



Conservation
Lands
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Protecting America's Heritage

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Balanced California Desert Management Plan Promotes Renewable Energy While Permanently Protecting Key Landscapes

*New California Desert Conservation Lands ensure the public can continue to explore
and experience the best of the unspoiled California Desert*

Palm Desert, Calif. (September 14, 2016) — The Conservation Lands Foundation praised the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) release of the Desert Renewable Energy and Conservation Plan (DRECP) today. Best known for identifying renewable energy development zones, the DRECP also provides permanent protections for the [California Desert Conservation Lands](#). The newly-designated California Desert Conservation Lands are now part of the BLM-managed [National Conservation Lands](#) that protect treasured landscapes throughout the West.

The California Desert Conservation Lands protected under the plan include regions such as the [Silurian Valley](#), [Amargosa Basin](#), [Panamint Valley](#), [Chuckwalla Bench](#) and [Yuha Desert](#). The DRECP protects these areas for their important cultural, natural and historical values while allowing the public to continue to recreate in and explore these distinctive regions. The newly-designated California Desert Conservation Lands contain the highest concentration of endangered species in the desert southwest, the only free-flowing river in the Mojave Desert, paleo-archaeological sites from early Paiute settlements, and the historic site of General Patton's World War II training camps.

"This plan is a win for California. Not only does it help the State meet renewable energy goals, it also protects some of California's best places—lands that provide a recreational escape and protect important wildlife species," stated **Doug Wheeler, former California Secretary for Natural Resources**.

Before the DRECP, ensuring a balance between land conservation and renewable energy in the California desert was done on a location-by-location basis. The benefits of regional-level planning include greater regulatory and economic certainty by streamlining renewable energy projects in appropriate areas, while ensuring "better conservation results than piecemeal project-by-project, species-by-species permitting." (www.drecp.org)

"Transforming our electric grid is among the most critical challenges we face as we look forward to saving our planet from devastating climate change. The opportunity to site grid-scale renewables while protecting our most vulnerable ecosystems and fragile landscapes is incredibly exciting and a model for what can and should be done around the country," noted **Alex Laskey, President and Founder of Opower, an industry leading Smart Grid and Energy Efficiency software company**.

Together with other protected areas in the desert, the resulting conservation network will now make the Mojave Desert one of the best-protected deserts in the world.

“The California desert is a beautiful, unique and fragile landscape.” said **Danielle Murray, Senior Director at the Conservation Lands Foundation**. “The DRECP provides a responsible path for future development, while permanently protecting the most important places as California Desert Conservation Lands. We thank Secretary Sally Jewell and the Bureau of Land Management for this landmark plan and hope it serves as a model for public lands planning in the future.”

For more information about the California Desert Conservation Lands, go to <http://desertlands.org>.

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The non-profit Conservation Lands Foundation is the only organization in the country dedicated solely to protecting, restoring and expanding the National Conservation Lands so they will endure from generation to generation. The National Conservation Lands are more than 34 million acres—more than 7 million acres in California—of protected public lands and waterways, managed by the Bureau of Land Management, that have joined the ranks of our national parks and wildlife refuges as guardians of our nation’s heritage and drivers of the country’s \$646 billion outdoor recreation economy. www.ConservationLands.org