

las vegas wash coordination committee

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Las Vegas Wash Outreach Plan, 2013



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SOUTHERN NEVADA
WATER AUTHORITY



Las Vegas Wash Outreach Plan, 2013

SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY Las Vegas Wash Project Coordination Team

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Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

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ABSTRACT

The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee, a 29-member stakeholder group, is working to stabilize and enhance the Las Vegas Wash (Wash), the channel that drains flows from the Las Vegas Valley to Lake Mead at Las Vegas Bay, by implementing the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan. Public outreach is an important component of the Wash project. This plan reaffirms outreach goals, establishes core messages, describes strategies, defines target audiences, outlines program tactics, discusses partnerships and partner efforts, and describes methods to evaluate effectiveness and use that data to improve outreach implementation.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The Las Vegas Wash (Wash) flows through the Clark County Wetlands Park (Wetlands Park) and is the primary drainage channel for the Las Vegas Valley watershed, carrying urban runoff, treated wastewater, shallow groundwater and stormwater into Lake Mead (Figure 1). In returning treated wastewater to Lake Mead, the Wash also functions as a return flow conveyance, increasing the amount of water that Nevada can withdraw from Lake Mead by an acre-foot for every acre-foot of Colorado River water returned. The Wash was originally an ephemeral stream; however, perennial flows began in the 1950s with the discharge of treated wastewater in to the channel. As the valley grew, the volume of the flows continued to increase, and coupled with flows from major storm events, incised the channel, eroded wetlands and deposited millions of cubic feet of sediment in to Lake Mead.

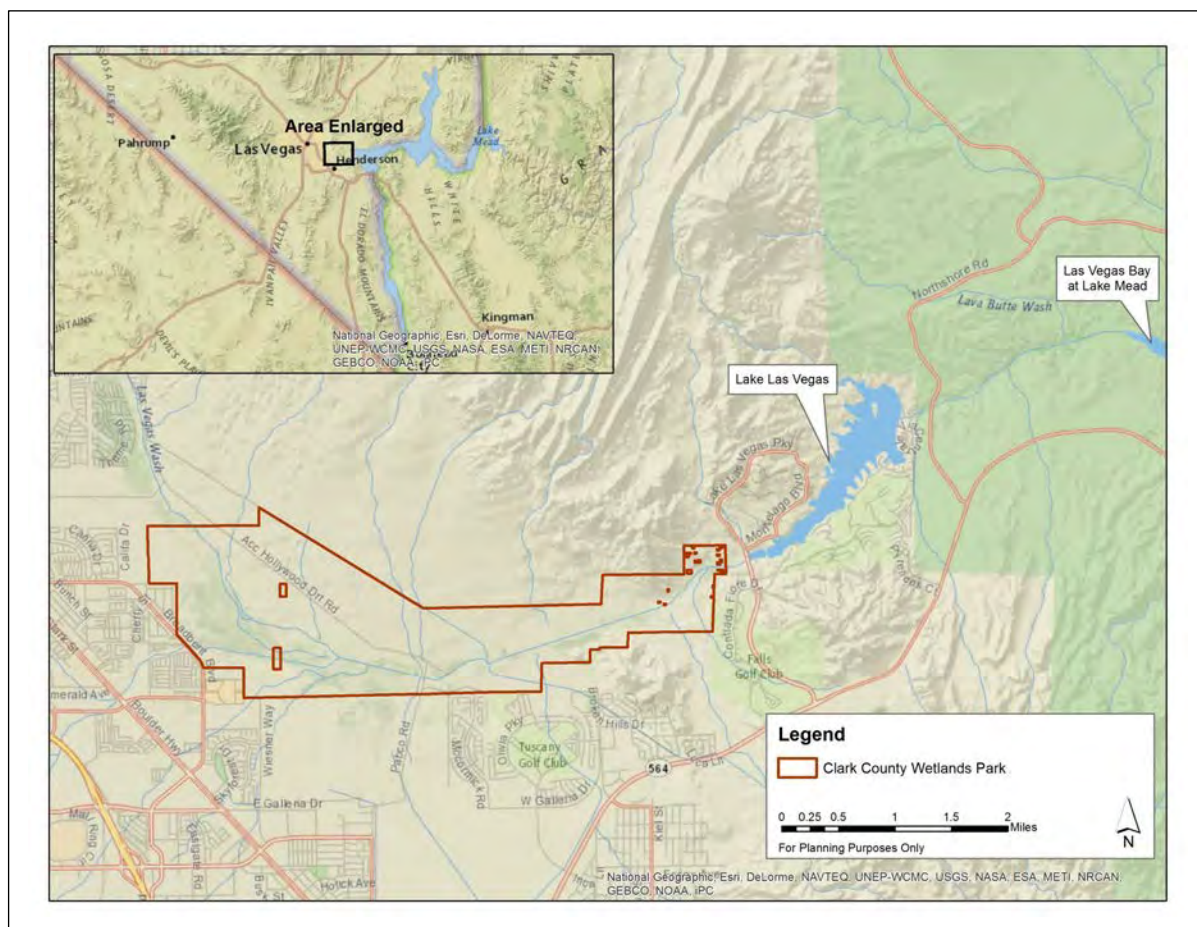


Figure 1: Las Vegas Wash location and general study area map.

In 1997, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) assembled a citizens advisory committee to evaluate water quality issues in the Wash, Las Vegas Bay, and Lake Mead. These efforts resulted in the establishment of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC), now a 29-member stakeholder group consisting of federal, state, and local agencies, a university, private businesses, an environmental group, and citizens. In 2000, the LVWCC drafted a long-

term management plan, the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan (CAMP), to facilitate stabilization and enhancement activities along the Wash (LVWCC 2000).

Public outreach was recognized early on as an important activity for the LVWCC. In Chapter 13 of the CAMP (Appendix A), the Public Outreach Study Team established two outreach goals: 1) to increase community participation in and awareness of the Wash as an environmental resource, and 2) to increase community and public official participation in and awareness of the LVWCC's activities on the Wash. In Appendix 13.2 of the CAMP, the study team established an outreach program with communication objectives, core messages and strategies, and laid out 14 tactics to help with implementation (Appendix B). They also recommended the following actions items: 1) establish a method to continue implementation of the public outreach program; 2) continue implementation of feedback mechanisms and measurements of progress and results; and 3) provide updates to elected officials (Appendix A).

Using the guidelines provided in the CAMP, the LVWCC implemented the outreach program. Much of this work was and is conducted by the Las Vegas Wash Project Coordination Team (Wash Team), the implementation arm of the LVWCC, under the guidance of the Administrative Study Team, the stakeholder body that oversees public outreach activities. In 2002, the LVWCC furthered its commitment to the program with the Public Outreach Initiative, 2002-2004 (POI; LVWCC 2002; Appendix C). The POI added a new layer to the outreach program, with the addition of goals to increase public understanding of the Wash's role in the watershed, of the local hydrologic cycle, and of how they themselves influence water quality in the channel.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

The LVWCC has implemented the public outreach program for nearly 15 years now. In that time, the Wash Team participated in approximately 550 events and reached more than 220,000 people with Wash-related messages. Volunteer opportunities were created in the form of Wash Clean-Ups, where the public picked up hundreds of thousands of pounds of trash from the Wash, and then transitioned to the Wash Green-Ups held from 2001 through the present, in which the community helps revegetate the Wash's banks with native plants. Taking advantage of increased use of the Internet, the Wash Team launched two websites early on, one for the public and one for stakeholders, and in more recent years, established an e-newsletter (the Email Update) and a Facebook page to further engage the public and provide a steady stream of project information.

Through the implementation of these and other tactics recommended in the CAMP and POI, the Wash Team has learned a great deal about how to conduct various types of outreach, but how effective is that outreach? Staff collects much of the data recommended in the CAMP under action item 2 for public outreach (Appendix A). These data tally how many people have been reached with Wash messages, but have not been as helpful in quantifying how effective the outreach has actually been; in other words, is the Wash Team achieving LVWCC outreach goals?

The importance of increased awareness of the Wash and its role in the Las Vegas Valley watershed, as well as the continued participation of the public in the Wash project, cannot be overstated in terms of the project's long-term success. An informed and involved public will help ensure the continued political will to complete project implementation and to sustain

constructed resources in to the future. Likewise, a community that cares about protecting the Wash and whose citizens understand how they impact water quality will be more likely to behave in an environmentally responsible manner that benefits Wash water quality and ecological health. Thus, the Wash Team needs to ensure it effectively communicates Wash messages.

The purpose of this outreach plan is to reaffirm the LVWCC's commitment to outreach as outlined in the CAMP (Appendices A and B) and furthered by the POI (Appendix C), establish a renewed focus for future outreach efforts, and outline effectiveness monitoring techniques and how they will be used to ensure the LVWCC is meeting its outreach goals.

The plan will:

- Establish/reaffirm goals and core messages for the outreach program.
- Describe program strategies.
- Define target audiences.
- Outline program tactics.
- Discuss partnerships and partner efforts.
- Review methods to evaluate effectiveness, and describe how effectiveness monitoring will be used to improve outreach implementation.

2.0 GOALS

The public outreach program established by the CAMP (Appendices A and B) and furthered by the POI (Appendix C) laid out goals that are still pertinent to the LVWCC's efforts today, and so, the goals of the outreach program remain the same or similar to iterations from these documents.

- Increase public understanding of the role the Wash plays in the Las Vegas Valley watershed.
- Increase awareness in valley residents that they affect the quality of water flowing in to the Wash (and Lake Mead) and that by changing their behaviors, they can improve Wash water quality.
- Strengthen community participation in and awareness of the Wash as an environmental resource.
- Enhance public awareness of the collective efforts by the LVWCC to stabilize and enhance the Wash.

3.0 CORE MESSAGES

In 2004, the LVWCC's oversight committee adopted a vision for the Wash: "The Lower Las Vegas Wash established and maintained as an integrated community resource." They also drafted a mission: "To develop the Lower Las Vegas Wash into a resource for the community by stabilizing erosion, protecting water quality, and supporting the development of the Clark County Wetlands Park." The Wetlands Park comprises 2,900 acres, and the Wash flows through and is an integral component of it.

Taking the newly affirmed goals and the vision and mission as direction, the Wash Team developed three core messages for the outreach program, as well as secondary, supporting statements. Ensuring consistent delivery of these messages will help meet program goals and ensure the Wash vision and mission become a reality. The messages can also be disseminated to LVWCC member agencies and project partners so they can assist in their delivery.

1. The Wash flows into Lake Mead, the valley's drinking water supply; protect it from pollution.
 - Tributaries like Pittman Wash and Monson Channel carry urban run-off from valley neighborhoods into the Wash, which then flows into Lake Mead. Protect Wash (and Lake Mead) water quality by disposing of trash, pet waste, motor oil and other household waste properly (with Republic Services).
 - The Wash is the watershed's only return flow conveyance, and thus is the primary conduit for increasing the amount of water Nevada can withdraw from Lake Mead.
2. The Wash and Wetlands Park are among southern Nevada's most unique environmental and recreational resources and deserve protection (POI [Appendix C]).
 - The Wash and Wetlands Park provide habitat for hundreds of species of plants and animals, many of which can be seen and enjoyed at the Wetlands Park Nature Preserve.
 - The Las Vegas Wash Wildlife Management Plan (WMP; Shanahan et al. 2008) includes a management objective to "increase environmental awareness of [Wash wildlife and habitat] resources in the community." This supporting statement will help the Wash Team achieve it.
 - Visit the Wetlands Park Nature Center (Nature Center), a world class facility with educational exhibits and expansive views of the surrounding wetlands (Figure 2).
 - Get out and explore the Wash and Wetlands Park via the vast network of trails.
3. The LVWCC is implementing a comprehensive program to stabilize the Wash against erosion, protect its water quality and enhance its environmental resources.

While the desire is to consistently convey these messages to the public, it is important not to be too rigid in their application. Certain outreach strategies and tactics or target audiences might require re-wording the messages for greater effect. Thus, the consistency of the delivery applies more to the intent behind the messages, rather than the specific words provided above.

4.0 STRATEGIES

Several strategies have been used to implement the outreach program in the past, and will continue to form a base for implementation of this plan. The Wash Team selected these strategies based on experience and a review of *Getting in Step: A Guide to Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns* (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency 2003) and *Eight Principles of Public Outreach: Recruiting Diverse Groups to Participate* (Goldman and Peters 2010). As staff initiates effectiveness monitoring and receives data, strategies will be adjusted as needed.

1. Encourage people to recreate at the Wetlands Park and appreciate the area's natural beauty and resources (POI [Appendix C]).

This strategy was first described in the POI (Appendix C) and ties directly to the second message and its supporting statements; however, it provides a platform for delivery of the other messages as well. People value the natural areas in which they recreate and want to protect them from degradation. Experiencing the beauty of the Wash and seeing the benefits it provides as an open space will encourage people to learn more about the area and to treat it with respect. Also, unlike many of southern Nevada's natural spaces, admission to the Wetlands Park and all its facilities is free, so there are no financial barriers to access. The Nature Center (Figure 2), which opened in April 2013,



Figure 2: The Wetlands Park Nature Center.

significantly increased the recreational and educational value of the area, especially for families. The facility's watershed, wildlife, habitat, and Wash stabilization exhibits reinforce and expand on all core messages. The Nature Center also provides an introductory film to the surrounding area. The recently completed trail network (mountain and road-biking, hiking, and horseback riding) on the north and south banks, along with two new trailheads and the existing Sunrise Mountain Picnic Area, will appeal to a wide variety of outdoor enthusiasts, while the trails within the Nature Preserve and Duck Creek Trailhead area can provide easy access for those wishing for a more relaxing walk or ADA or stroller accessibility. Kiosks and waysides in the Nature Preserve also educate visitors about the Wash, its resources, and non-point source pollution.

2. Maximize opportunities for members of the community to participate in educational outreach at the Wash.

This comes in part from a "seeing is believing" mentality, as does encouraging people to recreate at the Wetlands Park. It's hard to care about something that is an abstraction. Getting people out to the Wash makes it tangible for them. In addition, educational outreach, such as tours and student education field trips, allows the Wash Team to engage the target audience for one to several hours, providing them with a deeper knowledge of the Wash and issues surrounding it, and increasing their absorption of Wash messages. Many people do not understand what a watershed really is, let alone why it is important and educational outreach provides the opportunity to rectify that. With their new knowledge, participants are more likely to engage in watershed-friendly behaviors and are also more likely to become new ambassadors and spokespeople for the project, telling their friends and family about it and increasing the reach of Wash messages in to the community. As a result, even though groups taken to the Wash for

educational outreach may be relatively small, say 10 to 50 people per event, the number of people reached is greater and the effects are longer lasting.

3. Sustain or increase volunteer events and participation at the Wash.

Wash volunteer events currently draw hundreds of people. These events, while typically focused on a particular activity (planting, weeding, picking up garbage) rather than education, provide members of the community with the chance to actively participate in the enhancement of the Wash, giving them ownership in the project. The educational component of these events could also be enhanced through additional training of volunteer supervisors.

4. Sustain or increase interaction between knowledgeable Wash personnel and the community.

While educational outreach conducted in the field is particularly effective, the enhanced time to explain more complex concepts provides value, even if the outreach is conducted away from the Wash, such as a staff presentation in a school, community center or at a stakeholder meeting. Likewise, personal interaction with knowledgeable staff can be effective even if that contact is brief, such as when someone stops by the LVWCC booth at an Earth Day Fair. Community outreach events such as these enable the Wash Team to elevate the awareness of the Wash and its role in the Las Vegas Valley watershed in larger groups of people (hundreds to sometimes thousands). It also is a way to solicit project input from a broad section of the public. Contact at these events can be used not only to convey Wash core messages, but also to convince attendees to sign up for the Email Update, follow the Wash project on Facebook, volunteer for a Wash Green-Up or request educational outreach.

5. Relay Wash messages through a variety of mediums – web resources, printed material, radio spots, etc.

People generally need to hear something a few times before it sinks in. Using several methods to convey messages enhances the likelihood that people will be exposed to the information more than once. Also, in today's world, people obtain information from a variety of different sources, with some ignoring certain mediums in favor of others. A strong Internet presence is especially necessary, as more and more people obtain information almost exclusively on-line. By broadcasting Wash messages through several mediums, the LVWCC will reach a greater diversity of people and be more likely to achieve its communication goals.

5.0 TARGET AUDIENCES

Currently, the Wash Team conducts much of its outreach on a per-request basis, but it would also be helpful to target specific audiences and initiate contact with them, particularly given the strategies of the plan to maximize opportunities for educational outreach at the Wash and to sustain or increase participation in volunteer events and interaction between staff and the public. Those who contact the Wash Team for outreach may not be those most in need of receiving Wash messages (although they might be more receptive to them).

The goals of the outreach plan are broad and are meant to target the local community, as it is that community whose behaviors affect the Wash and that community who is affected by the Wash, as it flows into Lake Mead, their drinking water supply. Therefore, the target audience, to some extent, includes all residents in the valley. However, within that broad audience are distinctions that will influence how to reach out to them. Select audiences are discussed below, recognizing that people may fit into several different categories.

5.1 Single Family Home Owners and Renters

Those who own or rent single family homes can have a substantial impact on the Wash through their behaviors. They may empty their pool in the storm drain, change their motor oil in the driveway, or fail to clean up after their dog on a walk, all of which may cause non-point source pollution to enter the channel. Consequently, reaching out to this group and increasing their awareness and knowledge of the Wash is critical. As some examples, the Wash Team could reach out to homeowners' associations of communities that border the Wetlands Park or to community leaders from neighborhoods bordering tributaries.

5.2 Outdoor Enthusiasts

With the miles of trails that have recently opened, the Wetlands Park is now an outdoor enthusiast's dream. Hiking, horse-back riding, mountain- and road-biking, and wildlife viewing are all easily accessible, as is the park's location on the eastern side of Las Vegas. Encouraging those who already enjoy the outdoors to discover the Wash will increase the number of people who value and want to protect it.

5.3 Students

5.3.1 K-12

It is a widely held belief that providing environmental education to youth not only increases their knowledge of environmental issues and positively impacts their behaviors towards the environment, but that they transfer their new knowledge and behaviors to their parents. Although widely held, there had been little empirical data to support this belief until recently. Damerell et al. (2012) conducted a study in the Seychelles aimed at quantifying changes in knowledge and behavior in both the children who received education on wetland ecology and conservation and in their parents, compared to those who did not receive such education. Their findings showed both a significant increase in the knowledge of children and parents and an improvement in water use behavior, proving that children-centric environmental education can educate, and influence the behaviors of, the entire family.

K-12 covers a broad age and development range. Within this larger category are natural divisions related to child development (e.g., K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12). Outreach materials and activities will be designed to target specific divisions. Regardless of the grade level, the aspiration will be to develop a depth of knowledge that will result in both recall of facts about the Wash and more watershed-friendly behaviors at home.

5.3.2 College

College students are already in the process of learning new information, making them ready to absorb information about the Wash. They can also become passionate ambassadors for causes

that draw their interest. University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and the College of Southern Nevada, both located in the Las Vegas Valley, provide opportunities to reach out to the area's undergraduate and graduate students. The communication goals of the Wash Team coincide with learning objectives of classes such as natural history, ecology and environmental studies, making it an ideal field trip for the class and the perfect chance to convey Wash messages to a willing audience. In addition, courses such as these may provide general education credit and so attract a wide diversity of students, many of whom are not familiar with the Wash or wetlands in the valley.

Volunteer events resonate with university fraternities and sororities. As the latter groups are required to participate in monthly community service, minimal effort targeting them could produce a substantial increase in their participation in Wash Team events.

5.4 Minorities

The ethnic landscape of Clark County is diverse, with more than 50% of people censused in 2012 identifying themselves as non-white or as Hispanic or Latino (United States Census Bureau website, accessed August 13, 2013). Three ethnic groups account for the majority of this statistic: Hispanic or Latino at 29.8%, Black or African American at 11.3%, and Asian at 9.4%. In order to better reach out to these communities, time must be spent becoming familiar with cultural differences and how the cultural norms of the different groups might affect their learning about, and behavior towards, the Wash. Additionally, 32.4% of people censused stated that a language other than English was spoken at home. Given these statistics, the dissemination of Wash messages would likely be helped by having some printed materials available in languages besides English.

5.5 Financially Disadvantaged

Nearly 13% of people censused in Clark County live below the poverty level (United States Census Bureau website, accessed August 13, 2013). That the Wetlands Park and its facilities are free to the public, including the Nature Center and all of its exhibits, is an outstanding recreational and educational benefit. The Wash Team needs to promote this along with non-car methods for traveling to the Wash and Wetlands Park, such as bus and bike.

5.6 Special Interest Groups

Over the course of this project, there has been consistent involvement by special interest groups such as the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts, particularly during volunteer events. The Wash Team will continue partnerships with these and others such as local church groups and employer-based volunteer groups. Members of these groups are often already environmentally aware and are thus more inclined to internalize Wash messages and become spokespeople for the project within the community.

In addition to volunteer events, these groups are also good targets for possible educational outreach, such as Wash tours or presentations.

5.7 Businesses

A variety of local businesses can influence the water quality and environment of the Wash. Ensuring that landscapers dispose of their yard waste at approved facilities and that automotive

facilities do the same with used oil and other waste is another step towards protecting the Wash and Lake Mead from pollution. Golf courses along or near the tributaries could be another target, to prevent excess fertilizer use and encourage noxious weed control.

5.8 Stakeholders

There are 29 formally recognized stakeholders on the LVWCC. The Wash Team needs to ensure stakeholders remain aware and informed of progress and Wash messages so they can be ambassadors for the project, not only at home and within the community, but with their senior management and with elected officials, as well.

5.9 Other

The efforts of the LVWCC have reached national and international audiences through the website, presentations at conferences, and various articles about the Wash project in peer-reviewed journals and other publications. As a result of this exposure, the Wash Team periodically conducts outreach to those who live well beyond the borders of the Las Vegas Valley. While the actions of those living outside the watershed may not have a direct impact on the Wash, the information exchanged during these interactions further supports the LVWCC's efforts.

6.0 TACTICS

To accomplish outreach objectives, the following tactics have been and will continue to be used. In addition to a general description of each tactic and examples of how it has been or will be accomplished, information on cost and approximate number of people reached is given.

6.1 Briefings

Briefings with senior managers, elected officials and other notable community leaders are and will continue to be conducted. Briefings communicate the importance and benefits of the project, while keeping parties updated on the project's success. They can also be used to address concerns about the project and its effect on communities and the environment. Briefings can be conducted by Wash Team or member agency staff.

The cost of conducting briefings is minimal, just staff time for preparation and presenting. This tactic reaches a limited number of people, but is still very important. By sustaining the continued support of public officials and of LVWCC member agency senior management, the Wash Team helps to ensure the continued success of the stakeholder effort. Knowing that there is periodic turnover in these positions, Wash Team staff needs to be alert to changes in the people holding these positions, and be sure that new individuals are briefed.

6.2 Educational Outreach

Educational outreach is herein defined as those activities geared towards imparting detailed information about the Wash project, the local watershed and/or the Wash environment. These activities also often provide the Wash Team more contact time with participants than other forms of outreach.

6.2.1 Presentations

Presentations can take several forms and have different audiences and purposes. A general overview presentation of the Wash project was developed by staff long ago and is given to groups upon request. This presentation will be updated to ensure it reflects the messages outlined in this plan. In addition, staff members present quarterly project updates to the various stakeholder committees that oversee and guide Wash activities, including the LVWCC, Las Vegas Valley Watershed Advisory Committee, and the Administrative, Operations and Research/Environmental Monitoring study teams. Staff also gives presentations at professional conferences, covering research on water quality, wildlife research, and riparian restoration. While typically more focused in nature, these presentations also include general project information, providing a valuable overview in addition to more in-depth research.

Presentations are minimal in cost, requiring only staff time, and reach an average of approximately 150 people per year.

6.2.2 Student Education

6.2.2.1 K-12

For nearly 15 years, the Wash Team has partnered with Mabel Hoggard Math and Science Magnet School to educate fifth grade students on the Wash and its role in the watershed. This outreach starts with an introductory visit to the classroom, in which staff gives students an overview of the Wash. On another day, the Wash Team takes students out to Lake Mead and the Wash to become scientists for a day. Students are given a backpack with a notebook, pen and binoculars. Staff leads the fifth graders through activities that teach them about Wash water quality and ecology (including wildlife and habitats in support of the WMP [Shanahan et al. 2008; Figure 3]) and teach them the differences between Wash water and Lake Mead water. The notebook helps guide them through the day's activities and provides a location for recording data. The field trip experience has also been adapted to periodically include wastewater treatment tours as well as water treatment facility tours, when time allows.



Figure 3: Mabel Hoggard students learn about a cactus mouse firsthand during the enhanced wildlife portion of their field trip.

The Wash Team also conducts outreach with other schools on a per-request basis. This typically involves a shorter field trip to the Wash of a few hours. During this field trip, the Wash Team typically meets the students at the Nature Preserve and cycles them through a variety of stations, covering water quality, biological resources, and other topics. When a class is unable to visit the Wash or is grades K-2, staff visits the school with a presentation or activity. The Wash Team has a special notebook for students aged K-2 that guides the activity with them.

In order for the Wash Team to most effectively implement youth-oriented outreach, staff has incorporated elements from Nevada school curriculum. In October 2010, Nevada moved to the Common Core State Standards to ensure students are college and career ready. The standards incorporate reading, science, math and social studies along with health and physical education, and are becoming the foundation for curriculum design, instructional practice and formative assessments. In association with Nevada Department of Education Science Standards, students will be able to “understand the impacts of science and technology in terms of costs and benefits to society” (N.12.B); and “know the benefits of working with a team and sharing findings” (N5.B.3). The Wash Team’s student educational outreach can help fulfill these standards, and the Mabel Hoggard field trip notebook was recently updated to include standard components.

K-12 student educational outreach requires staff time and activity notebooks, which cost \$5,000 for 3,000 books. K-12 outreach typically reaches an average of approximately 300 students per year.

6.2.2.2 College

Wash Team outreach to college students typically includes tours and field trips, and occasionally more in-depth contact such as having an ecology class assist with biological resource monitoring.

College educational outreach is minimal in cost, usually requiring only staff time. The number of college students reached per year is highly variable, but typically ranges from 30 to 100.

6.2.3 Tours

The Wash Team gives several tours of the Wash each year. Participants include classes from local schools, colleges and universities as mentioned above; various other universities; delegations from other countries; organizational teams; and professional conference groups, among others. Stakeholders are taken on tours of the Wash, as well. The LVWCC/Lake Mead Water Quality Forum tour is held annually to allow members to experience firsthand the progress along the Wash. Although many of these members receive information during quarterly meetings, seeing the changes helps reinvigorate their commitment to the project.

On average, the annual tour for stakeholders costs \$1,600 for the transportation, lunches and snacks. In addition, tour books are printed and distributed to attendees. The books are often returned to staff at the end of the tour, so they can be reused for other groups. Costs for other tours are substantially less in that the attendees provide their own transportation, snacks, water and lunches; however, the Wash Team does typically provide tour books or other printed materials. The Wash Team gives tours to about 250 people per year.

A major benefit of this tactic is the amount of time spent with those in attendance. Normally, tours are a 2-hour minimum, with many lasting four hours. With this much time, participants gain valuable information on the Wash project and are able to interact with specialists in the areas of hydrology, biology, engineering and outreach.

6.3 Community Outreach Events

Earth Day, service fairs, student fairs, and local festivals are among the various community outreach events that provide an opportunity to reach valley residents on a large scale. At these events, the Wash Team staffs a booth with informative displays, dispenses print material, provides giveaways with the Wash logo and website address, and interacts with attendees. To draw people to the table, displays need to provide eye-catching visibility, but they also need to deliver Wash messages concisely and in an appealing way, so that attendees are interested in receiving more information. Once attendees approach the table, staff can either engage with them directly, or if staff is with other participants, the attendees can take printed materials and other giveaways that will direct them to the website for more project information. As a result, the events help increase attendee awareness of the Wash, but can also act as a portal to engaging them further.

Although the amount of time spent with attendees is minimal, the cost for the event in comparison with the exposure is well worth it. The primary costs are giveaways (found under Printed Materials) and staff time. The Wash Team reaches an average of more than 11,000 people per year through community outreach events, and attends about 10 events each year.

6.4 Volunteer Events

Since 2001, the LVWCC has hosted semi-annual volunteer planting events known as the Wash Green-Up (Figure 4). These events focus on connecting the community to the Wash through active participation while enhancing native vegetation. Volunteers plant assorted native plants near recently constructed erosion control structures. These events provide a meaningful way to connect people with the natural area found at the Wash and invest these people in the Wash's success. As such, these events are a great way to garner excitement about, and increase ownership in, the project. Wash Green-Ups draw families, scouts, fraternities, sororities, church and employer-based groups and more.



Figure 4: During Wash Green-Ups, community residents are able to observe the beauty of the Wash while working to enhance it.

During the past two years, the Wash Team has increased the educational component of Wash Green-Ups by hanging posters at the events. Each poster focuses on a particular aspect of the project, along with before and after photos of previous planting sites. Additionally, site supervisors, who oversee the groups of volunteers, are given Wash project talking points. These will be updated to reflect the core messages and Wash Team staff will encourage site supervisors to share them with their volunteers.

The Wash Team has also started organizing volunteer events (planting, trash pick-up, weeding) around World Wetlands Day. A key focus is environmental education, centered on connecting participants to the Wash through whatever the World Wetlands Day theme is for the year.

Green-Ups attract, on average, approximately 370 volunteers per event, and of all the tactics, they are the most expensive, as the Wash Team provides a catered hot lunch in a rented tent, giveaways, and often shuttle transportation from distant parking areas to the event site, among other items. Recent Green-Ups have cost approximately \$14,000 per event, with much of the cost offset by grants from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. World Wetlands Day events attract anywhere from a few dozen to a few hundred people and are considerably less expensive, as only snacks and giveaways are provided.

6.5 Special Events

The Wash Team periodically hosts or partners with others to put on special outreach events. An example includes International Migratory Bird Day 2012. The theme was “Connecting people to bird conservation,” and so was well suited to both conveying messages about the Wash as well as meeting recommended actions from the WMP (Shanahan et al. 2008) with regards to the objective of enhancing environmental awareness of wildlife and their habitats within the community.

6.6 News Releases

Although not used for some time, news releases may still have value as an outreach tactic. They could be used to promote project milestones, as recommended in the CAMP outreach program (Appendices A and B), or specific events such as World Wetlands Day.

6.7 Radio Spots

Radio spots were recently used to promote World Wetlands Day 2013. The event announcement ran on KNPR once to several times a day in the weeks leading up to the January 31 event. The publicity drew participants that had never attended a Wash event. The cost was expensive, \$10,000 for that and a print add in their magazine *Desert Companion*.

6.8 Print Ads

While not used often, print ads may also have a place in the host of tactics used to implement Wash outreach. The *Desert Companion*, which hosted the ad for World Wetlands Days, has more than 125,000 subscribers.

6.9 Television Programs

Water Ways, a television program produced by SNWA, reports on the Wash each year. The program is broadcast on Channel 4. Coverage in the past has included Wash Green-Ups, World Wetlands Day, and other topics. Given the newly affirmed goals of the outreach program, the Wash Team should work with show producers to develop segments focused on watershed education and beneficial behaviors, and other core Wash messages.

6.10 Print Materials

Print materials cover a broad range of items from study reports, to informational brochures, to giveaway pens. In an effort to be more sustainable, the Wash Team distributes fewer copies of

study reports and other project documents to stakeholders and instead encourages them to download the reports from the lvwash.org website. However, the Wash Team continues to produce a large number of print materials for the general public. These include or have included brochures, factsheets, reusable tour books, field trip notebooks, plant and animal field guides, a weed guide in English and Spanish, and giveaway items such as pens, yo-yos and stress balls with the LVWCC logo and lvwash.org website. In addition, Wash and other watershed/nonpoint source pollution information is provided in “The Reservoir” (a bill insert to water users in the valley) and in SNWA’s Water Smart calendar.

Each fiscal year, the Wash Team budgets approximately \$20,000 for printed materials.

6.11 Web Resources

Wash web resources currently include the Email Update, two websites and the Facebook page. Costs are staff time and website domain/online storage.

6.11.1 Email Update

The monthly Email Update (the LVWCC’s e-newsletter) is full of information on project activities, as well as upcoming meeting and event dates, and is a great resource for stakeholders and for members of the public that want to learn about the Wash and about how they can participate in Wash events.

The Email Update currently reaches 480 valley residents and LVWCC stakeholders each month. Subscription is currently available via the lvwash.org website. In the future, the Wash Team will have sign-up sheets at all community outreach events and make a point of encouraging people to subscribe. Additionally, a post will be added to the Facebook page each time a new Email Update is uploaded to lvwash.org, with the intention of increasing traffic to the site and subscriptions to the e-newsletter.

6.11.2 Websites

The lvwash.org website keeps the public informed of the LVWCC’s ongoing activities on the Wash. The homepage features a new article each month. These articles cover a variety of topics, including endangered species, flash flood safety, and significant project milestones. The site has a calendar of upcoming Wash events and a sign-up sheet for volunteer events and the Email Update. It also provides a detailed review of Wash Team research, including final reports.

The public site attracted an average of 1,743 unique visitors each month from 2008-2012. However, this is a decline of nearly 500 from the previous 5-year period. This may be due to an outdated look and information. The website will soon undergo a major redesign, for which the Wash Team is currently seeking input from the public through both lvwash.org and the Facebook page.

The password-protected members’ website is accessible via lvwash.org and assists communication between the Wash Team, the LVWCC and its study teams. The website provides stakeholders with access to the Lower Colorado River Regional Water Quality Database, contact information for other members, meeting information and more. The site experienced a significant revision within the past few years to discard unused functions and increase ease of

use. Since the redesign, relatively few stakeholders have used the site regardless of a new site rollout performed by Wash Team staff at quarterly stakeholder meetings. Research should be done to learn why.

6.11.3 Social Networking Sites

In the past several years, social networking sites such as Facebook have taken the world by storm, becoming a primary way in which people communicate with each other. In 2012, a Facebook page (Figure 5) was created for the Wash project. It helped drive traffic to the website, which increased immediately. The page currently has 253 followers and that number is growing. Posts include exciting species discoveries, storm impact photos, links to Wash-related news articles and blogs, and more. As Facebook is a “snow-ball effect” form of media, with little effort one post can reach the followers of the Wash page and then be seen by their friends and so on, thereby potentially reaching up to 1,000 people or more with each update.



Figure 5: The Wash Facebook page.

Staff should explore other social networking sites like Twitter and Instagram to see if they would also yield outreach benefits.

7.0 PARTNERSHIPS AND MEMBER AGENCY/PARTNER EFFORTS

Utilizing partnerships is vital to the implementation of the outreach plan, as they can help reduce costs and increase impact. From its infancy, partnerships have played a major role in the success of the LVWCC, and each partner brings a unique and invaluable contribution. As the project has progressed, more partners have been added and with these affiliations come a vast array of benefits to the outreach project.

The Wash Team recognizes that partnerships exist both within our organization as well as outside of it. Partnering with other departments has yielded access to additional expertise for the educational field trips. Outside partnerships have yielded grant funding that covers many of the items used for outreach, including books given to students for field trips and giveaway items at community events.

Partnerships have also been formed with members of Connecting Hands: Offering Lifelong Learning Adventures (CHOLLA) and the Administrative Study Team. Both committees are comprised of members that conduct environmental education and outreach. During meetings of these committees, information sharing and outreach opportunities are discussed as are current trends for reaching various audiences.

Several LVWCC member agencies and project partners also operate outreach programs whose goals align with the LVWCC's. These are listed below with their focus and a brief description of select tactics and/or available materials.

- Stormwater Quality Management Committee
 - Stormwater pollution prevention (www.lvstormwater.com) – Pamphlets and brochures, public service announcements, student and teacher resources and other information designed to educate the public about stormwater pollution and how to prevent it.
- SNWA
 - Conservation initiatives (<http://www.snwa.com/consrv/conservation.html>) – Seek to improve water use efficiency and reduce water use, especially outdoors (Water Smart Landscapes Rebate [pays \$1.50 per square foot of grass replaced with water efficient landscaping], grass restrictions for new development, restrictions on residential car-washing, etc.). This leads to reduced run-off and dry weather pollution to the tributaries, Wash and Lake Mead.
- Desert Wetlands Conservancy
 - Interactive watershed exhibit/game that travels to community outreach events and facilities with an educational focus, such as Siegfried and Roy’s Secret Garden and Dolphin Habitat at the Mirage.
- Clark County Parks and Recreation
 - Wetlands Park – Clark County Parks and Recreation constructed and operates the facilities that comprise the Wetlands Park, including the Nature Center, Nature Preserve, trailheads and trails. Wetlands Park staff conducts educational outreach targeting elementary schoolchildren and also partners with the Wash Team periodically for outreach activities conducted at or near the Nature Center.

8.0 EFFECTIVENESS MONITORING

The purpose of effectiveness monitoring is to measure progress towards outreach program goals. Of the various tactics identified in this outreach plan, educational outreach, community outreach events, web resources, and volunteer events provide opportunities to quantify outreach effectiveness. The majority of effectiveness monitoring will rely on administering surveys to outreach participants. However, some tactics have objectives such as increasing visitors to the website, increasing subscribers, or increasing new volunteers that can be quantified by other means. In addition, for educational outreach, community outreach events and volunteer events, staff will conduct a post event debrief with the outreach coordinator to qualitatively assess event success and discuss what, if anything, could be improved in the future.

8.1 Educational Outreach

The Wash Team participates in educational outreach (student education, tours, and presentations) aimed at developing awareness and understanding of the hydrology of the Las Vegas Valley, the importance of the Wash, water quality issues, wildlife, and recreational opportunities found at the Wash and Wetlands Park. The depth of involvement is dependent upon instructional time, which varies by group, but educational outreach generally provides increased interaction between participants and staff when compared with other types of outreach.

The purpose of evaluating educational outreach is to quantify its success in increasing participation, awareness and understanding of the Wash, its resources and benefits. One method for evaluating effectiveness includes a post Wash experience survey, which would provide quantitative data on knowledge and awareness of the Wash. The survey's questions may vary depending upon audience, activity and event duration, but will focus on answering the following:

- Can participants identify who the LVWCC is and the work they are doing?
- Can participants identify threats to water quality?
- Do participants understand the hydrologic cycle of the Las Vegas Valley?
- Can participants identify harmful activities to the Wash and Lake Mead?
- Are participants more interested in activities at the Wash and/or Wetlands Park?
- Can participants identify biological resources at the Wash?
- Do participants identify themselves as stewards of the Wash and/or Wetlands Park?
- Do participants consider Wash resources important?

Since educational outreach focuses on smaller groups, provides greater interaction time and often (but not always) occurs at the Wash, it is thought that this outreach produces the greatest amount of influence on participant knowledge and is the most effective method for reaching a targeted group. Survey results will be used to corroborate or challenge this assumption.

Given the smaller group size, the Wash Team should be able to survey each participant and expects the greatest percentage of respondents to be reached in this outreach category. Results from the survey will be able to address whether the outreach is successful in relaying core messages to the audience and to identify specific areas where improvement is needed. The two measurable objectives for educational outreach surveys are:

1. The number of respondents is 90% or greater.
2. Respondents correctly answer at least 80% of the questions.

8.2 Community Outreach Events

Community outreach events are usually well attended, with a few hundred to a few thousand people. Participation in community outreach events provides the opportunity to increase awareness of the Wash in a large audience. While educational outreach provides enough time and structure to relay core messages to smaller groups, limited time during community outreach events only provides a small window to increase interest in the Wash, convey some project information, and highlight meaningful resources that will stimulate individual exploration into Wash topics.

The benefit of community outreach events is the opportunity to turn the public onto other resources that can relay the core messages of the Wash program. The effectiveness of these events will be measured by the number of attendees who sign up for other forms of media, specifically, web resources such as the Facebook page or Email Update. Two measurable objectives are identified for community outreach events:

1. 5% of event attendees sign up for more information via web resources.
2. Maintain or increase current level of participation.

8.3 Web Resources

The Wash Team currently supports several web resources for dispensing core messages to a variety of audiences. These resources help users learn more about the Wash. The goal of lvwash.org, the public website, is to be an all-inclusive resource for people to use to understand the purpose and importance of the Wash. The Email Update and Facebook page provide attention-grabbing material and direct the reader to the website for further information.

The effectiveness of web resources will be determined by the number of people signed up, the amount of knowledge they gain, and, in the case of the Facebook page and Email Update, whether they elicit further interest in the Wash, driving traffic to lvwash.org. An annual survey posted on the website and Facebook page and sent to Email Update subscribers would provide further information regarding whether core messages are being conveyed and outreach goals are being met, and identify shortcomings, strengths and provide further direction for effectively utilizing web resources. The following questions are potential survey possibilities:

- Can respondents identify water quality concerns in the valley and Wash?
- Do respondents use or plan to visit the Wetlands Park?
- Have respondents identified ways they reduce non-source pollution?
- Do respondents report concern for the Wash and its resources?
- Can respondents identify the importance of the Wash?
- Do respondents understand the hydrology of the Las Vegas Valley?
- Do Facebook and Email Update subscribers use the website to find further information?

While survey results will provide details on users' experience with, and knowledge gained from, web resources, other methods like tracking website visitation and the number of Email Update subscribers will also provide beneficial measures of overall effectiveness. Some targeted measurable objectives for web resources include the following:

1. 30% or greater response from users.
2. 10% annual increase in subscribers to both the Facebook page and Email Update.
3. 10% annual increase in unique visitors to the lvwash.org website.
4. 50% or greater correct response rate to questions related to knowledge of the Wash.
5. 25% increase in interest in the Wash from web resources year over year.

8.4 Volunteer Events

Volunteer events offer an opportunity to turn attendees into stewards of the Wash and its resources. They provide substantial contact time between staff and participants, similar to educational outreach; however, most of the time is utilized by activities. There are several volunteer events held at the Wash and Wetlands Park each year. Volunteers pre-register for events, and over the years, a substantial volunteer database has been generated. Wash Team and Wetlands Park staff partner in hosting the annual World Wetlands Day, which includes several activities, including volunteering. Volunteer events aim to invest participants in the Wash project through active participation, and impart familiarity with the Wash, the Wetlands Park, and their resources.

The effectiveness of volunteer events at meeting outreach goals of the Wash project has never been measured. Effectiveness monitoring of volunteer events would determine if participants are acquiring an overall understanding of the Wash and its ecological services, and determine if the events are successful in turning volunteers into stewards of the Wash. As in other outreach programs, administering a survey to volunteers, either during the event or annually, could help address the effectiveness of the volunteer events. Potential survey questions should address the following:

- Can participants identify ecological resources of the Wash?
- Do participants understand the importance of their participation?
- Has volunteering increased the feeling of ownership in participants?
- How often have volunteers participated in Wash activities?
- Do participants understand the hydrology of the Las Vegas Valley?
- Can participants identify ways to help enhance and protect the Wash?

A successful volunteer event would increase the overall knowledge of the Las Vegas Valley's hydrology, promote the ecological resources of the Wash and promote Wash affirmative citizenry. In addition, the Wash Team wants to increase the number of new volunteers to established events. Measurable objectives from survey results for volunteer events include:

1. 30% or greater survey response from volunteers.
2. First time volunteers are equal to or greater than 25%.
3. 30% of volunteers can positively identify ecological services of the Wash.
4. Sense of ownership has increased in 20% of new volunteers.
5. 40% of volunteers can identify ways to protect the water quality of the Wash and Lake Mead.
6. Obtain 30% increase in interest in Wash-related resources.

8.5 General Demographics

Establishing general demographic information will help identify both dominant and underrepresented populations reached through outreach events. Demographic information can help guide future outreach by identifying populations current activities are missing. Underrepresented demographic groups should be targeted for future events to increase overall awareness and meet outreach goals. While demographic data may not be readily available, a few demographic questions can be included on administered surveys and the use of UNLV's Center for Business and Economic Research data can provide general information for zip codes.

8.6 SNWA Water Quality Tracking Survey

In August of 2001, SNWA administered the Water Quality Tracking Survey to Las Vegas Valley residents "to determine awareness, attitudes and understanding of issues related to southern Nevada's water quality" (POI, Appendix C). The survey included questions about the Wash and non-point source pollution. Of these, two were selected to serve as a baseline for the POI's effectiveness. While the data from the follow-up survey in 2004 has been lost, the survey is still conducted periodically. Consequently, the Wash Team would like to use the objectives outlined in the POI to help gauge increases in Wash awareness in valley residents.

- Increase the percentage of people who understand the Wash's function in the water cycle from the 2001 level of 23% to 30% or greater.
- Increase the percentage of people who are aware that urban runoff and stormwater are not treated prior to entering Lake Mead from the 2001 level of 55% to 70%.

8.7 Prioritization Process

The Wash Team currently participates in most outreach on a per-request basis, where staffing is, or can be made, available. This may change as specific audiences are targeted for outreach as a result of this plan. Whether internally motivated or driven by an outside request, a process for prioritizing the activities in which staff participates would better direct resources to where they would be most effective. In the future, effectiveness monitoring data will be used to determine which types of outreach yield the greatest results and will assist in the development of such a process. This will help the Wash Team ensure that outreach goals are met and that the Wash project continues to thrive well in to the future.

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Appendix A

Chapter 13, on the Public Outreach Study Team,
from the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan

CHAPTER 13

PUBLIC OUTREACH STUDY TEAM

Objective

"How do we get the public involved in understanding and participating in the enhancement and protection of the Las Vegas Wash?"

Introduction

Because stabilization and management of the Las Vegas Wash (Wash) is important for many entities with interests in the Wash, public involvement was identified early on as a critical component of the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Management Plan (LVWCAMP) process. Public involvement begins with public awareness, and awareness is best accomplished through an ongoing program of outreach and education to all segments of the public.

Recognizing this, and the significant role that community participation and support play in long-term success of the Wash, the public outreach strategy outlined below was developed, and includes a suite of tactics designed to foster environmental stewardship in the local community.

The Process

Public outreach issues for the Wash are being addressed by the Public Outreach Study Team (Team), comprised of professionals specializing in public information. Team members have broad backgrounds in educational program development and coordination, cultural resources, media relations and political strategy. The Team serves to provide the expertise necessary to ensure the various public outreach issues in the Wash are being adequately addressed.

Understanding that community involvement is an essential part in successfully managing the Wash and its resources, the Team posed the question, "How do we get the public involved in understanding and participating in the enhancement and protection of the Las Vegas Wash?"

With this question in mind, goals were defined according to target audiences, considering both the community as a whole as well as public officials. The two goals the Team identified are listed below.

- Goal One -** Strengthen community participation in and awareness of the Las Vegas Wash as an environmental resource, and of ongoing efforts of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee.
- Goal Two -** Strengthen public official participation in and awareness of the efforts of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee.

Stakeholder Interviews

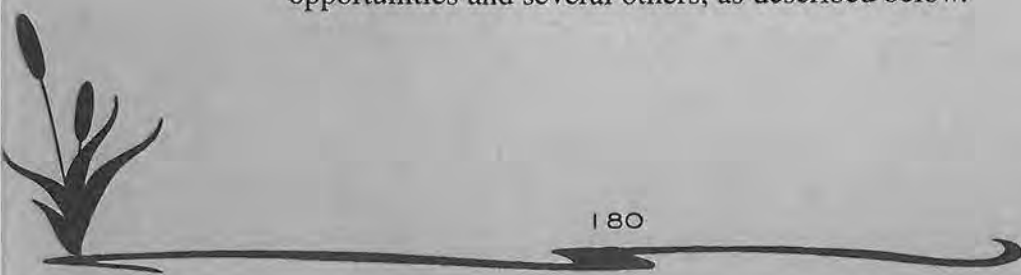
Before the Team could proceed with the established goals, it first had to determine the community’s current knowledge of the Wash issues. During the months of December 1998 and January 1999, a total of 80 comprehensive stakeholder interviews were conducted. The interviews are summarized in Appendix 13.1. The focus of the interviews was to evaluate the opinions of representatives of the coordination committee, as well as those of elected or appointed local and state public officials.

Information gathered from these interviews was used and analyzed by the Team to identify the community’s perception of issues and concerns surrounding the Wash. This analysis was then used to develop a public outreach program. The stakeholder interviews may also serve as a benchmark from which to measure the success of restoration and management efforts in the Wash by the coordination committee.

The Public Outreach Program

The public outreach program was developed by the Team to engage community interest and participation in coordination committee and activities within the Las Vegas Wash. The program, Appendix 13.2, defines core messages, target audiences, strategies and tactics designed to provide the guidelines necessary for implementation of the public outreach component of the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan.

At the heart of the program are a series of 13 tactics identified by the Team, which serve as the implementation component of the public outreach program. These tactics, summarized in Table 13.1, incorporate a variety of public outreach mechanisms including news releases, an Internet Web site, media briefings, education programs, presentations, volunteer opportunities and several others, as described below.



News Releases, Reports, and Displays

The public needs more than just accurate information; they need it be conveyed to them in a timely manner. With this in mind, information should be updated as needed and presented to a broad spectrum of the community by various methods. Some of these methods include news releases about project milestones, water quality reports, the coordination committee newsletter (The Current) and lobby displays. In fact, one of the most important functions of the Team is to facilitate communication among the nine coordination committee study teams. This can be accomplished through an internal newsletter, whereby the study teams are able to remain abreast of discussions and activities.

Internet Web Site

Additionally, the coordination committee Web site, www.lvwash.org, offers an interactive forum through which users can browse the topics that interest them specifically about the Wash, and ask questions and make comments via the Internet (Figure 13.1). The Web site provides access to current information on Wash issues such as erosion, water quality and habitat; project updates, materials for teachers and more than 900 photos are also available.

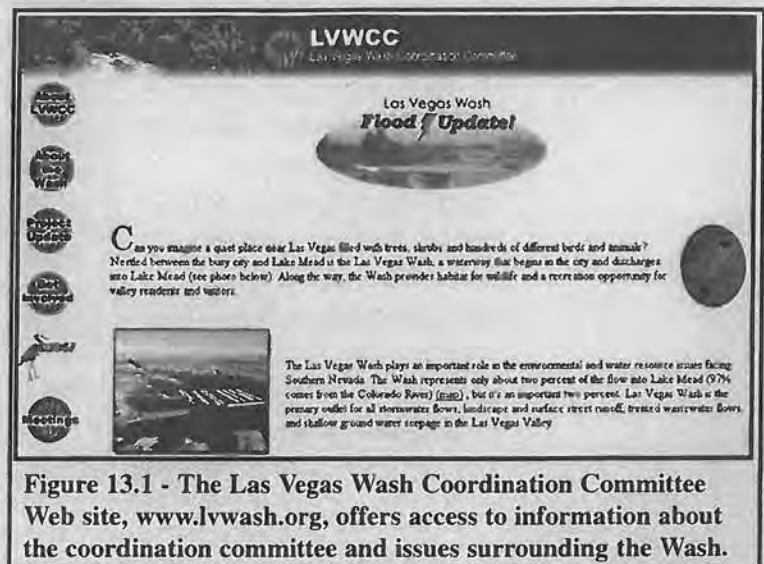


Figure 13.1 - The Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee Web site, www.lvwash.org, offers access to information about the coordination committee and issues surrounding the Wash.

Public Scoping Meetings

Public scoping meetings help facilitate open dialogue between coordination committee members and the community, allowing participants to voice their concerns and directly provide input to the process. The public scoping meetings that were held during the comment period of the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan are discussed later in the chapter.

Media Briefings

Whereas the working media will be inundated with information about the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan and associated activities, editorial board representatives are frequently placed in the unenviable position of adopting a stance on an issue without full knowledge of all relevant factors. These briefings serve to impart an understand-

ing of the issues at stake and a general knowledge of how implementation of the comprehensive adaptive management plan will affect those issues.

Stakeholder Awareness Briefings

Word of mouth is often a common vehicle for delivering news of accomplishments, but it also is an effective way to deliver misinformation. To ensure each member of a stakeholder entity is updated on Wash issues and coordination committee progress, the Team promotes a uniform and accurate picture of the comprehensive management effort through stakeholder awareness briefings.

Volunteer Opportunities

Another important element of public outreach is encouraging public participation through grassroots-level volunteer activities and information fairs. The coordination committee co-hosts the Las Vegas Wash & Wetlands Clean-Up



Figure 13.2 – The second annual Las Vegas Wash & Wetlands Clean-Up drew more than 1,400 volunteers that collected more than 100 tons of trash.

(Figure 13.2) and participates in numerous information fairs throughout the year.

Speakers' Bureau

A mechanism for maintaining support for the coordination committee effort is to provide topic specific presentations to the community, thus allowing for their input. For this purpose, the Team developed a speakers' bureau. A special presentation has been developed which will provide audiences an overview of the issues related to the Las Vegas Wash and the scope of the management plan. This affords the coordination committee an opportunity to hold an open discourse with members of the community to determine their concerns and provide timely information. During the development of the speakers' bureau, a public outreach workshop was conducted to survey the existing public outreach programs already established by the stakeholder entities (Appendix 13.3). This workshop revealed that each entity has some piece of information that may be incorporated into the outreach program and that opportunities are available to incorporate the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee's efforts into their programs.

PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM TACTICS		
Tactic	Purpose	Frequency
News Releases	The public, and even to some extent the media, will be patient with the management plan's development as long as they sense progress is being made.	As Needed
"The Current" Newsletter	Stakeholder Interviews have indicated that people interested in the Wash and the management plan's development would like to be apprised of Coordination Committee progress through a newsletter.	Quarterly
Water Quality Reports	Water purveyors responsible for distributing a Consumer Confidence Report will include information about efforts being undertaken by the Coordination Committee.	Annual
Lobby Displays	Lobby Displays provide an easy mechanism to maximize exposure with limited resources.	Ongoing
Internet Web site	Increasingly popular Internet technology will allow interested citizens access to the most current information available, and provide a forum for feedback and/or discussion of key issues.	Ongoing
Public Scoping Meetings	It is essential that the public have a voice in matters relating to the Wash. Public scoping meetings will allow for an open dialogue between the community and Coordination Committee in an effective, efficient manner.	Ongoing
Children's Educational Program	The goal of the Children's Educational Program is to teach children about the significance of the Wash as natural resource, water quality, and the monitoring process.	Ongoing
Media Briefings	Media Briefings serve to impart an understanding of the issues at stake and a general knowledge of how implementation of the management plan will affect those issues.	Annual
Stakeholder Awareness Briefings	If the Coordination Committee is to establish a united position on the Wash, it is imperative that employees of participant entities have a general understanding of the Wash and the issues surrounding it.	Annual
Speakers Bureau	Implementation of a Speakers Bureau will serve as a tool to enable the Team to hold an open discourse with members of the community, to determine their concerns and provide timely, accurate information.	Ongoing
Las Vegas Wash & Wetlands Clean-Up	This event creates a positive visual presence, raises public awareness of the Wash, improves the Wash from a pollution standpoint, and helps foster environmental stewardship within the community.	Annual
Water Information Fairs	Water Information Fairs offer a special opportunity to promote the Wash and the efforts of the Coordination Committee directly with the public through staff interaction, print materials, and displays.	As Needed
Las Vegas Wash "Familiarization Tours"	Key constituents should be led on tours of the Wash early in the process to establish 'before and after' visuals that will help underscore the project's urgency and develop a baseline perspective for its progress.	Ongoing
Interested Regional Stakeholder Outreach	Because water from the Colorado River is a shared resource, there is considerable interest outside Southern Nevada that requires regional outreach efforts.	As Needed

Table 13.1 - Public Outreach Program Tactics

Wash “Familiarization Tours”

The Team recognized the importance of the general public’s participation, but it also understood the significance of involving community leaders early in the process. Familiarization tours help garner support for the project from decision-makers by establishing striking visuals of the Wash throughout time. Personalized tours show the viewer firsthand, the key issues and concerns surrounding the Wash, and underscore the sense of urgency for comprehensive management.



Figure 13.3 – As part of an educational program, fifth grade students from Mabel Hoggard Elementary School receive hands-on experience monitoring water quality in the Wash.

Children’s Educational Program

The Team has developed a children’s educational program that teaches children about the significance of the Wash as a natural resource, its importance to the Valley and the water quality monitoring process (Figure 13.3).

Interested Regional Stakeholder Outreach

Because water from the Colorado River is a shared resource, there is considerable interest in the Wash from regional stakeholders outside southern Nevada. A regional stakeholder outreach program will help keep regional parties informed of the coordination committee’s activities.

A Proactive Approach

In an effort to take a proactive approach, the Team has already implemented many tactics of the public outreach program. The items listed below have already begun, and have received positive feedback from the community.

- Children’s Educational Program
- Lobby Displays
- Las Vegas Wash & Wetlands Clean-Up
- “The Current” Newsletter

- Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee Web site (www.lvwash.org)
- Information Fairs
- Speakers' Bureau
- Las Vegas Wash Familiarization Tours
- Public Scoping Meetings

Update

Public Participation in Document Development

As part of the development of the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan, public participation was sought through numerous ways. Five scoping meetings were conducted throughout the Las Vegas Valley and Boulder City to both educate the public and seek input during the approval process. In addition to being distributed for public comment, the DRAFT LVWCAMP document was presented at several public meetings, including the Water Quality Citizen's Advisory Committee and the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee. The document was also made available on the coordination committee Web site. In total, nearly 250 comments were received from more than one dozen entities during the 35-day comment period. All comments received during the comment period are included in Appendix 15. Each comment was considered separately and a response is listed with each comment. Of the comments received, 90 percent were either directly incorporated, determined that no action was required or taken under advisement for future consideration.

Recommended Actions

Based on the objective and goals set forth by the Public Outreach Study Team with consideration given to the information gathered from stakeholder interviews, the Team developed the following recommended actions.

Action 1: Establish a Method to Continue Implementation of the Public Outreach Program

Entities: Las Vegas Wash Management Entity

The Team has developed the public outreach program to effectively facilitate outreach efforts to the community and public officials in a timely manner. This program is not meant to be exhaustive, but instead serves as an outline for an open dialogue between stakeholders and the community, both of which are involved, in this dynamic process. It is recommended that the Las Vegas Wash Management Entity take the lead in the continuation of the implementation of the public outreach program and amend it as deemed necessary to address the future communication needs for the restoration and management of the Las Vegas Wash.



Action 2: Continue Implementation of Feedback Mechanisms and Measurements of Progress and Results

Entities: Las Vegas Wash Management Entity

Because an important function of the public outreach program is to facilitate communication between the coordination committee and the public, various stakeholders and other interested parties, development of a method to provide feedback to the coordination committee is recommended.

Numerous mechanisms have been set in place to enlist participation and feedback from the community. The Team recommends that the Las Vegas Wash Management Entity gauge the success of the public outreach program through such measurements as Web site activity from both the public and members' Web sites, perceptions conveyed from public scoping meetings, follow-up stakeholder interviews and requests for presentations from the speakers' bureau.

Action 3: Provide Updates to Elected Officials

Entities: All Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee members, Las Vegas Wash Management Entity

An invaluable aspect of public support stems from elected officials. For this purpose, the Team has utilized the speakers' bureau to target elected officials and community leaders such as local councils and commissions, foundations and trustee boards, local chambers and civic groups. The Team recommends that this be an ongoing program and, as such, provide personalized updates in a one-on-one communication forum throughout the Wash restoration and management process.

Appendices

- 13.1 Summary of Stakeholder Interview Results
- 13.2 Public Outreach Program
- 13.3 Stakeholder Outreach Activities



Appendix B

Appendix 13.2, on the Public Outreach Program, from the
Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan

Public Outreach Program

Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

Situation Analysis ~

The Las Vegas Wash, located in the southeastern part of the Las Vegas Valley, channels water into Lake Mead from three wastewater treatment plants, irrigation runoff, storm water channeled through the stormwater system and tributary washes, and the adjacent shallow ground water system. In previous decades, the moderate water flows created a wetlands area in the upper reaches of the wash encompassing approximately 2,000 acres. Some believe these wetlands enhanced water quality.

However, Southern Nevada's rapid growth has caused wastewater flows to increase dramatically in the past decade. Although effluent is treated to Clean Water Act standards, the increased wastewater flows saturate the channel, making the wash more susceptible to significant soil erosion during storm events. This also results in increased Total Suspended Solids (TSS) entering Las Vegas Bay.

Further complicating matters is the presence of perchlorate, a salt used as an oxidizing agent in solid rocket fuel, in the Las Vegas Wash. According to reports submitted to the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) by the two companies that manufactured perchlorate in Southern Nevada, this man-made salt appears to be flowing into the wash from an adjacent industrial site via ground water systems. While perchlorate is not regulated by the EPA, the California Department of Health

Services has established an action level for the salt at 18 parts per billion (ppb) due to concerns about its potential to affect the thyroid at high levels. A recent report by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) indicated that the 18 ppb figure may be too conservative. As of January 1999, perchlorate levels in water drawn from Lake Mead have been below the detection limit of 4 ppb. However, environmental groups and officials from state and federal agencies consider remediation of this chemical a top priority.

Other pollutants, such as household cleaners and pesticides, also enter the wash via home drains, storm water and runoff flows. Concerns relating to these contaminants stem more from secondary health issues such as consumption of contaminated fish than from direct exposure. Nevertheless, they remain important issues that are likely to be addressed by the Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan.

In 1997, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) formed the Water Quality Citizens Advisory Committee. This panel, which was established to provide a public forum through which residents could voice concerns and suggestions relating to water quality issues, developed nine specific recommendations that were accepted by the SNWA Board of Directors in July 1998. One of those recommendations, which is included verbatim below, specifically addresses the development of a Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan.

Recommendation:

1. The Southern Nevada Water Authority should take the lead in developing a comprehensive plan for managing the Las Vegas Wash. The plan should address the recommendations of the WQCAC and any related recommendations from the Lake Mead Water Quality Forum.

2. The comprehensive plan should be a consensus-based document prepared jointly with stakeholder groups and agencies, including providing opportunities for substantial public involvement as well as input from the WQCAC. Drafts of the plan should be provided to the Lake Mead Water Quality Forum and WQCAC for input.
3. The plan should address such aspects as implementation, existing institutional mechanisms to perform work, or the need for additional authorities. Where appropriate, the Southern Nevada Water Authority should solicit input (for example, using a request for proposal) to aid in development of the plan. The plan should also address funding considerations. Any responses to requests for proposals should be provided to the Lake Mead Water Quality Forum and WQCAC for input.
4. The Southern Nevada Water Authority should begin assessing the need to approach the 1999 Nevada Legislature for additional authorities or funding to support development and implementation of a comprehensive management plan for the Las Vegas Wash. Where possible, the support and input of the Southern Nevada Strategic Planning Authority should be solicited.

In accepting these recommendations, the SNWA board accepted responsibility for coordinating the development of a management plan for the Las Vegas Wash, a massive effort for which the organizational structure is currently being developed. In so doing, it also accepted the inherent responsibility for coordinating the planning and execution of public outreach activities designed to keep residents apprised of progress and issues and provide a forum for public comment. This document represents the underpinnings of that process. It will be executed with the input and under the direction of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee's public outreach study team.

Issues & Opportunities ~

Although flows from the Las Vegas Wash account for less than 2 percent of the water in Lake Mead, the high-profile nature of environmental and health issues relating to the Wash and occasionally incomplete media accounts of those issues have created the perception of a much stronger link between Las Vegas Wash water quality and the safety of drinking water.

While this misperception presents certain challenges, it also creates an opportunity to dramatically improve public perception about drinking water through the dissemination of information relating to activities directed toward improving water quality in the Wash. That is to say, while it is extremely difficult to significantly improve water quality in the entirety of Lake Mead because of the sheer volume involved (also, Lake Mead is by national standards a clean water source), the natural tendency of the public is to extrapolate conditions in the Las Vegas Wash to Lake Mead. Therefore, although improving water quality in the wash will have only a modest effect on Lake Mead as a whole, it may have an enormous impact on the public perception of Lake Mead's water quality.

It should be noted that, from a perception standpoint, the development of this Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan is at once a great opportunity and a great threat. In general, the public has relatively little understanding or appreciation for the amount of planning and coordination necessary to undertake a project of this magnitude. While public information efforts aimed at explaining the plan's development process may be marginally effective, nothing will satisfy the public's desire for progress except tangible, measurable results. The importance of implementing visible improvement projects within the most expedient feasible timeline cannot be overstated.

Communications Objectives ~

When dealing with subject matter as complex as addressing environmental issues in a water body affected by multiple sources, it is essential to focus on the major elements rather than risk confusing the audience with the intricacies of individual components. It is also important that people understand that their input is extremely valuable in the development of solutions.

With those two strategic goals in mind, the communications objectives are as follows:

- ~ Impart a greater understanding of the issues surrounding the Las Vegas Wash and tributaries, placing the environmental significance of the Wash in context to its potential to affect water quality.
- ~ Apprise the public of progress relating to execution of the management plan
- ~ Emphasize the value and availability of public participation forums and the SNWA's receptiveness to public input

In other words, we must tell people what needs to be done, keep them informed every step of the way, and give them the opportunity to participate and voice their opinions.

Core Messages ~

Too often, public information efforts become so focused on the process of communicating that they neglect to sufficiently define the message. In addition to being clear and specific, the core messages should also reflect the communication objectives. The core messages for these outreach efforts are:

- ~ The members of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee are actively addressing environmental issues through the development of a comprehensive management plan.

- ~ Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee members encourage the public to provide input about efforts being undertaken on behalf of the Las Vegas Wash.

It is important to recognize that the above messages are intended for the majority, rather than for individuals whose views and objectives may diverge radically from those of the general public. There are a certain number of people who will not be satisfied until the Las Vegas Wash contains only hydrogen and oxygen; this plan is not intended to address their goals as they are both unrealistic and, in many cases, undesirable. This public information program, through the core messages indicated above, is designed to impart to Southern Nevadans an understanding that the agencies involved with the Las Vegas Wash view its protection as important, share their concerns, and are actively working to improve environmental conditions in that area.

Target Audiences ~

The Las Vegas Wash management plan is a rare occurrence in which the public outreach component specifically precludes addressing special interest or sub-groups. It is essential that the program be sufficiently sweeping and general in nature as to avoid creating either the perception or reality of favoring any one group or individual in terms of input or receipt of information. That being said, the depth of information may vary among groups. For instance, a media representative may require information considerably more technical or detailed than would be feasible to convey to the public at large. It should be noted that special consideration is being given to regional stakeholders because of additional measures required to communicate with this group.

Strategies ~

There are two issues driving the communications strategies for this outreach program. First,

the public wants results, and it wants them soon. Second, in general, people want the right to participate, even if they choose not to exercise that right. To support the overall communications objectives, the outreach strategies must:

- ~ Underscore the activities being undertaken toward the protection of the Las Vegas Wash
- ~ Provide the public ample opportunities to offer comments and actively participate in the development process

Tactics ~

Because management of the Wash is an ongoing program, a limited number of highly effective tactics will both communicate the core messages and establish a consistent vehicle for those messages. In a long-term program such as this, conducting regular, visible information activities may be more conducive to public acceptance than generating an initial "big splash." Put another way, the pacing and method utilized to communicate the messages are nearly as important as the messages themselves. For that reason, a number of specific tactics have been included below. These tactics have been described in some detail to accurately convey their design; however, the public outreach study team is open to discussing individual components and addressing any expressed concerns with the tactics as outlined.

Project Milestone News Releases - The public, and even to some extent the media, will be patient with the management plan's development as long as they sense progress is being made. While physical construction is the most visible form of progress, there are myriad other milestones both within the overall umbrella and within the sub-projects that can and should be publicized. These releases will also be distributed to published industry newsletters.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Based on viable opportunities
Potential near-term topics: lvwash.org Web Site launch
Public meetings/info. fairs begin
Grade control structure construction begins

Las Vegas Wash & Wetlands Clean-Up -

This event was very successful in its initial year, drawing hundreds of participants and thousands of passers-by. In addition to creating a positive visual presence, the event raises public awareness of the Las Vegas Wash and what is being done to improve it from a pollution standpoint. In conjunction with the grass-roots Friends of the Desert Wetlands organization, efforts should be made to build upon the success of the 1998 event.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Annual
Activities: Promotion
~ Media calendar notices
~ Media advisory
~ Media pitches
Advertising/Public Notice
~ Notice in internal/external publications
~ Notice in public facilities
Execution
~ Media tours
~ Collateral materials
~ Exhibit booths
~ Commemorative items
Post-event publicity
~ News release
~ Segment for video news program
~ Article for internal/external publications

Water Information Fairs - Public information fairs focusing on all aspects of water are currently being developed. Materials depicting the issues surrounding the wash would help convey a baseline understanding of the management plan's objectives to the public.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Variable (based on existing outreach opportunities)
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Media calendar notices
 ~ Media advisory
 ~ Media pitches
 ~ Notice in internal/external publications
 ~ Notice in public facilities
 Execution
 ~ Set/strike
 ~ Video presentations
 ~ Informational materials
 ~ Staff interaction
 Post-event publicity
 ~ Segment for video news program
 ~ Article for internal/external publications

Speakers Bureau - In conjunction with the existing speakers bureau program, a special presentation will be developed which will provide audiences an overview of the issues related to the Las Vegas Wash and the scope of the management plan. This affords the project management team an opportunity to hold an open discourse with members of the community so as to determine their concerns and provide timely information.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: To be determined by interest
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Solicitation letters (SNWA)
 ~ Notice in internal/external newsletters
 Execution
 ~ Set/strike (SNWA only)

~ A/V support (SNWA only)
 ~ Presentation development (SNWA only)
 ~ Speaker
 ~ Collateral materials
 Post-event publicity
 ~ Article in internal/external publications
 Target Audiences:
 ~ Environmental groups
 ~ Civic organizations
 ~ Business organizations
 ~ Large businesses/employee meetings
 ~ Senior citizen organizations

Public Scoping Meetings - It is essential that the public have a voice in matters relating to the Las Vegas Wash. However, incorporating public sessions into work group meetings could unnecessarily slow the development process, which would undermine the project's expediency. For that reason, it is advisable to conduct independent scoping meetings under the direction of the work group coordinator.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Variable (TBD by Coordination Committee subgroups)
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Internal/external publications
 ~ Notice in public facilities
 ~ Paid media announcements
 ~ Media calendar notices
 ~ Printed notices in public buildings
 ~ Media advisory
 ~ Media pitches
 Execution
 ~ Set/strike
 ~ Scheduling facilitator
 ~ Collateral materials
 ~ Visual presentations
 ~ Staff support
 Post-meeting publicity
 ~ News release

- ~ Article in internal/external publications
- ~ Segment in video news program

Las Vegas Wash "Familiarization Trips" -

This tactic represents the "depth of information" referenced in the Target Audience section of this document. Key constituents should be led on tours of the Las Vegas Wash early in the process. Their personal observations will help underscore the project's urgency and establish a vivid "before" picture, thereby increasing their perspective on progress. Visiting the wastewater treatment facilities will also increase their understanding of mitigating factors in the wash. These tours should be renewed upon completion of major "milestone" accomplishments.

Participants: Las Vegas Wash Project Team
Frequency: Variable (contingent on milestones)
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Letters of invitation
 ~ Follow-up calls
 Execution
 ~ Scheduling
 ~ Transportation arrangements
 ~ Collateral materials
 ~ Staff guides
 Post-event activities
 ~ "Thank you" letters to participants
 Audiences
 ~ Media - Environmental reporters (all local outlets)
 ~ Media - Editorial staff (editors, assignment editors)
 ~ SNWA Board of Directors
 ~ Local elected officials
 ~ SNWA member agencies (administration)
 ~ SNWA member agencies (PI staff)

Media briefings - Whereas the working media will be inundated with information about the

Las Vegas Wash Comprehensive Adaptive Management Plan and associated activities, editorial board representatives are frequently placed in the position of taking a position on an issue without full knowledge of all relevant factors. These briefings would serve to impart an understanding of the issues at stake and a general knowledge of how implementation of the management plan will affect those issues. It will become increasingly important that the member agencies coordinate so as to present a united position on the Wash. The existing public information communication channels should suffice to keep the various entities apprised of media inquiries relating to this topic.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Annual
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Letters of invitation
 ~ Follow-up calls
 Execution
 ~ Scheduling
 ~ Audio-visual presentation
 ~ Collateral materials
 Post-event activities
 ~ "Thank you" letters to attendees
 Audiences
 ~ Media - Editorial boards (all local outlets)

Stakeholder awareness briefings - Employees are ambassadors, whether on the front lines of customer service or in the engineering bunkers. Friends, neighbors, and even strangers on the street often expect them to be apprised of situations that may in fact have nothing to do with their scope of work. If the LVWCC is to establish a united position on the Las Vegas Wash, it is imperative that employees of participant entities have at least a general understanding of the wash and issues surrounding it. Many of these entities already have a variety of vehicles for disseminating that information; steps will be taken to assist entities with their employees on an as-needed basis.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Annual
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Notice in internal newsletters
 ~ Notice in break areas
 ~ Announcement by department managers
 Execution
 ~ Scheduling
 ~ Audio-visual presentation
 ~ Collateral materials
 ~ Feedback mechanism
 Post-event activities
 ~ Article in internal publications
 ~ Responses to individual questions/concerns

Water Quality Reports - Water purveyors responsible for distributing a Consumer Confidence Report will include information about efforts being undertaken by the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee. This text will be included in either the Source Water section or in another area as deemed appropriate by the purveyor.

Participation: All water purveyors
Frequency: Annual
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Article in external newsletters
 Execution
 ~ Copy writing
 ~ Graphic design/layout

Lobby Displays - Text/graphic panels can be produced for use at member agencies' public facilities, libraries, etc. They will be updated periodically to reflect the LVWCC's current activities.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Ongoing
Activities: Execution
 ~ Copy writing
 ~ Graphic design/layout
 ~ Production
 ~ Distribution

The "Current" Newsletter - Stakeholder interviews have indicated that those people with an interest in the Las Vegas Wash and the comprehensive management plan's development would like to be apprised of the LVWCC's progress.

Therefore, it is recommended that the project coordination team, in conjunction with the public outreach study team, write and distribute a quarterly newsletter to provide community leaders, elected officials, and other interested members of the public current information about LVWCC activities.

Participants: LVWCC Public Outreach Team
Frequency: Quarterly
Activities: Execution
 ~ Copy writing
 ~ Production of graphics
 ~ Printing
 ~ Database development
 ~ Distribution

LVWCC Web site - Increasingly popular Internet technology will allow interested citizens access to the most current information available and provide a forum for feedback and/or discussion of key issues.

Participation: Las Vegas Wash Project Team
Frequency: Ongoing
Activities: Promotion
 ~ Media advisory
 ~ Notices in internal/external publications.
 ~ Hyperlinks in related websites
 Execution
 ~ Copy writing
 ~ Graphic design/layout
 ~ Information systems support

Interested Regional Stakeholder Outreach - Because water from the Colorado River is a shared resource, there is considerable interest in

the Las Vegas Wash outside Southern Nevada. Potential additional stakeholder groups include downstream American Indian tribes and officials from Arizona and California. Their lack of proximity to Southern Nevada mandates that additional outreach efforts be used to communicate current information.

Participation: Las Vegas Wash Project Team

Frequency: Ongoing

Activities: Promotion

- ~ Outreach letter
- ~ Notice of meetings
- Execution
- ~ Information packet
- ~ Distribution of news releases, bulletins
- ~ Feedback mechanism

Children's Educational Program – An important aspect of public outreach is education. The Children's Educational Program is designed to teach children about the significance of the Las Vegas Wash as a natural resource; water quality and the monitoring process.

Participation: Las Vegas Wash Project Team

Frequency: To be determined by interest

Execution

- ~ Presentation development
- ~ Collateral material
- ~ Staff support

Target audiences

- ~ Schools
- ~ Libraries
- ~ Community centers
- ~ Youth groups

Post Event Publicity

- ~ Article internal/external publications

Effective 11/30/99

Appendix C

Public Outreach Initiative, 2002-2004

Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

Public Outreach Initiative

2002 - 2004



www.lvwash.org



Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee Public Outreach Initiative

Situation Analysis

During the past two-plus years, the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee has made tremendous strides in managing and enhancing the Las Vegas Wash. Four new erosion control structures, miles of bank stabilization and acres of revegetation serve as evidence of the committee's success. Previous public outreach efforts were geared toward establishing support for the capital outlays associated with these improvements and highlighting the program's effectiveness. To a large extent, these efforts have been effective. However, while public outreach activities have cultivated a small but well-informed and environmentally active following, they have lacked the desired reach throughout the community.

While this public outreach plan proposes to continue supporting the previous program's goals, the coordination committee's Administrative Study Team – the group tasked with overseeing public information and involvement activities – is exploring ways to expand understanding of the wash's value and affect positive environmental change in this critical waterway.

One issue that stands out is water quality. Of the wash's four flow components, only one – reclaimed water – is treated and closely regulated. Urban runoff, stormwater and flows from the shallow groundwater system carry various contaminants, commonly known as “non-point source contaminants,” into the Las Vegas Wash and Lake Mead. The Southern Nevada Water Authority, Clean Water Coalition and Storm Water Quality Management Committee are presently collaborating on an outreach program encouraging the public to meet its responsibility for protecting Lake Mead from these contaminants. The Administrative Study Team recommends supporting these efforts by underscoring the Las Vegas Wash's role in Southern Nevada's watershed and encouraging a sense of stewardship among the general public.

Communication Goals

- Increase public understanding of the Las Vegas Wash's role in Southern Nevada's watershed.
- Increase Southern Nevada residents' understanding of the hydrologic cycle and their role in it.
- Sustain public awareness of the collective efforts by the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee to protect and enhance the Las Vegas Wash.

Objectives

In September 2001, the Southern Nevada Water Authority conducted a second benchmark research study that interviewed valley residents to determine awareness, attitudes and understanding of issues related to Southern Nevada's water quality. Included in that survey were questions about the Las Vegas Wash and non-point source pollution, two of which will be used as a benchmark by which the outreach initiative's effectiveness among the general public will be gauged. To test the program's effectiveness among key stakeholders, a follow-up the LVWCC's initial stakeholder interviews is recommended. However, the qualitative nature of stakeholder interviews does not lend itself to statistical analysis and is therefore excluded as a measurable objective.

- Increase the percentage of respondents who understand the wash's function in the water cycle (as indicated by "all of the above" responses on page 15 of the August 2001 Water Quality Tracking Survey) from the current level of 23% to 30% or greater by the August 2004 benchmark survey.
- Increase the percentage of respondents who recognize that urban runoff and stormwater are not treated before reaching Lake Mead (as indicated by "untreated" responses on page 19) from 55% to 73% or greater by the August 2004 benchmark survey.



Strategy

Those relatively few people who value the Las Vegas Wash as a recreational resource because of its wildlife value and “open space” attributes have proven particularly receptive to messages about its role in the watershed. Not only have they supported efforts to protect the wash, but also many have become extremely active in volunteer events.

This initiative, therefore, will try to increase appreciation for the wash as a recreational resource among a broader audience and leverage that appreciation into understanding of the waterway’s role in the watershed and a sense of stewardship. This strategy is facilitated by the existence of the Clark County Wetlands Park Nature Preserve, which affords residents the opportunity to utilize the wash as a recreational resource, and by the ability to clearly identify and reach target audiences.

Target Audiences

Although desirable, it is not realistic to reach all residents with this message. People who have no appreciation for natural areas in general, for instance, are unlikely to be persuaded of the wash’s value as an open space. Therefore, outdoors enthusiasts, families and students will be the program’s focal point.

- Outdoor enthusiasts
- Home owners
- Parents
- Students

Key Message

- The Las Vegas Wash is among Southern Nevada’s most unique environmental and recreational resources and deserves protection.

Tactics

Action plans will be developed for each tactic pending approval of the public outreach plan.

News Releases – The recreational amenities – i.e., wildlife viewing platforms, trails, etc. – at the wash are relatively unknown among the general public. Any releases related to the Nature Preserve will be closely coordinated with Clark County Parks and Community Services to ensure that agency is comfortable with all messages.

Media Advisories – In addition to wash-related events such as plantings, elementary school classes frequently visit the Nature Preserve. Potential opportunities will be evaluated individually based on their media potential.

Volunteer Events – In addition to the annual Green-Up month activities, which have been proposed as semi-annual events, there are a number of interesting event options that merit consideration. These include weed control, installation of “rabbit” fencing around plants and an “adopt-an-acre” program under which school classes, scout troops, etc. would take responsibility for planting and/or maintaining a specific area of the wash. All of these have excellent media potential and would keep supporters involved.



Speakers' Bureau – To increase the wash project team's ability to accommodate speakers' bureau requests, a packaged PowerPoint presentation will be developed. Interested individuals will be trained to increase the available speaker pool.

Government Television Programs – Clark County operates Channel 4, which affords the opportunity for either it or the Southern Nevada Water Authority – through Water Ways – to produce programs aimed at increasing awareness of the wash as a recreational resource. The City of Las Vegas operates Channel 2, which may provide additional opportunities to air those messages.

Internet Links - There are several options available in terms of sites, ranging from the existing Web sites operated by LVWCC member agencies to public sites such as lasvegas.com that might be more likely to reach the target demographics. In the interest of consistency, “promotional” text about the wash's recreational attributes may be shared among the sites, while the bulk of more technical wash-related information will be housed at lvwash.org.

Newsletters – As of the fall 2002 issue, the Current newsletter will be incorporated into the SNWA's Water Wise newsletter, which has circulation of more than 500,000 households and businesses, features articles related to a wide variety of issues. Additionally, other partnering organizations may have interest in including prepared articles in their respective publications.

Advertising – Depending upon available resources, Public Service Announcements placed on specific cable television stations are an economical way to reach the target audiences based on demographic data. A media plan will be developed for consideration upon conceptual approval of the outreach plan.

Brochure – A revised Las Vegas Wash brochure is currently in development by the administrative study team and is intended for use by any of the participating agencies. This would supplement materials available at the Nature Preserve's visitor center. Distribution channels could also include Lake Mead-related facilities, such as Lake Mead Marina, Lake Mead Visitors Center and the entrance to Lake Mead National Recreation Area, as well as the Desert Demonstration Gardens and the Red Rock Conservation Area visitor center and adventure tour operators.

Public Events – The Las Vegas Wash Project Team currently participates in events such as the various Earth Day celebrations. Two new displays that visually depict the wash's role in Southern Nevada's watershed are currently in development. One will be staffed and placed at high-traffic events such as Sparks in the Park, the Henderson Farmer's Market, Cinco de Mayo and the



Invensys Classic golf tournament. The other will be reproduced and placed as an unstaffed "traveling" exhibit in public buildings. These displays are being designed to accompany the brochure.

Student Programs – The project team has been closely involved with outreach activities involving Mabel Hoggard Elementary School and actively seeks participation in wash-related events from students throughout Southern Nevada. Additionally, information may be conveyed to students by providing text and collateral to the SNWA's H2O University and Project WET (Water Education for Teachers).