

# Desert Sunlight Newsletter

Issue 2 | May 9, 2012

## Caring for the Environment

### Desert Tortoise

The desert tortoise, native to the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts, is a cold-blooded herbivore that eats grasses and wildflowers. Desert tortoises grow to about one foot long and can live over 100 years. They dig and burrow, spending most of their life about three feet underground, which helps them avoid the heat and predators.



First Solar sited Desert Sunlight in its current location after extensive biological surveys were undertaken to determine where desert tortoises would be least impacted. The company also worked closely with environmental organizations, as well as Federal and State agencies to develop the project with minimal impacts to the

environment. In fact, the project size was reduced by over one-third to minimize impact on the desert tortoise.

Trained biological monitors oversee construction activities to protect all native species. They have also helped develop the biological training seminars all visitors and workers must participate in before coming on site to educate visitors on the desert tortoise and other native species.



*Destiny and Emily Kepner pose for a photo with baskets full of eggs.*

### Desert Center Easter Egg Hunt

Over 75 people attended the celebration, an annual tradition that was nearly called off before First Solar stepped in as sponsor. Local children gathered at the Lake Tamarisk Clubhouse waiting with baskets in hand to burst through the doors. After pouring out of the clubhouse, the kids eagerly hunted for brightly colored eggs filled with candy and small prizes. Those of all ages had fun watching toddlers, tots and even teenagers gather the over 900 eggs hidden that morning. First Solar is proud to have supported the event and thankful that Desert Center resident Jennifer Randall worked to involve us and coordinate the successful Easter Egg Hunt.

## Project Update

- The project is divided into 20 construction blocks with blocks 1, 2, 10 & 11 currently under construction.
- Block 1 is 60% complete.
- Work in block 2 is 45% complete.
- Construction in block 10 is 10% complete.
- Block 11, our newest, is 2% complete.
- Construction on the project began in September 2011, and is expected to be fully operational by 2015.



## About Desert Sunlight

Desert Sunlight is a 550-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar power project operated 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) per year—the equivalent of taking about 60,000 cars off the road.



### **Desert Kit Fox**

The kit fox is native to the deserts of the Southwest United States. These foxes are about the size of a small to medium house cat and range in color from reddish brown to gray depending on the season. Kit foxes hunt and eat small vermin like kangaroo rats and pocket mice. Their most common predator is the coyote. In the wild they live about six years. Upon maturity female kit foxes litter an average of three to four pups each spring.



Trained biologists observe kit fox dens from afar and use infrared cameras at night to watch foxes and their pups to keep their stress level as low as possible. Strict requirements ensure that the area around dens is isolated and that pups are able to grow up without disturbance.

### **Safety Tip**

First Solar puts safety first and starts all meetings with a safety moment. We will be sharing safety tips with you in our newsletters.

*As temperatures climb stay hydrated by drinking eight glasses of water throughout the day.*

### **For Desert Sunlight Information:**

Desert Sunlight Community Liaison: **Greg Johnson**  
Direct Line: **(760) 625-5519**  
Email: **greg.johnson@firstsolar.com**

### **Worker Spotlight**

#### **Mike Cyr, Site Supervisor**



Mike was hired in September 2009 as a site superintendent for First Solar's Blythe Solar Project. He joined the Desert Sunlight team in January of 2011. Mike supervises 80 employees as they install posts, tilt brackets and rails.

"First Solar encourages teamwork and career advancement making each day at Desert Sunlight rewarding."

#### **Dave Postma, Project Manager**



Dave is responsible for the overall direction, coordination, implementation, execution, control and completion of the project. He ensures that Desert Sunlight is in line with priorities, commitments and goals of

First Solar and the community of Desert Center. He works to keep the project on track by managing time, budget, people and materials.

Dave has worked in the construction industry for 35 years specializing in power plants. He is helping move the green energy movement forward by building Desert Sunlight and projects like it. He is pleased to play a part in bringing domestic renewable energy into the grid at a time when fossil fuels are being depleted and the need for a new cleaner energy source is so high.

