



Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

E-mail update

April 2007

Green-Up

Spring brings the promise of warming temperatures, blooming flowers, and for the last several years, hundreds of volunteers out to the Las Vegas Wash for the spring portion of the semi-annual Las Vegas Wash Green-Up. On Saturday, March 10, more than 500 volunteers gathered at the recently completed Powerline Crossing Weir, just upstream of Lake Las Vegas.

Upcoming Meetings

Research/Environmental
Study Team
April 4, 2007
10:30 a.m.

Management Advisory
Committee
April 9, 2007
1:30 p.m.

Administrative Study Team
April 19, 2007
1:00 p.m.

Las Vegas Wash
Coordination Committee
April 24, 2007
9:00 a.m.



Volunteers dig in at this years' spring Green-Up

Just like the thousands of new plants that were planted in the soil, this event continues to grow bigger and bigger with each season. This effort was the 11th Green-Up event and was by far the largest acreage planted to date. Without fail, local volunteers eagerly stepped up to the challenge, so quickly in fact that volunteer sign up reached its capacity several weeks before the event! Over 5,000 native shrubs and trees were planted throughout 14 acres. The acreage was spread across the north and south banks of the Las Vegas Wash allowing volunteers to utilize the new foot bridge to cross the channel.

Previously overgrown with invasive tamarisk, this area had been cleared to construct the Powerline Crossing Weir. Revegetation plays an important role in the bank stabilization process and helps to further meet the goals of the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee in improving the stability and water quality of the Las Vegas Wash.

Duck Creek Head-Cut

The Management Advisory Committee (MAC) met on March 12, 2007 in a special meeting to further address the developments of an eroding head-cut advancing up Duck Creek. Duck Creek is a tributary to the Las Vegas Wash that connects near the Silver Bowl. The head-cut has grown significantly since 2001 and the 12-foot drop has now moved approximately 1,400 feet upstream. Not only is this erosion moving upstream, but it is now also increasing in width at its head. Without mitigation, the head-cut is expected to continue to grow substantially with each storm flow event.

Major concerns regarding the Duck Creek head-cut are that as the erosion continues to advance, it will eventually threaten nearby structures such as the Wetlands Park Scenic Drive, the Whitney Lift Station, the proposed Ducks Unlimited Wetlands area and possibly even cause a breach of the Las Vegas Wash altering its flows and bypassing planned erosion control structures.

The MAC organized this special meeting in order to further discuss four proposed mitigation alternatives, their estimated costs, and feasibility.



The recent fire provided a clear view of the head-cut in Duck Creek.

The proposals range from constructing a large erosion control structure within Duck Creek to re-aligning the Las Vegas Wash for a short section, preempting the breach under controlled circumstances. As the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee works to resolve the Duck Creek head-cut, considerations must be given to environmental issues, cost, and private property.

Did You Know?

Did you know that there was recently a large fire in the Wetlands Park? Sure you did. But, did you know that the source of most of the fuel in the 200-acre fire was an invasive plant known as common reed? Although not as prolific as the more familiar tamarisk, common reed (*Phragmites australis*) is a member of the grass family, grows in thick stands all along the Las Vegas Wash and can reach over 12 feet tall! Common reed tends to out compete native plants such as cattails, bulrush, and willows decreasing migratory bird habitat. Management issues regarding common reed along with other invasive plants are spearheaded by the multi-agency Las Vegas Wash Weed Partnership.



A small patch of common reed survived the Wetlands Park fire.