

PEN

PARK EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER



ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

By David Morrow

I feel very fortunate to have worked with everyone in Nevada State Parks for the last ten years. Over that period of time, I grew to appreciate how hard everyone works and their willingness to do whatever it takes to get the job done. I guess being poor brings out some pretty good qualities. Nevada State Park employees are accustomed to finding ways to accomplish whatever it is they need to accomplish. The pride associated with managing a top notch park, section or program is pervasive. I have never worked or visited another park system where camp sites are raked between campers. Despite the wind, which is a constant throughout Nevada, you see very little litter. And although many of our facilities are old and outdated, they are kept clean and in good repair.

“Get-Er-Done!”

Everyone in Nevada State Parks cares and appreciates how their role affects one another, which I believe is rare and sets us apart from other organizations.

By the time these comments reach you, we will have closed our budget and hopefully gotten our Capital Improvement and One Shot budget approved. It appears this year's budget will be a big improvement over what was approved the last couple of bienniums. For the first time in a long while, there are no cuts and even a few additions that should really help. Our change in fortune is attributed to the economic upswing we are experiencing, but also to how much people think of state parks. It not always obvious, but the Governor and the Legislature appreciate the benefits of a good and well run state park system. I have heard over and over again, how well we all do with what we get in financial support.

Thanks for your hard work and dedication, I'm glad to see things back on the upswing.



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT (P&D)

By Mark Davis

Things have been quite busy for Planning and Development over the course of the winter with the emergency projects, fast track projects, etc.

The State Public Works Division (SPWD) and State Fire Marshal's (SFM) offices recently indicated they will require plan review and inspections for portable buildings as well as buildings constructed on site. The SFM has also interpreted NAC 477.910, paragraph 2 to mean all buildings need fire sprinklers when located on state land or land managed by the state. We were informed this includes portable sheds, because they considered occupied. SFM stated we could request a variance from this requirement through during the plan review process. However, there is no guarantee of an approval.

Please do not to construct or install any new buildings in parks without going through P&D. This way we can address anything that could be an issue with the authorities (e.g. SPWD, SFM, etc.).

There have been a number of bills in this session that may impact construction costs, and potentially reduce the bidding pool due to additional administrative requirements in those bills. We have been watching the bills and will continue to follow them. We are doing what we can to minimize these impacts to State Parks projects.

The following Q1 funded projects are pending approval of matching Wildlife grant funds:

Big Bend Erosion Mitigation and Shoreline Improvements Phase II; Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park, Cave Rock Improvements Phase I; Sand Harbor Boat Launch Plate Extension;

South Fork Southwest Shoreline Improvements Phase II (Design through Construction): The ramp extension portion of this project was completed using Question 1 funds. The rest of the project is awaiting match funding.

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT (con't)

Spring Valley Power Replacement (Design through Construction): This project made the Governor's recommended project list. We will continue to look for alternative funding mechanisms to move forward with the replacement, while we are waiting on the Legislative approval process. If the line cannot be repaired to regain power to the park, we may solicit emergency funds to replace the underground power.

PROJECTS COMPLETE

Valley of Fire, Fire Canyon Overlook:



By the time of the printing of this PEN, this project should be complete. The project is substantially complete. However we've had some issues with the precast concrete vault that require corrective action.

This project provided improvements to include a paved access road, paved parking, sidewalk, a comfort station and interpretive kiosks. Project design and construction was managed by **Eric Nelson**, assisted by **Marc Lepire** and **Joe Cyphers**. It was funded with \$720,000 in Scenic Byways grant money through Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and \$206,000 in Question 1 (Q1) Bonds. The Construction Management was performed by **Eric Nelson**.

PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Cave Lake, Comfort Station and Drainage Repairs:

This project is ongoing. **Terry Ivins** and **Steve Gray** have been working on the comfort station and hope to have it completed before the season begins. Further work will continue through summer and possibly into fall. Work will be performed by region staff (**Scott Payne** and his crew as necessary), as well as park staff and some will be contracted.

Valley of Fire Roof, Mechanical and Mechanical Screen Replacement: This project was funded by \$261,458 State Public Works Board (SPWB) Capital

Improvement general obligation bonds and \$121,071 Q1 for a total of \$382,529. **Marc Lepire, Blake Clark, Jamin Hunter** and **Mark Davis** are sharing the oversight. The completion date set for June 10, 2013. Due to some issues with getting the louvers to match, louver installation may be extended beyond that date. However, the balance of the work is currently scheduled to be completed earlier.

PROJECTS BIDDING

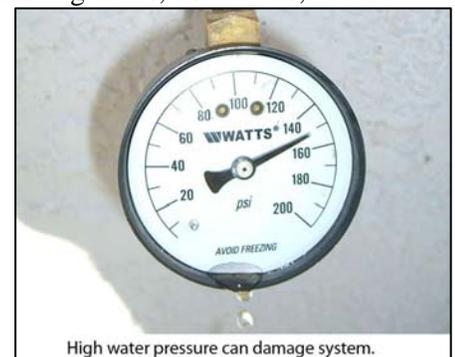
Big Bend of the Colorado, Residence #1: We reported this in the last PEN and did receive partial funding to replace it from Risk Management (133,133.33) and we funded the balance with Q1 (\$140,116.67).

The existing residence was removed down to the concrete by region and park staff: **Jamin Hunter, Jim Cole, Matt Elmer, Mark Colwell, Rod Lewis** and **Jonathan Brunjes**. **Marc Lepire** and **Blake Clark** designed a new residence. During the design process **Rod Lewis** refinished the original cabinets and did a beautiful job.



By the printing of this PEN, bids should be complete and hopefully the building will be under construction.

Valley of Fire Water System, Phase I: This high priority project first starts with abandoning the leaking steel water tanks and replacing them with two 30,000 gallon underground tanks at a lower elevation. This will correct the issue with leaking tanks, as well as, reduce the water pressure that is causing line breaks. **Blake Clark** designed and will oversee the construction, with assistance from **Joe Cyphers**.



DESIGN PROJECTS

New Echo Canyon Campground: The design is well underway by **Eric Nelson, Joe Cyphers** and **Marc Lepire** with some delays from the Big Bend Residence Replacement and Valley of Fire Water System projects. With a lot of field travel for oversight of those projects, it may be the winter of 2013 before we solicit bids.

Sand Harbor Sidewalk Replacement, Phase II: The beach overlooks are complete. Next is the replacement of asphalt walks with concrete walks, and improve Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) beach access at the main beach. This project has been assigned to **Bob Beck** for design through construction administration, supervised by **Joe Cyphers**. We are advertising this phase and expect to complete the work in one season.

Tahoe Transportation District, Stateline to Stateline Bikeway, Demonstration Project; designs are ongoing.

Valley of Fire East and West Entrance Pay Kiosks have been temporarily put on hold due to higher priorities.

Washoe Lake Bike Path: This project includes a bike lane adjacent to East Lake Boulevard by a road widening. State Lands and Washoe County are funding partners of the project. NDOT is looking at some possible funding to allow more trail/bike lane to be constructed. This project is currently being managed by Washoe County with State Parks and State Lands oversight. The project is currently under schematic design to better define the scope of work.

Washoe Lake Campground Improvement designs continue, but are slowed by higher priority projects.

Wild Horse Campground Improvements: We hope to have Andrew Bass begin grade work this spring.

LAKE TAHOE NV STATE PARK

By Dale Conner

After a big start to the snowy season at Tahoe in December, it's been a relatively dry winter, with precipitation standing at about 58% of normal near the end of March. Hopefully we'll get a few spring storms to help add water to our lakes and reservoirs; otherwise we'll be in for a rough boating season or two.

For those that haven't heard, the Spooner Lake Outdoor Company (Flume Trail Bikes/Spooner XC Ski) Concession ended their contract after 27 years of operation at Spooner Lake. **Max Jones** and **Patty McMullan** have been excellent partners over the years and will be missed in the park by staff and the public



alike. They'll still be around, since they moved their operation down the road at the Tunnel Creek Station. Stop by, grab a sandwich, and get some mountain biking advice from **Max**, who is in the mountain biking hall of fame and was the driving force behind the creation of the world famous Flume Trail. Taking their place as the new concession at Spooner Lake will be the **Aramark Company**, which has lots of experience in the area running the Zephyr Cove Resort operation. We look forward to a positive relationship with them in the years to come.



Despite lingering tough economic times (or maybe because of them), our reconciliation showed our continue popularity since we brought in about \$1.3 million in revenue last year. Sand Harbor's three concessionaires were also successful. The Shakespeare Festival is rebounding nicely after a couple of down years due to the difficult economy. They will be showing an audience favorite, A Midsummer Night's Dream, this year. Also on the slate is a Monday night entertainment series, including the Reno Philharmonic and (it is rumored) a performance of Les Miserables. The Char-Pit restaurant and Sand Harbor Rentals had very positive years as well, contributing \$19k and \$46k, respectively.

Our Enterprise Fund gift shop did well last year, with gross sales at \$56,000. We're in the process of doing a small remodel, mostly new shelving and displays, that we hope will increase the aesthetics, functionality and hopefully sales!

Sand Harbor was fortunate to recently receive grant funds for a couple of big projects that are keeping staff busy. Raley's donated \$25,000 for 26 new concrete picnic tables. We'll be creating pads for them to rest on and installing them throughout spring. We also received grant money for a solar lighting project. We will be installing walkway and parking area lighting near the visitor center, restroom #4 and the Shakespeare stage. It should be a nice addition to the park and can hopefully be a showcase for "green" energy in our park. We appreciate the work by **Mark Davis** and **Eric Johnson** to help us along with this project.

LAKE TAHOE NV STATE PARK (con't)

In addition to our regular summer entertainment schedule, we also hosted a few interpretive events this winter. We had 80 second graders come out to Spooner Lake and they went through four interpretive stations. Next, they will go to Sand Harbor for a similar event in April. We made a ranger presentation to four different classrooms at both Incline and Huffaker Elementary Schools (thank you Jennifer Dawson for your help). We also held a First Day Free Hike and had a Comet Viewing Party.

Lastly, I wanted to spotlight our two newest employees: **Brett Simerly**, who has been working as our Maintenance Repair Specialist II (MRS) since last fall and **Alisa Johansson** who is our new Administrative Assistant II (AA). Here are the results of an "interview" to help you get to know them better:

Brett Simerly - Growing up

1. Where were you born? Where did you grow up? I was born in San Gabriel, California and grew up in Whittier, California.

2. Generally speaking, what was your childhood like? My childhood was very active and busy, and I was always outside playing, rain or shine. Things I enjoyed were playing hide and seek, hiking, camping, fishing, horseback riding, or just playing in the dirt.

3. How many children were in your family? Where were you in the lineup? I have one older sister; two years my elder.



My sister and I in Spooner's backcountry this winter.

4. Are there any particularly happy, funny, sad or instructive lessons you learned while growing up? I was taught early on to enjoy every moment I could, and to make the best of every situation whether good or bad.

Going to School

5. Where did you go to school? I attended high school and college in Whittier, California with my focus during college being Business Administration.

6. Are there any teachers or subjects you particularly liked or disliked? My favorite college class and teacher was Physical Geology, taught by Mr. Joe Criscone.

7. Were you involved in sports, music, drama, or other extra-curricular activities? Were you a "nerd," "jock," "regular joe," "bully," etc.? I wouldn't consider myself a jock, but I was very active in sports while attending both high school and college. My primary sport was soccer, but I also played on the baseball, track, and water polo teams.

Work

8. What did you want to be when you grew up? First I wanted to be a fire fighter, which I believe was influenced by the TV series "Emergency." My second thought and most realistic, was to find something outdoors involving dirt and building things. I believe this is why I've been successful with construction positions.

9. What was your first job (or any memorable job from your youth), and how did you get it? My uncle Dave had a large industrial flooring business in the Los Angeles area and I worked for him on weekends and during some nights. It was very hard work, but he paid me very well and I enjoyed spending the time with him. I wouldn't give up the memories we had working together for anything.

10. What was your first boss like? What did you learn from him or her? My uncle Dave would have been my first boss. He was very intelligent, a leader, and like a second father to me. He taught me to never give up until the job was complete, and to make sure whenever I did something that it was done to the best of my ability and done right the first time!

11. Did you leave? Quit? Get promoted? Get fired? My uncle Dave was killed and the business ended up being sold.

12. Describe your career (where have you worked, what positions have you held, memorable supervisors, memorable lessons learned, what do you like/dislike about your career, particular or funny stories, etc). I have spent the last 16+ years working in construction. I moved to Incline Village the latter part of 1995 and started working in construction installing underground utilities, excavating foundations, and performing general grading work. In a very short time, I moved down to Reno and up the ranks. When I left Reno in 2005, I was managing a small mom and pops construction company that performed both private and government work. In September of 2005, I moved to Texas and started working on large diameter water and sewer pipeline projects throughout the state. Again I moved up the ranks quickly, and ended up managing the southern region of a pipeline company based in Colorado. In December of 2011, I decided to move back to Reno and start a new life.

LAKE TAHOE NV STATE PARK (con't)

13. What are you particularly proud of/greatest accomplishments in your overall career so far? Describe your first few months working for Parks. What are your goals in this organization? I think the thing I am most proud of and my greatest accomplishment is having met and worked with so many wonderful people over the years. My experience thus far while working with the Nevada State Parks has been a pleasure and most notably, the personnel have been very helpful and a pleasure to work with.



Participated in a Duathlon with my niece in 2012.

Quotes/Triumph and Tragedy/War and Peace

Is there anything else you'd like to share? Military service, favorite quotes, pets, words of

wisdom, people who had a big impact on your life, etc. "What really makes you happy?"

In Place of Family Life

14. How long did you serve in the military? What rank were you? I served four years in the USMC as a military policeman. I held the position of Guide and Series Honor Man while in boot camp, was meritoriously promoted three times, and discharged as a Corporal.

15. Is there anything in your life you'd like to do over again in your life? No, I enjoyed every day of the first one and now, I am enjoying every second of this one.

16. Do you have a dream vacation or retirement location? Why? My next international vacation will be to visit ancient ruins in Greece and I would like to return to Positano, Italy to relax on the beach and take day trips to Capri.



A 2007 ski trip in Utah.

Leisure time/travel

17. What leisure time activities are you involved with/What do you like to do in your spare time? I love anything physical and outdoors. I presently hike or snow shoe four to five times a week, and enjoy ice climbing when the conditions are right. Running, mountain biking, kayaking, canoeing, rock climbing, swimming, and anything else I can get my hand or feet on. Taking my Jeep four wheeling on day trips is fun as well.

18. Describe memorable family vacations or trips you can recall. Most of our family vacations have been along the northern coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington, and all usually included some time in the Sierras.

Alisa Johansson -Going to School

1. Where did you go to school (generally high school and college)? I attended high school in Incline Village, Nevada and have been an "Incline townie" since then. I relocated to Reno for a couple years for higher education pursuits, but gravitated back to the lake eventually.

Work

2. What was your first job (or any memorable job from your youth), and how did you get it? My first job was as a lifeguard at the Incline Village Recreation Center. The Rec Center offers lifeguarding and CPR classes every year and I was one of many hired out of that year's "fresh crop" of guards. This eventually led to my first position with State Parks as a Lifeguard I at Sand Harbor.

3. Describe your career (where have you worked, what positions have you held, memorable supervisors, memorable lessons learned, what do you like/dislike about your career, particular or funny stories, etc). After a few seasons as a lifeguard, I slowly worked my way through the different seasonal positions Sand Harbor had to offer: field park aid, fee collector, park ranger tech for fees, even seal inspection. When the administrative assistant position became vacant, I jumped at the opportunity to work for the park in a full-time, year-round capacity. Getting the job offer from Jay was a lot like winning the lottery.

4. What are you particularly proud of/greatest accomplishments in your overall career so far? Describe your first few months working for Parks. What are your goals in this organization? After working at Sand Harbor for so long, my first month in my new position has been a strange mix of déjà vu and on-the-job training. It's felt fresh and new, but also like I've been here forever!

Family life

5. If applicable, tell about how you met your spouse/significant other. Give us an anecdote or briefly describe your courtship.

LAKE TAHOE NV STATE PARK (con't)

1. I first met my husband Rob at the Rec Center in Incline where we both worked at the time. He used to make fun of me for working out on my breaks, saying "I didn't know lifeguards actually worked out!" A few years later when I moved back up to Tahoe to work at Sand Harbor, I sublet a room from him. We became friends over the course of the summer and the rest is history.

2. Tell about your wedding ceremony. What year? Where? How many attended? Where did you go for your honeymoon?

Rob and I got married in Las Vegas at a drive-through wedding chapel after a bodybuilding competition several years ago. It was just the two of us and our dog, Penelope, and after starving ourselves for months for the competition, we spent our honeymoon doing the only thing either of us was interested in: filling our bellies!



Leisure time/travel

3. What leisure time activities are you involved with/What do you like to do in your spare time? Rob and I are both dedicated bodybuilding enthusiasts. We push each other in the gym and help each other stay focused when the time comes to diet and compete. Our other interests include being good doggie parents and making sure Penelope is as spoiled as possible. Sometimes we even play video games together. I've only beat him a couple times, but I keep trying!



Photo of Alisa at a competition.

ready to be warm so I can start complaining about how hot it is. I seem to recall there being a "slow" season; a chance to reflect on all the things that went well and some of the things that you want to work on for the upcoming season; an opportunity to catch up on some of the paperwork that may have slipped through the cracks while you were busy doing the "important" part of your job. Apparently, when I wasn't looking, someone stole the "slow" season and simply replaced it with a "cold" season. Now the time just flies by, not paying any mind to the mercury (Ok mercury is bad and isn't in thermometers anymore, but I don't know what the new stuff is so I am calling it mercury anyway). It seems like just yesterday I was writing my first PEN article as the new regional manager. Since then, I have missed several PEN article deadlines and here I sit writing my second article still feeling like a "new" regional manager.

Things in the northern region are going well. Everyone is scurrying around trying to dig up seasonal applications in an effort to get all of the positions filled before the summer season hits. **Scotty** and



his crew anxiously await the final tally of freeze damage sustained throughout the region and are gearing up to bring the parks back on line for the spring. **Scotty** has a very talented crew spread out through the north and **Jose Marquez** has been a welcome addition.

We have several rangers currently attending the POST academy. All appear to be on schedule to graduate in May. It will be nice to have all of our positions finally filled and our parks fully staffed.

Hopefully someone from each park will be able to find the time to write a quick message to let us all know what is going on in their park, so I won't duplicate their effort. I just want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the effort and the dedication all of our park, region and division staff show on a daily basis. We really are blessed with the staff that we have and the level of commitment each of them display. Thank you to all of you who continue to make this such a great agency to work for.



NORTHERN REGION

NORTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS

By Bob Mergell

Well another winter has come and gone. {it is gone right???) I don't know about the rest of you, but I am

BERLIN-ICHTHYOSAUR STATE PARK

By Jeff Morris

After a brutally cold winter that saw **Robin's** toilet freeze solid INSIDE his residence (I told him to just use

the outhouse like the miners did), Berlin has finally thawed out and signs of spring have arrived. Fossil tours began on March 16 and we have been busy ever since. The Humboldt State Geology students enjoyed the first weekend of tours even though the group use area was covered in snow and mud. Cabin fever was the cause of a 150% increase in camping for the month of March with a total overall increase in visitation of 44%. Mine tours will begin on May 3 and we have already taken several reservations for this event. Lucky for us we will have park aid and mine tour guide **Todd Wheeler** back this year to lead visitors into the Diana Mine. **Robin** will be giving a presentation at the Wilbur D. May museum in Reno in April which should boost visitation even more. Also in April, Channel 4 news from Reno



will be doing a segment featuring the park as part of their interesting places to visit in Northern Nevada. With the word getting out, I expect this to be a banner year for Berlin.

CAVE LAKE & WARD CHARCOAL OVENS STATE PARKS

By Steve Gray

We got some snow this year and we were able to have a great Fire and Ice event and Rotary Ice Fishing Derby. Both events went off with very few problems. We had 16 groups come out and build sculptures. They came from all over Nevada and three Western States. Special thanks to **Robert Misiti, Randy Denter, Christi Miller,** and **Mat Elmer** for assisting at this four day event. The derby ended up having 571 paid participants with \$11,000 in cash and prizes. Out of 33 tagged fish in the lake, 23 were caught. Our fire suppression project has been put on hold this year due to the snow hindering access. We hope to start it up at the beginning of April. The renovation of the Lake View restrooms is coming along with **Terry Ivins** working on the plumbing and walls. I hope the weather cooperates to start the rest before we get busy.

Our commercial use permit with White Pine County Tourism and Recreation Board will be completed again in the next couple of months. June 22 is the scheduled date for our Great Bathtub Races. This event has been turning out about 5,000 visitors. We added canoe races to the day after all the bathtubs have gone. I don't usually get to see much except our usual problems. **Christi Miller** and I usually sit on the road and collect money for about 10 hours. **Christi**, you had better come back and help me again!!!



Ward Charcoal Ovens is still improving visitation and revenue. The campground is slowly getting busy. We had the GNATSASS off road group (it isn't a bad word; that is what the group is called) come out and use Ward as a base camp for their rides across the Schell Creek Range and the Egans. They were a great group and kept **Allen Wooldridge** on his toes for a week. **Allen** and I installed a pretty gate at the ovens parking area, but it got hit by a car. **Allen** has been working on a trail grant to fix the parking area, the busy trailhead, and the trail near the ovens. Our fire suppression project above the residence will hopefully continue in May this year and last for 3-4 weeks. Well, I hope everyone has had a productive winter break from the hustle and bustle of the upcoming busy season.

FT. CHURCHILL STATE HISTORIC PARK

By Kim Clawson

Park Supervisor, **Scott Egy** is at POST until May, and then will be working at Lahontan for Memorial Day weekend. By the time he returns in June, the park will be fully staffed with seasonals and volunteers. Park Ranger Technician, **Tony Calmese** returned in February to help get the park ready for spring and spray weeds. Park Aid, **Ray Poteete** starts work in April; **Trina Wren** returns in May. We still have Camp Host, **Bob Viennau.** **Mike Dinauer** is also working to get the park ready for spring and has been scheduling Boy Scouts and school field trips for this spring and summer.

Suzanne Sturtevant came to the park for a couple days during the winter to help us out with Past Perfect and cataloguing our artifacts at the museum and Buckland Station. We would like to thank her very much for her help and information! She is also planning to work with us in developing a guided brochure for Buckland Station.

The park submitted a Recreation Trails Plan grant application in April to restore hiking trails from the museum to the Orchard. We hope to add a permanent toilet to the Orchard, replace the toilet at the picnic area, remove two old toilets and replace the interpretive signs at the ruins and along the Nature Trail. Thanks to **Mark Davis, Scott Payne, Charlie Wells, Joe Cyphers,** and **Jenny Scanland** for helping us with prices, permits and everything else that is involved with removing and installing vault toilets!



FT. CHURCHILL STATE HISTORIC PARK (con't)

We are planning to have Buckland Station open at least 5 days/week again this year. Volunteers **Pat Kier**, **Rachel Bacigalupi** and **Jessica Babbitt** have been a huge help so far. **Bob Brittain** and **Nichole Calmese** helped out during Christmas; Bob had a great time dressed as Santa again.

Beavers have been busy knocking down trees along the Nature Trail, so we have been busy cleaning up after them! **Boy Scouts** have been wrapping trees with chicken wire and knocking down beaver dams in the Buckland Ditch as their service projects. Strong winds had us cutting up downed trees and cleaning up branches in the picnic area, campground and trails.



Interpretive programs this summer include Chautauquas at Buckland Station, a lecture on Dangberg from **Mark Jensen**, full moon hikes, night hikes and an astronomy program. Civil War volunteers will be scheduled for this spring and fall. I gave a talk on Valentine's Day for 43 people at the Carson Valley Museum in Gardnerville about Fort Churchill and Buckland Station. We also have a couple school visits coming up, and a brick-making demonstration for kids at the Silver Springs library in June or July.



RYE PATCH STATE RECREATION AREA

By Jim Hawkins



Spring is here and Rye Patch celebrated with a great Easter weekend. We had beautiful weather with only light spring showers to bring out those with symptoms of cabin fever. We had around 46 camps in our Lower Campground, and about half of those were in our River Bend group reservation site.

As with most of the state, the reservoir water level is low, with only around 20,000 acre feet, and not much hope of getting any recharge from the river. We might be looking at a short boating season. On the up-side, we have seen some good fishing in the last couple of weeks, with a couple of 12 lb. wipers coming out of the lake. We also saw some wall-eye caught. NDOW delivered some good looking trout in late March.



We had an unusually cold winter this year, with a day-time high of 18 degrees from Christmas until early February and a low of -22 degrees for about a week straight. This means a lot of repairs in the ground due to freezing. We saw several people out ice-fishing, but they never seemed to stick around too long due to the cold temperatures.

Thanks, to the ingenuity and hard work of the Maintenance Crew, we were able to get the cabins in the lower campground moved up to the park office area. Thanks again to the maintenance guys. We also were able to get a seed drill and tractor out from Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) and completed the seeding project of the flats above the park that was planned for last year. Hopefully we will get some good results.



SOUTH FORK STATE RECREATION AREA

By Robert Misiti

Winter/Spring Months

It was a cold winter and we experienced a fair amount of snow. Ice fishermen comprised the majority of our winter visitation. The ice reached 15 inches thick at the main boat ramp and 10-12 inches thick along the southwest shores. With spring right around the corner, visitation is steadily increasing due to warmer weather.

SOUTH FORK STATE RECREATION AREA (con't)

The mountain snow and reservoir ice has been melting fast due to nicer temperatures in March. Our reservoir water level has increased by two feet. Shoreline fishermen are starting to return for another season and are catching rainbow trout.

Park Improvements

During the winter months, our visitor center at the ranger station got a new look. The interior wall got repainted with a light blue color. The shelving units and wood trim around windows and door were re-stained. We got a donated display cabinet measuring seven feet tall by four feet wide. **Jeff** and **Nick** renovated it and now looks brand new. Glass shelving and new lighting were installed to give it depth and the capability to display various items. Right now it houses an old Tamera ledger dating back to the late 1800's and other various small artifacts discovered within the park. If South Fork obtains approval to sell park merchandise, we will display these items in there as well.

The park also received various animal mounts from an agency in town. The animals, while on loan, are what you might see in our park. We have: a mule deer, pronghorn antelope, sage grouse, young bald eagle and a golden eagle. Each animal has a sign with a short write up on its awesome characteristics. We are actively looking for some park fish to add to our interpretive display.

As the weather warms up, we are looking to install new park signs, replacing the old existing ones. To increase our customer service and revenue, we plan to install two new fee tubes at the old Tomera Ranch area and Jet Ski beach. We would like to get our other shower building refurbished and looking better. The housing units now have generator units to support them in the event of power losses. We will also be focusing our efforts on weed abatement.

Community Support and Involvement

South Fork took part in the 19th Annual Shop-With-A-Cop in Elko. This is the sixth year we participated. Before we went shopping, the children had a chance to get their picture taken with Santa Claus and had breakfast. We traveled to Kmart where we took our assigned child shopping for holiday gifts. After we filled the shopping cart, we



checked out and then we got them wrapped by Santa's helpers. It was a lot fun time and it gave the agencies and its members and chance to reach out and do some good for the children in the local community. South Fork also took part in the First Day Free Hike. We had 11 hikers and a lot of fun snowshoeing our way through the southwest meadows. Afterwards, we stood by a campfire and enjoyed each other's company as we cooked marshmallows. I was able to assist Cave Lake during their Fire and Ice event. I had a great time and had a chance to meet some nice people, seeing amazing sculptures full of detail. All of us headed up to Wild Horse in support of their ice fishing derby. This was another great event. We saw people coming out to the park, catching fish and having a wonderful time.



South Fork would like to congratulate **Michael Timm** for catching an 11 pound 8 ounce; 29 inch Catfish down by the Dam.

WILD HORSE STATE RECREATION AREA

By Andrew Bass

Recruitment this year has been trying to say the least. Every time it seems I've got a new employee hired, they don't work out or find a better job. I'm very thankful for the new recruiting process as it greatly reduces the time it takes to fill a position. Anke Simpson also deserves a huge thank you for her efforts in making the hiring process as smooth as possible. By the way, Craigslist seems to be a fairly decent way of posting job announcements.

While trying to find a long term employee, **Paula Ault** came back and helped me get through the winter. Winter of course is busy here with guided hikes, trout derbies, and of course a lot of good old fashioned ice fishing. The trout derby brought 526 registered participants with well over \$5,000 in cash prizes. The largest trout over the weekend measured in at 24 and 7/8 inches. Thank you again **Jeff McKovich**, **Bob Mergell**, **Nicholas Brunson**, and **Robert Misiti** for helping.



WILD HORSE STATE RECREATION AREA (con't)

This year's participation in the First Day Free Hike was an excellent experiment. My main concern was how practical it would be to lead a hike through the very frozen and snow covered countryside without anyone freezing to death. Although attendance was low (probably good for a first try), the hike was a definite success. We were able to trek about four miles on a beautifully groomed x-country ski/snowshoe trail. The day was cold, starting out about -26F, but the sun was out with no wind. A heated wall tent at the half way point made an excellent place for lunch. A couple of weekends later I was able to guide a Boy Scout troop on the same hike.



EASTERN NEVADA STATE PARKS

By Dawn Andone

January 1 was a beautiful sunny day in Lincoln County and a wonderful day for our First Day Free Hikes. We had hikes at both Cathedral Gorge and Kershaw-Ryan and both were well attended. Many who came to the morning hike at Cathedral also attended the



afternoon hike at Kershaw-Ryan. The sunny Saturdays in January also offered golfers a chance to test their skills on the ice. The Ice Hole Invitational at Spring Valley doubled in size this year with 50 gung-ho golfers and a few new challenges. Obstacles similar to those at a mini-golf park tested golfers' mettle all day long as some of the



holes required numerous strokes to sink the "golf" ball, which was really a tennis ball. Fun, laughter and little friendly competition resulted in fun for all and gave visitors an entertaining winter outing.

Registration for our Park to Park Pedal-Extreme Nevada 100 is open with number of participants already registered. We anticipate meeting our rider cap of 250 in year three. Our inaugural year saw 40 riders, last year we tripled our numbers with 140 signed up and 120 rode.



On Trails Day, June 1, we are introducing a Gravel Grinder event at Beaver Dam State Park. Gravel Grinders have you pedaling over gravel and dirt roads and through incredible scenery; the perfect ride for Beaver Dam. This year's course takes you down an old chaining road that runs along the park's rim so riders get a great view of the park from above. The course then swings around back to the main park road and down into the campground where barbequed hamburgers await to be devoured.

May brings spring flowers and also the annual \$50K Fishing Derby at Echo Canyon and Spring Valley State Parks. This event kicks off the season bringing in both locals and out-of-town visitors. Catch the right tagged fish and you can win \$50,000! Most prizes are something less than \$50K, but still worth the catch.

Helping us this year with our events are new employees at Spring Valley: **Josh Rhein** and **Matt Fretwell**. **Josh** moved all the way from Massachusetts to join our merry band. He started the end of February and will be going off to POST later this summer.

Matt comes to us all the way from Las Vegas. Having worked for state parks as a seasonal at Spring Mountain Ranch, he was already indoctrinated into the system and was ready to jump into his new maintenance position on arrival.

2012 VISITOR QUESTIONNAIRE REPORT CARD

By Joy Elwood

This data is based on our visitor surveys for 2012 and is compared with results from 2011. Parks were given 14,761 surveys to distribute. Per their monthly reports they only gave out 6,914, which means only 46.8% of the surveys were distributed in 2012, which is a decrease. We received 1,030 surveys, which is 8.4% increase over the year 2011.



The following is the overall rating for all state parks:

		<u>Increase or Decrease over 2011</u>
Excellent	82.8%	3.8% Increase
Good	14.5%	2.9% Decrease
Average	1.7%	.1% Increase
Poor	.6%	.2% Decrease
Unacceptable	.5%	.7% Decrease

THE REGIONAL SCORES

The following is the ranking of the regions based on the highest amount of Excellence:

1st - Southern Region; 2nd - Northern Region

The following is the ranking of the regions based on the lowest amount of below average ratings:

1st - Northern Region; 2nd - Southern Region



THE PARK'S SCORES

These results are based on a minimum return of 30 surveys for the year. 30 samples are generally recognized as the minimum number required providing statistical valid survey results. So, only 12 parks made the list.

The following is the ranking of the parks based on the highest amount of Excellence:

Old Las Vegas Mormon Ft.; Wild Horse; Mormon Station; Spring Mtn. Ranch; Berlin-Ichthyosaur; Big Bend of the Colorado; Cathedral Gorge; Valley of Fire; Washoe Lake; Ft. Churchill; Rye Patch; and Lahontan



The following is the ranking of the parks based on the lowest amount of below average ratings:

Old Las Vegas Mormon Ft.; Mormon Station; Spring Mtn. Ranch; Big Bend of the Colorado; Washoe Lake; Ft. Churchill; Berlin-Ichthyosaur; Cathedral Gorge; Wild Horse Rye Patch; Lahontan; and Valley of Fire

ACTIVITY PARTICIPATION

The following are the report activities done in our parks and a comparison from 2011's participation:

		<u>Increase or Decrease over 2011</u>
Relaxing Outdoors	9.6%	1% Increase
Hiking/Walking	57.3%	6.9% Decrease
Camping	42.2%	5.4% Decrease
Picnicking	29.9%	1.5% Increase
Group Activity	14.6%	1% Decrease
Pleasure Driving	29.9%	1.2% Decrease
Nature Study	20.7%	1.9% Decrease
Photography	40.8%	1% Increase
Historic Sites	36.4%	2.5% Increase
Special Events	7.1%	.9% Increase
Boating	13.7%	3% Increase
Fishing	13.7%	.1% Decrease
Swimming	15%	.4% Increase
X-Country Skiing	1%	.3% Decrease
Snowplay	2.3%	1.3% Decrease

So the following are the top 10 activities enjoyed at our parks throughout all of Nevada:

Relaxing Outdoors, Hiking/Walking, Camping, Photography, Historic Sites, Pleasure Driving, Picnicking, Pleasure Driving, Nature Study, Swimming, Group Activity



EXPENSES

More money is spent within a park's county, by 54.7%, than outside the park's county. The public spent 21.2% more from 2011 within a park's county (\$164,609.12 to \$209,036.69) and spent .1% more outside a park's county (\$114,183.86 to \$114,318.39).

The top five expenses were: Fuel, Hotel/Lodging, Groceries/ Picnic Supplies, Restaurant and Other Supplies

Highest average expense per person was on Fuel and the lowest average expense per person was for Rentals.





#4162
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 Nevada Division of State Parks
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Return Service Requested

PERSONNEL

By Anke Simpson

It is only the first week in April as I am writing this PEN article and seasonal hiring is in full swing already. We have almost all of our permanent positions filled. Interviews for the Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Valley of Fire are scheduled and the non-commissioned Park Ranger I recruitment for the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort is requested. Here are the changes among our permanent staff since the last PEN article.

Promotions:

Matt Fretwell promoted from his seasonal Park Aid I position at Spring Mountain Ranch to the Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Spring Valley on 2/19/13. **Alisa Johansson** accepted a promotion from her seasonal Park Ranger Tech I position to the Administrative Assistant II position at Lake Tahoe as of 3/11/13.

Terminations:

Jeremy Robinson resigned from his Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Spring Valley on 11/23/12. **Robert McClain** left his Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Valley of Fire on 2/22/13. **Don Bolton** left his non-commissioned Park Ranger II position at the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort on 4/13/13 to work at Yellowstone National Park.



New Permanent Employees:

Dillon Hoyt started working at Lahontan as commissioned Park Ranger I on 12/3/12. **Tracy Strassburg** accepted the Administrative Assistant II position at Valley of Fire as of 1/7/13. At Spring Valley, **Joshua Rhein** filled the commissioned Park Ranger I vacancy on 1/30/13. **Paul Brady** started working at Southern Region Headquarters as Communications Systems Specialist II on 2/4/13.

Park Service Plaques and Certificates for 2012:

We would also like to give recognition to those who have continued to work for State Parks over the years.

- 25 YEARS:** Joe Cyphers and Eric Johnson
- 10 YEARS:** Kim Copeland, and Jim Hawkins
- 5 YEARS:** Don Bolton, Cheryl Fretwell, Amber Heman, Mandy Keefer, Christi Miller, Steve Micklus and Debbie Wren



POST Academy

Mike Shipman, Scott Egy, Jonathan Brunjes and Dillon Hoyt are currently attending the POST Academy and will graduate on May 16, just in time for Memorial Day weekend.