



# FOOTPRINTS

SEASONAL IMPRESSIONS OF CLARK COUNTY WETLANDS PARK

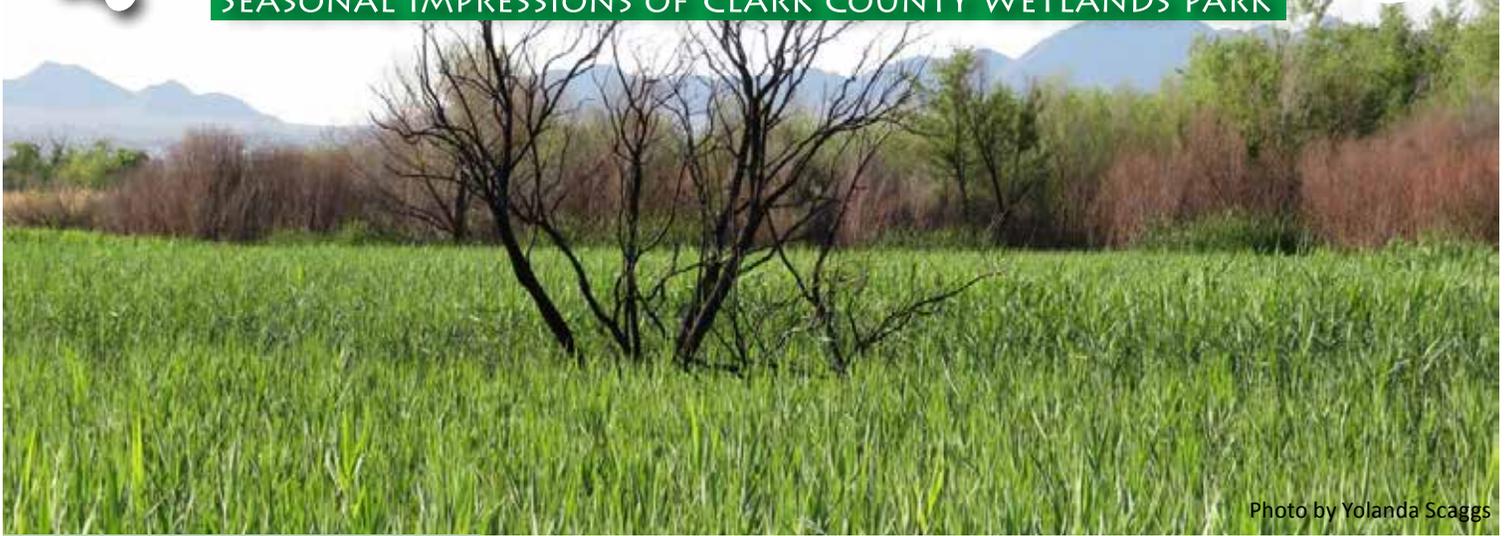


Photo by Yolanda Scaggs

## SUMMER 2018

### CONTENTS

- Fighting Wildfires . . . . . 1**
- Flora and Fauna Forecast . . . . 2**
- Nature Close-up . . . . . 2**
- Spring Events. . . . . 3**
- Volunteer Spotlight . . . . . 3**
- Wetlands Walkers . . . . . 4**
- Park Safety . . . . . 4**
- Park Artwork. . . . . 4**

*Footprints* is the quarterly newsletter of Clark County Wetlands Park.

Staff contributors include Liz Bickmore, Michelle Baker, CC Carlson, Sheila Glennie, Alice Hulslander, Jan Steinbaugh, and Jody Walker.

### CALL FOR PHOTOS!

Want to see your Wetlands Park photo featured in an upcoming newsletter? Submit your high resolution photo(s) to:

**wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov**  
by 5pm on August 15, 2018 to be considered. Include your name, date, and location of the photo.

**Subject:** "Splash of Color"

**702-455-7522**

**www.ccwetlandspark.com**  
**wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov**

## FIGHTING WILDFIRES: IT'S A TEAM EFFORT

Where there is smoke there is fire, and unfortunately, several fires recently have ignited at Wetlands Park. Back in the 70s and 80s, this area, known as 'the swamp', burned each year. A lot has changed since then. Clark County has since embraced the unique 'swamp characteristics' of the area and created the Wetlands Park. The once vast weedy area is now a seven mile stretch of open water and greenery that provides habitat for nearly 400 species of birds and other wildlife. The Park boasts twenty miles of trails, a state of the art nature center, and is a welcome addition to the community. To be a good neighbor, Clark County takes the responsibility of this Park seriously and managing for fire is a team effort.

Understanding that wildland fires are different than urban fires, Wetlands Park has partnered with the Bureau of Land Management Wildland Fire through the Bureau of Reclamation, Clark County Fire Department Urban and Rural Divisions, and internal departments from Park Police, Public Works, and Real Property Management.

Coordination between these agencies helps provide smoother management before, during, and after fires. Fire breaks

are created and maintained each year by the County and select staff has been trained on heavy equipment to support firefighting efforts. Police conduct sweeps to reduce overnight camping and the County coordinates trash and debris removal. "Wildfires can quickly expand. Fire departments work together to evaluate the hazard, establish fire breaks, and actively fight fire to protect life, property, and sensitive areas while minimizing acres burned. Winds, fuel, fire breaks, and access for fire vehicles all play major roles," says Clark County Assistant Fire Chief Haydu. The recent fires at the Park were contained with the joint effort of many and Wetlands Park is grateful to the team that continues to protect the Park.



Photo by Sheila Glennie

*Fire fighters putting out hotspots*

# SEASONAL FLORA & FAUNA FORECAST

Summer is when all animals, including humans, take advantage of the warmer weather. It is the hottest of the four seasons where days are longer and nights are shorter. Plants grow and provide food for herbivores. Herbivores gain weight and provide food for carnivores. Mammals and birds raise their young. Insects go through life cycles and lay eggs. So, get out there and take an early morning or evening hike in the Park when it is cooler:

**FLORA:** Look for blooming plants, such as sacred datura, salt heliotrope, sunflower, and desert willow.

Look for green-leafed plants, such as salt grass, tamarisk, and Goodding's willow.

**FAUNA:** Look for lots of insects, such as ants, aphids, bees, butterflies, dragonflies, damselflies, funnel spiders, tarantula hawks, and wasps. Insects

attract bats.

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

Look to the water for American coot, common gallinule, green and great blue herons, and turtles.

Look to the trees and the sky for black-tailed gnatcatcher, great-tailed grackle, hummingbirds, northern mockingbird, verdin, and turkey vultures. 🌸

## DESERT WILLOW BLOOM



Photo by Sheila Glennie

## RED ADMIRAL BUTTERFLY



Photo by Sheila Glennie

## ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD



Photo by Sheila Glennie

## NATURE CLOSE-UP: BATS!

Do you wonder why there is an exclamation point after the word "Bats" in the title of this article? It is because, despite their "bad" reputation, bats are truly amazing and incredibly useful animals. Here are just four reasons why we should appreciate them:

**1: Bats are exceptional exterminators.** They eat large quantities of insects such as mosquitos, beetles, moths, grasshoppers, and locusts. Bats eat insects that bite us and eat our crops, reducing the need for insecticides. Bats can eat 600 mosquitos in an hour, and up to 3,000 in one night!

**2: Bats are not only really cute; they are genuinely unique.** They are the only mammals capable of true flight. (Contrary to what you might think, flying squirrels don't fly, they only glide.)

**3: Many species of bats use echolocation to find prey and "see" their surroundings.** Echolocation is a series of calls, clicks, and vibrations sent out by bats to bounce off objects telling them

whether the object is food, what direction and speed it is moving, and how they need to adjust their movements. Humans have studied echolocation and adapted it for use within the blind community and for underwater sonar.

**4: Bat droppings, also known as guano, are one of the world's richest fertilizers.** Organic and high in nitrogen, guano is fast-acting, has little odor, and can be worked into the soil prior to planting or during

active plant growth.

If you want to learn more about these misunderstood mammals, sign up for an upcoming Discovery Walk, "Bats and the Park" on June 4, July 15, or August 4 from 7 – 9 p.m. Join a Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) educator and a Wetlands Park naturalist to hear the bats with a bat scanner. Enrollment is limited and pre-registration is required. 🌿



Photo courtesy of NDOW

**NDOW Biologist, Christy Klinger, swabs a Townsend's big-eared bat for a white nosed syndrome survey.**

# SPRING EVENT SEASON KICKS OFF WITH FANFARE

Spring festivities at Wetlands Park kicked off March 3 with a **5K Fun Run and 1 Mile Nature Stroll** through the Nature Preserve and continue all year long with additional events. KLAS-TV's Nate Tannenbaum served as master of ceremonies for the Fun Run. A raffle, live animal interactions, and fun activities followed in the Nature Center. Program Supervisor Ben Jurand observed, "This was our first Fun Run through the Preserve and it was a great day. Many thanks to the runners and strollers who participated; event sponsors Land Rover Las Vegas, The Nature Conservancy, Real Water and Sparkling Ice; Nate Tanenbaum; and all the wonderful volunteers who helped."

On March 28, the Park hosted



**5K Runners lined up at the starting line**

**Migratory Bird Day.** Over 500 visitors participated in activities held in the Nature Center vicinity. Special thanks to Las Vegas Clark County Libraries, Red Rock Audubon Society, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Get Outdoors Nevada, NV Department of Wildlife, Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee, Nevada

Department of Transportation, National Park Service Lake Mead, Great Basin Institute, and the volunteers who assisted in the event.

The Park presented **BioBlitz** on April 28. The turnout was great – over 273 visitors participated. The Park thanks the Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee, BirdandHike.com, Red Rock Audubon Society, and Las Vegas Clark County Libraries, along with the Park's enthusiastic volunteers who lent a hand. 🐾

**JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT  
UPCOMING EVENT:  
DISCOVERY DAY  
JULY 7, 9AM - 12PM**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



**Volunteer Muriel Covington greeting visitors with a smile at the Exhibit Hall**

**P**assionate volunteers are priceless. They are the heart and voice of Wetlands Park. Muriel Covington is one such volunteer. We were able to catch up with her to find out what it is that keeps her coming back year after year.

### **What is your background?**

I was born in Los Angeles, California. In the early 70s I belonged to the American Society of Interior Design. In the late 70s I volunteered at a rape crisis center in Las Vegas and eventually became a staff member in charge of the facility. I moved to Georgia in the early 80s and worked as a licensed practical nurse. Later, I managed a day care center with 358 children and 28 fulltime employees.

In 1999 I returned to Las Vegas and bought a designer resale store. I sold the business in 2005 and retired, sort of! I started working from home as a seamstress and still do that now.

### **How did you come to volunteer at the Park?**

I was looking for a place to walk and get away. I live about 10 minutes from the Park, so it was convenient. One thing led to another and I started volunteering in 2014.

### **In what capacities have you been volunteering at the Park?**

I am a host in the Exhibit Hall.

### **What kinds of things do you do during a typical volunteer shift at the Exhibit Hall?**

First, I greet and talk to everyone that visits the Exhibit Hall. People always have questions about the Park and I try to answer all their questions or find someone who can. My volunteer colleagues and I also make sure all the exhibits are operating and that we have plenty of maps and brochures.

### **Why do you like volunteering at the Park and what advice would you give someone thinking about volunteering?**

I come for the kids! I love to see their faces light up. Children enjoy the exhibits and amuse themselves with the interactive stations. They just have fun. I would tell anyone interested in volunteering to just do it!

### **What is your favorite spot in the Park?**

Everywhere. 🌿

# WETLANDS WALKERS ON THE MOVE

Walking is good for one's physical health, and a walk in nature is even better!

**Wetlands Walkers**, a group of **105** health and nature oriented individuals, track their miles whenever they walk Park trails and earn rewards at various milestones. As a group, their mileage is tallied to reach a yearly goal matching the migration distances of one of the Park's visiting species. In 2018 the Walkers are recognizing the black-

necked stilt and have a collective goal of trekking 5,000 miles. To date, the walkers have traveled **3,049 miles**, of the goal!

*To learn more about the Wetlands Walkers program and the black-necked stilt, stop by the Exhibit Hall in the Nature Center.* 🌿



## FUN BLACK-NECKED STILT FACTS:

- Five species of rather similar-looking stilts are recognized in the genus *Himantopus*.
- The black-necked stilt is the *Himantopus mexicanus* species.
- A Hawaiian subspecies, the Ae'o, is rare and endangered due to habitat loss, hunting, and introduced predators. It uses primarily the few freshwater wetlands found on the Hawaiian Islands. 🌿

# BE FIRE SMART IN WETLANDS PARK

According to the National Park Service, human activity causes over 90 percent of the wildfires in US parks. Every year more than 75,000 wildfires are reported, burning an average of 7 million acres and destroying more than 2,500 buildings.

Wetlands Park has been ground zero for human-caused fires since its inception. In 2017 alone, more than 70 acres were ravaged, impacting valuable habitat and trail systems.

When you are out enjoying nature, it

is important to take special precautions to prevent wildfires. Here are ways to be fire smart while visiting Wetlands Park:

- Pay attention to fire conditions. There is a high risk for wildfires year round.
- Always extinguish cigarettes, matches, and other smoking materials completely before disposing in a covered trash can.
- Do not generate open flames of any kind, including campfires and grills. Also do not set off fireworks. These are not permitted in the Park.

• Do not drive or ride motorized vehicles in the Park; the hot underside of vehicles can start a fire when in contact with dry brush. Motorized vehicles are prohibited.

• If you see evidence of fire on Park grounds call 911 to report the location. Leave the area so first responders can better access the area.

When you take the time to be fire smart, you limit the damage to life and property. The Park's habitats, wildlife, and visitors will thank you! 🌿



Watercolor by Camille Martin

## CALL FOR WETLANDS PARK ARTWORK!

Have you created artwork in one of our Studio WP Art Programs that you would like to share? Want to see your artwork featured in an upcoming newsletter?

Submit your artwork(s) in digital format to: **wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov** by 5pm on August 15, 2018 to be considered. Include your name, date and the Studio WP art program in which the piece was created.



CCPR Website



CCPR Mailing List



CCPR Facebook Page



CCPR YouTube Channel

**Clark County Board of Commissioners**  
 STEVE SISOLAK, Chairman,  
 CHRIS GIUNCHIGLIANI, Vice-Chairman,  
 MARILYN KIRKPATRICK, LARRY BROWN III,  
 LAWRENCE WEEKLY, SUSAN BRAGER,  
 JAMES B. GIBSON  
 YOLANDA KING, County Manager