

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

JANUARY-MARCH 2017



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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.
- Authorized a disturbance request from Techren Solar, LLC for construction of a new transmission line that traverses the BCCE.
- Started work on the Energy Zone fencing contract. Eleven miles of desert tortoise fencing, five desert tortoise guards and one desert tortoise culvert should be completed next quarter. This project will help protect the desert tortoise from death or injury on the solar sites or roadways.
- Met with law enforcement during multiple site visits to plan patrols to cover areas where unauthorized uses were detected.

A comprehensive list of BCCE management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: [BCCE1stQTR2017](#)

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

- The engineering contractor has completed the 30% grading design for an upcoming restoration project.
- The new environmental specialist has been hired and is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of the Riparian Reserve Units and restoration projects.
- A project has been awarded to conduct bird surveys to determine presence and relative abundance of all bird species on the Muddy River and Virgin River parcels. Surveys will begin in Quarter 2.

Property Acquisition

- Appraisal reports for properties of interest along the Virgin River were completed this quarter. DCP will seek authorization from the Board of County Commissioners to pursue acquisition next quarter. Offer letters will be sent to willing sellers following Board approval.

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. Planning efforts for this project have been initiated.



Virgin River

A comprehensive list of Riparian Reserve Units management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: [Riparian1stQTR2017](#)

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 Southern Nevada Conservancy (formerly Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association) for education programs.
- Will be selecting official winner of Mojave Max Emergence Contest and conducting winner's announcement and field trip in the next quarter.
- An RFP was advertised for a Mojave Max Educational Program Consultant and a selection should be made in the next quarter.

Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- There were no outreach events 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.

- We received one call from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line and no wild desert tortoises were picked up during this reporting period.

Desert Tortoise Fencing

- Continued 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 in 2018. A Request for Quotes to conduct cultural resource surveys in support of this project will be issued in the next quarter.
- Began construction of desert tortoise fence around the BCCE Energy Zone. Refer to BCCE update (page 2) for further information.

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

- Attended a Desert Tortoise Council agency coordination meeting on January 6th with other local agencies and special interest groups.
- Held meeting with the Science Advisor on February 2nd to discuss ongoing projects and to obtain help with setup of new projects.
- Presented County's progress on desert tortoise projects in 2016 at the annual Desert Tortoise Council symposium.
- Trained field crews for the Great Basin Institute and Knight and Levitt Associates to begin spring field work for range wide monitoring and occupancy sampling respectively.
- Science Advisor finished updates to the BCCE and Riparian Reserve Units management plans.



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.
- Continue to administer a contract with Ebbin, Moser + Skaggs, LLP to provide legal counsel services in support of the permit amendment effort.
- Executed a contract with WRA Environmental Consultants to assist with the preparation of documents and analyses that will support development of the MSHCP amendment. A kick-off meeting for this project is scheduled for next quarter.
- Solicited quotes for the preparation of an economic analysis that would determine the economic impact of implementing a large-scale regional habitat conservation plan. Applied Analysis was selected for this work and a kick-off meeting was held in March.
- Staff continues 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.

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

- 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. The Conservation Element was approved by the Planning Commission on March 7th and went before the Board of County Commissioners for adoption on March 22nd. Final adoption of the element has been postponed pending additional review.
- Prepared letters documenting Endangered Species Act compliance for projects requiring the submittal of map revisions to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- Staff participated in review of draft bills introduced in the 2017 legislative session to determine potential impacts and/or benefits to the program.
- Provided Water Rights documentation to Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Reno, Nevada.
- Provided GIS data to U. S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Provided Maps to Clark County Department of Aviation.
- Provided GIS data to City of Henderson.
- Provided GIS data to Clark County Regional Flood Control District.
- Provided Maps to Clark County Management (Legislative Sessions).



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

New projects started this quarter

- Energy Zone Fencing, 804F
- BCCE Desert Tortoise Predation Study—Phase 2 Amendment, 1421B
- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amendment, 1460A
- Economic Analysis of a Regional HCP, 1460B
- LEAN Process Improvement & Change Management, 1500ZY
- Federally Listed Bird Surveys, 1535A
- Point Count Surveys on Riparian Properties, 1535B

Ongoing projects this quarter

- Muddy River Grading Plan, 722K
- BCCE DT Predation Study – Phase 2, 803D
- Hotline and Processing of Wild Desert Tortoises, 803E
- OHV Registration Program Marketing, 807D
- OHV Education—Story Map, 807E
- Covered Species Analysis Support, 901B
- Mojave Max Mascot Appearances, 916Q
- BCCE Weed Survey, 910R
- BCCE Restore & Repair, 910S
- Boundary Surveys & Parceling for Virgin River, 917AC
- Desert Tortoise Occupancy Sampling Crews II, 1012D
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- Science Advisor Panel for the DCP, 1410B

Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- Water Rights Consulting, 1445E
- I-15 Exit 118 Improvements, 1500F
- BCCE Law Enforcement, 1510A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1515A
- DCP Branding Project, 1515C
- Muddy River Weed Management, 1520B
- Riparian Property Maintenance, 1520J
- DT Monitoring Data Management Years 2-5, 1541A
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1541B
- Desert Tortoise Telemetry on the BCCE (Years 2 & 3), 1545A
- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Planning & Implementation, 1550A

Projects closed this quarter

- Fencing Installation & Maintenance, 804A
- Eldorado DT Monitoring (Year 1 & 2), 1451A

Requests for proposals and quotes (RFPs / RFQs)

- An RFP for the Mojave Max Education Program was advertised on March 23rd.



Yellow-billed cuckoo

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

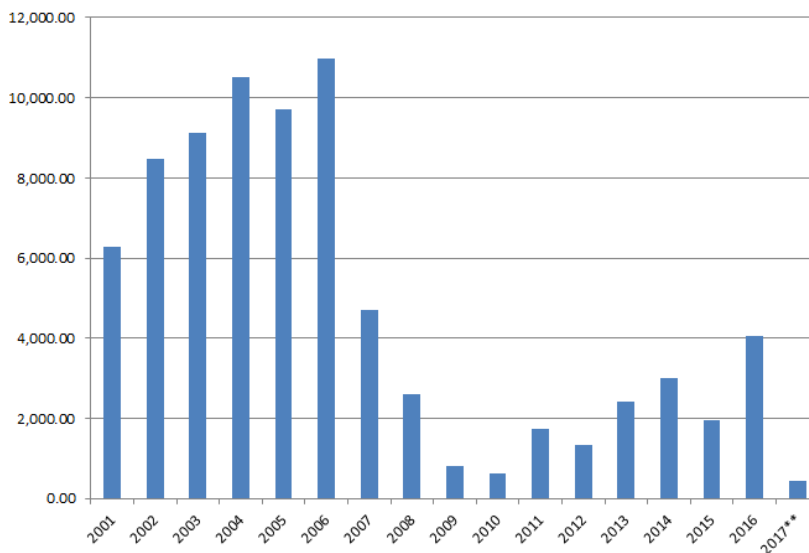


Southwestern willow flycatcher

- Processed vendor payments of 70 invoices: 67 accepted (96%), 3 rejected (4%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 17 budgets are being reconciled to prepare for end of year close. Expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. The process of developing FY17 estimates and FY18 budget is completed and submitted to the County Budget and Finance office.
- 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 \$2,899,515 continues in the County's financial system. The projects continue to be monitored for progress and reimbursement.
- Received reimbursement for SNPLMA projects: Round 15 - one draw down (\$11,352.00).

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.

**Acres of Disturbance*
(by calendar year)**



Total number of acres allowed for disturbance under the current permit.	145,000.00
Plus acres added through a Congressionally-mandated amendment to the MSHCP	22,650.00
Less number of acres reported for which fees have been paid under the current permit.	(81,440.34)
Less number of fee exempt acres under the current permit.	(15,000.00)
Number pf acres remaining under the current permit.	71,209.66

*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.

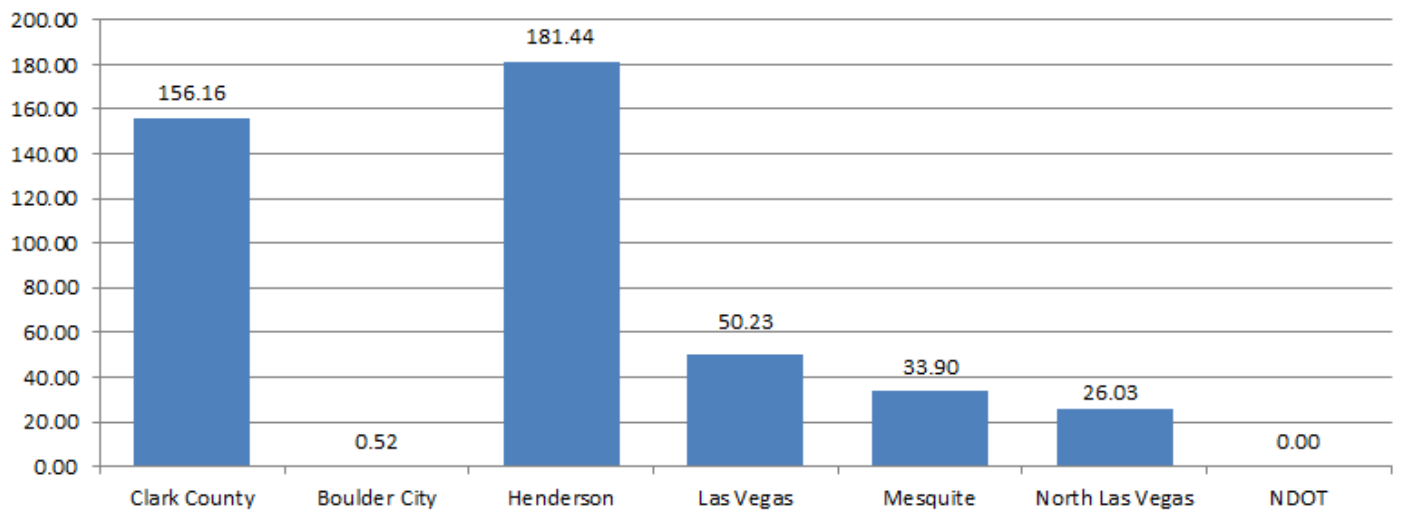
**2017 totals are subject to change.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED

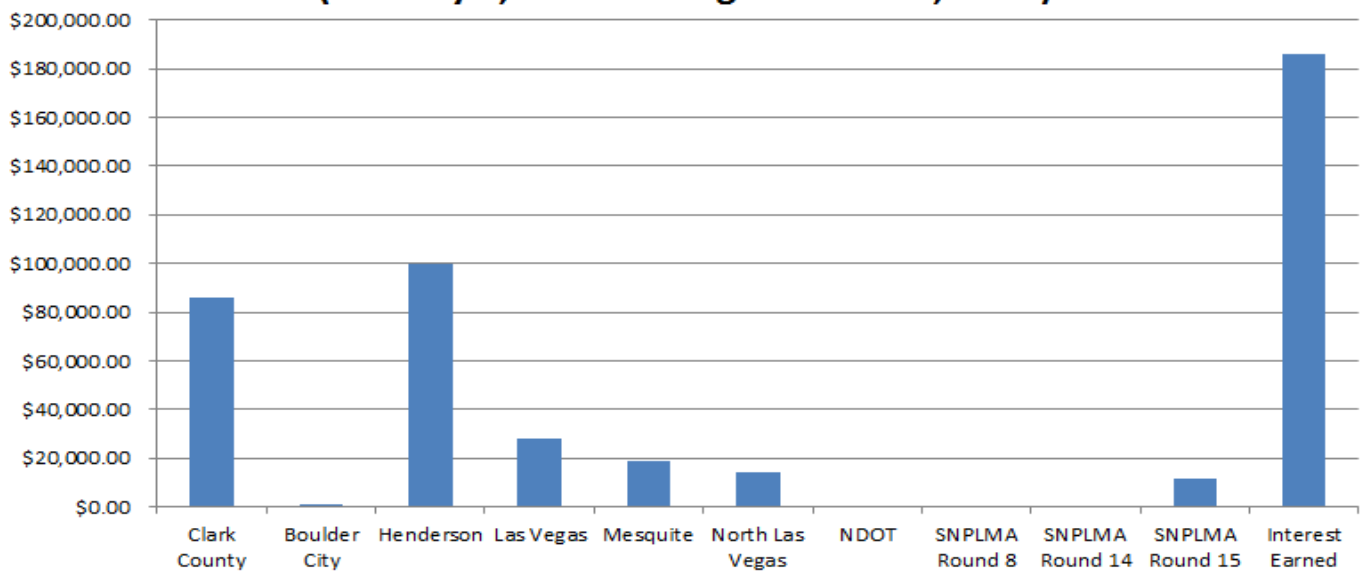


Western Burrowing Owl

Disturbance (January 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017)



Revenue by Source (January 1, 2017 through March 31, 2017)



OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Brittlebush

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

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