



Reclamation Construction Crews Return to the Las Vegas Wash

The Bureau of Reclamation construction crew out of Provo, Utah has made its annual trip to the Las Vegas Wash. Since their first year of working on the Las Vegas Wash in 2001, the partnership between the Reclamation's highly skilled crew and the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee has greatly benefited the stabilization efforts and has been a valuable resource in accomplishing the goals of the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan.

Upcoming Meetings

Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee
March 10, 2009 • 3 p.m.



Reclamation construction crews clearing vegetation in 2008.

Over the years, the Reclamation crews have constructed three weirs, conducted maintenance work on other weirs, installed several miles of bank protection and removed more than 500 acres of non-native tamarisk. The construction crews' expertise, their growing familiarity with the Las Vegas Wash as well as a level of flexibility impossible under normal construction contracts have enabled the LVWCC to save more than \$10 million.

The Reclamation crew arrived in Las Vegas on Feb. 22 with another full agenda. Over the next 12 weeks, crews are expecting to remove more than 100 acres of vegetation—most include non-native plants while some include thinning native plants within the flood plain that have grown dense enough to become a potential flood hazard. Crews also are scheduled to use soil to cover some of the existing bank protection near the Pabco Road Weir which will help expand the acreage available for revegetation for the spring Las Vegas Wash Green-Up event on March 21, 2009.

LVWCC Discusses Selenium Management Plan

Symbolic of the local soils, dealing with selenium issues seems to be a part of almost every water quality discussion. In the January Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) meeting, Dr. Khalil Abusaba of the environmental engineering and consulting firm, Brown and Caldwell, gave a presentation on the alternatives analysis report.

Selenium is found naturally in our local soils which can become mobilized by stormwater and urban runoff and end up in the Las Vegas Wash and Lake Mead. The creation of a selenium management plan for the Las Vegas Wash was due in part to the proposed Systems Conveyance and Operations Program (SCOP) project that would reduce the flows in the Las Vegas Wash and therefore increase the concentration of selenium. Biologists currently monitor the water quality for the Las Vegas Wash and its tributaries on a regular basis and even conduct an extensive bioassessment study semi-annually in which sediment, fish tissue and bird eggs are collected and tested for selenium, as well as a list of other potential contaminants.



A dewatering pipe in one of the area tributaries.

The Selenium Management Plan was created in an effort to mitigate threats to the fish and wildlife populations that utilize the Las Vegas Wash. It also was created to protect the endangered razorback sucker population that spawns in the Las Vegas Bay of Lake Mead. With a significant amount of effluent being diverted into the SCOP pipeline, Dr. Abusaba's presentation detailed plan alternatives to address the resulting higher selenium concentrations. The plan recommended two pilot programs in which flows from the Flamingo and Duck Creek tributaries would be diverted into a water reclamation facility to be treated for selenium prior to being released into the Las Vegas Wash given that water quality samples have identified these systems with the highest selenium concentrations. These pilot projects would be conducted from 2010 to 2014 with a full implementation of additional tributaries scheduled for 2014.