



Lower Narrows and Homestead Weirs Reach Completion



The newly completed Lower Narrows and Homestead weirs got their first test with a couple of September rain events.

Construction of the Lower Narrows and Homestead weirs has recently been completed. Located downstream of the Calico Ridge Weir (Lower Narrows Weir) and upstream of the Demonstration Weir (Homestead Weir), the combined projects comprise the largest construction area in the Clark County Wetlands Park to date.

With a permanent footprint of 8.9 acres, these two large weirs were constructed simultaneously over nearly 18 months of construction. Both weirs were designed using the riprap-type weir configuration, the preferred and most common material used for Las Vegas Wash erosion control projects. The Lower Narrows Weir is 480 feet across while the Homestead Weir is slightly smaller at 470 feet across.

Originally scheduled to begin in early 2008, this project faced numerous obstacles along the way, including the discovery of a historic site within the construction area. Archaeologists spent the next year excavating and cataloging a homestead foundation and in-ground stone milkhouse from the early 1900s.

Another challenge arose from new perchlorate monitoring guidelines established by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Discussions and collaboration enabled project engineers to develop a dewatering plan and schedule to exceed compliance expectations.

Other obstacles included a sudden rain storm and flooding event at the end of 2010, resulting in significant damage to several pieces of equipment stationed within the channel, as well as the discovery of an active barn owl nest inside a cavity of a cliff wall within the project boundary that was designed to be collapsed and sloped outward. Upon the discovery, the contractor was able to avoid the area, while biologists monitored for several weeks while the clutch hatched and matured enough to leave the nest.

The above examples not only reveal the unpredictable events common with the undertaking of large construction projects, but more importantly highlight the ongoing cooperation between the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee agencies and the positive track record of finding creative solutions to ensure the protection of the surrounding resources.

With the completion of the Lower Narrows and Homestead weirs, 15 of the 22 planned erosion control structures necessary to fully stabilize the Las Vegas Wash are now complete. The temporary project area is being prepared for the Fall Green-Up event, when more than 8 acres will be revegetated with nearly 4,000 native trees, plants, and shrubs. For more information on volunteer opportunities, visit lvwash.org. You also can view progression photographs of the 18-month construction process.

Upcoming Meetings

Administrative Study Team

Oct. 5, 2011
8:30 a.m.

Operations Study Team

Oct. 5, 2011
10:30 a.m.

Research and Environmental Monitoring Study Team

Oct. 5, 2011
1:30 p.m.

Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee

Oct. 11, 2011 3 p.m.

Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

Oct. 25, 2011
8:30 a.m.