

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

July–SEPTEMBER 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 twenty seven 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 six 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 2017 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 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.



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

BOULDER CITY CONSERVATION EASEMENT— CONTINUED

- Met with representatives from Sempra Energy and Boulder City to discuss proposed energy development projects.
- Completed fifth year of occupancy sampling pilot 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.

A comprehensive list of BCCE management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed [here](#).

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 maintenance contract for the Muddy River Reserve Units has completed. A Request for Quotes (RFQ) for a new contract was sent to potential bidders and a selection will be made soon.
- A contractor conducted bird surveys to determine presence and relative abundance of all bird species on the Muddy River parcels. Surveys are complete.
- The National Park Service's Exotic Plant Management Team is currently under contract to conduct vegetation management and maintenance activities for enhancement of native riparian species.
- Planning efforts for the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 14 project to conduct up to 5 acres of habitat restoration on the Muddy River Reserve Unit 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 draft restoration plan is complete and the final version will be finished soon.

A comprehensive list of Riparian Reserve Units management accomplishments for this quarter can be viewed [here](#).



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. The restoration plan is currently being finalized.
- A contractor conducted bird surveys to determine presence and relative abundance of all bird species on the Virgin River parcels. Surveys are complete.

Property Acquisition

- The Board of County Commissioners approved the DCP's request to purchase previously identified properties of interest along the Virgin River in Bunkerville and Riverside, Nevada. Ten offer letters were sent to property owners in the second quarter. Seven have been accepted and three were declined.



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

- A new contract with Outside Las Vegas Foundation for the education program was launched on August 1st.
- The Mojave Max Program was moved to the Springs Preserve and a [news release](#) was sent out on September 26th.

Outreach Events and Mojave Max Appearances

- The following outreach events were conducted during this reporting period:
Candlelighters Superhero 5K Exploration Park September 9th
Pigs for the Kids (Charity BBQ) Craig Ranch Regional Park September 23rd

Pigs for the Kids Charity BBQ Competition
at Craig Ranch 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. 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 three calls from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line and one wild desert tortoise was picked up during this reporting period.

Desert Tortoise Fencing

- Continued planning activities for the construction of post-and-cable and desert tortoise fencing along the boundary of the newly-designated Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. Construction of this project is expected to begin in 2018. Administered a contract with HRA, Inc. to conduct cultural resource surveys of the project alignment in support of consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Completed construction of the BCCE Energy Zone fencing project. Details regarding the fencing can be found under the BCCE report on page 2.

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 the 2017 Annual Project Progress Symposium on August 28th.
- Held the Quarterly Science Advisor meeting on August 29th.
- Held the Desert Tortoise Sterilization Clinic at the Oquendo Center on August 30th.
- Working with the USFWS, completed a translocation progress [report](#) for the BCCE .
- Worked with the USFWS, the U.S. Geological Survey, BLM and, the Great Basin Institute to release 38 tortoises into the BCCE.
- Began development of the 2018 Biennial Adaptive Management Report. This report will be completed in early 2018.



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.
- 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. A kick-off meeting for this project was held this quarter and WRA had begun synthesizing data provided by Southwest Ecology to develop a final list of species proposed for coverage. Development of MSHCP Amendment chapters was also initiated this quarter.
- Completed a contract with Applied Analysis for the preparation of an economic analysis to determine the economic impact of implementing a large-scale regional habitat conservation plan. Click on the link to view a copy of the [report](#).
- Staff continues to coordinate with Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) 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

- 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. Final adoption of the element occurred on September 6th.
- Prepared and submitted a letter to the Clark County Advisory Board to Manage Wildlife advocating for the revision of regulations pertaining to the commercial collection of reptiles in Nevada. Staff attended the Advisory Board meeting and the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners meeting to provide public comments and testimony in support of revised regulations.
- Participated on interview panels for the hiring of staff in the Department of Air Quality.
- Provided assistance to the Nevada Association of Counties in responding to the Secretary of Interior's request for input on revisions to the Bureau of Land Management's land use planning process.
- Provided GIS datasets to the Cities of Las Vegas, Henderson and North Las Vegas.
- Provided GIS datasets to the Southern Nevada Homebuilders Association.
- Provided GIS datasets to The Nature Conservancy.
- Provided GIS datasets to the Slater Hanifan Group.
- Provided GIS datasets to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

New projects started this quarter

- Parceling for APN 002-26-501-009, 917BD
- Appraisal Report for APN 002-26-301-002, 917DD
- Facilitate Climate Change Workshop, 1460C
- Joshua Tree Habitat Model, 1460D
- Virgin River Restoration Plan—Mormon Mesa, 1521B
- 2015-2017 BPR Editing and Printing, 1700A
- Law Enforcement for the BCCE, 1710A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1715A
- Avian Species Photographs, 1770C
- Evaluation of Drone-Based Auto Desert Tortoise Detectability, 1785A
- Pet Desert Tortoise Sterilization Workshop, 1787A

Ongoing projects this quarter

- Hotline and Processing of Wild Desert Tortoises, 803E
- OHV Registration Program Marketing, 807F
- Covered Species Analysis Support, 901B
- BCCE Weed Survey, 910R
- BCCE Restore and Repair, 910S
- Boundary Surveys and Parceling for Virgin River Properties, 917AC
- Parceling for Bunkerville Property, 917MB
- Desert Tortoise Occupancy Sampling, 1012D
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- Science Advisor Panel for the DCP, 1410B
- BCCE DT Predation Study, 1421B



Yellow-billed cuckoo

Ongoing projects this quarter Cont'd.

- Water Rights Consulting, 1445E
- Lower Virgin River Integrated Watershed Plan, 1445F
- Muddy River Restoration Plan, 1446C
- HCP Consultant for the MSCHP, 1460A
- I-15 Exit 118 Improvements, 1500F
- BCCE Law Enforcement, 1510A
- Muddy River Weed Management, 1520B
- Tule Springs Cultural Resource Survey, 1525B
- 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
- DCP Branding Project, 1770A

Projects closed this quarter

- There were no projects closed during this reporting period.

Requests for proposals and quotes (RFPs / RFQs)

- An RFQ was issued on August 16th for Evaluation of Drone-Based Desert Tortoise Detectability.
- An RFQ was issued on September 28th for Riparian Reserve Property Maintenance.
- An RFQ was issued on July 5th for Gabion Kiosks and Associated Signage on the BCCE.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

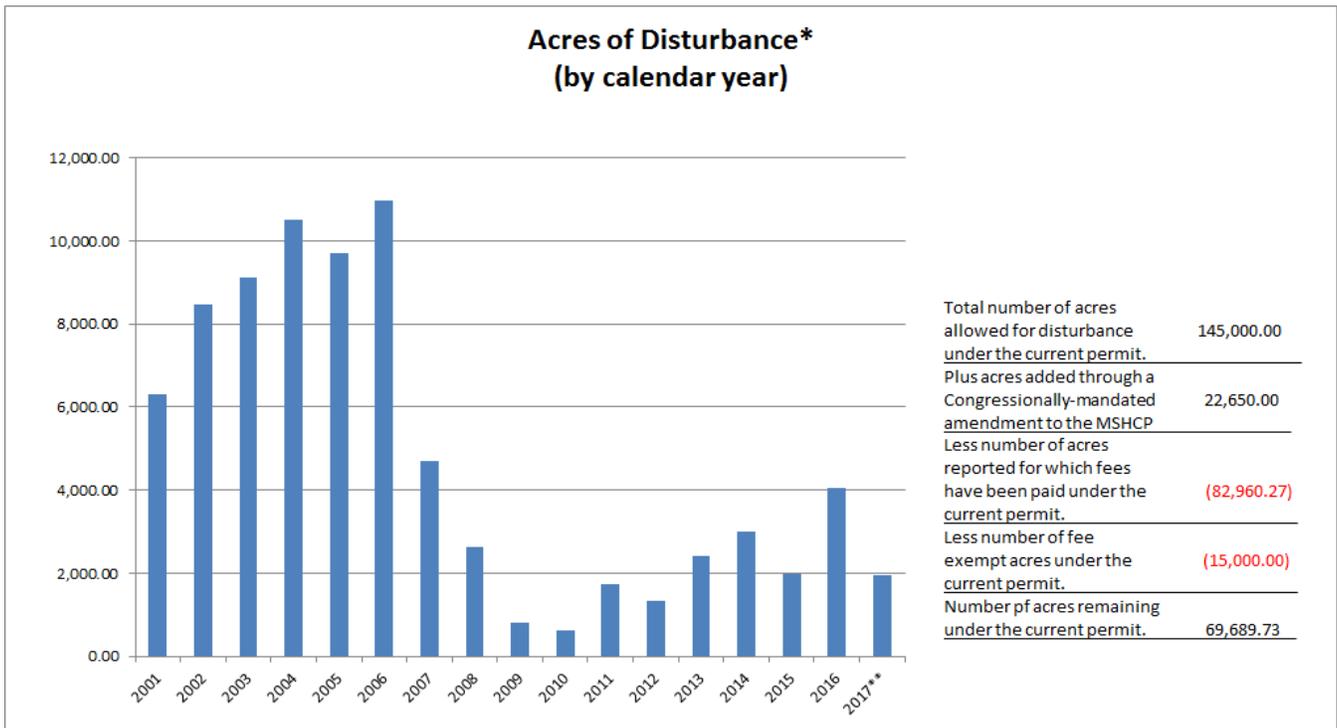
ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER



Desert Iguana

- Processed vendor payments 91 invoices: 89 accepted (98%), 2 rejected (2%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 17 Budgets reconciled for end of year close and rolled into new fiscal year. Expenditures 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 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. Plate design template sent to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for approval.
- Oversight of 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 – one draw down (\$40,610.80), Round 14 – one draw down (\$9,000.00).
- Began development of the Biennial Progress Report, which is expected to be available in the next quarter.
- DCP leadership attended training on Management Best Practices and Accelerating Change in the Workplace September 25th – September 29th.

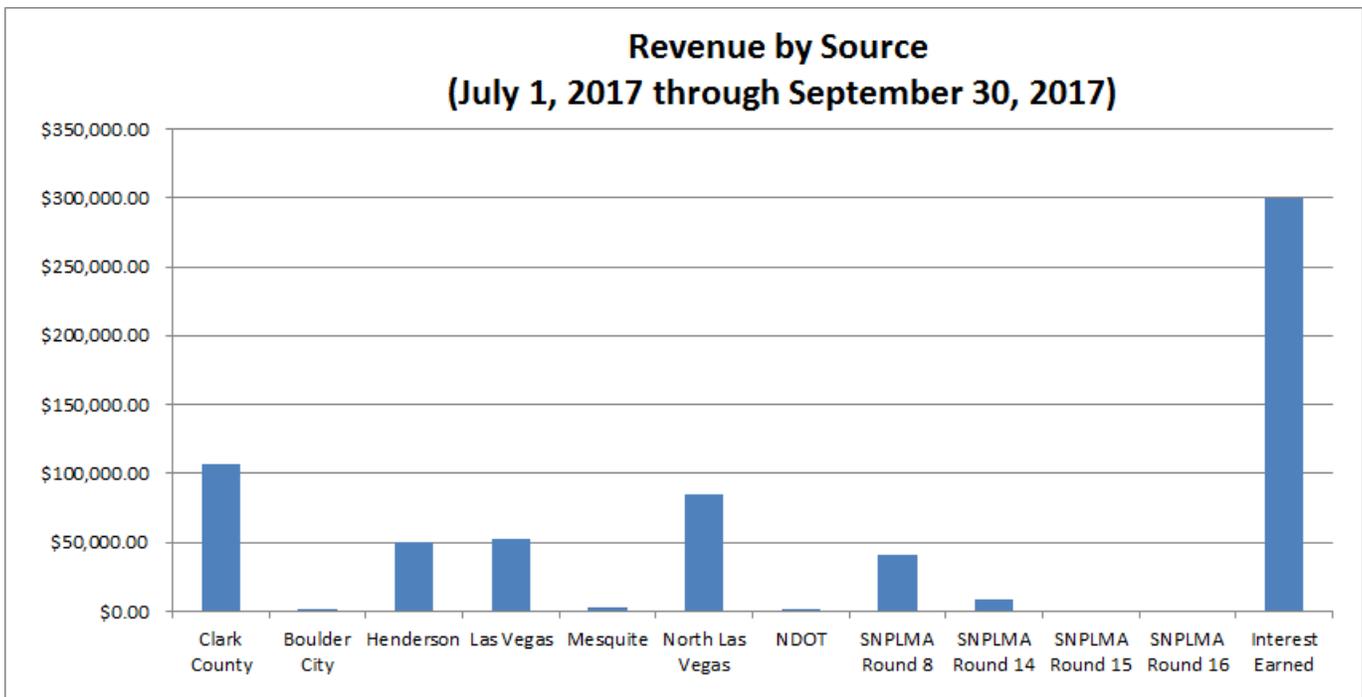
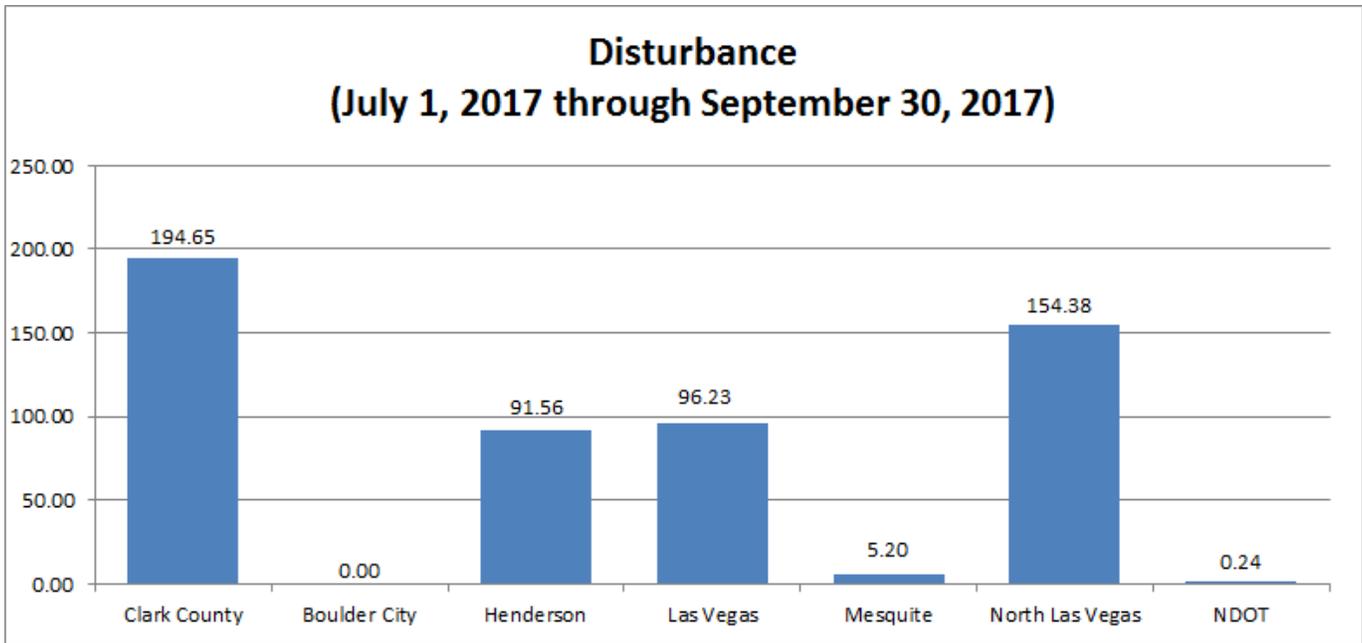
DCP staff is responsible for ensuring that land disturbed pursuant to the MSHCP is accounted for and monies are collected and deposited in the Section 10 special reserve fund established under the MSHCP. Below are charts which outline the total amount of fees collected and acres disturbed for the period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

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

MOJAVE/MAX.COM

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