



## NEWS RELEASE

**Date** October 26, 2022  
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*For immediate release*

### **FEDERAL GRANT WILL FUND CONSERVATION OF PROTECTED SPECIES IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced the award of \$4.4 million to the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) to fund land acquisition efforts for the protection of native animal and plant species across western Riverside County.

This competitive grant, authorized by Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act and funded through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, will help the RCA continue assembly of a 500,000-acre reserve, a requirement under the region's Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). In addition, the California Wildlife Conservation Board will contribute \$2.3 million in state funding for a total of \$6.7 million available to the RCA to conserve land.

"Receiving this grant shows that we are getting things done in western Riverside County," said RCA Chair and Lake Elsinore Mayor Pro Tem Natasha Johnson. "This type of collaboration and support from our federal and state partners will help us reach our land conservation goals, which benefits our residents, our environment, and our economy," she said.

The award will allow the RCA to negotiate the purchase of up to 737 acres of land for its habitat conservation plan. Purchasing this land will support species like the San Jacinto Valley crownscale, a small plant with grayish leaves that is able to draw salt from the soil, causing it to glow in the sunlight.

**RCA Receives Federal Grant to Purchase Land for Protected Species**  
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This endangered plant grows only in Riverside County. Other endangered and sensitive animals and plants like the coastal California gnatcatcher, western spadefoot toad, spreading navarretia, and Stephens' kangaroo rat, all will benefit from this grant award.

The funds will further the mission of the federal "America the Beautiful" initiative and California's 30X30 plan, efforts to conserve 30% of lands and waters across the state and nation by 2030. Purchasing sensitive lands will protect them from development while addressing climate change, promoting biodiversity, enhancing public health, and increasing equitable access to open space for residents.

The RCA was created in 2004 to implement the MSHCP, one of the largest plans of this type in the nation. In addition to protecting native species, the MSHCP streamlines the environmental permitting process for needed infrastructure like transportation and housing. Through careful and deliberate land acquisition, more than 82 percent of the 500,000-acre reserve is complete.

RCA photos and b-roll are available here for download.

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