

**DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION****Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan Work Plan**

**COMMENT ON THIS DRAFT:** It is anticipated one consultant will prepare the plan and another prepare the EIR/EIS. To speed the process, the EIR/EIS work beginning when the plan is close to being released as an initial draft.

Fish and Game and CEC need to identify task areas where they wish to play the major role with the consultant supporting.

In each task below, it will be necessary to specify what individuals from the consultant will be involved, what the scope of the activity is in terms of meetings, travel, etc., and what the deliverables are.

**Introduction and Purpose**

Today, only 12 percent of California's retail electric load is served by renewable energy sources. The RPS, established by State law, requires all retail energy sellers to obtain 20 percent of their delivered electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010. In November 2008, the Governor of California increased the RPS target to 33 percent by 2020, through Executive Order S-14-08.

In addition to the California effort, in 2005 the federal Energy Security Policy Act renewed interest in developing utility-scale renewable energy facilities on federal public land. It established a target of approving 10,000 MW of non-hydropower renewable energy generation on public lands within 10 years of the Act. The United States Congress also intensified the need for accelerated development of such projects with passage in early 2009 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which confers economic benefits on renewable energy projects that begin construction before the end of 2010.

While the State and federal governments are committed to developing compatible renewable energy generation facilities and related transmission infrastructure to achieve these requirements and goals, they are also committed to conserving biological and natural resources within the state. The desert regions of California provide extensive renewable energy resource potential. They also support extraordinary biological and other natural resources of great value, including numerous threatened and endangered plant and animal species. The DRECP is intended to advance state and federal conservation goals in these desert regions while also facilitating the timely permitting of renewable energy projects under applicable State and federal laws.

Executive Order S-14-08 and associated Memoranda of Understanding by and among several State and federal agencies established the joint State-federal REAT, which consists of the Parties

to this Planning Agreement. The USFWS and BLM are voluntary participants in the REAT. Federal participation in the REAT is supported by the Secretary of the Interior's Secretarial Order 3285 (March 2009) directing all Department of the Interior agencies and departments (which include the BLM and USFWS) to encourage the timely and responsible development of renewable energy, while protecting and enhancing the nation's water, wildlife, and other natural resources. In October 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger and Secretary Salazar signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Renewable Energy between the State of California and the Department of Interior that merges the work efforts of both orders.

The REAT's primary mission is to streamline and expedite the permitting processes for renewable energy projects, while conserving endangered species and natural communities at the ecosystem scale. Executive Order S-14-08 directs the REAT to achieve these twin goals in the Mojave and Colorado Desert regions through the DRECP. The REAT is directed to develop a conservation strategy that identifies and maps areas for RPS-project development and areas for long-term natural resource conservation. This conservation strategy will form the foundation of the DRECP. This approach is supported by the State's NCCPA, and the section 10 habitat conservation planning provisions and section 7 consultation provisions of the FESA, as appropriate.

The Parties intend that the DRECP will encompass development of solar, solar PV, wind, and other forms of renewable energy within the Mojave and Colorado Desert regions.

### **DRECP Planning Goals**

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is being developed to allow for projects to proceed that restore and/or protect ecosystem health within a stable regulatory framework. To support these ends, this regional conservation plan will address compliance with federal and California endangered species laws and regulations covering various development, construction, transmission and operational activities by renewable energy producers within the plan boundaries.

DRECP planning goals include:

- Provide for the long-term conservation and management of Covered Species within the Planning Area
- Preserve, restore, and enhance natural communities and ecosystems that support Covered Species within the Planning Area
- Build on the Competitive Renewable Energy Zones identified by RETI
- Further identify the most appropriate locations within the Planning Area for the development of utility-scale renewable energy projects, taking into account potential impacts to threatened and endangered species and sensitive natural communities

- Provide a means to implement Covered Activities in a manner that complies with the NCCPA, FESA, NEPA, CEQA, and other relevant laws
- Provide a basis for the issuance of Take Authorizations allowing the lawful Take of Covered Species incidental to Covered Activities
- Provide for issuance of Take permits for other species that are not currently listed but which may be listed in the future
- Provide a comprehensive means to coordinate and standardize mitigation and compensation requirements for Covered Activities within the Planning Area
- Provide a framework for a more efficient process by which proposed renewable energy projects within the Planning Area may obtain regulatory authorizations and which results in greater conservation values than a project-by-project, species-by-species review would have
- Provide durable and reliable regulatory assurances, as appropriate, under the NCCPA and the FESA for Covered Activities that occur within the Planning Area
- Identify and incorporate climate change adaptation research, management objectives, and/or policies into the final plan document.

The Parties recognize that, until conservation strategies are developed for the Covered Species and their habitats, and conservation partnerships are formed, the cost and feasibility of achieving these goals will not be known. During the development of the DRECP, the DRECP goals, preliminary conservation objectives, covered species, covered activities, and planning area may be modified to ensure that implementation of the DRECP will be practicable.

This Draft Work Plan provides the statement of work, schedule, and assumptions for tasks proposed to be conducted by CONSULTANT to prepare the DRECP in support of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee, and the Agencies as defined in the Planning Agreement.

### **Work Plan**

This Work Plan describes the scope of effort by CONSULTANT to develop the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) in support of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee. The Work Plan includes tasks to:

**Task 1. Manage the Project:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will coordinate with the DRECP Director and DRECP Executive Steering Committee during preparation of the DRECP and manage the project.

**Task 2. Support the Public Involvement and Outreach Program:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will provide technical support as needed for public involvement and outreach, including support

at meeting, public workshops, and preparation of exhibits and web materials.

**Task 3. Support the Independent Science Advisor Process:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will assist the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the Independent Science Advisor Process, including research, GIS work and support of Independent Science Advisor workshops.

**Task 4. Identify and Describe Covered Activities:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will assist the Stakeholder Committee and DRECP Executive Steering Committee in identifying and describing activities to be covered under the DRECP. The description of covered activities developed will provide the information necessary to conduct the DRECP impact assessment.

**Task 5. Compile Ecological Baseline Data and Prepare Report:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will assist the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in identifying the DRECP planning area and covered species, will coordinate with the regulatory agencies and other entities to compile the best available information to describe ecological baseline conditions, and prepare the ecological baseline report . The information gathered under this task will be used to prepare the Ecological Baseline Report.

**Task 6. Conduct the DRECP Impact Assessment:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will assist the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in identifying the impacts of implementing the covered activities on covered species, natural communities, and ESA designated critical habitats. Where possible, impacts will be described quantitatively, level of species take will be identified, and impacts on populations and species abundance will be determined. Results of the impact assessment will be used to develop the conservation strategy.

**Task 7. Prepare the DRECP Conservation Strategy:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will assist the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in selecting the desired overall approach to the conservation strategy and then will develop the proposed conservation strategy. Key elements of the conservation strategy are the biological goals and objectives, conservation measures, monitoring and research plan, and adaptive management plan.

**Task 8. Conduct Economic Analyses:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will prepare relative cost estimates for alternative conservation strategies. To develop DRECP conservation measures, CONSULTANT will assess the cost effectiveness of proposed conservation measures and will then prepare a detailed cost estimate for implementing the proposed DRECP conservation strategy. CONSULTANT will also assist the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in developing strategies for funding implementation of the DRECP.

**Task 9. Prepare the Draft DRECP Document:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will prepare the full DRECP document with all required sections. CONSULTANT will prepare administrative drafts of the DRECP document for DRECP Executive Steering Committee review and then the Public Draft

DRECP for public release. Under this task, CONSULTANT will support the EIR/EIS consultant in the preparation of the Draft EIR/EIS and will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the preparation of the draft Implementing Agreement (Implementing Agreement).

**Task 10. Prepare the Final DRECP Document:** Under this Task, CONSULTANT will prepare the final DRECP document based on public comments. CONSULTANT will coordinate with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in preparing responses to public comments. CONSULTANT will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee with preparation of the final Implementing Agreement.

## **STATEMENT OF WORK**

### **Task 1. Project Management**

#### **Task Section 1.1 Project Administration and Coordination**

As prime contractor for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), CONSULTANT will coordinate with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the preparation of the DRECP through communications via meetings, telephone calls, and email to facilitate efficient conduct of tasks. The Director will be the primary point of contact for CONSULTANT and will provide direction to CONSULTANT for all activities under the contracted Statement of Work.

CONSULTANT will prepare a Management and Communications Memorandum to the Director that describes the communication and management protocols for executing CONSULTANT's project scope, schedule, and budget for DRECP preparation. CONSULTANT project manager and deputy project manager will maintain regular communication with the Director to determine specific direction to CONSULTANT for work flow coordination and the content of deliverables. CONSULTANT will work with the Director to regularly review progress on the scope of work and status of the schedule and budget. In addition, CONSULTANT will maintain open communication via telephone and email with the Chair of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee and representatives of the members of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee as necessary throughout the preparation of the DRECP.

The CONSULTANT project manager will manage and coordinate all consulting staff under the CONSULTANT contract including subcontractors. CONSULTANT will establish and monitor subcontract agreements, scopes of work, work flow, and work products of subcontractors and ensure completion and coordination of work under a single schedule and single list of deliverables.

Under this Task Section, CONSULTANT will coordinate with the Agencies who are parties to the DRECP Planning Agreement in the development of work products for which Agency staff are

providing data, information, and interim review.

It is anticipated that as the DRECP is developed, tasks under this Work Plan and the schedule will change as information is gathered and participating agencies provide input and comment. As such, CONSULTANT will periodically review and update this Work Plan and schedule as necessary to meet the needs of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee. Changes in the scope of work and schedule would be evaluated to determine if additional work or changes in project direction would result in changes to the project cost.

### **Task Section 1.2 Project Monitoring and Status Reports**

CONSULTANT's project manager will monitor expenditures by task relative to task budgets, progress, and schedules.

### **Task Section 1.3. Administrative Record**

CONSULTANT will coordinate with the Director to maintain an appropriate administrative record of the DRECP in electronic format that is accessible to the DRECP Executive Steering Committee via internet. CONSULTANT will initially coordinate with the Director to identify protocols for providing CONSULTANT with materials to be maintained in the record and to identify the documents, emails and other communications records, and other information generated in the DRECP development process to be maintained in the administrative record.

### **Task Section 1.4 Meetings**

The CONSULTANT project manager or deputy project manager will attend regularly scheduled and, as needed, specially called meetings with the Director, Stakeholders Committee, DRECP Executive Steering Committee and the Agencies. These meetings will focus on DRECP development, decision making, project progress reporting, receiving direction, and resolution of issues that could affect project scope, schedule, or budget.

## **Task 2. Support Public Involvement and Outreach Program**

### **Task Section 2.1 Coordinate with Public Involvement and Outreach Consultant**

At the direction of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee, CONSULTANT will work with the DRECP to coordinate the development of informational materials (e.g., newsletters, website, pamphlets, and presentation graphics). A primary focus of this task is expected to be providing the public involvement and outreach consultant with the information necessary to develop informational materials related to the status and progress of DRECP development. CONSULTANT will also assist in a review capacity to ensure the accuracy of informational materials developed

by the public involvement and outreach consultant.

CONSULTANT will not maintain the DRECP website, but will coordinate with the Director to provide documents for inclusion on the website as these documents are authorized for release by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee.

### **Task Section 2.2 Support Public Workshops**

This task anticipates that up to X public workshops will be held. Up to Y CONSULTANT team members will attend and participate in these workshops. This participation would focus on providing technical support to the workshop facilitators.

## **Task 3. Support Independent Science Advisor Process**

### **Task Section 3.1 Support Development of Independent Science Advisor Process**

CONSULTANT will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the development of the process for independent scientific advice on and review of the draft DRECP products. This support will include input on the scope of services of the independent science advisor panel (SAP). There should be a clear separation of the consulting scientists and independent science advisors during preparation of conservation plans. CONSULTANT will provide support to the process as appropriate to maintain the separation necessary for an independent science review.

CONSULTANT will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the development of specific questions to pose to the science advisory panel that are germane to the development of the DRECP and particularly questions regarding the approach to the impact assessment and potential efficacy of conservation measures.

Under direction of the DRECP Executive Steering Committee and the Director, CONSULTANT will work to ensure that the DRECP science process is cognizant of and coordinated with other desert science and conservation plans.

### **Task Section 3.2 Support Science Advisor Panel Workshops**

Although the CONSULTANT must allow the science advisor panel its independence from DRECP development, the panel will need support from CONSULTANT to accomplish their tasks efficiently. Support from CONSULTANT will include providing to the SAP specific documents or portions of documents, guidance on where to find key information within documents provided, and summaries and clarification of information

## **Task 4. Covered Activities**

### **Task Section 4.1 Develop List of Covered Activities**

CONSULTANT will develop a list of covered activities in concert with the Agencies and the Stakeholders Committee.

#### **Task Section 4.3 Interim Project Notification Process and Tracking**

The Planning Agreement includes a process for notification when developers propose to undertake projects within the Planning Area prior to completion of the DRECP. CONSULTANT will assist the by developing a database for tracking these interim projects, including a summary of the project location, project purpose, biological effects, and mitigation measures included in the authorizations of those projects. This database will constitute a record of project and mitigation activity within the Planning Area during DRECP development and will be constructed to allow for the summation of effects on covered species and natural communities from all approved interim projects.

### **Task 5. Ecological Baseline Data Compilation and Report**

#### **Task Section 5.1 Identify Covered Species**

CONSULTANT will work with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee to develop criteria for identifying a preliminary list of species to be covered and addressed in the DRECP. CONSULTANT will prepare a draft and final technical memorandum describing covered species selection criteria and recommended covered species.

#### **Task Section 5.2 Description of Regulatory Environmental Baseline**

Environmental baseline is defined by regulation under the Endangered Species Act and other applicable laws. Before the impact analysis can be conducted or conservation measures developed, the time frame, actions, and conditions of the Planning Area that constitute the environmental baseline must be determined. CONSULTANT will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in the process of developing the environmental baseline for the Planning Area.

#### **Task Section 5.3 Assemble Resource Data and Information and Identify Gaps and Uncertainties**

CONSULTANT will assemble and synthesize data and information necessary for the development of the description of baseline ecological conditions, conduct of the impact analysis and development of the conservation strategy.

CONSULTANT will work with the Agencies, NGOs, and other entities to gather existing data sets, including GIS data, that are useful in the development of the DRECP. Such information may include species distribution data, vegetation data, land use data, soils data, etc. CONSULTANT



will establish a project data library of existing databases for use in presenting baseline conditions, conducting the impact analysis, developing the conservation strategy, and creating graphical depictions for the DRECP document.

Once all sources of data and information have been investigated, CONSULTANT will prepare and submit a memorandum to Director and Chair describing known or potential data gaps and the level of uncertainty associated with the available information for distribution and review by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee. This memorandum will summarize information that would be valuable to the DRECP development, but that is not available from existing sources.

#### **Task Section 5.4 Prepare Ecological Baseline Report**

CONSULTANT will prepare a draft and final Ecological Baseline Report. This report will be formatted as the ecological baseline chapter of the DRECP. This report will describe the overall physical and biological features of the Planning Area, the ecological characteristics of covered natural communities, and the status and ecological requirements of covered species.

CONSULTANT will prepare descriptions of the natural communities within the Planning Area. These descriptions will include an overview of distribution, dominant vegetation, common wildlife, and general ecological determinants (e.g., physical conditions such as soil types, geology, and hydrology that affect the community distribution and function).

The NCCP Act requires that NCCPs address the conservation of ecosystem functions, biological diversity, environmental gradients, and shifting species distributions. CONSULTANT will identify and describe the following characteristics of the major natural communities in the Planning Area:

- Ecosystem Function.
- Biological Diversity.
- Environmental Gradients.
- Shifting Species Distributions.

CONSULTANT will prepare status accounts for covered species using existing information gathered under Task Section 5.3. Species accounts will contain the following information:

- Legal status
- Distribution
- Habitat requirements
- Known distribution in the Planning Area

- Population status, trends, and reason for decline
- Current threats to survival
- Existing management actions
- Recovery goals (if any)

Species accounts will focus on information that is directly pertinent to the assessment of impacts and development of conservation measures in the DRECP.

## **Task 6. Impact Assessment**

### **Task Section 6.1 Develop Approach to Impact Assessment**

Before initiating the impact assessment, CONSULTANT will prepare and deliver to the Director and Chair for distribution to the DRECP Executive Steering Committee a presentation describing the approach proposed for conducting the impact analysis for covered species and natural communities. Following the presentation of the proposed approach, CONSULTANT will take guidance on the preferred approach and prepare an Impact Assessment Approach Report. CONSULTANT will work with the Executive Steering Committee to ensure that the proposed impact assessment approach will provide the information necessary to comply with the ESA and NCCPA. Impacts will be assessed from the baseline ecological conditions identified under Task 5. The report will identify the approach for each of the following components of the impact assessment:

- Impact mechanisms associated with each covered activity or groups of activities
- Impact mechanisms associated with anticipated proposed conservation measures (impact assessment methods would be developed iteratively following the preparation of the draft conservation strategy to address potential effects of conservation measures)
- Effects of covered activities and conservation measures on covered species, covered species habitats, and covered natural communities
- Metrics for expressing level of take for covered species and impacts on natural communities
- Conceptual species and species habitat models, population models, and other analytical tools proposed for use in assessing effects of covered activities and conservation measures on covered species and natural communities
- Statistical assessment methods

### **Task Section 6.2 Conduct Impact Analysis**

CONSULTANT will assist in conducting an assessment of impacts on covered species and natural communities that would be expected to result from implementation of the covered activities identified in Task 4. Following development of the conservation strategy under Task 7, CONSULTANT will assess the impacts expected to result from the implementation of DRECP conservation measures. As the conservation strategy is revised and refined, this impact assessment for conservation measures will also require revision and refinement. The impact assessment will identify the likely impacts of the covered activities on covered species and natural communities and estimated levels of species take as defined under federal and California regulations. Some impacts will not be readily identifiable or certain to occur and, in such instances, CONSULTANT will describe the relative likelihood of occurrence of such impacts. Impacts on ESA designated critical habitats will also be described.

#### Conceptual Species Habitat Models

Conceptual species habitat models will be developed for covered species using constituent elements of habitat that can be identified and quantified using existing data on vegetation, substrate, topography, and other parameters.

### **Task Section 6.3 Support Indirect and Cumulative Effects Analysis**

CONSULTANT will support the DRECP Executive Steering Committee in development of the assessment of indirect effects and will incorporate text received on indirect effects into a section of the DRECP.

### **Task 7. Conservation Strategy**

#### **Task Section 7.1. Review and Describe Other Conservation Programs in the Planning Area**

CONSULTANT will compile and review information related to conservation and other actions being undertaken through other programs within the Planning Area. Information developed under this task will be used to support development of the DRECP conservation strategy, such as the identification of opportunities to improve the efficacy of DRECP conservation measures through coordination with other programs.

#### **Task Section 7.2 Prepare Proposed Conservation Strategy**

CONSULTANT will assist in the preparation a detailed description of the proposed conservation strategy that will serve as the draft conservation strategy chapter for the DRECP. The proposed conservation strategy will describe measurable goals and objectives for each of the covered species and natural communities and will be consistent with guidance provided under the

USFWS's Five-Point Policy for HCPs and the requirements of the NCCP Act. Key elements of the conservation strategy are the biological goals and objectives, conservation measures, monitoring plan, and adaptive management plan. Draft deliverables for each of these elements will be combined under Task 9 to prepare the conservation strategy chapter of the draft DRECP.

#### Overall Conservation Goals and Approach

CONSULTANT will work with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee to develop the overall conservation goals and approach to the conservation strategy. After sufficient progress has been made in assessing impacts of covered activities on covered species under Task 6, CONSULTANT will prepare a draft and final Conservation Strategy Framework Report that describes in framework/summary form the DRECP Executive Steering Committee's proposed overall approach to conservation under the DRECP.

#### Biological Goals and Objectives

The CONSULTANT will work with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee to develop specific measurable biological goals and objectives for each of the covered species and natural communities. Species and community specific goals and objectives will be consistent with the overall conservation goals and objectives identified for the selected proposed conservation strategy. Goals and objectives will be formulated based on information collected under baseline ecological report and results of the impact assessment.

#### Development of Conservation Measures

Based on the Conservation Strategy Framework Report, CONSULTANT will develop detailed conservation measures designed to avoid and minimize impacts, mitigate impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and to achieve conservation goals for covered species and natural communities.

Conservation measures will be developed for each of the covered natural communities. These community-level conservation measures will address ecosystem functions necessary to sustain each natural community and will also provide for the protection, enhancement, and restoration of habitats for the covered species associated with each of the communities. Community-level conservation measures will include provisions for management actions that may need to be periodically implemented to maintain desired vegetative structure and compositions that provide habitat for covered species.

The conservation strategy will identify species-specific conservation measures for those covered species for which their conservation needs cannot be wholly achieved through implementation of system-wide-level and natural community-level measures. Examples of species-specific

measures would include measures that would be implemented in conjunction with covered activities that would avoid and minimize direct effects on covered species, that provide for protecting specified habitat areas necessary for one or more covered species, and establishing populations.

#### Adaptive Management Plan

The adaptive management plan (AMP) will be designed to meet the guidance provided in the USFWS's Five-Point Policy for HCPs, the requirements of the NCCP Act, and other applicable regulatory guidance. The adaptive management plan will address processes and procedures for adjusting DRECP implementation based on new information learned through results of effectiveness monitoring and research conducted under the DRECP and by others over the term of the DRECP.

#### Monitoring and Research Plan

The monitoring and research plan will identify monitoring goals and objectives, performance standards, the range of research that may be undertaken under the DRECP, and reporting requirements. This Work Plan assumes that detailed monitoring protocols and schedules and specific research studies will be developed during DRECP implementation. To develop the monitoring and research plan, CONSULTANT will review the extent of existing and planned monitoring and research relevant to the DRECP being implemented through other programs.

### **Task 8. Economic Analysis**

#### **Task Section 8.1 Prepare Implementation Relative Cost Estimates for Alternative Conservation Strategies**

To support the development of the overall approach to conservation strategy presentation as described in Task Section 7.2, the CONSULTANT economics team will develop screening-level cost/benefit information for up to three alternative conservation strategies. The economics team will use appropriate tools to represent expected relative implementation costs and conservation benefits of each alternative. Conservation benefits will be represented in terms of the expected increase in appropriate ecological metrics to gage progress towards achievement of goals and objectives over DRECP implementation. Strategy costs will be described as relative costs among evaluated alternatives. A gross cost estimate of the range of costs that could be associated with implementation of the Conservation Strategy Framework prepared under Task Section 7.2 will also be prepared.

#### **Task Section 8.2 Prepare Implementation Cost Estimate for Proposed Conservation Strategy**

Once the proposed conservation strategy has been selected and described the CONSULTANT economics team will develop detailed implementation cost estimates for the proposed strategy. Whereas the cost estimating for alternative overall conservation strategies under Task Section 8.1 will rely on reconnaissance-level cost information, the objective of this task is to develop a level of cost detail capable of supporting the DRECP's implementation cost allocation and funding plans.

#### Cost Estimation Guidelines

Before developing costs for conservation measures, the CONSULTANT economics team will prepare guidelines for the cost estimation, including formatting, level of detail, discounting assumptions, and period of analysis. CONSULTANT economics team will coordinate with the Executive Steering Committee to develop the guidelines for cost estimation. The economics team will use these guidelines to assure consistency in approach across team members and conservation actions. Existing state and federal guidelines for cost estimation will be reviewed and incorporated into the team guidelines as necessary.

#### Review Existing Cost Estimates

The economics team will conduct a review of existing cost estimates from other programs for conservation measures similar to the conservation measures included in the proposed conservation strategy. This review will identify the set of conservation measures for which existing detailed cost information is available. Conservation measures in the proposed conservation strategy will be sorted into three categories: (1) measures with no existing usable cost information; (2) measures with limited existing cost information of varying quality; and (3) measures with good existing cost information of medium to high quality. Using this information, the economics team will identify for each conservation measure the remaining cost information it must develop.

#### Develop Cost Estimates for Conservation Strategy Components

The economics team will work with engineers, habitat restoration specialists, and other experts to develop missing cost information for each conservation measure. The economics team will assess the cost of all components of the proposed conservation strategy including: conservation measures, monitoring, adaptive management, remedial measures, and plan administration. The cost effectiveness of proposed conservation measures will also be evaluated.

#### **Task Section 8.3 Assist with Conservation Funding Strategy**

The work in this Task Section is predicated on the assumption that the DRECP Executive Steering Committee will take the lead on developing the conservation funding and cost allocation

strategy. The role of the CONSULTANT economics team will be to provide analytic and technical support, as requested by the PREs and the DRECP Executive Steering Committee.

**Existing Funding.** The CONSULTANT economics team will compile information on existing state and federal funding that may be available to support DRECP implementation, such as passage of recent bond propositions, state and federal agency budgets, state general fund revenues, federal appropriations, and other sources.

### **Financing Tools.**

### **DRECP Cost/Revenue Schedule.**

## **Task 9. Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Under this task, the CONSULTANT Team will prepare administrative draft and public review draft versions of the DRECP.

### **Task Section 9.1 Prepare Administrative Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Following completion of the proposed conservation strategy and cost and funding analyses, CONSULTANT will complete the full DRECP document including all components required of a joint NCCP/HCP document and biological assessment (BA). The draft DRECP will include:

- Description of purpose and need
- Geographic scope of plan, duration of plan, covered species
- Description of the covered activities
- Ecological baseline conditions
- Analysis of impacts (including any adverse effects of conservation measures)
- Analysis of indirect and cumulative effects
- Proposed conservation strategy
- Expected outcomes with implementation of conservation measures
- Monitoring and adaptive management plan
- Governance and implementation Structure
- Implementation plan
- Implementation cost and funding sources
- Regulatory assurances requested by applicants
- Alternatives to take considered and rejected

The DRECP Executive Steering Committee will provide CONSULTANT with a description of the governance and implementation structure and a description of the DRECP implementation

funding assurances and sources.

CONSULTANT will initially prepare a draft annotated outline describing each DRECP chapter and its contents for review. Based on comments received, we will prepare a working outline that will be used to guide preparation of the Administrative Draft DRECP. The draft annotated outlines will be provided via email to the Director and Chair for distribution and review by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee.

The CONSULTANT Team will prepare two (2) administrative drafts of the DRECP for submittal to the Director and Chair for distribution and review by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee. The second draft will address comments received to the first draft.

### **Task Section 9.2 Prepare Public Review Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Based on comments received on the second administrative draft DRECP, CONSULTANT will prepare the public review draft DRECP. This Task Section assumes that the public review draft DRECP and draft Implementing Agreement will be released concurrently for review with the public review draft EIR/EIS and that the paper bound and CD copies of the public review draft documents will be assembled, reproduced, and distributed by the EIR/EIS consultant. CONSULTANT will initially prepare a screen-check version of the public review draft DRECP for review. Revisions required to the screen-check public review draft are assumed to be minimal, primarily editorial, and without large changes or changes in substantive content. The screen-check public review draft will be provided to the submittal to the Director and Chair for distribution and review by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee. Based on comments received, CONSULTANT will prepare the public review draft DRECP and will provide the EIR/EIS consultant with the electronic files for reproduction and public distribution.

### **Task Section 9.3 Support of Draft EIR/EIS Preparation**

### **Task Section 9.4. Support Draft Implementing Agreement**

## **Task 10. Final Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Under this task, the CONSULTANT Team will prepare the final DRECP.

### **Task Section 10.1 Review and Respond to Public Comments**

CONSULTANT will work with the DRECP Executive Steering Committee to review and respond to public comments specifically on the public review draft DRECP received by the federal and state lead agencies.



**Task Section 10.2 Prepare Final Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**

Based on responses to comments approved by the DRECP Executive Steering Committee under Task Section 10.1, CONSULTANT will prepare a draft final DRECP for review.

**Task Section 10.3 Support Final EIS/EIR Preparation**

CONSULTANT will support the preparation of the final EIR/EIS.

**Task Section 10.4. Support Final Implementing Agreement**

Under this task, CONSULTANT will provide the DRECP Executive Steering Committee with technical support in preparation of the final Implementing Agreement. CONSULTANT will review draft final Implementing Agreement text and provide comments.