



FOOTPRINTS

SEASONAL IMPRESSIONS OF CLARK COUNTY WETLANDS PARK



Photo by Tim Ricks

FALL 2016

CONTENTS

- Fall Means Fun 1**
- A Successful Summer 2**
- Volunteer Spotlight. 3**
- Nature Tykes 3**
- Flora and Fauna Forecast . . 4**
- Wildlife Safety. 4**
- Barnaby 4**

Footprints is the quarterly newsletter of Clark County Wetlands Park. Staff contributors: CC Carlson, Michelle Baker, Sheila Glennie, Alice Hulslander, and Jody Walker

CALL FOR PHOTOS!

Want to see your Wetlands Park photo featured in the next newsletter?

Subject: "Animal Antics"

Submit your photo(s) to: wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov by 5pm on November 10, 2016 to be considered.

Include your name, date and location of the photo.

FALL MEANS FUN AT THE WETLANDS

With Fall in the air, it's time to look forward to an impressive assortment of fun and educational programs and events at Wetlands Park. Best of all, these programs and events are free, though advance signup may be required.

Guided Park Tours A variety of tours and walks are designed to interest both new and regular Park visitors. Held on the Nature Center deck, our 30-minute **Overlook Talks** give visitors an engaging Park overview. Our two-hour **Discovery Walks** are presented on a range of topics, and monthly **Meetup Walks** offer a chance to meet others and explore with a guide. Birders love our **Java Jaunts**, and those with mobility issues appreciate our **Senior Golf Cart Tours**.

Kids and Families Our **Nature Tykes** program (ages 3–6) is held on Wednesdays and select Saturdays. Also on weekends, check out **Nature Tales**, a story and craft program, for children of all ages. Kids ages 5+ can participate in our **Young Explorers** indoor/outdoor program. Also kids can investigate scat and tracks in **Who Goes There?**

Studio WP Capturing the beauty of nature in "negative space," our **Charcoal Drawing** class is ideal for children ages 6+. In conjunction with the US Fish & Wildlife Service, there's the **Junior Duck Stamp Conservation Program**, where kids (K-12) can submit their art in a nationwide art contest.

Fitness, Education and Fun Love nature and have an inclination to cover the Park on foot? If so, join our **Wetlands Walkers** program. Visit our Exhibit Hall, attend one of our **Wetlands U** sessions, or participate in some **Phenology Phun** "citizen science" on the Weir Bridge.

Haunt the Wetlands On October 28, we will host our 3rd annual **Haunt the Wetlands**. Throughout the day, families are invited to tread softly through an eerie maze of rustling reeds, produce an array of Halloween-themed crafts, and partake in a Spooky Walk.

Pick up a Program Guide at the Nature Center for details about all of our program offerings or visit our website: www.clarkcountynv.gov/wetlandspark.

SUMMER SEASON A SUCCESS AT WETLANDS PARK

Despite the sweltering temperatures outside, Wetlands Park enjoyed record numbers of visitors this Summer. Additionally, Park staff achieved some significant milestones in terms of their professional standing and launched a number of exciting new programs that are either enhancing the visitor experience today or will in the future.

According to Park Program Administrator Liz Bickmore, “We held our first **Summer Open House** over the Fourth of July Weekend. Over 260 visitors attended the mostly indoor kid-friendly event, which included special exhibits from 13 leading agencies located here in the Vegas Valley, crafts and activities, live desert animals, and a host of fun and educational experiences in the ‘cool’ of the Nature Center. For many, it was their first time visiting the Park. Many expressed their delight in experiencing the **Exhibit Hall**, with its engaging informational vignettes. The event was a great way to enjoy nature and beat the heat.”

“MANY [VISITORS] EXPRESSED THEIR DELIGHT IN EXPERIENCING THE EXHIBIT HALL, WITH ITS ENGAGING INFORMATIONAL VIGNETTES”

The Park hosted the first series of **Golf Cart Tours**. Targeting older and disabled adults that would otherwise not be able to walk our trails, participants agreed that the two-hour tour gave them a deeper appreciation of the Park. The **Watercolor Classes** offered to children and adults were also a big hit, as was the **Plaster Painting** and paper **Snowflake-making Classes**. In fact, these classes were packed. “It was amazing to see the level of competency and satisfaction that participants had. Some in the



Visitors try their hand at capturing the beauty of nature in a watercolor class this summer.

watercolor classes had never picked up a paint brush before and yet they were able to produce attractive pieces of art they could frame,” observed Recreation Assitant Jody Walker.

“We also launched, **Hooray for Ants**, for children ages 6 to 10. It was amazing to see how many kids were really into the tiny, misunderstood creatures. And, our ongoing **Wild Science** and **Nature Tales** programs were also very well attended.”

In addition, the Park's early morning and evening **Discovery Walks** were much enjoyed. They included **Evening Bat Walks** and the popular early morning **Beaver Walks** run in conjunction with the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

“Park staff also achieved a major milestone. I am delighted to report that all of our staff are now **Certified Interpretive Guides** (CIGs) through the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). This program empowers our staff

to use both the theoretical foundations of the profession with practical skills to deliver quality interpretive programming. In Nevada, there are only 81 CIGs. Our team makes up 17% of those professionals in the state who are actively engaged in interpretation.”

Lastly, the Park hosted an NAI-sanctioned **Process of Interpretive Planning Workshop** in August. More than 25 individuals from around the country participated in the five-day event, which focused on planning effective ways to provide effective interpretive opportunities. Breaking out into small groups, teams were charged with analyzing our Park and making recommendations as to how we can best improve Park experiences for visitors.

Bickmore added, “We are anticipating additional suggestions over the next few months, with hopes of integrating the best ideas into our Park Plan.” 🌻

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteer Ed Hayes out on the trails.

Volunteers truly make a difference by doing what they enjoy. We spent some time talking with Ed Hayes, a Wetlands Watch volunteer, to see why he is a regular volunteer at the Park.

How did you come to volunteer at the Park?

I read about the installation of the Weir Bridge back in 2009 and came to check it out. I enjoyed the area so much and

started visiting regularly. After about a year, Park volunteers asked me if I would be interested in volunteering at the Park. I've been volunteering ever since.

In what capacities have you been volunteering at the Park?

I started out as a Trail Keeper; walking the trails, picking up trash, and helping visitors with directions. A little over two years ago, the Wetlands Watch Program was started and I began volunteering as a Watch volunteer, continuing to walk the trails and help out as needed. Lately, I also volunteer as a Team Lead with the Wetlands: Hands On! program.

Why do you like volunteering at the Park?

I like the people, everyone here is great! I enjoy the fact that I can walk in the Park while volunteering and get a bit closer to nature. I enjoy going on the Volunteer Ventures excursions open to volunteers, like the trip up to Mt. Charleston and the day spent at the

County Shooting Complex.

What advice would you give someone interested in volunteering at the Park?

I really think you will enjoy the experience. You'll get a sense of community, a chance to meet people. You get a feeling of gratification doing something valuable which you also enjoy.

How long have you lived in the Las Vegas Valley?

My wife and I discovered Las Vegas when we spent a couple of days here at the conclusion of a Grand Canyon float trip in the mid-eighties. We have lived here 25 years.

Where did you live previously?

Before Las Vegas, we lived in Chicago for 30 years.

What is your favorite spot in the Park?

I try to walk by the Boardwalk Pond every time I visit the Park. Other favorite places are the Cottonwood Grove and the Weir Bridge. 🌿

CHILDREN LEARN AND PLAY WETLANDS PARK STYLE

Nature Tykes is an educational program designed for pre-school aged children and their guardians. The entire program takes place outdoors within the Nature Preserve. The program is held in the Spring and Fall months during ideal weather conditions and abundant opportunities to observe and experience flowers, leaves, wildlife, sounds, bugs, and more.

The learning and science in Nature Tykes focuses on unique topics each week, such as: animal signs, nature's colors, textures, smells, nest building, bird discovery, animal homes and habitats, nature's music, everything trees, science experiments and predator/prey relationships. What makes this program so special is that participants do all this

through active Park exploration, outdoor puppet shows, imaginary role-plays (pretending to be quail for example), storytelling, free play, tree climbing, and guided discovery.

Play is how children learn to relate to others, to solve problems and to control their emotions. Through play, children learn to master their fears, assert their needs, process their emotions and learn to get along with others.

Play helps children resolve conflict and relieve stress. Play helps foster imagination and creativity. Play—such a simple word, but the benefits seem endless.

The Nature Tykes program has been awarded the "Program of the Year"

from the Nevada Parks and Recreation Society. 🌿



Photo by Jody Walker

NATURE TYKES SCHEDULE

**Fall: October and November
Wednesdays, Saturday 10/22 and
11/26 9:30 – 11:00 a.m.
Spring Programs: March and April.**

FLORA AND FAUNA FORECAST

Fall is a transition time for many plants and animals. The following is a sampling of what you may encounter in the Park this time of year:

FLORA Look for plants to transition from blooming & green to fall colors, such as the freemont cottonwood, marsh fleabane, sandbar willow and seep willow.

Some plants will remain green throughout the fall, such as salt grass, iodine bush and Goodding's willow.

Look for lots of seed pods either brown or opened, such as bulrush, four-wing saltbush, screwbean mesquite, quailbush and milkweed.

FAUNA Continue to look for insects, such as ants, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies and wasps. In particular, keep your eyes open for monarch and queen butterflies as well as their chrysalis and caterpillars.

Look to the ground for Gambel's quail, greater roadrunner, desert cottontail and northern flicker.

Look to the water for american coot, common gallinule, great blue herons, double-crested cormorants, killdeer and turtles.

Look to the trees and the sky for black-tailed gnatcatcher, hummingbirds, belted kingfisher, northern mockingbird, phainopepla, loggerhead shrike, vultures, hawks and falcons. 🦋

MONARCH CATERPILLAR



Photo by Sheila Glennie

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE



Photo by Sheila Glennie

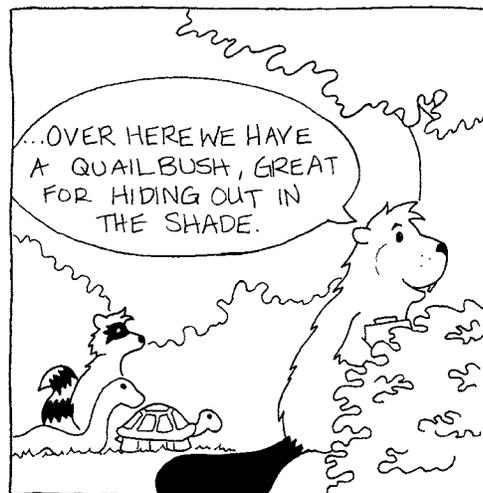
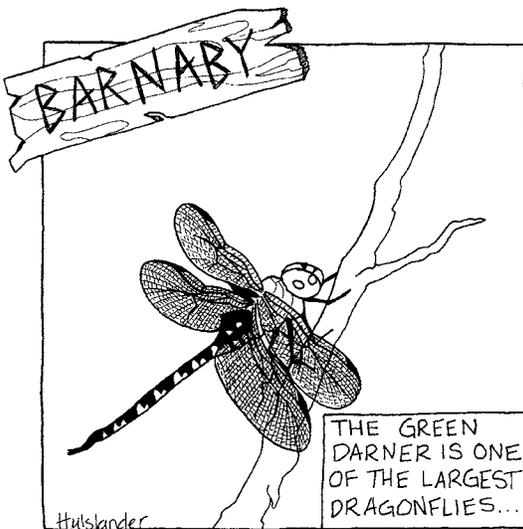
DID YOU KNOW?

FEEDING, TAKING AND LEAVING ANIMALS IS ILLEGAL

Whether it's hunting, trapping, or fishing, we want to remind readers that it is a crime to take or harm any of our wildlife. Such activity can upset the balance in our ecosystem, leading to undesirable outcomes, such as animal aggression and starvation. Feeding wildlife can have unintended consequences, and is against the law in all County parks.

While some area residents may think they are doing the right thing, it is illegal to drop off unwanted pets and other animals. It's not only bad for the environment, it is likely to be bad for the pet. The introduction of new diseases to the native animals – or to the newly introduced pet – can be deadly. Pets often do not know how to avoid predators the way wild animals do and may not survive long on their own if released into the Park.

Your understanding and cooperation in this regard is greatly appreciated. Please pass the word! 🌿



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