

## Millers SEZ

### Cultural Resources Class II Survey Results

Archaeological field work was undertaken at the Millers Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) in Esmeralda County, NV from May 31-June 6 and July 25, 2012. The Class II sample survey was completed by SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) under contract with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). A total of 811 acres, approximately 5% of the SEZ, was surveyed in 23 discrete quadrats of approximately 40 acres each, selected on the basis of a stratified random sample across three distinct strata defined by soil types from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey data (lacustrine sediments, alluvial fans, and fine sands). The sample units were inventoried following the Nevada BLM cultural resource inventory guidelines and State Protocol Agreement between the Nevada BLM and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office using pedestrian transects to visually inspect a maximum distance of 15 m on either side of the surveyor (30 m in total). Sites, features, unusual artifacts, disturbances and topographic features were recorded using a handheld Trimble GeoXT GPS unit.

The survey resulted in the recording of 33 new archaeological sites, 1 district, and 37 isolated finds. Four previously recorded sites were visited within the surveyed areas; however no artifacts were found (records indicated the artifacts had been collected during the earlier survey). SWCA recommended that 12 prehistoric lithic scatters (including a multicomponent site with a non-contributing historic debris scatter in addition to the lithic scatter) and a lithic procurement district are eligible for listing in the *National Register of Historic Places* (NRHP). The lithic scatters were recommended eligible for their potential to contribute significant information through lithic studies (including obsidian hydration and obsidian provenience) about settlement patterns in the Big Smoky Valley and the central Great Basin. The lithic procurement district includes multiple sites and isolated finds related to the procurement of Crow Springs obsidian and was recommended eligible for its potential to contribute significantly to research on obsidian procurement in the Big Smoky Valley. SWCA recommended that 10 prehistoric lithic scatters, 4 historic debris scatters, 1 multicomponent site, and 37 isolated finds were not eligible for listing in the NRHP, and that insufficient information was available to recommend NRHP-eligibility for 6 new sites (due to unknown depth of sites in dune deposits requiring additional testing) and the 4 previously recorded sites. BLM is responsible for determining the NRHP eligibility of all properties on BLM-administered lands consistent with 36CFR800.4.

A cultural resource sensitivity map (Figure 1) of the Millers SEZ was developed by SWCA in conjunction with the completion of the Class II sample survey. For the Millers SEZ, areas of high cultural resource sensitivity are related to distance to the Crow Springs obsidian source and the significance of the sites found in all three different strata in that western half of the SEZ. The lacustrine sediments through the northeastern half of the SEZ yielded few sites

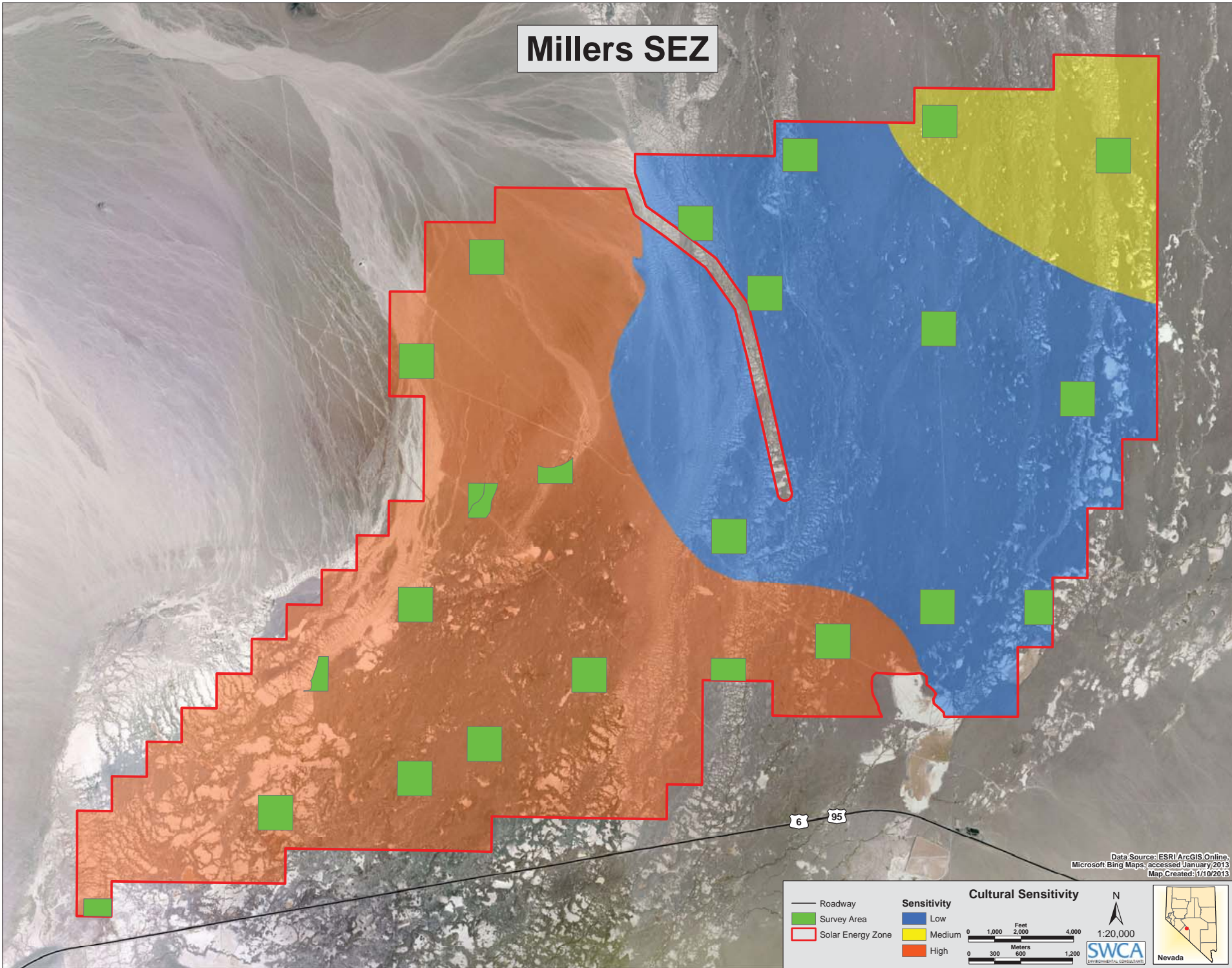
with low quantities of artifacts and were therefore determined to be of low sensitivity. Near the far northeastern corner of the SEZ there was a surge in the number of artifacts encountered (in comparison to the low sensitivity area), including the presence of a diagnostic Early Archaic projectile point; therefore the SWCA recommendation was to allocate medium sensitivity to this portion of the SEZ.

A Class III inventory of the area of potential effect (APE) for a solar energy project will be required<sup>1</sup> prior to approving development within the SEZ.

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<sup>1</sup> Alternative inventory strategies may be approved by the BLM according to the terms of the Solar Programmatic Agreement provided they are discussed during consultations with the State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribes, and any other consulting parties.

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Data Source: ESRI/ArcGIS Online,  
Microsoft Bing Maps, accessed January 2013  
Map Created: 1/10/2013

— Roadway	<b>Cultural Sensitivity</b>	0 1,000 2,000 4,000 Feet	N 1:20,000	
■ Survey Area	■ Low			
□ Solar Energy Zone	■ Medium			
	■ High			

SWCA  
Sustainable Water Consulting Agency