



Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

E-mail update

March 2007

2006 Outreach Summary

As the population of the valley continues to grow, so too do the educational outreach efforts of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC). Public involvement was identified by the LVWCC as a critical component of the Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan. As a result, the Administrative Study Team was formed to oversee the LVWCC's outreach and education efforts while also seeking out sources for grant funding. As a part of its role, the study team keeps track of attendance numbers for outreach events to gauge the effectiveness of the public outreach efforts. With more than 1,000 people visiting the Las Vegas Wash as part of organized events and reaching another 5,000 people through off-site community events, it looks as though it was a busy and successful year.

Upcoming Meetings

Operations Study Team
March 7, 2007
8:30 a.m.

Spring Green-Up
March 10, 2007
12:00 p.m.

MAC Meeting
Discussing Duck Creek
March 12, 2007
1:30 p.m.



Elementary students learn about the Las Vegas Wash



Public outreach events include tours out at the Las Vegas Wash, the Mabel Hoggard "Scientist for a Day" program, presentations to classrooms around the valley, lectures at scientific conferences, volunteer efforts like the bi-annual Wash Green-Ups, and booth participation at community events such as the UNLV and Summerlin Earth Fairs and Day with the Experts. In 2006, tours of the Las Vegas Wash were given to several groups from well outside the local community, including college students from Washington state, congressional representatives, and delegates from China and Africa.

Ecotoxicology Report Complete

What in the world is ecotoxicology? It's a field that might just be as foreign as it is important. Ecotoxicology simply combines the methods of ecology and toxicology in studying the effects of toxic substances and pollutants on the environment. As bank stabilization and wetland construction efforts continue along the Las Vegas Wash, water quality monitoring has been an important measure of success. These efforts have already succeeded in reducing total suspended solids by more than 50 percent, but have also raised the question as to whether the pools behind the erosion control structures, which provide habitat for fish and wildlife, were becoming contaminant sinks.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and Southern Nevada Water Authority collaborated on a project to analyze selected contaminants of potential concern in samples of water, sediment, fish tissue, and bird eggs to determine if the national Environmental Protection Agency standards are being met. The chemicals of potential concern include inorganic metals and metalloids such as arsenic and selenium that tend to be found naturally throughout the area, as well as organics, such as pesticides and herbicides that are introduced to the area by development and industrialization. By looking at fish tissue and bird eggs, an important determination can be made regarding whether or not the sampled contaminants are bioaccumulating in these organisms.



Red-winged blackbird eggs used in ecotoxicology study

The recently completed Ecotoxicologic Screening Assessment report assessed the initial 2003 monitoring effort and concluded that the levels of certain chemicals of potential concern found throughout the Las Vegas Wash and its tributaries warrant additional research. Therefore, research was conducted in 2005 and will be repeated in 2007 to confirm the previous results and help identify potential areas of concern.

Did You Know?

One of the many critters that make the Wetlands Park home is the desert tortoise, a federally threatened species. Desert tortoise often live in communities of creosote bush and saltbush scrub with soil conducive to digging burrows. Tortoise hibernate through the winter, are mostly active between early spring and fall, and can live for over 50 years! Through biological surveys conducted in the park, several tortoise burrows have been documented, and in 2003, two live tortoise were found. With the chance of encountering this threatened species in the Wetlands Park, we can help assist in its future recovery by following federal compliance protocols, which include not handling or disturbing observed tortoise or burrows, staying on designated roads and trails, and observing speed limits while in tortoise habitat.



Desert tortoise