

# COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

PROTECTING OUR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE





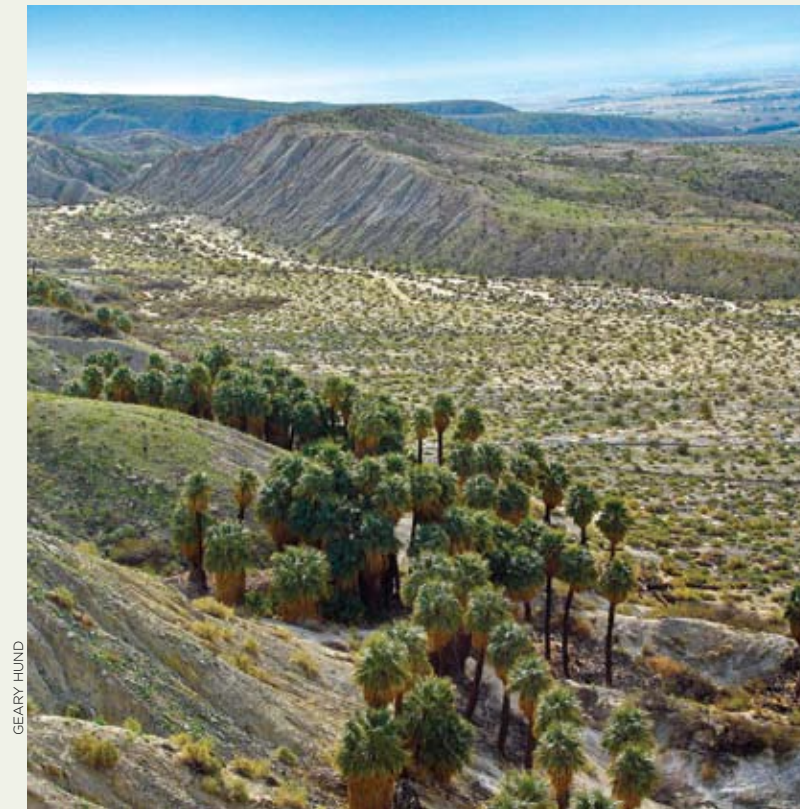
*"To those who come to the Desert with friendliness, it gives friendship; . . .*

BILL HAVERT

# THE COACHELLA VALLEY

THE MAJESTIC SAN JACINTO AND SANTA ROSA MOUNTAINS on the south side of the valley form the backdrop for life in the Coachella Valley. Whether marveling at the red-tinged slopes at sunrise, the purple shadows at dusk, or the starlit massif at night, the residents of the Coachella Valley and visitors alike treasure these mountains. They define the valley and contribute immeasurably to its quality of life.

Slicing through the center of the valley, the Indio Hills are a stark reminder of the power of the San Andreas fault that created these hills and of the erosive power of “gully-washers” and wind that have carved them into such a dramatic relief, especially in the gilded light of late afternoon when the interplay of light and shadow runs riot across the hills. Another creation of the San Andreas are the many palm oases that dot the Indio Hills and the mesquite dunes extending west from the hills.



GEARY HUND



CAM BARROWS

BEYOND THE INDIO HILLS lie the Little San Bernardino Mountains and Joshua Tree National Park, defining the north side of the valley. In between lies an area where wildflowers can still stage a magnificent show in a wet year, and where you’d never know that the restaurants and shopping and bustle of city life are just minutes away.

On the valley floor, remnants of the great dunes that once covered most of the valley floor still persist, supporting a host of specially adapted species: the Coachella Valley fringe-toed lizard, the Coachella Valley milkvetch, the Coachella Valley round-tailed ground squirrel, the Coachella Valley giant sand treader cricket, and the list goes on. So many species named after the one place in the world they occur.

Whether it’s an ancient trail system, village sites, petroglyphs, fish traps, or other reminders of the Native Americans who first thrived here, the Coachella Valley is rich with archaeological and cultural resource treasures.





JON STEWART

... to those who come with courage, it gives new strength of character ...

# THE CONSERVANCY

**OUR MISSION** is to protect the natural and cultural resources of the Coachella Valley: the scenic, wildlife, cultural, geologic, and recreational resources that make this such a splendid place for people and all the other life forms with which we share this special place. The Coachella Valley Mountains Conservancy is a state agency established in 1991 to pursue this mission, and is directed by a 21-member Governing Board. The Conservancy is an exceptional example of local communities, state and federal agencies, elected officials, non-profit organizations, and business and environmental interests working together for the good of all.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since its inception, the Conservancy and its partners have conserved over 47,800 acres, including:

- ✦ Over 20,600 acres in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, protecting scenic, wildlife, cultural, and recreational resources.
- ✦ Virtually all of the exceptional streamside habitat in Whitewater Canyon.
- ✦ More than 2,500 acres in the Snow Creek area at the scenic western gateway to the Coachella Valley.
- ✦ 9,000 acres linking the Coachella Valley Preserve in the Indio Hills with Joshua Tree National Park.
- ✦ 6,500 acres to protect rare palm oases and habitat for an array of threatened and endangered species.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE** [WWW.CVMC.CA.GOV](http://WWW.CVMC.CA.GOV)



CAMERON BARROWS

**THE CONSERVANCY** authored the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, which balances conservation and development in the Coachella Valley area and provides for the conservation of more than 200,000 additional acres of land. The Conservancy has also developed and implemented strategies for funding land acquisition and setting priorities.

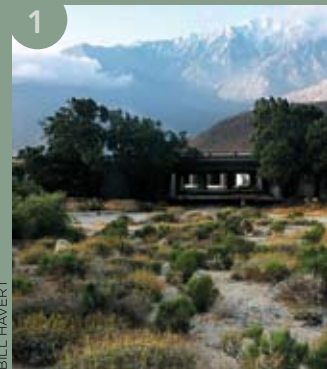
## STILL TO BE DONE.....

Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done. Our four highest priorities are:

- ✦ Conserve crucial “missing linkages” or wildlife movement corridors between major habitat areas such as the San Jacinto/ Santa Rosa Mountains and the San Bernardino Mountains.
- ✦ Protect scenic, wildlife, recreational, and cultural resources in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.
- ✦ Maintain essential ecological processes to protect the long-term viability of the sand dune and other fragile natural communities in the Coachella Valley.
- ✦ Protect and manage the shoreline of ancient Lake Cahuilla and its associated cultural resources.



# CONSERVANCY



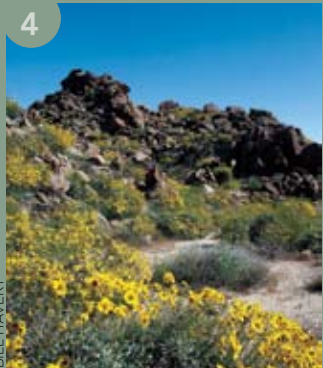
**MISSING LINKAGE**  
Conservancy funded acquisitions protect a critical wildlife movement corridor linking the San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountains.



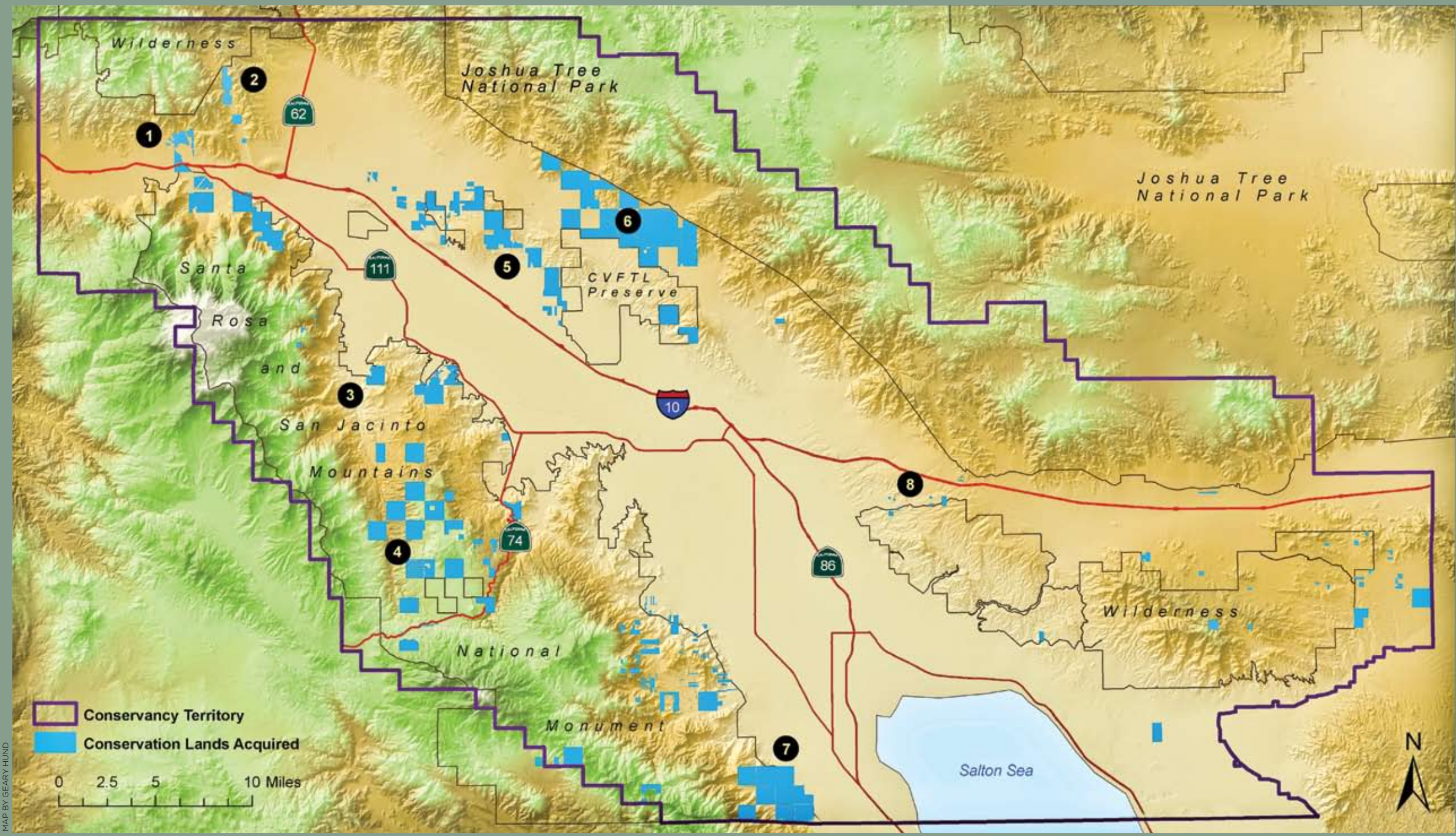
**WHITEWATER CANYON**  
Conservancy grants have helped acquire more than 700 acres along the Whitewater River.



**ANDREAS HILLS**  
The Andreas Hills acquisition provides a multi-use trail opportunity.



**NATIONAL MOUNTAIN INHOLDINGS**  
One of many acquisitions by the Conservancy and its partners in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument protects scenic and wildlife resources.



# PROJECTS



**VALLEY FLOOR-CVFTL PRESERVE**  
The Conservancy and its partners have acquired more than 6,500 acres to protect sand dependent species that occur only in the Coachella Valley.



**CATHTON-JOSHUA HILLS**  
The Conservancy assembled a \$26 million funding partnership to acquire the 8,881 acre Cathton property linking the Indio Hills with Joshua Tree National Park.



**SOUTHERN SANTA ROSAS**  
A Conservancy partnership acquired 5,400 acres of pristine and increasingly rare alluvial fan habitat.



**THERMAL CANYON CORRIDOR**  
A current project focuses on protecting a wildlife movement corridor linking the Mecca Hills Wilderness with Joshua Tree National Park.





*... Those seeking relaxation find release from the world of man made troubles ...*

# THE RESOURCES

IT'S EASY to take for granted the Coachella Valley's natural and cultural heritage: the wild places and wildlife, the astounding scenic vistas, the recreational opportunities, and the legacy of the Native Americans' long history here. Throughout southern California, it's also easy to see what has been lost. What we take for granted here reflects a century or more of conservation action in the Coachella Valley, but the job is far from finished, and much remains at risk.



Wildlife abounds in the mountains and deserts of the Coachella Valley: bighorn sheep, mule deer, bobcat, gray fox, ringtail, mountain lion, golden eagles, prairie falcons, an array of other birds, reptiles, and insects, and the hundreds of species of plants on which they depend in the complex web of life. Many of these species also depend on their ability to move between mountain ranges, navigating their way across – or under – such obstacles as Interstate 10 and Highway 62. Others depend on the ability of wind and water to continue to move unimpeded through undeveloped desert to replenish the supply of sand on which depend the dunes and hummocks that support so many unique species here.



The scenic resources of the Coachella Valley speak for themselves.

THE NATURAL areas of the Coachella valley afford recreational pleasure for hikers, backpackers, equestrians, mountain-bikers, birders, and even cross-country skiers. The Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, Joshua Tree National Park, Salton Sea, Coachella Valley Preserve, Indian Canyons Heritage Park, Whitewater and Mission Creek Preserves, Palm Springs aerial tram, and Mount San Jacinto State Park offer a remarkable array of opportunities for exercise, adventure, pleasure, relaxation, learning, rejuvenation, and solitude.







*... For those seeking beauty, the Desert offers nature's rarest artistry ...*

LONG AGO, the Coachella Valley was an extension of the Gulf of California. Where the Colorado River emptied into the Gulf, it gradually built up a delta that cut the Imperial and Coachella Valleys off from the ocean. Then for millennia the Colorado alternated between filling the lower Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley area with an enormous fresh water lake, known as Lake Cahuilla, and emptying directly into the Gulf. Lake Cahuilla came and went, the river filling it for centuries at a time, the desert air evaporating the lake in a matter of decades once the mighty river changed course. The Cahuilla and their ancestors enjoyed the bounty of the lake and the mountains, adapting to the comings and goings of the vast freshwater lake, while the mountains remained with their springs and creeks, canyons and oases, oaks and pinyons at the higher elevations, and the cornucopia of plants and animals to provide food, fiber, medicine, and more. Throughout the area, the signs of their history here remain. Some are protected; some are not. This is a history as well as a living presence we do not want to lose.

## OUR CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP



Non-profit  
Organization Partners

Federal Agency  
Partners

Coachella Valley  
Mountains Conservancy

Local Government  
Partners

State Agency  
Partners

## GOVERNING BOARD

City of Cathedral City  
City of Desert Hot Springs  
City of Indian Wells  
City of La Quinta  
City of Palm Desert  
City of Palm Springs  
City of Rancho Mirage  
County of Riverside  
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians  
Assembly Appointee  
Governor's Appointee  
Senate Appointee  
California Department of Fish and Game  
California State Parks  
Department of Finance  
Resources Agency  
University of California  
Wildlife Conservation Board  
Bureau of Land Management  
National Park Service  
United States Forest Service

## STAFF

Executive Director  
Associate Director  
Staff Services Analyst

FRONT & BACK COVER BY  
Tom Brewster

CREATIVE DESIGN BY  
Bill Havert, Geary Hund, Kerrie Marshall  
Richard Palmersheim and Emma B. Reyna

© COACHELLA VALLEY MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

A PUBLICATION OF  
DESERT PUBLICATIONS INC. 2008



*. . . This is the Desert that Men and Women Learn to Love."*

Randall Henderson and J. Wilson McKenney The Desert Sun, Vol. 1 No. 1, November 1937

73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 205, Palm Desert, CA 92260  
(760) 776-5026 [www.cvmc.ca.gov](http://www.cvmc.ca.gov)