

## **Class II Sample Surveys of Solar Energy Zones in Arizona, California, and Nevada**

On March 2, 2012, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) awarded a contract to SWCA Environmental Consultants to conduct a statistically-based, Class II sample survey of solar energy zones (SEZ) in Arizona, California, and Nevada. The BLM targeted these three states because of the interest in solar development there. Archeological surveys will cover those SEZ areas where little is known about the archeological record.

SEZ areas include Brenda and Gillespie in Arizona; Imperial East and Riverside East in California; and Amargosa Valley, Dry Lake Valley North, Gold Point, and Millers in Nevada. Dry Lake Valley SEZ in Nevada was not chosen since archeological surveys had already covered 60% of this area. In Arizona, the contracted surveys will also include the Agua Caliente SEZ that is under consideration as part of the Arizona Restoration Design Energy Project (AZ RDEP).

Acquisition of sample inventory data will enable the BLM and solar applicants to anticipate the adverse effects to historic properties likely to arise if solar development occurs on these designated tracts of public land. Based on the results of random and stratified random sampling designs carried out at a 5% level, the final report will estimate the density and distribution of archeological sites. Sensitivity maps will be generated that focus on management priorities and National Register of Historic Places eligibility. Final results will be submitted by the end of October 2012.