

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2016



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DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Desert Conservation Program (DCP) manages Endangered Species Act compliance on behalf of Clark County and the cities of Boulder City, Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Mesquite and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) (collectively, the Permittees) through implementation of the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and associated Section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit. The MSHCP and permit allow private landowners to develop land in Clark County without the need for individual project-by-project consultations and negotiation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS) to comply with the Endangered Species Act, providing a streamlined process for compliance. In exchange for this permit, the DCP implements actions to mitigate impacts from development. These actions include research, acquisition of sensitive habitats, habitat restoration, public information and education, the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line, and installation and maintenance of fencing along roadways to reduce tortoise mortality.



Clockwise from top: View of BCCE looking North; Browneyes found on the BCCE (Photo: C. Floyd); View of BCCE looking South; Silver cholla found on the BCCE (Photo: C. Floyd)

BOULDER CITY CONSERVATION EASEMENT (BCCE)

The incidental take permit requires the establishment of a conservation easement in the Eldorado Valley to be managed and protected for the benefit of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) as partial mitigation for the take of desert tortoise and its habitat. The BCCE was established between Clark County and Boulder City in July of 1995 to fulfill this requirement.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Provided oversight and project management for the interlocal agreement with Boulder City for Law Enforcement on the BCCE.
- Conducted site visits to monitor use, disturbances, and related issues; to perform new signage installation, maintenance and upgrades; for restoration planning and monitoring; and in support of the Predation Study and the Desert Tortoise Occupancy Study.
- Finalized license agreements necessary to start the Energy Zone fencing project. Issued a bid request for construction, a contractor was selected and work will begin next quarter.
- Met with Techren Solar to review a proposed transmission line that would traverse the BCCE.
- Extensive road modifications were made to some cattle guards where erosion had occurred due to flooding.
- Continued coordination with utility companies based in the Energy Zone in order to meet desert conservation and restoration goals.
- Met with law enforcement during multiple site visits to plan patrols to cover areas where unauthorized uses were detected.
- Mapping and assessment of unauthorized roads and other disturbances is ongoing and will guide prioritization of restoration efforts on the BCCE.

A comprehensive list of BCCE management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: <http://bitly.com/BCCE4thQTR2016>



Virgin River

RIPARIAN RESERVE UNITS

The incidental take permit stipulates that take of covered avian species is conditioned upon the acquisition of private lands in desert riparian habitats along the Muddy and Virgin rivers and the Meadow Valley wash. To comply with this permit condition, the DCP has acquired properties with riparian habitat along the Virgin and Muddy rivers in Clark County. These properties serve to mitigate impacts to covered species and conserve habitats and important connectivity corridors.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

Muddy River Reserve Unit

- A contract for the engineering design phase of our upcoming restoration project has been awarded and will begin next quarter.
- Conducted interviews to hire an environmental specialist to fill a recently vacated staff position. The new environmental specialist will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of the Riparian Reserve Units and overseeing restoration projects. The new staff member will start next quarter.

Property Acquisition

- Completed title reports and began preparation of appraisal reports for properties of interest along the Virgin River.

Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued photo-monitoring documentation of restored areas within Subunit 1.
- Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 15 has been awarded to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration on the Virgin River Reserve Unit. Planning efforts for this project have been initiated.
- A reach-scale assessment of the Virgin River is being conducted by Stillwater Sciences. This project will be completed in the next quarter.

A comprehensive list of Riparian Reserve Units management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: <http://bit.ly/Riparian4thOTR2016>

PUBLIC INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

One of the requirements of the MSHCP is to provide public information and education and to complete outreach projects that support messages of the DCP.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

Mojave Max Education Program

- Provided oversight and project management for the contract with Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association for education programs.
- Selected schools for the Mojave Max Assembly programs which will start next quarter.
- The Mojave Max Emergence Contest officially opened on November 1, 2016.

Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- There were no outreach events conducted during this reporting period.

FOLLOW MOJAVE MAX

Get information about Mojave Max, who he is and why he's an important mascot for The Desert Conservation Program. Also check out his website at MojaveMax.com. Follow him on social media too!



Mojave Max



Mojave_Max



@MojaveMax





ATTENTION CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL

If you see a wild desert tortoise on a construction site, please call the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance line at 702-593-9027. The tortoise will be picked up free of charge.

CONSTRUCTION SITE TRAINING

Please contact the DCP if you would like to schedule a desert tortoise training session for your construction staff. The DCP will explain what to do if you find a wild desert tortoise on your construction site and the training will be provided free of charge. Please contact the DCP at 702-455-3536 if you're interested.

WILD DESERT TORTOISE ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line

The 1995 Desert Conservation Plan and the 2001 MSHCP require that the DCP provide a hotline and pick up service to deal with wild desert tortoises which are displaced by development or appear to be in harm's way due to construction activity. The DCP operates the wild desert tortoise assistance line to meet this requirement.

- Two wild desert tortoises were picked up during this reporting period.

Desert Tortoise Fencing

- No desert tortoise fencing was installed during this reporting period.
- Began planning activities for the construction of post-and-cable and desert tortoise fencing along the boundary of the newly-designated Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. Construction of this project is expected to begin late 2017 / early 2018.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

As a requirement of the incidental take permit, the DCP is required to have an Adaptive Management Program (AMP) in order to gauge the effectiveness of existing conservation measures, propose alternative conservation measures as the need arises and to deal with changed or unforeseen circumstances.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Staff performed health assessments on tortoises and facilitated their release after the tortoises were removed from construction sites.
- Staff participated in the Northeast Mojave Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Team meeting to discuss tortoise recovery on October 25th.
- Staff performed tortoise surveys on the BCCE in an effort to increase the sample size of the tortoise telemetry project.
- Staff attended the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Raven Workshop held in Palm Springs, CA on November 1st and 2nd to discuss possible solutions to raven predation on tortoises and their increasing numbers across the landscape.
- The program's science advisor completed work on an Adaptive Management and Monitoring plan to help guide the Adaptive Management Program.



Mount Charleston Blue Butterfly

Permit Amendment

The DCP continues to pursue a major amendment to the MSHCP and incidental take permit. This amendment would allow for additional take authorization in Clark County while providing long-term assurances to the Clark County community for continued economic growth.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Staff continues to meet with the USFWS to discuss issues related to the proposed amendment.
- Continued to administer a contract with Southwest Ecology, LLC to provide covered species analysis support. This contract will result in the development of up to 31 new species distribution models, review and assessment of 25 existing species distribution models, and development of species accounts for up to 56 species. Work under this contract will provide information necessary to support an analysis and revision of the covered species list and data necessary to conduct impact analyses to support an application for an amended MSHCP.
- Issued a request for proposals (RFP) to solicit the services of an environmental consultant that can assist with the preparation of documents and analyses that will support development of the MSHCP amendment. Staff evaluated proposals and made a selection. Contract negotiations with selected consultant will occur next quarter.
- Staff continued to coordinate with Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) to discuss development of a master permit for the take of state-listed plant species. This permit would provide the MSHCP Permittees with disturbance authorization from the State Forester Firewarden, in accordance with Nevada Revised Statutes, for state-listed plant species in Clark County.
- Staff attended the National Habitat Conservation Plan Coalition meeting in West Virginia.

External Agency Coordination and Assistance

In order to keep well informed on the current and future land use impacts to Clark County, the DCP will review and potentially provide comments on issues relevant to Clark County. As a public agency, the DCP also provides data as requested to interested parties.

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Provided GIS datasets to USFWS.
- Provided stakeholder comments to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Section 368 Energy Corridor Region 1 abstract.
- Continue to serve on the Environmental Advisory group to assist the Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning with updating the Conservation Element of their Comprehensive Plan.
- Provided GIS maps to Clark County Department of Comprehensive Planning for updating the Conservation Element of their Comprehensive Plan.
- Prepared letters documenting Endangered Species Act compliance for projects requiring the submittal of map revisions to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

New projects started this quarter

- Muddy River Grading Plan, 722K
- DT Monitoring Data Management Years 2-5, 1541A
- BCCE Weed Survey, 910R
- OHV Education—Story Map, 807E
- BCCE Restore & Repair, 910S
- Occupancy Covariate Creation using Landsat, 1412C
- Water Rights Consulting, 1445E
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1541B

Ongoing projects this quarter

- BCCE DT Predation Study – Phase 2, 803D
- Hotline and Processing of Wild Desert Tortoises, 803E
- Fencing Installation & Maintenance, 804A
- Covered Species Analysis Support, 901B
- Mojave Max Mascot Appearances, 916Q
- Boundary Surveys & Parceling for Virgin River, 917AC
- Desert Tortoise Occupancy Sampling Crews II, 1012D
- Science Advisor Panel for the DCP, 1410B
- I-15 Exit 118 Improvements, 1500F
- BCCE Law Enforcement, 1510A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1515A
- DCP Branding Project, 1515C
- Muddy River Weed Management, 1520B

Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- Desert Tortoise Telemetry on the BCCE (Years 2 & 3), 1545A
- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Planning & Implementation, 1550A
- VR Baseline Conditions Assessment, 1521A
- Riparian Property Maintenance, 1520J
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1515A
- DCP Branding Project, 1515C
- OHV Registration Program Marketing, 807D
- Muddy River Weed Management, 1520B

Projects closed this quarter

No projects closed during this reporting period.

Requests for proposals and quotes (RFPs / RFQs)

- An RFP was advertised for an HCP Consultant for the MSHCP amendment and is pending award of contract.
- An RFQ was advertised for desert tortoise fencing, guards and culvert installation. This project was awarded to Muller Construction as project 910S.



Yellow-billed cuckoo

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

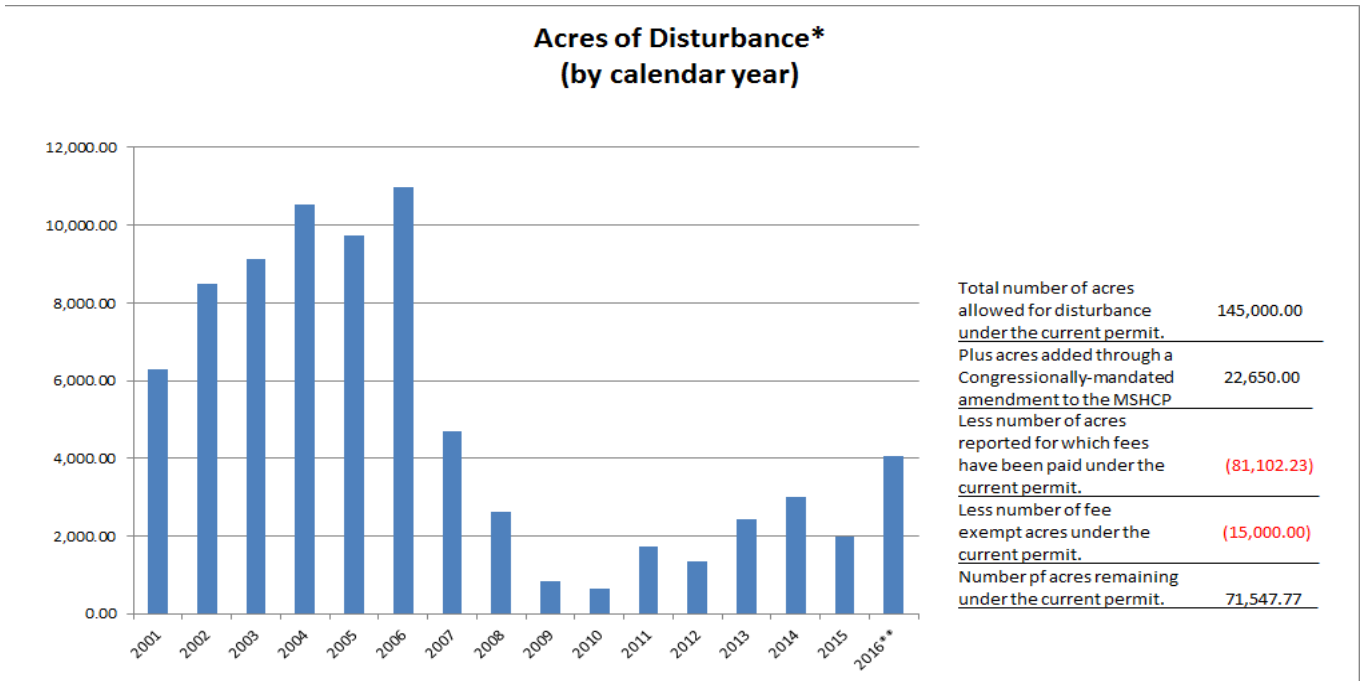
ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER



Southwestern willow flycatcher

- Processed vendor payments for 65 invoices: 63 accepted (97%), 2 rejected (3%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 17 budgets and expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. Initiated process of developing FY17 estimates and FY18 budget.
- Phase 1 of converting all the existing credit card terminals to the new processor, Wells Fargo, has been completed. Phase 2 of converting the existing web and IVR systems has been completed. Phase 3 is in process to establish e-payment services for County departments that do not currently offer e-payments.
- Desert tortoise specialty license plate application was approved. Awaiting next steps in the process for production of the plates.
- Oversight of the SNPLMA Round 8 through Round 15 projects totaling \$1,649,992 continues in the County's financial system. The projects continue to be monitored for progress and reimbursement.
- There were no reimbursements for SNPLMA funded projects during this period.

DCP staff is responsible for ensuring that land disturbed pursuant to the MSHCP is accounted for and monies are collected and deposited in the Section 10 special reserve fund established under the MSHCP. Below are charts which outline the total amount of fees collected and acres disturbed for the period 2001-2015.



*Total acres reported in this chart do not include acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010. Total number of acres of municipal development that were exempted from mitigation fee payment is 15,000 acres.

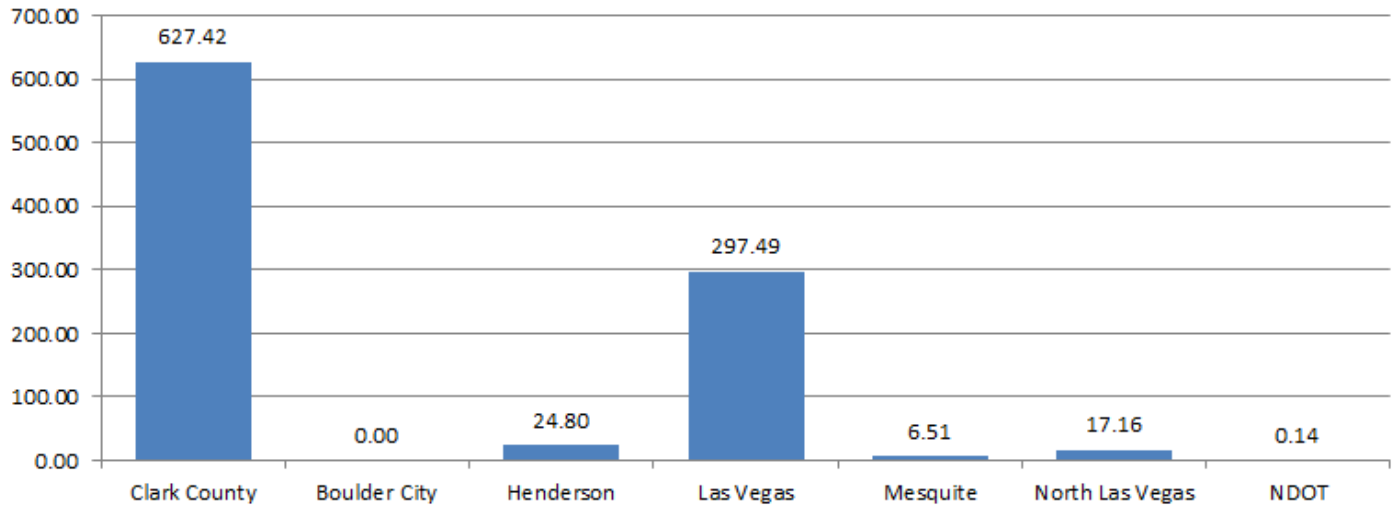
**December 2016 totals are subject to change.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED

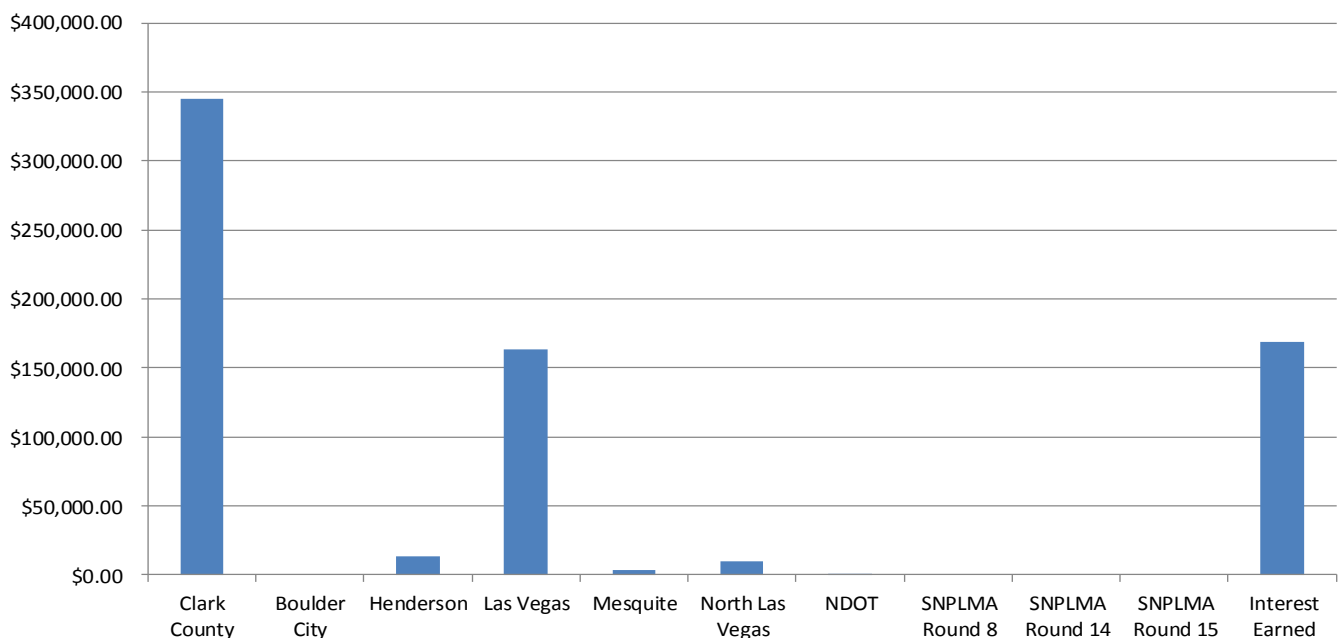


Western Burrowing Owl

Disturbance (October 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016)



Revenue by Source (October 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016)



OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The 2017-2019 Implementation Plan and Budget was approved and adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on December 20, 2016. The final report is available to view here: <http://bit.ly/2jRJML7>

We currently have no RFPs advertised for the Desert Conservation Program.

Interested parties are encouraged to sign up through Nevada Government EMarketplace ([NGEM](#)) in order to receive future RFP notifications.

Check the Clark County opportunities page regularly at <http://bit.ly/2bBQrvz> for new opportunities.

Employment opportunities:

There are currently no employment opportunities advertised for the Desert Conservation Program.

Employment opportunities can be viewed on this webpage:

[HR](#)



DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

**CLARK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AIR QUALITY
DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM
4701 WEST RUSSELL ROAD, SUITE 200
LAS VEGAS, NV 89118**

WWW.CLARKCOUNTYNV.GOV/DCP

 [MOJAVE MAX.COM](http://MOJAVEMAX.COM)

 desert conservation PROGRAM