

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR

January - March 2021



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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.



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

- Continued to provide oversight and project management for the interlocal agreement with Boulder City for Law Enforcement on the BCCE. This quarter, unauthorized routes were observed on the BCCE; the law enforcement officer is assisting with investigating the source of these unauthorized routes and contacting those responsible for the damage. Investigations are currently ongoing.
- Continued to administer a contract for ongoing maintenance of 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.
- Continued weed surveys and treatment through an interlocal agreement with the National Park Service's (NPS) Invasive Plant Management Team (IPMT).
- Three new interpretive kiosks were successfully installed at key entry points; signage will be installed next quarter.
- Gothic Landscape, Inc. is maintaining the shrubs planted last quarter to restore a decommissioned road located in valuable desert tortoise habitat at the BCCE. DCP staff will conduct post-restoration monitoring next quarter.

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. Their design is in its final stage and currently under review with Public Works. Continued coordination with adjacent landowners to request easements for future restoration implementation activities.
- NPS' IPMT conduct cut-stump tamarisk treatment on parcel F for enhancement of native riparian species on the Muddy River Reserves.

- Continued monthly data collection on groundwater monitoring wells.
- Eagle View Contractors, Inc. removed invasive palm trees along the Muddy River that posed a potential fire hazard.



Crews from American Conservation Experience planting native vegetation following the mastication of tamarisk on the Virgin River.

Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued efforts for a SNPLMA Round 15 project to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration on the Mormon Mesa subunit. American Conservation Experience crews planted material from NPS Song Dog Nursery, harvested and planted willow cuttings, and installed exclusion fencing. Staff continues monitoring project area for non-native plant species.
- NPS' IPMT 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 2020. Duane Magoon requested to terminate his lease in January 2021.
- Request to adjudicate hydrobasins 222, 223, and 224, submitted in Q2 2020 to Nevada Division of Water Resources. Currently under review.

Property Acquisition

- In Q4 2020, offer letters were sent to two owners (previously identified willing sellers) of two parcels on the Muddy River (adjacent to parcels owned by the County). Both owners declined the County's offers.
- A willing seller contacted DCP with two parcels along the Virgin River they are interested in selling. An offer letter will be sent out in Q2 2021.
- Coordinated with Clark County Real Property Management and Clark County District Attorney on development of draft conservation easement.

Other

- SWCA was selected to evaluate archaeological resources on COUNTY riparian parcels. Final reports have been prepared for all of the parcels.
- 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.
- Attended the RiversEdge West's Changing Rivers Conference.



Plants from Song Dog Nursery

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.
- Continued to administer a contract with MXT Media to develop virtual content for the Mojave Max Assembly season; this quarter virtual content for the assemblies was completed.
- Conducted 14 virtual Mojave Max assemblies utilizing the new virtual format developed during the last quarter .
- Received over 100 requests for Tortoise Talks resulting in a total of 414 classrooms participating.
- Conducted 21 virtual Ranger Q&A sessions

Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- The first outreach event since the onset of the pandemic was held in March 2021 at a volunteer event at Mountains Edge Park.

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



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; development of biological goals and objectives, as well as the conservation strategy, began this quarter.
- Continued to administer a contract with Cogan Technology to prepare a County-wide fine-scale vegetation map.
- Executed a contract with SWCA Environmental Consultants to conduct avian surveys to improve knowledge of ecology and distribution of proposed covered avian species; field work is scheduled to begin next quarter.
- Executed a contract with BEC Environmental to conduct pocket mouse surveys to improve our understanding of the ecology and distribution of this proposed covered species in Clark County.



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

The DCP implements numerous conservation actions to benefit the desert tortoise and to assist with recovery efforts. Two of the key projects implemented to reduce the impacts of development on wild desert tortoises include operation of the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line and the implementation of a translocation program, conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Tortoise Recovery Office. Additional projects that benefit wild desert tortoise populations include the construction and maintenance of over 400 miles of desert

ACTIVITIES FOR THE QUARTER

Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line

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

Translocation

- Five tortoises that were removed from construction sites were released to the BCCE on October 14th.
- Two desert tortoises are currently being held in the temporary holding facility while they undergo health assessments and await suitable translocation conditions.

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.
- Continued to administer a contract with The Tortoise Group to conduct inspections of desert tortoise fencing installed along roadways and to conduct road mortality surveys.

Misc. Projects

- Natural Resource Conservation, LLC continues to provide academic consultation services in preparation for a future workshop which will focus on Mojave Desert restoration as a tool for desert tortoise recovery.
- Continued to administer several contracts related to examining the state of desert tortoise population connectivity in Clark County.
- Attended and participated in the multi-stakeholder Transportation Ecology Workshop hosted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and continue to participate in Transportation Ecology subcommittees.
- Participated in a Ivanpah Valley connectivity coordination meeting to continue to work towards solutions that would preserve genetic connectivity of tortoise populations throughout the Ivanpah Valley region.
- Attended and participated in the Northeastern Mojave Recovery Implementation Team meeting and the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group meeting, both hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Desert Tortoise Recovery Office.

OTHER CONSERVATION WORK

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Ironwood Consulting continued planning for the next round of rare plant surveys which are scheduled for next quarter.
- USGS continued to study rare plant propagation for this project through an interlocal agreement. The final report for Las Vegas bearpoppy is now available. Spring field and lab activities are in progress.



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

- Assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with training of desert tortoise range-wide monitoring field personnel for the 2021 field season.
- Trained desert tortoise occupancy field crew on the background and procedures of the occupancy sampling on the BCCE and then supervised field practice for the teams.
- Avian surveys for 2021 conducted by SWCA Environmental Consultants at the Riparian Reserve Units and the BCCE are scheduled to begin next quarter.
- Participated in the Eastern Mojave Conservation Collaborative coordinating team meeting and in the Eastern Mojave Conservation Collaborative wildlife working group meeting.
- Conducted the quarterly Science Advisor meeting.
- Attended and presented a County progress report at the Desert Tortoise Council Symposium.

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

- 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.
- Continued to serve on the Technical Working Group for the Nellis Complex Joint Land Use Plan.
- Continued to participate in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Tortoise Transportation Ecology work group.
- Continued to participate in the Northeast Mojave Recovery Implementation Team (RIT); attended biannual meeting.
- Continued to participate in the Desert Tortoise Manager's Oversight Group (MOG); attended biannual meeting.

LIST OF ACTIVE PROJECTS

Ongoing projects this quarter

- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amend (1460A)
- Muddy River Flood Inundation Project (1521G)
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring (1541B)
- Muddy River Habitat Restoration (1570C)
- DT Connectivity Solutions Modeling (1580C)
- DT Telemetry around Culverts (1580E)
- Connectivity Management Plan (1580G)
- BCCE Maintenance (1710D)
- Water Rights Consulting (1720E)
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance (1720F)
- Avian Surveys (1730P)
- Restoration at the BCCE (1745A)
- Archeological Resource Evals on Rip Rsv Parcels (1750D)
- Rare Plant Surveys (1755A)
- Academic Consultant for DT Rest Workshop (1760A)
- Desert Pocket Mouse Surveys (1782A)
- Avian Surveys (1782B)
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics (1795A)
- Riparian Reserves Vegetation Management (1910C)

Ongoing projects (continued)

- Mojave Max Education Program (1915A)
- Science Advisor Panel (1920A)
- DT Occupancy on the BCCE (1920B)
- DT Monitoring Data Mgmt Year 2-5 (1920C)
- Avian Surveys (1920D)
- Vegetation Map for Clark County (1965A)
- Desert Tortoise Nesting Study on the BCCE (1985A)
- DT Predator-Prey Dynamics (1987A)
- Rare Plant Propagation Research (1990A)
- Assess Genetic Diversity of Gila Monster (1997A)
- Gila Monsters Spatial Ecology and Habitat (1997B)
- Gila Monster Habitat Modeling (1997C)
- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support (803F)



ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

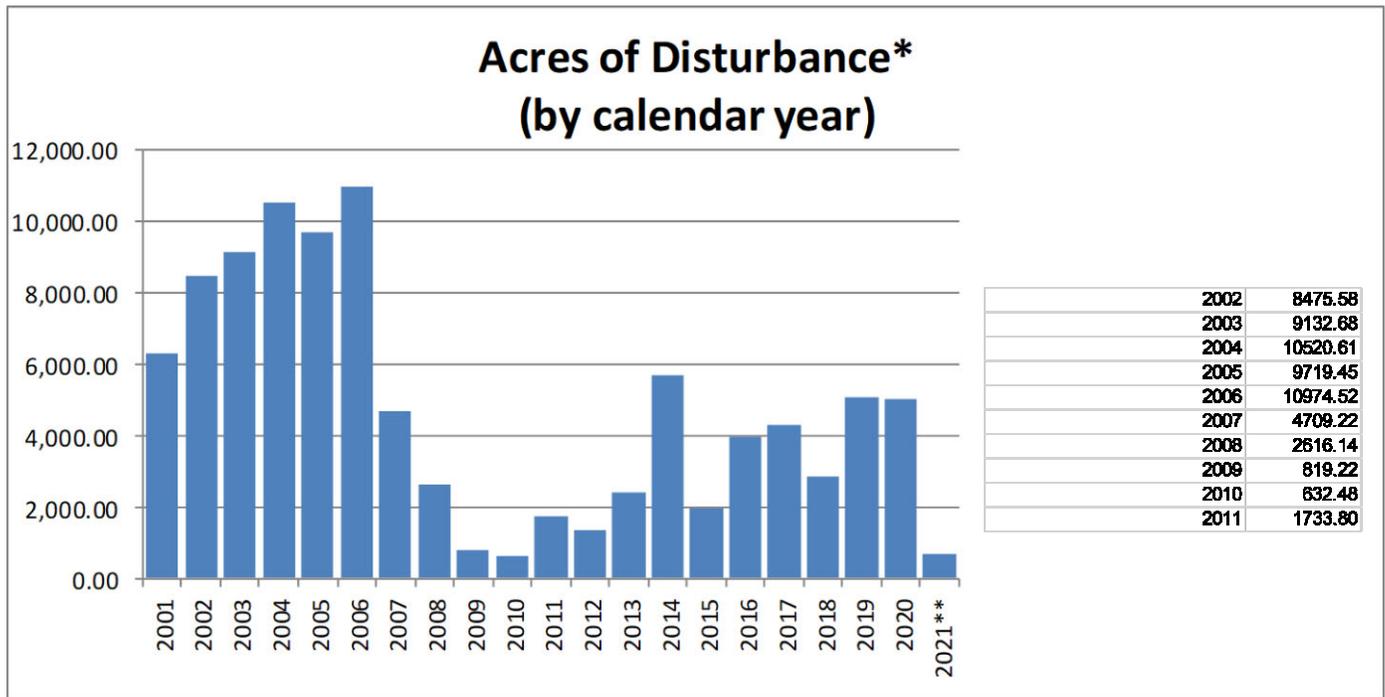
ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 54 invoices: 44 accepted (81%), 10 rejected (19%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 21 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 20 estimates and Fiscal Year 21 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 – eight draw downs (\$180,345.50), Round 17 – one draw down (\$5,000.00).



Red Rock Canyon, NCA

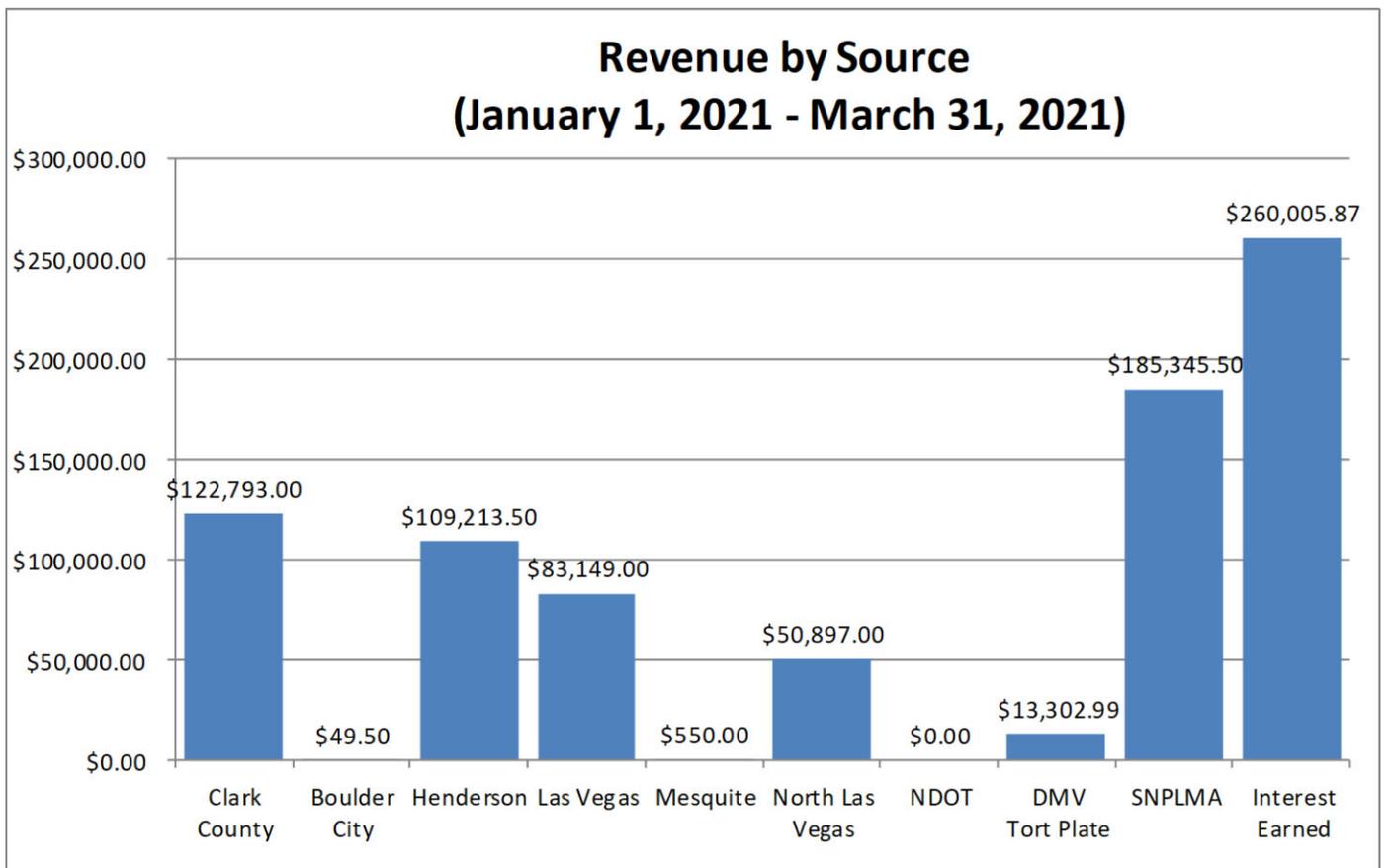
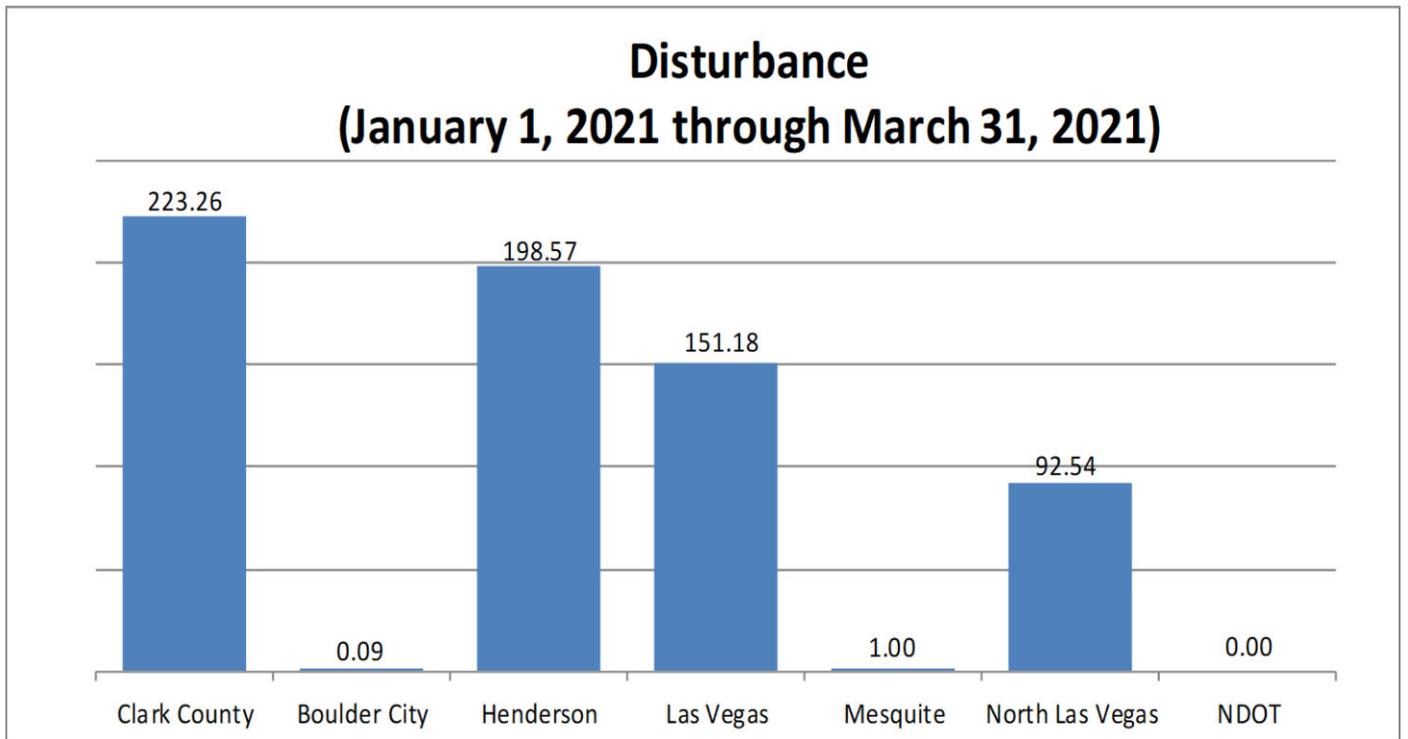
DCP staff is responsible for ensuring that land disturbed pursuant to the MSHCP is accounted for and monies are collected and deposited in the Section 10 special reserve fund established under the MSHCP. Below are charts which outline the total amount of fees collected and



*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



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 four new positions in the next quarter; recruitment process have slowed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so please check for employment opportunities within the DCP and other County departments frequently 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
Las Vegas, NV 89118

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