



Fact Sheet

For Immediate Release

May 15, 2007

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Geothermal Drilling at Ocotillo Wells SVRA

The purpose of this fact sheet is to outline what is and is not going on at Ocotillo Wells State Vehicle Recreation Area, as of this date, in regard to the development of geothermal energy.

First, it is important to understand the ownership of the land within Ocotillo Wells SVRA. The SVRA is composed of approximately 80,000 acres. Of that, approximately 53,000 acres is owned by California State Parks and the other 27,000 acres is owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), but operated by State Parks. Under this agreement, BLM has retained the right to use its land in accordance with its rules and regulations, having the right to allow for the granting of leases for the development of geothermal wells and plants. California State Parks has no authority to interfere with that right.

For the California State Parks' land, the 53,000 acre SVRA portion of the property, a single permit for a test well has been granted. Layman Energy Associates/Islandic America Energy has a Right of Entry permit, recently extended for one year to March 31, 2008, which allows for the drilling of a single test well on a remote, three-acre section of the SVRA to explore for geothermal energy potential.

In granting the Right of Entry Permit, California State Parks is complying with a section of the Public Resources Code of the State of California which states that such an entry is allowed unless it interferes with the recreation of the area. Since this site is only three acres, and is in a remote section of the park where there is not high off-highway recreational activity, it could not be asserted that there would be an unreasonable impact on recreation. Therefore State Parks is legally obligated, under PRC 5019 and 5006.45 to grant a permit.

The Department's position however, is that longer-term or permanent arrangements for extraction wells, geothermal generation plants and electric transmission facilities, could unreasonably interfere with park uses. There are no applications or proposals for such facilities on State Parks' land at this time.

BLM has informed State Parks that they have five applications for geothermal leases on approximately 14,000 acres of their land within the SVRA and on another 8,000 acres of BLM land that is in the Superstition area, referred to as Truckhaven by BLM, but not the same as and not to be confused with the Truckhaven/Desert Cahuilla area owned by State Parks. Three public hearings were held in March. Currently, the draft EIS/EIR documents on these applications is out for public comment. The final EIS/EIR documents are due in June with a decision to lease or not to lease scheduled for July.

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California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>

