

# Riparian Properties on the Virgin and Muddy Rivers



## Directive

Pursuant to the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) and associated Incidental Take Permit TE034927-0 Permit Condition K, the Desert Conservation Program (DCP) is required to acquire riparian lands in desert riparian habitats on the **Virgin River, Muddy River and Meadow Valley Wash** to preserve as habitat for riparian birds covered by the MSHCP.



Riparian corridor on Muddy River property



Floodplain view of Muddy River property



Virgin River property one after December 2010 flood event



Dense tamarisk stand at Virgin River property two

## Property Acquisition

Acquired properties are managed to protect and enhance habitat quality. Weed abatement and restoration activities are conducted as needed and as funding allows.

The total number and location of acres to be acquired within each area is dependent on a variety of factors including:

- willing sellers,
- quality and condition of riparian habitat,
- types of improvements or degradations on the land,
- resolution of any survey issues,
- funding availability, and
- mitigation requirements.

The DCP has been approached by willing sellers on the Virgin and Muddy Rivers. Acquisition of private properties on the Virgin River is currently on hold until cadastral surveys are complete and boundary discrepancies are addressed. The DCP is not currently pursuing property on the Meadow Valley Wash.

## Muddy River

The Nature Conservancy acquired 118 riparian acres on the Upper Muddy River floodplain on behalf of the DCP. The properties were formally transferred to the DCP in a series of transactions in 2010 and 2011 and included groundwater rights and an operational well. A 0.25 hectare reservoir, located on the property, was retrofitted as a frog refugia and is managed by the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

### Property Management Activities Completed:

- ❖ Creation of Fire Breaks
  - 15 foot clearance along 900 linear feet
- ❖ Selective palm tree extraction and trimming
  - Along stream bank
- ❖ Tamarisk removal
  - Cut stump herbicide treatment along linear 1,620 feet

## Virgin River

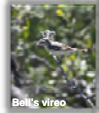
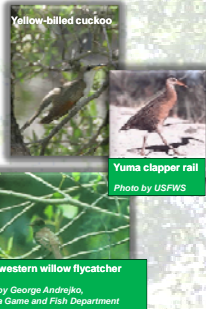
The DCP has assumed ownership of two Clark County parcels along the Virgin River. The first property, located in the Bunkerville area, was transferred from Parks and Recreation in 2011. Roughly 80 acres in size, this parcel provides an opportunity to maintain a large contiguous tract of riparian habitat located within the floodplain.

The second property is approximately 21 acres in size and was transferred from Public Works. It is located amidst private agricultural lands on the river. This site experienced erosion from a December 2010 flood event. Restoration plans for this site are being determined.

Both Virgin River Properties have documented observations of southwestern willow flycatcher from the Nevada Native Heritage Program.

## Covered Riparian Birds

- ❖ Southwestern willow flycatcher
- ❖ Yellow-billed cuckoo
- ❖ Yuma clapper rail
- ❖ Arizona Bell's vireo



## Virgin River Cadastral Survey

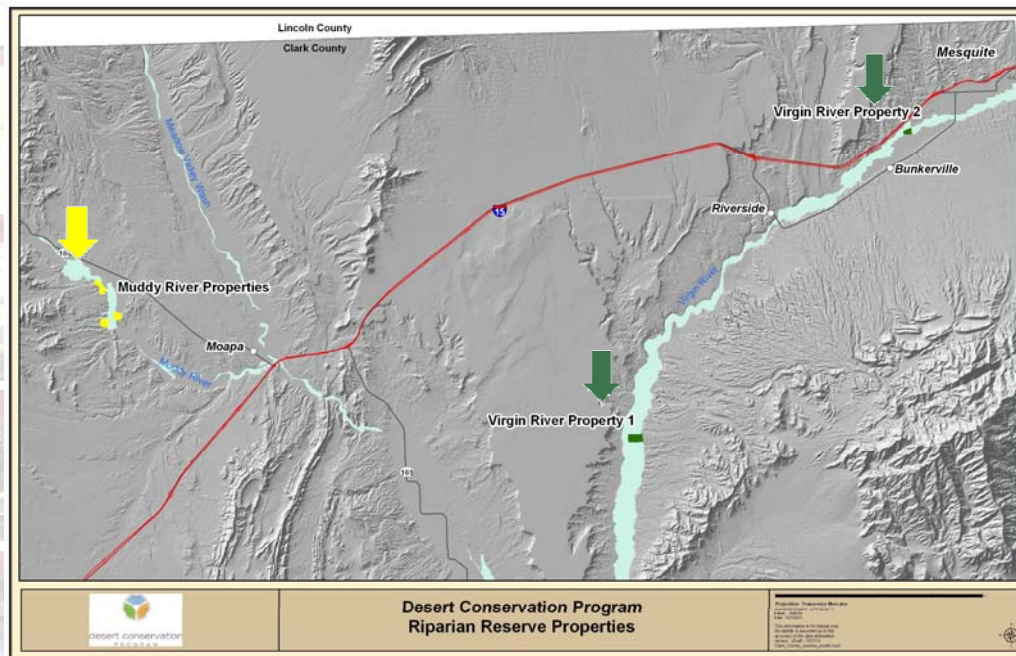
On June 21, 2011, Clark County, on behalf of the DCP, entered into an agreement with the Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey Office to conduct surveys to define the boundary lines of Federal Lands in the unincorporated towns of Riverside and Bunkerville along the Virgin River.

### Re-surveys will occur in these Township and Range Sections:

T14S R69E Sections: 12, 13, 14, 23, 28, 32, 33

T14S R70E Section: 7 if sufficient funds remain

Identification and location of private encroachments on Federal Interest Lands need to be identified before clear title can be established. Until this is addressed, parceling of these properties and property acquisition from willing sellers cannot occur. Once the cadastral surveys are complete and boundaries are defined, DCP will be able to move forward in the pursuit of acquisition of private land from willing sellers along the Virgin River. Survey costs will be recouped in the land acquisition price negotiations with willing sellers.



Location of the riparian properties acquired by the DCP. Muddy River properties are outlined in yellow and the Virgin River properties are outlined in green. The riparian corridor is highlighted in light blue.

## Progress to Date

- ✓ Initiated Cadastral Survey on Virgin River
- ✓ Property Acquisitions and Transfers
  - Muddy River 118 acres
  - Virgin River 101 acres
  - Meadow Valley Wash 0 acres

Total 219 acres
- riparian
- ✓ Implemented Property Management
  - Created fire breaks
  - Conducted weed control projects

## For further information

Please contact [bickmore@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:bickmore@ClarkCountyNV.gov)