In Calif, desert land-use plan turns alleys into foes

By Anne Lowry

LUCERO, Calif. — It was only a teenager when a pack of young men pulled her into a car, tortured her and raped her for hours. She has been fighting ever since for justice.

A woman who was gang-raped in India as a teenager pursued her attackers in court for more than a decade. Her ordeal highlights the effect of an overburdened legal system on female crime victims.

The last of the rapists, the son of an illiterate junk dealer: “This is fairly typical, that as crime goes west of here in Los Angeles, the court system wanes in effectiveness,” said Thomas G. Rosenthal, a professor of law at the University of California, Los Angeles. “This is the effect of an overburdened legal system.”

Rosenthal is among a handful of legal authorities who have studied the effect of an overburdened legal system on female crime victims.

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Solar-energy industry, conservationists both lay claim to California desert

Large-scale solar projects, such as the Desert Sunlight Solar Ranch in Riverside County, Calif., produce electricity from the sun. Conservationists and companies that can deliver animal species in the desert.

The industry’s main contention—deflated the Desert Forum’s project—and its current plan—have been met with resistance from both sides. The New York Times identified the Desert Forum’s project as too large.

“While the industry and conservationists have been meeting for years, the number of available renewable-energy projects continues to rise, and the conflict over land use in the West has only worsened.”

Lands P2A

desert for conservation, recrea-
tion, and development, according to the Interior Department, has been projected to increase from 300,000 acres in 2007 to 450,000 acres in 2015.

One of the main reasons is that the Bureau of Land Management, which is responsible for public lands in the West, has expanded its scope of activity to include renewable-energy projects. This is a result of the federal government’s policy of promoting renewable-energy development as a way to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.

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Conservationists and landowners have been working to find a balance between development and conservation. In 2014, the Desert Forum proposed a 2,000-acre solar project near the Mojave Desert, which would have displaced about 3,000 acres of natural habitat. Conservationists opposed the project, arguing that it would threaten the survival of the desert tortoise, a species that is listed as threatened.

The Desert Forum argued that the project would not impact the tortoise, but conservationists countered that the project would fragment the tortoise’s habitat, making it more vulnerable to predators and disease.

In 2015, the Desert Forum announced a revised plan that would reduce the size of the project by about 50 percent. The revised plan was met with mixed反应 from both the industry and conservationists. Some conservationists were pleased with the reduced size of the project, while others remained concerned that the project would still impact the tortoise’s habitat.

The conflict over solar-energy development in the desert continues to be a contentious issue. Conservationists and the industry are working to find a solution that allows for the development of renewable energy while minimizing the impact on the tortoise and other species.

For more information, visit the Desert Forum’s website: www.desertforum.com.