

COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT AND MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Tuesday April 15, 2025, 1:00 pm

Note: This is an in-person meeting which will be held at:

***73-710 Fred Waring Dr., Ste. 101
Palm Desert, CA 92260***

For Questions Contact:

Abriana Elms at aelms@cvmc.ca.gov or (760) 776-5026.

AGENDA

ACTION MAY RESULT ONLY ON ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA.
THIS MEETING IS ACCESSIBLE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

1. Call to Order – The Chair will determine if there is a quorum. If a quorum is met, the meeting will be called to order.
2. Approval of February 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes (See Attachment 1) – Previous meeting minutes will be reviewed and voted on by the Conservation Authority.
3. Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items – The public may comment on items not on the Agenda.
4. Discussion/Action Items – The items below will be open for discussion and possible action will be taken.
 - A. Approval of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authorities (CVDMRCA) Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget (See Attachment 2) – Desert Recreation District will present the proposed fiscal year 2025-26 budget. The Board will vote regarding acceptance of the fiscal year 2025-26 proposed budget.
 - B. Approval of Diana Rosas as Acting Executive Officer of the CVDMRCA from August – October 2025 (See Attachment 3) -The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Executive Director Elizabeth King will present this item.
 - C. Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – Ordinance Update (See Attachment 4) – The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission will present an update on the development of an ordinance for conservation lands management. This is an informational item.

D. Status update Land Management Capacity Building Project 38500000CRCA0009.

5. Director Comments or Announcements – Executive Director King will provide any additional updates. This is an informational item.
6. Adjournment – The Chair will adjourn the meeting.

Contact:

This meeting notice and agenda, and any available meeting materials, will be posted on the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy webpage. These records are also available for public inspection upon request. If you need further information prior to the meeting, please contact the Conservancy by phone at (760) 776-5026 or by visiting our office located at 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120, Palm Desert, CA 92260.

Public Participation:

In accordance with the Brown Act, all meetings of the Conservation Authority are open to the public. Discussion and action may be taken on any item on the Conservation Authority's meeting agenda. The time and order of agenda items are approximate and subject to change at the discretion of the Chair or their designee to facilitate the effective transaction of business.

The public will be provided the opportunity to address each agenda item during discussion or consideration by the Conservation Authority or prior to the Conservation Authority taking any action on said item. The Conservation Authority will provide members of the public with an opportunity to make public comments during the meeting on any issues before the Conservation Authority, but the Chair or their designee, at their discretion, may apportion available time among those who wish to make public comment during the meeting. Individuals may also make public comment to the Conservation Authority regarding items not on the agenda; however, the Conservation Authority cannot discuss or take official action on these items during the same meeting.

Members of the public may but are not obligated to provide their names or personal information as a condition of observing or participating in the meeting.

Accessibility:

Meetings of the Conservation Authority are open to the public. Public meetings are held in barrier free facilities that are accessible to those with physical disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you are a person with a disability requiring disability-related modifications or accommodations to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, or if you require documents be made available in an alternate format or another language or require an interpreter at the meeting, please contact the Conservancy by phone at (760) 776-5026 or by visiting our office located at 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 120, Palm Desert, CA 92260. Requests should be made as soon as possible, but at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. You may also dial a voice TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech Communications Assistant at 7-1-1.

ATTACHMENT 1 –April 15, 2025

Agenda Item 2 Approval of February 25, 2025, Meeting Minutes

COACHELLA VALLEY DESERT AND MOUNTAINS RECREATION AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Tuesday February 25, 2025, 1:00 pm

Parkview Professional Building
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 101
Palm Desert, CA 92260

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kathleen Brundige, Coachella Valley Conservation
 Commission (Chair)
 Gary Gardner, Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy
 (CVMC)
 Kevin Kalman, Desert Recreation District (DRD)
 Elizabeth King, Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

 Karina Rodriguez, Desert Recreation District

STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth King, CVDMRCA Executive Officer
 William “Brent” Felstead, CVDMRCA Capital Project
 Manager
 Diana Rosas, CVMC Associate Director
 Maximiliano Ochoa, CVMC Project Coordinator
 Abriana Elms, Administrative Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT: Jonathan Abadesco, C.J. Brown and Company, CPAs
 Will Steichen, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
 Troy Strange, Desert Recreation District

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Kathleen Brundige called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm and declared a quorum with 4 voting members present (Karina Rodriguez arrived at approximately 1:20pm).

2.0 Approval of Minutes from May 17, 2024, Meeting:

Chair Brundige asked for changes or corrections. Chair Brundige asked for and received a motion (Gardner/Kalman) to approve May 17, 2024, minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

3.0 Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items

There were no comments or questions.

4.0 Discussion/Action

- A. Request for Approval of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (CVDMRCA) Audited Financial Statements for the year ended on June 30, 2024.

Chair Brundige introduced Jonathan Abadesco with C. J. Brown and Company CPAs. Abadesco presented the Audited Financial Statements as presented in the staff report.

Executive Officer Elizabeth King inquired about the details of Liabilities and Assets and if the Shumway Ranch property was counted as a monetary asset or liability in the financial report. Board Member Kalman responded that Shumway Ranch is property held under fee title by the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC). Abadesco responded that the property is not owned by the CVDMRCA and the main purpose of the CVDMRCA is to obtain grants for specific projects, the property was not accounted for as an asset in the financial report. Board Member Kalman stated that the CVDMRCA's focus is grant funding and project expenditures. Reimbursements are made to whichever party is doing the planning and or improvements. The only revenue outside of grant revenue that the CVDMRCA receives is the annual contribution that both the DRD and CVMC make of \$3,500 each to offset insurance and auditor's fees. Executive Officer King asked if there has been any consideration in the Authority taking ownership of properties. Chair Brundige responded that it was discussed at the last meeting. The Board agreed that the discussion would be revisited on a case-by-case basis looking at whether it would benefit the CVDMRCA. Chair Brundige asked why the documents were submitted in "Draft" form. Board Member Kalman responded that it has been DRD's process in case any edits are needed.

There were no further comments or questions from the board.

A motion was made and seconded (Gardner/King) approving the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2024, which passed unanimously.

- B. Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – Ordinance update.

Chair Brundige introduced Will Steichen, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC). Will Steichen provided an ordinance presentation update. With the assistance of a CVMC grant, CVCC is developing a ranger program and a draft ordinance with the goal of protecting conservation lands from challenges such as illegal dumping, vandalism and destruction of the environment.

Board Member Gardner asked about citation processes on private lands with regards to the Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) conserved lands. He expressed concerns, particularly regarding homeless encampments and enforcement restrictions with private landowners, whether it be FODM or other conservation partners such as the Oswit Land Trust, to do the cleanup. Chair Brundige commented that CVCC has had discussions with FODM regarding transferring the lands to CVCC's jurisdiction so that those lands can be included in the ordinance plan. Chair Brundige also agreed that the focus should be on multi-jurisdictional areas with the goal of getting the ranger program up and running. Executive Officer King asked Board Member Kalman if DRD calls the local police department when they have issues on their lands. Board Member Kalman responded that DRD's practice is to address situations directly and that they will contact code enforcement or local law enforcement such as police or sheriff's departments as appropriate.

Troy Strange, DRD, asked what the difference is between Interpretive and Enforcement Rangers. Steichen responded that Enforcement Rangers will complete the PC 832 Arrest and Firearms Course, which is the minimum training requirement for California Peace Officers to exercise their powers. Interpretive Rangers are educated on the local land and engaging with individuals but will not have the authority to issue citations. Board Member Kalman asked if the ordinance would be incorporating the Tribes into the interpretation portion. Steichen commented that he has met with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribe and that there are some cross training courses that they are hoping to integrate for the ordinance rangers.

Executive Officer King inquired about the next steps of the ordinance. Steichen commented that the next steps include confidentiality agreements between all the corresponding groups who have been working on the ordinance and getting clarification from the attorneys regarding specific questions to the ordinance process. Where to house the ranger program is still being considered as well. Executive Officer King mentioned that to use CVMC's statutory authority there is an approximate one-year rule-making process that CVMC would need to go through but DRD's authority is also being considered.

5.0 Staff Updates

A Four New Trails- William Brent Felstead will present an update.

Chair Brundige introduced Brent Felstead, CVDMRCA. Felstead gave a verbal update on the four new trails.

- The CVDMRCA received a CVMC grant in the amount of \$18,000 for West Deception Canyon Trail. The trail goes through

multiple parcels with separate ownerships which require land use agreements from the CVCC as well as the FODM. Grant funds will cover the biologist and Tribal monitors, signage and trail work that will be completed by the Urban Conservation Corps (UCC) crew. The UCC will cut switchbacks for land stability and safety on a portion of the trail that is on FODM lands.

- On the Chuckwalla Overlook Connector Trail in Rancho Mirage, Felstead reported that signage is needed for safety measures.
- On the Biskra Trail in the City of Indio, Felstead reported that the City of Indio is in support of the trail as they see the community need due to the popular Badlands Trail. There are some challenges to the Biskra Trail however, as part of the trail goes through the Coachella Valley Water District's flood basin that is fenced off. There is also a landowner who has some concerns about the trail going right through the quarry. Working through these challenges will take some time.
- On the Cathedral City Cove Connector Trail, Felstead reported that an appraisal report was completed, however the landowner did not accept the Fair Market Value. As a result, Felstead is reaching out to other property owners in the area who own land that could also be used for a potential parking/trailhead site.

No action is required.

- B. Shumway Ranch- Restoration Projects, Program and (Memorandum of Understanding) MOU with Daniel Foster. William Brent Felstead will give an update.

Brent Felstead with the CVDMRCA provided a presentation update.

Shumway Ranch is located in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Shumway Ranch is a historic homestead on 640 acres of pristine conservation lands pioneered by Steve and Nina Paul Shumway in 1932 and ultimately purchased by the State of California in 2017 for environmental, historical, cultural, and local community benefit purposes. Improvements were made to allow visitors. DRD was commissioned to build restrooms and add a shade structure to accommodate groups visits. The work was completed in May 2023. In 2018, CVMC contracted with Daniel Foster to form a new volunteer-based nonprofit, Shumway Ranch.Org, to partner on the planning and development of the historic homestead ranch. In early 2025, ShumwayRanch.Org closed for business due to the retirement of its founder, Daniel Foster - after a seven-year effort to vision, plan, and develop the ranch. Felstead shared an overview of 2024 Shumway activities for underserved youth hosted by FODM and DRD.

He also reported on plans for future improvements at Shumway Ranch. On December 29, 2024, CVMC had the Tors house, the largest historic building at Shumway, inspected for structural conditions. The Tors house has a rustic historic feel to it as well as a panoramic view from the surrounding deck. In order to prevent decay, improvements are needed. Disaster Kleenup International, (DKI) Services sourced through Omnia Partners, toured the Tors house on January 16, 2024. Staff are currently waiting for a bid to update the deck, restore the roof and paint exterior. In the meantime, DRD will be visiting Shumway Ranch on a quarterly basis to inspect and complete any maintenance needed.

The board agreed to discuss and implement a maximum capacity occupancy at Shumay Ranch because of the unsafe Tors structure the capacity should be limited to avoid any injuries and keep all guests safe.

No action is required.

5.0

Director Comments or Announcements

Executive Officer Elizabeth King reported on the following:

- Executive Officer King welcomed Karina Rodriguez (DRD), new member to the board. Board Member Rodriguez introduced herself to the rest of the board.
- Executive Officer King asked the board if the CVDMRCA has by-laws. Board Member Kalman responded that he would share more information on the organization of the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) with Executive Officer King.
- Executive Officer King thanked CVDMRCA staff Brent Felstead, DRD staff Sonya Galvez and CVMC staff Abriana Elms for their work and efforts in supporting the JPA. Executive Officer King also announced that she will be on maternity leave from August to October and that CVMC Associate Director Diana Rosas will be stepping in to cover.

Board Member Kalman acknowledged Board Member Gardner on his excellent presentation during the bus tour of the Chuckwalla National Monument. Board member Gardner noted that it was a great tour and that he was glad to see the monument designated.

6.0

Meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m. The next meeting will be set by staff coordinating with the Chair.

ATTACHMENT 2 – April 15, 2025

Agenda Item 4A Request for Approval of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.

BACKGROUND

In accordance with section 9.4 of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority's (CVDMRCA) Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement the CVDMRCA board must adopt an annual budget in a form approved by the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC) and the Desert Recreation District (DRD), which budget shall be submitted to the CVMC and the DRD for approval, in the time and manner as specified by CVMC and DRD. Public funds may not be disbursed by the CVDMRCA without approval of the adopted budget of the CVDMRCA, and all receipts and disbursements shall be in strict conformance with the adopted and approved budget.

DISCUSSION

The proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26 (attached) includes the programs and activities that support the CVDMRCA annual workplan. The annual workplan includes the following programs:

• Administration – Member Contributions	\$10,000
• Shumway Ranch Use – User Fees	\$5,000
• Land Management Capacity Building Project – CRCA0009	\$77,418
• Trail Planning – P680015	\$1,920
• W. Deception Canyon Trail Project - P680025	17,998
• Unidentified Projects/Programs – Shumway Improvements	\$200,000
Total	<u>\$312,336</u>

The CVDMRCA has a beginning fund balance of \$2,026 consisting of one grant balance that will carry over to the new fiscal year. The CVDMRCA anticipates revenues of \$312,336 from a combination of sources including member contributions, intergovernmental revenue, user fees, and grants. The program expenditure outlined above is \$312,336 leaving the CVDMRCA with an estimated ending fund balance of \$2,026 as illustrated in the table below:

FY2025-26 Budget Summary

Beginning Fund Balance	\$2,026
Revenues Expenditures	\$312,336
	<u>\$312,336</u>
Ending Fund Balance	\$2,026

DRD will act on the CVDMRCA budget on April 23, 2025. CVMC will act on May 12, 2025. Therefore, staff request CVDMRCA provides its approval contingent on the approvals of the DRD and CVMC boards. Should one or both member agencies not approve the budget, staff will resubmit the budget to the CVDMRCA to amend and approve any requested adjustments.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a motion approving the attached Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.

Exhibit A

Budget Overview

Coachella Valley Desert & Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority
July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026

ACCOUNT	COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY	DESERT RECREATION DISTRICT	GRANT NO. 38500000CRCAD009	GRANT NO. 38500000P650015	GRANT NO. 38500000P650025	SHUNNWAY RANCH OPERATIONS	UNIDENTIFIED GRANTS/PROJECTS	TOTAL
Income								
Grants	0.00	0.00	77,418.00	1,820.00	17,088.00	0.00	200,000.00	297,336.00
Intergovernmental Revenue	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00
User Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	0.00	5,000.00
Total for Income	5,000.00	5,000.00	77,418.00	1,820.00	17,088.00	5,000.00	200,000.00	\$312,336.00
Cost of Goods Sold	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Gross Profit	5,000.00	5,000.00	77,418.00	1,820.00	17,088.00	5,000.00	200,000.00	\$312,336.00
Expenses								
Bank Charges & Fees	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00
General Services	0.00	0.00	77,418.00	1,820.00	17,088.00	5,000.00	0.00	102,336.00
Insurance	2,500.00	2,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,000.00
Office Supplies & Software	800.00	800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00
Professional Services	1,800.00	1,800.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,600.00
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	200,000.00	200,000.00
Total for Expenses	5,000.00	5,000.00	77,418.00	1,820.00	17,088.00	5,000.00	200,000.00	\$312,336.00
Net Operating Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$0.00
Net Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$0.00

ATTACHMENT 3 – April 15, 2025

Agenda Item 4B Approval of Diana Rosas Acting Executive Director from August -October 2025.

BACKGROUND

The Executive Director of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy serves as the Executive Officer of the CVDMRCA. The current Executive Director/Executive Officer Elizabeth King will be on Maternity Leave August 2025-October 2025. Associate Director of CVMC Diana Rosas will serve as Acting Director of CVMC during that time. Staff recommends Rosas serve as Acting Executive Officer of the CVDMRCA from August – October 2025 or as long as the Maternity Leave persists.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends a motion approving Diana Rosas serve as Acting Executive Officer of the CVDMRCA from August – October 2025 or as long as the Maternity Leave persists.

ATTACHMENT 4 – April 15, 2025

Agenda Item 4C Presentation by The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission

INFORMATIONAL ITEM – No Board action required.

BACKGROUND

This item will provide an update on the Climate Resilience Community Action Grant-funded Cooperative Ranger Initiative Project awarded to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission. The update will include a general program overview, as well as progress on grant timelines, stakeholder engagement, ordinance development, program design, and other key implementation milestones.

ATTACHMENT 5 – April 15, 2025

Agenda Item 4D Status update Land Management Capacity Building Project
38500000CRCA0009.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM – No Board action required.

BACKGROUND

CVMC awarded grant CRCA 0009 to the CVDRMCA to: Establish a program to assist nonprofit, tribal or public entity owners of conservation land to (i) provide land management related public works and related services and (ii) promote and implement joint efforts among adjacent conservation owners related to monitoring, maintenance, enforcement, recreational and public education endeavors.

With the recent vacancy of the position funded by this grant, the Board will discuss the future of the grant.