

## Bostick weir serves as first line of defense against erosion

A new erosion control structure named for long-time environmentalist and Las Vegas Wash advocate Vernon Bostick will soon fortify the waterway's defenses against erosion. Already, the six structures completed along the wash have reduced by more than two-thirds the amount of sediment being carried downstream.

The Bostick Weir has the largest water-holding capacity of any such structure built along the wash to date. In fact, it is the first structure along the Las Vegas Wash to require a Dam Safety permit from the State of Nevada. Engineer **Gerry Hester** said the weir will protect both the wash and the other weirs already in place upstream. Weirs—which are constructed primarily from boulders, concrete and other reinforcements—

slow the water's flow and reduce erosion. During the past three decades, erosion caused by increased daily water flows and periodic storms has reduced the wash's wetlands acreage by approximately 90 percent.

"During a flood, you might see a billion gallons of water come down the wash in less than a day," Hester explained. "Without these structures to slow the flows, the water will just scour the channel, destroying most of the wetlands vegetation and carrying tons of sediment into the lake."

The wash is the primary channel through which urban runoff, stormwater and other flows travel to Lake Mead. The wash also serves as a habitat for a wide variety of wildlife.

The Bostick Weir structure is scheduled to be completed in May. 



Strategically placed boulders and other natural materials form weirs that shore up the banks of the Las Vegas Wash.

## Research underscores need to reduce urban pollution

Water quality testing conducted by the Las Vegas Wash Project Team has confirmed what many scientists have long suspected—the pesticides and fertilizers that are washed off our lawns and driveways can end up in the Las Vegas Wash, potentially impacting the quality of water that flows into Lake Mead.

"Over-fertilization of lawns and improper disposal of pet waste and household chemicals are definitely among the culprits. What I don't think people realize is that our actions

within the Las Vegas area can have an effect on water quality many miles downstream," explained Regional Water Quality Supervisor **Peggy Roefler**.

Members of a regional Stormwater Quality Management Committee last year began spreading the word, through a public information campaign, about how residents can reduce pollution in Southern Nevada's watershed. The radio and television spots are designed to promote proper disposal of household and pet waste.

- To learn how you can help reduce pollution in the Las Vegas Wash, visit [lvstormwater.com](http://lvstormwater.com).
- To report illegal dumping or disposal of substances in storm drains, call the Clark County Health District at **383-1251**. You can also report illegal dumping online at [cchd.org](http://cchd.org).
- To get information about proper household chemical disposal, call Republic Services of Southern Nevada at **734-5400**. 

## Volunteers 'Green-Up' wash banks

**U**ndaunted by Mother Nature, more than 150 valley residents joined staff from the Las Vegas Wash Project Team in March for the Las Vegas Wash Green-Up, planting approximately 1,000 shrubs and trees along the wash's banks.

A week after the originally scheduled event was postponed by rain, eager volunteers—including scores of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts—planted the south bank of the wash just upstream from an erosion control structure. The effort was designed to help stabilize the wash's banks and thereby prevent erosion during storms.



“The erosion control structures we’ve installed have been very effective, but during flood events the water has a tendency to scour out the wash’s banks,” said project coordinator **Keiba Crear**. “These plants’ root systems reinforce the soil and help reduce the damage.”

During the past three years, volunteers have planted more than

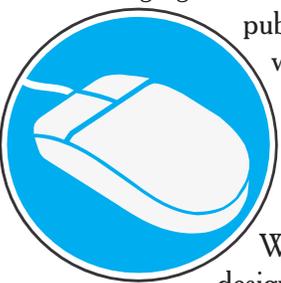
15,000 trees and shrubs in several areas adjacent to the waterway. In total, the wash project team has enhanced 42 acres near the wash with native vegetation.

The Wash Green-Up is only one project in an ongoing program overseen by the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee (LVWCC) to protect and enhance the Las Vegas Wash. In addition to organizing volunteer plantings and building the dam-like structures, the coordination committee and its member agencies are arming the wash's banks with boulders, removing invasive plants and conducting extensive wildlife studies.



## Web site puts information at your fingertips

**W**ant to know where the Las Vegas Wash flows in Southern Nevada? Is your classroom looking to conduct research at the wash? Interested in lending a hand to a planting effort? Find out how to get this information and more at your fingertips by logging on to **lvwash.org**. The LVWCC's Web site is changing to address increased



public interest in wash-related activities and volunteer projects. “Initially, the Web site was designed as a way

for participants on the Coordination Committee to share information,” said site administrator **Stephanie Lien**, “but it has evolved into a window through which the public can view the wash. Because the Web site is visually oriented and can be updated quickly, it’s the best way for people to see changes as they occur.”

Lien said the new format is geared toward answering the four questions residents ask most frequently:

- What is the Las Vegas Wash?
- Why is it important?
- What is being done to restore it?
- What can I do to help?

The Web site includes information on diverse topics such as wildlife, volunteer projects, construction activities and water quality. Content has been organized so people seeking basic information can find it easily, while those who want to search the depths of the Web site can access volumes of information about various wash-related subjects. The site also houses thousands of photographs organized by category.

The revamped version of **lvwash.org** is scheduled for launch later this month.

