

Coachella Valley MSHCP

Preserving our Natural Heritage... Protecting our Quality of Life



E-NEWSLETTER

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On the Road to Better Transportation

The CVMSHCP opens the door for timely construction of much needed new road, freeway interchange, street widening and bridge improvement projects to help alleviate gridlock in the Coachella Valley.

By providing comprehensive compliance with federal and state laws that protect endangered species under one permit, the CVMSHCP allows for easier approval of public infrastructure projects needed to improve quality of life for residents.

Expedited projects include:

- Construction and widening of Indian Avenue, Palm Drive, Gene Autry Trail, Airport Road, Avenue 66.
- Interstate 10 Interchange Projects including Monroe, Jackson, Golf Center Parkway
- Highway 86 Interchange Projects (e.g. Avenue 50, 52, 54, 62, 66)

What's Next for the CVMSHCP...

- **Through Oct. 31:** Plan goes to **permittees*** for adoption
- **Fall through Winter:** Permits issued by wildlife agencies

* CVMSHCP Permittees include:

Cathedral City, Coachella, Indian Wells, Indio, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Palm Springs and Rancho Mirage, along with the Riverside County Board of Supervisors and the County Waste Management, Flood Control, and Parks and Open Space Districts, Coachella Valley Water District, Imperial Irrigation District, California State Parks, CalTrans, and the Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy.

Home Stretch for Habitat Plan

After ten years of planning and review, the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) is complete, approved and moving toward full adoption.

The CVMSHCP continues to move closer to final adoption with an official launch by the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) earlier this month. Their approval puts the CVMSHCP in the home stretch, and follows the successful conclusion of the public comment, response and environmental review periods over the spring and summer.

When the CVAG committees met on September 10, and approved the CVMSHCP, it marked an historic step forward on a balanced plan for growth and environmental protection in the Coachella Valley.

This step was made possible by a decision of the Riverside County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in mid-July, and will usher in a period of intense activity by local permittees as they consider and adopt the plan.

Made even more urgent by the potential loss of the regional fringe-toed lizard coverage, which streamlines public and private infrastructure and development projects while protecting sensitive lizard habitat, all local permittees have been urged to act on the plan before October 31.

Once adopted by the permittees, the plan goes to wildlife agencies to issue permits as soon as the end of this year, which marks full implementation of the plan.

Plan Benefits

Secured: The Coachella Valley's economy through timely construction of much needed transportation improvements and other infrastructure.

Safeguarded: Critical habitat corridors that enable animals to move safely from one habitat area to another without crossing freeways, major roads or through communities.

Expedited: Construction of transportation improvements in Coachella Valley's regional road network including 75 years worth of CalTrans projects and Interstate 10 interchange projects.

Incorporated: Protection of the Fringe-toed Lizard Preserve.



Highlighted Species:

The Desert Pupfish

The Desert Pupfish, one of the 27 endangered species to be protected under the CVMSHCP, resides in the Coachella Valley's Salton Sea and surrounding areas, including agricultural drains.

The Desert Pupfish can tolerate a broad range of environmental extremes, such as water temperatures of over 100 degrees Fahrenheit and salinity levels up to three times the level of ocean water. However, severe man-made environmental changes have been detrimental to the desert pupfish.

Groundwater pumping, dewatering, water diversion, drain maintenance activities and contaminants have all affected the Pupfish population. The introduction of non-native species to the habitat has also negatively impacted the Pupfish by bringing new predators and increased competition for food and resources.

The CVMSHCP will help protect the Desert Pupfish by maintaining and enhancing habitat, monitoring populations, and managing water quality in shoreline pools and drains.

More Information Online

please visit our new Web site: <http://www.cvmshcp.org/>

The Web site includes links to key documents, timelines, preliminary maps and a feature by which landowners can enter their assessor's parcel number to determine if their property lies within the preliminary boundaries of the conservation plan.