

Animals find home in LV Wash vegetation



Dig in for a cause at Las Vegas Wash

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) is looking for volunteers to plant trees and shrubs at the Las Vegas Wash Green-Up on Saturday, Oct. 2, from noon to 4 p.m. Call **822-8584** to volunteer.

The LVWCC was created to manage and protect the Las Vegas Wash, the waterway through which the Las Vegas Valley's urban flows return to Lake Mead. Its members include local, state and federal agencies, environmental groups and the business community.

During the past five years, volunteers working with the LVWCC have added more than 15,000 plants and removed approximately 500,000 pounds of trash from the environmentally sensitive area.

Log on to lvwash.org to learn more.



The bats, frogs and birds that call the Las Vegas Wash home have some nosy neighbors, but the watchful eye is for a good cause.

Biologists working to fortify the Las Vegas Wash with plants and erosion control structures are also studying the animals that are finding a home in the revegetation program. The revegetation effort was initiated by the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) to help stabilize and preserve the wash, a 12-mile channel that serves as a natural filter as water travels toward Lake Mead.

Over the past 30 years, riparian areas—the vegetated sections on each side of the wash—decreased nearly tenfold. By replacing weeds with native vegetation (see sidebar), committee members work alongside biologists and volunteers to protect the wash from future erosion, while enhancing the wildlife habitats.

To date, more than 50 acres have been revegetated with native plants, and eight grade control structures have been installed to help stabilize the wash's banks.


“Since native riparian habitat in the western U.S. has been reduced substantially over the past 100

years, the areas that remain are very important,” explained wash biologist Seth Shanahan. “The activities occurring at the wash provide us with a great opportunity to enhance riparian habitat for many of the native species found in Southern Nevada.”

Biologists are conducting studies on bats, amphibians and birds to better

understand the important relationship between the water and the creatures living in and around it. The Western Yellow Bat, Woodhouse's Toad and Great Blue Heron are just a few of their discoveries.

It's a circle of life that helps researchers determine the

effects stabilization projects have on plants and animals, which—in turn—reveal important insights into the health of the wash's ecosystem. 

“Since native riparian habitat in the western U.S. has been reduced substantially over the past 100 years, the areas that remain are very important.”

Seth Shanahan
Wash Biologist



American Coots nest along the Las Vegas Wash. They typically build nests 8 to 12 inches above the water surface and rely on emergent vegetation for shelter.