The Las Vegas Wash: Student Real-world Site Involvement

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The Las Vegas Wash: Student Real-world Site Involvement

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What is/isn’t the Wash?
Functions as the Las Vegas Valley’s receiving stream for:
--treated wastewater (~150 MGD)
--urban runoff
--shallow groundwater
--storm water

Supports wetlands at the Clark County Wetlands Park (~2900 acres) and enclosed Nature Preserve (WPNP) (~210 acres)

It isn’t a “natural” system or a typical wadeable stream

But, its size, permanence, uniqueness and proximity to campus (~7 miles) make it an ideal natural classroom and laboratory

Demonstrates the integration of human water use across the valley as it culminates in this distinctive urban desert stream system

UNLV Student Field Activities
ENV 360 (Environmental Assessment Methods) students have worked with Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) biologists on projects including:
--Evaluation of revegetation (‘Green-Up’) efforts
--Analysis of the Las Vegas Wash cottonwood revegetation area

And on small group/class projects at the Clark County Wetlands Park:
--Qualitative site assessment of terrestrial and wetland sites
--Evaluation of soils and hydrology

Las Vegas Wash Coordination Committee
Website: https://www.lvwash.org/html/what_index.html
Contact: Jason Eckberg, SNWA Biologist II
jason.eckberg@snwa.com

Clark County Wetlands Park
Website: http://www.clarkcountynv.gov/parks/Pages/cc-wetlands-park-homepage.aspx
Contact: Ben Jurand, Education Program Supervisor
ben.jurand@clarkcountynv.gov

Applicability and Value to Students
Students from all disciplines (not just Environmental Science) can gain experience with and appreciation of their local natural resources, through:
--Extension of STEM skills learned indoors/classroom to an outdoor/hands-on-minds-on application
--Mentored projects in natural sciences with local agencies and organizations
--Field and lab experiences in a wide range of local ecosystems (terrestrial, wetland, riparian, aquatic)
--Deeper involvement with their community
--Exposure to professional scientific endeavors

Students are always surprised by the apparent attractiveness of the LV Wash and Wetlands Park!