



# Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

## E-mail update

October 2006

### Don't forget – October's here and that means it's time for the annual tour

On Tuesday, October 24, the LVWCC will go on its third annual tour of the Wash. This yearly event provides an excellent opportunity to see the progress being made on the ground toward completing CAMP action items. The schedule currently features several new stops, including Powerline Crossing Weir, which is forecasted for completion by the end of October, Pittman Wash Pilot Wetlands, and S108, the 60-acre revegetation site described in prior updates. We will also return to more mature sites such as Pabco and Bostick to see how these sites have changed in the past year. We have a lot of ground to cover, so remember to wear comfortable shoes. Lunch will be provided. Please call 822-3390 by October 19 to reserve your spot on the tour, and we'll see you on the 24th!

### Upcoming Meetings

Operations Study Team  
October 4, 2006  
8:30 a.m.

Research and Environmental  
Monitoring Study Team  
October 4, 2006  
10:30 a.m.

Management Advisory  
Committee  
October 16, 2006  
1:30 p.m.

Administrative Study Team  
October 19, 2006  
1:00 p.m.

Las Vegas Wash  
Coordination Committee  
Annual Tour  
October 24, 2006  
8:30 a.m.

### LVWCC members receive presentation on selenium by noted biologist

On Tuesday, August 15, Dr. Joseph Skorupa, an expert on selenium contamination in birds with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), spoke to members of the LVWCC on selenium-related topics. Selenium was identified as a potential contaminant of concern in the Wash during the 2003 bioassessment monitoring efforts. Data from the 2005 bioassessment monitoring is under review and a plan to conduct a third round of monitoring is under development for 2007.

In his presentation, Dr. Skorupa discussed how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is developing a new selenium standard based on fish tissue concentrations (dry weight). He discussed the study used to develop the draft standard of 7.9 ug/g, the complications with translating findings from a single study into a relevant standard, and how the EPA is now conducting additional research to further inform the creation of the new standard. The FWS is recommending a standard of 4 ug/g and asking that EPA consider other aquatically dependent wildlife.



2005 annual tour



Killdeer nest sampled during bioassessment monitoring



Coot nest sampled during bioassessment monitoring

Dr. Skorupa went on to discuss selenium impacts on birds. A study he conducted with other researchers found two selenium endpoints to be most relevant in birds: survival/growth and reproduction. Reproduction includes both pre-hatch and post-hatch effects. The researchers also found that some species are more sensitive than others. They were able to develop exposure response curves for coots, ducks, stilts, killdeer, and avocet, which are listed in descending order of sensitivity. He went on to discuss possible management options based on selenium levels found in bird eggs from the bioassessment study in the Wash. These options included reducing selenium loading to negligible risk levels, mitigating and compensating over the landscape, and shifting contamination from high-risk aquatic food webs to lower risk terrestrial food webs. Dr. Skorupa concluded his talk with a question and answer session.

### Did you know?

#### New species slithers on to the Wash species list

A new species has reared its head in the Wash - the southwestern speckled rattlesnake (*Crotalus mitchellii pyrrhus*)! So named for the pattern of dark speckled bands on its skin, this venomous snake averages from 2 to 3.5 feet long and is commonly a rock-dweller. Body coloration among these snakes can vary widely, as was confirmed by the two experiences we had with the species in the field. One snake, found curled up among woody debris, was a pinkish brown, while the other, found napping on bank stabilization rocks, was more beige in color and had more pronounced banding. Each blended in well with its different environment. So the next time you are out at the Wash, keep your eyes and ears open and watch where you step. You never know what will slither across your path!



Southwestern speckled rattlesnake -photo credit: Aaron Miller