

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 21, 2026

## **Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy Approves More Than \$2 Million for Regional Conservation and Wildlife Projects**

PALM DESERT, Calif. — The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy (CVMC) Board approved more than \$2 million in conservation grant funding during its May 11, 2026 Board meeting, advancing projects focused on endangered species protection and wildlife connectivity throughout the Coachella Valley region. The Board approved three grants through Proposition 1 and Proposition 4 funding programs.

“These projects reflect the Conservancy’s commitment to collaborative, science-based conservation that benefits both wildlife and local communities,” said Executive Director Elizabeth King. “We are proud to support our regional partners in advancing innovative solutions for habitat protection, climate resilience, and species conservation.”

### **Two Grants Awarded to Help Save the Desert Pupfish**

The first project will support efforts to sustain endangered desert pupfish habitat at the Thousand Palms Oasis Preserve by studying why portions of Simone Pond have alarmingly dried over the past two years. As one of the few remaining habitats for desert pupfish, this information will be vital. Grant details: the Board approved a Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant of \$695,751 to Center for Natural Lands Management for its Groundwater–Surface Water Monitoring Project. The project is being conducted in collaboration with the United States Geological Survey.

The second project will evaluate methods to establish sustainable desert pupfish refuge habitat and restore functionality to former wetland cells that historically conveyed water between the Whitewater River and the Salton Sea ecosystem. Grant details: the Board approved a conditional Proposition 1 Local Assistance Grant of up to \$863,450 to The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens for the Desert Pupfish Conservation Refugia Project on land owned by the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians.

### **The Conservancy Awards its First Climate Bond/Proposition 4 Project for Wildlife Crossing Planning**

Additionally, the Board approved its first Proposition 4 Local Assistance Planning Grant of \$512,000 to Mojave Desert Land Trust for its State Route 62 Wildlife Crossing Project. The funds will advance planning for two wildlife crossings across State Route 62, a heavily trafficked corridor linking the Coachella Valley to Joshua Tree National Park. This is an area identified as important for safe wildlife movement. At the local level, there is a growing

sense of urgency surrounding the project due to documented mountain lion and bighorn sheep deaths along the highway corridor, as well as ongoing public safety concerns resulting from wildlife attempting to cross State Route 62. Regional conservation partners and community members have increasingly emphasized the need for infrastructure solutions that protect both motorists and wildlife. The project supports broader statewide efforts to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and improve habitat connectivity across transportation corridors.

### **About the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy**

The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy is a California state conservancy established to acquire, protect, and manage natural and open-space lands within and surrounding the Coachella Valley region. For more information, visit [Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy](#) or view the [2025 Report](#). The next regular public meeting of the CVMC Board is scheduled for August 10, 2026, at 3p.m. at the City of Palm Desert Administrative Conference Room.

Media Contact: [eking@cvmc.ca.gov](mailto:eking@cvmc.ca.gov)