

# QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR

APRIL—JUNE 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 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

- Continued to provide oversight and project management for the interlocal agreement with Boulder City for Law Enforcement on the BCCE. This quarter, numerous 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 still 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) Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT).
- A Request for Quotes (RFQ) was issued to solicit a contractor to conduct restoration treatments along closed roads within the BCCE; the project will kick-off 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 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.
- SWCA completed point count surveys, and protocol-level surveys for southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL) and yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU).
  - BEC Environmental, Inc. completed surveys to develop a record of small mammal species present on the properties.

#### Other

- Continued coordination with Overton Power District (OPD) and Clark County Real Property Management Department; OPD requested an easement through the Riverside parcels for a replacement distribution structure.



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 Song Dog Nursery continued maintenance of propagated plants for outplanting in winter 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.
- Request to adjudicate hydrobasins 222, 223, and 224, submitted in Q2 to Nevada Division of Water Resources; request is currently under review.
- SWCA completed point count surveys, and SWFL and YBCU surveys. SWCA also completed monitoring of SWFL nests and banding of nestlings and unbanded adults. In Q2, a nest was observed on the Mormon Mesa parcel – the first attempt by SWFL on this County parcel.
- BEC Environmental, Inc. completed surveys to develop a record of small mammal species present on the properties.

#### Property Acquisition

- Two appraisals were conducted of three parcels on the Muddy River (adjacent to parcels owned by the County) from previously identified willing sellers.



Two southwestern willow flycatcher nestlings from a nesting site on the Mormon Mesa parcel .

Photo credit: SWCA Environmental Consultants



Desert pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus penicillatus sobrinus*), MSHCP evaluation species, after being captured and released during surveys at the Bunkerville East riparian reserve unit.

Photo credit: BEC Environmental

## 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.
- No Tortoise Talks were conducted this quarter due to the pandemic. Tortoise Talks are being revised to suit a virtual format and will resume at a future date.
- Initiated a contract with MXT Media to develop virtual content for the Mojave Max Assembly season.
- The assembly application portal will be open in October for teachers to submit their requests for an assembly program.

#### Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no outreach events were conducted during this reporting period.

## 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



## 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; available data to support development of the map is currently being reviewed and a coarse-level map is expected to be developed by summer 2021.



## 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.

- Two calls were received from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line during this reporting period.
- Two desert tortoises were picked up and the 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.

## OTHER CONSERVATION WORK

### ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- UNLV continued field and lab work studying Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology at our Riparian Reserve Units. This project is scheduled to continue until the end of the calendar year.
- Ironwood Consulting continued planning for the next round of rare plant surveys. Fall surveys will not take place this year due to lack of rainfall. The project will continue in the spring of 2021.
- We continue to work with Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. to help us develop a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) 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. The PUP, draft Biological Assessment, draft EA, and Biological Resources Summary Report have been completed.
- USGS continued to study rare plant propagation for this project through an interlocal agreement.
- Continued to administer a project that will examine threats to the continued persistence of Gila monster populations in Nevada. Field work tracking Gila monsters is ongoing; 96 genetic samples have been submitted to the lab for sequencing.

## 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

- Executed a contract for Desert Tortoise Mating opportunities on the BCCE
- Executed a contract for Mapping Potential Desert Tortoise Habitat connectivity in Clark County on August 1<sup>st</sup>
- Attended the Science Advisor Panel quarterly meeting.
- Performed tortoise health assessments on 4 tortoises to prepare them for translocation.
- Performed second round health assessments on tortoises for release in the fall.
- Baseline Riparian Small Mammal Surveys were completed by BEC Environmental, Inc. last quarter. The final report and data were delivered this quarter, and the project is now complete.
- SWCA Environmental Consultants completed surveys for southwestern willow flycatcher, yellow-billed cuckoo, and point count surveys at the Riparian Reserve Units and the BCCE. The annual data and report have been submitted.



Mount Charleston Blue Butterfly

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## 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

- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support (803F)
- EA for Pesticide Use (803H)
- TUSK Trail Head Design (804K)
- Rare Plant Propagation Research (809N)
- Restorations on the BCCE (809P)
- Parceling for APN 002-26-501-009 (917BD)
- Appraisal Report 030-23-101-001 (917JC)
- Appraisal Rpt 030-23-101-004 & 030-22-501-011 (917QA)
- Legal Services for DCP (1014J)
- Eastern Mojave Consv Collaborative (1410D)
- BCCE DT Telemetry and Health Assessments (1412D)
- Water Rights Consulting (1440D)
- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amend (1460A)
- Vegetation Map for Clark County (1460G)
- BCCE Boulder City Police Dept Drone Project (1510C)
- Virgin River Restoration Treatment (1521H)
- Mormon Mesa Plant Propagation (1521J)
- Mormon Mesa Rest Svs -Phase II (1521K)
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring (1541B)
- Muddy River Habitat Restoration (1570C)
- DT Connectivity Across Roadways (1580B)
- DT Connectivity Solutions Modeling (1580C)
- Mapping Potential DT Hab Conn in CC (1580D)
- BCCE Weed Survey (1710B)
- BCCE Maintenance (1710D)
- Mojave Max Education Program (1715A)
- Content Prod for MoMax Assemblies/Emergence (1715AJ)
- Virgin River Weed Management (1720A)
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance (1720F)
- Riparian Small Mammal Survey (1720G)
- Effects of Exotic Forage on Mojave DT (1730J)
- Avian Surveys (1730P)
- Archeological Resource Evals on Rip Rsv Parcels (1750D)
- Rare Plant Surveys (1755A)
- Academic Consultant for DT Rest Workshop (1760A)
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics (1795A)
- Law Enforcement for the BCCE (1905B)
- Reserves Maintenance Materials & Tools FY21 (1905D)
- Avian Nest Monitoring on Riparian Properties (1910B)
- Science Advisor Panel (1920A)

## Ongoing projects (continued)

- DT Occupancy on the BCCE (1920B)
- DT Monitoring Data Mgmt Year 2-5 (1920C)
- Avian Surveys (1920D)
- DT Range-Wide Monitoring (1925A)
- Fence Maintenance Survey (1950A)
- Road Warrior DT Mortality Survey (1955A)
- Desert Tortoise Nesting Study on the BCCE (1985A)
- DT Mating Opportunities on the BCCE (1985B)
- DT Predator-Prey Dynamics (1987A)
- Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology Phase 1 (1992A)
- Assess Genetic Diversity of Gila Monster (1997A)
- Gila Monsters Spatial Ecology and Habitat (1997B)
- Gila Monster Habitat Modeling (1997C)

# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

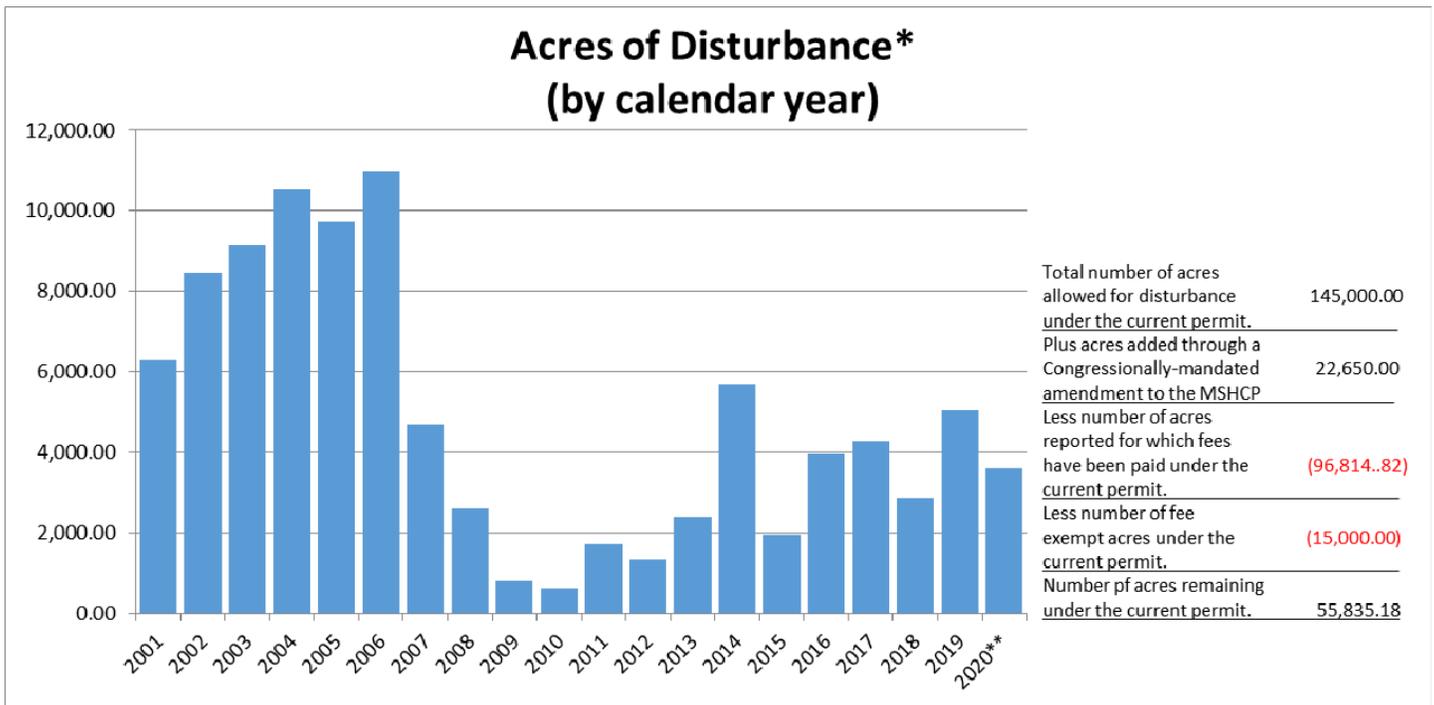
## ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 51 invoices: 48 accepted (94%), 3 rejected (6%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 20 Budgets reconciled for end of year close and rolled into new fiscal year. Expenditures for FY21 continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur.
- 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: None during this period.
- Continued 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



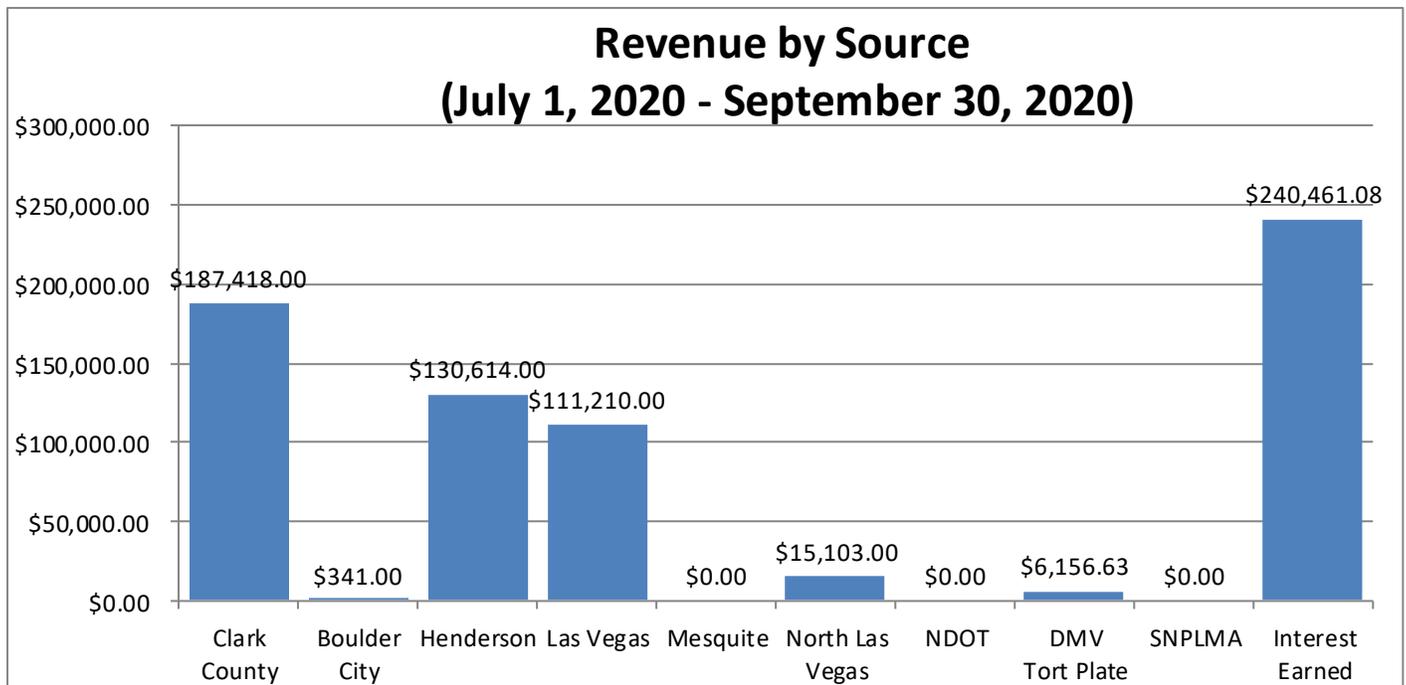
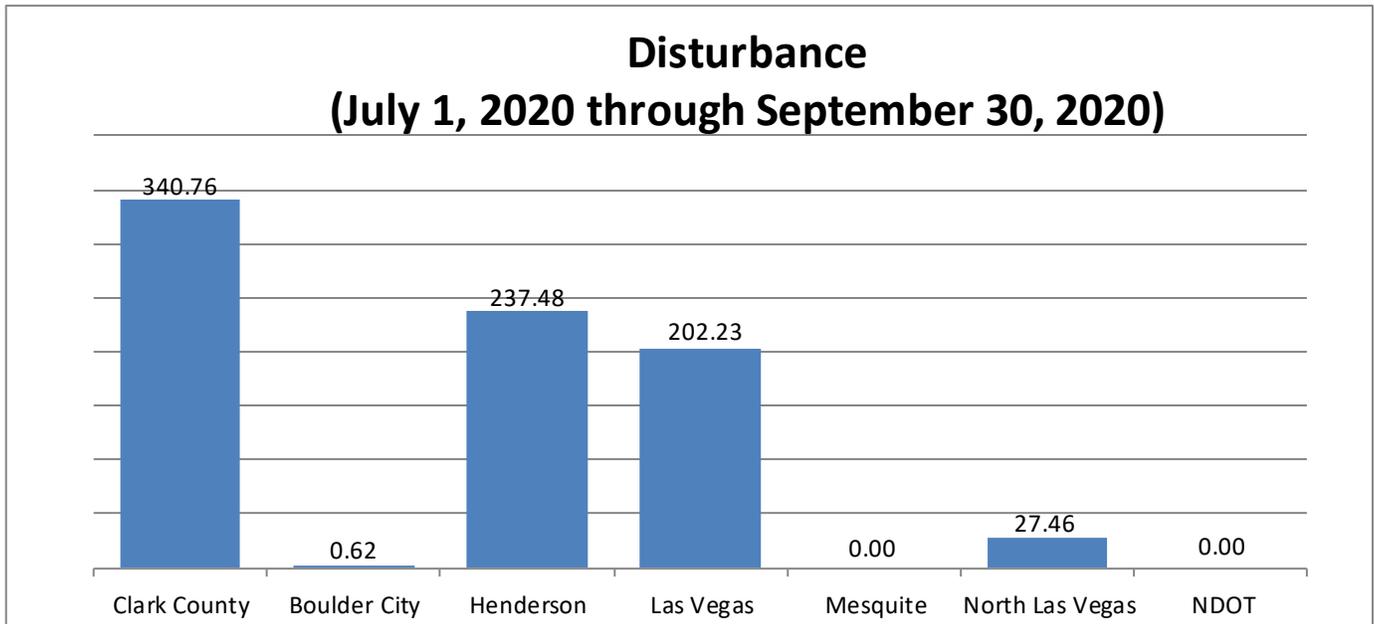
\*Total acres reported in this chart do not include 15,000 acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010.

\*\*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 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**  
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