

December 17, 2012

Description and Comparative Evaluation of Draft DRECP Alternatives

3.8 Tribal Interests

In support of the Administration's directive for Federal agencies to engage in tribal consultation on policies and programs impacting Indian Country, the Bureau of Land Management-California, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-Region 8, and the Department of Interior conducted numerous meetings and technical sessions throughout the year with Native American Tribes. BLM-California initiated government-to-government meetings creating a series of opportunities and a forum for the 40 California Desert Area federally recognized Tribal leaders to engage with Federal executives (DOI, OIS, SOL, BLM, FWS, BIA) to identify issues, concerns, interests and to share information regarding any and all natural and cultural resources in the California Desert Area pertinent to renewable energy, natural and cultural resource conservation, and land use planning in the CDCA, Bishop RMP, Caliente/Bakersfield RMP, and Eastern San Diego County RMP, as part of the development of the DRECP, including alternatives. BLM provided technical support to those Tribes that requested it for mapping the areas they defined as significant to conserve or develop for renewable energy.

The meetings were held under the authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA, Sec. 202(c) 9) and have not been conducted as consultation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 consultations seeking information from Indian tribes who might attach religious and cultural significance to historic properties in the DRECP and to consult about concerns regarding such properties will occur at a later date.

Through this dialogue, the Tribes became more familiar with the DRECP planning process. Additionally, BLM and all the federal participating agencies received a deeper understanding of tribal concerns and valuable input as to those areas that the Tribes would like considered for natural resource and cultural conservation or renewable energy development in the DRECP alternatives.

As part of this dialogue, the Tribes reaffirmed the enduring value of the map of Tribal Interest Areas created in 1980 for the original CDCA Plan and the importance of its role in the development of DRECP alternatives. This map was generated via conversations with tribal elders in the late 1970's and 1980 and was identified in the original CDCA Plan as the Native American Element. In a following chapter Figures 4.8-1 through Figure 4.8-6 depict the distribution of these lands relative to the lands proposed for conservation and development for renewable energy under each alternative.

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