



# Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee

## E-mail update

November 2006

### Rescheduled

Due to rain, the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee Annual Tour has been rescheduled for November 7, 2006 8:30 a.m.

### Upcoming Meetings

Operations Study Team  
November 8, 2006  
8:30 a.m.

Interagency Sampling and  
Coordination Committee  
November 13, 2006  
1:30 p.m.

### 10th Wash Green-Up a tremendous success

September 30, 2006, dawned bright and sunny, heralding in a beautiful day for the 10th semi-annual Wash Green-Up. The community responded, turning out en masse for the planting event. More than 400 volunteers, the largest number in five years, descended on the S108 site. Under the guidance of skilled site supervisors, large contingents from Vo-Tech High School, Alpha Epsilon Delta, Cub Scout Pack 99 and others sunk their hands into the dirt and planted an amazing 3,300 native trees and shrubs in less than two hours! The vegetation planted included approximately 2,500 screwbean and honey mesquites and 800 globemallow, fourwing saltbush, and broom baccharis. The plants cover more than 10 acres, the largest acreage of any volunteer planting event on the Wash!



Volunteers planting mesquite tree

### Wash cultural history highlighted at regional conference

The Las Vegas Wash is lined with history. This is not just a reference to the miles of riprap salvaged from imploded casinos, but also to the dozens of historic and prehistoric sites spread along the Wash's banks. These sites and their significance were the subject of a special symposium at the 30th Great Basin Anthropological Conference held October 19-22 in Las Vegas' "historic" downtown. Speakers presented more than 30 years of data collected from the Wash. The presentations chronicled the history of human activity from as early as 150 BC to an apparent moonshine operation during the Prohibition of the 1920s and early 1930s. Cataloged discoveries include among others, prehistoric rock shelters, pit houses, food storage pits, potsherds and maize. Plants such as cattails and cactus provided food and materials for making baskets and mats, while ephedra was boiled to make medicinal tea. Mesquite trees were especially important assets used for structures, food, and fuel. These plants also provided habitat for desert tortoises and mammals, which were critical food sources. Researchers believe these once abundant resources drew people to the area for hundreds if not thousands of years, revealing the importance of the Wash to early inhabitants.



Prehistoric pithouse structure circa 430 AD



Bishop Ranch structure circa 1910 AD

The Southern Nevada Water Authority and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation provided funding and support for much of the research presented, and the importance of that research is apparent. By analyzing these cultural resources, we not only learn more about the people that utilized the Wash; we learn more about the Wash itself. The information presented at this symposium substantiates that the Las Vegas Wash has played an essential role in the local ecosystem for thousands of years, and thanks to the efforts of the LVWCC should continue to do so long into the future.

### Staff Spotlight

#### New Environmental Biologist joins Wash Team

The Wash Team is pleased to introduce its latest addition, Environmental Biologist Tim Ricks. Tim graduated with a B.S. in Fisheries and Wildlife from Utah State University and has since conducted research on many threatened and endangered fishes around the West on both a state level and within the private sector. While working for a consulting firm for several years, he had the opportunity to do extensive sampling on the Virgin and Muddy rivers and study the endangered razorback sucker populations of Lake Mead. These experiences introduced him to the Las Vegas watershed, and he looks forward to expanding his expertise on the Las Vegas Wash project.

Some of Tim's responsibilities will include ensuring biological and archaeological compliance, studying the potential effects of selenium on razorback suckers in Las Vegas Bay, and taking over the fish tissue bioassessment study, the photo comparison analysis project and the LVWCC email update.



New Wash Team Member Tim Ricks