



## Tamarisk Leaf Beetle Found in Las Vegas Wash



The tamarisk leaf beetle.

For several years, the tamarisk leaf beetle has been working its way down the Colorado River corridor, and biologists for the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) have been keeping their eyes out throughout the Las Vegas Valley in an effort to spot them.

The beetles were intended to be used as a biological control agent to limit the proliferation of the non-native tamarisk. Tamarisk is known for out-competing native plants and changing ecosystem dynamics in riparian zones. They were known for only eating tamarisk, and large colonies were able to wipe out all of the tamarisk in an area.

When the tamarisk leaf beetle was originally released, it was believed that environmental constraints would prevent the beetle from establishing colonies further south than the 38° north latitude. But it didn't take long for the beetle to migrate past that invisible barrier and move further and further south.

During the summer, monthly surveys are conducted along the Las Vegas Wash, in which biologists inspect tamarisk plants for any evidence of the beetle. The June 2012 survey uncovered the first beetles within the boundaries of the Clark County Wetlands Park. One beetle was located near the Bostick Weir, while another was located near the Powerline Crossing Weir. In addition to these individuals, several other populations were discovered on tamarisk at locations scattered throughout the Las Vegas Valley and Lake Mead.

Although the LVWCC has actively removed most of the non-native tamarisk throughout out the Clark County Wetlands Park and replaced it with native plants, there is still plenty of tamarisk to be found. Many view the beetle's arrival as a mixed blessing. The long term benefit of the beetle's effect on tamarisk is somewhat negated in the short term as the mature trees could provide habitat for area birds, including the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher. It will take some time for native trees to replace the dead tamarisk.

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee

July 10, 2012  
2 p.m.

#### Operations Study Team

July 11, 2012  
10:30 a.m.

#### Research and Environmental Monitoring Study Team

July 11, 2012  
1:30 p.m.

#### Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

July 24, 2012  
8:30 a.m.

## DU Wetlands No. 1 Substantially Completed

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) recently completed the fifteenth weir in the Las Vegas Wash within the Clark County Wetlands Park. Aggregate Construction, Inc. broke ground on the DU Wetlands No. 1 Weir at the end of 2011.

Located near the Clark County Mitigation Ponds and directly downstream of the DU Wetlands No. 2 Weir, the structure is constructed with rock rip-rap. The weir is 285 feet long and has a slope of 20:1, dropping the water elevation by six feet.



Construction on the DU Wetlands No. 1 Weir began in 2011