



FOOTPRINTS

SEASONAL IMPRESSIONS OF CLARK COUNTY WETLANDS PARK



Photo by Yolanda Scaggs

SPRING 2017

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

CALL FOR PHOTOS!

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

Subject: "Birds on the Water"

Submit your photo(s) to: wetlands@clarkcountynv.gov by 5pm on May 15, 2017 to be considered. Include your name, date and location of the photo.

CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY ON NEW TROPICANA WEIR

Construction of the new Tropicana Weir began in January as part of Southern Nevada Water Authority’s ongoing work along the Las Vegas Wash. The weir will help reduce channel bed erosion, slow the flow of reclaimed water, runoff, shallow groundwater and storm water running into Lake Mead, and provide a stable platform for the establishment of vegetation. When completed in 2018, the weir will be the 20th of 21 permanent weirs, or low-height dam structures, located on the seven-mile stretch of the Wash between The Big Weir Bridge and Lake Las Vegas.

According to Elizabeth Bickmore, Program Administrator for Wetlands Park, “Since the first permanent weir structure was placed in the Las Vegas Wash in 1998, weirs have been designed to withstand large storm events. The weirs at the Wash vary in construction and material type depending on when they were constructed and where they are located. Some have a natural

look and others are more obviously man-made. The Tropicana Weir will be constructed of confined rock riprap, which will give the structure a more natural look, similar to a gentle waterfall.”

Located in the southeast corner of the Nature Preserve, the Tropicana Weir will be approximately 360 feet long and 500 feet wide. It will contain over 340 tons of steel, 200 tons of concrete and 1,000 tons of riprap. During hauling operations, the trail between the Sunrise Trailhead and the Big Weir Bridge will be closed. The Wetlands Loop North Trail connecting the Big Weir Bridge to Lake Las Vegas will be open for the entirety of the project. 🌿



SEASONAL FLORA & FAUNA FORECAST

Spring is a big burst of life. It is a time of emergence, migration, breeding, and reproduction. It brings longer days and warmer temperatures. Buds are popping and animals are on the move. The following is a sampling of what you may encounter in the park this time of year:

FLORA: Look for plants to **bloom**, such as the salt heliotrope and salt cedar. Look for tree **buds** to swell and bloom into new green leaves on the Fremont cottonwood and catclaw acacia. Look for aromatic green arrowweed and **new growth** of common cattail and alkali sacaton.

FAUNA: Look to the **ground** for Gambel's quail, greater roadrunner, ants, and crickets.

Look to the **water** for American coot, common gallinule, mallard, Canada goose, pied-billed grebe, great blue heron, and green heron. Listen for the bullfrog.

Look to the **trees and the sky** for northern harrier, yellow-rumped warbler, verdin, black phoebe, and Say's phoebe. Keep your eyes open for

both the honey bee and carpenter bee pollinating trees, shrubs, and flowers. 🐝

CANADA GOOSE



Photo by Sheila Glennie

CATCLAW ACACIA



Photo by Jody Walker

FREMONT COTTONWOOD



Photo by Sheila Glennie

SAY'S PHOEBE



Photo by Sheila Glennie

NATURE CLOSE-UP: VERDINS



Photos by Sheila Glennie



Verdin (above) and verdin's nest (below)

Have you noticed some of the nests in the trees lately, especially up in the desert scrub and mesquite trees? The nests are very visible when the trees are bare but spring is the time that nest activity really picks up.

Look for large round balls of thorny twigs at eye-level or above. If you look closely you may see some feathers protruding from the little round hole opening near the bottom of the nest. Now stop. Pause for a moment and simply watch and listen. A call and song of loud chirps or three whistles in succession is a wonderful indication of a **Verdin** close by.

You may notice the quick movement of a very small bird flitting within the brush or tree, a mostly gray bird with a fluffy yellow head and a bright orange wing patch. He may quickly tuck into the nest or flit around looking for insects or spiders to eat.

The verdin is a clever bird who builds different types of nests each year, one for babies in the spring and more for roosting year round. Roosting nests are much smaller, so pay attention to which way the small opening to the nest is facing. Winter roosting nests have thicker insulation to help retain energy and summer nests have openings facing south to take advantage of cooling prevailing winds. 🍀

COMMUNITY CLEANS UP AT SUNRISE TRAILHEAD

On January 14, 2017, almost 300 volunteers participated in the Wetlands Hands On (WHO) cleanup of the Sunrise Trailhead. At least 5,000 pounds of trash and debris were removed from the area around the trailhead. Graffiti was also removed from picnic tables and trash cans.

County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani and State Senator Mark Manendo were among the participants lending a hand to clean up the trailhead joining volunteers from all over the valley.

Several groups turned out, including several scouting troops and volunteers recruited by the Outside Las Vegas Foundation (OLVF), a partner organization that helped coordinate the event. OLVF also sent out volunteers to

continue the work in the days following the main event.

Park Police and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department are increasing security efforts to ensure your park remains safe, clean, and beautiful for all to enjoy. Agencies like the Bureau of Reclamation are also contributing rangers to help patrol the area.

Previously, the trailhead has been a popular site for late night parties and severe vandalism, and has been closed until further notice as a result of visitor safety concerns.

Contributions by volunteers during these clean up events are vital to the Park's efforts to reopen the trailhead sometime in the future. 🐾



State Senator Mark Manendo and County Commissioner Chris Giunchigliani thank volunteers for their hard work and dedication in cleaning up Sunrise Trailhead.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Chig Foley hanging out in the trees on a Wetlands Park Volunteer Venture to the Spring Mountains.

Volunteers truly make a difference by doing what they enjoy. We spent some time talking with volunteer Chig Foley to see what keeps him coming back to Wetlands Park.

How long have you lived in the Las Vegas Valley?

I arrived in Oct. 1999, planned to stay for one year and never left.

Where did you live previously?

I grew up in Pennsylvania and spent 12 years in Alaska before moving to Las Vegas.

Are you currently working or retired? If so, what did you do?

Currently retired. I have worked many jobs including: working in the oil fields at Prudhoe Bay, as a commercial fisherman, an archaeologist in England, a printer, a dishwasher, and a landscaper.

How did you come to volunteer at the Wetlands?

I have been visiting the Wetlands since 1999, since I seemed to be here all the time anyway!

How long have you been volunteering at the Wetlands?

Just over 3 years.

In what capacities have you been volunteering at the Wetlands?

I regularly volunteer as a WHO! (Wetlands Hands On!) Team Lead assisting with stewardship projects, and as a Wetlands Watch Volunteer,

monitoring conditions in the park. I have also helped out with Park special events and Safekey group tours.

What kinds of things do you do during a typical volunteer shift at Wetlands Park?

As a team lead for the WHO! Events, I try to get people to feel a sense of community by engaging in activities to improve the Park.

Why do you like volunteering at the Wetlands?

There is a real sense of community, especially among volunteers, and tons of educational and social opportunities, too.

What advice would you give someone thinking of volunteering at Wetlands Park?

Do it! There are so many different programs; you will find something to suit you.

What is your favorite spot in Wetlands Park?

The South Loop bike trail, the area between Duck Creek & Wells. 🌿

PARK RULES HELP KEEP PEOPLE AND WILDLIFE SAFE

As the weather warms, we are expecting more visitors to the Park. While it is very exciting for greater numbers of people to discover and explore the many Park resources, it is important to remind all visitors about some of the rules that are intended to keep both people and wildlife safe.

• **The Park is open every day from dawn to dusk.** Being in the park after hours is against the rules and can be unsafe, as lighting is sparse or non-existent in many locations.

• **Curfew laws are in effect for children under 18.** Parents should know where their children are and make sure they are aware of the laws.

• **Possession and/or consumption of drugs and alcohol is prohibited** at all times in the Park.

• **Graffiti, defacing, or damaging property is prohibited.** All graffiti is tracked and reported to the police before it is removed. The police actively investigate all vandalism, including graffiti.

• **Dumping is prohibited.** Don't spoil the desert, dispose of trash and household waste in proper locations.

• **Off-road driving is prohibited** and can be extremely dangerous to pedestrians and wildlife.

• **Discharging firearms is strictly prohibited,** as is hunting and poaching. Visitors are encouraged to visit the Clark County Shooting Complex in the north of the valley for an approved and safe place to discharge weapons.

• **Feeding or capturing animals is prohibited.** Wildlife in the Park does not need help to find food. It can be

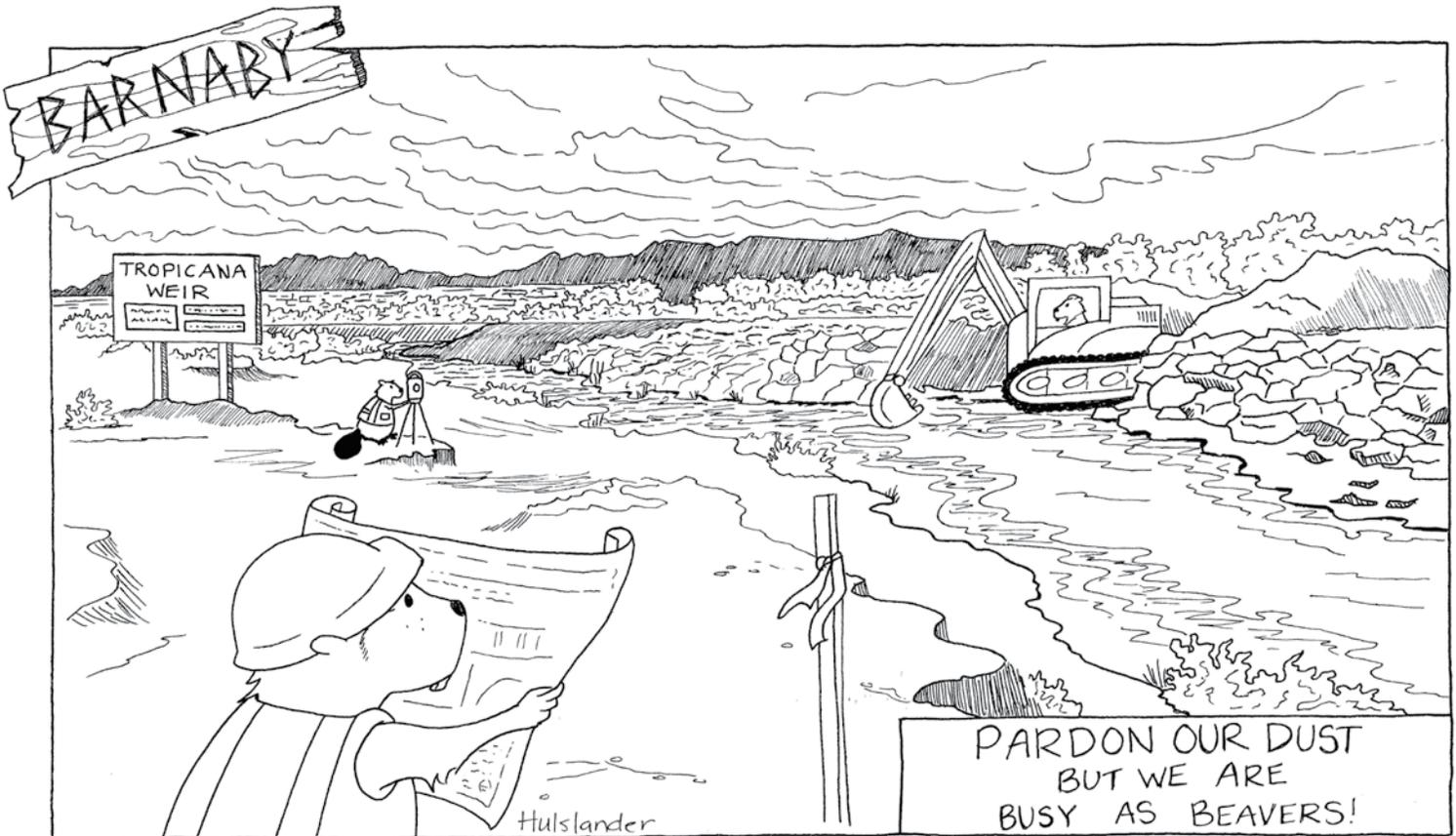
disruptive to wildlife's natural behaviors and they can become dangerous around people when they have learned to expect food.

• **Bicycles, horses, and dogs are allowed ONLY in designated areas.**

Neither are permitted in the Nature Preserve, which is an area set aside to protect wildlife habitat. All pets MUST be on a leash at all times.

• **Fires, stoves, and fireworks are prohibited at all times.**

Help out the Park and your fellow visitors by abiding by the Park rules. New signs have been placed at the parking areas to ensure the public is aware of how to enjoy the Park safely as well as share it with others. 🌱



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