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 Palbco 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!

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.

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 it’s 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!

For comments or to contact Project Team staff, call 702-822-3370.