



Desert Wetlands News & Views

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

Wetlands Park Update

By Elsie Sellars, Wetlands Park Coordinator

The Board of County Commissioners awarded the contract for the construction of the Wetlands Park Nature Center at their May 4 meeting. The building is expected to be under construction for approximately 18 months beginning this summer. The Center will be located just beyond the pavilion in the parking lot that invites visitors to the trails. The Nature Center, elevated 12 feet off the ground on piers, will have an orientation kiosk, an auditorium wing, an interpretive wing with an exhibit gallery, gift shop and café and an administrative wing with offices and classrooms. A deck will surround the Center on three sides to provide scenic views of the park and surrounding mountains.

The existing temporary Information Center will be relocated to the new maintenance facility yard at Hollywood Lane and Wetlands Park Lane (about 1/10th of a mile be-

fore the end of Wetlands Park Lane cul-de-sac—the traditional entrance into the parking lot). Signs will direct visitors to the new Information Center location and parking area.

The Nature Preserve will still be open for visitation, but visitors will begin their journey from the newly expanded Nature Preserve area that had been under construction. Some areas of the “original” Nature Preserve may not be accessible due the staging and project areas designated for the contractor to accommodate the construction of the Nature Center. There will be signage indicating the restricted areas.

The Information Center will maintain its current hours of operation of being open daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Wetlands Park is open daily from dawn to dusk. □



Artist conception of how the completed Nature Center will appear as viewed from the existing Nature Center paved trail. (picture courtesy CC Parks and Recreation)

LVWCC Annual Tour

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) moved their 12th annual tour to the spring this year, reviewing some of the recent accomplishments. The Committee consists of 30 partner members, including federal, state, and local agencies, and citizen members. The Desert Wetlands Conservancy is a citizen member. The LVWCC was formed and tasked in 1998 by the Board of Directors of Southern Nevada Water Authority to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the Las Vegas Wash.

Our first stop was again at the Upper Diversion Weir. Gerry Hester, SNWA, announced that this project was the recipient of additional award from the National American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC). The ACEC is the voice of America's engineering industry. The Honorable Mention Award is special. It means that on a national level this project was judged to be one of the top twenty environmental projects completed in 2008 and is comparable in stature to the earlier award received from American Public Works Association.



Vegetation filling in behind the Upper Diversion Weir

At the site of DU No. 1 Weir, Gerry discussed the construction challenges of this upcoming construction due to the narrowness and depth of the channel at that location, only 15 feet across and 22 feet deep. The completed DU No. 2 Weir just a few hundred feet upstream is 285 feet across and only 7 feet high. The completed system is designed to be submerged during a 100 year flood event. At the Fee-in-Lieu Mitigation Ponds, Elsie Sellars, CCP&R, discussed the history of the project. The 112 acre site has 47 acres of surface water, ranging from mudflats to open water at a depth of 8 feet. The site is the last stop for the water flow through the Wetlands Nature Preserve, fed entirely from treated waste water. Fu-

ture plans call for blinds and observation towers for birders. Debbie Van Dooremolen, SNWA, discussed the new bird sightings, indicating that 230 species have been identified in the Wash. Birds provide a good indicator of the habitat development due to their mobility and how they rapidly adapt to changes.

The Bureau of Reclamation Construction has assisted with channel stabilization activities on the Wash since 2001. To date the Bureau has saved the public over \$10 Million in commercial construction costs. Recently, they cleared 6.7 acres of Tamarisk in preparation for the upcoming fall Green-Up, located near the Lower Narrows Weir.

Public and educational outreach was discussed. There are about 50 public outreach events per year. Over 170,000 people have been involved in programs, tours, and events over the years. Public outreach activities continue to be among the most successful activities for communicating the message of restoration along the Wash.

We viewed the construction of the Lower Narrows Weir and the Homestead Weir, due to be completed in 2011. The Wash flow has been diverted to the south of the Lower Narrows Weir to clear the northern portion of the construction site, which will be completed by the end of July 2010. Next year the flow will be switched to flow over the new construction so the southern portion of the Weir can be constructed. The Lower Narrows Weir project is the most extensive project to date in terms of land area impacted.



Lower Narrows Weir construction site

Our last stop was at the Las Vegas Bay Scenic Overlook at Lake Mead. The lake level is currently at 1099 feet and is expected to drop to 1082 feet by October. Compare this to the relatively full level of 1210 feet in the spring of 2000. This time last year, the level was at 1107 feet. The concern is that if the current drought conditions continue, the level may be down to 1075 by next year. The intakes for the Las Vegas Valley water supply are at 1000 and 1050 feet re-

spectively and require at a head of approximately 50 feet to function properly. You can see why the SNWA is proceeding with some urgency to complete a new intake that will be down close to the original Colorado River bed. The plan is to have everything up and running by 2012. Currently the project is on schedule.

Water quality monitoring in the Las Vegas Wash and urban run-off is an important mission for SNWA and the LVWCC and it has been a priority since 1998. Beginning in 2000, regular monitoring of major ions, trace metals, nutrients, bacteria, and organic pollutants is conducted in the mainstream Wash channel. Similar monitoring is performed in all of the major tributaries. The data tracks water quality trends in response to changing conditions along the Wash. Noticeable water quality improvements have been seen after the completion of weir construction and as wetland vegetation is established. In addition, there is a total suspended solids (TSS) and perchlorate monitoring programs that directly measure the effectiveness of erosion control structures and perchlorate remediation. Samples are collected monthly at ten locations throughout the Wash. As the weir construction continues, there have been dramatic reductions in both TSS and perchlorate concentrations. Real time water quality monitoring is also conducted at 5 stations along the Wash and its tributaries. Measurements are taken every 20 minutes and are uploaded to the Wash Team website: www.lvwash.org. These stations monitor pH, electrical conductance, dissolved oxygen and temperature. □



Water sampling in the Wash (SNWA photo)

DWC Facebook and Website

The DWC has had a Facebook page since last fall, and now has close to 340 people who follow our announcements there and post pictures and comments. We hope that people who like our FB page will become Members, and vice versa. We want to use the FB page to encourage discussion on issues relating to the Las Vegas Valley Watershed, and to communicate breaking news and information more quickly than by updating the website pages. So far the majority of our FB followers are from the U.S. but there are also people from Sweden, Canada, Chile, France, Mexico, New Caledonia, and Qatar who keep in touch with us using that medium. Men make up 42% of our fans and women 58%. While our current Members tend to be seniors, we are pleased to see new audiences using FB.

You can reach the page by searching Facebook for Desert Wetlands Conservancy, or by going to <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Desert-Wetlands-Conservancy/125748746837?ref=ts>

We also recently opened a new DWC website, designed by Crear Creative. To reach the site, search the web for Desert Wetlands Conservancy, or go to <http://www.desertwetlands.org> You can also reach our Facebook page from our website. □



Share Our Vision!!

We are an all-volunteer, 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization that receives no regular tax-based support. Our strength and our ability to carry out our mission is through our members. There are many ways to join, access our web page or Facebook, or email membership@desertwetlands.org, or write to DWC, PO Box 28017, Las Vegas, NV, 89126 and you will receive membership information.

Membership options for Individuals and Families

Student/Senior	\$20	Supporting	\$100
Individual	\$25	Sustaining	\$250
Family	\$50	Steward	\$500

All contributions to our programs are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law. There are a number of ways to help us described on our website

Desert Wetlands Conservancy
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Our Thanks To...

New and Renewing Members: *Barbara Moore, Peter Samuolis, Paul Aizey, Peter Kingman, Jack & MJ Harvey, Fred Sigman, Peggy Roefer, Gloria Porter, Martha Wood, Mary Campbell, Helen Bagstad, Arthur Wolf and Holly Chaffee, Glen & Susan Sherman*

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 your interest in watershed issues and the impact on our community!

The Park is a place to enjoy! Have you visited the Park recently? The temporary Visitor Center has been relocated during the construction of the new Visitor Center. Cross Boulder Highway and travel 1 mile east, then look for the Wetlands Park sign, just where Tropicana turns into Broadbent Ave. Head down Wetlands Park Lane, signs will direct you to the new location. 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.



Spring Greenup

Another successful Green-Up was held on March 20th. Over 300 volunteers planted approximately 2000 native trees and shrubs on a 5.2 acre site located between the Upper Diversion Weir and the new In-Lieu Fee Mitigation ponds.

With the completion of this planting, volunteers have planted more than 48,000 native trees, shrubs, and emergents. These plantings protect the channel banks against further erosion and add to the habitat for wildlife, along with enhancing the scenic beauty of the Wash and Wetlands Park. □



Volunteers at work in the planting area

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Newsletter