



## Summer clouds can bring danger

Although Las Vegas receives little more than 4 inches of rainfall per year, the majority of it occurs during the hot summer months, resulting in flash floods. According to the National Weather Service, flash flooding is the number one weather-related killer in the United States. To ensure that you remain safe during flood events, it is important to remember a few tips:

### Upcoming Meetings

#### Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee

Aug. 11, 2011  
3 p.m.



Flooding in the desert southwest can happen suddenly and without warning.

- Even short rainfall events can trigger flooding due to the Las Vegas Valley's hardened soils, which cannot absorb rain as quickly as it falls.
- Exercise caution when driving in the rain, as storm water can rapidly build up in normally dry washes or low-lying areas, making roads impassable.
- Flood water can be powerful, moving up to 30 miles per hour.
- If flooding occurs, get to higher ground immediately. Never attempt to cross flooded areas.

For more information, visit [LVWash.org](http://LVWash.org).

---

## Battle of the birds and the beetles

The 2011 monitoring season for the endangered southwestern willow flycatcher has recently come to a close. Between May 15 and July 17, biologists monitored the small songbirds by surveying the project area a minimum of five times (broken into three survey periods).

The surveys incorporated the use of vocalization play-back to illicit a response from an individual willow flycatcher. Due to the impracticality of distinguishing the southwestern subspecies from more common willow flycatchers, any detections made in the Las Vegas Wash before June 25 were considered short-term migrants unless clear nesting behavior was observed.



A southwestern willow flycatcher was captured and banded at the Las Vegas Wash in 2008.

This year's monitoring effort produced 16 detections, the second highest number in the history of the survey. One of those detections was made after June 25, becoming the third southwestern willow flycatcher detected at the Las Vegas Wash in the last five years; however, no corresponding nesting activity was observed. Because the southwestern willow flycatcher is an endangered species, the federal government requires that the annual surveys are included as part of the overall management activities of the Las Vegas Wash. These surveys are funded, in part, by a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation.

A potential threat to the southwestern willow flycatcher is the tamarisk leaf beetle. Introduced to the Colorado River basin in 2004 as a biological control to defoliate non-native tamarisk trees, it was believed that the leaf beetle would be unable to survive south of Lake Powell, eliminating a negative impact on southwestern willow flycatcher populations. However, the beetles have managed to continue their southern migration and have recently been discovered near Lake Mead.

It is unknown how the defoliation of tamarisk by the beetles will affect southwestern willow flycatcher populations in the future. Biologists will continue to monitor the Wash to determine if the revegetation efforts of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee, combined with the loss of tamarisk habitat in the surrounding area, will change the number of southwestern willow flycatcher detections.