



Desert Wetlands News & Views

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Desert Wetlands
Conservancy

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.

Birding

In 2006, a survey estimated that there were 48 million birdwatchers in the United States—about 20 percent of the population. To be counted, an individual must have traveled from home for the primary purpose of observing birds in nature or closely observed or tried to identify birds around their homes. Seventy-seven percent reported observing waterfowl, making them the most watched type of birds. Birds of prey came in second, at 71 percent, followed by song birds at 69 percent. The survey also estimated that, in 2006, birders spent \$36 billion on equipment and trips and generated \$82 billion in total industry output across the United States.

There are more than 450 species in 49 families that can be seen in Nevada. More than half of that count, 230 species, have been identified in the Wash. As the Fee-in-Lieu Mitigation Ponds, re-vegetation projects, and other features along the Wash develop, that count will only go up. There are also many other bird watching sites in the Las Vegas area.

Our State bird, the mountain bluebird, (*Sialia currucoides*), is also a visitor of the Wash, though only rarely sighted. The mountain bluebird feeds primarily on insects, catching them in flight, but will also forage for berries. The mountain bluebird was adopted as our State Bird in 1967.

World-wide, there are more than 10,000 species. Some birders travel around the world to add another “lifer” to their list. A few very dedicated individuals, making birding a lifetime objective and going to extraordinary extremes, have seen more than 7,000 species.

Bird watching can be very competitive. In 2008, two British birders, Alan Davies and Ruth Miller, gave up their jobs, sold their possessions and put everything they had into a global, year-long birding adventure called “The Biggest Twitch”, aiming to set a new world record for the number of species recorded in a single calendar year. They finished the year recording 4,341 species, setting a new world record, beating the previous record of 3,663 species. □



Male mountain bluebird (Photo from Wikipedia)

Clark County Desert Wetlands Park

Visiting the Desert Wetlands Park will take some extra planning as the construction of the new Visitors Center cranks up. The temporary Visitors Center is open and has been relocated to the southwest corner of the Nature Preserve, accessed from Hollywood Lane. The old temporary Visitors Center site and parking area will be closed off in the next week or two as construction activities start up.

Accessing the Nature Preserve trails from this starting point works out very well, and a stop at the Visitors Center to pickup a new trail map will help your day



Nature Preserve trail



View of one of the ponds from the new trails in the Nature Preserve.

Walking to the southeast corner of the Nature Preserve will take you to a point where you will be able to see the view shown below. Other than this disruption, there are 160 acres of trails, ponds and vistas to enjoy.

The best way to visit the Fee-in-Lieu Mitigation ponds is via the Duck Creek trails. The trailhead is located on Broadbent Avenue east of the turnoff for the Nature Preserve. There are plans in the works to upgrade the trailhead at this location, including paving the parking

area, but the schedule isn't set yet.

As the weather cools down and the migratory bird activity cranks up, it's a good time to visit one of the unique attractions right here in the Las Vegas area. □



View of lower Fee-in-Lieu Mitigation Ponds showing the new vegetation growth and a visiting blue heron.



Panoramic view of the new Visitors Center construction site, just south of the east end of the Nature Preserve.

NV Energy Power Lines

At least 50 representatives of Protectors of Tule Springs, National Parks Conservation Association and other local groups including the DWC were in attendance at a recent North Las Vegas City Council meeting, supporting their intervention with the Public Utilities Commission versus NV Energy. The Power Line Proposal would cut a 260-foot-wide swath across land rich with fossils, fragile landscape and rare desert plant species.

To counter the union pitch for jobs working on the power line, a young man from the Sierra Club reminded them of the Blue and Green initiative to create more jobs - pointing out that if the power lines are rerouted they would be more expensive and actually provide more jobs!

The North Las Vegas City Council unanimously approved a proposal that will allow Acting Attorney General Nicholas Vaskov and Acting City Manager Maryann Ustick to intervene before the Public Utilities Commission, which will either approve or reject NV Energy's proposal. The item was proposed by Mayor Shari Buck at the August 4 council meeting. A week earlier, Buck traveled to Washington, D.C. to urge congressional leaders not to include the utility corridor in any legislation.

The transmission lines would be used to connect green energy plants in the area from Amargosa Valley to Carson City and is part of Senator Reid's Clean Renewable Energy and Economic Development Act. So opposition to the present routing of the Power Lines will be an uphill battle.

The Spring issue of the Newsletter included an article on the Upper Las Vegas Wash which puts some of the opposing issues in perspective. The Pleistocene-age formation in the upper Wash is considered to be the most significant assemblage of late Pleistocene invertebrate fossil remains within the entire Great Basin and perhaps, the world. The site could be the basis for a future Ice Age Park and potentially a National Monument. Several groups are very concerned about inappropriate intrusions on this potential site. □

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting for the Desert Wetlands Conservancy will be held at the Winchester Community Center from 11AM to 1PM on **Saturday, September 18th**.

Among the items on the agenda are:

- Election of Board Members and Officers. We have two official new candidates,
- An update on the Wetlands Visitor Center and the preview of a short trailer for the film on the Wetlands, by Elsie Sellars,
- A presentation on work in the Wash by Carol Lane,
- An update on the status of the fossil preservation and NV Energy plans in the Upper Wash.
- Plans for participation in the Fall Green-Up and National Trails Day events
- Treasurer's Report
- President's Report
- Other Business.

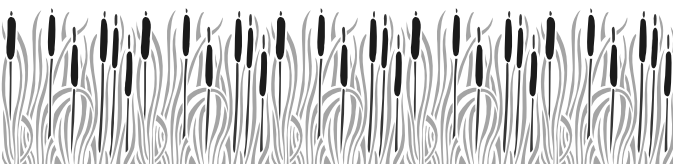
Share Our Vision!!

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, <http://www.desertwetlands.org>, or our Facebook, (search for Desert Wetlands Conservancy) 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
PO Box 28017
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Our Thanks To...

New and Renewing Members: Paul Lim, Robert Means, Marthe Chandler, Jack & Betty Coogan,

**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 Broad-bent 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.

Fall Green-Up



Its once again time for some fresh air and exercise. The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) is gearing up for its 17th Wash Green-Up! The LVWCC is hosting the Fall Green-Up on **Saturday, October 16** from

12 to 4 p.m. Volunteers will plant 5,000 trees and shrubs on about 13.25 acres along the Las Vegas Wash. In case of weather a back up date will be Saturday, October 23. Participation in this community event is limited to only 500 volunteers, so register today. For more information, please call (702) 822-8543. [Register for the Wash Green-Up.](#) □



Volunteers working the site on a previous Green-Up (SNWA photo)



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Newsletter**