

ITEM 4A

Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2025



The audio file for this committee can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Chair Gary Gardner, City of Desert Hot Springs Mayor Pro Tem, at 10:31 a.m. in the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administrative Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert.
- 2. ROLL CALL** – Following the pledge, roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez*
Councilmember Frank Figueroa, *alternate*
Director Anthony Bianco**
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner, *Chair*
Director Alex Cardenas
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz
Mayor Linda Evans
Director Amber Duff
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee**
Mayor Ted Weill
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick
Mayor Jan Harnik
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez
Councilmember Ben Guitron**

Agency

City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
Coachella Valley Water District
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indian Wells
City of Indio
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 2
Riverside County – District 3
Riverside County – District 4
Riverside County – District 5

Members Not Present

Mayor Ron deHarte
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen

City of Palm Springs
Riverside County – District 1

*arrived at Item 5

**arrived at Item 8A

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Pro Tem Reed led the commission in the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. AGENDA MODIFICATIONS (IF ANY)

None

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

6. COMMISSION CHAIR / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Chair Gardner reported that he attended the Friends of Desert Mountains’ dinner the previous evening and expressed appreciation for an excellent event. He also noted that he represented CVCC in the PBS SoCal Brain Trust meeting in Ontario on Wednesday, October 29, and provided a brief recap of the group’s discussion on developing long-term story concepts.

Executive Director Tom Kirk reviewed meeting logistics and reminded Commissioners of the ceiling-mounted microphones.

7. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approve the minutes of the September 11, 2025, meeting

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY COUNCILMEMBER GUTIERREZ TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 12 AYES AND 5 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Councilmember Frank Figueroa	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Absent
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Absent
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Mayor Ted Weill	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Absent
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Absent

7.1 ITEMS HELD OVER FROM CONSENT CALENDAR

None

8. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Acquisition of one parcel in the Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Area

Diana Rosas, Associate Director of Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy, presented the staff report.

Member discussion ensued regarding illegal dumping and in the area and the clean-up activities that were undertaken as part of the pre-acquisition efforts.

IT WAS MOVED BY MAYOR EVANS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR WEILL TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 2025-07 FOR ACQUISITION OF ONE PARCEL CONSISTING OF APPROXIMATELY +/-10.77 ACRES IN THE UPPER MISSION CREEK/BIG MORONGO CANYON CONSERVATION AREA AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$140,000, PLUS CLOSING AND TRANSACTION RELATED COSTS NOT TO EXCEED \$2,500; AND AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO EXECUTE ALL NECESSARY CONTRACTS AND TAKE SUCH OTHER ACTIONS AS NECESSARY FOR THE ACQUISITION

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 15 AYES AND 2 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Councilmember Ernesto Gutierrez	Aye
Councilmember Frank Figueroa	Aye
Director Anthony Bianco	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Gary Gardner	Aye
Director Alex Cardenas	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Dana Reed	Aye
Councilmember Oscar Ortiz	Aye
Mayor Linda Evans	Aye
Director Amber Duff	Aye
Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee	Aye
Mayor Ron deHarte	Absent
Mayor Ted Weill	Aye
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen	Absent
Councilmember Kathleen Fitzpatrick	Aye
Mayor Jan Harnik	Aye
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez	Aye
Councilmember Ben Guitron	Aye

B. Presentation: 30 X 30 Wildlife Connectivity Project

Shannon Lemieux, Data Research Analyst with the UC Davis Ecology Center, joined the Commission in person. She was accompanied by Dr. Fraser Shilling, also from the UC Davis Ecology Center, who participated via Zoom. Together, they provided an update on the project's work plan and shared recent field data study results.

Lengthy member discussion with Dr. Schilling and Ms. Lemieux answering questions from the Commission regard information presented.

No action was taken, as the item was presented for informational purposes only.

C. Burrowing Owl Status & Permitting Update

Director of Conservation Kathleen Brundige provided a PowerPoint update on the item.

Member discussion ensued regarding letter received from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and how the CVCC will be responding to the issued rased.

Staff noted that an update on this item will be brought back on January's meeting agenda for the CVCC. No further action was taken as this was an informational item only.

D. Cleanup of Illegal Dumpsites and Encampments in Upper Mission Creek/Big Morongo Canyon Conservation Areas

Conservation Ranger Coordinator Will Steichen delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining recent encampment clean-up efforts, including before-and-after photographs documenting the work completed.

No action was taken as this was an informational item only. Commissioners praised the cleanup efforts and asked that additional updates be brought back at future meetings.

9. INFORMATION

- A. Attendance Record Attendance Record**
- B. Contracts under Executive Director's signing authority**
- C. Acquisition Status Report**
- D. Native Planting Palette Resources for the Coachella Valley**
- E. Managing the North Shore Ranch property**

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

11. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next **Coachella Valley Conservation Commission** meeting will be held on Thursday, January 8, 2026, at 10:30 a.m at the Coachella Valley Water District, Steve Robbins Administration Building Training Room, 75515 Hovley Lane East, Palm Desert, 92260.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Gardner adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elysia Regalado
Deputy Clerk