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D1-9

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ASSEMBLY NATURAL RES., AGRICULTURE & MINING  
DATE: 3/12/03 ROOM: 3141 EXHIBIT D1-9  
SUBMITTED BY: Harry Mortenson

## **AB 131 & Outside Las Vegas**

Provided by: Assemblyman Mortenson, Clark County Assembly  
District 42

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- 1) Connecting People with their Public Lands, Outside Las Vegas  
Foundation Brochure
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- 3) Written Text from Alan O'Neill, Executive Director, Outside  
Las Vegas Foundation

# How you can help

We need your help! The Outside Las Vegas Foundation, a 501c (3) non-profit organization, seeks *funds* and *friends* to assist in the stewardship of our valued natural assets. Your tax-deductible contribution will make a big difference. Please contact us for information regarding our many wonderful projects, programs and volunteer opportunities:



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Outside Las Vegas Foundation

# Outside Las Vegas Foundation

The Outside Las Vegas Foundation is a private non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the connection between people and the seven million acres of public lands surrounding Las Vegas. Annually, 16 million visitors enjoy these beautiful landscapes. The rapidly expanding resident and visitor populations has created a need for greater vision, more community collaboration, and a stronger public presence - in order to preserve and protect our natural surroundings.

We believe that the quality of life in southern Nevada is directly related to the health of our public lands. As such, our natural assets are vital to our community. As the pressures of urban life become more intense, the need to reconnect with nature becomes more significant. Furthermore, these lands and the cultural treasures they house are a very important part of the heritage of southern Nevada and the American Southwest.

Our Board of Trustees is made up of business and community leaders, political and private citizens, all who are strongly committed to the health and protection of our precious public lands. Our partners include the four federal land management agencies: the National Park Service (Lake Mead National Recreation Area), the Bureau of Land Management (Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area and others), the U.S. Forest Service (Spring Mountains National Recreation Area) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex). A Partnership Advisory Council, including local governments and other non-profit organizations dedicated to quality of life issues has also been formed to further help us in our initiatives.



# A few of our projects

- A comprehensive environmental education program for southern Nevada
- *Forever Earth*, a floating environmental laboratory and learning center
- A broad ranging program to reduce litter, dumping, and graffiti on the public lands
- Assistance in providing a diverse range of visitor facilities, services, and programs
- The connection of the people to the public lands through trails
- Assistance in the protection of cultural and natural sites
- The restoration of native plant and animal habitats
- Recruitment and training of volunteers
- Coordination of the National Wonderful Outdoor World (WOW) programs in Las Vegas





The official newsletter of

# the Outside Las Vegas Foundation

Connecting the people and the public lands surrounding Las Vegas.

Winter/Spring 2003 Volume 4 - Issue 1

## Sweeping county conservation bill passes

Thanks to the Herculean efforts of U.S. Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign and U.S. Representative Jim Gibbons, the landmark *Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002* passed Congress on November 4, 2002. Out of 130 conservation bills, it was the only one that passed the last session of Congress. The Nevada Congressional Delegation is to be commended for developing legislation that addresses the key issues facing Clark County, yet provides a balance between development and environmental protection. The Congressional Delegation issued a challenge to the various interest groups to roll up their sleeves and work cooperatively—with the delegation—to draft a bill that works for the overall community. The resulting act strikes a good balance in accommodating growth and protecting our environment. The process was truly remarkable; never has there been a similar effort to comprehensively address both environmental and developmental issues in a single piece of legislation. The creation of this act is a wonderful model for how diverse interests can come together for the good of the whole. We see so many confrontational and unproductive processes effected around the country that this effort was indeed refreshing. The legislation builds upon the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act of 1998, one of the most important shifts in public policy in several decades.

### Short Summary – by title – of the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002

#### Title I

Authorizes the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to exchange a specific tract of approximately 1,000 acres of public land in the Las Vegas Valley for 1,082 acres of land within the boundary of the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area (RRCNCA) owned by the Howard Hughes Corporation. The RRCNCA boundary is adjusted to include all of the acquired parcels. Clark County receives 1,221 acres for a county park and public regional trails system.

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Senator Harry Reid (left) and Senator John Ensign (right) at the Clark County Conservation of Public Land and Natural Resources Act of 2002 Press Conference

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# Mission

The Outside Las Vegas Foundation supports the conservation of natural resources and the environment through education, research, and public participation.

## Board of Trustees

### Chair Thalia Dondero

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and Community College System of Nevada

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### Executive Committee Members

#### Stewardship Saturdays

February 8, 2003—Moapa Valley Wildlife Refuge

Join in the fun and help remove non-native vegetative species and transplant natives into the streams. Help restore historically suitable habitat for the endangered Moapa dace and other native species.

March 8, 2003—Pahranagat National Wildlife Refuge

Volunteers will plant native vegetation species in the new Ducks Unlimited Wetlands Project to help migratory birds as they stopover in the valley.

**Call 702-515-5453 for  
further details and to sign up!**



**NATIONAL PARK  
FOUNDATION**

The National Park Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that supports the National Park Service and its mission to preserve and protect the nation's natural and cultural resources.



March 12, 2003

Dear Assemblyman Mortensen:

On behalf of the Outside Las Vegas Foundation, it is my pleasure to speak in strong support for Assembly Bill 131 to further protect our State's cultural heritage and establish a site stewardship program. This is an outstanding piece of legislation and a wonderful complement to what our foundation is trying to accomplish in southern Nevada.

The Outside Las Vegas Foundation is a private non-profit organization made up of prominent community and business leaders and private citizens that work hand-in-hand with the four federal land managing agencies to improve the long-term stewardship of the seven million acres of federal land surrounding Las Vegas and to enrich the experiences for those who visit. The Outside Las Vegas Foundation serves as the principal point of contact and coordination for the four federal land managing agencies in working with the citizens, the business community and local governments in developing partnership initiatives that enhance both the short-term and long-term values of the adjacent federal public lands. Our mission is to enhance the connection between people and their public lands.

The area encompassed within the Outside Las Vegas Partnership initiative include three million acres of federal public land plus eight Congressionally designated areas: Lake Mead National Recreation Area; Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area, Sloan Canyon National Conservation Area, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area; Desert National Wildlife Refuge; Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge; Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge; and Pahrangat National Wildlife Refuge. These seven million acres of natural and cultural landscape – ranging from the lush forested alpine environment to dry desert landscape – form the most unique setting of any large urban area in North America. These lands and waters contain some of the most diverse flora and fauna found anywhere in the world. Some 1,000 species of plants, 400 species of birds, 54 species of reptiles, 142 species of mammals; and 41 species of fish are found within the seven million acres. Also present are thousands of cultural sites, many listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The cultural sites include historic, prehistoric and paleontological resources. For example, there are 302 recorded rock art sites in Clark County alone. These include petroglyphs, pictographs or geoglyphs that represent a long cultural continuum and provide an extensive documentation of various cultural groups for whom no written record exists. Cultural sites are valued for an assortment of reasons by different groups or individuals and, in some cases, are increasingly sought out as points of destination. These irreplaceable sites are the cultural heritage of our state and nation, deserving of protection through proactive management.

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As you are aware, the Las Vegas metropolitan area has been the fastest growing urban area in the country over the past decade, with a resident population now exceeding 1.5 million people. In addition, some 37 million people visit Las Vegas each year. The seven million acres of adjacent public land receive over 18 million visitors each year. The pressures of population explosion, increasing visitor volume and urban encroachment are creating tremendous problems for the public land managing agencies. The fragile rock art sites are being indirectly and directly impacted by the increasing demands placed on public lands for recreation and non-recreation uses. Once isolated and little known, the cultural resource properties are now easily accessed and widely recognized. The escalating visitation and inappropriate use of such cultural resource sites have, all too often, resulted in adverse impacts either by accident or intentional, destructive actions. Cultural resource sites situated near urban areas or adjacent to travel corridors have suffered from different forms of vandalism such as target shooting, graffiti, damage by off-road vehicles, trash dumping and artifact collecting.

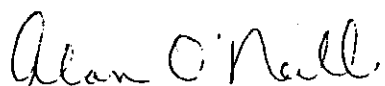
There are around 350 federal employees to manage the seven million acres of public land in southern Nevada. This is equivalent to the size of the culinary staff at a medium size Las Vegas hotel. The most extreme case is at the Desert National Wildlife Refuge where there are only four employees to manage 1.6 million acres. Likewise, there are similar staff shortfalls in the state and local public land managing agencies. The public land managing agencies do not have adequate staff to be in the field on a regular basis to discover the negative impacts of man on cultural resources.

It is unlikely that the number of employees will increase for the federal, state, and local land managing agencies in the years ahead due to budget constraints and the public's concern over the size of government. Yet there is a need for more people to help in the stewardship of these areas. Therefore, it's critical to find avenues where the citizenry can take a greater sense of ownership and engagement in the process. These are our community's heritage and we all share an intergenerational responsibility to pass on to those generations to follow a full complement of our cultural and natural heritage. This is why we are so excited about Assembly Bill 131 for it sets up a productive framework and partnership between the federal, state, and local governmental agencies, tribes, and private citizens to assist in monitoring sensitive cultural sites and in educating the public about the value of our cultural heritage. The level of understanding, appreciation, advocacy and involvement on the part of the southern Nevada community needed to assist government has been lacking to date. Programs like the Site Stewardship Program can raise the level of consciousness in the community and help build the community's capacity to help.

The Outside Las Vegas partners have requested funding through Round 4 of the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act Program to implement a site stewardship program for Clark County and adjacent areas. The funding would hire a site stewardship coordinator for the local program and cover the costs of training, consultation, and coordination. The program would focus on monitoring of key sites. This local model would fit perfectly under the framework of the statewide program as proposed under Assembly Bill 131.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and are hopeful that the legislation will be enacted. We stand ready to assist wherever needed in its implementation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan O'Neill".

Alan O'Neill  
Executive Director  
Outside Las Vegas Foundation