

Report shows wash swells with activity

The Las Vegas Wash Project Team's 2002 year-end report provides ample evidence that the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee has made significant progress on its stabilization and restoration plan.

Among the report's highlights:

- Project team crews and Wash Green-Up volunteers have planted 42 acres of native plants along the waterway's banks.
- The engineering team designed four additional erosion control structures, two of which are already complete.
- Construction crews installed 4,300 linear feet of boulders along the banks of the wash to stabilize the channel.

- Water-quality scientists have implemented a program to monitor contaminants of concern such as selenium, mercury and perchlorate in the wash and its tributaries.
- Biologists are conducting baseline studies to establish populations of birds, fish, reptiles, small mammals and insects so the effects of enhancement activities for wildlife can be measured.
- Archaeologists have identified and surveyed nearly 60 sites adjacent to the Las Vegas Wash, recommending 39 for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

All of these activities are designed to satisfy recommendations included in the Comprehensive Adaptive

Management Plan, a blueprint for stabilizing the channel and improving water quality in the Las Vegas Wash. An electronic version of the 2002 year-end report is available from the project office. To request a copy, call **822-3300** or visit **lvwash.org** and download a PDF version from the Web site.



Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve offers glimpse of the wild life

When most people think of Southern Nevada's wild life, they visualize bright lights and crowded nightclubs. The



City of Henderson, however, is home to a different kind of wildlife.

Tucked inside the Henderson Water Reclamation Facility is the City of Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, a sanctuary that attracts scores of avian species and flocks of birders and photographers. Open daily from 6 a.m. to 3 p.m., the preserve features paved and unpaved trails that wind along several ponds. Staff members also lead tours and conduct classes

oriented toward both beginning and experienced birders.

From great blue heron to snowy egret, majestic birds abound at the preserve, underscoring the wetlands' value as a wildlife habitat. For more information or directions to the City of Henderson Bird Viewing Preserve, call **566-2939** or visit the City of Henderson's Web site, **www.ci.henderson.nv.us**.

Erosion control structures winning war against erosion

Seven grade-control structures and more than 10,000 feet of bank protection are doing a number on the once-unbridled flows of the Las Vegas Wash. Since the first structure was built, total suspended-solids concentration in the wash has been reduced by more than 50 percent.

“The name of the game is stabilization, and we’re winning,” said **Gerry Hester**, engineering construction manager for Las Vegas Wash activities. “For wetlands to thrive and provide water quality and habitat benefits, the channel must be stable. During the past two decades, erosion in the Las Vegas Wash has been out of control. While we still have some work ahead of us, there isn’t any question that we now have the upper hand on erosion.”

Using a variety of methods and materials—ranging from resort rubble to poured concrete—the wash project team has built structures that both slow the water’s flow and create large wildlife-friendly ponds in the process. Combined with the nearly two miles of bankline reinforcements, the structures create a solid foundation upon which to re-establish wetlands.

The most recent addition to the fortifications is the Bostick Weir, named for local longtime environmentalist Vern Bostick. The largest structure built across the wash to date, the weir was completed in July. 



Construction on this Pabco Erosion Control Structure was completed in November 2000.

Demonstration wetlands pond thriving

The 5.75-acre demonstration wetlands pond project has finally taken root, and it has some proud new residents. Working



with the City of Henderson Water Reclamation Facility, biologists have been attempting to construct a wetlands area comprising 11 submerged planting beds and three bird “loafing” islands.

After installing the vegetation in early 2002, crews began to fill the area with water only to discover more than two dozen black-necked stilt nests containing a total of 77 eggs. Rather than disturb the nesting area, the team elected to postpone the project until the chicks hatched.

Last September, however, project

team crews were able to replant and raise the pond’s water level. While the demonstration wetlands pond will help environmental planners determine what types of wetland plants are best suited for life in the wash, an even more critical goal is to quantify the water-polishing benefits of wetlands. For decades, environmentalists have touted wetlands’ ability to absorb nutrients and contaminants from water. This research may help further establish a quantifiable link between wetlands and water quality. 

