

# MBCA



## morongo basin conservation association

Post Office Box 24, Joshua Tree CA 92252 – [www.mbconservation.org](http://www.mbconservation.org)  
MBCA is a 501(c)3 non-profit, community based, all volunteer organization since 1969

March 11, 2024

RIVERSIDE COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Attn: Tim Wheeler, Project Planner

PO Box 1409; Riverside,

CA 95202-1409

[TWheeler@rivco.org](mailto:TWheeler@rivco.org)

Comments In response to the:

DRAFT Environmental Impact Report for IP Easley LLC's Easley Renewable Energy Project  
(SCH No. 2022-11-0240)

Conditional Use Permit No. 220021 Public Use Permit No. 230002 Variance No. 230003 Development Permit  
No. 2200016

Dear Mr. Wheeler,

The Morongo Basin Conservation Association is an advocate for responsible renewable energy development that preserves the economic and environmental welfare of desert communities while working to meet the federal and state climate change goals.

Please incorporate the Respect Lake Tamarisk Alternative and the extensive research supporting this plan into the following MBCA comment.

As currently planned, the Easley Renewable Energy Project impinges on the historic Lake Tamarisk Community that includes 80 homes consisting of families with and without children and 150 homes occupied by 55 year and older people. To protect their history, lifestyle, scenic vistas, and monetary investment, the Lake Tamarisk Desert Oasis Community has submitted the Respect Lake Tamarisk Alternative which meets all the state and federal goals of the Easley Renewable Energy Project while protecting the community and surrounding desert.

### **Biological Resources**

We have all learned that solar fields mimic water and attract birds, frequently to their death. Lake Tamarisk is a bird watcher's haven. We don't have to guess this value since Cornell University's worldwide checklist <https://ebird.org/hotspots> has the data. As of March 11, 2024, 304 species have been seen with checklists submitted by 2058 birders <https://ebird.org/hotspot/L419660>. Figure 1 below shows the strategic location of Lake Tamarisk on the 90-mile journey from the Colorado River to the Salton Sea. If there was a sea of solar panels only 600 feet from the boundary of Lake Tamarisk migrating birds looking for rest and refreshment could be confused and land on the panels (Figure 2). A mile buffer allows the surrounding ponds and the community's lawns, shrubbery, and trees to be seen by birds for landing and feeding (Figure 3).

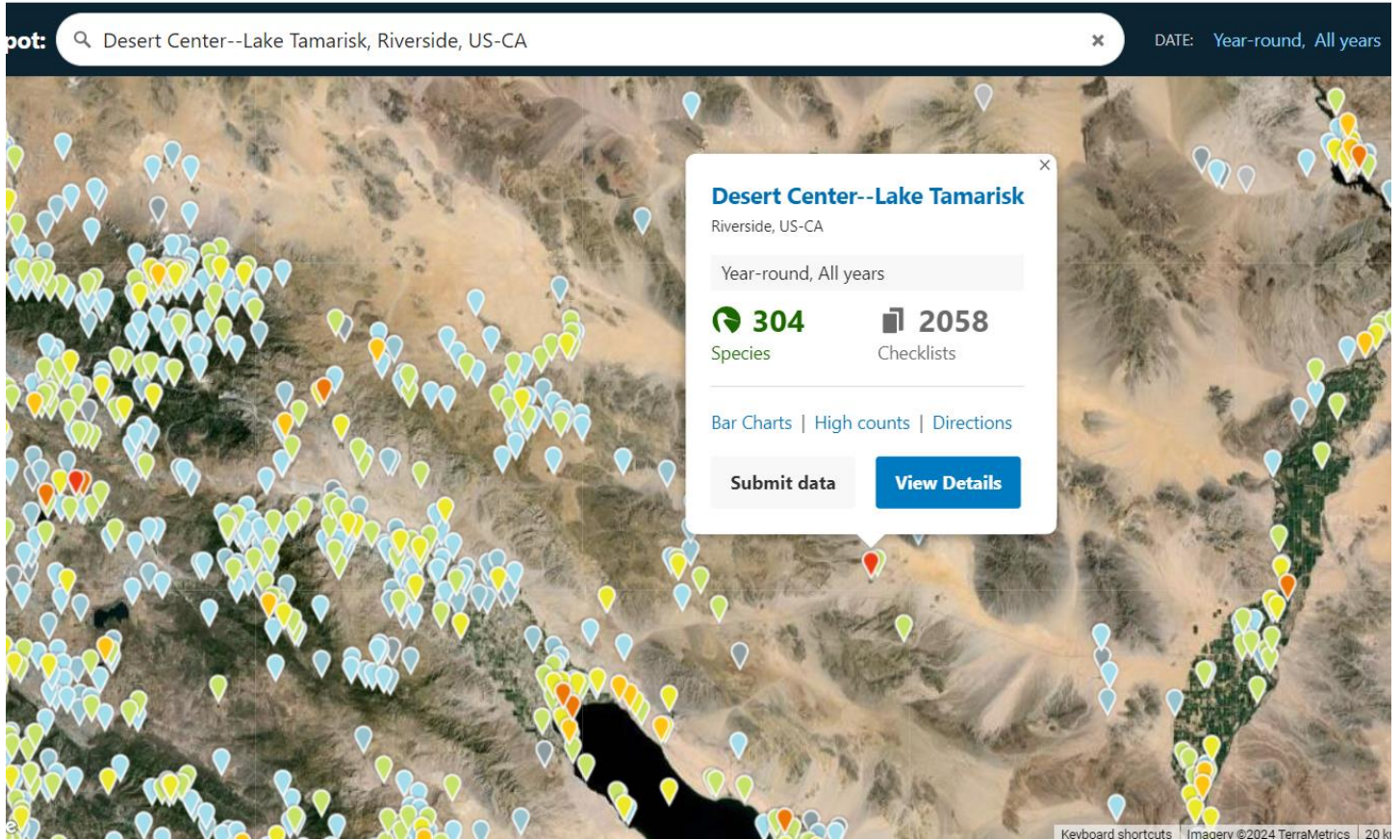


Figure 1: eBird map showing Lake Tamarisk and Salton Sea hotspots.

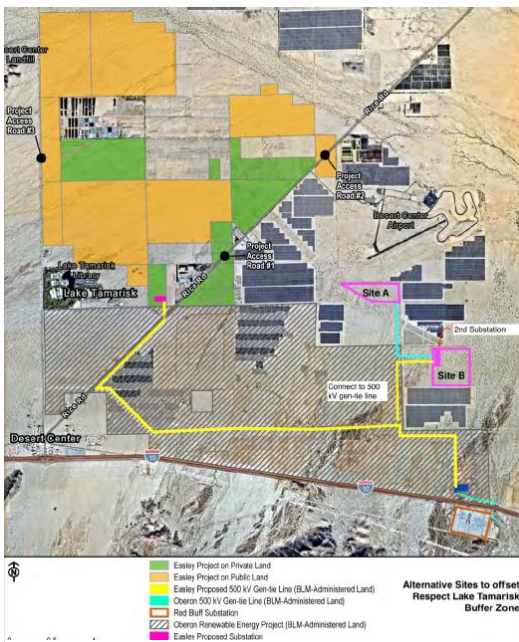


Figure 2: Lake Tamarisk surrounded by proposed and existing solar projects on BLM and private land.

Figure 4: Lake Tamarisk – a bird refuge

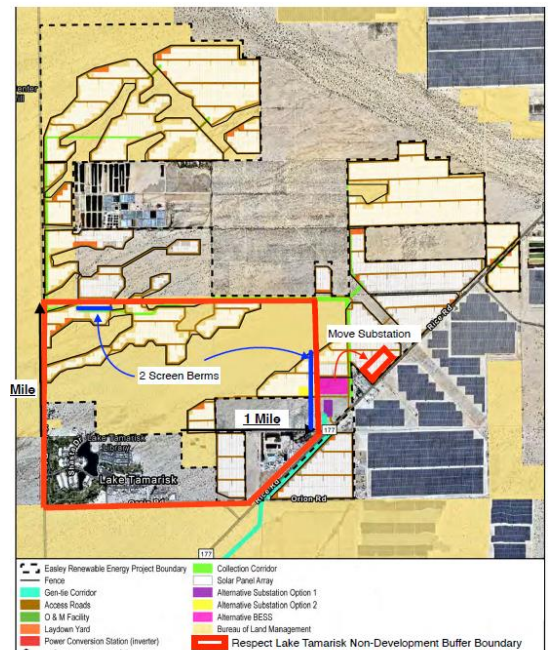


Figure 3: Boundary of Respect Lake Tamarisk Alternative in red.

Thank you for adding this observation to the research provided by the Lake Tamarisk Desert Oasis Community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Flanagan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pat Flanagan, Board Member MBCA

Cc:

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