

## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—April 28, 2008**

Media Contacts: Ruth Rieman 760-364-3455 **Photos:** <http://www.flickr.com/photos/98346583@N00/?saved=1>  
April Sall 760-369-7105 (1) GPN survey marker  
Email: [cad Desertco@gmail.com](mailto:cad Desertco@gmail.com) (2) GPN marker removed  
Website: [www.cad Desertco.org](http://www.cad Desertco.org) (3) GPN route tortoise

### **More LADWP Doublespeak as Green Path North Survey Markers are Removed**

On April 26, the Sierra Club led a scenic tour and hike of the Big Morongo Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) with the intent of learning more about a serious threat to the desert posed by the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power's (LADWP's) proposed Green Path North (GPN) power line project. The hiking group, while dazzled by the spring beauty of this remote area of protected land, was also surprised to find that LADWP survey markers, put in place by the utility along its preferred route for Green Path North, have been scrupulously removed.

Exactly one month ago, on March 26, LADWP CEO and General Manager David Nahai had spoken with CBS 2 News of Palm Springs regarding the explosive controversy that has erupted over the markers installed on both private and public lands. In that interview Nahai said, "Survey markers were put down as a result of the requirements of BLM and were there to establish boundaries of wilderness areas in order to avoid them."

Nahai's March statement, seemingly calculated to allay the fears of citizens in affected desert communities, is fraught with inaccuracies. The truth is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) did not require the markers, and the majority of markers had been placed far from, rather than on the boundaries of, areas designated as wilderness (although in some cases, appallingly deep within environmentally sensitive, protected lands).

Removal of the survey markers appears to be the latest flip-flop by the LADWP in its effort to calm citizen protests while pushing through federal designation of an entirely new energy corridor across 30 miles of private property and 55 miles of public lands along a route from Desert Hot Springs to Hesperia. The Los Angeles utility originally denied having placed the steel-plate-in-concrete survey markers (clearly imprinted with the utility's name) until confronted with physical evidence of the markers.

LADWP's penchant for doublespeak has often centered around its outrageous claim that no preferred route has been chosen for GPN. As recently as April 11, 2008, a letter from Nahai to a Yucca Valley couple again reiterated this fallacy in stating that "At this time, the Green Path North Project remains in its infancy, and there is no route that has been recommended for this proposed transmission system." Such a statement clearly belies the fact that LADWP's December 2006 application to the BLM for right-of-way (ROW) across public lands requested only the GPN route between Desert Hot Springs and Hesperia. And also at the federal level, in July of 2006, LADWP had requested the same route in its submission to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) as part of the West-Wide Energy Corridor (WWEC) process to establish energy corridors on federal lands in 11 Western states. In February 2008, LADWP again submitted comments through the WWEC process, reminding the DOE of the earlier request (but this time hedging by acknowledging that this corridor had yet to undergo required federal and state environmental screenings).

The California Desert Coalition, a grass roots coalition of citizens and community organizations opposed to an unnecessary new Green Path North transmission corridor, points to further dissembling in LADWP CEO Nahai's letter to the local residents who were concerned with the survey marker they found on their property. The letter, in telling the residents that LADWP will be removing the previously set marker from their property, points to LADWP's supposed "diligent efforts" to avoid setting markers on private property and to the difficulty of distinguishing property lines of private versus public land in desert areas. Because the private property in question is set deep within an entire one-square-mile section of land clearly defined on the most superficial of BLM recreational maps as being the property of private landholders, the CDC can only conclude that LADWP is being less than honest in its statements to citizens.

For the Sierra Club hikers exploring the GPN route on Saturday, the outing was both uplifting and disconcerting. The group was delighted to see first-hand a desert tortoise walking the "Green" Path route, but dismayed at the

prospect that this endangered species, found within sight of the former location of an LADWP survey marker, may be devastated by construction of a new high transmission power line. Hikers also found much evidence of bighorn sheep activity in the area, but having seen first-hand that a traditional spring is now dry and a last-century water guzzler is now defunct, both located at the edge where Joshua Tree National Park meets the ACEC, there was much dismay that construction of a new power line may affect the bighorns' ability to travel from JTNP to their current water sources in the riparian areas of the ACEC.

For those interested in seeing more of the beautiful high desert back county that would be lost if Green Path North is allowed to happen, the Sierra Club will be leading the second of its "Green" Path hikes on Saturday, May 3. This hike will explore two little-known archaeology sites, including extensive native rock art, that lie within the route to be affected by a new transmission corridor. Details of the hike and information about LADWP's Green Path North Project can be found at [www.cadesertco.org](http://www.cadesertco.org).

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The California Desert Coalition is a nonpartisan advocacy group organized as an advisory committee of the Mojave Desert Land Trust (a 501(c)(3) public charity). The CDC has organized to stop the proposed new LADWP Green Path North transmission corridor.

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