



Desert Wetlands News & Views

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Salt Cedars (Tamarisk)

Congress enacted Public Law 109-320, *The Salt Cedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act of 2006*, which directs the Department of Interior to submit a report to Congress to include an assessment of several issues surrounding these two invasive, non-native trees which are dominant components of vegetation along many rivers and washes in the Western United States. The USGS recently released a report, "Saltcedar and Russian Olive Control Demonstration Act Science Assessment", prepared in cooperation with the Bureau of Reclamation and the USDA Forest Service, which is part of the response to the Act. The Report will be available on-line at www.lvwash.org.

The Act calls for an assessment of the trees' infestation on Public and Private lands and specifically to; consider research methods for control, effects on water consumption, re-vegetation or restoration challenges, and costs related to biomass removal. The Act also calls for considerations related to wildlife use and habitat.

job of documenting the distribution and abundance of the trees in the Western United States. On the issue of water savings, it points out the difficulty of determining actual increases in streamflow resulting from the removal of the trees. The other reporting requirements are covered in detail, including a discussion of long-term management strategies, needs for additional study, potentially useful field demonstration projects, and a planning process for on-the-ground projects involving the removal of saltcedar and Russian olive.

One of the major maintenance activities along our watershed is the removal and controlling the spread of saltcedar, especially along the sites of the weir construction and related restoration. The Report is a significant contribution to our knowledge base. □



Saltcedar grove bordering the Wash below Pabco weir showing both cleared and uncleared zones. (LVWCC archive photo)

The Winter 2008 issue of the Newsletter had an article on the Tamarisk invasion in the Wash, which brings some of the issues into perspective. The issue is available on our website.

The Report does a detailed

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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.

Coordination Committee Meeting Notes

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) meets regularly to update its members on its activities in the Watershed. The committee is comprised of local, State, and Federal agencies and citizen members, including the Desert Wetlands Conservancy.

The LVWCC received a “Partners in Conservation” award from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation at the October meeting. Art Wolf accepted the award on behalf of the DWC.



Art Wolf (DWC) receiving award from Lorri Gray-Lee (Bureau of Reclamation)

Over 280 acres have been revegetated along the Wash. The 2010 vegetation monitoring is complete and a draft report is due out soon. Future planting locations include the Lower Narrows and Homestead Weirs. The Spring 2011 Green-Up, scheduled for April 2, is a 9-acre site downstream of the Pabco Weir and will include 3,580 plants. Concerning invasive tree management, in 2001, there were over 1,500 acres of saltcedar along the watershed. That has been reduced to only about 200 acres in 2010.

Two bird surveys have recently been conducted for non-threatened or endangered species. The aquatic bird count survey is conducted monthly and has identified 35 species for weir sites and 50 species at off channel mitigation wetlands. The point-count study has been ongoing for six years. Over 175 species have been detected through that study. The threatened and endangered species monitoring is part of the compliance activities required for building weirs. The first is marsh bird surveys, which are completed for 2010. Notably, no Yuma clapper rails have been detected since 2006 and only one migrant southwestern willow flycatcher has been detected during the study period.

The bat survey was concluded in October 2010 and a six year comprehensive report will be available on the

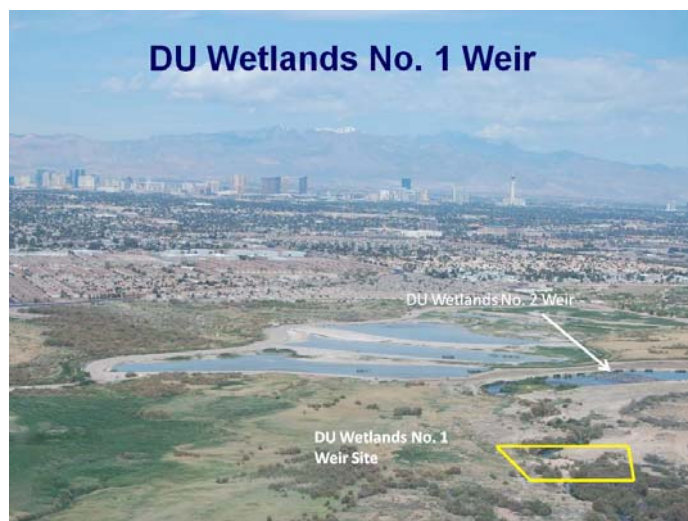
Wash Team website (www.lvwash.org) after external review. The report includes four years of acoustic monitoring data yielding 18 species and six years of live capture data yielding nine species.

Mammal monitoring continues with the large mammal survey concluding this winter. Eight species have been identified including striped skunk, western spotted skunk, ring-tailed cat, raccoon and beaver.

Mainstream water quality monitoring continues bi-monthly at eight sites. Of note was a decrease in selenium levels in the tributaries. Further research will be conducted to understand the cause.

The Clean Water Coalition reported that its board concluded that SCOP will not be necessary for the foreseeable future and will likely be cancelled. The Spring 2008 Newsletter detailed this \$780 million project.

The work plan for the weir construction for the 2011-12 period is estimated to be \$44.7 million, including construction work on 6 weirs and design work on 4 additional weirs. To date, \$92 million has been spent and it is estimated that \$72 million is needed to complete. One of key projects for 2011 is the DU Wetlands No. 1 weir which is critical for the protection of the mitigation ponds.



DU Wetlands No. 1 weir showing proximity to the mitigation ponds. (image provided by Gerry Hester SNWA)

The December rains resulted in a 5000 acre-feet storm event through the Wash without notable damage to the existing structures. Of note, we discussed in the Summer

2010 issue of the Newsletter that the lake level was expected to drop to 1082 feet by October from the then current level of 1099 feet. Indeed, the lake reached that level in November. This winter's storm event through the Wash, the Virgin River and other tributaries into the lake has raised the lake's level to 1091 feet by the end of January. This increase further protects the intakes for the Las Vegas Valley water supply. The bad news is that construction for the third straw has run into problems and will require rerouting the path to the lake, delaying the schedule to complete, probably well into 2013. A new schedule is to be released soon and we will update the issue in the next Newsletter.

Also of concern is the integrity of the Northshore Road Bridge. Erosion at the bridge site had been averaging approximately 3 to 5 feet/year, but is now protected by 3 weirs. If the bridge needs to be relocated, estimates for the project cover a wide range of \$59 million to \$134 million. □



Northshore Road Bridge at the lower end of the Wash. (Wikipedia photo)

World Wetlands Day

Each year, World Wetlands Day (WWD) is celebrated on February 2nd, marking the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, on the shores of the Caspian sea. WWD was celebrated for the first time in 1997 and the event continues to grow.

The Convention on Wetlands, called the "Ramsar Convention," is an intergovernmental treaty that embodies the commitments of its member countries to maintain the ecological character of the wetlands and to plan for the wise use, or sustainable use, of all of the wetlands in their territories.

Each year, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to **undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general and the Ramsar Convention in particular.** From 1997 to 2009, the Convention's Web site has posted reports from more than 98 countries of WWD activities of all sizes and shapes, from lectures and seminars, nature walks, children's art contests, sampan races, and community clean-up days, to radio and television interviews and letters to newspapers, to the launch of new wetland policies, new Ramsar sites, and new programs at the national level.

The theme for 2011 is "Wetlands and Forests" and marks the 40-year anniversary of the signing. With a slogan of "**forests for water and wetlands,**" the theme allows the community to consider how forested wetlands bring specific benefits and why looking after them matters.

The LVWCC celebrated World Wetlands Day to increase awareness at the Clark County Wetlands Park. Activities included a planting event on the east side of the In-Lieu Mitigation Wetland Ponds in the Clark County Wetlands Park Nature Preserve. There were also activities such as short seminars, nature walks, bird viewing and activities for students. Water quality is quite important and this event allows an opportunity for residents to understand how to do their part in **keeping water clean** by appreciating the wetlands. □

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

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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 one 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.

Fall Green-Up



The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) 17th Wash Green-Up was a great success! Nearly 450 volunteers planted 5,000 trees and shrubs on about 13.25 acres along the Las Vegas Wash. The planting area was located along the banks of the Wash between the Lateral Weir and the C-I Channel. The event area was cleared of non-native tamarisk stands by the Bureau of Reclamation construction crew earlier this spring. Thus far, volunteers have planted 53,125 plants on 137 acres. The spring Green-Up is scheduled for April 2, 2011. □



Volunteers working the site on this Green-Up (SNWA photo by Tim Ricks)

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