



## COACHELLA VALLEY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN FACT SHEET

**BACKGROUND:** The diverse desert landscape of the Coachella Valley provides habitat for dozens of plant and animal species, some found nowhere else in the world. One of the fastest growing areas in rapidly expanding Riverside County, the Valley has a projected population growth of 600,000 over the next 13 years. The Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) provides a regional vision for balanced growth to meet the requirements of federal and state endangered species laws, while promoting enhanced opportunities for recreation, tourism and job growth.

**THE PLAN:** The CVMSHCP aims to conserve over 240,000 acres of open space and protect 27 plant and animal species. By providing comprehensive compliance with federal and state endangered species laws, the Plan not only safeguards the desert's natural heritage for future generations, it allows for more timely construction of roads and other infrastructure that is essential to improving quality of life in the Coachella Valley. The Final Recirculated CVMSHCP excludes the City of Desert Hot Springs as a participant and includes coverage for the proposed Morongo Wash flood control facility.

Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) is serving as lead agency for plan review and consideration. Participants include Riverside County, the cities of Cathedral City, Coachella, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage as well as Coachella Valley Water District and Imperial Irrigation District.

**BENEFITS:**

- Preserves the Coachella Valley's native desert wildlife and creates a magnificent system of open space parks, trails and reserves
- Safeguards significant habitat linkages and wildlife corridors that enable animals to move safely from one habitat area to another
- Assures critical freeway and freeway interchange projects can be built without delays resulting from endangered species conflicts
- Offers certainty for the business community ultimately making the Coachella Valley a more attractive place for businesses to relocate or expand

**KEY FACTS:**

- Ensures the continuation of the Fringe-Toed Lizard permit and provides long-term conservation for this endangered species.
- Approximately 25% of the land proposed for conservation (60,000 acres) has already been acquired.
- Expedites construction of all currently planned road projects in the Coachella Valley in the next 25 years, as well as construction and widening of regional roads such as Indian Avenue, Palm Drive, Gene Autry Trail, Airport Road, and Avenue 66.

**TIMELINE:**

- CVAG Executive Committee approved the Final Recirculated MSHCP at a special joint meeting on September 10, 2007
- All other Plan Permittees will consider approval of the Final Plan by October 31, 2007
- US Fish and Wildlife Service will complete Biological Opinion and issue MSHCP permit
- Target for final state and federal resource agency approval is early 2008.