



City of La Quinta

CITY/ SA/ HA/ FA MEETING DATE: September 16, 2014

AGENDA CATEGORY:

ITEM TITLE: UPDATE ON THE BIG HORN SHEEP PROTECTION FENCE ALONG THE BASE OF CORAL MOUNTAIN REQUIRED BY STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

BUSINESS SESSION:

CONSENT CALENDAR:

STUDY SESSION: 1

PUBLIC HEARING:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Review and discuss a status report recently submitted to the Federal and State Wildlife agencies regarding the establishment of a barrier fence to prevent access of Peninsular Bighorn Sheep onto certain La Quinta properties.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- In March 2014, the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and the City received a joint letter from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Agencies) providing written notice that Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, an endangered and protected species, are coming onto several La Quinta golf courses (Attachment 1).
- The Agencies require a report be submitted to them within six months, which was provided on August 28, 2014, and a fence be constructed within two years of the written notice.
- The August 28, 2014 CVCC status report in response to the notification (Attachment 2) is being presented to City Council for review and feedback.
- The proposed fence is 8.3 miles long and 8 feet high.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The estimated cost from CVCC to install chain link fence for the 8.3 miles of fence outlined in the plan ranges from \$2.4 to \$3.3 million. There is \$1 million in the 2014/2015 CVCC budget for the construction of a fence.

City staff solicited a fence contractor to provide an estimate for compliant fencing at SilverRock (not including the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) section). The 1.2 mile SilverRock fence estimate is \$679,250. This cost estimate includes administration, design, inspection, and contingency costs.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS:

The Agencies provided formal written notice to CVCC and the City that Peninsular Bighorn Sheep are coming onto the SilverRock, PGA West and the Quarry golf courses. Along with the Big Horn Institute, the Agencies indicate wildland-urban interface of the sheep make them subject to risk of injury, death from drowning in the canal, vehicle strikes, intestinal parasites from ingesting turf and grasses and other potential urban-related hazards. As a result, they have mandated that an access barrier be established within two years. Such a barrier has historically resulted in an eight-foot high fence, as seen in Rancho Mirage.

The CVCC prepared a status report in response to the notification received in March. The status report provides a map of the location of the proposed fence, a summary of each section of the fence in relation to golf and other developments, a preliminary estimate of the fence costs, provisions for the California Environmental Quality Act analysis, and a draft plan with a preliminary timeline of the fence project.

The 8.3 miles of proposed fence will be constructed along the properties of The Quarry, Lake Cahuilla, PGA West, SilverRock, and The Tradition. Coordination with Federal and CVWD lands will also be needed. These communities will be required to provide easement for the fence to be constructed on their property, as well as funding for the fence. The material being specified is non-chain link (except for the CVWD section) eight-foot high panels with the openings not to exceed 2 inches by 6 inches. This specification is similar to the design used in Rancho Mirage. Chain link fence meets barrier requirements for the Bighorn Sheep but does not comply with La Quinta's Municipal Code.

As part of the mitigation requirements for the development of the SilverRock property, the City is required to construct a fence if the sheep should come onto the property. Additionally, as part of the recent Coachella Canal relocation effort, the Coachella Valley Water District is constructing an eight-foot high fence on the west side of the canal from Avenue 54 to the No. 16 tee at SilverRock.

The CVCC and City staff is continuing to seek alternatives to a fence that would prove effective and manage the costs. The report identifies potential water sources for the sheep located in the mountains. The severe drought has caused the sheep to seek food and water on the golf courses and other urban areas. CVCC staff will work with wildlife agencies to determine if providing water sources is feasible.

ALTERNATIVES:

This is an informational report from the CVCC; therefore, staff has no alternatives.

Report prepared by: Steve Howlett, Golf, Parks and Facilities Manager

Report approved for submission by: Edie Hylton, Deputy City Manager

Attachments: 1. Notice from Agencies
 2. Status report



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Palm Springs Fish and Wildlife Office
 777 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Suite 208
 Palm Springs, California 92262
 760-322-2070
 FAX 760-322-4648



ATTACHMENT 1
 California Department of Fish and Wildlife
 Inland Deserts Region
 78078 Country Club Drive, Suite 109
 Bermuda Dunes, California 92203
 760-200-9158
 FAX 760-200-9358

In Reply Refer To:
 FWS-CDFW-ERIV-09B0023-13TA0160

Mr. Tom Kirk
 Executive Director
 Coachella Valley Conservation Commission
 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 200
 Palm Desert, California 92260

FEB 28 2014

RECEIVED

cc: CM ✓
 CS ✓

MAR 03 2014

Mr. Frank J. Spevacek
 City Manager
 City of La Quinta
 P.O. Box 1504
 La Quinta, California 92247

CITY OF LA QUINTA
 CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

Subject: Notification that Peninsular Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) are using artificial sources of food in unfenced urban areas in the City of La Quinta, Riverside County, California

Dear Messrs. Kirk and Spevacek:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service or USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department; formerly California Department of Fish and Game or CDFG), jointly referred to as the Wildlife Agencies, provide this notice to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and the City of La Quinta (City or Local Permittee) to express our concerns regarding urban-related impacts to the Peninsular Ranges Distinct Population Segment of Nelson bighorn sheep (Peninsular bighorn sheep, *Ovis canadensis nelsoni*), a federally endangered species and a State endangered and fully protected species. CVCC and the City are permittees under the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP/NCCP) through Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit TE104604-0 and State of California NCCP Permit 2835-2008-001-06.

Members of the public, including the Bighorn Institute of Palm Desert, California, have informed us that Peninsular bighorn sheep are regularly observed grazing within several golf resorts in the La Quinta area, including SilverRock Resort, PGA West, and The Quarry at La Quinta. These developments are located at the wildland-urban interface along the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains in La Quinta, adjacent to Peninsular bighorn sheep habitat in the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains Conservation Area of the CVMSHCP/NCCP. The Bighorn Institute has obtained photographic documentation of Peninsular bighorn sheep on these properties, and Peninsular bighorn sheep have been seen on the PGA West golf course during various televised events (see Enclosure 1), including the recently televised Humana Challenge tournament in January 2014.

We are concerned that rams, ewes, and lambs will continue to be attracted to forage, and possibly water sources, at golf resorts throughout the year, where they are at risk of injury and death from drowning in canals and swimming pools, toxic plant poisoning, vehicle strikes, the effects of ingesting intestinal parasites present among watered lawns and grasses, and other potential urban-related hazards. The death of three bighorn rams within urbanized areas of the City occurred during the summers of 2012 and 2013. One ram died of acute *Nerium oleander* poisoning on the grounds of PGA West; the others were found drowned in the concrete-lined Coachella Canal, one in the vicinity of Madison Street and 52nd Avenue in La Quinta, and the other in the vicinity of Lake Cahuilla.

According to Section 8.2.4.1, item 14, of the CV MSHCP/NCCP:

If the USFWS or CDFG provides written notice to the CVCC or Local Permittee that Peninsular bighorn sheep are using artificial sources of food or water in unfenced areas of existing urban Development within or near a Conservation Area, the CVCC (unless otherwise agreed to by the applicable Local Permittee) shall cause to be constructed a barrier to sheep access to cure the problem within 2 years of such notice. The location of this barrier (i.e., an 8-foot fence or functional equivalent) shall be determined by CVCC based on its ability to obtain permission/access to the necessary lands. If placement of a barrier must occur on other public lands (e.g., BLM [Bureau of Land Management], CDFG), CVCC will coordinate with these other agencies as appropriate.

The Service first approached CVCC on this issue on May 30, 2012, at a CVMSHCP/NCCP Coordination Meeting at the Coachella Valley Association of Governments office in Palm Desert (see Enclosure 2). Representatives of the Wildlife Agencies and CVCC subsequently met at the City-owned SilverRock Resort on June 12, 2012, with representatives of the City and Landmark Golf Management, which manages SilverRock Resort for the City. Representatives of CVCC and the Wildlife Agencies met again to discuss the issue on August 20, 2012, at the Service's Palm Springs office. These parties and representatives of the Bighorn Institute met again at SilverRock Resort on September 11, 2012, and at PGA West on July 26, 2013. Representatives of the Wildlife Agencies, CVCC, and the City met at the City of La Quinta Civic Center on January 9, 2014. In addition, the Service has continued to remind CVCC informally at CVMSHCP/NCCP Coordination Meetings that Peninsular bighorn sheep were continuing to use the above sites for forage.

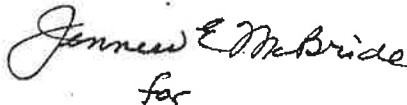
Thus, we are formally providing written notice to you that Peninsular bighorn sheep are using the above mentioned locations for forage, and possibly water, at the urban-wildland interface on the edge of a CVMSHCP/NCCP conservation area. The 2-year clock for CVCC and potentially the City to construct a barrier to Peninsular bighorn sheep access at the La Quinta golf courses named above begins on the date of this letter. Although the CVMSHCP identifies fencing or a functional equivalent as a sheep barrier, it is well documented that adequate fencing will keep Peninsular bighorn sheep away from inappropriate forage and

water sources on golf resort properties, and will reduce the opportunities for Peninsular bighorn sheep to wander farther into the urban environment. In particular, we note the success of the Peninsular bighorn sheep fence built by the City of Rancho Mirage in 2002 in reducing Peninsular bighorn sheep mortalities in that area. Before the fence was constructed, the Bighorn Institute had documented 15 Peninsular bighorn sheep deaths in urbanized areas along California Highway 111. With the fence in place and maintained by the City of Rancho Mirage, no Peninsular bighorn sheep have perished in that area from urban-related causes. We are not aware of any functional equivalents to fencing at this time.

Unless a functional equivalent of fencing can be demonstrated to be effective, we expect CVCC and the City to meet the requirements identified in 8.2.4.1, item 14, of the CVMSHCP/NCCP within 2 years. We request CVCC and the City to involve the Wildlife Agencies in planning the location and type of fencing to be built, and regularly inform us of progress toward implementation. Accordingly, within 6 months of the date of this letter, please provide the Wildlife Agencies with a letter-report of actions taken to notify and work with the golf resort owners/managers to plan fence construction, including a preliminary map of fence locations, provisions for developing any CEQA analysis that may be required, and a timeline for construction.

If you have questions, please contact Jenness McBride of the Service at 760-322-2070 or Heather Pert of the Department at 858-395-9692.

Sincerely,



Jenness E. McBride
for
Kennon A. Corey
Assistant Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



David Elms
Acting Regional Manager, Inland Deserts Region
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Enclosures



COACHELLA VALLEY CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Cathedral City • Coachella • Desert Hot Springs • Indian Wells • Indio • La Quinta • Palm Desert • Palm Springs
 Rancho Mirage • County of Riverside • Coachella Valley Water District • Imperial Irrigation District

To: Ken Corey, Assistant Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Kim Nicol, Regional Manager, Inland Deserts Region, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

From: Tom Kirk, Executive Director, Coachella Valley Conservation Commission

Subject: Status Report on Fence in La Quinta to Avoid Urban-related Impacts to Peninsular Bighorn Sheep

Date: August 28, 2014

Introduction

This status report is in response to the February 28, 2014 letter to the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission (CVCC) and the City of La Quinta (La Quinta) from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to officially notify these agencies that bighorn sheep are using artificial sources of food and water in unfenced areas within the City of La Quinta. The USFWS/CDFW letter is related to a provision in the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (CVMSHCP) (Section 8.2.4.1) that states, "... if Peninsular bighorn sheep are using artificial sources of food or water in unfenced areas of existing urban Development within or near a Conservation Area, the CVCC (unless otherwise agreed to by the applicable Local Permittee) shall cause to be constructed a barrier to sheep access to cure the problem within 2 years of such notice. The location of this barrier (i.e., an 8-foot fence or functional equivalent) shall be determined by CVCC based on its ability to obtain permission/access to the necessary lands."

As requested, we are providing you with a 6-month status report of actions taken to date regarding the fence. This report includes: 1) a map showing the location of the proposed fence and land ownership in the vicinity; 2) a summary of the sections of the fence related to the various golf course projects and other developments in the vicinity; 3) a preliminary estimate of the cost of the fence; 4) provisions for CEQA analysis; and 5) a draft plan and preliminary timeline for the fence project, including coordination with golf course owners/managers and other relevant agencies and property owners. Preparation of this report has been coordinated closely with staff from the City of La Quinta.

For some time, CVCC staff has been working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, BLM, the Bighorn Institute, and the City of La Quinta to address concerns related to Peninsular bighorn sheep coming on to the golf courses in the City of La Quinta. Since the summer of 2012, three bighorn rams have died, one due to oleander poisoning and two drowned in the canal. More recently, in August 2014 a fourth bighorn sheep was found dead in the Coachella Canal. The CVCC is working cooperatively with you, the wildlife agencies, as well as the City of La Quinta, and other partners to develop a plan for a fence along or near the toe of the slope adjacent to

these golf courses. The fence would separate bighorn sheep from the hazards of urbanization, such as vehicle mortality, non-native and toxic vegetation, swimming pools, canals, disease transmission, and domestic animals. It will also separate the sheep from food and water sources, albeit artificial ones. Over the past year or more, meetings and site visits have been held to assess the situation along the toe of the Santa Rosa Mountains in La Quinta and identify options for limiting bighorn sheep access to urban areas. Visits have been made to several golf courses in the area, including PGA West and the City's SilverRock Resort; visits were also made to view the portion of the Quarry golf course not within their existing wall/fence and the Tradition. City personnel and golf course staff have been very cooperative in working with us on this issue.

The proposed location of the fence is shown in the attached map. The delineation of the fence location is approximate, based roughly on the toe of slope along the perimeter of Santa Rosa Mountains in the La Quinta area. It is anticipated that various sections of the fence could be constructed by various property owners or other agencies, depending on whether specific requirements to do so exist. For planning purposes, the proposed fence is broken up into sections which are named based on the adjacent golf course/ residential projects. Land ownership in the vicinity of the proposed fence is also shown on the map. The following descriptions of each fence section identify the approximate route of the fence. The descriptions address whether a specific development condition or other requirement for a fence has been imposed on past, present or future projects. These sections are listed in Table 1.

Section 1: The Tradition Golf Club

- Segment of fence outlining the Tradition that could potentially connect the wall that runs east of Avenida Bermudas along Del Gato Drive, north/northeast along the toe of the slope, terminating just east of the parking lot at the end of Deacon Dr. East.
- There are no specific conditions of approval for the Tradition project related to a fence to limit access for bighorn sheep. However, the *Initial Study – Addendum for Environmental Assessment 96-333* for the project includes the following language, “. . . The project is north of the BLM habitat area, thus there are no anticipated impacts to the bighorn sheep from the proposed project. So as not to create barriers across habitat corridors for migrating species, development of this property should be limited to areas within the residentially-zoned district with no development in the Hillside Conservation designated areas . . . The hillside areas should not be fenced in order to permit access across the open space areas by native and migrating wildlife (Source: EA 92-240).”
- The Tradition may have a condition resulting from a settlement agreement following a lawsuit with CDFW prior to development of this project which provides that fencing that may impede wildlife movement would not be installed. We are still researching documents to determine the wording of this settlement agreement and how it relates to installation of the proposed fence adjacent to the Tradition project.
- No specific incidents of bighorn sheep activity have been reported for the Tradition. However, in conversations with CVCC staff, representatives of the Tradition have noted that sheep have been seen within the project area.

Section 2: SilverRock Resort A

- Segment of fence outlining SilverRock Resort that will run from the eastside of the terminal point of the Tradition south/southeast along the toe of the slope terminating at the bridge which crosses the canal north of Avenue 54.

- SilverRock Resort is owned and managed by the City of La Quinta. A condition of approval for the project requires that a fence be constructed if bighorn sheep are observed using the golf course
- As noted in the USFWS/CDFW letter, the SilverRock golf course has been frequented by bighorn sheep in the recent past.

Section 3: Silver Rock Resort B

- Segment runs from the access bridge north of Avenue 54 southward along the toe of the slope to the fencing at the border of PGA West.
- As of August 2014, CVWD was in the process of fencing 2,976 linear feet as part of the canal relocation project on the southern end of Silver Rock Resort (see map).
- CVWD has provided their cost estimate for this section of the fence: 1,210 linear feet of 8 foot chain link fence is \$45,890; 1,000 linear feet of 8 foot chain link is \$47,000, and 766 linear feet of 10 foot chain link is \$55,152 for a total cost of \$148,042 for 2,976 linear feet. Average cost would be \$49.75/linear foot.

Section 4: PGA West

- Segment runs south from Avenue 54 along the toe of the slope to north edge of Lake Cahuilla.
- Bighorn are regularly seen on the golf course, around the homes, and have been recently seen at the far eastern edge of the housing development on Jefferson Street, Avenue 52, and Madison Street. In August 2014, one ram was rescued from the canal. Several days later, a fourth fatality in the area since 2012 occurred when a dead bighorn sheep was found in the Coachella Canal.
- There are no conditions of approval related to bighorn sheep for PGA West. PGA West was built in 1984, prior to the federal listing of the Peninsular bighorn sheep as endangered in 1998.

Section 5: Lake Cahuilla

- Segment of fence ties in to fence on far north east edge of Lake Cahuilla and will continue across the wash along Cahuilla Park Road south to where Jefferson enters the Quarry.
- Lake Cahuilla includes a segment of the Coachella Canal and Lake Cahuilla County Park, managed by the Riverside County Park and Open Space District.
- There are no specific requirements related to bighorn sheep for Lake Cahuilla.

Section 5: The Quarry

- Segment to connect Section 5 at Jefferson to fence on north end of the Quarry and continue it around the toe of the slope to outline the golf course “peninsula” that juts out to the west of the Quarry residential area. A perimeter wall and fence surround the residential portion of the Quarry and most of the golf course.
- Bighorn sheep, including lambs, have been recorded on a video by golfers using the Quarry golf course.
- The Quarry has a condition of approval which was added when the original Specific Plan and map were amended, stating “If Bighorn Sheep enter the Project Site, an 8-foot fence (or the functional equivalent) between the development and the hillside, if any, shall be constructed...”

Table 1. Proposed La Quinta fence separated into sections based on adjacent golf course/residential areas. The table shows the length of each section in linear feet and the estimated cost using the CVCC estimate of \$53.89/linear foot.

Section	Title	Land Ownership	Fence Type	Length (linear feet)	Per unit cost ¹	Estimated Total Cost
1	Tradition	Federal (BIA), Tradition Golf Club	TBD	13,375	\$53.89	\$ 720,779
2	Silver Rock A	KSL Resort, Xochimilco Property, City of La Quinta, CVWD	wildlife fence (brown)	6,219	\$53.89	\$ 335,142
3	Silver Rock B	CVWD	Chain Link	2,976	\$49.75	\$ 148,056
4	PGA West	Xochimilco Property, LQR Golf, KSL Resort, Riverside County Regional Parks Open Space District	TBD	6,803	\$53.89	\$ 366,614
5	Lake Cahuilla	Riverside County Regional Parks Open Space District, CVWD, private	TBD	5,546	\$53.89	\$ 298,874
6	Quarry	Quarry of La Quinta, City of La Quinta, BLM	TBD	8,904	\$53.89	\$ 479,837
Total				43,823	TBD	\$ 2,349,301

1. Per unit (linear foot) estimate of cost = \$53.89 is based on cost of Rancho Mirage fence. The CVWD fence already under construction (SilverRock B) has an average cost of \$49.75 per linear foot (see Table 2).

Estimated Cost of Proposed Fence

The cost of the proposed fence has been estimated based on costs provided by others for similar projects. These estimates are shown in Table 2. In 2003, the City of Rancho Mirage installed a fence at a cost of approximately \$1 million for 5.5 miles of fencing along the edge of the mountains to prevent bighorn sheep from coming into urban areas and crossing Highway 111. To address concerns about the visual impact of that fence, some segments of the Rancho Mirage fence were installed using materials other than chain link. In particular, in areas where the fence occurs adjacent to residential areas, wrought iron and a brown wildlife fence were used to blend more with the natural environment. The City of Rancho Mirage also provides \$30,000 annually for monitoring the fence through a contract with the Bighorn Institute.

Table 2. Estimated cost of fence in La Quinta based on other similar projects.

Source of Estimate	Fence Type and Total Cost	Cost / Linear Foot
CVWD (Part of canal relocation, in progress)	Chain link 2,976 linear feet Total cost of \$148,056 (\$263,000/mile)	\$49.75
USFWS - Blaisdell Canyon (proposed, not funded)	Chain link 11,880 linear feet total estimated cost of \$250,000	\$21.04
City of Rancho Mirage (completed in 2003)	Mixed (avg. for wrought iron, brown wildlife fence and chain link) 26,400 linear feet total cost of \$998,000 (\$199,600/mile)	\$37.80
CVCC (estimate for La Quinta fence)	Mixed (Based on Rancho Mirage total fence cost + 3% /annum inflation) 43,823 linear feet total cost of \$2.3 million (\$284,539/mile)	\$53.89

The distance for the proposed fence in La Quinta shown in the attached map is 43,823 linear feet or approximately 8.3 miles. A fence similar to the Rancho Mirage fence could cost significantly more, depending on the ultimate length and design. For comparison, note that the cost of the fence could be much more than CVCC receives in development impact fees from all the cities and County in a single

year. To develop a preliminary estimate of the cost, CVCC staff used the cost information provided by Rancho Mirage, added an annual inflation factor of 3% and came up with a cost per linear foot of \$53.89. This cost per linear foot was used to develop the cost estimates for the fence sections shown in Table 1. This preliminary estimate for approximately 8 miles of fence in La Quinta is \$2.3 million. The CVWD information provides a good estimate of the cost of chain link as this estimate was obtained recently and the fence is currently under construction. CVCC staff and the City of La Quinta are continuing to refine the estimates for the cost of the fence. CVCC staff would like to emphasize that it is anticipated that the costs could rise given the need to use more aesthetically pleasing materials other than chain link, and to properly negotiate routes that could cross more rugged terrain. Recently City staff met with a fence contractor regarding an alternative fence that will address the concerns about visual impacts. We expect to have those cost estimates in the near future.

Possible Funding Sources:

For those sections of the fence occurring in project areas where a condition of approval requires a fence (SilverRock, Quarry) it is anticipated that the cost will be the responsibility of the respective property owners, the City of La Quinta and the Quarry. The City of La Quinta anticipates a future hotel development at SilverRock ; the hotel developer(s) could be conditioned to provide a fence as part of the project approval.

In June 2014, the CVCC approved their annual budget for 2014/2015, including up to \$1 million for construction of a fence. This funding will come from the Management Contingency Fund. It should be noted that this budget adjustment imposes a financial commitment that, unfortunately, will negatively impact other monitoring, management, and acquisition efforts.

Various other options for funding are being explored but no solid commitments have been made at this time. Other potential funding sources include private donations, habitat restoration or other funds from CDFW, and grant funds.

Environmental Analysis (CEQA/NEPA)

The February 2014 letter requests that “provisions for developing any CEQA analysis that may be required” be provided in the 6-month status report. CVCC has consulted with our legal counsel regarding the requirements for CEQA and NEPA for the fence project. The 2007 Final Recirculated Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) analyzes the effects of development on bighorn sheep. The EIR/EIS references the edge effects of development and describes the benefits of a unified conservation program as is provided for in the CVMSHCP. It also identifies management actions that are being taken to protect bighorn sheep, including placement of barrier fences.

Based on feedback from our legal counsel, we anticipate that an addendum to the EIR can be completed. The initial study checklist will need to be completed. A project description including the location of the proposed fence and a brief analysis of whether the impact of the proposed fence is greater than what was described in the original EIR will be prepared. The CVCC will need to adopt a resolution of no significant impacts. For NEPA purposes, analysis will depend on whether federal land is involved. There is BLM land in the vicinity of the proposed fence and the Bureau of Reclamation owns land along the Coachella Canal. NEPA requirements could be met by a summary to describe that no significant impacts beyond those identified in the original EIS will occur.

Timing and project schedule:

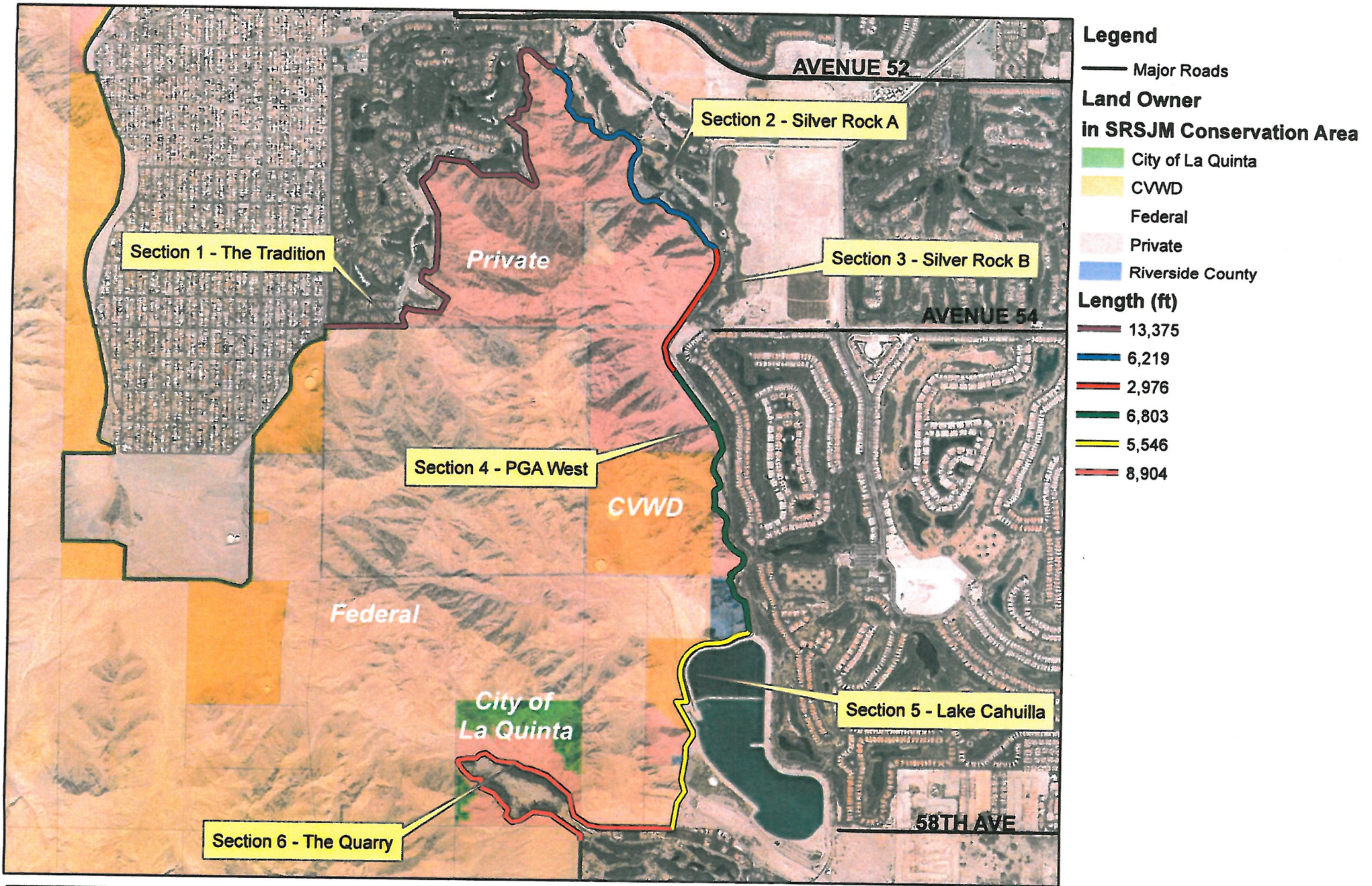
CVCC is in preliminary talks with the City of La Quinta and the state and federal agencies to determine the best and most cost effective route for the fence. As of August 2014, CVWD has begun completion of Section 2 – SilverRock Resort B. In addition to the fence route, funding options for the City need to be determined.

Next steps:

This fence project require a great deal of coordination with wildlife agencies, the City of La Quinta, bighorn sheep biologists, property owners and other relevant agencies. The next steps and a preliminary timeline for accomplishing these steps is as follows:

1. Route selection will need field trips to coordinate with US Fish and Wildlife, California Fish and Wildlife, the Bighorn Institute, CVWD, BLM and adjacent property owners. (by Spring 2015).
2. Obtain authorization from the Coachella Valley Conservation Commission to release a request for proposals/bids for qualified fence contractors. Due to the unique nature of this fencing project, the contractor will likely need to be involved in the planning process. (by Spring 2015).
3. Identify potential funding sources and confirm whether these funds can be available (by November 15, 2014). Seek grants, donations and other funds as appropriate.
4. Obtain easements, rights of entry and approvals from property owners as needed (by December 15, 2014).
5. Pending available funding, develop a phased approach to fence installation. High priority will focus on the SilverRock/PGA West area. (by November 1, 2014).
6. Complete CEQA/NEPA process (by December 15, 2014).
7. Evaluate the potential for artificial water sources to be provided in the vicinity of the fence. Several water tanks occur in the area and might provide a source for water. Coordinate this effort with wildlife agencies, volunteer groups that assist with installation of wildlife water sources. (by Spring 2015)
8. Determine parameters for fence installation. The proposed route includes areas of extreme terrain, which for some places means that crews will be required to hike or climb in to destinations to clear and prepare the landscape and erect the fence. It may be necessary for supplies to be airlifted in by helicopter or other means.
9. As with the Rancho Mirage fence, if a helicopter is needed, a staging area for the supplies and landing of the helicopter must be considered for approval by the relevant jurisdiction/authority. This should be done in order to ensure the least disturbance and stress to the bighorn.
10. Initiate first phase of fence construction (by Summer 2015).

La Quinta Peninsular Bighorn Sheep Fence Concept



Legend

— Major Roads

Land Owner in SRSJM Conservation Area

- City of La Quinta
- CVWD
- Federal
- Private
- Riverside County

Length (ft)

- 13,375
- 6,219
- 2,976
- 6,803
- 5,546
- 8,904



Coachella Valley
Conservation Commission

La Quinta PBS Fence_v01.mxd
8/22/2014
Background Image: 2013 Pinnacle Geospatial



