

WETLANDS EXPLORERS CLUB



Water and the Las Vegas Wash

The Las Vegas Valley gets about 4.1 inches of rain each year. All of Nevada averages 10 inches of rain. That's not much! The rainiest state is Hawaii, with 57.2 inches a year, while Nevada is the driest state in the United States.

The lowest elevation in our Las Vegas watershed is the Las Vegas Wash. The Wash carries about 2 million gallons of water each day to Lake Mead. If not from rain, where does all that water come from?



[Watch a video](#) of the Las Vegas Wash flowing through Wetlands Park.

LESSON

Water comes from four places:

1. **Wastewater Treatment Facilities:** Water collected from homes and businesses, is treated before being discharged into the Las Vegas Wash as **reclaimed** water.
2. **Urban Run off:** Excess water from roads, parking lots, sidewalks, and driveways is called urban run off. That includes excess water from sprinklers or water from washing cars in the driveway.
3. **Storm Water:** Storm drains were build to catch rain water and direct it safely to flood channels and on to Lake Mead.
4. **Shallow Groundwater:** Sometimes called the "water table," groundwater is part of the natural water cycle.

The flow of water in the Las Vegas Wash is slowed by a series of flood control structures called "weirs." By slowing the water down as it flows through Wetlands Park, we are returning naturally cleaner water to Lake Mead, which we will use again in our homes and businesses.



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A great place at Wetlands Park to do today's activity: **Big Weir Bridge**

The Big Weir Bridge is a great place to see the millions of gallons of water that travels through our Urban River, the Las Vegas Wash. Did you know that urban runoff is the number one cause of lowering the water quality of rivers and streams in the US? Look around you and answer the questions below.

ACTIVITY

1. Does the water look clean? Explain. _____

2. The water you're looking at came from Storm Drains. Make a list of all the things that water can carry into storm drains. What do you see?

3. What other things could pollute the water? If the water looks clear, could it have unseen pollutants in it? Explain.

4. What can you do to help keep our water clean and safe for wildlife, people and plants? _____

Research urban runoff and Las Vegas storm water in Google to compare your answers.



Takeaway... A question for today: Who is affected by polluted water?

[Click here to answer.](#)



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Just for Fun

Evaluate Your Home

Draw a map of your house. Including the front and back yards, and the road if you have them. Add in the nearest storm drain to your house.



Now draw a water drop in all the places water could run off into the storm drain. Think of a solution that could help keep water run off out of the storm drain.

Problem	Solution

Problem	Solution

