

Spring 2007

Volume 10 Issue 1



Wetlands Park

News & Views

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Information?

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Friends of the
Desert Wetlands Park

The mission of the FDWP is to cooperate with public and private entities to increase public awareness and contribute to the quality of life in the Las Vegas valley by: Supporting the Desert Wetlands Park; Preserving and enhancing the wetlands environs, and Promoting stewardship of the

Spring Plantings

This spring there were two major plantings in the Wash; the annual spring Green-Up and a Boy Scout planting event.

Green-Up

The Spring Green-Up was held on March 10 and more than 500 volunteers gathered at the recently completed Powerline Crossing Weir on a beautiful spring day, planting over 5,000 native trees and shrubs on a 14-acre site. The acreage was spread across the north and south banks of the Wash, allowing the volunteers to use the new foot bridge to cross the channel.

This was the 11th Green-Up event to date and was the largest acreage to be planted. The area was previously overgrown with invasive tamarisk. Over 100 acres of tamarisk from this, and other sites along the Wash, was cleared through the combined efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation and the Nevada Division of Forestry, clearing the way for native plants to flourish.

Boy Scout Project

Approximately 250 Scouts from the LV Area Council came together on April 21, meeting at the newly constructed Sunrise Trailhead, to participate in the conservation effort.

The scouts planted almost 2,400 native trees and shrubs along the northern banks of the Las Vegas Wash near the Pabco Road Weir.

In February, this planting area was infested with invasive tamarisk and was part of the overall tamarisk removal effort.

Anderson Dairy was also on hand to provide the Scouts with ice cream sandwiches, a tasty reward in recognition for their community service.

Park Update

The 200-acre fire in the Park this spring didn't impact any of the Park features, but did give the crews a chance to see the eroding head cut moving up Duck Creek. Repair is necessary to prevent further damage to the Wetlands Park Scenic Drive, the Whiney Lift Station and the Planned Ducks Unlimited constructed wetlands site. The reeds have already grown back and only some blackened tamarisk branches are the remaining signs of the fire.

The Nature Preserve Phase II, the West 80 site, is finally in construction. The site will showcase climbing structures for children in the shapes of wildlife found in the park. The climbing objects will be placed in a neighborhood park near the Nature Preserve's main entrance. More features for picnicking and family recreation will be incorporated in this project.

As mentioned under the Boy Scout Project, the Sunrise Trailhead is completed and features shade structures, picnic tables, equestrian facilities, and restrooms

Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee 2006 Year-End Report

The Wash, once a simple seasonal channel, now drains more than 170 million gallons a day into Lake Mead. The increased flows caused erosion and channeling along the wash, destroying the 2,000 acres of wetlands and animal habitat that once existed. The erosion also transported millions of tons of sediment down the Wash into the lake.

Rising community concern prompted the creation of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC), charging the stakeholder group with the task of protecting and enhancing the Wash.

Formed eight years ago, the LVWCC began a journey of restoration and enhancement along the Las Vegas Wash. More than 100 acres of invasive trees and weeds have been replaced with native vegetation; Ten of the planned 22 weirs needed to curb erosion and improve water quality are in place; and scientific research into water, wildlife, and archaeological

features have been added to the growing body of knowledge about the Wash’s biology, hydrology and history.

This past year marked a phase of significant achievement at the Wash, such as the removal of the lower Wash area from the US EPA’s impaired waters list for total suspended solids (TSS), the completion of the six-year Bostick Bird Census which detected 140 bird species at the Bostick Weir, and the creation of a Hydraulic Modeling Project that has advanced the science of weir construction.

This phase also reflects the foundation of research that has provided input to make crucial decisions about the Wash’s future management. The completed “Las Vegas Wash Revegetation Plan” and the draft “Las Vegas Wash Wildlife Management Plan” stemmed from this research, and will guide future decision making along the Wash.

The 2006 Year-End Report summarizes these and other achievements that occurred along the Wash. The Report details the activities and accomplishments in nine performance areas measured against the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan (CAMP) action items. A brief summary review of those performance areas is as follows:

Stabilization

Stabilization of the Wash is the most capital intensive performance area of the group. The Powerline Crossing Weir construction both began and ended in 2006, bringing the total number of weirs to 13, including 3 National Park Service weirs. As part of this project, we have our first foot bridge across the Wash. Design has been completed for both Ducks Unlimited Weirs and the Upper Diversion Weir. Construction on these projects should begin this year. In design are the Lower Narrows Weir and the Homestead Weir.

Engineering projects included geotechnical investigations of the Sunrise Mountain Outfall Weir and a Hydraulic Modeling Project to further the understanding of weir dynamics.

You remember the Stardust implosion? Well much of the concrete debris is now located down by the Wash for future projects.



View of the Upper Diversion Weir site, looking South, with the Nature Park trails in the background. (photo courtesy of Gerry Hester, snwa)

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LWVCC 2006 Year-End Report *(continued from page 2)*

Bioassessment Monitoring

The on-going studies compile critical information about water quality and biology of the Wash. This year, contracted scientists completed water and sediment sample analyses, and substantial portions of the bird egg and fish tissue analyses.

The toxicologist reviewing 2003 samples finalized and delivered the bioassessment report. Findings will be applied to wildlife management concerns of contaminants in the Wash. Selenium was determined to be the strongest potential risk in this study.

Water Quality

The Project Team continued to assess and enhance water quality programs in 2006. A sampling location was added at Lake Mead's future site of the third intake due for completion in 2011, along with two additional probes at the Duck Creek and Flamingo Washes.

Water quality improvements in the lower reaches of the Wash were noted by both the state and the USEPA, leading the Wash to be featured as a "Success Story" on EPA's web site. TSS and many trace metals are less prevalent. Erosion reduction, invasive vegetation removal and the added filtration emergent wetlands provide have factored into the water quality improvements.

Wetland Demonstration Projects

Efforts in 2006 focused on improving and repairing the Pittman Wash site. This pilot project is designed to answer several fundamental questions regarding wetland effectiveness and needs.

Hydrologists and biologists completed 2 years of successful data collection at the Henderson Demonstration Wetland. The Project Team now possess primary baseline data for analyzing wetland effectiveness. Additionally, the bird monitoring program at the site has yielded more than 20,000 detections of 95 species.

Wildlife

A significant report summarizing the amphibian studies conducted 2004-2005 time period has been drafted. Also a 2-year report on the findings from the bat study has been published and distributed. Avian studies advanced significantly in 2006 as well. All together, 175 species have been identified in the Wash, indicating

broad appeal of the area to birdlife.

Vegetation Enhancement and Management

In addition to replanting of disturbed sites to comply with the 404 permits related to the weir construction projects, 42,000 5-gallon buckets of hardstem bulrushes were harvested from the Pahrnat National Wildlife Refuge and relocated to the Wash.

Tamarisk removal methods improved in 2006 after biologists conducted a cost-benefit analysis to research various removal strategies. Tamarisk has been one of the most serious infestation problems in the Wash. With the assistance of the Nevada Division of Forestry and the Bureau of Land Management, more than 100 acres of tamarisk have been removed to date.

Continued on Page 4

Share Our Vision!! Membership Application

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Preferred Mailing Address:

City: State: Zip:

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May we show your name on our membership list?

Yes No

Check here if you wish to be contacted for volunteer projects

Membership Options:

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Our Thanks To...

New and Renewing Members: : Rose Marie Pickell, Robert Means, Esther Doherty, Margaret Mark, Lake Las Vegas Resort, John Trabert, Sabine Dutoit, Pamela Martin, Donald Johns, H. E. La Plant, Helen Bugstad, Bernard Murphy

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

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. **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!

LLWCC 2006 Year-end Report (cont. from Page 3)

Archaeological Resources

An active program of archaeological studies continued in 2006, documenting evidence of occupation in the Wash during the Late Archaic period, dating back as early as 150 B.C. The Project Team supported the creation of a research document that details the ethnohistory of the Wash, representing 30 years of research.

Education and Outreach

In addition to the Green-Up events, an exciting new educational partnership with the Public Lands Institute allowed the team to outfit a houseboat that serves as a "floating classroom" on Lake Mead. Students spend up to 2 hours on the lake with a hydrologist and a microbiologist observing actual multi-parameter water quality monitoring and zooplankton.

Data Resources

The lvwash.org website comprises a public area and a password protected member's area. In 2006, there were more than 27,000 unique visitors to the site, a 14.5% increase over the previous year. The data bank holds approximately 9,000 images, 3,500 of which are available for public viewing. In addition to monthly articles, some of the other information available are bird census entries, Hydrolab readings, and water sample readings

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