

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR

October—December 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



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, 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; new aerial imagery from 2020 shows several new closed loop tracks on the landscape.
- Continued weed surveys and treatment through an interlocal agreement with the National Park Service's (NPS') Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT).
- Selected a contractor to construct three new interpretive kiosks at key entry points; construction will begin next quarter.
- Gothic Landscape, Inc. completed decompaction, recontouring, seeding, and live planting to restore a decommissioned road located in valuable desert tortoise habitat at the BCCE. DCP staff will conduct post-restoration monitoring next quarter. (Photos attached of before and after shrubs were planted by Gothic on the western side of the decommissioned road.)

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

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 preliminary design is currently under review.
- NPS' IPMT 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.

Other

- SWCA was selected to evaluate archaeological resources on COUNTY riparian parcels. Draft Class I reports have been prepared for all of the parcels.



Mormon Mesa parcel after completing mastication of 36 acres of tamarisk. Planting will begin in the next quarter.

Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued planning efforts for a SNPLMA Round 15 project to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration on the Mormon Mesa subunit. Summitt Forests, Inc. was selected to masticate additional acreage in Q1 2020 – however due to excessive precipitation, this work was delayed until fall 2020. Summitt masticated 36 acres in October. NPS Song Dog Nursery continues maintenance of propagated plants for outplanting in early 2020. Staff continues monitoring of masticated 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.
- Request to adjudicate hydrobasins 222, 223, and 224, submitted in Q2 2020 to Nevada Division of Water Resources. Currently under review.
- Eagle View Contractors, Inc. removed a dilapidated shed and some debris that had been illegally disposed of on the Riverside subunit. A fence was installed to deter future trespassing.

Property Acquisition

- Offer letters were sent to the owners (previously identified willing sellers) of two parcels on the Muddy River (adjacent to parcels owned by the County). One owner has declined our offer; the other offer is still under consideration.



Riverside shed, pre-demolition.



Post-demolition photo of the Riverside shed location.

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.
- Continued to administer a contract with MXT Media to develop virtual content for the Mojave Max Assembly season.
- The assembly application portal opened in October for teachers to submit their requests for an assembly program. Schools were selected and notified in November. Assembly content will be distributed to the selected schools in January.

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. 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, continued this quarter.
- Continued to administer a contract with Cogan Technology to prepare a County-wide fine-scale vegetation map; an initial taxonomy has been compiled and reviewed and all base imagery has been downloaded to begin the rough classification process.



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 tortoise exclusionary fencing, and a wide variety of desert tortoise monitoring and research projects.

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

- 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

- Began working with Natural Resource Conservation LLC who will 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; initiated three new contracts, Culvert Inspection for Tortoise Usage, Desert Tortoise Telemetry Around Culverts, and Desert Tortoise Connectivity Management Plan.



A desert tortoise that has been removed from a construction site is released onto the BCCE.

OTHER CONSERVATION WORK

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- UNLV completed research studying Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology at our Riparian Reserve Units. The final report and data will be available next quarter.
- Ironwood Consulting continued planning for the next round of rare plant surveys. The project will continue in the spring of 2021. The annual report for the 2020 survey season is now available.
- We continued 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, Biological Assessment, EA, and draft Decision Document have been completed.
- USGS continued to study rare plant propagation through an interlocal agreement. The final report for Blue Diamond cholla is now available.
- 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; genetic samples have been sequenced and analysis is pending additional field data collection of genetic samples.



Yellow-billed cuckoo

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

- Attended the Science Advisor Panel quarterly meeting.
- Species monitoring projects have completed field work for the year; monitoring for birds and mammals will resume in the spring
- Attended the Mojave Desert Climate Refugee workshop

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.
- Continued to participate in the Relic Leopard Frog Conservation team meetings.
- Continued to participate in the Eastern Mojave Conservation Collaborative Coordinating team meetings
- Participated in Title 30 Update workgroup meetings.

LIST OF ACTIVE PROJECTS

Ongoing projects this quarter

- Academic Consultant for DT Rest Workshop (1760A)
- Appraisal Report 030-23-101-001 (917JD)
- Appraisal Rpt 030-23-101-004 & 030-22-501-011 (917QA)
- Archeological Resource Evals on Rip Rsv Parcels (1750D)
- Assess Genetic Diversity of Gila Monster (1997A)
- Avian Nest Monitoring on Riparian Properties (1910B)
- Avian Surveys (1920D)
- Avian Surveys (1920E)
- BCCE Boulder City Police Dept Drone Project (1510C)
- BCCE DT Telemetry and Health Assessments (1445D)
- BCCE Maintenance (1510F)
- BCCE Weed Survey (1710B)
- Connectivity Management Plan (1580G)
- Content Prod for MoMax Assemblies/Emergence (1715AJ)
- Culvert Inspection for Tortoise Usage (1580F)
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring (1012A)
- Desert Tortoise Nesting Study on the BCCE (1985A)
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics (1795A)
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring (1541B)
- DT Connectivity Across Roadways (1580B)
- DT Connectivity Solutions Modeling (1580C)
- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support (803F)
- DT Mating Opportunities on the BCCE (1985B)
- DT Monitoring Data Mgmt Year 2-5 (1920C)
- DT Occupancy on the BCCE (1920B)
- DT Predator-Prey Dynamics (1987A)
- DT Range-Wide Monitoring (1925A)
- DT Telemetry around Culverts (1580E)
- EA for Pesticide Use (803H)
- Eastern Mojave Consv Collaborative (1410D)
- Effects of Exotic Forage on Mojave DT (1730J)
- Gila Monster Habitat Modeling (1997C)
- Gila Monsters Spatial Ecology and Habitat 1997B)
- HCP Consultant for the MSHCP Amend (1460A)
- Law Enforcement for the BCCE (1905B)
- Legal Services for DCP (1014J)
- Mapping Potential DT Hab Conn in CC (1580D)
- Mojave Max Education Program (1715A)
- Mormon Mesa Plant Propagation (1521J)

Ongoing projects (continued)

- Mormon Mesa Rest Svs -Phase II (1750C)
- Muddy River Habitat Restoration (1570C)
- Rare Plant Propagation Research (809N)
- Rare Plant Surveys (1755A)
- Restorations on the BCCE (809P)
- Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology Phase 1 (1992A)
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance (1720F)
- Road Warrior DT Mortality Survey (1955A)
- Science Advisor Panel (1920A)
- TUSK Trail Head Design (804K)
- Vegetation Map for Clark County (1460G)
- Virgin River Restoration Treatment (1521H)
- Virgin River Weed Management (1720A)
- Water Rights Consulting (1440D)

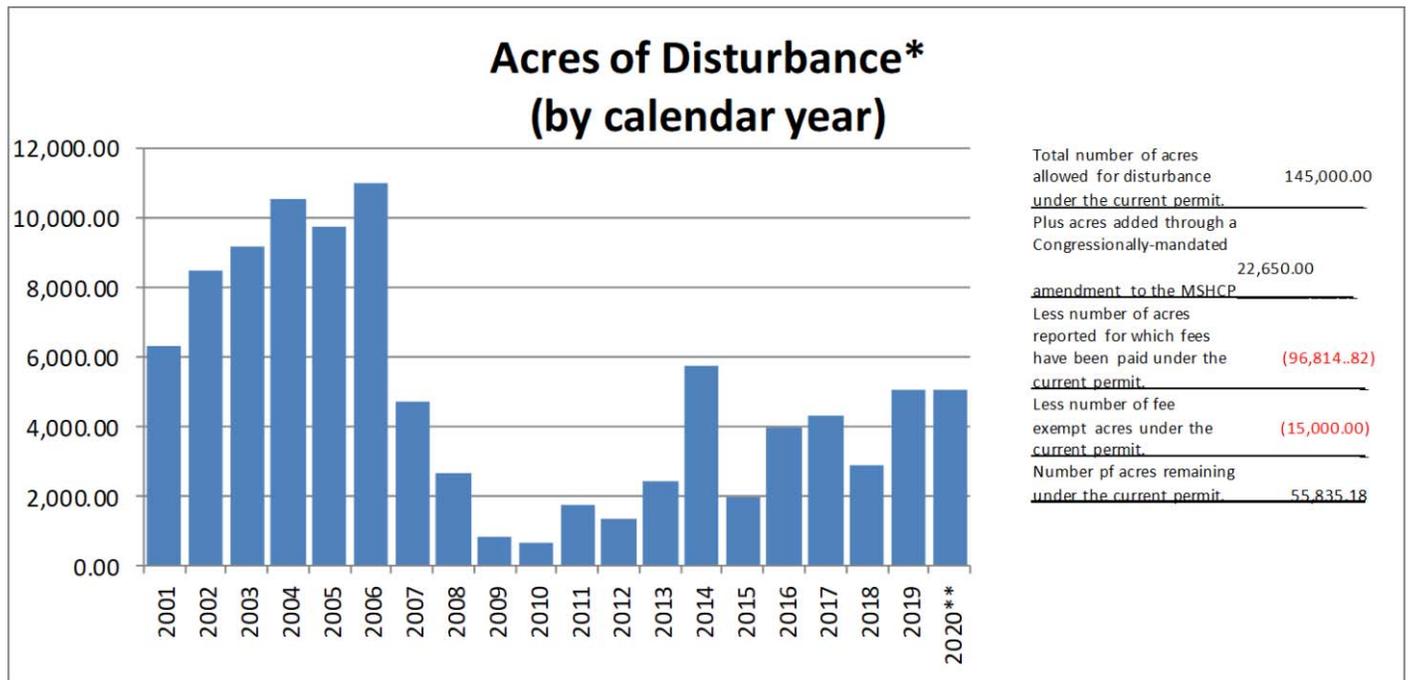
ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 39 invoices: 33 accepted (85%), 6 rejected (15%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 20 Budgets and expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. Initiated process of developing the FY21 estimates and FY22 budget.
- 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 – one draw down (\$99,504.00), Round 16 – two draw downs (\$20,086.00).
- Completed development of the 2021-2023 Implementation Plan and Budget; the final report is available on the DCP website.

Red Rock Canyon, NCA

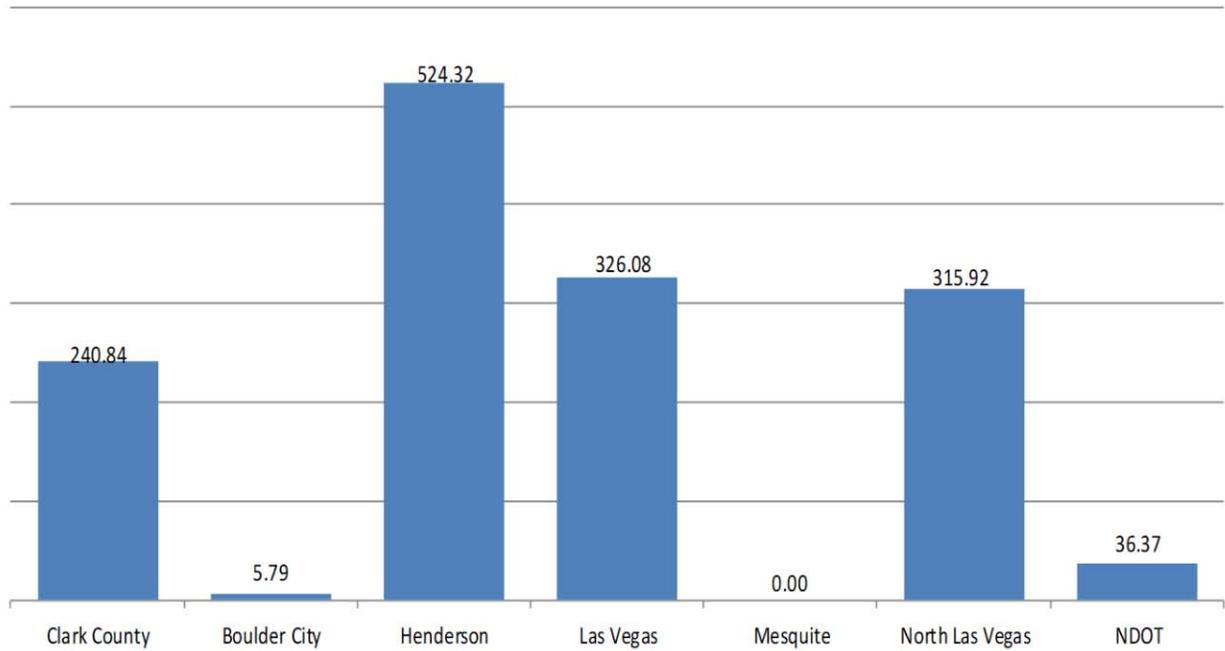
DCP staff is responsible for ensuring that land disturbed pursuant to the MSHCP is accounted for and monies are collected and deposited in the Section 10 special reserve fund established under the MSHCP. Below are charts which outline the total amount of fees collected and acres disturbed for the period 2001-2020



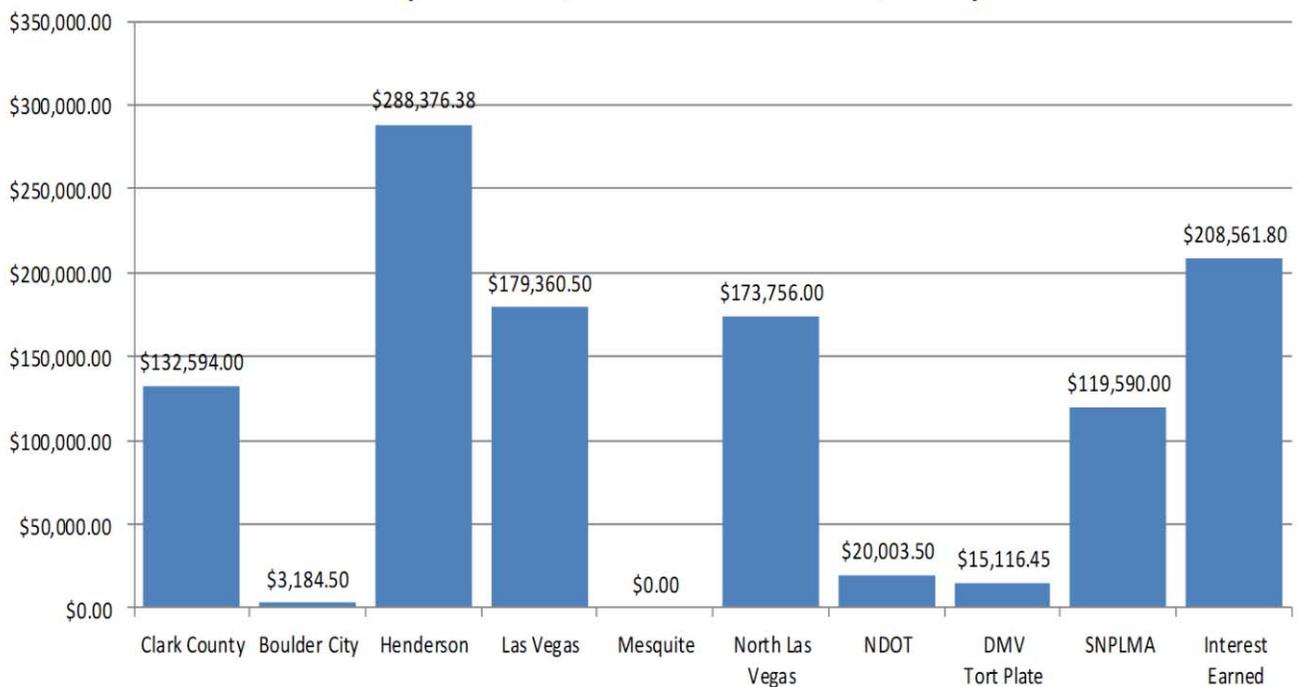
*Total acres reported in this chart do not include 15,000 acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED

**Disturbance
(October 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020)**



**Revenue by Source
(October 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020)**



OPPORTUNITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Desert Tortoise License Plate

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](#).

Contracting opportunities

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 an Office Specialist position in the next quarter; recruitment process have slowed due to the COVID-

DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Department of ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

Desert Conservation Program

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