



Desert Wetlands *News & Views*

Wetlands Park Gears up for School Year 2009-2010

Article provided by Christie Leavitt, Curator of Education

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School tours at the Nature Preserve will be in full swing on Thursday, October 1, when the first three classes (third graders) of the year arrive at the Park. This year, thanks to our dedicated Education Ambassador volunteers, the Wetlands will be offering tours for third, fourth, and fifth grade classes on Thursdays, and for kindergarten, first, and second grade classes on Tuesdays from October through April.

To ensure a quality experience for students, tours are limited to two classes in grades that do not have class size reduction (about 30 students per class), and three classes in grades that have class size reduction (about 20 students per class). Because tour dates are limited, and the program is popular with teachers, available dates for upper elementary grades were filled the first day reservations were open, and only a few dates for lower elementary grades remain to be scheduled.

Education Ambassadors lead the students on two-hour nature walks in the Preserve. Younger students carry only their water and themselves, while leaders carry magnifying glasses and checklists to record what the students observe. Older students become Nature Scene Investigators (NCI), and carry their water, plus binoculars, a pack of

science tools to use during their tour, and a Nature Scene Investigator journal that is theirs to keep.

“We must see before we understand. We must understand before we care. We must care before we become stewards.” In addition to meeting school curriculum needs for each grade level, Wetlands Park visits help students to see and begin to understand as a precursor to effective stewardship. Many students rarely leave the urban area, and the opportunity for a “walk on the wild side” really makes an impression. Some time back, a youngster flew back off the bus as it was loading for school to hug the Education Ambassador who had been working with his group and announce: “OH, Mrs. Baker, this was the BEST day of my LIFE!”

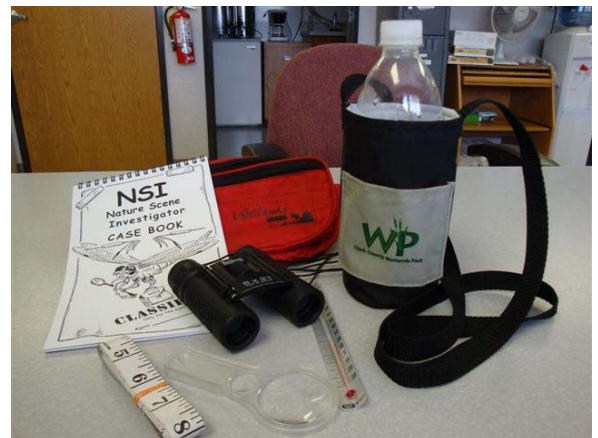
Annual Meeting

The Desert Wetlands Conservancy will have their Annual meeting on September 19, 2009, at 10:30am to noon, to be held at the Winchester Community Center, 3130 Mcleod Dr, Las Vegas, NV 89121, just north of Desert Inn Road.

We will elect a new board of trustees and conduct other business as necessary. Hope to see you there.

Desert Wetlands
Conservancy

The mission of the DWC is to influence policy, create partnerships, and initiate activities in advocacy or the Las Vegas Valley Watershed, including the Desert Wetlands Park.



Nature Scene Investigator kit, photo provided by Pam Radke

Sunrise Tap Transmission Line

For years, Utility Industry executives and regulators wanted to have one transmission line that directly connected Nevada Power Co. with Sierra Pacific Power Co. The two companies are now know as NV Energy Inc. In January 2009, approval was received to build a transmission line on the east side of Nevada, linking Las Vegas with the transmission lines near Ely that run to Reno. In August, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) took the first step to approve the right of way, finding “no significant impact” resulting from the new transmission line. BLM still needs to approve the construction, operation and maintenance plan.

The proposal seeks turn the approximately 30-foot-tall wooden poles with one circuit and three wires into 135-foot tall metal towers, equivalent of 12 stories high, with the capacity to carry up to four circuits and 20 lines each. Although approved by the Clark County Planning Commission and may be a done deal for the Wetlands Park, the Henderson officials recently unanimously denied the request to upgrade a small power line into a major electrical transmission corridor through residential areas. The DWC strongly supports the Henderson position and seeks a change in approach, below is the letter we sent to the US Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation. In addition to this communication, our Executive Committee will meet with the Bureau and the BLM to encourage them to direct all such infrastructure into the North/South Harry Allen-Mead Transmission Line Corridor where that line already crosses the Wetlands Park.

RE: Sunrise Tap Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Liebhauser:

The Desert Wetlands Conservancy (DWC), a nonprofit organization, appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Sunrise Tap Transmission Line Project. The DWC wishes to express its urgent and deep concern in opposition to this ill considered project. The DWC believes it was not adequately noticed during the public comment period on this project, and that the intrusion of

the proposed 135 foot transmission towers and power lines into the Wetlands Park will not only cause permanent and irreparable damage to the Park itself and the wetlands therein, but also permanently impair the entire viewshed of the Park and the proposed \$27 million Nature Center. Further, DWC recommends that all long term decisions on power line placement be based on preservation and quality of life values and not simply on a cost and expedience basis. It would seem that a more satisfactory solution to this project would be to bury the lines within the established north/south power line corridor east of the Park. The DWC fears that there may be serious conflict between this intrusion into the Park and the many complex agreements, including those with the United States Government, upon which the Park was created, funded and constructed that could indeed precipitate future legal ramifications for this important community resource.

Furthermore, there has been substantial adverse community opposition to the entire project as it has proceeded through the City of Henderson’s review process. Although this project was approved by the Clark County Planning Commission at its meeting on 11/18/2008, the project was unanimously denied by the City of Henderson’s Planning Commission. The DWC has been informed that the Henderson Planning Commission’s negative decision will be appealed by NV Energy to the City Council. Even a decision by Henderson’s City Council denying approval of the project will leave the Clark County Wetlands Park permanently damaged without the reversal of the County’s decision.

All of the alternative routes proposed by NV Energy running along the northern border of the Park along the base of Sunrise Mountain and through the Rainbow Gardens instead of within the north/south power line corridor established many years ago will damage the viewshed permanently. The DWC respectively submits its most ardent opposition against this project and requests that any future power transmission projects of this nature be confined to the utility corridor already established for such purposes.

Sincerely,

Joan Lolmaugh
Chairman

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Las Vegas Wash Pond Dedication

Friday, August 28, 2009 marked the dedication of the new 112-acre pond system in the Clark County Wetlands Park. The ponds, called the Ducks Unlimited Project in previous newsletters, were designed and created by a team from Ducks Unlimited's Western Regional Office in Sacramento. In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Project funds were used for the project's design and construction. These funds are collected from government agencies and private developers that disrupted or destroyed wetlands in their own construction efforts.

The dedication was sponsored cooperatively by a combination of Clark County Parks & Recreation, DWC, Ducks Unlimited and James Hunt (Morgan Stanley Smith Barney). It was a wonderful event...good attendance, good food, good weather (a little warm) and a good time was had by all. Representatives from the offices of Congresswoman Dina Titus, Congresswoman Shelley Berkley and Senator Harry Reid, attended as did County Commission Chairman Rory Reid and several members of several local conservation groups. Commissioner Reid spoke to the group, noting that the Wetlands Park is a treasure for the Las Vegas Valley including Henderson, Las Vegas and North Las Vegas. "Its natural wetlands are about 15 minutes from our urban center....It's an incredible opportunity for people to escape the city and see another world. Ultimately, when completed, it'll be our Central Park." Also speaking at the event were: Jane Hulbert, Senior VP of Ducks Unlimited, from Longview, WA, Jane Pike, Clark County Parks and Rec, Patricia McQueary, Chief of the US Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Office, and our own Joan Lolmaugh and Peter Kingman, DWC.

The site features six seasonal ponds with adjustable water levels designed to attract migratory birds and wildlife to the area. Results so far are very promising. Several new bird species have already been observed visiting the ponds. The site's shallow mud flats are unique to the area and are particularly attractive to certain shore birds, including American avocets who have nested and bred at the site.

The DWC also received a "Certificate of Recogni-

tion" from Congresswoman Shelley Berkley prior to the event.



View across the largest pond looking towards Sunrise Mountain., photo provided by Art Wolf taken during the event.

Share Our Vision!! Membership Application

Name:

Preferred Mailing Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Fax:

E-Mail:

May we show your name on our membership list?

Yes No

Check here if you wish to be contacted for volunteer projects

Membership Options:

Individual Member:	\$25
Senior/Student:	\$15
Family Member:	\$50
Sustaining Family Member	\$200
Non-Profit Org:	\$100
Small Business	\$150

Corporate Sustaining Member

Osprey:	\$500
Great Egret:	\$5000
Great Blue Heron:	\$10,000+

Please mail to DWC,
PO Box 28017, Las Vegas, NV 89126
For Membership information, call:
457-8867

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Our Thanks To...

New and Renewing Members: Jack & Betty Coogan, Dekker/Perich/Sabatini Architects, Keiba Crear, Richard and Sue Brand, Peter Samuolis, Connie Boch, Karen Cwika, Robert Means, George Hughes, Candy Rutledge, Diane Bush

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

PLEASE CHECK THE EXPIRATION DATE ON YOUR MAILING LABEL TO SEE IF IT IS TIME TO RENEW! If you have not yet taken the plunge to join, please do so now. You will demonstrate that you want to help in the development of new features in the Park for our community!

The Park is a place to enjoy! Have you visited the Park recently? The temporary Visitor Center is at the very end of Wetlands Park Lane. Cross Boulder Highway and travel 1 mile east, then look for the Wetlands Park sign, just where Tropicana turns into Broadbent Ave. If it has been a while since you've visited the Park, you will be amazed at the changes and improvements that have taken place. The Park is for your benefit, come and enjoy it!

There are many opportunities to get involved and to show your support-not only through membership in the Friends, but by contributing funds or labor for needed physical improvements, and educational materials. If you have put off renewing, remember your membership ends one year from the date you paid your dues.

Fall Las Vegas Wash Green-Up



The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) is gearing up for its 15th Wash Green-Up! The LVWCC is hosting the Spring Green-Up on Saturday, October 17.

We are hoping to attract 2000 volunteers planting and revegetating nearly 28 acres in the Wash. Due to the sheer size of this year's Wash Green-Up, the volunteer planting will occur in three 2-hour shifts: 9a.m. to 11a.m.; 11a.m. to 1p.m. to 3p.m.

This popular and fun event always turns out a big crowd. If you are interested, click on the following website. http://www.lvwash.org/cfml/volunteer/volunteer_signup.cfml. The planting holes are pre-dug and lunch is provided. But you will want to hurry because the volunteer quota can fill up quickly.

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**Desert Wetlands Conservancy
Newsletter**