

COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
Regular Meeting – May 12, 2025, 3:00 PM

73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 115
(Administrative Conference Room)
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Teleconference locations:

State of California, Resources Agency
715 P St.,
Serpentine Room on the 20th floor (NRHQ 20-103)
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Department of Fish & Wildlife
3602 Inland Empire Blvd. Suite C-220
Small Conference Room
Ontario, CA 91764

AGENDA

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

2.0 Approval of February 10, 2025, Meeting Minutes (See Attachment 1.)

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

At this time, any member of the public may address the Governing Board on any item not on the agenda. The Board cannot act on an item not on the agenda, but it can place it on the agenda for a future meeting. For items on the agenda, there will be an opportunity to speak when that item is heard. The Chair may limit the time for each speaker. Any written material may be submitted to the person taking minutes.

4.0 Closed Session

Pursuant to Government Code sections 11126 (a)(1), 11126(e)(1) and 11126.3(a) the Board may hold a closed session to discuss and take possible action on personnel matters and or receive advice of counsel on pending or potential litigation. In addition, pursuant to Government Code section 11126(c) 7(A) the Board may meet in closed session with its negotiator prior to the purchase or sale of real property by or for the state body to give instructions to its negotiator regarding the price and terms of payment for the purchase or sale. Confidential

memoranda related to these issues may be considered during such closed session discussions. The matters scheduled for closed sessions are:
No closed session is scheduled.

5.0 Action/Informational Items – Public Hearing (if there is any member of the public who wishes to address the Governing Board before action is taken, testimony from the public will be taken prior to a vote.)

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| Action Item 5.1 | Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program.
(See Attachment 2.) |
| Action Item 5.2 | Adoption of Resolution 2025-01 consenting to and approving a Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant to the City of Coachella for its Rancho Las Flores Stormwater Project.
(See Attachment 3.) |
| Action Item 5.3 | Adoption of Resolution 2025- 02 consenting to and approving A Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant to the Southern California Mountains Foundation for its Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project.
(See Attachment 4.) |
| Action Item 5.4 | Approval of the Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authorities (CVDMRCA) Fiscal Year 2025-26 Budget.
(See Attachment 5.) |
| Action Item 5.5 | Adoption of Resolution 2025- 03 consenting to and approving Diana Rosas as Acting Executive Director of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy from August -October 2025. (See Attachment 6.) |
| Informational Item 5.6 | Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy 2024 Annual Report Presentation. (See Attachment 7.) |

Informational Item 5.7 Recognition of Tammy Martin for Receiving the Trails Champion Award from California State Parks.
(See Attachment 8.)

6.0 Reports

6.1 Written Reports from Staff. (See Attachment 9.)

6.2 Executive Director Report.

- Conservancy updates for FY 2024/2025.

6.3 Board Member comments and reports from Conservancy member agencies. This is an opportunity for any of the Governing Board Members to present a report on matters of interest regarding the agency he or she represents.

7.0 Adjourn to the August 11, 2025, Meeting at 3:00 p.m.

This Agenda is available on our website at <http://cvmc.ca.gov>. Anyone with questions about any item on the agenda may 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. After July 1, 2025, the Conservancy's new address will be: 42-600 Cook Street, Suite 219 Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Contact:

This meeting notice and agenda, and any available meeting materials, will be posted on the 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. After July 1, 2025, the Conservancy's new address will be: 42-600 Cook Street, Suite 219 Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Public Participation:

In accordance with the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, all meetings of the Conservancy Board are open to the public. Discussion and action may be taken on any item on the Conservancy'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.

Government Code section 11125.7 provides the opportunity for the public to address each agenda item during discussion or consideration by the Conservancy or prior to the Conservancy taking any action on said item. The Conservancy will provide members of the public with an opportunity to make public comments during the meeting on any issues before the Conservancy, 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 Conservancy regarding items not on the agenda; however, the Conservancy cannot discuss or take official action on these items during the same meeting. (Gov. Code, §§ 11125, 11125.7, subd. (a).)

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 Conservancy 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. After July 1, 2025, the Conservancy's new address will be: 42-600 Cook Street, Suite 219 Palm Desert, CA 92211. Requests should be made as soon as possible, but at least 72 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

Action Item 2.0 Approval of February 10, 2025, Meeting Minutes

COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
(CVMC)
REGULAR MEETING
73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 101
Palm Desert, California

DRAFT MINUTES

February 10, 2025 - 3:00 p.m.

Teleconference locations:

State of California, Resources Agency
715 P St.
Serpentine Room on the 20th floor (NRHQ 20-103)
Sacramento, CA 95814

3602 Inland Empire Blvd. Suite C-220
Small Conference Room
Ontario, CA 91764

MEMBERS PRESENT: Enrique Arroyo, California State Parks
Patricia Cooper, Riverside County
Madeline Drake, CA Natural Resources Agency (CNRA)
(Remote)
Gary Gardner, City of Desert Hot Springs
Grace Garner, City of Palm Springs
Beatriz Gonzalez, State Assembly Appointee
Bjana Jefferson, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
(Remote)
Rita Lamb, City of Cathedral City (*Chairwoman*)
Deborah McGarrey, City of La Quinta
Margaret Park, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
Brian Penna, City of Indian Wells
Christopher Tracy, University of California, Riverside (UCR)
Ellen Lloyd Trover, Senate Rules Committee Appointee
Evan Trubee, City of Palm Desert

MEMBERS ABSENT: Stephen Benson, Department of Finance
Denise Delgado, City of Coachella
Steve Downs, City of Rancho Mirage (*Vice-Chair*)
Elaine Holmes, City of Indio

Jennifer Norris, Wildlife Conservation Board
Joan Taylor, Governor's Appointee

CVMC STAFF PRESENT: Elizabeth King, Executive Director
Diana Rosas, Associate Director
Maximiliano Ochoa, Project Coordinator
Abriana Elms, Administrative Coordinator

OTHERS PRESENT: William Brent Felstead, Coachella Valley Desert and
Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority
Tammy Martin, Friends of the Desert Mountains
G. Patrick O'Dowd, Salton Sea Authority
Oscar Ortiz, Friends of the Desert Mountains
Will Steichen, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
Jack Thompson, The Wildlands Conservancy

1.0 Call to Order & Introductions

Chair Rita Lamb declared a quorum with 13 voting members present and called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Subsequently, one additional Board Member (Jefferson) arrived after the roll call bringing the attendance to 14 voting members.

2.0 Approval of November 18, 2024, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made and seconded (Gardner/McGarrey) to approve November 18, 2024, minutes; the motion passed with one abstention (Tracy).

3.0 Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

Tammy Martin, Executive Director, Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) introduced herself to the new Board Members and invited the board to the upcoming Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival on March 1, 2025.

4.0 Closed Session

No closed session was scheduled for this meeting.

5.0 Action/Informational Items- Public Hearing

Action Item 5.1 Approval of New Meeting Location for 2025.

Chair Lamb gave a brief overview of the proposed new meeting location.

Vote: A motion was made and seconded (Park/Gardner) to approve the proposed new meeting location at the Palm Desert Council Chamber (Address: 73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92260). The motion passed unanimously.

Action Item 5.2 Election of Officers 2025.

Vote: A motion was made and seconded (Gardner/Park) to elect Deborah McGarrey as Chair. A motion was made and seconded (Gardner/Gonzalez) to elect Rita Lamb as Vice Chair. The motion passed unanimously.

Informational Item 5.3 Presentation by the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission on Ordinance Development for a Ranger Program.

Chair Lamb introduced Will Steichen, Ranger Coordinator, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC), who gave a brief informational update on the Ranger Program.

Chair Lamb asked if the CVCC was the funding source for the grant and if CVCC was to be the Human Resources Department for the personnel hired. Steichen clarified that CVMC awarded a grant to CVCC for the development of an ordinance for a ranger program which will cover the project for the first three years. Executive Director King added that the housing of the ordinance is yet to be determined but CVCC has committed to funding the Ranger Program in perpetuity. Board Member Gardner expressed the importance of the Ranger Program. Board Member Penna asked if the grant has already been funded. Steichen confirmed that the grant has already been awarded. Executive Director King added that the Ranger Program contributes to the efforts of the State of California's 30x30 Initiative that aims to conserve 30% of state land by the year 2030.

Informational Item 5.4 Friends of the Desert Mountains Presentation on Native Plants.

Chair Lamb introduced Oscar Ortiz, Deputy Director, FODM, who gave a brief presentation on Native Plants.

Board Member McGarrey disclosed that she serves as an unpaid Board Member on the FODM Board and that per the Attorney General no conflict exists therefore recusal is not required. Board Member Gardner commented that he appreciates the progress reports on awarded projects. Board Member McGarrey suggested that the Native Plant Guide be presented to the local cities. Ortiz responded that FODM is open to suggestions and meeting with cities to discuss. Board Member Penna suggested that the Native Plant guide be provided to the Planning Commissions as well. Executive Director King asked about information on where to purchase the native plants. Ortiz responded that the native plant guide includes a page with a list of local nurseries. Board Member Tracy added that UCR is looking into seed collection within their properties. Board Member Arroyo mentioned that

State Parks likes to use local native plants as well. Board Member Park also commented that the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians Tribe work with and recommend to always use native plants.

6.0 Reports

6.1 Written reports from staff.

Associate Director Rosas and Project Coordinator Ochoa gave a brief update on acquisitions and land management.

Board Member Gardner asked if grant funds may be affected by the current state budget deficit. Associate Director Rosas responded that local assistance grants from bond programs are not being affected by the budget deficit, rather general and special funds are being considered by the state's administration but because the Conservancy does not have general funds, staff is hopeful that an exemption from future budget cuts will be considered for the Conservancy's budget.

6.2 Executive Director Report.

Executive Director King reported on the following:

- Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act. A copy of the rules was provided to all board members for review.
- Welcome to new Board Member Brian Penna, City of Indian Wells.
- Welcome to the incoming Board Chair Deborah McGarrey and exploring new practices such as board subcommittees.
- Goals for 2025, including:
 1. Creation of the Proposition 4 Grant Program, development of grant guidelines, and potentially announcing some awardees by the end of 2025.
 2. CVMC will be moving offices, likely to the Berger Foundation building on Cook Street in Palm Desert.
 3. Developing an ordinance for a CVCC led Ranger Program to help protect desert lands.
 4. Continuing with acquisition work in advancing the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.
 5. Updating Strategic Plan goals and potentially hosting a Board retreat.

6. Update on the creation of four new trails. West Deception trail is underway, a group hike was suggested after project completion.
- Introducing CVMC to the Cities at local council meetings and sharing individual projects funded through CVMC.
- Conservancy's budget and the State's budget deficit.
 - Overview of the Conservancy's operating budget and essential work.
 - Shared publicly available information on statewide budget deficit drills: 7.95% cut and vacancy elimination potentially affecting Conservancy's operating budget.

Chair Lamb commented that the budget condition is alarming. Board Member Gardner asked about the status of the new lease and if the lease rate increased. Executive Director King confirmed that the new lease rate will increase. Board Member Penna suggested that the Cities come together to help the Conservancy with the potential budget deficit. Board Member McGarrey encouraged board members to reach out to and talk with local partners. Board Member Trubee noted that he would personally reach out to the City of Palm Desert, City Manager to see if the City can provide moving assistance for the Conservancy. Board Member Tracy inquired about the statewide budget deficit drills and the possibility of the Conservancy being exempt. Executive Director King responded that staff have been in communication with State Parks, who manages the Conservancy's budget, the Department of Finance, and CNRA. Board Member Drake commented that CNRA is doing their best to help support the Conservancy and that other departments are also facing proposed budget cuts.

6.3 Board Member Comments and Reports.

Board Member Gardner commented about the Chuckwalla National Monument in Washington and what an honor it was to attend the celebration. Board Member Trover also commented on the importance of the monument and potential setbacks that may be faced with the new administration.

7.0 Adjourn to the May 12, 2025, meeting.

Chair Lamb adjourned the meeting without objection at 4:30 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 2

Action Item 5.1 Update on Grant Applications under Proposition 1 Grant Program.

The latest Notice of Funding Availability for the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program was issued on December 4, 2024, with applications due by March 26, 2025; three proposals were received requesting a total of \$1,063,707.

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Funding Request</u>	<u>Type</u>
<u>City of Coachella</u> Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Project	\$700,000	Infrastructure
<u>Southern California Mountains Foundation</u> Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project	\$213,707	Restoration
<u>City of Coachella</u> Drywell Installation Project	\$150,000	Infrastructure
Total	\$1,063.707	

(See Exhibit A for a map showing project locations.)

In accordance with the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines, the proposals were reviewed by a panel consisting of staff (Executive Director Elizabeth M. King, Associate Director Diana Rosas, Project Coordinator Maximiliano Ochoa) and one outside independent expert (Coachella Valley Association of Governments Program Manager and External Affairs, Emmanuel Martinez). Panel members reviewed the proposals, with an emphasis on documenting the objectives of Proposition 1 that each project would fulfill and then developed preliminary rankings for funding or general conditions to be achieved by grantees prior to the funding recommendation. Staff compiled scores for each project using the point system established by Section VIII of the Guidelines. The results and preliminary funding recommendations are presented in the next section of this report.

To date, the Board has awarded \$7,089,424 in Proposition 1 grants which are now in various stages of implementation. Before taking the projects below into consideration, the funding balance remaining in Proposition 1 for new projects is \$2,210,575. If all three applications are funded as recommended below, the remaining balance will be \$1,446,868. The next round of funding is tentatively set to be announced by Fall 2025, with a Winter application deadline.

DISCUSSION OF PROPOSALS

The projects are presented below in three groups:

- I. Category 1 - Priority for funding
- II. Category 2 - Priority for funding, with conditions
- III. Category 3 - Potential fundable elements, but funding not recommended as proposed

Summary: currently there are two projects proposed for funding under Category 1. One project proposed for funding with conditions is recommended under Category 2. There is no project proposed under Category 3.

Projects Recommended as Priority for Funding – Category 1

City of Coachella - Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Project

Summary: The City of Coachella is requesting \$700,000 for a multi-functional stormwater retention basin at the Rancho Las Flores Park located in the City of Coachella at the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street and Ed Mitchell Drive. The stormwater project is a central component of the 14-acre expansion of Rancho Las Flores Park, which will address a critical stormwater management challenge, mitigate recurring flooding issues, restore ecological balance, and provide the community with a park that functions both as an environmental asset and a recreational hub. Rancho Las Flores Park is an essential resource which serves as one of the primary recreational spaces within the city for residents, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The park's expansion will provide an additional setting for outdoor activities, social gatherings, and environmental education. The City of Coachella has full ownership and control of the project site, ensuring that implementation can proceed without delays related to land acquisition or access rights.

Review panel analysis: The proposed project is a multi-benefit project that meets Proposition 1 and California Water Action Plan objectives and proposes to reduce flood risk, improve stormwater management, and provide an environmental asset related to ecological balance. The project would directly serve and provide

opportunities for recreational access to the outdoors to a community that is economically disadvantaged. The project is fully compliant with CEQA. Score: 94.25/100.

Staff recommendation: Category 1 - Priority for funding. The project improves management and mitigation of stormwater impacts as well as reduces the risk of flooding and infrastructural damage due to extreme flooding events. The project would contribute to and increase economic benefits by ensuring that the park remains viable and accessible. The project enhances public safety and improves the City's management of floods during severe storms. The project furthermore would have a positive impact by improving the park's role as a critical recreation and economical asset for the community, improving access to recreational opportunities for the disadvantaged communities of nearby neighborhoods in the city. The requested amount included vegetation and irrigation costs; however, the review panel determined that such costs have not been previously funded from Proposition 1 funds, for other park projects. Therefore, staff recommend approval of the proposed project with a grant amount not to exceed \$400,000 which would exclude the vegetation and irrigation components and only cover basin infrastructure costs.

Southern California Mountains Foundation - Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project

Summary: The Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) is requesting \$213,707 for their Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project located within the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. The project will focus on restoring water sources in the Palm Canyon watershed by removing invasive species such as tamarisk and fountain grass from flowing streams, ephemeral streambeds, washes, and tributaries in and around Palm Canyon. This work has been ongoing for the past decade, originally initiated by the San Bernardino National Forest Service in 2010. The work continued with CVMC funding to the Friends of the Desert Mountains in 2016 and the SCMF in 2021. The SCMF has since assumed primary management of the project with the support of the US Forest Service. With 124 acres treated to date, 14 hard to reach acres remain to be treated. The project seeks to continue the initial project work in the areas not yet treated. A minimum of eight acres of habitat for invasive plants would be treated using a cut stump herbicide application technique and an additional 50 acres will be surveyed and monitored for re-treatment to ensure maximum eradication.

Review panel analysis: The proposed project meets Proposition 1 and California Water Action Plan objectives including preserving and maintaining watershed

areas that are critical for threatened or endangered species, such as the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep and the least Bell's vireo. By removing invasive plants, shrubs or trees, the project will help to increase both the quantity and quality of water necessary to support riparian and endangered species. In addition, the project will improve ground water supply by eliminating the invasive species that are currently diverting the water's natural flow and inhibiting percolation down into the aquifer. The project is fully compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. Score: 92.5/100.

Staff recommendation: Category 1 - Priority for funding. The impact of tamarisks is well documented. Tamarisks consume large quantities of water and displace native vegetation, resulting in negative impacts to both water quantity and quality as well as overall poor habitat quality for nesting birds and other wildlife. Thus, the Project will benefit wildlife by providing significant sources of water for sustainability of wildlife populations. Finally, the restoration project will help to offset the expected results of climate change on endangered species by restoring viable historical refugia. Accordingly, staff recommends approval of the proposed project with an added condition that the cost of the project reduces depending on number of acres treated (for example, if only eight acres are treated, the grant amount would reduce).

Project(s) Recommended as Category 2 - Priority for Funding, With Conditions

City of Coachella - Drywell Installation Project

Summary: The City of Coachella is requesting \$150,000 for their drywell installation project at Bagdouma Park and Veterans Memorial Park. The project is a critical infrastructure improvement effort aimed at mitigating chronic flooding, enhancing water quality, and increasing groundwater recharge within the City of Coachella. The drywell installation would be designed to efficiently filter and infiltrate stormwater, thereby reducing sedimentation and contamination before the water percolates into underground aquifers. The project would involve a comprehensive assessment of soil conditions and drainage patterns to ensure that each drywell is placed in the most effective location. The planned infrastructure improvements would enhance public safety, preserve park usability, and support long-term community resiliency.

Review panel analysis: The proposed project meets Proposition 1 and California Water Action Plan objectives and is a multi-benefit project as it would reduce flood risk, improve water quality, improve water infiltration and groundwater aquifer recharge, and provide economic benefits to a city with a significant number of disadvantaged residents. Score: 92.5/100.

Staff recommendation: Category 2 - Priority for funding, with conditions. The Project would promote water infiltration and groundwater recharge through the installation of the drywells at two parks in the City of Coachella where none are currently installed. Additional work on final engineering plans and CEQA compliance is required before a grant award can be considered. Staff propose to continue working with the City staff and return to the board with a funding recommendation once the required work has been completed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff requests any comments or direction from the Board on the applications as categorized by the review panel. Staff recommends the Board consider Category 1 projects for grant funding in Action Items 5.2 and 5.3 and that the Board wait to consider Category 2 projects until CEQA compliance is fully determined.

EXHIBIT A

Map of Project Location for Proposed Project No. 1 City of Coachella – Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Project



EXHIBIT A - Continued

Map of Project Location for Proposed Project No. 2 Southern California Mountains Foundation

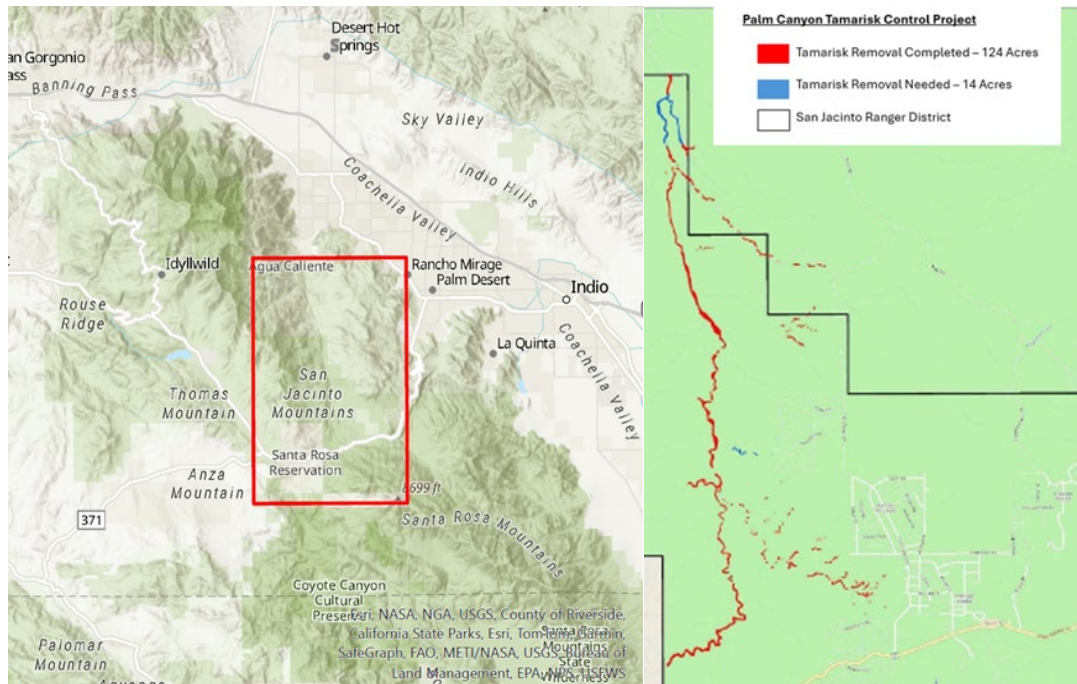
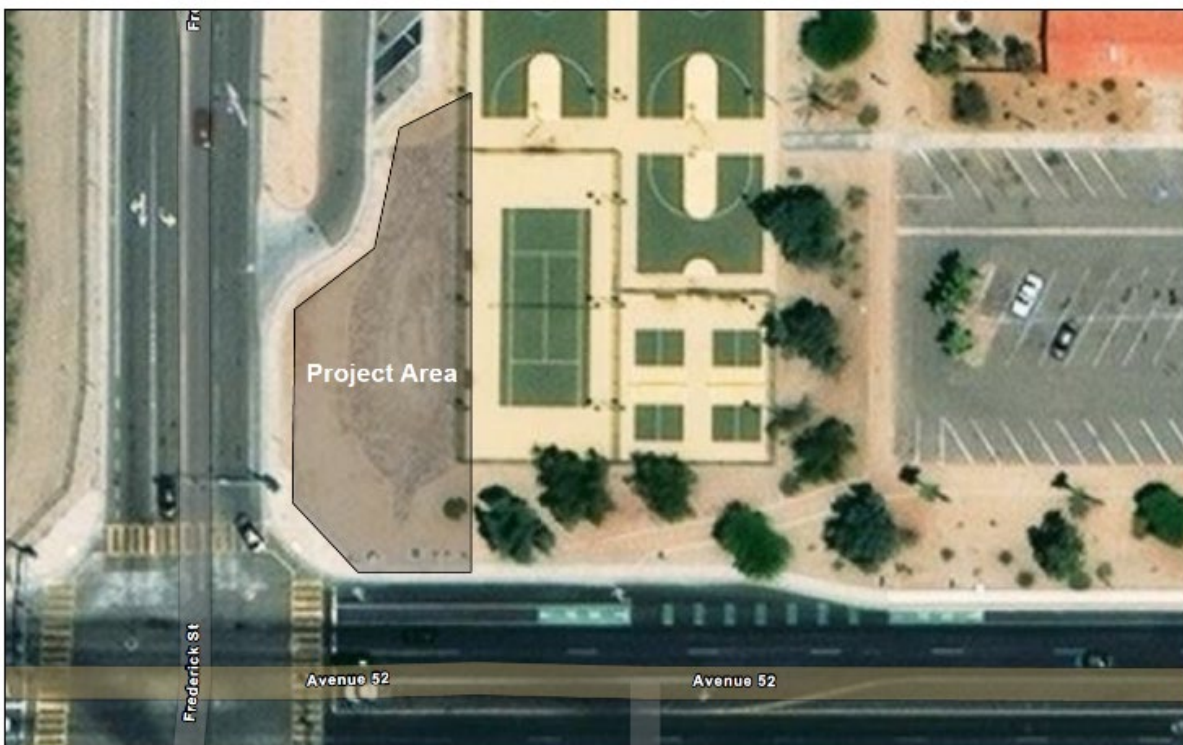


EXHIBIT A - Continued

Map of Project Location for Proposed Project No. 3 City of Coachella – Veterans Park Drywell Project



City of Coachella – Bagdouma Park Drywell Project



ATTACHMENT 3

Agenda Item 5.2 Adoption of Resolution 2025-01 consenting to and approving a Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant to the City of Coachella for its Rancho Las Flores Stormwater Project.

BACKGROUND

The Conservancy issued Notice of Funding Availability No. 2024-01 on December 4, 2024, with an application deadline of March 26, 2025. As discussed in Agenda Item 5.1 above, the expert and staff review panel identified this City of Coachella (COC) project as a Category 1 - priority for funding.

DISCUSSION

The City of Coachella is requesting \$700,000 for their multi-functional stormwater retention basin project at the Rancho Las Flores Park located in the City of Coachella at the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street and Ed Mitchell Drive. The stormwater project is a central component of the 14-acre expansion of Rancho Las Flores Park, which will address a critical stormwater management challenge, mitigate recurring flooding issues, restore ecological balance, and provide the community with a park that functions both as an environmental asset and a recreational hub.

The Rancho Las Flores Park is an essential resource for residents, many of whom come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The park serves as one of the primary recreational and open spaces for various neighborhoods and large-scale events within the city. The park's expansion will provide additional space for outdoor activities, social gatherings, and opportunities for environmental education. The design has been envisioned to enhance the park's usability by incorporating recreational and educational features such as walking paths and shaded seating areas that create an inviting environment for visitors, and includes interpretative signs that will provide insight into the local fauna and ecological functions. This incorporates a wildlife observation area that will give the residents and opportunity to a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between natural habitats, water conservation, sustainable landscape, and recreational areas.

The City of Coachella has full ownership and control of the project site and has completed CEQA requirements, ensuring that implementation can proceed without delays related to land acquisition, access rights or permit issues.

ANALYSIS

In accordance with Proposition 1 and the Conservancy's Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines), eligible projects must implement the California Water Action Plan in the Coachella Valley by meeting one or more of the objectives listed in Public Resources Code section 79732, with a preference for projects that are "multi-benefit" because they fulfill more than one objective. In addition, funded projects must score highly on the numerous project evaluation criteria set by the Guidelines, including technical effectiveness and innovation, cost effectiveness, leveraged financial support, collaboration with other governmental agencies, grantee technical capacity, local economic benefits to disadvantaged communities or improved access to water for human consumption, and evidence of public and community support.

Based on Proposition 1 objectives and evaluation criteria, staff believes that the Project qualifies for funding with a score of 94.25/100 under the Conservancy's Guidelines. In addition, the Project qualifies as "multi-benefit" because it meets several Proposition 1 objectives, as discussed in more detail below.

PROPOSITION 1 OBJECTIVES

The Project contributes to the fulfilment of multiple specific objectives listed in Proposition 1.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(1): *"Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds, fishery resources, and instream flow."*

The expansion of the park and development will encourage economic development by ensuring the park remains a viable and accessible community asset. The stormwater management improvements will improve flood control that has historically limited access to the park and reduced opportunities for recreational activities, cultural events, and local sports programs that would otherwise drive community engagement and economic benefits. Community benefits include improvement in physical and mental health, enhancement of public safety, and reduction in potential of infrastructural damage due to severe flooding events. The park furthermore will support community benefits for individuals of disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(2): *"Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate change on California's communities and ecosystems."*

This project will increase climate resiliency for the local community through building stormwater retention basins and reducing extreme weather impacts.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(9): *“Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, storm water resource management, and greenhouse gas reduction.”*

The multi-use basins are designed to capture and control stormwater runoff, preventing pollutants such as sediments, debris, and chemicals from entering waterways. By installing catch basins, the project will help to mitigate the impact of urban runoff on water quality, thereby protecting the watershed. Furthermore, the project incorporates innovative technologies and techniques to address water management challenges effectively.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(11): *Reduce pollution or contamination of rivers, lakes, streams, or coastal waters, prevent and remediate mercury contamination from legacy mines, and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management.*

The project will implement nature-based solutions such as stormwater retention and groundwater recharge. By improving the stormwater storage capacity and flood management in a heavily developed area. The basin will increase groundwater infiltration, ensuring that stormwater is retained and used constructively rather than cause damage through uncontrolled runoff. Furthermore, construction of bioswales and retention basins will diminish erosion and reduce the flood risk to park improvements and the surrounding community.

OTHER PROGRAM AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The project is part of an ongoing larger development. The grant requested amount is proposed to cover basin infrastructure costs including mobilization, grading, and construction of a curb and gutter, drainpipe, and basin. The requested amount included vegetation and irrigation costs; however, the review panel determined that such costs have not been previously funded from Proposition 1 funds, for other park projects. Therefore, staff recommend a grant amount not to exceed \$400,000 which would exclude the vegetation and irrigation components and only cover basin infrastructure costs as noted above.

The City of Coachella has agreed to comply with all programmatic requirements of Proposition 1 and the Guidelines, including but not limited to public contracting and prevailing wage laws. Finally, the components of the Project have a useful life span in excess of 15 years, thus qualifying as capital improvements in accordance with applicable bond laws.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The City of Coachella, as lead agency, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) on May 12, 2010, and filed a Notice of Determination for its Rancho Las Flores Master Plan Project on May 13, 2010. Staff reviewed the MND and its mitigation measures and determined that the MND fully addresses the Project and that the Conservancy, as a responsible agency, may rely on the MND to approve the grant to the city. Detailed findings to that effect are included in the resolution proposed for Board consideration and adoption.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution 2025-01 approving a Proposition 1 local assistance grant to the City of Coachella in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 for its Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Infrastructure Project.

Exhibit A

City of Coachella – Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Project



**RESOLUTION 2025-01 OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION
MAY 12, 2025**

**APPROVING A PROPOSITION 1 LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT
TO THE CITY OF COACHELLA FOR ITS
RANCHO LAS FLORES PARK STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33501 created the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy for the purpose, among other things, of acquiring and holding, in perpetual open space, mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley and natural community conservation lands, and to provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources and the public's enjoyment thereof; and

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33601 (e) provides that the Conservancy may, "in order to further the conservancy's purposes as set forth in Section 33501, award grants to cities, counties, resource conservation districts, or nonprofit organizations...."; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), the Conservancy operates its Proposition 1 Grant Program, which funds projects of local public agencies or nonprofit organizations that implement California Water Action Plan in the Coachella Valley; and

WHEREAS, on December 4, 2024, the Conservancy issued Notice of Funding Availability No. 2024-01 for watershed restoration and acquisition and water related infrastructure projects that are eligible for funding under its Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the City of Coachella (City) is a public agency eligible to receive funding under Proposition 1; and

WHEREAS, in fulfilling its obligations to provide for the public health, safety and welfare of its citizens, the City has been very active in creating recreational resources and open space within the City; and

WHEREAS, the City submitted a Proposition 1 local assistance grant application for funding in the amount of \$400,000 for their Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Infrastructure Project consisting of a system of bioswales lined with native vegetation, a catch basin and storm drain pipe to treat water runoff and prevent flooding, which construction includes mobilization, grading and drainage, soil preparation, a curb and gutter, storm drain pipe, water quality basin fence refinish, and basin rip rap, (collectively,

the Project) near the intersection of Cesar Chavez Street and Ed Mitchell Drive in the City of Coachella; and

WHEREAS, by providing construction jobs, new outdoor recreational amenities, employment opportunities and educational programming associated with the expanded public park, the Project will bring needed economic development benefits to the City of Coachella, a designated disadvantaged community as defined by Water Code section 79505.5 and an economically distressed area as recognized by Public Resources Code 79702 (k), which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified in Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(1); and

WHEREAS, through the expansion of community activities and amenities, the Project will improve access to recreation and nature spaces, and by promoting community use of drought-resistant native plants, the Project will implement watershed adaptation activities that will reduce the impact of climate change, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified in Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(2); and

WHEREAS, by constructing a multi-use basin designed to capture and control stormwater runoff, preventing pollutants such as sediments, debris, and chemicals from entering waterways, the Project will enhance water quality and prevent the wide dispersal of pollutants, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified in Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(9); and

WHEREAS, by expanding the park with a thriving community green space and constructing bioswales and retention basins, the Project will improve water quality by filtering pollutants from stormwater runoff, thereby reducing contamination and improving water quality in groundwater sources and improving water supply management which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified in Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(11); and

WHEREAS, the improvements to be installed by the Project have a useful life of more than 15 years and therefore are capital improvements as defined by the general obligation bond laws; and

WHEREAS, it is in furtherance of the Conservancy's purposes as established in Public Resources Code Section 33501 to complete the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy wishes to authorize a local assistance grant to the City of Coachella to implement the Project; and

WHEREAS, the City of Coachella, as lead agency, adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Rancho Las Flores Master Plan, including the Project, and filed

a Notice of Determination with the County of Riverside on May 13, 2010, then filed the MND with the State Clearinghouse on December 24, 2010 (State Clearinghouse number 2010121067); and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy staff reviewed the MND, its mitigation monitoring plan and other information provided by the City of Coachella, and staff determined that the Project activities funded by the Conservancy grant are included in the actions analyzed by the MND; and

WHEREAS, under the MND, all of the potential impacts of the Project as implemented in accordance with the mitigation monitoring plan will be less than significant; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15096 (a), the Conservancy, as a responsible agency for the Project, may review a negative declaration prepared by the lead agency for the Project, and after reaching its own conclusions, may rely on that negative declaration to approve the Project; and

WHEREAS, under CEQA Guidelines section 15096 (h), the Conservancy as a responsible agency is not required to make any findings where there are no significant impacts of the Project; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved in regular session of the Governing Board of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy that the Board finds and determines that the Project meets the objectives of the California Water Action Plan and Proposition 1, including but not limited to those objectives set forth in Public Resources Sections 79732 (a)(1) and 79732 (a)(2) 79732 (a)(9), 79732 (a)(11) ; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board finds and determines that the Project complies with the requirements of the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines and is consistent with the implementation of the Conservancy's mission;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board finds and determines that (i) all Project activities that would be funded by the grant have already been fully analyzed in the MND prepared by the City of Coachella on May 12, 2010 (State Clearinghouse number 2010121067) for which a Notice of Determination was filed with the County of Riverside on May 12, 2010, and (ii) all of the potential impacts of the Project as implemented in accordance with the mitigation monitoring plan of the MND will be less than significant, and therefore it is appropriate for the Conservancy, as a responsible agency, to rely on the MND in order to approve the grant for the Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves a local assistance grant to the City of Coachella (Grantee) in an amount not to exceed \$400,000 for its Rancho Las Flores Park Stormwater Infrastructure Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a condition of the grant is that the Grantee shall enter into a Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant Agreement with the Conservancy, which shall contain provisions requiring the following:

1. That the Grantee will agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Conservancy and the State of California, its contractors, officers, directors, agents or employees against any and all claims, liability, demands, damages, debts, judgments, costs, or expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of or in any way connected to the Grantee's actions, omissions, or other conduct relating in any way to this agreement and the Project, including, but not limited to, any such losses, damages, or expenses arising out of (a) loss of or damage to the Project, and (b) injury to or death of persons;
2. That the Grantee must complete the Project no later than June 30, 2027, unless the Conservancy agrees in writing to an extension;
3. That should the Grantee violate the Grant Agreement in any material way, and fail to cure such violation upon written notice from the Conservancy as provided in the Grant Agreement, the Grantee shall reimburse the Conservancy for the full amount of the grant within thirty (30) days of a written demand from the Conservancy to do so;
4. That the Grantee shall maintain accounting records of how the grant sum was spent for a period of three years and shall make such records available for inspection by the Conservancy or the Department of Finance upon request by either agency;
5. That the Conservancy shall review and approve all material changes to the Project as described in the grant application prior to their implementation; and
6. That any unused grant funds must be returned to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, along with any accrued interest, not later than one month after the project completion date.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board hereby authorizes its Executive Director, or in her absence the Acting Director or Board Chair, to execute any and all documents necessary to effect the grant.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Governing Board, held on this 12th day of May 2025, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

Deborah McGarrey, Chair
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

ATTACHMENT 4

Action Item 5.3 Adoption of Resolution 2025-02 approving a Restoration Grant from the Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant Program to the Southern California Mountains Foundation for its Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project.

BACKGROUND

The Conservancy issued Notice of Funding Availability No. 2024-01 on December 4, 2024, with an application deadline of March 26, 2025. As discussed in Agenda Item 5.1 above, the expert and staff review panel identified the Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) project as Category 1 - priority for funding.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SCMF is requesting \$213,707 for a three-year project to remove invasive plant species and restore water sources within the Palm Canyon Watershed (the Project) located in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument as shown on the map Exhibit A (the Project Area). Currently, the Canyon is experiencing significant drying due to drought, as well as infestations of tamarisk and fountain grass. As a result, several of the seeps and springs are no longer accessible as open water to local wildlife. The Project will restore water sources by removing tamarisk and fountain grass from flowing streams, ephemeral streambeds, washes, and tributaries in and around Palm Canyon.

SCMF's Urban Conservation Corps (UCC) crews will hike into back country wilderness areas to cut the trees and stems and apply herbicide to the cut stumps to prevent re-sprouting. The Project will enhance essential habitat for the endangered Peninsular Bighorn Sheep and other sensitive wildlife species such as the least Bell's vireo by providing significant sources of water, restoring water flow into the aquifer and improving water quality by promoting the growth of native plants in place of invasive species.

This work has been ongoing for the past decade, originally initiated by the San Bernardino National Forest Service in 2010 and continued with CVMC funding to the Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) in 2016 and the SCMF in 2021. The SCMF has since assumed primary management of the project with the support of the US Forest Service (USFS). With 124 acres treated to date, 14 hard to reach acres remain to be treated. The Project seeks to continue the initial project work in the areas not yet treated, a minimum of 8 acres of habitat for invasive plants will be treated using a cut stump herbicide application

technique and an additional 50 acres will be surveyed and monitored for re-treatment to ensure maximum eradication.

The Project is being done in cooperation with the USFS, which owns some of the affected land, and FODM. The total cost of the Project is \$289,112, with SCMF leveraging \$75,405 from USFS and UCC, representing 26% in matching funds.

ANALYSIS

In accordance with Proposition 1 and the Conservancy's Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines), eligible projects must implement the California Water Action Plan in the Coachella Valley by meeting one or more of the objectives listed in Public Resources Code section 79732, with a preference for projects that are "multi-benefit" because they fulfill more than one objective. In addition, funded projects must score highly on the numerous project evaluation criteria set by the Guidelines, including technical effectiveness and innovation, cost effectiveness, leveraged financial support, collaboration with other governmental agencies, grantee technical capacity, local economic benefits to disadvantaged communities or improved access to water for human consumption, and evidence of public and community support.

Based on the Proposition 1 objectives and evaluation criteria, the staff and outside expert evaluation panel rated the Project as a Category 1 - priority for full funding. In particular, the panel found that the Project qualifies as "multi-benefit" because it meets numerous Proposition 1 objectives, as discussed in more detail below.

PROPOSITION 1 OBJECTIVES

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(1): *"Protect and increase the economic benefits arising from healthy watersheds, fishery resources, and instream flow."*

Palm Canyon contains an iconic trail that leads from tribal lands on the north all the way to Highway 74 on the south, approximately 15 miles. Invasive tamarisk is overtaking the canyon, thus degrading recreational and scenic values as well as the biological values. Clearing the canyon will protect recreation and tourism, and the resulting benefits to the Coachella Valley's economy will be enhanced. This project also includes direct employment of underserved and at-risk young adults in the area.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(2): *"Implement watershed adaptation projects in order to reduce the impacts of climate change on California's communities and ecosystems."*

This Project seeks to restore the current watershed to its natural state, free from the degradation suffered as a result of invasive plant species. In its natural state, the watershed will be positioned to allow the native organisms that depend on this ecosystem to adapt more easily to climate change.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(8): *“Implement fuel treatment projects to reduce wildfire risks, protect watersheds tributary to water storage facilities, and promote watershed health.”*

Tamarisk creates large masses of highly flammable plant biomass, and the leaf litter from tamarisk accumulates in large masses around the base of the plant, which creates extremely flammable tinder that increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires. Clearing tamarisk brush away from the dry leaf litter allows natural water flows to wash the litter away and incorporate it into the soil, reducing the risk of ignition. In addition, tamarisk is fire-adapted, re-infesting areas more quickly through lack of competition from less fire-adapted native species.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(9): *“Protect and restore rural and urban watershed health to improve watershed storage capacity, forest health, protection of life and property, storm water resource management, and greenhouse gas reduction.”*

Elimination of invasive species removes barriers to natural water flow and promotes percolation of water into the ground. This results in increased storage capacity as well as groundwater supply. In addition, the removal of invasive plants helps protect the native plants and their benefits to the wildlife habitat.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(11): *“Reduce pollution or contamination of rivers, lakes, streams or coastal waters, prevent and remediate mercury contamination from legacy mines, and protect or restore natural system functions that contribute to water supply, water quality, or flood management.”*

Nonnative plant biomass clogs streambeds and washes, unnecessarily depletes water supply, and reduces percolation into groundwater supplies, thereby negatively impacting water quality. Tamarisk and fountain grass removal will restore natural functions that contribute to water supply and water quality by reducing the amount of biomass.

- Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(12): *“Assist in the recovery of endangered, threatened, or migratory species by improving watershed health, instream flows, fish passage, coastal or inland wetland restoration, or other means, such as natural community conservation plan and habitat conservation plan implementation.”*

The Project will preserve and maintain watershed areas that are used by both endangered and migratory species, including Peninsular Bighorn Sheep and the least Bell's vireo. As a result, the risk of species extinction will decrease, and a portion of the natural balance of the ecosystem will be restored. In addition, this Project falls directly within the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) Area and helps to implement Plan objectives.

OTHER PROGRAM AND LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

This Project will employ techniques that have proven to be effective over many years of implementation in the field based on the best available science concerning herbicide types and concentrations, as well as application techniques. All herbicide activity will be supervised by properly licensed individuals. Current GPS mapping technology will be employed to track infested and treated areas, in addition to guiding workflow and progress. SCMF will be working in conjunction with a USFS botanist who will provide advice and input on new science and techniques. SCMF's UCC has experience in similar projects (including FODM's earlier Palm Canyon restoration work), and SCMF has demonstrated capability to successfully work with USFS and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on similar projects.

CEQA COMPLIANCE

The Project constitutes activities specifically contemplated by the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP), and the work to be funded by the grant has already been fully analyzed in the September 2007 CVMSHCP Final Recirculated Environmental Impact Report and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (CVMSHCP EIR). Conservancy staff has reviewed the CVMSHCP and has determined that: (i) the Project does not constitute substantial changes requiring major revisions of these EIRs; (ii) no substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the actions would be undertaken would require major revisions of the CVMSHCP EIR; and (iii) no new information that was not known and could not have been known at time of EIR certification has become available. Finally, all mitigation measures required by the CVMSHCP EIR for the Project will be implemented by CVCC. Therefore, pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21166 and State CEQA Guidelines section 15162, no additional environmental review is required under CEQA.

The attached Resolution 2025-02 contains detailed findings for adoption by the Board as part of Project approval in accordance with CEQA and applicable law.

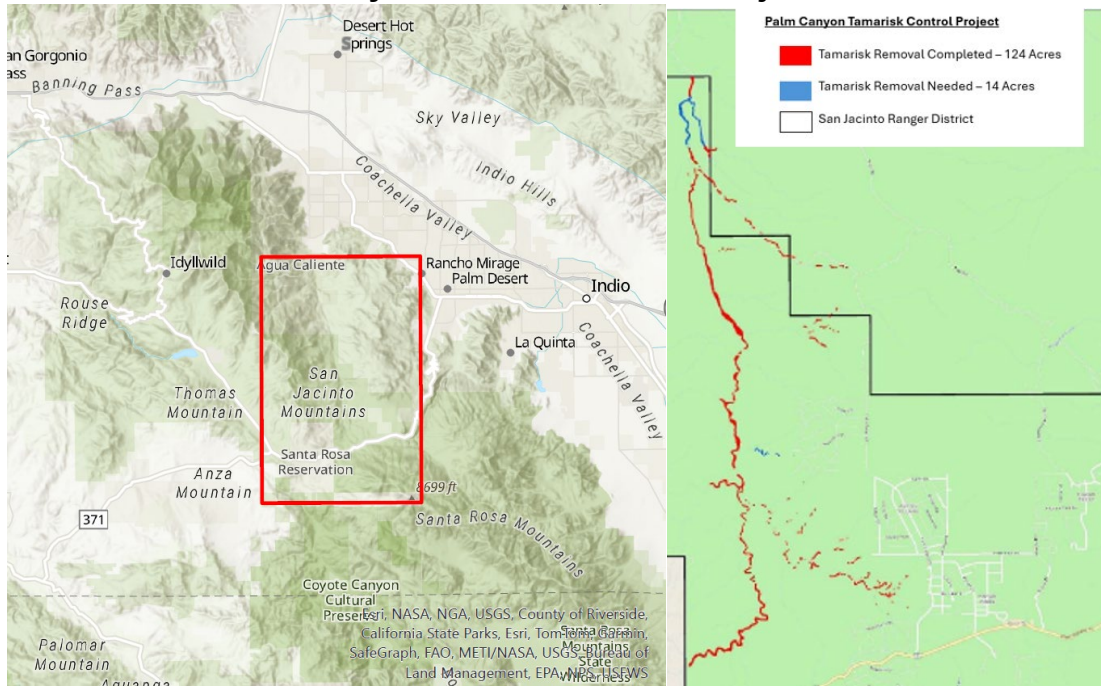
Regarding the work on federal land, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment was previously prepared by the BLM on August 14, 2008 (CA-660—6-14), and similarly, the work involved in the Project was contemplated and evaluated by that EA.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of Resolution 2025-02 approving a Proposition 1 local assistance grant to the Southern California Mountains Foundation in an amount not to exceed \$213,707 for its Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project.

EXHIBIT A

Palm Canyon Tamarisk Control Project Area



**RESOLUTION 2025-02 OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION
MAY 12, 2025**

**APPROVING A RESTORATION GRANT
FROM THE PROPOSITION 1 LOCAL ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM
TO THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINS FOUNDATION
FOR ITS PALM CANYON WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT**

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33501 created the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy for the purpose, among other things, of acquiring and holding, in perpetual open space, mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley and natural community conservation lands, and to provide for the protection of natural and cultural resources and the public's enjoyment thereof; and

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code Section 33601(e) provides that the Conservancy may "in order to further the conservancy's purposes as set forth in Section 33501, award grants to cities, counties, resource conservation districts, or nonprofit organizations...."; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 (Proposition 1), the Conservancy operates its Proposition 1 Grant Program, which funds projects of local public agencies or nonprofit organizations that implement California Water Action Plan in the Coachella Valley; and

WHEREAS, on December 4, 2024, the Conservancy issued its Notice of Funding Availability 2024-01 (NOFA 2024-01) for watershed restoration and acquisition and water related infrastructure projects eligible for funding under its Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines (Guidelines); and

WHEREAS, the Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) is a California nonprofit corporation, recognized as a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service and is therefore a nonprofit organization eligible to receive funding under Proposition 1; and

WHEREAS, SCMF submitted a Proposition 1 local assistance grant application for funding in the amount of \$213,707 for watershed and habitat restoration in the Palm Canyon area of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, where streambeds, washes and tributaries are currently infested with tamarisk; and

WHEREAS, SCMF will periodically remove any tamarisk re-growth on the Project site at its own expense in order to maintain the health of the Palm Canyon watershed and prevent the need for future capital restoration projects; and

WHEREAS, by removing non-native tamarisk trees contained within Palm Canyon, the Project will safeguard recreation and tourism, thereby protecting and increasing the economic benefits to the local community, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified by Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(1); and

WHEREAS, by removing non-native tamarisk trees, the Project will restore the current watershed to its natural state, thereby reducing competition amongst species and allowing native species to adapt more easily to climate change, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified by Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(2); and

WHEREAS, the removal of the tamarisk trees will reduce large strands of highly flammable vegetation, thereby clearing away potential fuel and allowing natural water flows to wash away the remaining dry duff and incorporate it into the soil, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified by Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(8); and

WHEREAS, the removal of the tamarisk trees also will limit spread of tamarisk seed by wind and animal activity to nearby conservation land owned by other conservation agencies, thereby preventing degradation of the habitat value of those lands, which fulfills the Proposition 1 objectives identified by Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(9); and

WHEREAS, the removal of the trees will decrease biomass and soil salinity in the vicinity, thereby improving the quantity and quality of the storm water that is seeping into the ground water table and aquifer, which fulfills another important Proposition 1 objective identified Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(11); and

WHEREAS, by removing the non-native tamarisk trees, the Project will preserve and maintain watershed areas that are used by endangered and migratory species, thereby restoring a natural balance to a portion of the ecosystem, which fulfills an important Proposition 1 objective identified Public Resources Code sec. 79732 (a)(12); and

WHEREAS, SCMF operates a locally experienced Urban Conservation Corps program and has a qualified professional staff, strong relationships with local agencies, and a track record of successfully completing projects it undertakes; and

WHEREAS, Conservancy staff reviewed the existing environmental documentation applicable to the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP), including the CVMSHCP Final Recirculated Environmental Impact Report certified in 2007 for the CVMSHCP adoption (CVMSHCP EIR); and

WHEREAS, the CVMSHCP EIR recognized and analyzed the environmental impacts of enhancement and tamarisk control, particularly in Section 8.4.1 of the CVMSHCP (which established a Monitoring and Adaptive Monitoring Program) and Section 8.2.4.1 of the CVMSHCP (which contemplated removal of tamarisk by mechanical means as well as by pesticide use where necessary); and

WHEREAS, the Project activities were included in the actions analyzed by the CVMSHCP EIR, and nothing in the Project constitutes substantial changes requiring major revisions of the CVMSHCP EIR; and

WHEREAS, the Project does not include any substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the actions under the CVMSHCP would be undertaken; and

WHEREAS, the Project does not rely on or identify any new information that was not known and could not have been known at time of CVMSHCP EIR; and

WHEREAS, all mitigation measures required by the CVMSHCP EIR that are applicable to activities contemplated by Project have been included in the Project; and

WHEREAS, Public Resources Code section 21166 and State CEQA Guidelines section 15162 provide that where a project does not constitute substantial changes requiring major revisions of an existing EIR, no substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the project actions would be undertaken would require major revisions of the EIR, and no new information that was not known and could not have been known at time of EIR certification has become available, then no additional environmental review is required under CEQA; and

WHEREAS, a NEPA Environmental Assessment was previously prepared for the portion of the Project on federal land by the Bureau of Land Management on August 14, 2008 (CA-660-06-14); and

WHEREAS, it is in furtherance of the Conservancy's purposes as established in Public Resources Code Section 33501 and the implementation of the CVMSHCP to complete the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Conservancy wishes to authorize a Proposition 1 local assistance grant to SCMF in an amount not to exceed \$213,707 to support the Project; and

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved in regular session of the Governing Board of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy that the Board finds and determines that the Project meets the objectives of the California Water Action Plan and Proposition 1, including but not limited to those objectives set forth in Public Resources Sections 79732 (a)(1), (a)(2), (a)(8), (a)(9), (a)(11) and (a)(12); and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board finds and determines that Project complies with the requirements of the Conservancy's Proposition 1 Grant Program Guidelines and is consistent with the implementation of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board approves a Proposition 1 local assistance grant to the Southern California Mountains Foundation (Grantee) in an amount not to exceed \$213,707 to support its Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a condition of the grant is that the Grantee shall enter into a Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant Agreement with the Conservancy, which shall contain provisions requiring the following:

1. That the Grantee will agree to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Conservancy and the State of California, its contractors, officers, directors, agents or employees against any and all claims, liability, demands, damages, debts, judgments, costs, or expenses, including reasonable attorney's fees, arising out of or in any way connected to the Grantee's actions, omissions, or other conduct relating in any way to this agreement and the Project, including, but not limited to, any such losses, damages, or expenses arising out of (a) loss of or damage to the Project, and (b) injury to or death of persons;
2. That the Grantee must complete the Project no later than June 30, 2028, unless the Conservancy agrees in writing to an extension;
3. That should the Grantee violate the Grant Agreement in any material way, and fail to cure such violation upon written notice from the Conservancy as provided in the Grant Agreement, the Grantee shall reimburse the Conservancy for the full amount of the grant within thirty (30) days of a written demand from the Conservancy to do so;

4. That the Grantee shall maintain accounting records of how the grant sum was spent for a period of three years and shall make such records available for inspection by the Conservancy or the Department of Finance upon request by either agency;
5. That the Conservancy shall review and approve all material changes to the Project as described in the grant application prior to their implementation; and
6. That any unused grant funds must be returned to the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, along with any accrued interest, not later than one month after the project completion date.

BE IT FURTHER resolved that the Board hereby authorizes its Executive Director, or in her absence the Acting Director or Board Chair, to execute any and all documents necessary to effect the grant.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED at a regular meeting of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Governing Board, held on this 12th day of May 2025, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

Deborah McGarrey, Chair
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

ATTACHMENT 5

Action Item 5.4 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 |

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

The CVDMRCA approved the budget on April 15, 2025, contingent upon CVMC and DRD approval. DRD approved the CVDMRCA budget at their April 23, 2025, board meeting. CVMC will act on May 12, 2025. Therefore, staff recommends a motion approving the attached Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget. 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 approving the attached Fiscal Year 2025-26 budget.

ATTACHMENT 6

Action Item 5.5

Adoption of Resolution 2025-03 consenting to and approving Diana Rosas as Acting Executive Director from August - October 2025.

BACKGROUND

The current Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC) Executive Director Elizabeth King will be on Maternity Leave from approximately August 2025-October 2025. In order to ensure operational continuity during her absence, staff recommends Associate Director Diana Rosas serve as the Acting Executive Director of CVMC from approximately August – October 2025 or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months. Additional responsibilities would include but are not limited to: reporting to the CVMC Board, reporting to the California Natural Resources Agency, managing the CVMC budget, serving as the CVDMRCA Acting Executive Officer, signing invoices, approving/denying grant extension requests, assuming Executive Director Delegated Authority duties, and temporarily serving on the Reserve Management Unit Committee, Reserve Management Oversight Committee, Trails Subcommittee, and Friends of the Desert Mountains Property Committee. It is at the Board's discretion to determine the qualifications of the interim Executive Director.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approving Diana Rosas serve as the Acting Executive Director of CVMC from approximately August – October 2025 or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months.

**RESOLUTION 2025-03 OF THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE
COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY
ADOPTED IN REGULAR SESSION
MAY 12, 2025**

**APPROVING DIANA ROSAS AS ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CVMC
FROM APPROXIMATELY AUGUST-OCTOBER 2025
OR AS LONG AS THE MATERNITY LEAVE PERSISTS,
NOT TO EXCEED FOUR MONTHS**

WHEREAS as authorized by Section 33601 of the Public Resources Code, the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy has appointed an Executive Director; and

WHEREAS the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy desires that its Executive Director, and in her absence, its Acting Executive Director, should have, and should be authorized to exercise, all necessary authority to administer the day-to-day operations and affairs of the Conservancy and to take all such actions on behalf of the Conservancy during periods between scheduled meetings, including actions related to litigation, from approximately August through October 2025, or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy hereby delegates to its Acting Executive Director all necessary authority, express and implied, to carry out the day-to-day administrative functions and responsibilities of the Conservancy, as generally described herein, and to take all necessary actions on behalf of the Governing Board as may be necessary to manage and conduct the business of the Conservancy during periods between scheduled meetings, including necessary actions related to litigation, from approximately August through October 2025, or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the administrative functions and responsibilities of the Acting Executive Director shall include, but shall not be limited to, matters related to office management, budget, and fiscal matters, personnel and contracts, and preparation for meetings of the Board and any committees of the Board, from approximately August through October 2025, or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Acting Executive Director shall administer the affairs of the Conservancy in accordance with the direction and policies of the

Conservancy, the provisions of the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Act (Public Resources Code § 33501 et seq.), and all applicable laws and procedures, from approximately August through October 2025, or as long as the Maternity Leave persists, not to exceed four months; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this delegation of authority may be amended or rescinded by the further resolution of the Conservancy.

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTENTIONS:

ABSENT:

Deborah McGarrey, Chair
Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy

ATTACHMENT 7

Informational Item 5.6 Presentation on the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy 2024 Annual Report.

BACKGROUND

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) is pleased to present the 2024 Annual Report showcasing the Conservancy's partnerships, funding and major accomplishments for the year. The Conservancy serves an important role as a bridge between statewide initiatives and the local community by providing financial, technical, and logistical support to achieve conservation goals.

In 2024, the Conservancy supported statewide initiatives that included the 30x30 Initiative through land acquisitions and conservation, Outdoors for All, strengthening Tribal engagement and partnerships, as well as improving and incorporating Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in the conservation work we do. This work also fulfilled and provided significant progress towards the Conservancy's strategic goals.

In support of Governor Newsom's proclamation and statewide initiative of Ancestral Land Return, the Conservancy returned over 600 acres to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians to ensure effective protection of cultural and natural resources.

Under the Conservancy's grant programs, the board awarded \$1,864,943 million in eight new grants to Coachella Valley organizations, cities and special districts. In 2024, the Conservancy managed 27 active grants across the Coachella Valley, many of which served and supported disadvantaged communities. These grants improved organizational capacity, provided educational and lecture opportunities, and enhanced access to recreation and natural spaces.





The Conservancy Mission

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy's mission is to protect and steward land in perpetuity and to provide for the public's enjoyment and access to those lands, which include mountainous lands surrounding the Coachella Valley from the Banning Pass to the Riverside County border of the Salton Sea. The Conservancy develops partnerships with local government, state, and federal agencies, Tribes, the private sector, and the community to protect the magnificent biological, scenic, cultural and recreational resources of the Coachella Valley area. The Conservancy is directed by a 20-member board representing nine incorporated cities in the Coachella Valley, the County of Riverside, the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, state agencies with land management responsibilities and citizens appointed by the Assembly, Governor and Senate offices.



CONSERVANCY STAFF

A Message from our Executive Director

2024 was a significant year for CVMC. Looking back over the past three decades, CVMC has worked with our partners to acquire, protect and co-manage over 100,000 acres of land for conservation in perpetuity. The benefits are multi-faceted: this protects endangered species, serves as a critical carbon sink, helps restore our groundwater aquifer, and provides recreational access for underserved communities. In 2024, we were proud to continue to actively manage 27 grants across the Valley, over half of which served disadvantaged communities. We were honored to partner with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians on an ancestral land return of over 300 acres to ensure effective protection of cultural and natural resources. Looking ahead to 2025, CVMC is excited to roll out new grant funds to help address climate resiliency through the new climate bond and to advance work on lands management. We are a small but mighty team and are ready to take on new challenges with hope and dedication to our Valley. The best is yet to come.

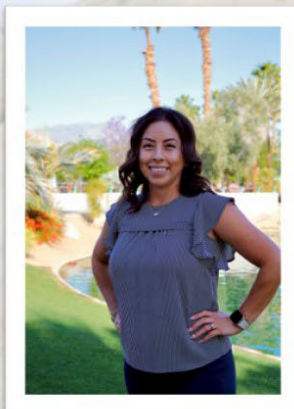
Elizabeth M. King



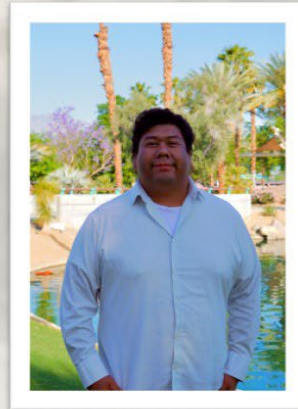
Elizabeth M. King
Executive Director



Diana Rosas
Associate Director



Abriana Elms
Administrative Coordinator



Maximiliano F. Ochoa
Project Coordinator

The Conservancy and California Initiatives

The Conservancy plays an important role in serving as a bridge between statewide initiatives and the local communities by providing financial, technical, and logistical support needed to achieve conservation goals and the state-wide initiatives.

Land Acquisition and Conservation

In partnership with the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission and its associated Habitat Conservation Plan, as well as Friends of the Desert Mountains, over 100,000 acres in the Coachella Valley has been acquired for conservation in perpetuity. In 2024, the Conservancy and the Commission acquired over 200 additional acres of land in critical wildlife corridors to help protect 27 endangered species, including the desert tortoise and burrowing owl. Land acquisitions in the Coachella Valley directly support the statewide commitment to the 30x30 initiative that aims to protect 30% of land and water by 2030. This initiative is a significant push to protect our natural communities, safeguard our regional biodiversity, prevent habitat loss, and mitigate the impacts of climate change.



Image: A burrowing owl takes in some desert sun.

Outdoors for All

The Outdoors for All Initiative expands parks and outdoor spaces in communities that need them the most. In 2024, the Conservancy continued to support the governor's initiative through grants and funding of projects that improve and connect people who lack access to the outdoors and recreational and natural spaces. The Conservancy funded organizations such as the Desert Recreation District, Friends of the Desert Mountains, and Council of Mexican Federations in North America to expand programs that focus on nature education, recreation, and exploring the outdoors. These programs are created to serve and bridge opportunities for Disadvantaged Communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley who have few opportunities free-of-cost to learn and participate in such programs.



Image: A student learns to rock-climb through the Conservancy's Proposition 68 grant program.

Incorporating Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) in Conservation

The Conservancy has been implementing practices that fulfill the JEDI policy. This work starts inward by ensuring our own workplace is welcoming for all and reflective of the diverse community that we serve. Further, it extends to our communities and conservation partners on the ground as we intentionally focus our outreach and communication. Our conservation partners have continued to create programs, spaces, and an environment in which all members of our community can participate, learn, appreciate and enjoy the natural resources available that the Coachella Valley and our conserved spaces have to offer.



Image: An education cohort gathers at the Coachella Valley Preserve to learn about sand dunes and local species through a Conservancy grant to Defensores de Tierras Publicas.

Strengthening Partnership and Tribal Engagement

The Conservancy is committed to early, frequent, and meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes on policy initiatives, funding opportunities, and other projects that may affect tribes. The Conservancy Tribal priorities include:

1. Implementation of Governor Newsom's policy state on Native American Ancestral lands, including support for ancestral land return.
2. Support for existing tribal programs and collaborative developments of projects
3. Restoration of culturally important resources, habitats and species
4. Supporting tribal customary use of natural resources



Image: The Native American Land Conservancy hosts a cleanup day and on-site lecture in the Willow Hole Conservation Area through a Conservancy grant.

LAND TRANSFER

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Board adopted Resolution 2024-07 consenting to and approving an ancestral land return by the Conservancy of one 320-acre parcel in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, a federally recognized Tribe. The 320-acre parcel was originally purchased by the Conservancy to protect palm oases and fragile cultural resources near Palm Canyon for conservation purposes. In November of 2023, the Conservancy Board approved the transfer of the directly adjacent 280-acre parcel to Agua Caliente. The 280 acres were originally purchased using Conservancy grant funds by the Friends of the Desert Mountains. The additional ancestral land return will establish a total of 600 acres to the Tribe for stewardship and management of these sacred lands.

Regarding the most recent 320-acre land return to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, Tribal Chairmen Reid D. Milanovich said, “preservation of our homeland is essential to maintaining our cultural heritage. Integral to the identity of our Tribe is the thousands of years of knowledge and ancient wisdom held within these lands, our homeland.”



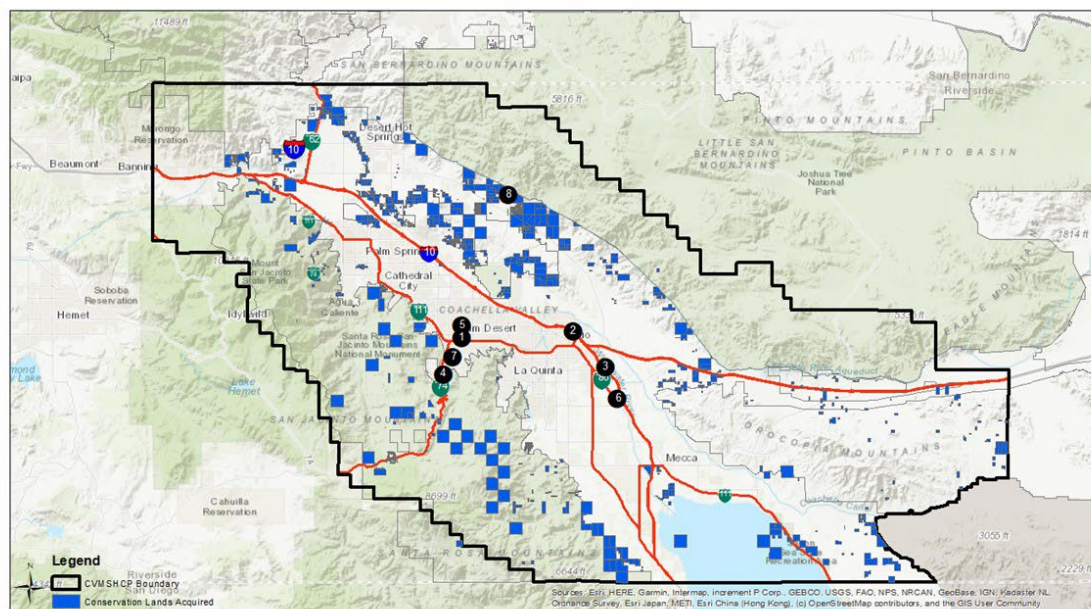
Image: The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians hosts the Conservancy and California Natural Resources Agency to celebrate the ancestral land return in 2024.

2024 Grant Awards — \$1,864,943

In 2024, the Conservancy awarded eight new grants and continued to manage 27 active grants across the Coachella Valley.

- 1) **\$372,712** to Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) for their Cooperative Ranger Initiative for Conservation Lands, a Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant program.
- 2) **\$109,277** to Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) for their Urban Conservation Corps (UCC) Climate Corps Program, a Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant program.
- 3) **\$140,000** to Council of Mexican Federation in North America (COFEM) for their *Defensores de Tierras Publicas* (Public Land Defenders) Program, a Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program.
- 4) **\$118,700** to Friends of the Desert Mountain (FODM) for their Eastern Coachella Valley Programs Capacity Building Project, a Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant program.
- 5) **\$125,000** to Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Conservation and Recreation Authority (CVDMRCA) for their Land Management Capacity Building Project, a Climate Resilience and Community Access Grant Program.
- 6) **\$847,285** to Desert Recreation District (DRD) for their Thermal Park Water-Efficiency Infrastructure Project, a Proposition 1 Grant program.
- 7) **\$133,981** to The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens (TLD) for their Desert Hot Springs Pollinator Pathways Project, a Proposition 68 Grant program.
- 8) **\$17,998** to Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (CVDMRCA) for their West Deception Canyon Trail Project, a Proposition 68 Grant program.

Map of Conserved Lands through 2024 and New Grant Award Locations



Conservation Work in 2025 and Beyond

The Conservancy will continue to develop relationships with tribes and the community to grow the relevance and impact of the Conservancy. As the Conservancy prepares to update the Strategic Plan, the Conservancy will continue to build relationships with tribes, communities, and local government as a crucial component to ensuring that all communities are considered in the Strategic Plan and fulfillment of statewide initiatives locally.

Land Acquisition and Conservation

Conservation and Land Acquisition remains a top priority. Land management will be pivotal to ensuring the continued protection of 27 endangered species in the Coachella Valley. The Conservancy will continue to support the statewide 30x30 initiative in preserving natural communities, safe-guarding our regional biodiversity, preventing habitat loss, and mitigating the impacts of climate change. The Conservancy will continue to support clean-up efforts, restoration projects, acquisition, and wildlife connectivity.

Outdoors for All

Outdoors for All remains a top priority. We continue to support the expansion of access to natural spaces, recreational opportunities, and outdoors for our communities. 2024 illustrated the impact that grants and partnerships on the ground have in fulfilling the Outdoors for All initiative.

Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) in Conservation

The Conservancy will continue to implement practices that fulfill JEDI policies internally and externally with our partners, our communities and stakeholders on programs, projects, and environmental initiatives. Our goal is that all members of our community can participate in, learn from, and enjoy the natural resources available in the Coachella Valley. With the anticipated roll-out of Proposition 4 Grant-Funding, we plan to continue awarding over 50% of our grants to benefit disadvantaged communities.

Tribal Affairs and Engagement

The Conservancy remains committed to early, frequent, and meaningful consultation with California Native American tribes on policy initiatives, funding opportunities, and other projects that may affect tribes.

The Conservancy's Tribal priorities include:

1. Implementation of Governor Newsom's policy state on Native American Ancestral lands, including support for ancestral land return.
2. Support for existing tribal programs and collaborative developments of projects
3. Restoration of culturally important habitats and species
4. Supporting tribal customary use of natural resources

Grants and Funding

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy issues grants to public agencies, nonprofits, special districts, cities, and tribes for projects that support watershed health, strategic land conservation, vibrant recreation and tourism, resilient communities, and wildfire recovery. The projects that we fund through our service area are developed by our community partners with assistance of local CVMC staff. Our holistic approach yields projects that address local needs, align with our strategic plan, and address state priorities to reduce greenhouse gas emission, improve habitat, and protect water supply infrastructure.

1. Acquisitions and Capital Improvement—Funding that supports the acquisition of lands with important biological, cultural, or recreational resources. Acquisition priorities and funding are set in close coordination with the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habit Conservation Plan and the states 30x30 initiative.
2. Prop 1—The Water Quality, Supply and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014 addressing an array of challenges facing Californias limited water resources.
3. Prop 4—The Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparation, Flood Protection, Extreme Heat Mitigation, Clean Energy, and Workforce Development Act of 2024, tackling the our most urgent climate needs by investing in preventing devastating wildfires, providing clean, safe drinking water, and boosting water supplies, and protecting Californias iconic landscapes.
4. Prop 68—The California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoors Access for all of 2018 are to expand public access to safe parks, wildlife preserves, trails, and recreation areas, mitigate the effects of climate change, and encourage water conservation and drought preparedness, restoration of culturally important habitats and species.

The Conservancy Board

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

Savana Saubel, Secretary-Treasurer

Margaret Park, Chief Planning Officer (Alternate)

CA State Assembly Appointee

Beatriz Gonzalez, Private Citizen

CA Governor's Appointee

Joan Taylor, Private Citizen

CA Senate Appointee

Ellen Lloyd Trover, Private Citizen

CA Department of Fish & Wildlife

Richard Kim, Environmental Scientist

CA State Parks

Enrique Arroyo, District Superintendent, Ocotillo Wells District

CA Department of Finance

Joe Stephenshaw, Director

CA Natural Resources Agency

Madeline Drake, Assistant Secretary for Biodiversity

Andrea Scharffer, Deputy Assistant Secretary (Alternate)

City of Cathedral City

Rita Lamb, Council Member

Mark Carnevale, Council Member (Alternate)

City of Coachella

Denise Delgado, Mayor Pro Tem

Frank Figueroa, Council Member (Alternate)

City of Desert Hot Springs

Gary Gardner, Mayor Pro Tem

City of Indian Wells

Brian Penna, Council Member

City of Indio

Benjamin Guitron, Council Member

Elaine Holmes, Mayor Pro Tem (Alternate)

City of La Quinta

Deborah McGarrey, Mayor Pro Tem

Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Council Member (Alternate)

City of Palm Desert

Evan Trubee, Mayor Pro Tem

Gina Nestande, Council Member (Alternate)

City of Palm Springs

Grace Garner, Council Member

Ron deHarte, Mayor (Alternate)

City of Rancho Mirage

Steve Downs, Council Member

Lynn Mallotto, Mayor Pro Tem (Alternate)

County of Riverside, District 4

V. Manuel Perez, Riverside County Supervisor

Patricia Cooper, Riverside County Deputy Chief of Staff (Alternate)

University of California

Christopher Tracy, Director, Deep Canyon Desert Research Center

Wildlife Conservation Board

Jennifer Norris, Executive Director



Conservation Partners

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Resources Agency

California Wildlife Conservation Board

Center for Natural Lands Management

Coachella Valley Association of Governments

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission

Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

Council of Mexican Federation in North America

Desert Compost

Desert Recreation District

Friends of the Desert Mountains

Native American Land Conservancy

Southern California Mountains Foundation

Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians

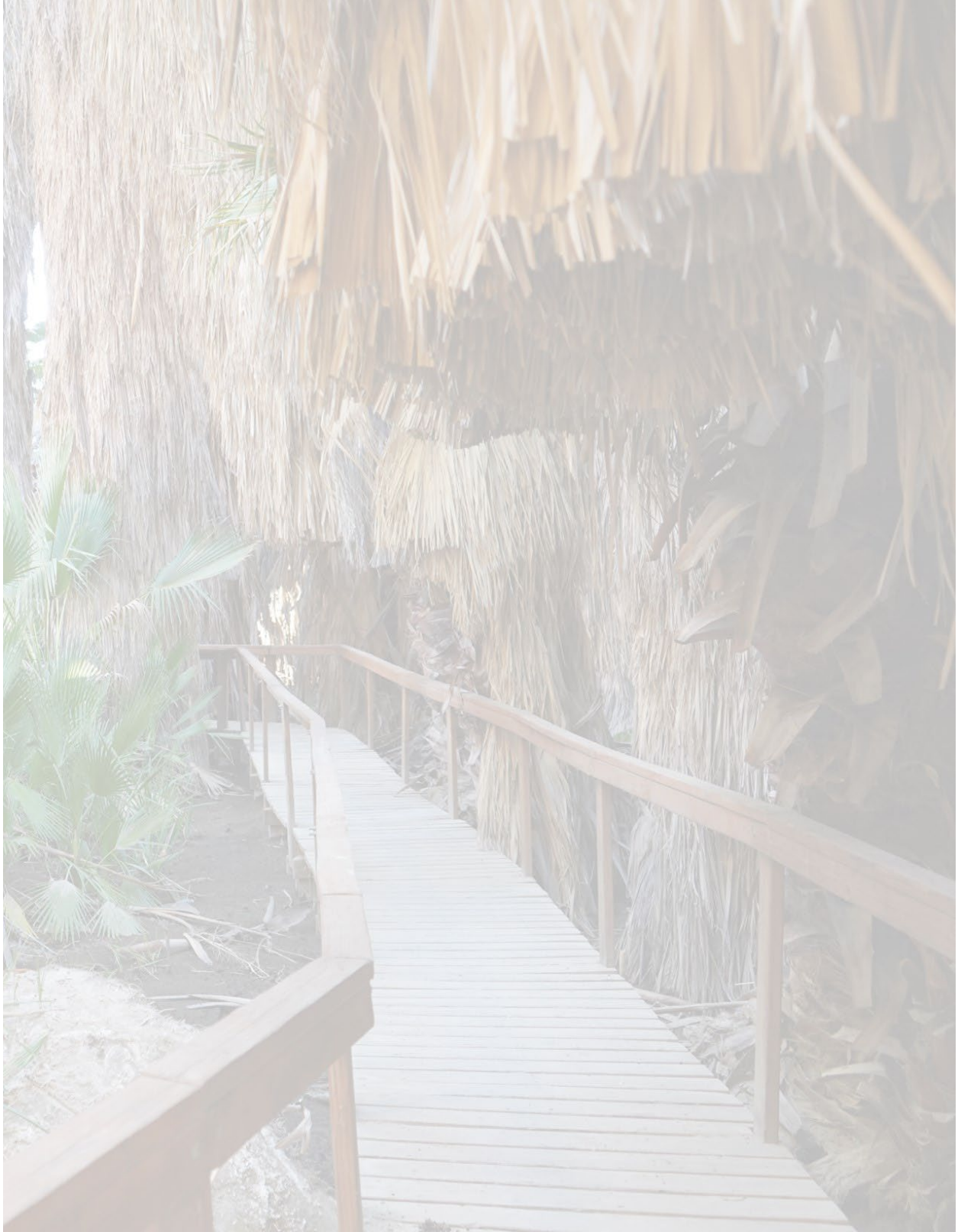
The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens

The Wildlands Conservancy

Oswit Land Trust

University of California, Riverside—Palm Desert Campus

And many more!



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CALIFORNIA
NATURAL
RESOURCES
AGENCY



ATTACHMENT 8

Informational Item 5.7 Recognition of Tammy Martin for Receiving the Trails Champion Award from California State Parks.

BACKGROUND

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Executive Director partnered with the Desert Recreation District General Manager to nominate Tammy Martin, Executive Director of Friends of the Desert Mountains, for the Trails Champion Award. Through a competitive selection process, California State Parks chose Tammy Martin as the 2025 recipient of this award and presented it to her and the Friends of the Desert Mountains on April 23, 2025, in Pomona, California at the Trails and Greenways 2025 Event. Executive Director Martin has been with Friends of the Desert Mountains for over 20 years. Under her leadership, Friends has purchased land to preserve our unique ecosystems and has run active programs for youth, adults and seniors to engage with our trails and natural resources in the Coachella Valley. This item is to acknowledge Tammy Martin for her outstanding service.

ATTACHMENT 9

Informational Item 6.1 Written Reports from Staff

INFORMATIONAL ITEM – No Board action required.

Item A. ACQUISITION AND LAND MANAGEMENT UPDATES

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC)/Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC)/Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) Management – The Conservancy continues to perform monitoring inspections on properties owned by the Conservancy and oversee grantees whose local assistance grants have been provided in support of the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP).

CVCC ACQUISITION MANAGER PROGRAM - The Conservancy continues to contract with CVCC as Acquisition Manager to implement the Habitat Conservation Plan. ***In 2025, 166.53 acres have been newly acquired for conservation in perpetuity.***

Current active acquisition efforts include:

Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area: In November 2024 the CVCC Board approved the acquisition of two parcels consisting of +/-2.0 acres. Due to probate issues needing to be resolved with title, escrow is expected to close by end of June 2025.

Indio Hills/Joshua Tree National Park Conservation Area: In February 2025 the CVCC Board approved the acquisition of one parcel consisting of +/-5.0 acres. Escrow is expected to close by end of May 2025.

Desert Tortoise and Linkage Conservation Area: In April the CVCC Board approved the acquisition of two parcels consisting of +/-60 acres. Escrow is expected to close by end of June 2025.

Tax Default Properties:

In January 2025, staff received a letter from the County with notice that Tax Sales were being postponed due to potential legal risks and that the purchase price quotes were no longer valid. Furthermore, the County noted that information regarding new law for Tax

Sales through Chapter 8 is still pending, and that details will not be available until early 2026. Until then, no properties will be sold through the Chapter 8 process. The parcels below are all on hold, pending details forthcoming in 2026.

In October 2022, CVCC applied to purchase 48 tax defaulted parcels; eight of the parcels have been redeemed and are no longer available for purchase. In June 2024 the County provided purchase price quotes for the remaining 40 tax default parcels, totaling approximately +/-147.32 acres, the CVCC Board approved the acquisition of the remaining parcels and passed a resolution accepting the purchase price quotes. These parcels are now on hold.

In December 2023, CVCC applied to purchase 12 tax defaulted parcels; one parcel has been redeemed and is no longer available for purchase. In September 2024, the CVCC Board approved the acquisition of the remaining 11 tax default parcels, totaling approximately +/-135 acres, and passed a resolution accepting the purchase price quotes. These parcels are now on hold.

In February 2024, CVCC applied to purchase 12 tax defaulted parcels; two parcels have been redeemed and are no longer available for purchase. CVCC is awaiting purchase price quotes for the remaining 10 parcels that have not been redeemed. These parcels are now on hold.

In December 2024, CVCC applied to purchase 12 tax defaulted parcels; two parcels have been redeemed and are no longer available for purchase. CVCC is awaiting purchase price quotes for the remaining 10 parcels that have not been redeemed. These parcels are now on hold.

Active Appraisals:

1. **Desert Tortoise Linkage Conservation Area:** In October 2024, an appraisal was completed on eleven parcels, consisting of +/-803.97 acres, representing separate ownerships. Three owners accepted CVCC's contingent offer for the purchase of +/-65.0 acres. Escrow is scheduled to close by end of May on the 5.0-acre parcel. The other two parcels consisting of 60.0-acres are scheduled to close by June 2025. The appraisals expire in December 2025.
2. **Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area:** In March 2024, an appraisal was completed on five parcels, consisting of +/-222.72 acres, representing separate ownerships. One owner accepted CVCC's contingent offer for the purchase of +/-48.31 acres which closed escrow in

December 2024. Another owner accepted CVCC's contingent offer for the purchase of +/-148.5 acres which closed escrow in April 2025. Staff are continuing to pursue discussions with the other owners of the remaining 25.91-acres for potential acquisitions. The appraisals expire in June 2025.

Additionally, in August, an appraisal was completed on two parcels, consisting of +/-15.8 acres, representing separate ownerships. One owner accepted CVCC's contingent offer for the purchase of +/-5.03 acres, and escrow closed in March 2025. Staff are continuing to pursue discussions with the other owners of the remaining 10.77-acres for potential acquisition. Appraisals expire December 2025.

Additionally, in March an appraisal was completed on 12 parcels, consisting of +/-294.25 acres, representing separate ownerships. Contingent offer letters have been sent out; should property owners accept CVCC's offer and sign a Purchase and Sale Agreement, staff will initiate the acquisition process. Appraisals expire June 2026.

Item B. GRANT PROGRAM UPDATES

PROPOSITION 1 GRANT PROGRAM – ACTIVE GRANT PROJECT STATUS

Grant No. – Grant Award – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

P010027 - \$428,615 - The Wildlands Conservancy – *Whitewater Preserve Flood Control Improvement Project (Planning)*

The Wildlands Conservancy is in the final phase of the permitting process. The permitting agencies are working to finalize the habitat mitigation plan permits, which are required for county permits. The process now includes a parallel effort at the behest of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to have endangered mountain yellow legged frogs translocated to the preserve as soon as possible through a US Fish and Wildlife Service Conservation Benefit Agreement. The Wildlands Conservancy will continue communication with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to update the permit applications and revise and correct the Habitat Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.

P010034 - \$182,264 - Southern California Mountains Foundations – *Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration Project (Restoration)*

The Urban Conservation Corp (UCC) is in their third year of restoration work in the Palm Canyon Watershed. To date the crew has reported completing a total of 26.3-acres of initial treatment and 25.2-acres of re-treatment. Last season, UCC coordinated with the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians ranger and cultural monitors who assisted with the restoration work. The UCC will be prioritizing work in the fall with focus on the treatment of the northern boundary of the project area and the difficult terrains which consist of 14-acres. The team will strive to re-treat 15-acres and an additional 25-acres of initial treatment.

P010036 - \$525,000 - City of Indio – *Flood Prevention Project at Jackson St. & Ave 50 (Infrastructure)*

The City has completed the design project and is working through the necessary right of way acquisitions. The project has been split into phases to start work within the current available right of way as Phase 1. Phase 2, including the drainage improvements, will be completed as soon as the rights of way are secured.

P010040 - \$847,285 - Desert Recreation District – *Water Efficiency Project (Infrastructure)*

The Desert Recreation District's Water Efficiency Project will construct water-efficient infrastructure prior to groundbreaking of the entire park. Construction of the park is on schedule. 90% of the proposed storm drainage has been installed. 60% of the domestic

water line has been installed. 90% of the PVC irrigation lateral has been installed. The Project will continue with the installation of the irrigation and domestic lines and home place conduits of the south side of the parking lot.

PROPOSITION 1 GRANT PROGRAM – COMPLETED PROJECTS

34 PROJECTS COMPLETED TO DATE

\$5,106,260 TOTAL AMOUNT OF COMPLETED PROJECTS TO DATE

Grant No. – Grant Award Amount – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

P010003 – \$111,407 – Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – *Mesquite Restoration and Groundwater Monitoring (Restoration)*

P010004 – \$150,000 – Desert Recreation District – *North Shore Park Flood Improvements (Infrastructure)*

P010005 – \$15,647 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Palm Canyon and Santa Rosa Watershed Restoration (Planning)*

P010005 – \$111,043 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Palm Canyon Watershed Restoration (Restoration)*

P010005 – \$90,515 – Friends of the Desert Mountains– *Santa Rosa Mountains Watershed Restoration (Restoration)*

P010006 – \$95,156 – Mission Springs Water District – *Willow Hole Groundwater Monitoring Wells (Restoration)*

P010008 – \$59,154 – City of Palm Springs – Phase 1 – *San Jacinto Mountains Watershed Restoration (Planning)*

P010008 – \$803,611 – City of Palm Springs – Phase 2 – *San Jacinto mountains Watershed Restoration (Restoration)*

P010009 – \$50,000 – City of Palm Springs – *Tahquitz Creek – Triangle Parcel Restoration (Restoration)*

P010010 – \$7,532 – Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians – *Phase 1 – Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration (Planning)*

P010010 – \$169,580 – Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians – *Phase 1 – Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration (Restoration)*

P010011 – \$7,178 – Coachella Valley Resource Conservation District – *Root Water (Infrastructure)*

P010012 – \$150,000 – California Department of Fish and Wildlife – *Dos Palmas Reserve Artesian Well Project (Restoration)*

P010014 – \$26,440 – The Wildlands Conservancy – Phase 1 – *Whitewater Preserve Flood Control (Planning)*

P010015 – \$135,884 – Center for Natural Lands Management – *Desert Pupfish Refuge Habitat Restoration (Restoration)*

P010016 – \$200,461 – City of Coachella – *City-Wide Stormwater Resource Plan Project (Planning)*

P010017 – \$215,911 – University of California/Riverside – *Salton Sea Crust and Water Quality Remediation (Planning)*

P010018 – \$16,330 – Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians – *Phase 2 – Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration (Restoration)*

P010018 – \$236,728 – Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians – *Phase 2 – Salton Sea Wetlands Restoration – Implementation (Restoration)*

P010019 – \$500,000 – Desert Recreation District – *Flood Control Project at Oasis Park (Restoration)*

P010020 – \$501,305 – Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – *Snow Creek Watershed Acquisition – Lamb Property (Acquisition)*

P010022 – \$71,841 – Southern California Mountains Foundation – *Dos Palmas Restoration Project (Restoration)*

P010023 – \$54,000 – Palm Springs Cemetery District – *Invasive Species Removal Project (Restoration)*

P010024 – \$132,318 – Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – *Wetlands Restoration, Tamarisk Control and Rail Habitat Enhancement at North Shore Ranch (Restoration)*

P010025 – \$101,556 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Desert Pupfish Refugia and Native Habitat Restoration (Infrastructure)*

P010026 – \$152,707 – Salton Sea Authority – *NSBYC Harbor Rehabilitation & Flood Infrastructure (Infrastructure)*

P010028 – \$96,832 – Santa Rosa Band of Cahuilla Indians – *Santa Rosa Horse Creek Dam and Wetlands Restoration Project (Restoration)*

P010029 – \$57,865 – Center for Natural Lands Management – *Core Marsh Burn and Restoration Project (Restoration)*

P010030 – \$72,136 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Dos Palmas Middle Salt Creek Project (Restoration)*

P010033 – \$54,100 – Coachella Valley Public Cemetery District – *Water Management System (Infrastructure)*

P010035 – \$235,000 – Coachella Valley Water District – *Groundwater Monitoring Well Project (Infrastructure)*

P010037 – \$203,498 – Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians – *Monitoring Wells Project Section 33 (Infrastructure)*

P010038 – \$160,000 – Coachella Valley Water District – *DHS and Mission Creek Subbasin Groundwater Monitoring Wells Project (Infrastructure)*

P010039 – \$60,515 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *San Felipe Creek Desert Pupfish Pond Project (Infrastructure)*

PROPOSITION 68 GRANT PROGRAM – ACTIVE GRANT PROJECT STATUS

Grant No. – Grant Award – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

P680015 – \$125,000 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – *Environmental Review of its Coachella Valley Trail System Expansion Project (Planning)*

The CEQA documentation has been completed, Conservancy staff is working with the consultants on next steps to obtain site control and entitlements.

P680020 – \$152,057 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Conservation Greenhouse Project (Infrastructure)*

The Conservation Greenhouse Project includes construction of a dedicated greenhouse to germinate and propagate native plants for use in projects that will improve climate resilience and community access to nature across the Coachella Valley. Project design has been approved. Concrete pouring has been completed, with the concrete slabs schedule in the next phase. Once the base is completed, the construction of the

greenhouse will continue with assembly of the frame, and installation of the tables and interior features. Grantee expects the greenhouse to be completed by June 2025.

P680023 – \$150,000 – City of Indio – *Parking Lot Improvement Project at Indio Hills Badlands Hiking Trailhead (Infrastructure)*

The parking lot improvements at the Indio Badlands Trailhead project will increase and enhance the visitor experience by improving the trailhead infrastructure and parking facility. The project received CVWD approval for both the construction and landscaping plans. The full package has been submitted to USBR for their review and issuance of construction encroachment permit. Construction will commence as soon as the plans are approved.

P680024 – \$133,981 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Desert Hot Springs Pollinator Pathway Project (Infrastructure)*

The Desert Hot Springs Pollinator Project will create 10 to 20 pollinator gardens using native plants at various locations within the City of Desert Hot Springs on a total of less than five acres combined. TLD staff have met with recreation and community service directors within the city for site considerations. Additionally, TLD staff have started to collect seeds in the area for the germination process.

P680025 – \$17,998 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority – *West Deception Canyon Trail Project (Infrastructure)*

The West Deception Canyon Trail Project consists of installing approximately 200 feet of trail switchbacks, trail signage, and markers to enhance hiker safety and avoid erosion on a 4.3-mile loop trail. Grantee has started with the procurement of materials for the project, contract for the workforce and scheduling work to be completed in the fall.

PROPOSITION 68 GRANT PROGRAM – COMPLETED PROJECTS

19 PROJECTS COMPLETED TO DATE

\$2,304,891 TOTAL AMOUNT OF COMPLETED PROJECTS TO DATE

Grant No. – Grant Award Amount – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

P680002 – \$28,947 – Friends of the Desert Mountains– *Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center Improvement (Planning)*

P680003 – \$49,000 – ShumwayRanch.Org – *Shumway Ranch Master Site Plan (Design)*

P680004 – \$74,500 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority – *Shumway Ranch Restoration and Infrastructure (Planning)*

P680005 – \$81,730 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Design-Interpretive-Improvement Project – National Monument Visitor Center (Design)*

P680006 – \$232,182 – Kounkuey Design Initiative, Inc. – *Salton Sea State Recreation Area Renovation and Restoration (Planning)*

P680007 – \$139,550 – Center for Natural Lands Management – *Coachella Valley Preserve Fencing Project (Infrastructure)*

P680008 – \$25,917 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Coachella Valley Trails Facility and Signage Inventory and Assessment Project (Planning)*

P680009 – \$38,530 – Southern California Mountains Foundation – *Coachella Valley Conservation Corps Center Project (Planning)*

P680010 – \$57,500 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority – *Shumway Initial Improvements and Preparations Design Plans Project (Design)*

P680011 – \$245,274 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Greening the Desert (Infrastructure)*

P680012 – \$100,000 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority – *Trails and Interpretative Signage Project (Infrastructure)*

P680013 – \$565,475 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Recreation and Conservancy Authority – *Shumway Restroom and Pavilion Improvement Project (Infrastructure)*

P680014 – \$35,000 – ShumwayRanch.Org – *Preservation Plan for Historic Structure Improvements at Shumway Ranch (Planning)*

P680016 – \$53,856 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Signs of Nature: Connecting DHS to Nearby Nature (Infrastructure)*

P680017 – \$200,000 – The City of Coachella – *Environmental Review of its Grapefruit Boulevard Urban Greening and Connectivity Project (Planning)*

P680018 – \$88,479 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *East Valley Pollinator Pathway Demonstration Project (Infrastructure)*

P680019 – \$35,000 – Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District – *Feasibility Study for new Regional Park in the Coachella Valley (Planning)*

P680021 – \$163,850 – Oswit Land Trust – *Biological Resources Assessment and Environmental Review for the Prescott Preserve (Planning)*

P680022 – \$90,098 – Center for Natural Lands Management – *Restroom Replacement Project (Infrastructure)*

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM – ACTIVE GRANT PROJECT STATUS

Grant No. – Grant Award – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

CRCA0002 – \$407,277 – Southern California Mountains Foundation – *UCC Coachella Valley Center (Capacity)*

The project consists of hiring a Senior Director that will lead and carry out the Southern California Mountains Foundation (SCMF) Urban Conservation Corp (UCC) Strategic Plan to move the Coachella Valley Conservation Center forward and to launch a new science-based desert conservation UCC Climate Corps program that will plan and carry out 50 work projects and train over 30 young people from Eastern Coachella Valley to become UCC Climate Corpsmembers. Status: Additional partnerships and project opportunities are continuously sought. The Coachella Valley Site Director periodically checks in with potential partners like Audubon, Alianza, Oswit Land Trust, Desert Recreation District, City of Indio, City of Cathedral City, Pacific Crest Trail Association, Native American Land Conservancy, and many others to find ways to expand capacity for local conservation and climate resilient projects and initiatives.

CRCA0003 – \$398,000 – UC Riverside/Center for Conservation Biology – Palm Desert – *Desert Climate Resilience Initiative (Capacity/Research)*

The project consists of retaining a full-time experienced land manager to establish and operate a sustainable land management program for two-and-one-half- years. Status: Vegetation habitat modeling: Current tasks are running and calibrating joint species distribution models and preparing to apply results to future climate scenarios. These climate scenarios will be used to model potential changes in vegetation in different parts of the Coachella Valley in the future. Carbon stocks project data collection and analysis: working to finalize vegetation cover estimates from the vegetation cover maps and use literature information to scale this information to represent aboveground biomass and carbon (C) content.

CRCA0004 – \$405,700 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Eastern Coachella Valley Programs Capacity Building (Capacity)*

The Project consists of expanding the Friends of the Desert Mountains capacity to provide recreational and educational programs that showcase the wildlife, scenic and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley to underserved and economically disadvantaged

communities in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Status: The Director of Education, the Indigenous Community Liaison, and the Translation Specialist have been diligently working and implementing several youth educational classes; assisting with organizing trips and recently participated at the Wildflower Festival in Palm Desert. Attending lectures at University of California Riverside (UCR) pertaining to the Salton Sea; along with conducting research and applying for grants to continue funding the education programs.

CRCA0005 – \$390,000 – Native American Land Conservancy – *NALC Capacity Building (Capacity)*

The Project consists of funding the Native American Land Conservancy's Capacity Building Project which will add two-full time positions. Both positions will work to enhance the capacity of NALC to promote equity in access to the outdoors, connect tribal people to the land and their cultures. Status: There has been a rapid pace of work product as the Director of Development and Education and Stewardship Programs Manager have continued to work on maintaining funding and volunteer networks, exploring new and innovative ways to connect with the community to share NALC's work, attend and host program outreach events and identifying ongoing support for new programs and acquisitions.

CRCA0006 – \$202,000 – Desert Recreation District Foundation – *Outdoor Adventure Experiences for Underserved Youth (Capacity)*

The Project consists of expanding two youth programs by retaining additional staff and purchasing additional equipment to be able to offer these programs for two years at no cost to at least 180 underserved and economically disadvantaged youth annually. Status: This reporting period the Trips for Kids Project and Recreation Outdoors Club (ROC) delivered various programs. Most of the participants were Hispanic youth that attend Title 1 schools and come from low-income communities. There were 12 Bike Club programs across the Coachella Valley at various Desert Recreation District sites including Thousand Palms Community Center, Mecca Community Park, Northshore Beach and Yacht Club, and Oasis del Desierto Park. The ROC program the last three months included one classroom style Leave No Trace Camping Activity, two youth and family hikes and one afterschool hike with Mecca Clubhouse.

CRCA0007 – \$280,000 – Council of Mexican Federation in North America (COFEM) – *Coachella Defensores de Tierras Publicas/ Public Land Defenders (Capacity)*

The Project consists of expanding the Council of Mexican Federation's (COFEM) Defensores de Tierras Publicas program, which works in collaboration with conservation organizations to protect desert landscapes and create educational opportunities for people of low-income and traditionally underserved communities, by retaining a full-time,

two-year conservation fellow to expand its educational program. Status: COFEM co-hosted the Desert in the Park event, along with CactusToCloud Institute, which served as a celebration and graduation ceremony for the 2024 Nuestro Desierto California Naturalist students. During the event, graduates showcased their stewardship projects, which were designed as valuable resources for the community. General outreach activities are ongoing to support and inform community members about the conservation program advocacy efforts, events and activities.

CRCA0009 – \$215,000 – Coachella Valley Desert and Mountains Conservation and Recreational Authority – *Land Management Capacity Building (Capacity)*

The Project consists of establishing a program to assist non-profit, tribal or public entity owners of conservation land management related public works and related services. Working to promote and implement joint efforts among adjacent conservation owners related to monitoring, maintenance enforcement, recreational, and public education endeavors. Status: As of recent the position funded by this grant is vacant. CVDMRCA plans to interview for and fill one full-time position for a limited term of 12 months. DRD will cover 50% of the cost of the position, with the CRCA Grant 009 covering the other 50% of the cost.

CRCA0010 – \$52,950 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Desert Lake Shore PH2 (Planning)*

The Project consists of further development of the Desert Lake Shore Property as a conservation and education center in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Status: KDI has hired a civil engineer to finish the final designs for the project. KDI and FODM are in the process of scheduling outreach with Torres Martinez youth and tribal historians to gather more input for graphic designs and content at Desert Lake Shore (mainly for the amphitheater and historical timeline sections)

CRCA0011 – \$292,000 – The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens – *Native American Conservation Workforce Development Program (Capacity/Training)*

The Project consists of providing paid training in the conservation field for up to forty Native Americans, ages 18-34, from disadvantaged communities. The program will teach habitat conservation and climate resilience approaches to mitigate the effects of climate change on Native American communities and their lands using Western and Traditional methods. Status: For quarter one of the year, the program focused on social science and the importance for conservation and communities through education via surveys and interviews which participants used to quantify data. Another focus in quarter one was learning different techniques for wildlife research with hands-on experience where participants selected areas for installation of monitoring equipment. A lesson on invasive and exotic species and management of such species was also a major takeaway with

participants developing their own plant identification skills and becoming familiar with how plant communities' function.

CRCA0012 – \$296,000 – Southern California Mountains Foundation – UCC Coachella Valley Center (*Capacity/Training*)

The Project consists of supporting education, training, and internship programming for three full-time corps members. Funding will support the conservation workforce and allow members to participate in regional conservation projects and community networks. Status: Three new corpsmembers have been hired. UCC placed one additional intern this quarter with the City of Cathedral City. She is completing rotations in their Parks & Recreation and Code Enforcement departments. Other internships remain on hiatus, but several corpsmembers continue to put their training on Peninsular Bighorn Sheep fence monitoring into practice. Another project this quarter was assisting the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla with a fence cleanup and removal of vegetation. Two corpsmembers have successfully transitioned this quarter from the UCC to good jobs or opportunities as a result of the experience gained at the UCC. Hiring is always ongoing, as corpsmembers transition out for jobs or various other reasons.

CRCA0014 – \$200,000 – Desert Compost – *Composting for Climate Resiliency (Capacity)*

The Project consists of two new community composting sites to be created and an existing site to be expanded. In addition, the grant will support programming on composting and waste reduction for up to sixteen schools, and presentations on composting and soil regeneration for four community organizations. Status: To date, the Environmental Club, and Future Farmers of America students at Indio High School composted over 5,203 lbs of leftover food from the on-campus food bank, which produced a CO₂ reductive equivalent of 6.85 metric tons. These efforts generated 11.79 cubic yards of finished compost. Additionally, the Prescott Preserve project is composting a record number of materials. Over 9,294.54lbs of food scraps were diverted from the landfill which produced carbon reduction equivalent of 2.88 metric tons. Desert Compost team is also collaborating with the leaders from the Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians and launched the community composting program on the reservation. The composting program is running efficiently and at ease thanks to the implementation of the program.

CRCA0015 – \$300,000 – City of Palm Desert – *North Sphere Regional Park (Design)*

The Project consists of developing a conceptual design and preparing construction documents for a 27-acre regional park in an unimproved portion of Palm Desert between I-10 and Dinah Shore/Gerald Ford Drive. Status: **Milestones/Deliverables completed during the reporting period:** City staff met and worked with the design consultant,

Interwest, to incorporate the input from the Capital Improvement Department. A new conceptual design and presentation was prepared, which will be shared in the coming weeks.

CRCA0016 – \$41,087 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Native Plant Education Program (Capacity/Education & Outreach)*

The Project consists of developing a native planting guide for community distribution and implementing a bilingual lecture program advocating nature-based solutions and urban greening methods focused on economically disadvantaged communities and youth. Status: Friends of the Desert Mountains (FODM) staff are aiming to deliver ten lectures at 30 participants each in Coachella, Indio, Cathedral City, and Desert Hot Springs within disadvantaged unincorporated communities in Riverside County, such as Thermal and Mecca. All include large populations of low-income residents, immigrants and farmworkers. The Native Planting Guide has been printed and distributed accordingly in both paper and digital form to all of FODM's partners.

CRCA0017 – \$245,372 – Friends of the Desert Mountains – *Land Acquisitions and Management (Capacity)*

The Project consists of establishing and operating for up to four years a revamped Land Acquisition and Management Program. Status: The Land Administrator is well underway, projects and activities for quarter one of 2025 included land monitoring on conserved lands, negotiations for additional land acquisitions, facilitated clean-up efforts on conserved lands, coordinated with Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and over 40 volunteers on a vegetation survey on the Palm Canyon trail and deconstructed an illegal extension on Palm Canyon trail.

CRCA0018 – \$200,000 – Oswit Land Trust – *Sustainable Land Management (Capacity)*

The Project consists of retaining a full-time experienced land manager to establish and operate a sustainable land management program for two-and-one-half years. Status: In March 2025 Ray Schneider was hired as the Grant's Conservation Land Coordinator. Quarter one objectives revolved around making introductions, learning about OLT's properties, getting involved in management operations, and addressing needs and goals at each property.

CRCA0019 – \$273,877 – UC Riverside/Center for Conservation Biology – Palm Desert – *WUI Assessment (Capacity/Research)*

The Project consists of evaluating the impact of human activities such as off highway vehicle (OHV) use on conservation land and developing and providing resources to help

land managers and planners better prevent landscape disturbances on conservation lands. Status: Staff were able to Document the current extent of human-based disturbances in the Coachella Valley Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) [Oct 2023-Aug 2024] Staff are continuing to add the additional information such as the annotation of disturbances and interventions for review, and continue to work on analysis of remote-sensing (aerial and satellite imagery) of patterns of disturbances in desert lands within the WUI. The task to leverage conservation intervention data to compare impacted and non-impacted sites [Feb 2024-Jan 2025] was completed by field surveys at a variety of wildland/urban interface sites, documenting cover and presence of perennial plants and soil characteristics. Three surveys were conducted in OHV-impacted sites in the Coachella Valley, each site with three sets of paired plots covering fenced-off conserved land and the immediately adjacent unfenced landscape. It was decided to complete wildlife surveys in the warmer months when animals are more active.

CRCA0020 – \$372,712 – Coachella Valley Conservation Commission – *Cooperative Ranger Initiative for Conservation Lands*

The Project consists of funding a Law Enforcement Coordinator position for three years and legal or consultant fees to develop and organize CVCC's Cooperative Ranger Initiative for Conservation Lands (the Program). Status: CVCC's Conservation Ranger Coordinator has been diligently working on the creation of the ordinance for the ranger program to allow enforcement on conserved lands of CVMC and CVCC.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE & COMMUNITY ACCESS GRANT PROGRAM – COMPLETED PROJECTS

3 PROJECTS COMPLETED TO DATE

\$574,175 TOTAL AMOUNT OF COMPLETED PROJECTS TO DATE

Grant No. – Grant Award – Grantee - *Project Name (Project Type)*

3850CRCA0001 – \$310,000 - *Kounkuey Design Initiative – Juntos al Aire Libre*

3850CRCA0008 – \$128,000 – City of Desert Springs – *Trails Conservation Outreach and Education Program (Design/Outreach & Education)*

3850CRCA0013 – \$136,175 – Native American Land Conservancy – *Nature Based Solutions Projects (Capacity)*

Item C. CVMC FUND STATUS

After the board consideration and awards from the action items above, the Conservancy's available grant funding balances are as follows:

Proposition 1	\$1,596,868
Proposition 68	\$3,591,072
Proposition 84	\$6,296,369
CRCA FY22/23	\$ 0
Total Remaining Grant Funds	\$ 11,484,309