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October 26, 2011

DRECP Preliminary Conservation Strategy

7. SUMMARY OF NEXT STEPS

The Preliminary Conservation Strategy (PCS) is a stepping-stone to the immediate next steps in the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) planning process, which include further development of conservation strategies and their alternatives and the selection of a preliminary preferred conservation and implementation strategy. These next steps will require work on conservation planning and development planning and include the following specific items:

Conservation Planning (Complete by February 2012, items g and i are ongoing, item h will be posted February 2012, see Section 6 for further discussion of science review and integration)

- a. Species profiles – Prepare species profiles for potentially about 40 additional proposed Covered Species as appropriate based on ongoing review of species list ;
- b. Species models – Complete expert-based models and proceed with statistically based models using MaxEnt for species with sufficient available data including species for which species profiles have already been developed and potential new species profiles;
- c. Obtain review by species experts of species profiles and models;
- d. Complete vegetation cross-walk for consistency with current vegetation mapping efforts, revised species models as needed to reflect the crosswalk, and obtain review of natural communities descriptions by experts;
- e. Complete documentation of existing landscape features/ecological processes needed for conservation planning and obtain review by experts;
- f. Refine gap analysis based on the data set assembled in items a through e, above;
- g. Conduct preliminary reserve selection modeling using Marxan, with consideration of alternative regional-scale and DRECP-scale conservation targets and scenarios, with appropriate map products;
- h. Develop draft biological goals and objectives for the preliminary preferred conservation and implementation strategy; and
- i. Continue to assemble and use additional data as they become available.

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Development Planning (Complete by February 2012, items d and e are ongoing)

- a. Identify appropriate renewable energy technology mixes to carry forward from the California Energy Commission calculator in order to estimate magnitude of potential impacts;
- b. Identify most appropriate acreage multipliers for calculator;
- c. Review and refine the Renewable Energy Study Areas (RESAs) and explore use of the RESAs concept in development of alternative conservation strategies;
- d. Assemble more detailed transmission data to analyze the opportunities presented by lower voltage transmission; and
- e. Explore solutions for other barriers to development, such as highly fragmented ownership of private land.

Alternative Conservation Strategies Development (Complete by February 2012)

- a. Engage stakeholders in development of alternative conservation strategies, including: (1) consideration of comments on the PCS; (2) working group and joint working group meetings; and (3) stakeholder meetings including interest group breakouts or working sessions;
- b. Incorporate both conservation and development planning information noted above;
- c. Use Development of DRECP Conservation Strategy Alternatives memorandum (posted October 11, 2011, to www.drecp.org) as a springboard for discussion; and
- d. Consider and discuss DRECP options for structuring conservation strategies introduced and discussed in the Approach to Structuring the Preliminary Conservation Strategy memorandum (posted July 1, 2011, to www.drecp.org) and the DRECP Regulatory Framework presentation on January 12 and 13, 2011 (posted January 19, 2011, to http://www.drecp.org/meetings/2011-01-12and13_meeting/presentations/), as well as other new options suggested by stakeholders.