



Fall Wash Green-Up Announced

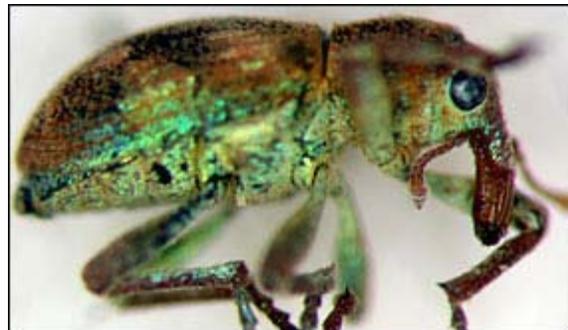
Mark your calendars and save the date for the Fall Wash Green-Up volunteer planting event. The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) is looking for approximately 400 volunteers from the community to plant more than 3,500 native plants on the morning of Oct. 8, 2011. The seven-acre planting area is part of the recently completed Lower Narrows Weir construction project.

For more information on volunteering, click on "Sign Up Here!" in the Become a Volunteer section of the lwwash.org homepage.

What's Bugging You?

Although often thought of as "creepy" and sometimes classified as "pests," insects of all shapes and sizes play an important role in the environment. For example, aquatic macroinvertebrates serve as a locally important food source and they are good indicators of the overall health of the ecosystem.

On behalf of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC), the Bureau of Reclamation and the Southern Nevada Water Authority have conducted benthic aquatic macroinvertebrate studies from 2000-2011.



The splendid tamarisk weevil.

The studies monitored the types and abundance of organisms in water and documented changes in communities related to weir construction. Results indicated an increase in the number of species found at erosion control structures. More information regarding this study can be found on lwwash.org.

Biologists are looking for other sorts of insects by conducting surveys in and around the shrubs and trees near the Las Vegas Wash. The tamarisk leaf beetle, which was reported on in one of last month's articles, is anticipated to arrive at the Las Vegas Wash next year. But the tamarisk leaf beetle will have some competition when it arrives.



A biologist uses a net to sample vegetation during recent insect monitoring.

First discovered at the Las Vegas Wash in 2004, the tamarisk leafhopper is originally from Europe and is a cousin to the cicada. The tamarisk leafhopper feeds on the sap of tamarisk trees.

Another insect that may compete with the leaf beetle is the splendid tamarisk weevil; first found at the Las Vegas Wash and in Nevada in 2010. Originally from the Mediterranean, it was introduced into the United States as a biological control against tamarisk as they feed on tamarisk shoots. Although neither the tamarisk leafhopper nor the splendid tamarisk weevil seem to have a debilitating affect on tamarisk in the area, biologists continue to monitor the spread of both these species throughout the Las Vegas Wash, as well as their impact on tamarisk in areas they've already inhabited.

The fourth documented species that has caught the attention of biologists is the newly discovered Bagrada bug. An enemy of agriculturalists, it is often referred to as the "harlequin bug," known for wiping out fields of crops, especially leafy vegetables. The Bagrada bug was first discovered in the United States in 2008 as it moved across Southern California. Oddly enough, the only plant at the Las Vegas Wash that seems to stimulate the Bagrada bug's appetite is tall whitetop, an invasive weed. The LVWCC has been working closely with the Nevada Division of Forestry to chemically treat the spread of tall whitetop, so it will be interesting to see how the arrival of this insect affects our management techniques.