

# QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

APRIL-JUNE 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: Windmills; Browneyes; Silver cholla; and Yellow cups all found on 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 agassizzi*) 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.
- Met with law enforcement during multiple site visits to plan patrols to cover areas where unauthorized uses were detected.
- Continued to administer a contract with Conservation Science Research & Consulting. Fieldwork for the 2107 season is underway. The purpose of this contract is to collect data on desert tortoise predators in the BCCE and to ultimately develop a management plan.
- Completed 80% of the construction on the Energy Zone fencing project. This includes eleven miles of desert tortoise fencing, five desert tortoise guards and one desert tortoise culvert. This will help protect the desert tortoise from death or injury on the solar sites or roadways.
- Completed fifth year of occupancy sampling study to determine spatial extent of desert tortoises and provide a baseline to detect changes in spatial extent by which to identify and prioritize areas for habitat restoration/enhancement.



Clockwise from top: Brittlebush; Desert palafox; Desert dandelion; and Pricklypear all found on the BCCE (Photos: C. Floyd)

## BOULDER CITY CONSERVATION EASEMENT— CONTINUED

- Continued coordination with Boulder Solar Power and Techren Solar in order to meet restoration goals for their projects within the BCCE.
- Mapping and assessment of unauthorized roads and other disturbances is ongoing and will guide prioritization of restoration activities on the BCCE.
- Began planning projects to collect baseline data for bats at the BCCE and all riparian reserve units. Monitoring will begin in the upcoming months.
- Began planning projects to collect baseline data for birds, and small mammals on the BCCE. Monitoring will begin in the spring of 2018.
- Authorized a disturbance request from GridLiance for the construction of a new transmission line that will span the BCCE. This project will not result in any new ground-disturbing activities outside of existing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) utility corridors.

A comprehensive list of BCCE management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: [BCCE2ndOTR2017](#)

## 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 the upcoming restoration project and has been selected to continue work through the final grading design.
- A contractor has been conducting bird surveys to determine presence and relative abundance of all bird species on the Muddy River parcels. Surveys began in Quarter 2 and are ongoing.
- Planning efforts for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 14 project to conduct up to 5 acres of habitat restoration have been initiated and a contract has been awarded to prepare a restoration implementation plan to prioritize restoration areas within the property including recommendations for native plant species selection, planting methods, source stock, etc.

A comprehensive list of Riparian Reserve Units management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed on this webpage: [RIPARIAN2ndQTR2017](#)



Perkins Pond at the Muddy River Reserve Unit

#### Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued photo-monitoring documentation of restored areas within Subunit 1.
- SNPLMA Round 15 has been awarded to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration. Planning efforts for this project have been initiated and a contract has been awarded to prepare a restoration implementation plan.
- A contractor has been conducting bird surveys to determine presence and relative abundance of all bird species on the Virgin River parcels. Surveys began in Quarter 2 and are ongoing.

#### Property Acquisition

- The Board of County Commissioners approved the request to purchase previously identified properties of interest along the Virgin River in Bunkerville, NV. Ten offer letters were sent to property owners last quarter. Five have been accepted, three were declined, and two are still under consideration.



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

- Five classroom programs were presented during this reporting period, in which 655 students were reached.
- Received the final project deliverables for the contract with Southern Nevada Conservancy which will end on July 31st.
- A new contract with Outside Las Vegas Foundation for the education program was launched on July 5th and will be starting in the next quarter.
- A tentative agreement was reached to move the Mojave Max Program to the Las Vegas Springs Preserve. A news release will likely be issued next quarter.

#### Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- The following outreach events were conducted during this reporting period:

Junior Ranger Day	Lake Mead NRA	April 14th
School Science Night	Alexander Dawson	April 27th
Las Vegas Science Festival	Cashman Center	May 6th

2017 Mojave Max Emergence  
Contest Winner's Field Trip



## 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.

- Received two calls from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line and no wild desert tortoises were picked up during this reporting period.
- Received a right-of-way grant from the BLM for the use of 32 desert tortoise holding pens located at the former Desert Tortoise Conservation Center. These pens will be used to temporarily hold desert tortoises displaced by construction activities prior to translocation.

### **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. Construction of this project is expected to begin in 2018. Kicked-off a contract with HRA, Inc. to conduct an archaeological survey of the project alignment to support consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Continued construction of the fence around the BCCE Energy Zone which is approximately 80% complete. 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

- Participated in a southern Nevada restoration field trip to tour sites of effective restoration within southern Nevada and learn about useful restoration techniques on April 18<sup>th</sup>.
- Participated in the North-East Mojave Recovery Implementation Team meeting to discuss the recovery of tortoise and potential projects and project categories that should be addressed on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Held a Science Advisor meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup> to discuss the state of current projects and how they should move forward.
- Attended the Relict Leopard Frog (RLF) Team meeting to discuss the recovery of the RLF and future funding for the team.
- Attended an interagency meeting with BLM, USFWS, and state wildlife agencies to discuss the possibility of a tortoise translocation site in the northeast Mojave.
- Started preparations for the 2017 Annual Project Progress Review Symposium.



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.
- Held kick-off meeting with WRA Environmental Consultants for the HCP Consultant contract. This project will provide support for the MSHCP amendment by assisting with the preparation of documents and analyses that will be required for the amendment.
- Continued to administer a contract with Applied Analysis. Under this contract, an economic analysis is being prepared to determine the economic impact of implementing a large-scale regional habitat conservation plan. The final report will be completed in the next quarter.
- Continued coordination with Nevada Division of Forestry 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

- Provided mapping support to Clark County for the 2017 Nevada Legislative Session.
- Provided GIS datasets to the City of Las Vegas.
- Provided GIS datasets to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.
- 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 7 and went before the Board of County Commissioners for adoption on March 22. Final adoption of the element is tentatively scheduled for next quarter.
- Continued to review draft bills introduced in the 2017 legislative session to determine potential impacts and/or benefits to the program.
- Provided environmental compliance assistance to the Department of Real Property Management for the development of a community park.
- Participated on interview panels for the hiring of several staff positions in the Department of Air Quality.
- Provided water rights permitting assistance to the Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Provided assistance to the Nevada Association of Counties in responding to the President's request for state/county government input on repealing/revising the Clean Water Rule of 2015.



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

# NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

## New projects started this quarter

- Parceling for Bunkerville Property, 917MB
- Lower Virgin River Integrated Watershed Plan, 1445F
- Muddy River Restoration Plan, 1446C
- Mojave Max Assembly PowerPoint Presentation, 1515Y
- Virgin River Restoration Plan, 1521B
- Tule Springs Cultural Resource Survey, 1525B

## Ongoing projects this quarter

- Muddy River Grading Plan, 722K
- Hotline and Processing of Wild Desert Tortoises, 803E
- Energy Zone Fencing, 804F
- Covered Species Analysis Support, 901B
- BCCE Weed Survey, 910R
- BCCE Restore and Repair, 910S
- Mojave Max Mascot Appearances, 916Q
- Boundary Surveys and Parceling for Virgin River Properties, 917AC
- Desert Tortoise Occupancy Sampling, 1012D
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- Science Advisor Panel for the DCP, 1410B
- BCCE DT Predation Study, 1421B
- Water Rights Consulting, 1445E
- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amendment, 1460A

## Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- Economic Analysis of a Regional HCP, 1460B
- I-15 Exit 118 Improvements, 1500F
- BCCE Law Enforcement, 1510A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1515A
- Muddy River Weed Management, 1520B
- Riparian Property Maintenance, 1520J
- Federally Listed Bird Surveys, 1535A
- Point Count Surveys on Riparian Properties, 1535B
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring Data Management, Year 2 -5, 1541A
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1541B
- Desert Tortoise Telemetry on the BCCE, 1545A
- Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Planning and Implementation, 1550A

## Projects closed this quarter

- Desert Tortoise Habitat, 719Q
- Water Rights Consulting, 805Q
- Occupancy Covariate Creation, 1412C
- Desert Tortoise Telemetry on the BCCE Year 1, 1450B
- South Loop Trail Restoration, 1530A
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1540A
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring Data Management, 1540B

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

- There were no RFPs advertised during this reporting period.



Yellow-billed cuckoo

# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

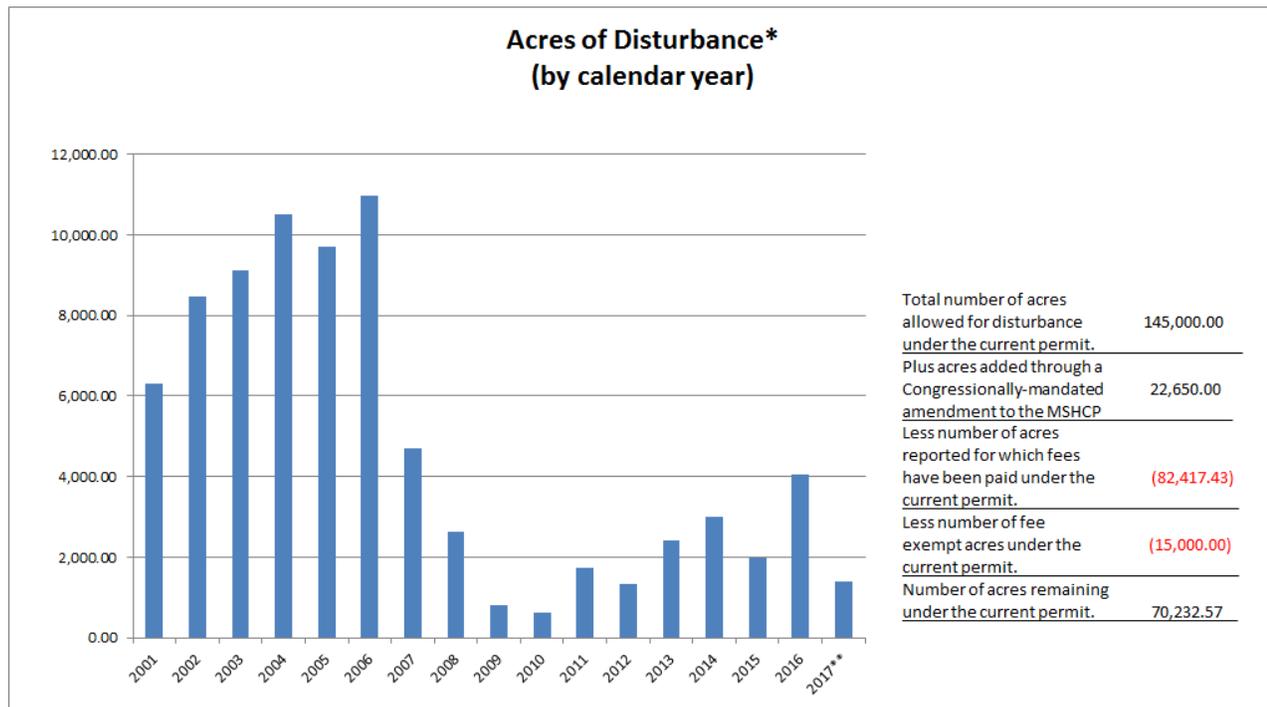
## ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER



Desert Iguana

- Processed vendor payments of 70 invoices: 67 accepted (96%), 3 rejected (4%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 17 Budgets continue to be reconciled for end of year close. Expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. The process of encumbering the FY18 budget has begun.
- 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-payments services for County departments that did 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 for the SNPLMA R8-R16 projects totaling \$7,733,015 continues in the County's financial system. The projects continue to be monitored for progress and reimbursement.
- Received reimbursement for SNPLMA projects: Round 8 – three draw down (\$81,000.00), Round 15 – two draw downs (\$22,352.00).

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.



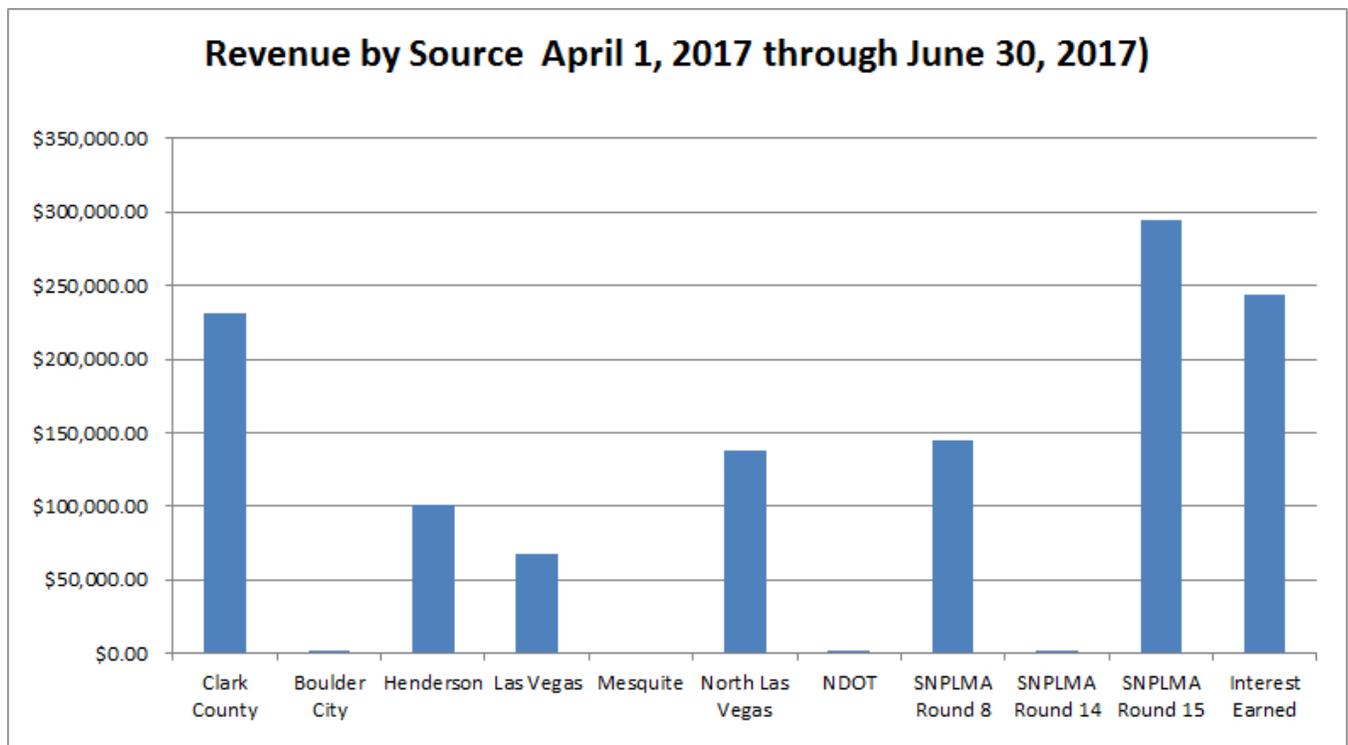
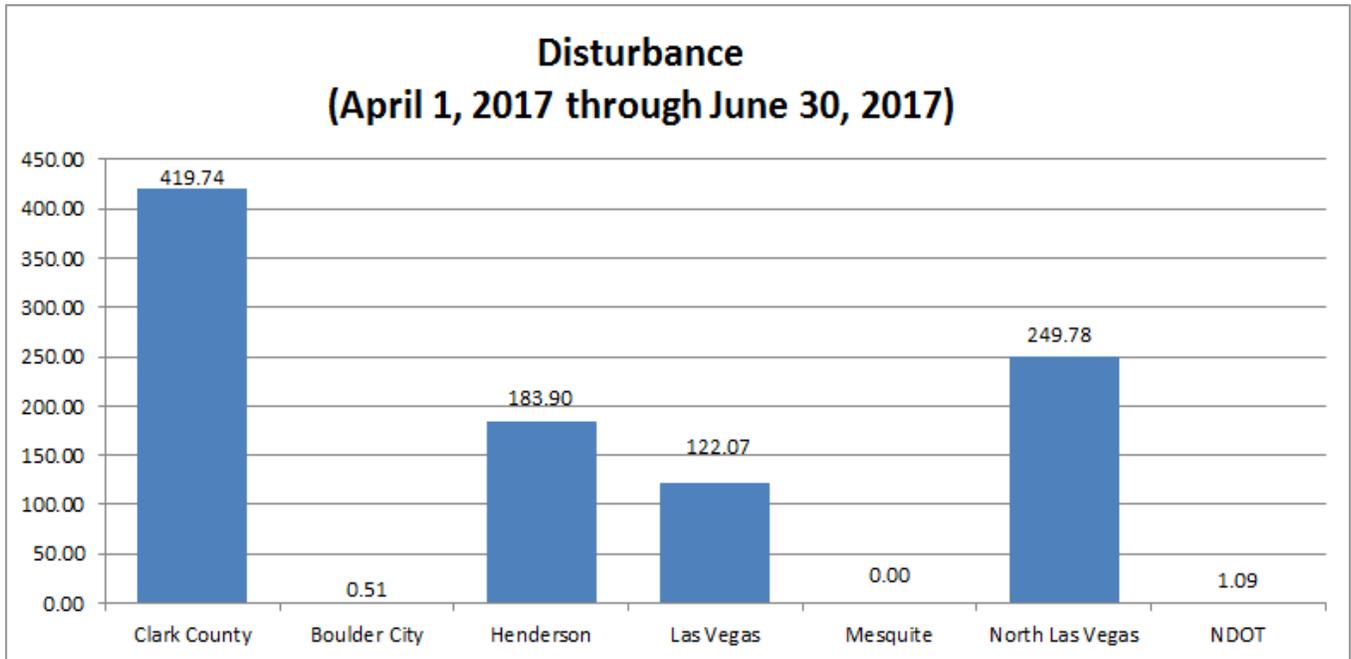
\*Total acres reported in this chart do not include acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010. Total number of acres of municipal development that were exempted from mitigation fee payment is 15,000 acres.

\*\*2017 totals are subject to change.

# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED



Western Burrowing Owl



## 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/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:

[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](http://WWW.CLARKCOUNTYNV.GOV/DCP)**

  
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