

Public Lands Update
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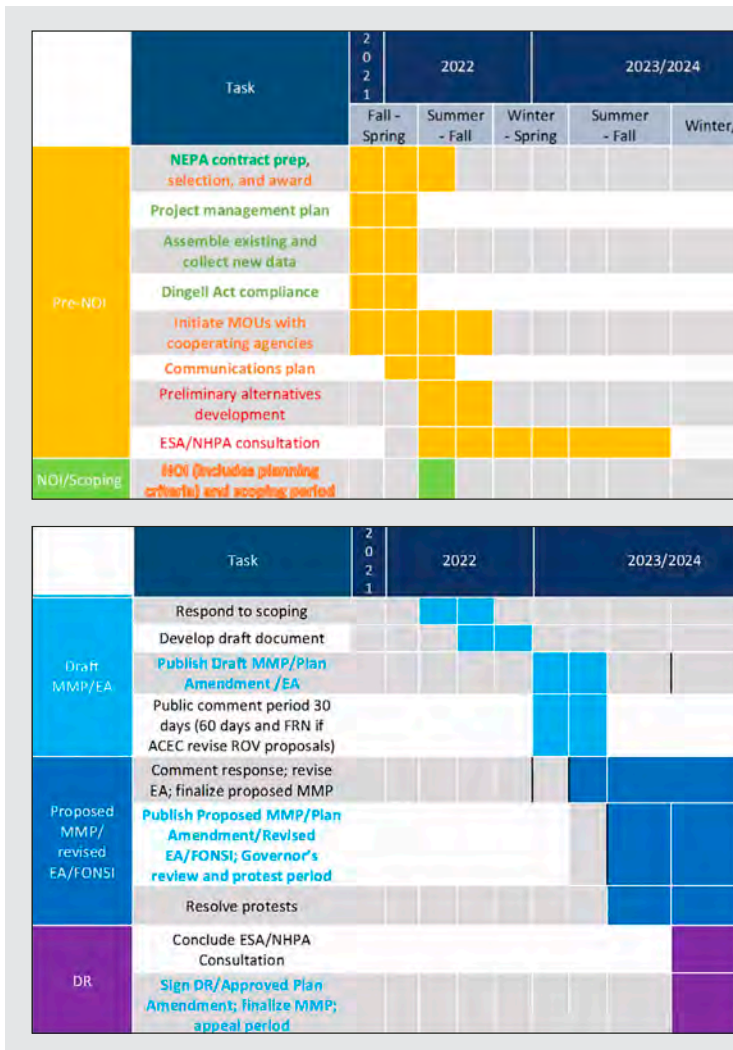
The DAC Meeting in August

THE DESERT DISTRICT Advisory Council (DAC) of the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** met on Saturday, August 27, 2022. The agenda included presentations and reports by council members, five BLM Field Managers and one monument manager, as well as formal introduction of **Shelly Lynch** as the new DAC District manager. The August DAC meeting agenda is posted online at: <https://on.doi.gov/3QyBEQA>.

The virtual all-day Zoom meeting was better attended than the May meeting, with 23 participants

from the public in the morning session. Rockhounds showed up and stayed to participate in the public comment period in the late afternoon along with some conservation group representatives.

For Rockhounds, the most important item on the agenda was a presentation on **Mojave Trails National Monument (MTNM)** by **Noelle Glines-Bovio**. It was her first introduction to the public via a DAC meeting since assuming the role of monument manager in the summer of 2020. For anyone who attended the Zoom information sessions on MTNM, which the BLM hosted in April, the overview presented at the April meetings was substantially the same as the one given at the DAC meeting. However, the timeline is now better developed for the Management Plan, which is slated to be finalized by late summer/early fall of 2024 (see figures below).



MTNM Project Status/Timeline

Source: DAC presentation, 8/27/2022, N. Glines-Bovio

Notice of Intent/ Winter (January 2023)

Red and Orange = under development or review.

Draft MMP/ Late 2023
 Proposed MMP/ early 2024
 Approved MMP/EA 2024

Mojave Trails National Monument Countdown to a Final Management Plan

It will be important for Rockhounds to participate during every step of the management planning process over the next two years. We'll be playing an active role and coordinating with **Gregor Losson**, who will be advocating Rockhounding interests to the DAC via the Mojave Trails subgroup.

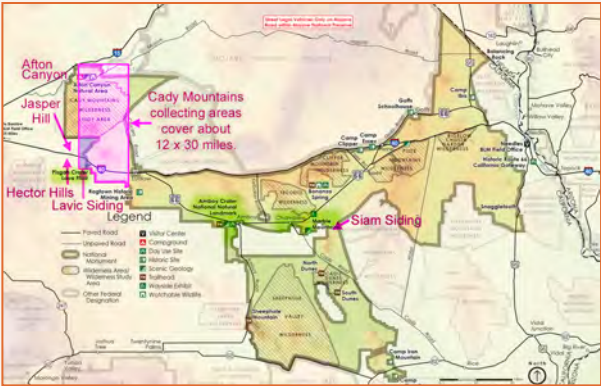
National monuments belong to everyone, not only the local residents where a monument is located – we welcome rockhounds everywhere to get involved. **Got questions?** Contact Lisbet at editor@sdmg.org.

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| Planning Schedule for MTNM through ROD | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Fall/Winter 2022 | Notice of Intent |
| Summer 2023 | Draft MMP / EA |
| Winter 2023 | Proposed MMP / Final EA |
| Summer 2024 | Approved MMP / ROD |



Collecting areas highlighted in the Mojave Trails National Monument. Source: BLM, with annotations by L. Thoresen.

On the Docket: Industrializing California's Deserts

It bears repeating that since the **Desert Renewal Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)** was made final in September 2016, the permits issued for industrial scale renewable energy (RE) projects, especially solar, have sky-rocketed. DRECP was designed expressly to fast-track permits for such projects and get Californians running on 100% renewable energy ASAP. Once again, at the August meeting, as previously, DAC member **Richard Holliday** pointed out that a fabulous amount of solar has been powered down in California because the "frequency cannot be controlled in the system," i.e., California has more solar, with more production capacity than can be used. It cannot be stored, so building more RE projects without having a storage solution as a variable in the equation is not actually getting us closer to 100% RE

usage. Nonetheless, it is being pursued aggressively. Dick Holliday's background is in the energy industry dating back 30+ years. Without explicitly saying that the way the transition to renewables is being managed in California is programmatically chaotic, it was clear from his comments that the cart has been put before the horse. And so, at the present time, 40 percent of industrial scale solar projects already built are offline, even as new projects are breaking ground at a feverish pace. If the future portends the building of quite a lot of infrastructure to support all these RE projects, it does not require a crystal ball to see that the desert will be the obvious target of still more exploitive activities – rare earth element mining, building battery storage facilities and transmission corridors to connect RE projects to a grid that needs its own bolstering and building out to meet demand.