



COACHELLA VALLEY MSHCP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What is the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan?*

The CVMSHCP is a conservation plan that will protect over 240,000 acres of open space and protect 27 species, safeguarding the desert's natural heritage for future generations. The CVMSHCP will provide a regional vision for balanced growth to meet the requirements of federal and state endangered species laws; help expedite transportation improvement projects, while promoting enhanced opportunities for recreation, tourism and job growth.

2. *Does the CVMSHCP comply with the state and federal Endangered Species Acts?*

Yes. The CVMSHCP complies with Endangered Species Acts for land in the Coachella Valley under a single permit, a significant departure from the status quo process that requires permits for each individual property on which development is proposed.

3. *Will the local government have any control?*

Yes. Once the CVMSHCP is approved, the state and federal wildlife agencies transfer their authority under the Endangered Species Act to local government, thus providing local rather than state and federal control.

4. *How will the plan be funded?*

The CVMSHCP will be funded through a combination of development impact fees, open space trust funds, and funding from some permittees for infrastructure projects. Currently there is about \$50 million available for land acquisition and CVAG will be able to leverage an additional \$50 million in partner agency dollars for acquisitions in the early years of Plan implementation.

5. *Who will administer the CVMSHCP?*

The Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC), a joint powers authority of elected representatives, will oversee and manage the Plan. The CVCC has no regulatory powers and no land use authority. Its primary purpose is to buy land from willing sellers in the conservation areas and to manage that land. CVCC meetings are open to the public and held on the second Thursday of every month.

6. *Does the CVMSHCP only conserve and protect habitat in the area?*

No. The CVMSHCP does more than just protect the natural habitat and the plants and animals that call the Coachella Valley home. It protects scenic vistas and cultural resources, while safeguarding new areas for recreational use.

7. *What will happen to property located in the conservation area?*

Private property owners inside the conservation area have the option to pursue development consistent with the Plan or offer their land for sale at fair market value. Significant funds to acquire land from willing sellers will be available in the early years of the Plan.

8. *Will eminent domain be involved in the acquisition of conservation property?*

No. Property will only be purchased from willing sellers at fair market value, based on an appraisal using comparable sales of like properties.

9. *Will land in the conservation area be un-developable and un-sellable?*

Some amount of development is permitted on conservation properties. In addition, over 74% of the land the Plan proposed for inclusion in the conservation areas would be unaffected because it has already been set aside for protection. Within the conservation areas, 95% of the land could develop to current general plan designation.

10. *What are the environmental benefits of the CVMSHCP?*

Not only does the CVMSHCP protect 27 species of plants and animals that are threatened or facing extinction, including the Desert Tortoise, Peninsular bighorn sheep, and Desert Pupfish but it also safeguards natural wonders in the Coachella Valley such as Whitewater Canyon, the link between Joshua Tree National Park and the Indio Hills, and opportunities for new trails. These protected wonders will be part of a system of open space, parks, trails and reserves.

11. *What are the CVMSHCP's infrastructure benefits?*

The CVMSHCP opens the door for timely construction of much needed roads, freeway interchanges, road widening, and bridge improvement projects to help prevent traffic gridlock in the Coachella Valley. The CVMSHCP will allow 75 years of Caltrans projects to be permitted and constructed without costly delays and will help expedite construction of all currently planned road projects in the next 25 years. The CVMSHCP also provides for critical flood control and water infrastructure.

12. *How will the CVMSHCP benefit the local economy?*

By providing development certainty the CVMSHCP makes the desert region an attractive destination for new businesses that will bring new jobs and tax revenue to the Coachella Valley, bolstering the local economy. Additionally, the Plan provides opportunities for outdoor recreation and ecotourism, enhancing one of the fastest growing sectors of the tourism market.

13. *How will the CVMSHCP enhance the quality of life in the Valley?*

The CVMSHCP conserves significant areas throughout the Coachella Valley, protecting the Valley's scenic and open space qualities, allowing for the timely construction of roads and providing recreational amenities including additional trails. Open space enhances property values and supports the Coachella Valley's tourism economy.

14. *What process will Desert Hot Springs need to go through if it chooses to join the plan?*

If a city, such as Desert Hot Springs, chooses to join the habitat plan after the plan has been adopted, it would require a major amendment. A major amendment essentially goes through the same process as the plan itself, including a public hearing, and has to be reviewed and accepted by every member of CVCC and the wildlife agencies to take effect.