

QUARTERLY ADMINISTRATOR

APRIL—JUNE 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 installation and maintenance of fencing along roadways to reduce tortoise mortality.



Top: row Wildflowers in bloom at the BCCE (photos: J. Ellis) Bottom row: Silver cholla; and Yellow cups in 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 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

- Provided oversight and project management for the interlocal agreement with Boulder City for Law Enforcement on the BCCE.
- The Boulder City Police Department drone has been delivered; use of the drone will begin next quarter.
- 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.
- Continued weed surveys and treatment through an interlocal agreement with the National Park Service's (NPS) Exotic Plant Management Team (EPMT).
- Continued to manage a contract with SWCA Environmental Consultants to conduct point count avian surveys, on the BCCE; three rounds of surveys were completed.

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 preliminary design is currently under review.
- Participated in a site visit to discuss preliminary project design with neighboring landowner on Muddy River.
- The NPS' EPMT 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.



Perkins Pond at the Muddy River Reserve Unit

Muddy River Reserve Unit (continued)

- BEC Environmental, Inc. began surveys to develop a record of small mammal species present on the properties. NPS' EPMT continued to conduct vegetation management and maintenance activities for enhancement of native riparian species on the Muddy and Virgin River Reserves.
- SWCA began point count avian surveys, and protocol-level nesting surveys for southwestern willow flycatcher (SWFL) and yellow-billed cuckoo (YBCU). The first three rounds of surveys for SWFL, the first round of surveys for YBCU, and three rounds of point count surveys were completed.

Property Acquisition

- The Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved the purchase of three parcels, totaling 59 acres, along the Virgin River in Bunkerville, Nevada (adjacent to two parcels owned by the County) from



Desert kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys deserti*), MSHCP Evaluation Species, Muddy River Reserves.

Photo credit: S. Cambrin



Desert pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus penicillatus sobrianus*), MSHCP evaluation species, after being captured and released during surveys at the Bunkerville East riparian reserve unit.

Photo credit: BEC Environmental

RIPARIAN RESERVE UNITS (CONT.)

Virgin River Reserve Unit

- Continued planning efforts for a Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) Round 15 project to conduct 20 to 40 acres of habitat restoration on the Virgin River Reserve. Staff continues monitoring of masticated area for non-native plant species. A contractor was selected to masticate the remaining acreage in Quarter 1; however, due to excessive precipitation, this work has been delayed until fall 2020.
- NPS' EPMT 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 Board BCC approved a non-exclusive lease agreement in Quarter 1.
- Submitted request to adjudicate hydrobasins 222, 223, and 224 to Nevada Division of Water Resources; participated in video conference call with Nevada Division of Water Resources to discuss petitions.
- SWCA began point count surveys, and SWFL and YBCU surveys. SWCA also began monitoring of SWFL nests and banding of nestlings and unbanded adults. A nest has been observed on the Mormon Mesa parcel – the first attempt by SWFL on this County parcel.

- BEC Environmental, Inc. began surveys to develop a record of small mammal species present on the properties.
- Continued coordination with Overton Power District (OPD) and Clark County Real Management Department; OPD requested an easement through the Riverside parcels for a replacement distribution structure.



Overview of the Virgin River reserve.

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.

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.
- Two Tortoise Talks were conducted via Zoom during this reporting period.
- There were no outreach events conducted during this reporting period.

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





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.

- Two calls were received from the Wild Desert Tortoise Assistance Line during this reporting period.
- Three desert tortoises were picked up and the 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.

OTHER CONSERVATION WORK

ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) began field and lab work studying Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology at the Riparian Reserve Units. This project is scheduled to continue until the end of the calendar year.
- Ironwood Consulting completed spring surveys as part of our Rare Plant Surveys project. Fall surveys will begin next quarter.
- Continued to work with Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. to develop a Pesticide Use Proposal (PUP) and Environmental Assessment 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 Biological Resource Surveys and first draft of the PUP and Biological Resources Summary Report have been completed.
- Initiated an interlocal agreement with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to study propagation techniques for five rare plant species in Clark County. Field work and research activities for this project are in progress.
- Continued to administer a project that will examine threats to the continued persistence of Gila monster populations in Nevada; executed the third of three contracts associated with this project. Field work tracking Gila monsters continued this quarter; 21 Gila monsters were tracked for a total of 657 observations. Genetics Lab continues to review samples that have been collected and not sequenced yet.

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 Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group meeting via webinar on April 29th.
- Began an Interlocal Agreement with University of Nevada Reno on May 10th to model connectivity solutions.
- Held the quarterly Science Advisor meeting via webinar on May 19th .
- Attended the Relic Leopard Frog Conservation Team meeting on May 21st via webinar.
- Assisted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in coordinating volunteers and conducting a desert tortoise clearance survey on a future construction site May 28-30th and June 2nd-3rd.



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

- 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; draft habitat functionality methods continued this quarter and a draft of the covered species chapter was completed.
- Executed a contract with Cogan Technology to prepare a County-wide fine-scale vegetation map.

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

- Met with renewable energy developers to review proposed project siting and discuss potential land use conflicts.
- 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. Participated in video conference call with U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and Clark County Regional Flood Control District to discuss in lieu fee program development.
- Continued to serve on the Technical Working Group for the Nellis Complex Joint Land Use Plan; conducted stakeholder review of draft documents and provided feedback.
- Continued to participate in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Tortoise Transportation Ecology work group.



Spring Mountains Acastus Checkerspot butterfly

NEW, ONGOING, AND CLOSED PROJECTS

New projects started this quarter

- TUSK Trail Head Design, 804K
- Eastern Mojave Conservation Collaborative, 1410D
- DT Connectivity Solutions Modeling, 1580C
- Avian Nest Monitoring on Riparian Properties, 1910B

Ongoing projects this quarter

- DT Health Assess and Pickup Svc Support, 803F
- EA for Pesticide Use, 803H
- Parceling for Bunkerville Property, 917BD
- Legal Services for DCP, 1014J
- BCCE DT Telemetry & Health Assessments, 1412D
- HCP Consultant for the MSCHP, 1460A
- BCCE Drone Project, 1510C
- Muddy River Flood Inundation, 1521G
- Virgin River Restoration Treatment, 1521H
- Desert Tortoise Range-Wide Monitoring, 1541B
- Muddy River Habitat Restoration, 1570C
- DT Connectivity Across Roadways, 1580B
- BCCE Weed Survey, 1710B
- BCCE Maintenance, 1710D
- Virgin River Weed Management, 1720A
- Water Rights Consulting, 1720E
- Riparian Reserves Maintenance, 1720F
- Mormon Mesa Plant Propagation, 1521J
- Effects of Exotic Forage on Mojave DT, 1730J
- Rare Plant Surveys, 1755A
- Desert Tortoise Predator-Prey Dynamics, 1795A
- Law Enforcement for the BCCE, 1905B
- Riparian Small Mammal Survey, 1910A
- Mojave Max Education Program, 1915A
- DT Occupancy on the BCCE, 1920B
- DT Monitoring Data Mgmt, 1920C
- Avian Surveys, 1920D
- BCCE DT Telemetry & Health Assessments, 1930A
- Road Warrior DT Mortality Survey, 1955A
- Desert Tortoise Nesting Study on the BCCE, 1985A
- DT Predator-Prey Dynamics, 1987A
- Rare Plant Propagation Research, 1990A
- Riparian Plant-Pollinator Ecology Phase 1, 1992A
- Assessing Genetic Diversity of Gila monster, 1997A
- Gila Monsters Spatial Ecology and Habitat, 1997B

Projects closed this quarter

- No projects were closed during this reporting period

Requests for Quotes (RFQs) and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) this quarter

- Avian Nest Monitoring on Riparian Properties, 1910B
- Mormon Mesa Plant Propagation, 1521J



Cactus mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*) being released from a live trap amongst masticated tamarisk at Mormon Mesa.

Photo credit: BEC Environmental



Yellow-billed cuckoo

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

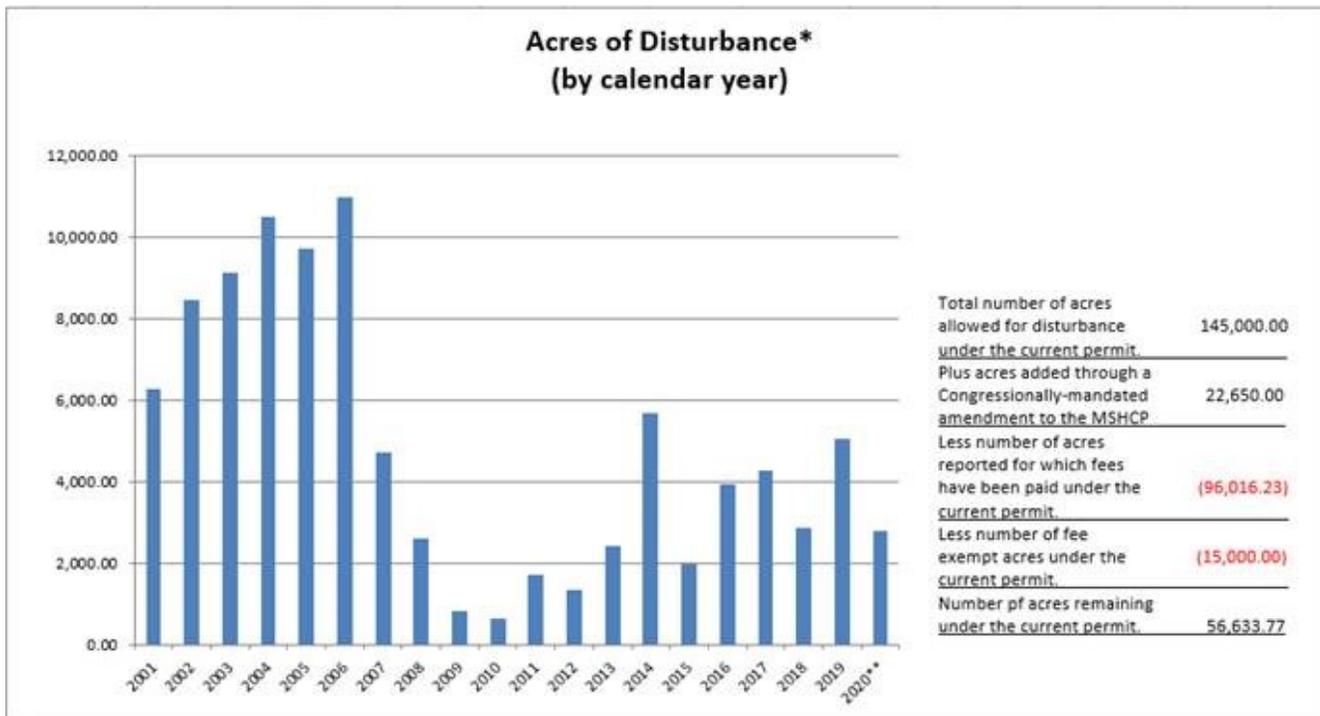
ACTIVITIES FOR THIS QUARTER

- Processed vendor payments 47 invoices: 46 accepted (98%), 1 rejected (2%).
- Fiscal Year (FY) 20 Budgets continue to be reconciled for end of year close. Expenditures continue to be monitored regularly to ensure appropriate spending and reporting occur. The process of encumbering the FY20 budgets has begun.
- 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 16 – one draw down (\$189,363.00).
- Continued development of the 2021-2023 Implementation Plan and Budget; the draft plan will be available for public review in Q4 2020.



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



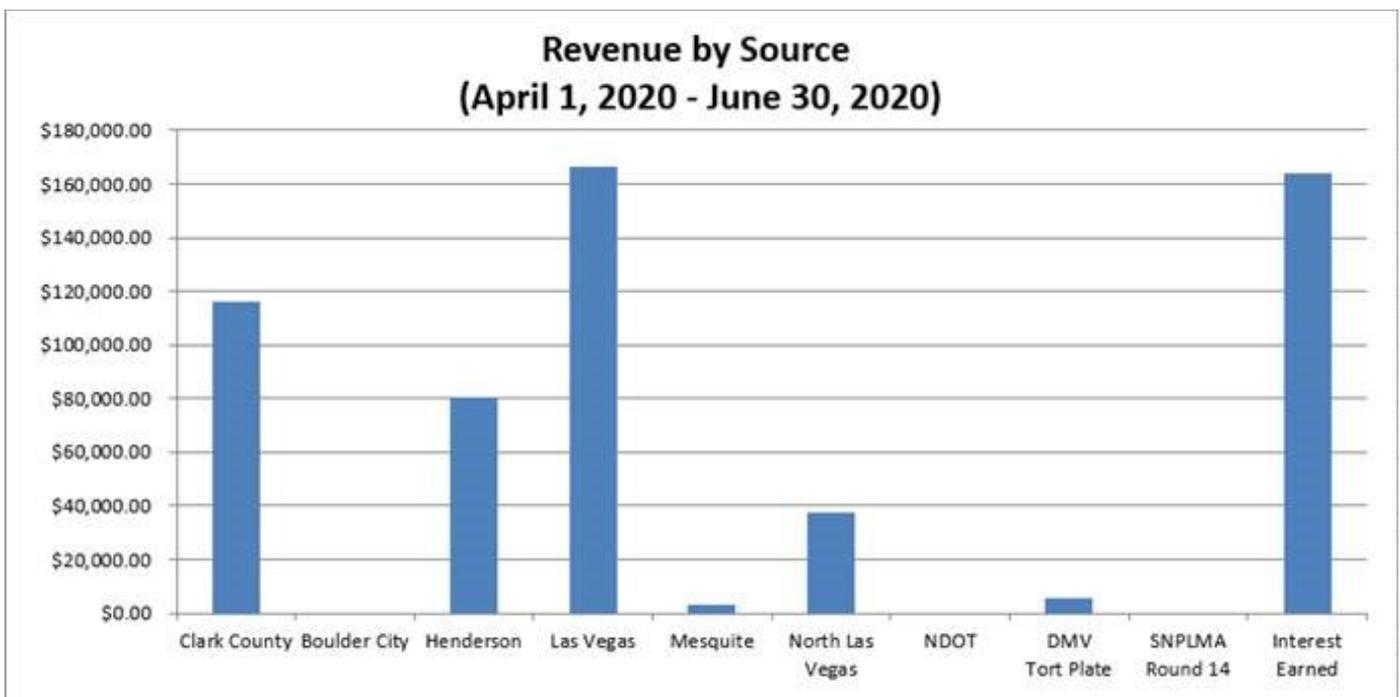
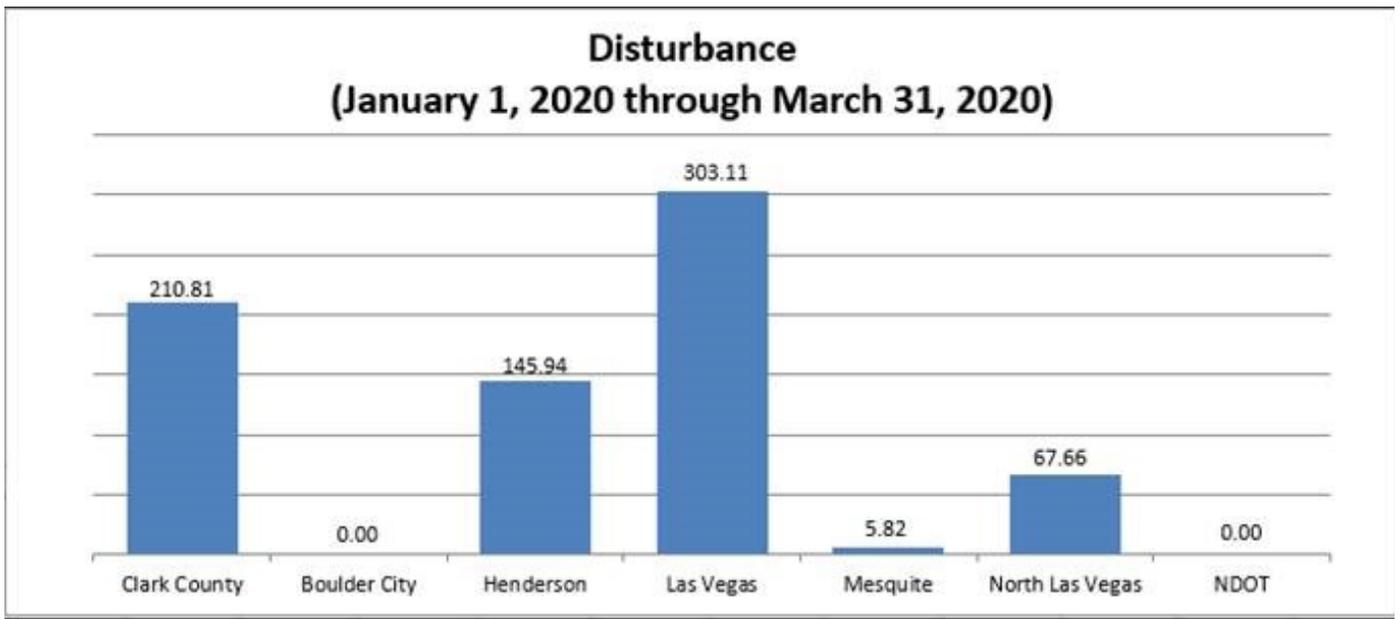
*Total acres reported in this chart do not include 15,000 acres of municipal development, which were exempt from the payment of mitigation fees through January 2010.

**2020 totals are subject to change.

ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE — CONTINUED



Western Burrowing Owl



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 four new positions in the next quarter.; re3cruitment 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](#)

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