an allowable use in this area. At the least, BLM was asked to redefine the DFA encroaching this area in the draft DRECP so that it would exclude this area from the DFA. Any designated routes that allow access to this collecting area should be included in any LUPA or management plan revision.

**Yuha Basin**

The south side of I-8 between Highway 98 and Dunaway Road has giant fossilized oyster shells that have been collected by rockhounds since the 1950s. BLM was asked to designate this area as a SRMA. Prior to the DRECP ROD, this area had overlapping ACEC and NLCS designations. BLM was asked to allow rockhounding to continue as a permissible activity and all roads into the area to be left open.