



desert conservation
PROGRAM

JUL 2016—SEP 2016

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DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Quarterly Administrator Update

OCTOBER 2016

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.

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.
- Continued to negotiate the terms of license agreements with energy companies operating in the BCCE Energy Zone. The license agreements will allow for the construction of desert tortoise exclusionary fencing around the Energy Zone and associated access road.
- Repaired cattle guards and roads damaged from rain-related erosion.
- Met with law enforcement during multiple site visits to plan patrols to cover areas where unauthorized uses were detected.
- Continued coordination with utility companies based in the Energy Zone in order to meet desert conservation and restoration goals.
- 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/BCCE3rdOTR2016>



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

- An engineering firm for the planning phases of a pilot restoration project at the Muddy River Reserve Unit has been selected. Formal planning for this project will begin next quarter.

Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Planning efforts for a Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA)-funded 20 to 40 acre habitat restoration project on the Virgin River Reserve Unit are underway.
- A reach-scale assessment of the Virgin River was initiated with Stillwater Sciences. The results of the assessment will help the DCP maximize the benefit of its riparian restoration efforts.

Property Acquisition

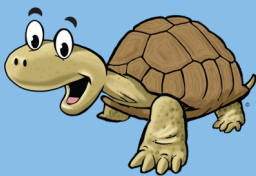
- Phase II of property boundary surveys nearing completion.
- Opened a recruitment to hire an environmental specialist to fill a recently vacated position. This position will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of the Riparian Reserve Units and overseeing restoration projects. The recruitment closed October 14th; interviews and final selection will occur next quarter.

A comprehensive list of Riparian Reserve Units management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: <http://bit.ly/Riparian3rdOTR2016>



www.MojaveMax.com

Follow Mojave Max on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.



Public Information and Education

One of the requirements of the MSHCP is to provide public information and education and to complete

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

Mojave Max Education Program

- Continued contract with Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association for education programs.
- Installed live streaming web camera at Mojave Max's habitat at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. The habitat can be viewed from Mojave Max's website at: <https://mojavemax.com/live-stream>
- Started accepting applications for Mojave Max school assemblies on August 25th.

Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

Pigs for the Kids Charity Bar-Be-Que	September 17, 2016
Healthy Kids Festival	September 24, 2016
Step Up for Kids	September 26, 2016



Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Fed and watered five tortoises currently being held at the County's holding facility on a weekly basis.
- Completed health assessment on tortoises currently being held in preparation of translocation this fall.

Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line

The 1995 Desert Conservation Plan and the 2001 MSHCP require 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.

- Six calls for wild desert tortoises were received this quarter and one wild desert tortoise was translocated to the BCCE. Four tortoises were moved to the County's holding facility.

Desert Tortoise Fencing

No desert tortoise fencing was installed during this reporting period.



Attention all 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.



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

- Performed adaptive management reviews for all projects in the 2017—2019 Implementation Plan and Budget (IPB).
- Attended a Tortoise Group Advisory Committee meeting on July 18th.
- Participated in a conference call on the revision of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Programmatic desert tortoise translocation Environmental Assessment (EA) on July 25th.
- Held the annual progress report symposium on August 23rd. The presentations may be viewed by clicking on this link: <http://bit.ly/2eSpRWn>
- Held quarterly meeting with the science advisor on August 24th.
- Began a study in September looking at culverts to determine which can be crossed by tortoises.



Photo: C. Floyd

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to discuss issues related to the proposed amendment.
- Staff completed a review of the USFWS draft Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook. This draft handbook could have important implications for the proposed MSHCP amendment. Comments on the draft handbook have been submitted to USFWS.
- Staff completed a review of USFWS' proposed compensatory mitigation policy and submitted comments.
- 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.
- Began preparing 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. The RFP will advertise next quarter.
- Staff continued to meet 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.
- Continued to meet with the BLM to discuss their proposed revisions to the Las Vegas Field Office Resource Management Plan.

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 maps to SWCA Environmental Consultants.
- Provided GIS maps to USFWS.
- Attended the BLM's Section 368 Energy Corridor Public Workshop on September 27th.
- Continue to serve on the Environmental Stakeholders group to advise and assist the City of Henderson during their Comprehensive Plan update process.
- 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.
- Prepared letters documenting Endangered Species Act compliance for projects requiring the submittal of map revisions to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Photo: C. Floyd

Out and About with the DCP



Photo of Mojave Max's habitat from the live stream camera.



Thank You notes from Mr. Palermo's first-grade class for a Mojave Max classroom program.



Photo of a sidewinder observed at the BCCE during the Desert Tortoise Occupancy project.



Digging a hole for new signage at the BCCE

New, Ongoing, and Closed Projects

New projects started this quarter

- OHV Registration Program Marketing, 807D
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- Riparian Property Maintenance, 1520J
- Virgin River Baseline Conditions Assessment, 1521A

Ongoing projects this quarter

- BCCE Weed Survey, 714K
- BCCE DT Predation Study – Phase 2, 803D
- Hotline and Processing of Wild Desert Tortoises, 803E
- Fencing Installation & Maintenance, 804A
- OHV Education—Story Map, 807E
- LiDAR/Aerial Imagery Data Analysis, 811K
- Covered Species Analysis Support, 901B
- BCCE Weed Survey, 910R
- BCCE Restore and Repair, 910S
- 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
- Occupancy Covariate Creation using Landsat, 1412C
- I-15 Exit 118 Improvements, 1500F
- BCCE Law Enforcement, 1510A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1515A
- DCP Branding Project, 1515C

Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- South Loop Trail Restoration, 1530A
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1540A
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring Data Management, 1541A
- Desert Tortoise Telemetry on the BCCE (Years 2 & 3), 1545A
- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Planning & Implementation, 1550A

Projects closed this quarter

- Virgin River Cadastral Survey, 805H
- OHV Education 807B
- OHV Education, 807C
- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation, 810A
- Veg Data for Desert Tortoise Occupancy Covariate Monitoring, 811H
- GIS Data Management and Needs Assessment, 901C
- Permit Amendment Legal Counsel, 1014B
- Geotechnical Assessment & Conceptual Grading Plan Recommendations, 1446A
- Mojave Max Secure Server License, 1515G
- Muddy River Weed Removal, 1520C
- Dumpster Rental for Muddy River Weed Removal, 1520D
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring Data Management, 1540B

Requests for proposals (RFPs)

- No RFPs were advertised during this reporting period.



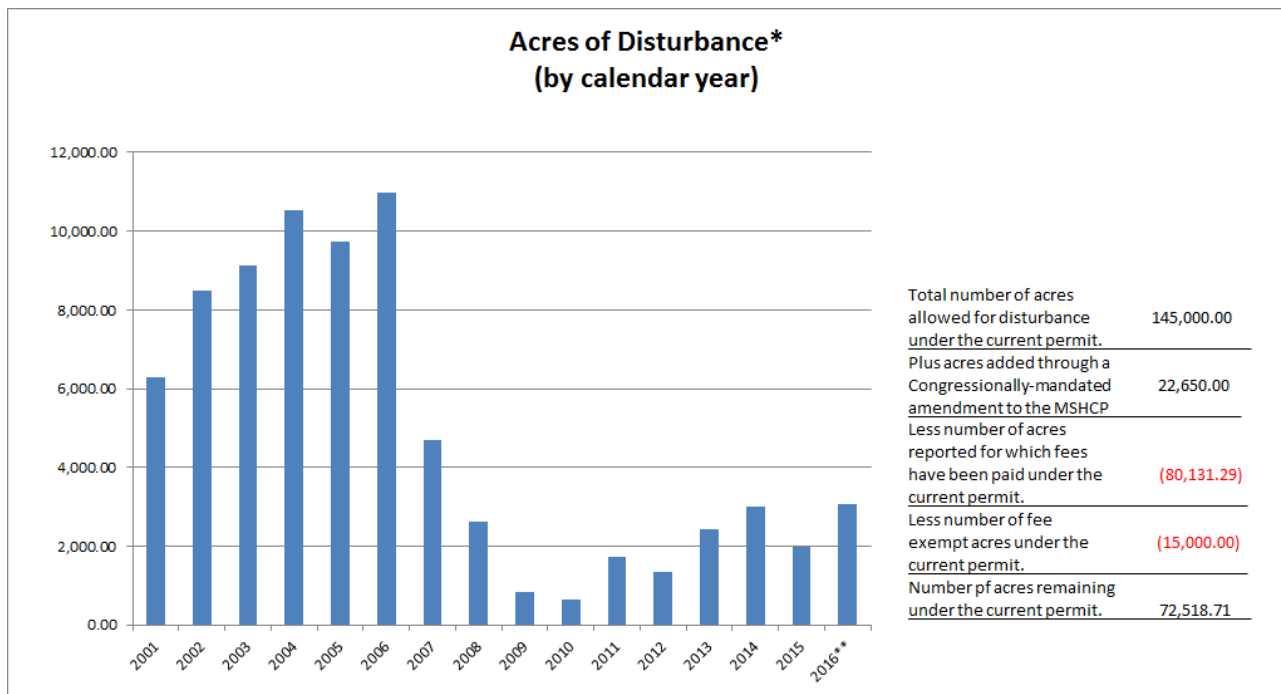
Administration and Finance

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 73 invoices: 69 accepted (95%), 4 rejected (5%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 16 budgets continue to be reconciled for end of year close. Expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. Coordinating efforts with multiple internal departments to ensure a smooth transition from Comprehensive Planning to Air Quality is proceeding as planned.
- Phase 1 of converting all existing credit card terminals to the new processor, Wells Fargo, has been completed. Phase 2 of converting 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 14 projects totaling \$1,649,992 continues in the County's financial system. The projects continue to be monitored for progress and reimbursement.
- Received reimbursement for SNPLMA projects: Round 8: 3 draw downs (\$101,000.00), and Round 14: 1 draw down (\$72,374.50).



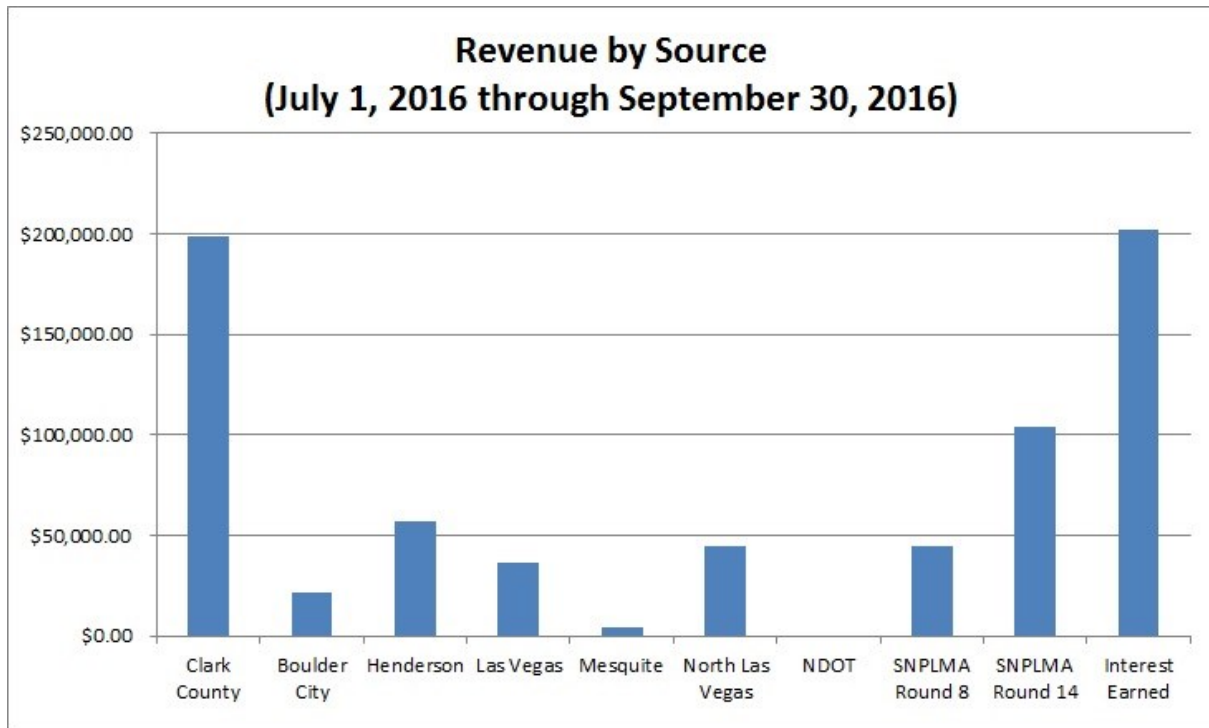
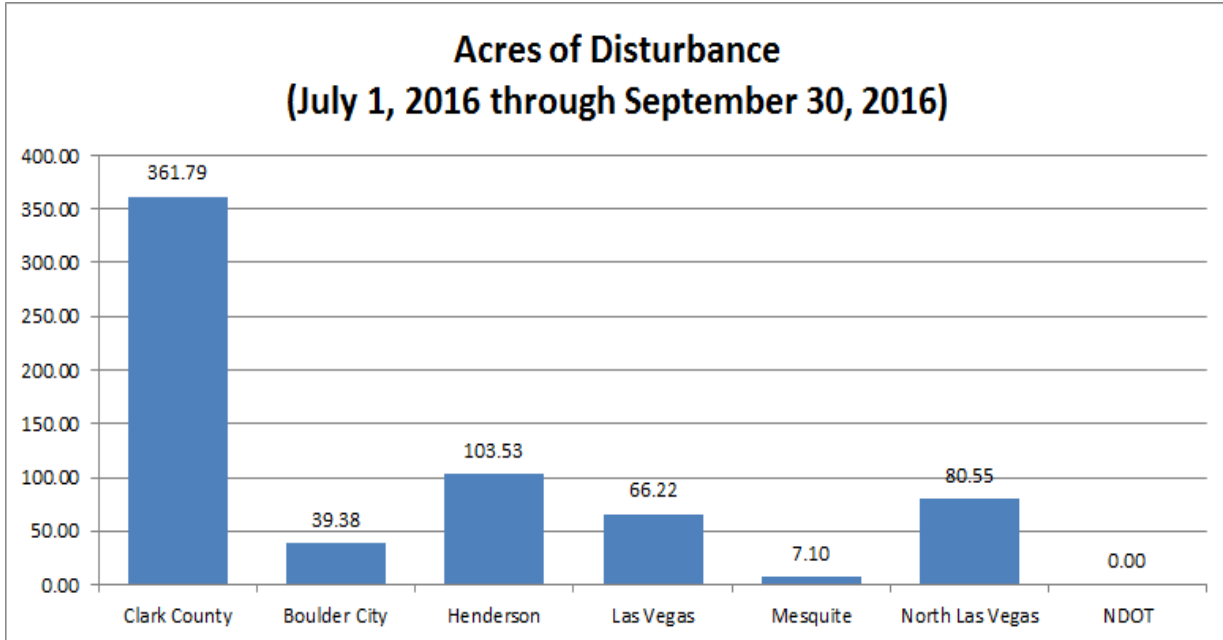
DCP staff is responsible for ensuring that land disturbed pursuant to the MSHCP is accounted for and monies are collected and deposited in the Section 10 special reserve fund established under the MSHCP. Below are charts which outline the total amount of fees collected and acres disturbed for the period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

**September 2016 totals are subject to change.

Administration and Finance Cont'd.



OPPORTUNITIES and ANNOUNCEMENTS



Prepared the Draft 2017-2019 Implementation Plan and Budget (IPB). The DCP is currently seeking public comment on the draft plan. Comments may be submitted by email to dcp@ClarkCountyNV.gov or by mail to: Desert Conservation Program, 4701 West Russell Road, Suite 200, Las Vegas, Nevada 89118. Comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. PST on November 4, 2016.

The draft IPB can be found here: [Draft Implementation Plan and Budget for 2017-2019](#)

OPPORTUNITIES

There is currently an RFP advertised for a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Consultant for the MSHCP, which will close on November 17th.

The RFP can be viewed by clicking on this link: <http://bit.ly/2bBOrvz>

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/2bBOrvz> 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:

Desert Conservation Program

Clark County Department of Air Quality
Desert Conservation Program
4701 W. Russell Road, Suite 200
Las Vegas, NV 89118



Streamlining development, protecting species, and preserving our future.

www.clarkcountynv.gov/dcp