

Desert Sunlight Newsletter

Desert Sunlight Garden

Preserving local habitat is an important part of bringing clean solar power to the grid. Before construction started biologists walked the site looking for native plant and animal species. To protect the plants found on site, Desert Sunlight biologists designed a vegetation salvage plan. Crews flagged every cactus and ocotillo on site for transplant to the Desert Sunlight Garden.

Over 350 cacti were salvaged; most were potted in native soil and donated to Joshua Tree National Park to help restore portions of the Chuckwalla Valley. The



Local plants thrive in the Desert Sunlight Garden

rest are thriving in the Desert Sunlight Garden alongside other species, including 30 ocotillo.

Our biologists will maintain, monitor and report on plant welfare until the plants prove to be fully established and no longer require care. The nearly three-acre Desert Sunlight Garden is protected from any vehicle or foot traffic, allowing the plants to flourish in their new home. Decades from now, when the project is decommissioned these plants will be restored across the project site.



Biologists prepare an ocotillo for its move to the Desert Sunlight Garden

Local Advisory Board Established for Desert Sunlight Fund

In May of 2011, First Solar introduced the \$350,000 Desert Sunlight Fund and distributed three \$5,000 checks to local organizations: Desert Center Unified School District, Friends of the Desert Center Library, and Lake Tamarisk Residents Association. A newly formed seven member advisory board has been established to recommend recipients for the remaining \$335,000. With direction from the Advisory Board the California Community Foundation (CCF), a non-profit grant making foundation, will manage the fund. CCF will review and approve grants to ensure they comply with established guidelines and then send the funds to local non-profit organizations.

“We are proud to serve as advisors for the fund established by First Solar,” said Travis Rye, Advisory Board Chairman and local firefighter. “These grants will help revitalize the community by supporting youth recreation and education, community programs and events, and conservation initiatives.”

Issue 5 | August 15, 2012

Project Update

- The project is divided into 20 construction blocks with blocks 1, 2, 10, 11 and 16 currently under construction.
- Block 1 is 93% complete with 100% of modules installed.
- Block 2 is 64% complete with 4% of modules installed.
- Block 10 is 36% complete.
- Block 11 is 30% complete.
- Block 16 is 17% complete.
- Construction on the project began in September 2011. It is expected to be fully operational by 2015.

About Desert Sunlight

Desert Sunlight is a 550-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar power project being constructed by First Solar and co-owned by GE and NextEra. When construction is complete, Desert Sunlight will provide enough clean, renewable energy for about 160,000 average California homes while displacing approximately 300,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year—the equivalent of taking about 60,000 cars off the road.

Safety Tip

Avoid the soft-looking, hairy spines on some cacti. They are very painful, and can be hard to remove.

First Solar puts safety first and starts all meetings with a safety moment. Check back for more safety tips in future issues of our newsletter.

Desert Sunlight Fund cont...



Desert Sunlight Fund Advisory Board: (from left to right) George Donaldson, Steve Jones, Dawn Rettagliata, Travis Rye, and Glen Eastman (not pictured: Jerry Grey & Renee Castor)

The Desert Sunlight Fund Advisory Board is looking for community members to work with non-profits to apply for \$335,000 in grants. One quarter of the fund will be awarded each year for the next four years. Applications will be available September 1 and must be submitted by November 15. Grant recipients will be announced in early 2013.

The Board's goal is to make sure these funds go toward critical services in the community. In line with guidelines established by First Solar, funds will be given to registered non-profit 501c3 organizations that serve the Desert Center, Lake Tamarisk and Eagle Mountain communities for programs focused in three key areas: youth and education; civic engagement; and conservation.

The Desert Sunlight Fund will give local non-profit organizations funds needed to continue their efforts to better lives and encourage new partnerships within the community.

For additional information contact Board Chairman, Travis Rye, ffhmtr@gmail.com.

For Desert Sunlight Information:

Greg Johnson, Community Liaison

Direct Line: **(760) 625-5519**

Email: greg.johnson@firstsolar.com

Visit www.DesertSunlight.com for more information.

Worker Spotlight

Tiffany Gray, Site Administrator

A real cowgirl, Tiffany is no stranger to boots, dust and desert heat. Born and raised in Blythe, Tiffany has a real passion for 4H that she now shares with her son, Kyle.



Tiffany is the point person for Desert Sunlight. Since August of 2011 she has been processing visitors on site, managing weekly activity logs and wrangling staff together for project update meetings.

"I look forward to coming to work everyday at a place where I am always learning something new," she says. "I am proud to be part of this incredible project, working with a great group of people."



Nathan Rudolph, Construction Manager

Nathan has been with First Solar for the past four years. In December of 2011 he came to Desert Sunlight, where he helps keep the project on time and on budget without compromising high quality or safety standards.

Nathan appreciates the emphasis First Solar puts on safety here on site. He feels that putting people first has made the Desert Sunlight team feel like family. He is proud to help bring clean energy to the grid, better the environment, boost the economy, and share Desert Sunlight's benefits, with the community.

A true Southern gentleman from Fayetteville, Arkansas, he loves hiking and taking his family on camping trips. When he has a chance to wind down, Nathan grabs his golf clubs and heads for the first tee.

