

## **Appendix C**

### **Scoping Meeting Materials**

**C.1 Meeting Registration**

**C.2 Meeting Agenda**

**C.3 Meeting Comment Forms**

**C.4 Project Fact Sheet**

**C.5 Project Area Map**

**C.6 Project Photos/Poster Boards**



## Bureau of Land Management

### Public Scoping Meeting

### West Chocolate Mountain Evaluation Area EIS

Calipatria, CA – March 4, 2010

**Note:** Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you may ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

## SIGN-IN SHEET

Presentation starting promptly at 6:30 PM *(PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY)*

NAME	AFFILIATION	Mailing ADDRESS	PHONE	EMAIL	Do you want to be on the Mailing List?



**West Chocolate Mountains  
Renewable Energy Evaluation  
Area  
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Scoping Meeting Agenda**

March 4, 2010

**6:30 - 8:30 Public Scoping Meeting**

- 6:30 Welcome and Introductions
- 6:35 Presentation
- 6:45 - 8:30 Open House

*Thank you for attending!*





## ■ Environmental Review

Issuing leases for the exploration, development, and utilization of geothermal resources and solar energy development is considered a Federal action and may have a significant adverse impact to the environment. The BLM will prepare an EIS in compliance with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to identify, analyze, and disclose potential environmental effects of leasing geothermal resources.

BLM is conducting scoping for the proposed leasing of geothermal resources and granting of ROWs for solar and wind energy facilities to identify issues to be addressed, and identify the range of actions, alternatives, mitigation measures, and significant effects to be analyzed in-depth in the EIS. The anticipated release of the Draft EIS/Draft Plan Amendment to the CDCA is Summer 2010. The publication of a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register will announce the release of the report and start of the 90-day comment period. Formal public meetings will also be conducted during this time. The Final EIS/Proposed Plan Amendment is expected in the winter of 2010/2011 and another Notice of Availability will be published to announce the release, as well as start of 30-day protest period and 60-day Governor's Consistency Review. A Record of Decision (ROD) to issue or not issue leases for development of geothermal resources and ROW grants for solar energy development in the West Chocolate Area and amendment to the CDCA is expected in Spring 2011.

## ■ Public Outreach and Communication

The project team welcomes comments and involvement throughout the project and appreciates your feedback. Comments concerning the scope of the environmental analysis are requested by close of business March 19, 2010. If you have questions or comments about the project, or would like to be added to the project mailing list, please contact the project team in one of the following ways:

- Attend one of the public scoping meetings
- Visit the project website – [www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html)
- Send an email to [cawestchocolate@ca.blm.gov](mailto:cawestchocolate@ca.blm.gov)
- Send written comments to:  
Bureau of Land Management  
California Desert District Office  
Attn: John Dalton,  
West Chocolate Area Coordinator  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, California 92553

**Disclaimer:** Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

# FACT SHEET

No. 1

## WEST CHOCOLATE MOUNTAINS RENEWABLE ENERGY EVALUATION AREA

March 2010

### Scoping Meetings

#### ■ PROJECT OVERVIEW –

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing this Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan of 1980 (as amended in 1999) Plan Amendment to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of leasing approximately 19,047 acres of BLM-managed surface lands for testing and developing solar and wind energy facilities on and leasing approximately 20,962 acres of federal mineral estate for geothermal energy testing and development in the West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Project Area (hereafter the West Chocolate Area).

The West Chocolate Area is located in Imperial County, California approximately 18 miles north of Brawley. The approximate project area boundaries are the Salton Sea to the west, the U.S. Marine Corps Chocolate Mountains Aerial Gunnery Range (CMAGR) to the east, the Imperial/Riverside county line to the north and the North Algodones Dunes Wilderness Area to the south.

#### ■ BENEFITS

##### Geothermal Resources

Geothermal resources are underground reservoirs of hot water or steam created by heat from the earth. Geothermal steam and hot water can reach the surface of the earth in the form of hot springs, geysers, mud pots, or steam vents. These resources can be accessed by wells, and the heat energy can be used for generating electricity.

Geothermal fields produce only about one-sixth of the carbon dioxide that a relatively clean natural gas fueled power plant produces, and very little if any, of the nitrous oxide or sulfur-bearing gases. Geothermal energy is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Geothermal power plants may be the most reliable of all energy production methods, because they do not require purchase or transport of fuel, or waste disposal, and have no intermittency or dispatchability problems.

Geothermal energy is a renewable resource, because its source, the earth's core, provides an almost unlimited amount of heat. Tapping into clean, renewable geothermal energy will help reduce greenhouse gas emission associated with other types of power plants.



Typical geothermal power plant facilities

### PROJECT TIMELINE

#### Scoping

- Scoping comments due March 19, 2010

February 10 to March 19, 2010

#### Draft EIS/Draft Plan Amendment

- Publish Notice of Availability
- 90-day comment period

Summer 2010

#### Formal Public Meetings

Summer 2010

#### FEIS/Proposed Plan Amendment

- Publish Notice of Availability
- 30-day protest period
- 60-day Governor's Consistency Review

Winter 2010/2011

#### Record of Decision

Winter 2010/2011

For the latest information... Website: [www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html)

Email: [cawestchocolate@ca.blm.gov](mailto:cawestchocolate@ca.blm.gov)

West Chocolate Coordinator: John Dalton

22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, California 92553



■ **Solar Energy –**

Solar radiation can be converted directly to usable energy through a variety of technologies, and that energy can be used for large-scale commercial applications such as generating electricity in solar power plants. Due to the fact that the desert regions of Southern California receive large amounts of solar radiation nearly every day, it is an ideal location for solar energy projects.

Similar to geothermal energy, solar energy generation is a clean alternative to coal and natural gas-fired power plants that produces close to zero greenhouse gas emissions. Several different solar power producing technologies are now being as well. Photovoltaic technology (PV)—arrays of solar cells that convert solar radiation to direct current electricity—is becoming increasingly popular in desert regions due to minimal maintenance and low water usage.

■ **Wind Energy –**

Much like geothermal and solar energy, wind energy is a clean and economically feasible option for the generation of electricity. Nearly constant winds that come onshore from the Pacific Ocean and pass through the deserts of Southern California provide a viable energy resource that does not come at the expense of emitting greenhouse gases.



■ **PURPOSE and NEED**

The focus of the EIS is to assess whether the 19,700 acres of BLM-managed lands within the West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area should be made available for renewable energy development including solar energy rights-of-way (ROWs) and wind energy ROWs. Geothermal leasing would involve 20,962 acres (19,700 acres of BLM land and 1,262 acres of split estate [private surface/federal subsurface]). Through the analysis contained within the EIS, the BLM will consider whether all, a portion of, or no lands within the area should be leased for geothermal exploration and development, solar energy development through ROWs, or wind energy development through ROWs.

As part of an overall strategy to develop a diverse portfolio of domestic energy supplies for our future, the National Energy Policy of 2001 and the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (Pub. L109-58, August 8, 2005) encourage the development of renewable energy resources, which includes geothermal, solar and wind energy. The BLM issued a National Energy Policy Implementation Plan in June 2001, which directed the BLM to process geothermal leases in a timely manner in order to help support efforts to increase energy production from federal minerals, while preserving the health of the public lands. Section 211 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 encourages the approval of at least 10,000 MW of non-hydropower renewable energy projects on the public lands by 2015. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 made significant changes to the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, to encourage leasing and development of geothermal resources from public lands. BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 2007-097, issued on April 4, 2007, establishes policy for the processing ROW applications for solar energy projects on BLM-managed public lands. As part of the Final Programmatic EIS on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States prepared by BLM (2005), the BLM and the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) established a partnership to conduct assessments of wind energy on BLM-administered lands in the western United States to assist in determining where such development should occur.

The CDCA Plan provides overall regional guidance for management of the public lands in CDCA and establishes long-term goals for protection and use of the California Desert. The BLM directly administers about 10 million acres of the CDCA, which includes the West Chocolate Area. Congress directed the BLM to prepare and implement a comprehensive, long-range plan for the management, use, development, and protection of public lands within the CDCA. The Plan is based on the concepts of multiple use, sustained yield, and maintenance of environmental quality. The Plan would be amended to allow the West Chocolate Area lands to be leased for geothermal exploration, development, and utilization.

The BLM currently has received one noncompetitive geothermal lease application for approximately 640 acres of BLM-managed lands within the West Chocolate Area and must determine whether to approve the application. There are currently no solar or wind energy ROW grants pending or approved within the West Chocolate Area.

Although this is a Federal action taking place on Federal land, this proposal will also assist the State of California with its Renewable Portfolio Standard goals that call for 33 percent of California's energy to be derived from renewable sources by 2020.

■ **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

BLM is proposing leasing of geothermal resources, as well as solar and wind energy development ROWs, in the West Chocolate Area, which consists of approximately 19,700 acres of BLM-managed surface lands and an additional 1,262 acres of BLM-managed mineral estate; this area also includes one lease application for approximately 640 acres of BLM-managed lands. The BLM-managed lands considered for leasing occupy all or a portion of the following sections:

**T9S - R12E**, Sections: All or portions of 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 24, 26, 28

**T9S - R13E**, Sections: All or portions of 18, 20, 22, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34

**T10S - R13E**, Sections: All or portions of 4, 6, 10

**T10S - R14E**, Sections: All or portions of 6, 8, 22, 26, 28

**T10S - R15E**, Section: 32

**T11S - R14E**, Section: portion of 12

**T11S - R15E**, Sections: All or portions of 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 18, 20, 22, 24, 28, 34, plus Catellus Acquisition Sections 11 and 13

**T11S - R16E**, Section: 30, plus Catellus Acquisition Sections 19 and 29

The proposed action is to amend the CDCA Plan to allow project area lands to be leased under the authority of the Geothermal Steam Act of 1970, as amended (30 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.). The CDCA Plan does not specifically identify areas for solar and wind energy ROW grants, therefore, an amendment to the Plan may be necessary for this purpose as well.

The approval to issue geothermal leases could have indirect environmental impacts because such leasing represents a commitment of resources, and it is reasonably expected that subsequent exploration, development, production, and decommissioning activities would occur. A lease for geothermal resources allows the right to future exploration and development of geothermal resources within the lease area, however, subsequent activities involving surface disturbance or other extensive operational activities specific to a project will require additional NEPA analysis. The same would apply for solar and wind energy development.



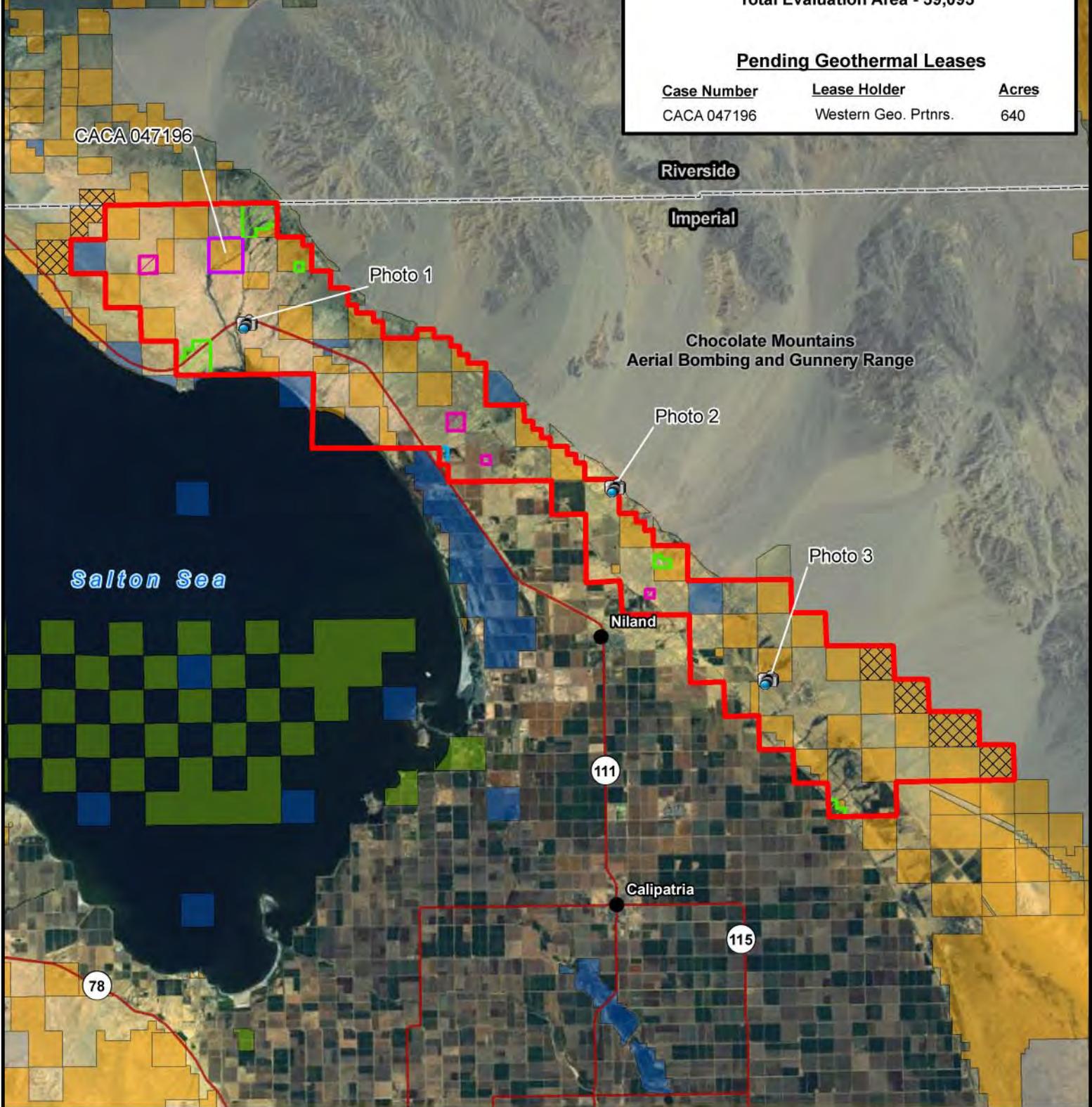
# West Chocolate Mountains Renewable Energy Evaluation Area

## Surface Ownership Acreage (Nearest Full Acre)

BLM - 19,700  
 Private - 33,333  
 CSLC - 3,200  
 Catellus Acquisitions - 2,862  
**Total Evaluation Area - 59,095**

## Pending Geothermal Leases

Case Number	Lease Holder	Acres
CACA 047196	Western Geo. Prtnrs.	640



Evaluation Area	DOD Land	Split Estate - All Mineral Rights Owned	County Boundary
Catellus Acquisition	USFWS Land	Split Estate - Geothermal Rights Owned	Major Road
Pending Geothermal Lease	CA State Land	Split Estate - Oil and Gas Rights Owned	City
	BLM Land		Photo Location

N

0 1 2 3 Miles

*Photo 1 - Facing South From Highway 111  
Near Mineral Springs*



*Photo 2 - Facing south in the south-central portion of the Evaluation Area – Badland landscape and transmission lines*





*Photo 3 - Facing northeast from the southern edge of the Evaluation Area – Creosote bush-dominated vegetation community and the Chocolate Mountains*

