DESERT SUNLIGHT SOLAR PROJECT
WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
DESERT CENTER, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 10-SEPTEMBER 16, 2012

PUBLIC INFORMATION

PREPARED BY

L. CHOW, DESIGNATED BIOLOGIST

IRONWOOD CONSULTING INC.

20 NEVADA STREET, SUITE 300

REDLANDS, CA 92373

Summary:

Health assessments for all tortoises associated with the project began this week and was completed. Clearance surveys in the northern section of the site continued at the beginning of the week but were halted due to the rain events. All tortoises were tracked throughout the week and many have been travelling quite a bit. One translocated tortoise was of particular concern, because it was travelling close to a road being maintained by the county, so it was monitored until it was very far from harm's way.

All kit foxes were tracked daily and were found in their typical dens. The on-site female, however, was missing for two days and a larger effort on-site found her hiding underneath some site supplies. It is speculated that she was displaced when the heavy rainstorm occurred and was seeking shelter. She was later found again that same day foraging in vegetated areas of the site and returned to her den all the following days.

Quarterly weed surveys around the perimeter of the site and the buffer zones were conducted – no weeds were found. Monthly raven surveys were also conducted – raven sightings were minimal.

All other daily and weekly biological checks were completed throughout the week and no major issues were observed. Daily tortoise fence inspections occurred and all damage were repaired immediately and fence reinforcement for future rain events also occurred. The wheel wash was not working properly after the rains and First Solar provided staff to manually wash all vehicles entering the site.

Aggregate exported dirt in the southern retention basins and compacted and grubbed the southeastern portion of the site as some work continued in the western basins as more material was added in between the perimeter fence and tortoise fence. After the rains, however, some work was shifted to site maintenance. Visits to the northern weather station continued to be accompanied by a biologist.

Monday:

Clearance surveys in blocks 6, 7, and 8 continued. All tortoises were tracked with the exception of two off-site tortoises due to the thunderstorm. Health assessments on all the transmittered tortoises occurred throughout the week in the early mornings. Aggregate exported soil from the southeast basins to the southeast construction block as more material was placed in the western basins. Work ended earlier due to the rain.

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Tuesday:

Only the female kit fox was tracked due to the thunderstorm and tracking of the remaining two off-site tortoises were delayed. The wheel wash was not functioning properly due to the rain the previous day, but visual inspections and manual washes

occurred to alleviate the problem. Heavy rainfall occurred again and stopped work early again. Repairs on the tortoise fence occurred. Some of the work for Aggregate was shifted to site maintenance to repair the damage done by the rains.

Wednesday:

Perimeter and internal tortoise fencing was inspected – repairs were made. Visits to the north weather station were escorted by a biologist through Friday. The wheel wash was not working properly and visual inspections occurred until a person dedicated to manually wash all vehicles entering the site was assigned. Manual washing occurred for the remainder of the week.

Thursday:

3 of the 4 kit foxes were tracked. Repairs on the perimeter tortoise fence continued to reinforce the integrity of the fence. Bird netting was checked and final repairs were made on the perimeter tortoise fence to prepare it for future rain events. Translocated tortoise was found close to a road being maintained – observed until maintenance crew left for the day.

Friday:

All kit foxes and tortoises were tracked and the female kit fox was found. Efforts to remove large rodent complexes in the vegetated area on the eastern portion of the site continued through the weekend. The same translocated tortoise from the previous day was observed until it was very far from harm's way. Quarterly perimeter and buffer zone weed surveys were conducted.

Saturday:

Monthly raven surveys occurred. All kit foxes were tracked. Daily compliance checks were completed without issue. No construction activities requiring a biological monitor as only some road maintenance on the site occurred.

Sunday:

Clearance surveys continued in the northern section of the site. All kit foxes were tracked as well as tortoise #6007 to ensure that he was a safe distance from any road. Daily compliance checks were completed without issue. No construction activities requiring a biological monitor occurred.