

Wetlands Park At A Glance

10-05-09

“The [Clark County] Wetlands Park is a lush oasis in the heart of North America’s driest desert, the Mojave. The Park is located at the doorstep of Las Vegas, one of the fastest-growing metropolitan communities in the country. The Wetlands Park is alive with wildlife and plants, a way station for migratory waterfowl, nesting habitat for magnificent species such as the great blue heron, and a refuge for beavers, raccoons, coyotes, and others. This regional park is designed to protect and enhance the cultural and ecological resources of the Las Vegas Wash, while providing environmental education, recreation opportunities, and promoting stewardship and volunteerism.”

Clark County Wetlands Park Interpretive Plan, May 6, 2003

Wetlands Park area:

2,900 acres
7.5 miles long (east to west)
1 mile wide (north to south)

Wetlands Park hours:

Park hours are dawn to dusk. Visitors are welcome to arrive at the Park at sunrise, and should plan to be back at the parking lot preparing to leave the Park at sunset.

Wetlands Park rules:

The Wetlands Park is a managed wild place adjacent to a major metropolitan area. Special stewardship practices and rules of use apply in this special place (see “What To Know Before You Let Them Go”). Visitors are responsible for knowing and following all Park rules. Failure to comply with the rules may result in citations or permanent trespass from Park property.

Wetlands Park water:

- Water in the Wetlands Park is not for human contact. Visitors must not fish, wade, swim, or drink from the ponds and streams.
- The Las Vegas Wash, primary drainage channel for the 1,564 square mile Las Vegas Hydrographic Basin, brings water to the Wetlands Park.
- The Wash carries storm flows, shallow ground water, untreated urban runoff, and highly treated (reclaimed) wastewater.
- Reclaimed water makes up over 95% of daily flows down the Wash to Lake Mead (over 180 million gallons per day).

Wetlands Erosion Control:

The Las Vegas Wash drops 250 feet in seven miles as it crosses the Wetlands Park (37 feet per mile). To stabilize the Wash channel and banks, erosion control structures called weirs (rhymes with “deer”) are built. These dam-like structures slow the water flow and create ponds on the upstream side. Some weirs look like concrete dams, and some look like natural rock rapids. A total of twenty-two weirs will be built. Twelve have been completed.

Wetlands Park habitats:

A variety of plant communities make up the relatively small 2,900-acre Clark County Wetlands Park. They include alkali meadow, mesquite woodland, desert wash, desert scrub, riparian, and aquatic wetlands communities. Habitat restoration projects are ongoing, to remove exotic and invasive plant species and replace them with desirable native species.

Wetlands Park wildlife:

The Wetlands Park is home to a wide variety of resident wildlife, and is also a resting place for many migratory species. The Las Vegas Wash Wildlife Management Plan (March 2008) lists nine species of fish, three species of amphibians, nineteen species of reptiles, twenty-eight species of small mammals, and nine species of large mammals recently documented in the Park. The Red Rock Audubon Society Bird checklist for the Las Vegas Wash (March 2003, revised January 2009) lists two hundred eighty-eight bird species found in the Park.

Wetlands Amenities for people:

The Wetlands Park provides environmental education and appropriate recreation (hiking, wildlife watching, birding, biking, picnics, walking, sketching or painting, and horseback riding). The Park also provides volunteer and stewardship opportunities.

A temporary Information Center, trailheads, trails, boardwalks, bridges, picnic areas, rest rooms, drinking fountains, observation sites, amphitheaters, and shade structures are available for visitor use.