

Decrease in land sales affects both ends of Nevada

By Ed Vogel, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY – Through the sale of \$3 billion in public land in Clark County, cities and counties throughout Nevada have built hundreds of parks and trails, pollution has been kept out of Lake Tahoe and forest fires have been prevented.

The Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act of 1998 has been a boon for the entire state. The federal program has saved taxpayers' money and made life more pleasant and safer for residents and visitors. In Clark County alone, the sales have funded 691 projects. The money paid for park and trail construction, purchases of land for open space, and making water delivery system improvements.

But the good times are about over.

Once the recession reared its ugly head in Nevada, people stopped buying U.S. Bureau of Land Management property in what had been one of the fastest-growing areas of the nation. Just five acres were sold in the most recent auction last year, and that sale brought in only \$457,000. That pales in comparison with the heyday in 2004 when 10,329 acres sold for \$884 million, of which Las Vegas received \$248 million and Clark County \$280 million.

Clark County and Las Vegas elected officials acknowledge they relied too much on the land sale revenue and now don't have other sources of money to build additional parks. But they are confident there is enough general fund revenue to repair and maintain all the parks that have been built.

"There are no guarantees anymore," said Nancy Lipski, Clark County's comprehensive planning director. "It has been a very

good source of funding that allowed us to do things more quickly than normal.”

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