



MSHCP

Permit Amendment Update

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WHAT'S CHANGED SINCE LAST YEAR

Last August the application package was still in draft. Four things happened since.

01

The conservation strategy was finished

A stakeholder work group refined every avoidance and minimization measure, and the Board adopted the final set in March.

02

The Covered Species list was settled

Seventy-eight species down to twenty-eight, focused on what development in Clark County actually affects.

03

The Reserve System moved forward

Nine Areas of Critical Environmental Concern nominated to BLM in June, along with a request to pull land out of disposal.

04

The Board approved submittal

On July 21 the Board approved sending the completed package to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including the proposed fee.

WHY AMEND, AND WHY NOW

The current permit took effect in February 2001, authorizes 167,650 acres of non-federal development, and expires January 31, 2031.

133,016

acres of reported disturbance
through June 2026

34,634

acres of authorized take
remaining

79%

of authorized take used

85%

of the permit term elapsed

The binding constraint is the calendar. Acreage still available cannot be used once the term ends, and the term ends in under five years.

Without an amended permit

- Streamlined Endangered Species Act authorization for development in Clark County ends with the permit.
- Individual project-level permits would be required, project by project, applicant by applicant.

WHAT THE AMENDMENT SETS OUT TO DO

Four objectives, set with community input and unchanged since. Where each one landed this year:

1

Increase allowable development

The application requests authorization for take on up to 215,000 acres over a 50-year term.

2

Reduce the Covered Species list

Twenty-eight species proposed for coverage, replacing the current 78 covered plus 153 evaluation and watch list species.

3

Revise the conservation strategy

Final avoidance and minimization measures adopted, Reserve System nominations submitted to BLM.

4

Fund the plan

State law amended in 2025, updated funding analysis completed, proposed fee submitted for federal review.

A YEAR OF MILESTONES

April 2025 to July 2026

- Apr 2025** ● Board directs staff to convene a work group on avoidance and minimization measures
- Aug – Nov 2025** ● Work group meets seven times with jurisdictions, developers, and utilities
- Feb 2026** ● Work group final report delivered
- Mar 2026** ● Board approves the final measures, keeping the burrowing owl as a Covered Species
- Mar 2026** ● Updated funding analysis completed
- May 2026** ● Proposed Covered Species list finalized at 28 species
- Jun 2026** ● Nine ACEC nominations submitted to the Bureau of Land Management
- Jul 2026** ● Board approves submittal of the application package to USFWS



JULY 21, 2026

The application package is with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Board of County Commissioners approved submittal of the completed package, including the proposed per-acre habitat disturbance fee, for federal review.



AVOIDANCE AND MINIMIZATION MEASURES

A stakeholder work group reviewed every measure a developer would have to follow under the amended plan.

7

work group meetings,
August to November 2025

3

sectors at the table: local jurisdictions,
development associations, utilities

1

measure without full consensus,
out of the complete set

What the work group changed

- Added detail and specifications where measures were unclear
- Removed measures already covered by existing policy and regulation
- Identified measures needing best management practices and design guidelines to implement

The one open question: burrowing owl

- One member argued the owl is common enough that surveys and nest buffers would burden development, and proposed dropping it from coverage.
- Most members preferred coverage from the outset rather than amending the plan to add the owl later.
- The Board settled it in March 2026 and kept the owl as a Covered Species.

A SHORTER COVERED SPECIES LIST

The current plan spreads coverage across species that development in the valley never touches. The amended list is built around the species actually at risk from covered activities.

CURRENT PLAN

78

Covered Species

plus 102 Evaluation Species
and 51 Watch List Species



AMENDED PLAN

28

Covered Species

Evaluation and Watch List
categories are eliminated

More than 400 species were compiled, and 68 were carried forward for detailed evaluation against four criteria: range, status, impacts, and data. Of the 28 recommended, 13 are currently Covered Species, 9 are Evaluation Species, 2 are Watch List Species, and 1 was not previously considered.

THE 28 PROPOSED COVERED SPECIES

3

Mammals

Desert pocket mouse · Townsend's big-eared bat · Spotted bat

10

Birds

Golden eagle · Western burrowing owl · Yellow-billed cuckoo · Southwestern willow flycatcher · Yuma Ridgway's rail · Bendire's and LeConte's thrashers · Gilded flicker · Loggerhead shrike · Bell's vireo

2

Reptiles

Mojave desert tortoise · Gila monster

1

Amphibians

Arizona toad

2

Invertebrates

Monarch butterfly · Mojave poppy bee

10

Plants

Las Vegas bearpoppy · Threecorner milkvetch · Blue Diamond cholla · Las Vegas buckwheat · Sticky buckwheat · White-margined beardtongue · Eastern Joshua tree · Sticky ringstem · Silverleaf sunray · Pahrump Valley buckwheat

Species new to coverage include the golden eagle, burrowing owl, Gila monster, monarch butterfly, Mojave poppy bee, eastern Joshua tree, and Arizona toad.

WHAT CAME OFF THE LIST, AND WHY

Species were removed where covered activities are not the threat, or where another permitting process already applies.

Above the Plan Area

The amended Plan Area covers land below 4,000 feet. The Spring Mountains and Sheep Range endemics sit above it.

Mt. Charleston blue butterfly, Palmer's chipmunk, Charleston kittentails

Aquatic species

Aquatic habitats are regulated through other federal and state programs, and covered activities are not likely to affect them directly.

Springsnails, relict leopard frog

Not at risk from covered activities

Widespread species with no meaningful listing risk over the life of the permit.

Sidewinder, desert iguana, banded gecko, California kingsnake

Insufficient data

Where survey or threat information was too limited to support the findings the Service must make, coverage was not recommended.

Various invertebrates and non-vascular plants

Three bodies of work completed in the past year underpin the species analysis and the take assessment.

OCTOBER 2025

Species distribution models updated

- Habitat suitability models rebuilt for all 28 covered species
- Ensemble of four algorithms, reducing reliance on any single method
- Five years of field verification added occurrence data for every species
- First models to use the county vegetation dataset as a predictor

A NATIONAL STANDARD

Ecosystems reclassified

- Moved from eleven locally defined ecosystems to the U.S. National Vegetation Classification
- Twelve divisions mapped in the Plan Area, plus urban interface, vacant, and developed
- Comparable with other regional planning efforts, and updatable as the standard is revised

MARCH 2026

Habitat functionality models

- Built in house by Program staff on top of the updated species models
- Ten habitat groups, each scored for quality rather than counted in acres alone
- Externally peer reviewed in 2025 and reviewed with the Service
- Gives the Program a way to track impact and mitigation over a 50-year term

Species-specific field studies feeding the models

● Arizona toad

Two field seasons and 295 eDNA samples. Detected at six Virgin River sites, the first confirmed evidence in Clark County in about forty years.

● Gila monster

Genetic diversity assessment, wrapping up this year. Dustin Wood and Amy Vandergast present at 3:20.

● Desert pocket mouse

Threats assessment and habitat characterization, wrapping up this year. UNLV and BEC present at 2:40.

THE RESERVE SYSTEM

Mitigation under the amended plan runs through the Reserve System, which must offset take at no less than one to one by habitat value.

88,049

acres in the existing
Reserve System

305,242

acres across nine
Future Reserve Units

215,000

acres of take the
permit would authorize

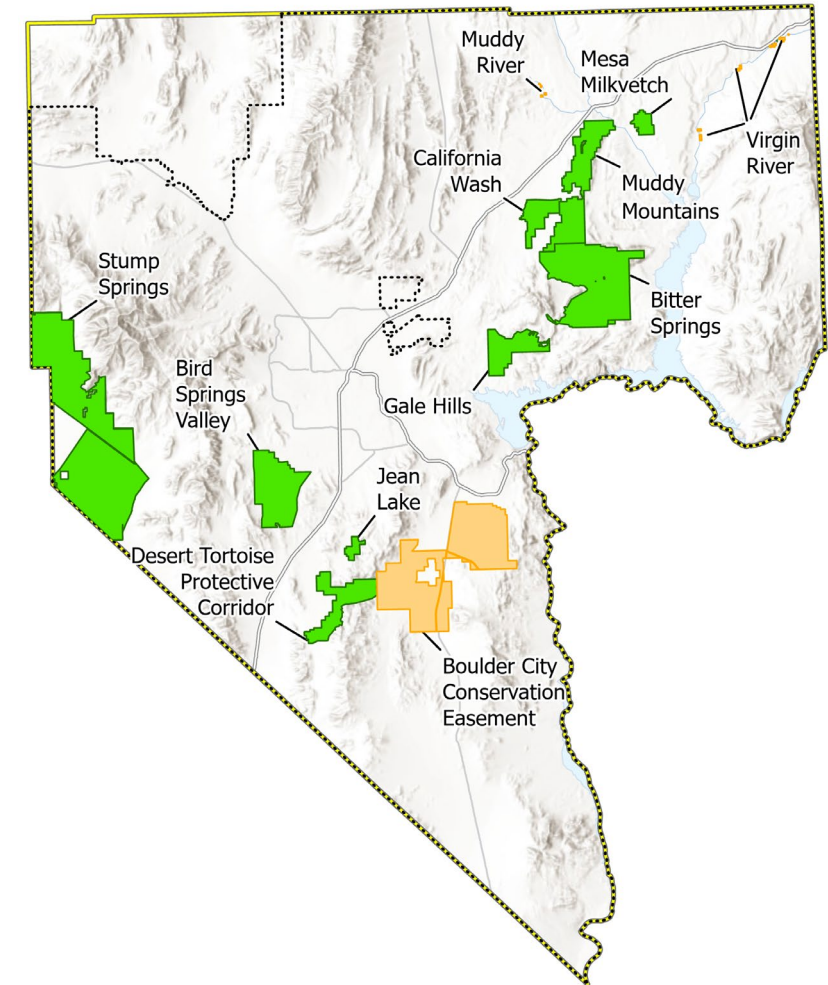
Nine ACEC nominations submitted to BLM, June 2026

Bird Springs Valley · Bitter Springs · California Wash · Desert Tortoise Protective Corridor · Gale Hills · Jean Lake · Mesa Milkvetch · Muddy Mountains · Stump Springs

Designation would move these lands out of undesignated multiple use or disposal status and into special management. Riparian units on the Muddy and Virgin Rivers and the Boulder City Conservation Easement round out the system.

31,107

acres requested for removal from the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan disposal areas, across Glendale, Las Vegas Valley, Moapa, Moapa Valley, Nelson, and West Valley.



BLM Local Government

Ownership of proposed units

WHAT THE AMENDED PLAN COSTS

An updated funding analysis was completed in March 2026 by Economic & Planning Systems with Jodi McGraw Consulting.

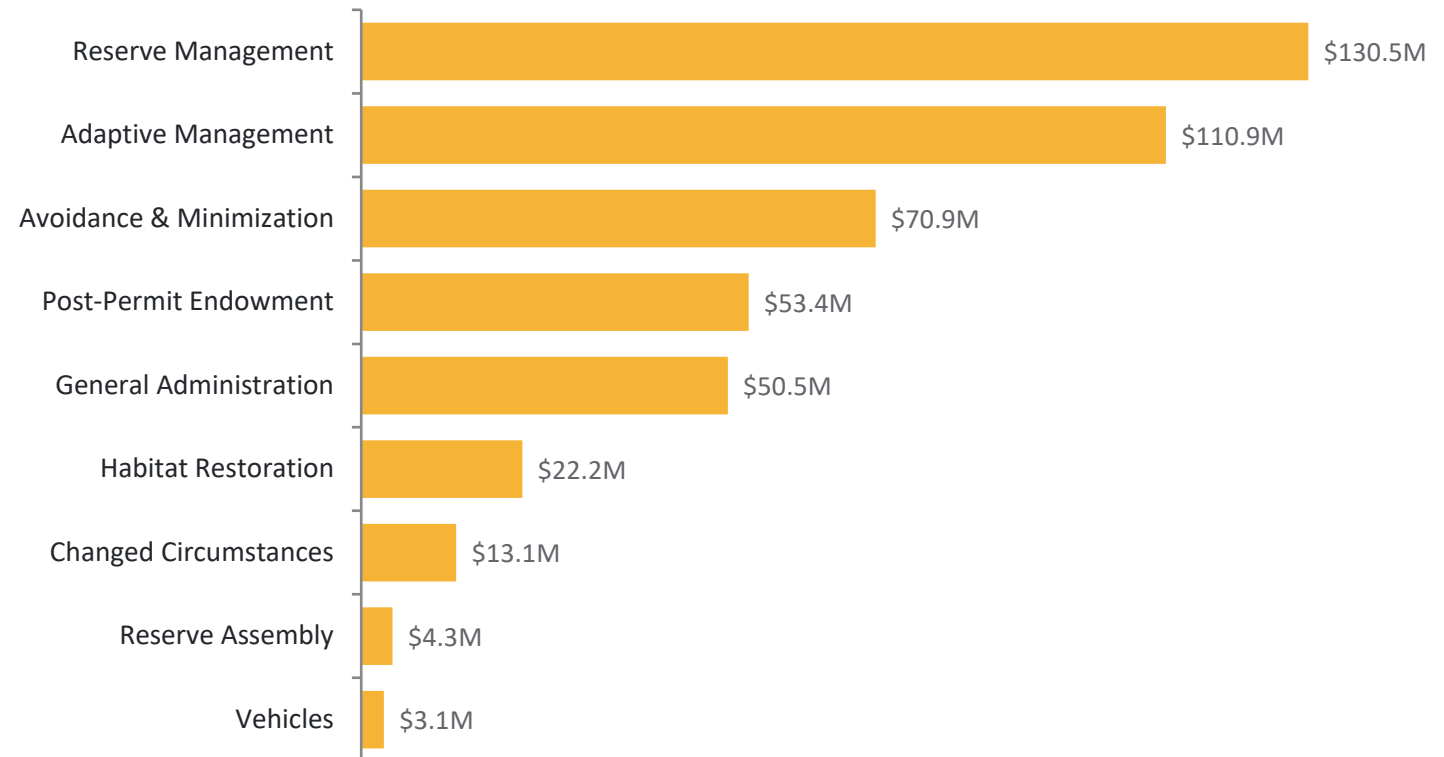
\$458.8M

total implementation cost
over the 50-year permit term,
in constant 2026 dollars

\$9.2M

average annual cost

*Down \$15.2M from the 2023 estimate,
despite three years of inflation.*



The plan is funded primarily by a per-acre habitat disturbance fee on covered development.

TODAY

\$550

per acre, set in the early 1990s



PROPOSED

\$2,134

per acre, in 2026 dollars

Why it has to move

- Federal land funds through SNPLMA carried major program costs for years.
- Rapid early development banked fee revenue faster than the program spent it, at high interest rates.
- The amended plan adds nine Future Reserve Units and a perpetual endowment.

What has and has not been decided

- The fee was submitted to the Service for federal review, negotiation, and environmental analysis.
- The Board has not adopted it. Staff return to the Board for any fee action after federal review.
- It would take effect with the amended permit, estimated February 2031, and be indexed for inflation.

SENATE BILL 15

NRS 244.386

Amended in the 2025 legislative session,
along with NRS 268.4413

What changed

- Authorizes a fee for plans and programs that conserve habitats and ecosystems for species listed under the Endangered Species Act.
- The fee must be based on an economic analysis of the approved plan.
- Beginning in fiscal year 2026-2027, the fee may be adjusted for inflation.
- Adoption requires a two-thirds vote of the Board of County Commissioners.

Why it mattered

The prior statutory framework capped the fee below what the amended plan needs to operate. The Service requires an amended plan to demonstrate full funding from secured sources before it will issue a permit. Without the change in state law, the higher fee could not be legally adopted, the funding case to the Service could not be made, and an obstacle the development community had flagged would have stayed in place.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Federal review is the long part. Current estimate puts the amended permit near the expiration of the existing one.

1

Federal review

The Service reviews the application package, including the proposed fee, and negotiates terms.

2

BLM plan amendment

BLM evaluates the ACEC nominations and disposal-boundary changes through an amendment to the Las Vegas Resource Management Plan.

3

NEPA review

Environmental analysis leading to a Record of Decision. Not yet started, and expected to take about two years.

4

Amended permit issued

The amended incidental take permit takes effect, currently estimated February 2031.

5

Fee adoption

Staff return to the Board for any action needed to adjust, adopt, or implement the fee.

Questions?

The amendment documents are posted online.

[clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/environment_and_sustainability/
desert_conservation_program/permit-amendment](http://clarkcountynv.gov/government/departments/environment_and_sustainability/desert_conservation_program/permit-amendment)



MSHCP PERMITTEES

