

# QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

JANUARY – MARCH 2020



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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.





Top: row Wildflowers in bloom at the BCCE (photos: J. Ellis) Bottom row: Silver cholla; and Yellow cups in the BCCE (Photos: 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 11 site visits to monitor use, disturbances and related issues; to perform new signage installation, maintenance and infrastructure upgrades.
- Met with law enforcement during three site visits to plan patrols to cover areas where violations had occurred.
- The Boulder City Police Department ordered the drone and is awaiting its delivery.
- Initiated a new maintenance contract for roads, fences, and other various maintenance needs.
- Continued coordination with utility companies based in the Energy Zone in order to meet desert conservation and restoration goals.
- Continued mapping and assessment of unauthorized roads and other disturbances to guide prioritization of restoration activities on the BCCE.
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a Categorical Exclusion document for proposed restoration activities within BCCE utility corridors.
- Continued weed surveys and treatment through an interlocal agreement with the National Park Service's (NPS) Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT).

Click on the link for a comprehensive list of [BCCE](#) management accomplishments for this quarter.

## 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 Muddy and Virgin rivers in Clark County. These properties serve to mitigate impacts to covered species and conserve habitats and important connectivity corridors.

### ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

Click on the link for a comprehensive list of [Riparian Reserve Units](#) management accomplishments for this quarter.

#### Muddy River Reserve Unit

- Continued planning efforts for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 16 project to conduct habitat restoration on the Muddy River Reserve Unit -Natural Channel Design was selected to complete the restoration design. They have submitted the preliminary design which currently under review.
- NPS' EPMT continued to conduct vegetation management and maintenance activities for enhancement of native riparian species on the Muddy and Virgin River Reserves.
- Continued monthly data collection on groundwater monitoring wells.



Perkins Pond at the Muddy River Reserve Unit

#### Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued planning efforts for a SNPLMA Round 15 project to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration on the Virgin River Reserve. Staff continues monitoring of masticated area for non-native plant species. A contractor was selected to masticate the remaining acreage in Q1 – however due to excessive precipitation, this work has been delayed until fall 2020.
- NPS' EPMT continued vegetation management and maintenance activities for enhancement of native riparian species.
- Continued photo-monitoring documentation of restored areas within Mormon Mesa site.
- Continued coordination with Duane Magoon; the BCC approved a non-exclusive lease agreement in Q1.

#### Property Acquisition

- Previously identified properties of interest along the Virgin River in Bunkerville, Nevada were appraised in Q4 of 2019, DCP will request approval from Board of County Commissioners in Q2 of 2020 to purchase additional parcels.



Photos of property at the Virgin River Reserve Unit





## 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

- Continued to provide oversight and project management for the contract with Get Outdoors Nevada (formerly Outside Las Vegas Foundation) for the Mojave Max Education Program.
- Conducted 31 Tortoise Talks during this reporting period.
- Conducted 3 outreach events during this reporting period.

#### Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

The following outreach events were conducted during this reporting period:

- Stay Prepared for School Fair, Doolittle Community Center, January 11th
- Sights / Sounds of Nevada, Las Vegas Natural History Museum, January 20th
- Construction vs. Cancer, Silverton Casino, February 29th



Las Vegas History Museum Sights and Sounds Event, January 20, 2020

## 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](http://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.

- Zero calls were received from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line during this reporting period. No wild desert tortoises were picked up.

#### **Desert Tortoise Fencing**

- Continued planning activities for the construction of post-and-cable and desert tortoise fencing along the boundary of the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. This project will go out for bid once the BLM has completed their cadastral survey of the monument.

## OTHER CONSERVATION WORK

### ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Initiated an Interlocal Agreement with UNLV to study Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology at our Riparian Reserve Units.
- Initiated a county-wide Rare Plant Surveys project with Ironwood Consulting. Surveys will begin in the next quarter.
- Initiated a contract with Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. to help us develop a Pesticide Use Proposal and Environmental Assessment that will allow us to get approval from BLM to study the effectiveness of two different herbicides in eliminating invasive grass infestations within desert tortoise habitat.
- Continued to administer a project that will examine threats to the continued persistence of Gila monster populations in Nevada; executed two of the three contracts associated with this project. Field work tracking Gila monsters has begun. Genetics Lab is reviewing samples that have been collected and not sequenced yet.

## 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

- Awarded Riparian Small Mammal Surveys project to BEC Environmental, Inc. Surveys will be conducted in the next quarter. (2019-BEC-1910A)
- Participated in the Ivanpah valley connectivity workshop on January 8th
- Attended the Colorado River Terrestrial and Riparian Symposium in Laughlin Nevada on January 28th
- Participated in the Recovery Implementation Team meetings on January 29th
- Attended the Mojave Native Plant Workshop on February 11th and 12th
- Held the Quarterly Science Advisor Panel meeting on February 20th
- Attended the Desert Tortoise Council Symposium on February 21-23
- Attended the Raven Webinar given by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 5th



Mount Charleston Blue Butterfly

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## 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

- Continued to coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss issues related to the proposed MSHCP amendment.
- Continued to work with Permittees on a proposed federal lands bill that will support efforts to obtain an amended MSHCP; continue to coordinate with elected officials and other stakeholders on the development of the lands bill; continue responding to public records requests related to the proposed lands bill.
- Continued to administer a contract with Ebbin, Moser + Skaggs, LLP to provide legal counsel services in support of the permit amendment effort.
- Continued to administer a contract with WRA Environmental Consultants to assist with the preparation of documents and analyses that will support development of the MSHCP amendment; draft habitat functionality methods continued this quarter and a draft of the covered species chapter is in development.
- Completed an interlocal agreement with University of Nevada, Reno for the development of an additional 17 species distribution models. The models will be used in the development of the habitat functionality analysis and to estimate and track impacts to species.
- Continued the Request for Proposal process to select a contractor to prepare a County-wide fine-scale vegetation map. A contractor was selected this quarter and contract negotiations are under way.



## 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

- Met with renewable energy developers to review proposed project siting and discuss potential land use conflicts.
- Continued to coordinate with the Clark County Regional Flood Control District on the development of a new in-lieu fee mitigation program for projects that require a permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
- Provided interview assistance to the Department for recruitment purposes.
- Continued to assist the Department of Comprehensive Planning in preparing an update to the Federal Lands Element of the Comprehensive Plan



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

# NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

## New projects started this quarter

- EA for Pesticide Use, 803H
- Mormon Mesa Plant Propagation, 1521J
- BCCE Maintenance, 1710D
- Bat Recording Analysis, 1730N
- Rare Plant Surveys, 1755A
- Riparian Small Mammal Survey, 1910A
- Science Advisor Panel, 1920A
- DT Occupancy on the BCCE, 1920B
- Desert Tortoise Nesting Study on the BCCE, 1985A
- DT Predator-Prey Dynamics, 1987A
- Rare Plant Propagation Research, 1990A
- Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology – Phase I, 1992A

## Ongoing projects this quarter

- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support, 803F
- Parceling for Bunkerville Property, 917BD
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- BCCE DT Telemetry & Health Assessments, 1412D
- HCP Consultant for the MSCHP, 1460A
- BCCE Drone Project, 1510C
- Muddy River Flood Inundation, 1521G
- Virgin River Restoration Treatment, 1521H
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1541B



Yellow-billed cuckoo

## Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Planning and Implementation, 1550A
- Muddy River Habitat Restoration, 1570C
- DT Connectivity Across Roadways, 1580B
- BCCE Weed Survey, 1710B
- Virgin River Weed Management, 1720A
- Water Rights Consulting, 1720E
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance, 1720F
- Science Advisor Panel for the DCP, 1730A
- Effects of Exotic Forage on Mojave DT, 1730J
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics, 1795A
- Law Enforcement for the BCCE, 1905B
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1915A
- DT Monitoring Data Mgmt, 1920C
- Avian Surveys, 1920D
- BCCE DT Telemetry & Health Assessments, 1930A
- Road Warrior DT Mortality Survey, 1955A
- Assessing Genetic Diversity of Gila monster, 1997A
- Gila Monsters Spatial Ecology and Habitat, 1997B

## Projects closed this quarter

- Avian Species Surveys, 1730K
- Gold Butte AML Closures, 1792C

## Requests for proposals and quotes (RFPs / RFQs)

- Vegetation Map for Clark County, 1965A



# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

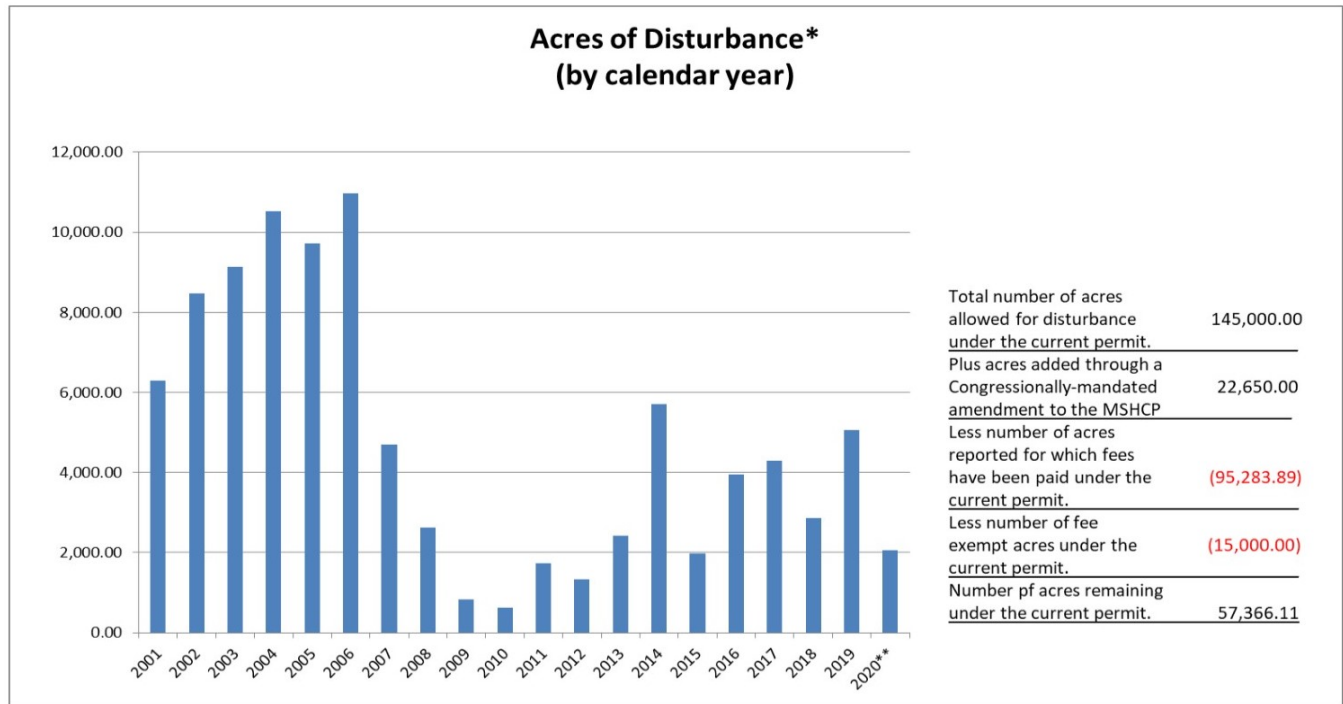
## ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 43 invoices: 42 accepted (98%), one rejected (2%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 20 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 the Fiscal Year 19 estimates and Fiscal Year 20 budgets are completed and submitted to County Budget and Finance.
- Phase 1 of converting all the existing credit card terminals to the new processor, Wells Fargo, is completed. Phase 2 of converting the existing web and IVR systems has been completed. Phase 3 is in process to establish e-payments services for County departments that did not currently offer e-payments.
- Continued production of the desert tortoise specialty license plate and plates are being distributed at Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles (DMVs). Active plates are currently exceeding the 1,000 minimum threshold.
- Continued oversight of the SNPLMA Round 14 – Round 17 projects totaling \$7,790,244 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 downs (\$42,449.87), Round 16 – two draw down (\$43,088.00).
- Began development of the 2021-2023 Implementation Plan and Budget; the draft plan will be available for public review in Q4 2020.



Red Rock Canyon, NCA

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 2001-2020



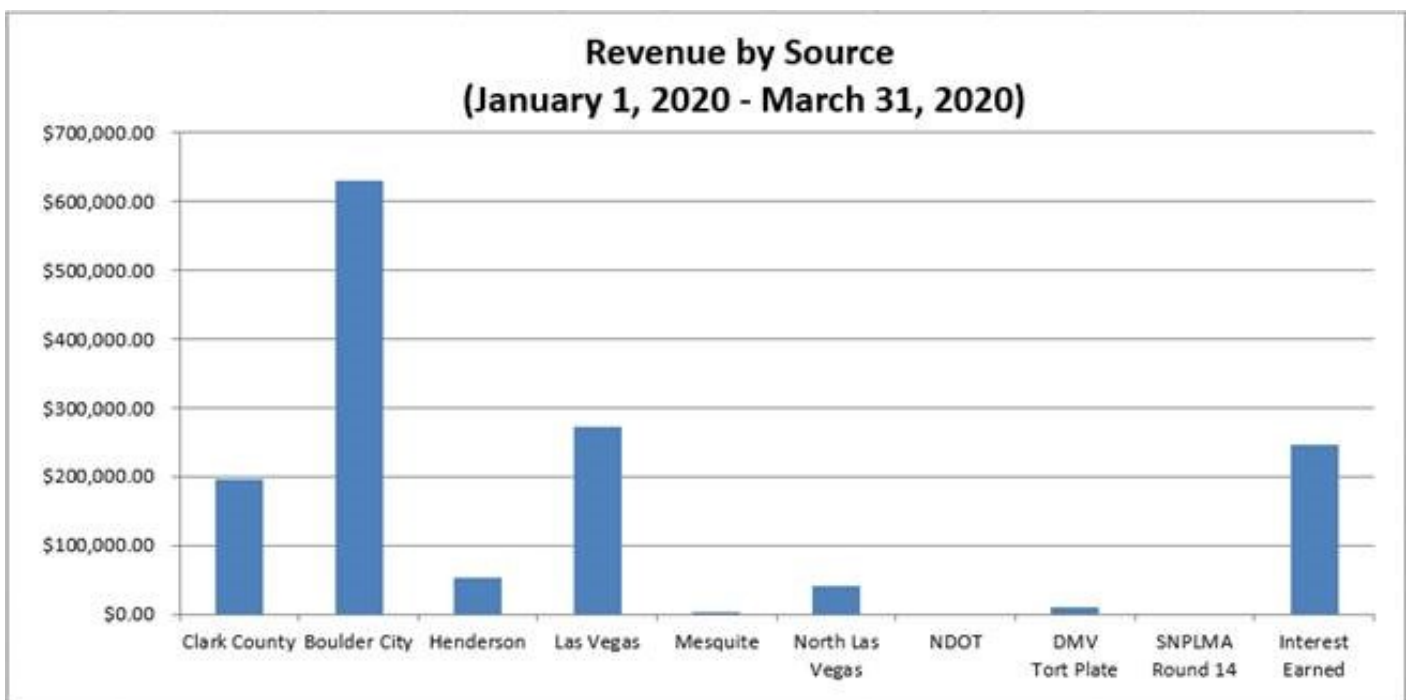
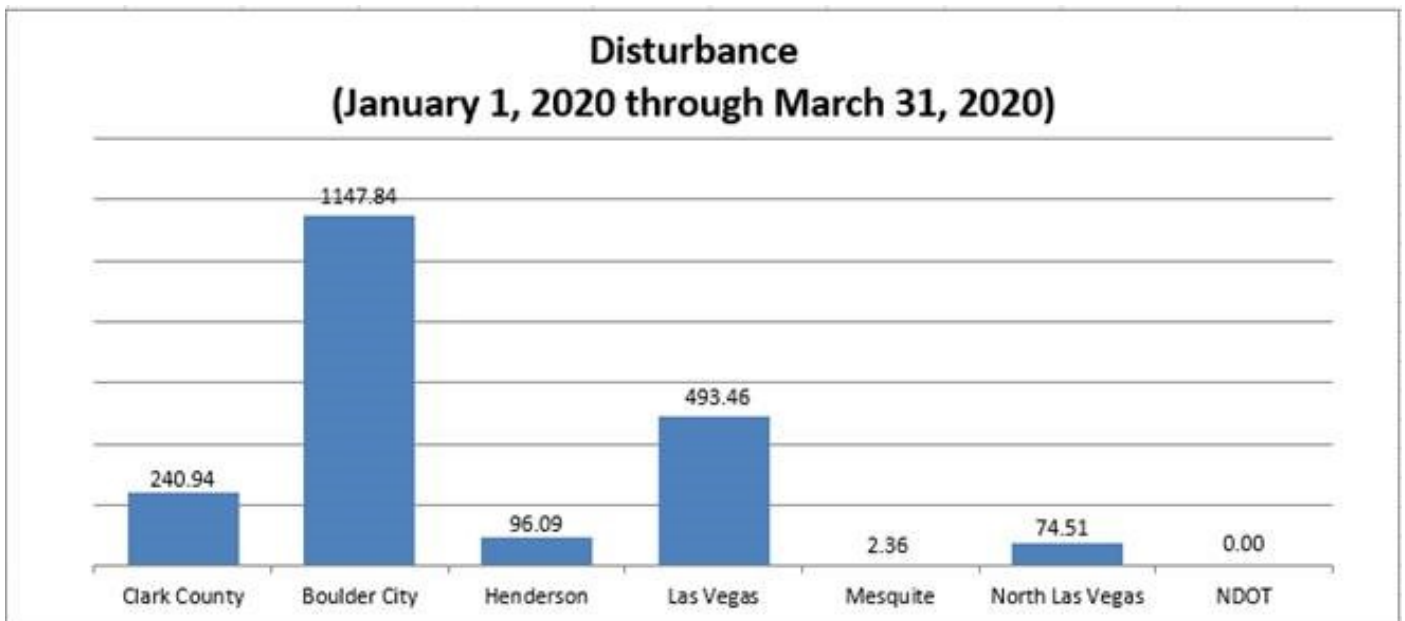
\*Total acres reported in this chart do not include 15,000 acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010.

\*\*2020 totals are subject to change.

# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED



Western Burrowing Owl





## OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Desert Tortoise License Plate

On January 21, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners approved a department name change from the Department of Air Quality to the Department of Environment and Sustainability.

DCP's Desert Tortoise License Plate is available at Nevada Department of Motor Vehicle offices across the state. Click here for more information about the [plate](#).

Those interested in viewing any RFPs that are advertised for the DCP, are encouraged to sign up through Nevada Government EMarketplace ([NGEM](#)) to receive RFP notifications. Please check the Clark County opportunities page regularly at <http://bit.ly/2bBOrvz> for RFP opportunities.

### Employment opportunities:

DCP intends to recruit up to three new positions in the next quarter. Please check for employment opportunities within the DCP and other County departments, by visiting Clark County's Human Resources webpage: [HR](#)

**DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY**  
**DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM**  
**4701 WEST RUSSELL ROAD, SUITE 200**  
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