

LAS VEGAS WASH COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Virtual Meeting Conducted via Microsoft Teams

Las Vegas, NV

January 26, 2021

8:30 a.m.

Members Present:

Elizabeth Bickmore, *Clark County Wetlands Park (Wetlands Park)*

Dan Fischer, *Clark County Water Reclamation District (CCWRD)*

Joe Leedy, *Clark County Water Quality (CCWQ)*

Zane Marshall, *Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA)*

Brenda Pohlmann, *City of Henderson (COH)*

Peggy Roefer, *Colorado River Commission (CRC)*

John Tennert, *Clark County Regional Flood Control District (CCRFCD)*

Andrew Trouette, *Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)*

Also Present:

Matt Baird

Julia Lantow

John Solvie

Dave Bowers

Natalia Londono-Arroyo

David Stoft

Keiba Crear

Lisa Luptowitz

Todd Tietjen

Christine Dudas

Tom Minwegen

Xiaoping Zhou

Syndi Dudley

Hannah Nicholas

Jason Eckberg

Roger Patton

Deena Hannoun

Ryan Pearson

Ken Lambert

Tim Ricks

Comments by the General Public

No one wished to speak.

1. Welcome/Call to Order

Keiba Crear called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

2. Introductions

Keiba conducted a roll call of members and alternates and those individuals stated which entity they represented.

3. Approve January 28, 2020 Meeting Summary

Keiba asked if anyone had comments on the meeting summary. There were no comments, and the summary was posted to the website following the meeting.

4. Receive Presentation on I-11 Project

Dave Bowers, Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) provided the presentation. Dave reported that the purpose of the I-11 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) project is to select a preferred corridor alignment for a future I-11 through the greater Las Vegas metropolitan area between I-11/US-93 at the Nevada/Arizona border and US-95 in the vicinity of the US-95 Kyle Canyon interchange. He stated that the environmental

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process for this project will consider both environmental and engineering issues to determine the best alternative. Dave provided a brief history on the project noting that the proposal for the I-11 project began prior to 1995 when the Canamex corridor was defined. In 2015, the FAST Act identified and extended the I-11 between I-80 and Arizona. In 2019, the I-11 study was initiated and is currently in the scoping phase. Staff is working on the alternatives development report which will make the final recommendation on the I-11 alignment. The project was originally a Tier 1 environmental impact statement (EIS) but recent requirements led NDOT to transition to a PEL study, which is a federal transportation decision-making process that considers environmental, community and economic goals in the planning stage and carries them through project development. A PEL must include input from interested state, local, tribal and federal agencies as well as the public to help inform the decision-making process. Following completion of the PEL and selection of a preferred corridor for I-11, Tier 2 project-level studies and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) processes may begin to further advance the project to phased design and construction. Dave reported that the purpose and need for the I-11 project are to provide a high-capacity access-controlled corridor; improve access to activity centers within the Las Vegas Valley; facilitate efficient mobility for emergency access, evacuation and national defense; and provide the Congressionally-mandated link through the Las Vegas Valley for a continuous I-11 corridor that connects major metropolitan areas and markets. There are three resource evaluation corridors: 1) the western alignment, which connects the I-11 Boulder City bypass to the Henderson interchange where it meets I-215 and follows it to the south where it will potentially peel off of a future proposed Sheep Mountain corridor; 2) the central corridor, which ties into the I-11 Boulder City bypass and continues through the Henderson interchange, up the I-515 through downtown Las Vegas where it ties into I-95 and terminates in the Kyle Canyon area; and 3) any engineering alternative that would work. These options include passing through the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, some that cross the Las Vegas Wash (Wash) and several other options through Henderson and eastern Las Vegas. Conversations and studies regarding the options are ongoing. Changes in public meetings due to COVID-19 have drastically increased public participation. Option 3 has received significantly more public responses than the other two options. Option 2 has received the least amount of negative feedback.

Following the presentation, Zane asked about the cost differences based on the three corridor alternatives. Dave replied that NDOT did not have final construction estimates at the time, but they will in the future. Zane also asked when the next opportunity would be for the public to provide input on the environmental analysis. Dave replied that there would soon be additional outreach opportunities to provide feedback as required by the environmental process.

5. Receive Update on Hollywood Boulevard Extension

Roger Patton, WSP, gave the presentation. Roger stated that about a year ago, Clark County Public Works (Public Works) asked WSP to do a feasibility study on the possibility of extending Hollywood Boulevard south into the Wetlands Park. Following the feasibility study, Public Works decided to move forward with preliminary engineering work. Roger reported that the purpose of the Hollywood Boulevard extension is for an alternate way to link the primarily residential Sunrise Manor to the commercial and employment areas in

Henderson. Another purpose is to improve recreational access to the Wetlands Park for Sunrise Manor residents. The proposal is a new arterial street with a trail that extends through the Wetlands Park from Hollywood Boulevard to connect to the Henderson street network. WSP initially looked at five different alignments to select the best way to cross the Wetlands Park and the Wash. The alignment selected begins in the north at Hollywood Boulevard and Vegas Valley Drive, follows the existing boulevard extension out to the Sunrise Trailhead, then turns south crossing BOR land, crosses the Wash just below Archery Weir, crosses Duck Creek, then continues south of Silver Bowl Park and ties into Wiesner Way. The road will be widened from two to four lanes, and the alignment will include a 10-foot wide multipurpose trail offset to the west side of the roadway. The crossing includes two bridges totaling more than 800 feet and a roundabout providing access to a new trailhead. This crossing was selected after letters from SNWA and the Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee (LVVWAC) stating this would be the preferred alignment given the width of the Wash and the more mature revegetation areas that would be impacted by the other alignments. Roger summarized some of the characteristics for the extension project: 5.8 miles long, 76-foot wide, 45-mile-per-hour design speed, four lanes and a 10-foot wide multipurpose trail. Initially, it is expected that during peak hours 1,500 cars per hour will cross the bridge; this number is expected to more than double in the next 20 years. The current estimated construction cost is \$36 million. The project could include efforts to stabilize Duck Creek, which would add to the costs.

Following the presentation, Dan Fischer stated that CCWRD was concerned about the design of the roadway behind CCWRD and that CCWRD would like to be part of the design discussions. Dan further explained that the area where the alignment's construction is planned is where CCWRD sludge trucks go in and out, and the area is used for chemical deliveries throughout the day. Roger noted that WSP would set up a meeting with Dan to get CCWRD's input on the project as it pertained to their construction concerns. Zane thanked Roger and his team for taking SNWA's comments regarding the project and asked about the schedule for an environmental assessment (EA) or EIS and when would be the next opportunity to review and comment on the EA and/or EIS documents. Roger stated that they have initiated discussions with BOR to find out what will be needed in the NEPA process. Roger added that they will also be meeting with federal agencies to see what their requirements are for the environmental documents; this will take place over the next 1.5 years. Zane also asked if WSP was coordinating with Clark County Parks and Recreation regarding the Wetlands Park's needs related to flows in Duck Creek. Roger indicated that WSP has had initial discussions including the development of grade control structures on Duck Creek to protect the bridge.

6. Receive Update on Recent Activities

a. Las Vegas Wash Project Coordination Team (Wash Team)

Tim Ricks presented on environmental programs and outreach activities that the team has participated in over the last several months. The 2020 avian point count survey was interrupted for a few months due to COVID-19. The second iteration of the amphibian survey and night searches for snakes were postponed to 2021. Marsh bird surveys, which include Yuma Ridgway's rail, were canceled in 2020, and the southwestern willow

flycatcher survey was abbreviated. The yellow-billed cuckoo survey, vegetation monitoring and photo comparative analysis study were conducted per their normal schedules. The 2020 southwestern willow flycatcher and yellow-billed cuckoo survey report is under review. Staff anticipates being able to conduct all scheduled surveys in 2021. Great Basin Bird Observatory is currently writing the 2005 through August 2020 report for the avian point counts, which identified 237 species within the Wetlands Park; the 2005-2019 report is complete and has been posted on lvwash.org. Regarding revegetation, staff monitored 68 sites or 50 percent of the total sites; the remaining sites will be monitored using ArcGIS mapping software. Due to COVID-19, the spring and fall Wash Green-Ups were canceled. Tim reported that a small Girl Scout planting project related to earning the Gold Award was conducted, in which three small groups of Girl Scouts worked on revegetating approximately three acres at Historic Lateral South. Soil-Tech planted 600 milkweeds at Historic Lateral South and 1,500 trees at Sunrise Mountain North. Regarding invasive weed management, staff removed more than 11 acres of tamarisk in early 2020 using \$62,000 of Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) funding. The Lake Mead Exotic Plant Management Team (LMEPMT) surveyed 132 acres in August and September and of those 132 acres, treated 1.8 acres of Johnson grass, Malta starthistle and silverleaf nightshade. NDF Conservation Crews worked to clear tamarisk and trash at Pabco North: four large dumpsters of trash/tamarisk were filled. For outreach, the Wash Team was able to host or participate in 10 events prior to the shutdown, reaching approximately 850 people. Staff have also reached hundreds more through virtual outreach. The Wash Facebook page is up to 1,223 followers and the e-newsletter currently has 332 subscribers. Tim reported that the 2020 year-end report is currently being drafted. Due to COVID-19 restrictions not allowing for school field trips, staff worked to develop six videos to create a virtual experience to show to students in a classroom setting. The videos provide an introduction to the Wash, water quality, wildlife, vegetation and food webs. The plan is to also use these videos in elementary schools throughout the valley for students that cannot attend the field trips even under ideal conditions. The videos are expected to be ready before the end of the school year. In the area of grant funding, there is \$710,000 in obligated funding provided by BOR. Staff has two funding agreements with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP): one for \$37,000 covering the 2019-2020 Mabel Hoggard program and Wash Green-Ups and another for \$36,500 covering the 2020-2021 Mabel Hoggard program, Wash Green-Ups and stormwater pollution poster contest. Staff applied for \$67,500 to cover the 2021-2022 Mabel Hoggard program and two Wash Green-Ups as well as plants and irrigation supplies. A grant agreement with NDF provided \$62,000 for salt cedar removal.

Following Tim's presentation, the committee had a brief discussion regarding the collected bird data and how that information guides management decisions within the larger Wash program.

Ryan Pearson reported on ongoing stabilization efforts from the Operations Study Team. He noted that this spring, reestablishing the Calico and Bostick weirs will be conducted by Las Vegas Paving and reconstruction of the Lower Narrows through Powerline Crossing weirs will be conducted by BOR crews. The plan is to return those facilities back to their originally constructed lines and grades. This work is expected to be completed by June

2021. Ryan reported that through a professional services agreement with WSP, they have completed the facilities assessment report and contributed to the Las Vegas Wash Long-Term Operating Plan (LTOP); the letter of map revision to the Federal Emergency Management Agency is still in process and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2021.

Xiaoping Zhou presented on water quality monitoring, starting with a list of ongoing programs. He then reported on shallow groundwater monitoring data. The program, conducted along both sides of the Wash, was initiated in 2003 due to the expectation of using groundwater for irrigating revegetation sites. It expanded to 16 monitoring wells in 2009 and transitioned from monthly to quarterly sampling; data presented were collected between 2009 and 2020. Field personnel measure temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, electrical conductance and water levels and collect water samples for analysis. The lab analyses include major ions, nutrients, perchlorate and metals. Xiaoping showed a map of the locations of the monitoring wells and a slide with photos of what the monitoring wells look like. He reported that the monitoring wells located on the south side of the Wash recorded high total dissolved solids (TDS) levels, 2,000-5,000 mg/L, which is typical for shallow groundwater. The monitoring wells located on the north side recorded relatively lower TDS concentrations. Nitrate concentrations from wells along the south side were relatively low until Pabco Weir, at which point they began to increase due to the impacts of mixing with Wash water in that area. Nitrate concentrations from wells along the north side of the Wash were also generally low, but this area also has wells where Wash water mixes with shallow groundwater. Orthophosphate (OP) concentrations in wells on the south side were relatively low, less than 0.1 mg/L, while on the north side of the Wash, OP concentrations were even lower, generally less than 0.05 mg/L. Perchlorate along the south side of the Wash showed high concentrations, 1,000-2,000 mg/L, while perchlorate along the north side was relatively low but began to increase at Pabco Weir. Average metal concentrations from wells along the south side of the Wash were low, at less than 1 mg/L, but were much lower along the north side. Selenium concentrations along the south side were high, up to 40 mg/L, but were much lower on the north side of the Wash, usually 5-10 mg/L.

b. Clark County Wetlands Park (Wetlands Park)

Elizabeth Bickmore presented on Wetlands Park activities over the past year. The park remains open from dawn to dusk and the administrative offices are now open Tuesday-Sunday. All indoor facilities except for the restrooms have been closed due to COVID-19. The Wetlands Park has staffed three new positions—park police chief, environmental specialist and digital media recreation assistant—and has experienced a 99 percent increase in visitation over the previous year. Elizabeth reported that there was a flood and three fires at the Wetlands Park within the past year. One of the fires burned 18 acres and resulted in the loss of the Cottonwood Bridge.

The Wetlands Park has focused on restoration projects in the Neighborhood Park, plantings in the Nature Preserve and fuel-reduction efforts. Staff have also been able to do weir clean-up in conjunction with SNWA downstream of the Big Weir Bridge (i.e., Upper Diversion Weir bridge) and Pabco Weir. The Wetlands Park is working on fuel-reduction projects

with the Bureau of Land Management, NDF and LMEPMT. The Wetlands Park also unveiled new programs including the Spooky Maze, Holiday Lane and Story Walk and began offering virtual programs for school field trips. The Wetlands Park currently has 130 volunteers who are working on videos, an e-newsletter, a website upgrade and a web application. Future projects include installation of gates, barriers and fencing along the south side of the Wetlands Park and construction of the Nature Play Corner through a Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act grant. Construction is expected to begin in spring 2021. The Wetlands Park will also be reviewing the Transwest Powerline proposal to install two towers to expand the existing powerline corridor.

Following the presentation, Zane asked if there was an opportunity to create a solution to address the Wetlands Park's concern regarding Duck Creek in relation to the Hollywood Boulevard extension alignment. Elizabeth replied that one of the biggest concerns for that general area is to address the Duck Creek headcut that could impact the in-lieu fee mitigation wetlands project. She added that the Wetlands Park will need to have a trail going through that area and will also need to go around private land. Elizabeth further explained that this issue has been discussed with Public Works and LVVWAC.

c. Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee (LVVWAC)

Keiba provided an update on LVVWAC. She reported that LVVWAC met in January and elected Priscilla Howell as chair and Mark Dunbar as vice chair. Since the last Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) meeting, LVVWAC met in March, October and November of 2020 and January of 2021. During the March meeting, the LTOP was approved, with a \$2.4 million budget per year addressing 36 actions in six categories to maintain Wash program assets and continue Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan implementation. Also, the 2020 Las Vegas Wash Capital Improvements Plan was approved, and the wastewater dischargers provided their annual updates. At the October meeting, the 2019 Regional Water Quality Plan accomplishments document was approved, and the committee received updates on regional water quality issues, the Lower Las Vegas Wash (Lower Wash) and NDEP standards. At the November meeting, LVVWAC approved SNWA to apply for a watershed-based BOR grant. At the January 2021 meeting, LVVWAC received updates on the Wetlands Park, LVWCC 2020 activities, Stormwater Quality Management Committee and the Lower Wash. Also, there was a presentation on the selenium study. Lastly, LVVWAC received a presentation on the Wash budget, but the vote to approve it was delayed until the meeting scheduled for February 9, 2021 at 1 p.m.

d. Emerging Issues

There was no discussion among the member agencies.

7. Set Next Meeting Date/Time and Propose Items for the Next Meeting's Agenda

The next meeting is scheduled for April 27, 2021. Keiba stated that while April is typically when the Wash tour is held, the Wash Team is delaying the tour until October.

Comments by the General Public

Seeing no request from the public to comment, the meeting was adjourned.

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