

# QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR

July– September 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, there was an increase of illegal dump sites and unauthorized routes observed on the BCCE. Law Enforcement officers are assisting in investigating the source of these dumpsites and unauthorized routes. Law Enforcement continues to engage in contacting those responsible and 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.
- Gothic Landscape, Inc. has completed maintenance and scheduled watering of shrubs planted in late 2020 to restore a decommissioned road located in valuable desert tortoise habitat at the BCCE (2017-GOTHIC-1745A). The second round of post-restoration monitoring will be conducted by DCP staff in spring of 2022.

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.
- Continued monthly data collection on groundwater monitoring wells.
- SWCA completed point count surveys, and southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL) and yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU) protocol surveys.
- Attend monthly meetings with Biological Advisory Committee.
- Presented background info and outline for Round 19 SNPLMA grant proposal to conduct additional restoration on the Muddy River Reserve Unit.



Overview of the Mormon Mesa Riparian Reserve Unit

#### Virgin River Reserve Unit

- All work was completed on the SNPLMA Round 15 project, 40 acres of habitat restoration was completed on the Mormon Mesa subunit, including masticating tamarisk, planting material from NPS Song Dog Nursery, harvesting and planting willow cuttings, and installing 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.
- Request to adjudicate hydrobasins 222, 223, and 224, submitted in Q2 2020 to Nevada Division of Water Resources. 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. Cowbird control was conducted in conjunction with the nest monitoring. Six adults and three nestlings (all confirmed as fledged) were banded at Mesquite West. One lone male was observed at Mormon Mesa; he was also banded.

#### Other

- An interlocal with NPS' Invasive Plant Management Team was approved by the Board of Clark County Commissioners to conduct vegetation management on existing Riparian Reserve Units and any future properties incorporated into the reserve system.
- Coordinated with Science Advisors to update the Riparian Reserve Management Plan.

#### Property Acquisition

- A willing seller contacted DCP with two parcels along the Virgin River they are interested in selling. An offer letter was sent out in Q2 2021 and should close in Q4 2021.



Banded SWFL



## 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.
- Prepared advertisements and outreach materials to kick-off the Emergence Contest and Mojave Max Assemblies in the fall.
- Began preparation of the schedule and supporting materials to conduct Tortoise Talks throughout the school year.
- Executed a new contract with Inform Evaluation and Research to conduct a n evaluation of the Mojave Max program; development of a logic model and the evaluation plan will occur in the next quarter.

#### Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- Conducted 3 outreach events. Mojave Max was able to connect with approximately 1,575 community members at events at Bob Price Recreation Center, Exploration Peak Park, and Mountain's Edge Regional 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](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 WRA Environmental Consultants to assist with the preparation of documents and analyses that will support development of the MSHCP amendment; continue to develop biological goals and objectives, as well as the conservation strategy, this quarter.
- Continued to administer a contract with Cogan Technology to prepare a County-wide fine-scale vegetation map. Completed the Coarse Level Mapping for 4 Additional Work Zones, 10 total completed. This quarter, Cogan also completed the first verification trip to document the current vegetation on the ground.
- Presented background info and outline for Round 19 SNPL-MA grant proposal to support further development of the Fine-Scale Vegetation Map of Clark County.
- Continue to administer a contract with SWCA Environmental Consultants to conduct avian surveys to improve knowledge of ecology and distribution of proposed covered avian species; field work was completed and the final data deliverable and report will be submitted next quarter.
- Continued to administer 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; field work was completed and the final data deliverable and report will be submitted next quarter.
- Executed a contract with Ventajas, LLC to conduct research on conflicts and encumbrances within the proposed Special Management Areas that will serve as the Reserve System under an amended MSHCP.



## 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 THIS 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

- Attended a meeting on the translocation and tracking of tortoises removed from the beltway project.
- Conducted the first round of health assessments on tortoises removed from construction sites.
- Completed the final round of Health Assessments on tortoises removed from construction sites and prepared for 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. The project went out for bid, but due to Covid-related cost increases all bids received were over the budget allotted for this project. We will be reducing the scope and re-bidding the project in the next quarter.

#### 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. A draft literature review was completed this quarter.
- Southwest Decisions Resources, Inc. continues to facilitate meetings and provide planning assistance in preparation for a future workshop which will focus on Mojave Desert restoration as a tool for desert tortoise recovery. This quarter, two meetings were held, and SDR assisted DCP with planning the workshop agenda and communicating with possible participants.
- Continued to administer several contracts related to examining the state of desert tortoise population connectivity in Clark County.; these projects will culminate in the development of a Connectivity Management Plan for Clark County, scheduled to be completed in quarter 2 of 2022.
- Held a meeting with FWS to discuss the implementation of multiple Clark County tortoise projects.
- Held a meeting to discuss potential scenarios to model that may restore connectivity in the Ivanpah Valley.
- Presented background info and outline for Round 19 SNPLMA grant proposal to conduct Mark-Recapture Surveys on Demography Plots.

## 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.
- U.S. Geological Survey continued to study rare plant propagation for this project through an interlocal agreement. Research activities included collection of soil seedbank samples, seedbank emergence trials, seed longevity trials, and pollination observations.
- Continue to administer a contract with Austin Peay University to examine Gila monster spatial ecology and habitat use. Continue to track 8 individuals this quarter and continued analysis of field data collected during summer of 2021. Made estimates of spatial habitat use, including distances traveled and home range.
- Continue to administer a contract with U.S. Geological Survey to conduct an assessment of the genetic diversity among Gila monster populations. Requested a 90 day no cost extension to include additional genetic samples from the 2021-GBI-2040C Gila Monster Seasonal Support project. Presented preliminary findings to County; 2-3 genetic populations of Gila Monsters were observed in Clark County with initial samples.
- Continue to administer a contract with University of Nevada Reno to model Gila monster habitat. This quarter a Draft Gila Monster Movement Model was completed. Began work on Future Habitat Model to predict how climate change will impact Gila monster habitat.
- Executed a new contract with Great Basin Institute to provide seasonal Gila monster monitoring support. Recruited a wildlife monitor to conduct Gila monster monitoring and field surveys. The wildlife monitor tracked radio transmitted Gila monsters each week. Successfully located a previously transmitted Gila monster whose transmitter had failed and location was unknown.

## 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

- Held a sampling assessment workshop with the Science Advisor Panel to continue developing sampling methods that will allow DCP to infer population status and trends for covered species.
- Had the Quarterly Science Advisor meeting.
- Avian surveys conducted by SWCA Environmental Consultants at the Riparian Reserve Units and the BCCE have concluded for this year. The final data and final report for 2021 were submitted this quarter.



## 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 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)
- Culvert Image Inspection 1580H)
- Connectivity Data Analysis (1580J)
- BCCE Maintenance (1710D)
- MSHCP Education Video (1715AK)
- Water Rights Consulting (1720E)
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance (1720F)
- Avian Surveys (1730P)
- Restoration at the BCCE (1745A)
- Archeological Resource Evals on Rip Rsv Parcels (1750D)
- Avian Nest Monitoring on Riparian Properties (1750F)
- Rare Plant Surveys (1755A)
- Academic Consultant for DT Rest Workshop (1760A)
- Restoration Workshop Facilitation (1760B)
- Desert Pocket Mouse Surveys (1782A)
- Avian Surveys (1782B)
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics (1795A)
- Riparian Reserves Vegetation Management (1910C)
- Mojave Max Education Program (1915A)
- Mojave Max Education Prg Eval (1915F)
- 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)
- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amendment (1970B)
- 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)
- BCCE Law Enforcement (2005B)
- BCCE Law Enforcement (2005C)

### Ongoing projects (continued)

- Reptile Monitoring and Surveys (2040B)
- Gila Monster Seasonal Support (2040C)
- MSHCP Amendment Reserve System Research (2095A)
- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support (803F)

# ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

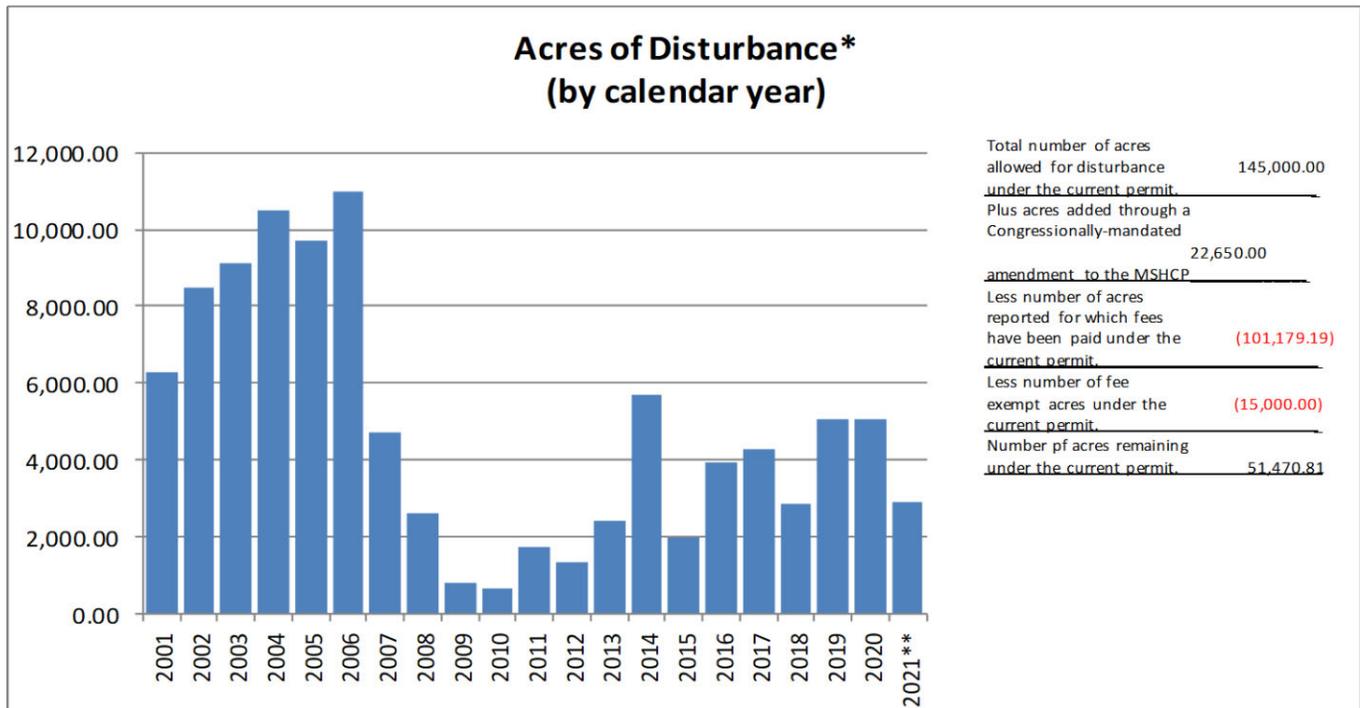
## ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 58 invoices: 53 accepted (91%), 5 rejected (9%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 21 Budgets reconciled for end of year close and rolled into new fiscal year. Expenditures for FY22 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 15 – Round 17 projects totaling \$7,701,594 in the County's financial system. The projects continue to be monitored for progress and reimbursement.
- Received reimbursement for SNPLMA projects: Round 16 – five draw downs (\$43,008.20), Round 17 – one draw down (\$3,250.00).
- Began development of the 2019-2021 Biennium Progress Report. The report is scheduled to be completed next quarter and will be posted to the website.



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 2001-2021.

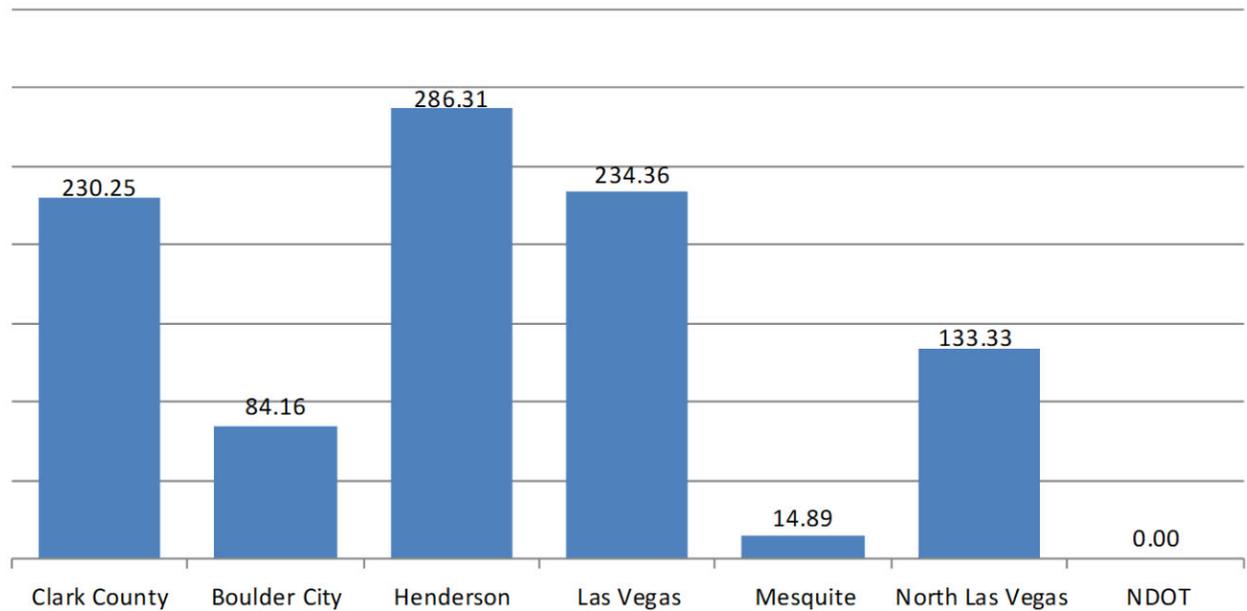


\*Total acres reported in this chart do not include 15,000 acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010.

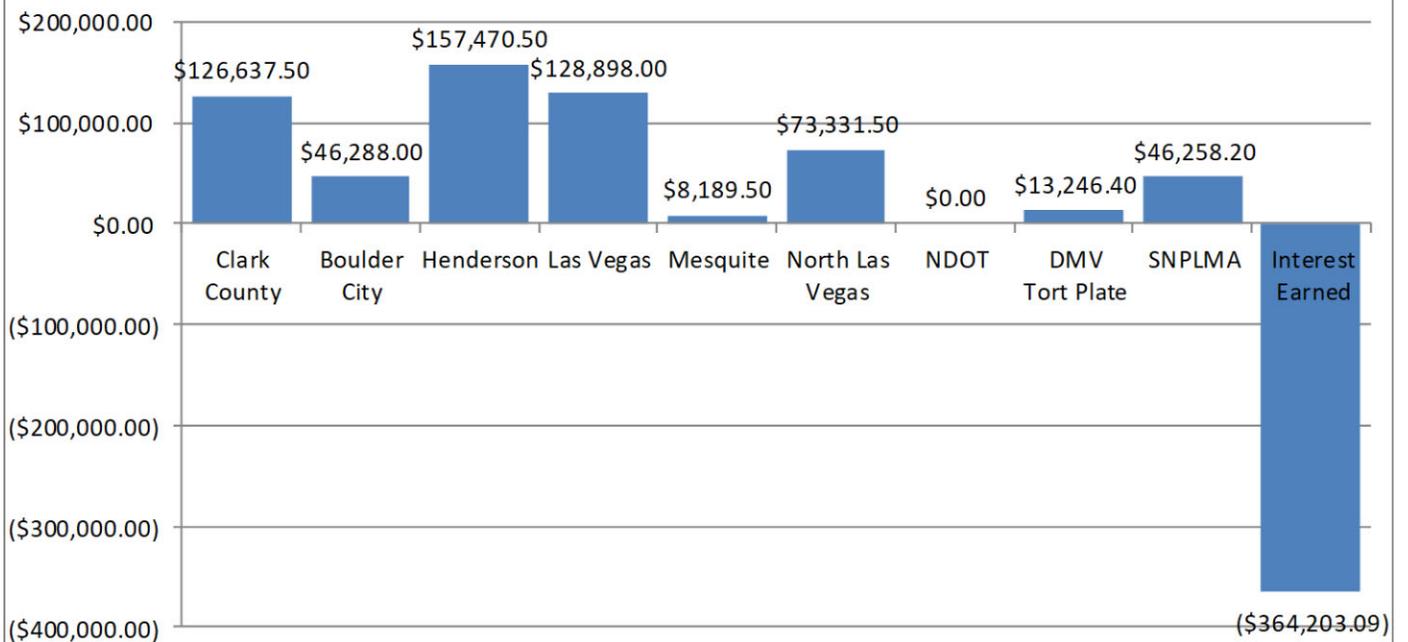
\*\*2021 totals are subject to change.

ADMINISTRATION AND  
FINANCE — CONTINUED

**Disturbance**  
**(July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021)**



**Revenue by Source**  
**(July 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021)**



## 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 two 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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