August 12, 2025

DESERT CONSERVATION PROGRAM PROJECT COMPLETION SUMMARY
Reevaluating Desert Upland Habitat Restoration
2017-UNLV-1760C

The work for the above referenced project has been completed. Below is a summary of project related information.

The purpose of the above referenced project was:

Restoration of Desert Tortoise habitat and its populations is a key aspect of the Clark County Desert Conservation Program. Conducting ecological restoration has improved conditions at previously degraded sites. DCP wishes to improve restoration approaches that reduce financial costs while improving ecological effectiveness. There are three major uncertainties that hinder further progress in desert restoration. They are: identifying the most cost-effective treatments appropriate to small or large areas, choosing optimal restoration techniques appropriate to the project, and understanding the long-term effectiveness of restoration approaches. Most monitoring studies are conducted at only a few sites and are short term, so returning to restoration sites after the initial monitoring has concluded will help determine the long-term effects of treatments and management strategies.

The major accomplishments or findings of this project include:

DCP conducted a broad-scale field assessment of the status of 15 habitat restoration projects that have been conducted in the last 25 years. Samples of plant communities and soil conditions were conducted on 363 plots across the projects. It was determined that 9 out of the 15 restoration projects (60%) were successful or at least partially successful. 60% of projects being successful is an encouraging success rate given that desert habitat restoration is difficult, and dry conditions preceded and occurred during the 2024 field studies. Further work is necessary to improve future restoration effectiveness, but every major restoration treatment type (e.g., seeding, outplanting, ripping) succeeded in at least one project. A major recommendation based on this project is to apply multiple treatment types in combination to increase the chance of success. Experimental trials are recommended to identify effective treatments before attempting to upscale, as large projects are expensive and do not guarantee success.

For more information about this project and/or for other Project Reports or Symposium Reports, please

visit our website.

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Stefanie Ferrazzano, at (702) 455-6386.