



# PEN PARK EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

## ADMINISTRATOR'S CORNER

*By David Morrow*



As my pending retirement nears, I would like to thank everyone for all their support and hard work

over the last ten years. It has been a pleasure to work with you and although I wish we could have avoided all the budget cuts the true character of Nevada State Parks employees really stood out during some pretty tough times. When I listen to all the complaints from federal employees about taking 5-9% cuts it really brings home just what a special group of employees we have working for the Nevada Division of State Parks. After taking a 60% cut in our general fund appropriation you kept parks open and operating and very few if any of our visitors realized how badly our budget had been cut. Although there have been several bright spots including the budget that was just passed by the Nevada Legislature, it is what you did to keep parks open and operating that will stand out in my mind.

I hope to get out and visit and enjoy Nevada's State Parks. I'm looking forward to being a park visitor and enjoying your hospitality. There are several events I plan to take advantage of with winter fishing at Wild Horse is at the top of my list. There's just not many places where you can get a ride out to your favorite fishing spot and then have someone drill a couple of holes in the ice for you. I also want to hang out at Berlin in one of those shady camp spots. I might even build a bathtub boat and compete in the annual bathtub races. I'm already looking for a trailer and planning to take advantage of the most generous senior citizen program in the country. I plan to get out of the cold in the winter by spending some time at Big Bend on my way further south.

I have a lot of good memories and a host of strange and funny stories to share about working for Nevada State Parks. I also feel very fortunate to have been able to get to know so many

wonderful people. Although I'm looking forward to retirement it will be very hard to no longer have the daily contact with so many dedicated and hardworking people. I know the future for Nevada State Parks is bright and will continue to improve. There are some very, very good folks in leadership positions just waiting to try out some of their ideas, so I think the next few years will be very rewarding.

Thanks again for a decade with Nevada State Parks. I hope to see you all many times over the next few years. There will also be extra places at my campfire, an extra plate or two of food and plenty cold beverages in the cooler.

## ACTING ADMINISTRATOR

*By Eric Johnson*

It was a strange feeling for me when I came to work on August 1 and didn't have someone to defer to for advice or with a question. Those who know me well know I have never aspired to oversee the agency, but I plan to do the best I can. I don't know what will happen in the next couple of months regarding the administrator's position. I told Kay I'll put in for it, but my interest has always been the best interest of the agency. If we get an applicant with the right combination of experience, political savvy, common sense and is slightly red neck, that's the person we need.

In the mean-time, my goal is to essentially go down the path Dave kept us on. Which begs the question, what is that path? The simple answer is to refer to our mission statement, it is laid out fairly well and describes in general terms what our purpose is. It's more difficult to describe how we are going to accomplish this mission.



"The Division of State Parks plans, develops and maintains a system of parks and recreation areas for the use and enjoyment of residents and visitors. The Division also preserves areas of scenic, historic and scientific significance in Nevada."

## Objectives

- To continue to manage, protect, operate and maintain existing and future units of the Nevada State Park System.
- To acquire, plan for and develop a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific and historical importance.
- Continue to manage and interpret the natural, cultural and recreational resources of the State Park System.

**ACTING ADMINISTRATOR (Con't)****Plans**

The “planning” component of our mission is not currently a focus. General Management Plans or “Master Plans” have a place, but right now we can’t afford to expend time and money on park-wide, long-term planning.

**Develops**

Development is ongoing and is largely based on existing “Master Plans.” However, development is also a function of changing visitor trends and use through additional restrooms where use is concentrated, installation of hook-ups, reservation systems, etc. Development has also become a function of fund availability, efforts are focused on funded projects (grants, Question 1(Q1), Environmental Improvement Program (EIP), etc.). This is not the ideal scenario, but it is reality. I envision more efforts in seeking funding based on need or priority, not just the availability of grants. We can get too far off-course if we start pulling the horse with the cart.

**Maintains**

This is the agency’s highest priority. Our goal has been and will remain fixing what we already have. The infrastructure in most of our parks is aging and leaves little room for expansion. Many of our structures (primarily restrooms) are getting tired. A preventative maintenance (PM) plan (program or software) has been everyone’s goal, but we can’t find the time to get there. We have to determine what we are not going to do in order to develop a PM plan.

Part of achieving an effective maintenance program is efficient use of our time. We have several pending projects that will become prohibitively expensive if not addressed soon. Some funding does exist for contract work; we can’t keep operating under the theory that we can do it all. An on-call contract for well service, electrical repairs, plumbing, septic, and even light construction is good business and might be a way to free up time for the PM plan.

This agency excels in protecting, operating and maintaining existing units of the system. I envision more focus (funded training and inter-agency coordination) on the natural resource component of management as it requires current skills and monitoring. All the maintenance and customer service in the world will have little value if we are not managing the very thing people come to see.

Acquisition is an objective, but is not a priority in 2013, it may have been in 1980 when “more is better” was the common opinion. We need to be very selective in what we take on, when we own something, we own everything that goes with it: liability, weeds, fire potential, cultural concerns and disgruntled neighbors. I mentioned “plan” and “develop” earlier so I’ll move on to “a well-balanced system of areas of outstanding scenic, recreational, scientific and historic importance.” State Parks has achieved this objective; we operate and maintain parks in the Sierras, sagebrush steppe, Mojave Desert, high desert, in rural communities and inner-city Las Vegas. Nevada is an interesting state, we have a wide range of attributes among our parks, but I would argue we have just as wide a range within many individual parks.

Valley of Fire, Ft. Churchill, Ward Charcoal Ovens, Berlin Ichthyosaur, Old Las Vegas Mormon Ft., Mormon Station, Cathedral Gorge and others have an appeal to visitors with widely different interests and disciplines.

Manage is a vague word. To me, it means speaking for something that cannot speak for itself. It also encompasses everything else in our mission statement. If we are making a resource available to most people, even 100 years from now, without compromising the processes that created the resource, we are doing a good job managing. In this aspect, my hat is off to all of you.

Thank you to everyone, when I get bogged down in the bureaucratic process, I’ll count on you to remind me why I got into this field.

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT (P&D)**

*By Mark Davis*

As with all of you, we remain busy in Planning and Development. The legislative session had many bills that could impact how we do bidding and construction contracts. Fortunately, not all made it through. We have to figure out how much we have been impacted. More news will follow as we learn more from the Deputy Attorney General.

I would like to reiterate that the State Public Works Division (SPWD) and State Fire Marshal (SFM) 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 will have fire sprinklers when they are located on state land or land managed by the state. They indicated that they will require sprinklers, even in portable sheds, as they consider them to be occupied.

The State Fire Marshal stated we could request a variance from this requirement through the plan review process. However, there is no guarantee of an approval.



**Please do not to construct or install any new improvements in parks without going through P&D.** This way we can vet out any issue with the authorities having jurisdiction (e.g. SPWD, SFM, etc.). If we construct without a permit and a permit is required, not only can the department be fined, but also the individual that commenced with the work.

**PROJECTS COMPLETED****VALLEY OF FIRE ROOF, MECHANICAL AND MECHANICAL SCREEN REPLACEMENT**

This project is substantially complete. One major issue came up which required them to redo the roofing. That started the week of July 29. Anticipated to be complete by the time of the printing of this PEN article. **Marc Lepire, Blake Clark, Jamin Hunter and Mark Davis** have been sharing the oversight for State Parks.

**SAND HARBOR, LAKE TAHOE, SOLAR LIGHTING DEMONSTRATION PROJECT**

This project was not originally on the books. However, State Parks was contacted by the Nevada State Office of Energy (NSOE). They solicited us for a solar project in a location of high visibility. The condition of the grant was that it needed to be complete by the end of June. Sand Harbor needed some night lighting for evening access to the Shakespeare Theater. The project was submitted, quickly approved and the grant received.



**Joe Fontaine, Jay Howard, Todd Anderson, Dale Conner, and Brett Simerly** all pitched in to complete the project in a timely manner. They received outside support from the **Washoe County Juvenile Services Division**. This project received 100% of its funding from the NSOE in the amount of \$22,500.00, matched only with staff time and time from Washoe County Juvenile Services Division.



**PROJECTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION**

**BIG BEND OF THE COLORADO, RESIDENCE #1**

The residence is under construction, foundations have been poured and framing began the week of July 29. Due to some changes, it is likely to be completed in October. The project is currently being managed by **Marc Lepire** and **Blake Clark**.

**CAVE LAKE COMFORT STATION AND DRAINAGE REPAIRS**

The solar power system is installed and the Lakeview comfort station is near completion. Some of the grading has been done to redirect the runoff around the buildings. Due to the impact on staff time, P&D will contract the work. Park staff does not have the time to perform.

**Marc Lepire** is managing this project. **Scott Payne, his crew, Terry Ivins and Steve Gray** have done the vast majority of the work, excluding the solar work contracted at the beginning of the project. This project is funded by 50%

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and 50% Q1 bond funds

**VALLEY OF FIRE WATER SYSTEM, PHASE I**



This is a high priority project. The scope of the first phase is to abandon the leaking steel water tanks, install new tanks and reduce the water pressure in areas where it is causing damage. To replace the abandoned tanks, we will install two 30,000 gallon underground tanks.

Currently this project is funded with \$350,000 in Q1 bond money and \$395,983.00 from the park's Utility Fee Surcharge account. Additional funding through LWCF has preliminarily been approved. The additional funding will enable us to move forward with either rehabilitating the existing well, or drilling a new well. **Blake Clark** designed and is managing the construction of Phase I with assistance from **Joe Cyphers**.

**PROJECTS BIDDING**

**BIG BEND EROSION CONTROL AND SHORELINE IMPROVEMENTS**



This project has been on the books for a couple of years. In 2012, as an emergency project, we were forced to relocate some shoreline ramadas (see photos above) away from the river due to erosion. The original scope was to protect the existing shoreline, provide some boating access and make shoreline improvements to meet user needs. We requested a grant funding from Boating Access.

After the writing of the last PEN article, State Parks was contacted by the **U.S. Marines, Civil Engineer Corps at Camp Pendleton**. They asked if there was any work they could do at Big Bend. They requested a project that would help a park and provide training for their troops. We provided them with a list of all of the originally planned work and other work to reduce the impacts of flooding in the park. Much to our surprise, they would like to perform the vast majority of the work.



After the request from Camp Pendleton, the grant gained a lot of energy from the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Boating Access program. With a little luck, the grant will come through and we can get a lot more work done for a lot less Q1 Bond money match. If all goes well, the Marines will move in with 300 troops on September 21. This project is being managed by **Joe Cyphers** with assistance from **Blake Clark**

#### NEW ECHO CANYON CAMPGROUND

The design is near completion. Some of the materials for the project have been bid and came in on budget. **Eric Nelson and Joe Cyphers** are the designers. This project is funded with \$150,000 in Q1 bond and \$2,100,000 in Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) grant money. We expect to bid this project by the end of October 2013.

#### DESIGN PROJECTS

##### SAND HARBOR SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT

This project will replace asphalt walks with concrete walks, the beach overlooks will be removed and replaced with smaller, more functional units and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) beach access at the main beach will be provided. This project has been assigned to **Bob Beck** for design through construction administration, supervised by **Joe Cyphers**.

The Tahoe Fund is soliciting additional funds for this project so we can expand the scope of work and enhance the aesthetics of the overlooks. **Bob Beck** has been working on the enhancement drawings. We will find out how much the Tahoe Fund could raise for this project before the end of August. Bidding for this project will be this winter.

##### VALLEY OF FIRE EAST AND WEST ENTRANCE PAY KIOSKS

Due to higher priority projects, this project is still temporarily on hold. The project will be managed by **Marc Lepire** with the assistance of **Joe Cyphers**.

##### WASHOE LAKE CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

This project has been on hold pending completion of the design of the Echo Canyon campground project and other emergency projects. As soon as bidding is complete on the Echo Canyon campground, this project will begin to move forward again. **Eric Nelson, Marc Lepire and Joe Cyphers** will be working on the design. **Bob Beck** will be the construction manager.

##### WILD HORSE CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

This project is funded by \$120,000 in Parks Q1 Bond funds and \$150,000 in LWCF funds with park staff in kind match. **Marc Lepire** is assigned for design through construction management with assistance from **Joe Cyphers**. Design is underway. **Andrew Bass** completed some of the rough grading for the project. We expect to bid this project during the winter and hope for an early spring construction start time.

#### SPRING VALLEY POWER REPLACEMENT (DESIGN THROUGH CONSTRUCTION)

We will replace the existing, aged and failing underground power lines (approximately four miles of underground power line). On July 17, SPWD began solicitation for consultants.

This project was approved in the 2013 legislative session as project number 13-M37. SPWD estimated the total project cost at \$1,945,453. **Cliff Davidow** is the SPWD Project Manager. **Mark Davis** will manage the project until it gains traction then **Joe Cyphers** and/or **Blake Clark** will take over.

#### CANCELED PROJECTS

##### WASHOE LAKE BIKE PATH

State Parks believes this project would be good for the park and its users. However, due to the limited funds and the lack of progress by Washoe County Parks and Open Space, State Parks and State Lands agreed to allow the grant to lapse.

##### RECREATIONAL TRAILS (RECTRAILS)

*By Jenny Scanland*

Parks and Rec Federal Programs update: State Parks has 73 active grants being administered throughout the state with costs totaling \$11,209,860! Both programs are on the proverbial cutting block within the next two years. Loss of these programs would be devastating to Nevada and all of its recreational entities.

Whew! Finally out from under a humongous pile of paper! The question for the last six months has been, "will we have federal money or not?" regarding both federal programs that pass through State Parks: Land and Water Conservation Fund (National Park Service) and the Recreational Trails Program (Federal Highways). Well I was able to keep my head on straight, mostly, and we were funded. RecTrails funding is already being released to grantees, but Land and Water money is still held up in Seattle office.

It was really tough competition and a lot of folks were turned down. There are still 35 active projects (costing: \$6,290,646) out there for RecTrails, adding the new grants will bring the number of projects up to 57 with a new total costs for 2013 at \$1,755,802. Grand total for all active projects is \$8,046,448.

##### 2013 projects being awarded this summer:

1. Mormon Station Interpretive Signs
2. River Mt. Loop Trail in Henderson
3. Angel Park Trail Connector in Las Vegas
4. Ft. Churchill Ruins Loop/Nature trail and toilet.
5. Muscle Powered trail building tools
6. Valley of Fire Leave No Trace train the trainer
7. Kershaw Ryan Interpretive Trail
8. Deadman's and equestrian trail trail Washoe Lake
9. Lake Tahoe backcountry trail maintenance
10. Ward Charcoal interpretive signs and parking fence.
11. U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Peavine motorized trail maintenance
12. Tahoe Meadows Winger motorized project

**RECREATIONAL TRAILS (con't)**

13. Nevada Outdoor School motorized training, Outdoor Ethics
14. PODUNKS Peavine mtn. bike trails on USFS
15. Sierra Front Trail Maintenance, USFS
16. Tahoe Rim Trail, volunteer training
17. Tahoe Rim Trail maintenance in Park's backcountry
18. Pine Grove motorized trail signing, USFS
19. Spring Mt. National Recreation Area trail maintenance
20. Eastern NV motorized trail maintenance, USFS Ely
21. Jake's Wetland Trailhead, Minden
22. Sand Mt. rehabilitation motorized

For Land and Water Conservation Fund there are currently 11 active projects. New for this year is a total project cost of \$1,009,508 in new projects listed below. All active projects total \$3,163,412.

- Carson City Centennial Park from Carson City
- Herrera Skateboard Park from the Town of Elko
- Beatty Town Park from Nye County
- Fernley Autumn Winds Gazebo from the Town of Fernley
- Valley of Fire Waterline from State Parks

Funding for 2014 programs won't be released until almost Christmas. I am afraid as Washington, D.C. continues to have trouble passing bills and reauthorization of both, Land and Water (2015) and RecTrails funds (tied up in the Transportation Bill) will be finished before funded. So hike on good fellows! Plan for the future and continue to shoot for the moon!

**LAKE TAHOE NV STATE PARK**

*By JoAnn Kittrell and Alisa Johansson*



JoAnn Kittrell of the director's office and Dale Connor attended the grand opening at Raley's in Tahoe to thank them for their support and funding of picnic tables for Sand Harbor.

It's been a great summer season so far, with many special events and performances going off without a hitch. Highlights of the season thus far include the Trans-Tahoe Relay, the backcountry Ultra Endurance Runs, and the sold-out Reno Philharmonic performance. More exciting events are planned for August and early fall, notably the world-famous Xterra Triathlon, the 2013 Tahoe Summit, Les Miserables and the Great Flume Race.

Speaking of events and staying in the know, our brand-new public outreach program, including a Facebook page and Twitter account, has been receiving great feedback and (as we'd hoped) seems to be a great resource for new and returning visitors alike. As anticipated, it was slow going at first with only a few "likes" here and there, but as the season continues and the social media juggernaut gets rolling, we anticipate the program will reach and assist even more beach-goers. We're excited to finally be stepping into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and enhancing our relationship with our visitors through these new and exciting methods.

As I'm sure you can imagine, Sand Harbor has been at or near capacity most days since the Fourth of July and issues that arise from that type of visitation have not changed. Law enforcement incidents, medical incidents, water rescues, overflowing trash receptacles, pump failures, and of course, traffic issues persist, but staff, both seasonal and permanent, have risen to the challenge. With only a month or so left of the peak season, we're all looking forward to the cool breezes of fall.

**NORTHERN REGION**

**NORTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS**

*By Bob Mergell*



**WHERE'S THE WATER????????????**  
 As everyone knows, it's been a difficult year for our water parks. Boat docks were rendered unusable much earlier in the year than usual. The one positive result of low water is that it allowed some parks to catch up on a few projects that were on the back burner.

All in all, the season has gone along relatively smooth. Our typically crazy summer holiday weekends turned out fairly uneventful.

We are anxiously waiting to fill the vacant Maintenance Repair Specialist (vacated by Jeff Jones) and get the crew finally back up to full staff. Hopefully that will help us catch up on a few projects still floating out there waiting to be completed. Maintenance crews have been working hard to try to keep up with all of the stuff that seems to get re-broken every year and trying to keep our fleet of vehicles on the road. If they haven't gotten to your park to fix something yet, try to be patient, they are coming as soon as they can.

This last budget cycle was fairly surprising. For the first time in a long time, we were actually approved to purchase some much needed equipment. We (and by "we" I mean Scotty and his crew) are now desperately scouring the country side looking for some used equipment that meets our budget and needs. Northern Region was fortunate enough to purchase six new trucks, which we are currently, patiently waiting for Board of Examiners (BOE) approval in order to spend the money that was already given by the Governor and the legislature. You gotta love checks and balances.

**NORTHERN REGION HEADQUARTERS (con't)**

By the time this comes out, Dave Morrow will officially be retired. Dave was a great addition to the Nevada State Park family and he will be greatly missed. He promised to come in and get his Senior Permit as soon as he qualifies and has plans to use it as often as he can, so look for him visiting your parks in the near future.

I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone that works in the Northern Region (you Southern folks are alright too, I suppose), but I love working here. I appreciate how everyone is willing to help each other out and how for the most part everyone looks at State Parks as a system and not a bunch of individual locations. I think we do a pretty good job helping to utilize each other's strength while covering for their weaknesses. We aren't all great at everything individually, but collectively there is nothing we can't accomplish. Thank you all for the great work you do day in and day out.

**BERLIN-ICHTHYOSAUR STATE PARK**

*By Karsen Case*

When the Mountain Thistle blooms, we know summer is in full swing in Berlin. Their white flowers stick out amongst the maze of sage and sand as visitors leave the paved highway and hit the park's road. Another sure sign of summer is the arrival of volunteer and ghost town aficionado **Wayne Kirk**. Wayne leads tours of both the Diana Mine and Berlin Mill. He serves as a great source of information about the way of life in mining towns at the turn of the century for visitors and staff alike. New to our team this summer is a kit fox who we've aptly named "Fox." He can be seen in the morning patrolling for mice near the assay office or roaming the picnic area for scraps.



Seasonal **Todd Wheeler** is back for his second year and continues to do a good job of guiding the fossil and mine tour when needed and making sure the campground is clean and ready. Park Tech I **Karsen Case** returned on short notice to complete our staff. We know it was difficult for him to leave his new life in Seattle, Washington, yet he brings a positive and productive attitude to work every day. We appreciate his help this summer.

As we are sure you have all heard, once again, for the second year in a row, the astute and wise editors and readers of *Nevada Magazine* have named Berlin our state's "Best Rural Park." We are currently deciding where to hang this newest trophy. We are running out of room at this point. On a more serious note, we hope you have a safe and successful summer season and encourage you to visit our award winning, critically acclaimed park.



**CAVE LAKE & WARD CHARCOAL OVENS STATE PARKS**

*By Allen Wooldridge*

I hope everyone had a safe, productive and fun summer. With far less "bizarre" incidents this summer, we were able to focus more on little projects around the parks, help visitors, and complete customer satisfaction surveys. We received almost 20 donated aspen trees and **Steve Gray** been busy planting them along our irrigation ditch. **Terry Ivins** has been busy improving the Lake View Campground shower building. He installed a new water heater system, redid the showers with new tile and stainless steel walls and just completed work on the retaining wall around the building.

In June, we held our annual "Cocktails and Cannons" with great success. This year we had 12 bathtubs compete. 3,234 spectators spent the day at the lake enjoying the vendors selling snow cones, indian tacos, and the Jailhouse Casino cooking up brats, hamburgers and other goodies. Everyone had a great time and is planning next year's tubs.

**Tracey Doutre** returned for her ninth season and continues to be a familiar friendly face for our visitors. We hired a new seasonal this summer. **Alexa Nelson** comes from Las Vegas, but has hunted, fished and camped her whole life, and fits in perfect with our visitors. **Alexa** is starting classes at Great Basin College this fall with goals of becoming a ranger. We hope everyone continues to have a great summer and a mellow fall.

**LAHONTAN STATE RECREATION AREA**

*By Tony Beauregard and John Collis*

Well the summer is hot and dry. Did I say Dry? Well we started off busy as usual with two new Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspection stations and two new Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) graduates. Believe it or not **Mike Shipman** is carrying a gun. Congratulations to **Mike** and **Dillon Hoyt** on your accomplishment and welcome



back.  
**POST graduates Scott Egy, Dillon Hoyt & Mike Shipman**

Also new is baby boy, **Bo Hoyt**; a 10 pound (Yikes) bundle of joy for **Dillon** and his wife **Heather**. So much for sleep this summer.



**LAHONTAN STATE RECREATION AREA (con't)**

We are excited to say, "There is no alligator in Lahontan." **Larry**, as we call him, never showed and we have no knowledge there is or ever was an alligator at Lahontan. By the way, new uniform belts will now be available from the Lahontan gift shop this year.

Overall we had a good summer with some, but less than, the typical Lahontan summer. We are glad to have POST staff home and thankful for returning staff that keep Lahontan...interesting. Thank you to everyone for your hard work. Speaking of hard work, **John Collis** and his crew at the Dam did a terrific job with a new program and I thought I'd let him share the event.-Thanks **John**.



**Dutch Oven Class** - Lahontan held its first Dutch Oven Class on June 21 at the Day Use area with the assistance of the Northern Sierra Dutch Oven Group. With twenty-three in attendance, things were exciting around the six prep tables as the participants gathered ingredients and put them into the six Dutch ovens.

Some of the dishes cooked were a perfectly browned pineapple turnover cake, the world's tastiest Butch's bitchin' chicken, lasagna, chili, corn bread, and a delectable blueberry cobbler. All participants shared in making the dishes and of course the tasting while park employees kept the charcoals hot. Many prizes were raffled off to the participants and plenty of food and fun was had by all who attended. Of course, park Supervisor **Tony Beauregard** was in attendance for the final tasting. We received many positive comments and are looking forward to planning the next class for early next year. We would like to thank the **Northern Sierra Dutch Oven Group**, **Sportsman Warehouse**, and **Cal Ranch** for their support and donation to this event.

**RYE PATCH STATE RECREATION AREA**

*By Josh Ivins*

Another summer is about over, and it has been a hot and dry one. We watched as our temperatures went from -22 degrees in January to 115 degrees in July, we started wondering how anything survives such drastic changes and then started wondering how we were going survive the changes. Well so far we seem to be managing alright. Our lake level is down to about 6,800 acre/feet, which is about 3.4% of capacity and the lowest most people around here have seen it. On the bright side, we are still able to launch boats from the shore. There is

also about three miles of navigable lake for people to fish and boat. We have also seen some great fish come out of the lake.

Camping has certainly been a lot slower due to the hot weather and low water level, but we seem to be doing alright with day use. With the hot weather, the few electrical sites we have are being used regularly and we are finding they bring people into the park for longer periods.

We are looking forward to the First Annual Rye Patch Nugget Shoot happening on September 28. We are doing this with a lot of help from the **Reno GPAA (Gold Prospecting Association of America)** and the **Reno Prospecting and Metal Detecting Club**. We are expecting a good turnout and a lot of activities such as metal detecting, panning, sluicing, and high banking, as well as some demonstrations from some experienced prospectors.

We are hoping to get some more trees planted in our overflow areas, and get some better irrigation systems in for existing trees this fall. And of course, we are keeping our fingers crossed for a long, wet winter. We hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable end to their summer.

**SOUTH FORK STATE RECREATION AREA**

*By Robert Misiti*

This summer has been very busy. We experienced increased visitation every month and higher revenues than ever before. In April, our visitation was up 77%, May 99%, June 90% and July 82%. In July, our revenue for the year already reached over in \$116,000 and permit sales, especially our multiuse permit, continues to remain strong. Park staff continues to do an excellent job in keeping the park clean despite less than ideal staff for the entire summer season. Despite down reservoir water levels, boating, fishing and swimming continue to be favorites for our water based enthusiasts.

Interpretive events have made a comeback this season. South Fork has teamed up with members from **NDOW**, **Bureau of Land Management**, **Great Basin College** and **Division of Water Resources** to help provide our visitors and their families with informative presentations. Throughout the summer, we provided presentations about our park history, the local wildlife, the California trail, local birds and stargazing.

**Nick Brunson** and I partnered with the **Nevada Highway Patrol** and took part in the Annual Tip A Cop fund raiser for the Special Olympics in Elko. **Nick** covered the lunch hours and I covered the dinner hours. We walked around with the athletes at JR Restaurant and asked people for donations for their event in Reno. The event was a big success as it raised over \$4,000 for the day. **Nick** and I alone helped raise over \$1,000 for the Special Olympics.



**SOUTH FORK STATE RECREATION AREA (con't)**

The **Elko Bass Federation** held its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual NV Fishing Youth Qualifier Tournament here at the park. Junior Anglers from the area had a chance to compete for a trip to Louisiana and compete for the title of the Junior National Champion. Congratulations to **Louis Mendive** and his sister **Franci Mendive** as winners of the event and good luck at the Junior National Championship. Our participation in the event gives the anglers at a young age the chance to appreciate the park as they learn the art of fishing. We continue to be a fishing paradise where anglers of all ages can “Land Your Trophy.”



South Fork celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a celebration with the local public. The **Elko Area Chamber of Commerce** and **City of Elko** helped sponsor the event and provided free food and music for our celebration. Our Dam Master, **Rich Perry** provided tours of the dam house and insights on how the dam operates to local visitors. Governor Sandoval was invited, but could not attend the historic celebration event. He did however send us a letter congratulating us on our 25 years of service to the people of Nevada and all over the world.



In looking forward, we are currently coordinating with a tree nursery in Carlin for more trees in our east campground. Some trees did not make it through the winter and the root systems for other trees fell victim to ambitious gophers. We also plan on repaving our access road to our residence with more base and building up our driveways. We will also clear some beaver dams located upstream. The area beavers completely plugged one waterway culvert passing under Lucky Nugget Road. While they were busy as beavers in building the dams, park staff will be busy as beavers tearing down the dams. We are continuing our efforts in replacing old signs in the park with new ones. Thank you for visiting South Fork. Have a great rest of the summer and see you later.

**WASHOE LAKE STATE PARK**

*By Don Berinati and Donna Silva*

Since May, we experienced a renewed effort of maintenance and enhancement, along with a number of programs presented for the general public. The latter include:

- Stargazing in May and August: May’s stargaze event had 60 visitors and enjoyed clear skies with cool temperatures in the group use overflow parking area.

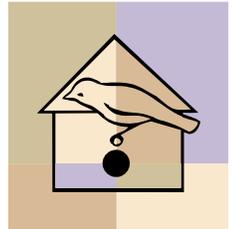
- Local docents and instructors from the **Audubon Society** gave a number of classes in May and June for local students from the Douglas, Washoe and Carson City elementary school districts. The volunteer members set up microscopes and examples of local food supplies for the various species of birds that inhabit the park, as well as conducted tours of the various feeding and nesting areas. As a bonus, they were treated to a nesting robin pair with young just outside the bathrooms in the Day Use Area and a nesting goose re-using an eagle’s nest in a Group Area cottonwood.

- Rattlesnake Training: Twice in June, the park teamed up with local trainers and provided facilities for these classes. Approximately 75-80 participants came through the training with their dogs on each day.



- Bats: On August 3, the park will host an Evening with Bats, helping to educate the general public on the importance of bats, their life cycle, habitation requirements, and role in nature. This should be an intriguing class about a mysterious and often invisible agent of nature.

- Dutch Oven: This popular program returns late in August with its usual bonus of good food!



- Birdhouses: This will be a class for children of all ages in August where they will build, decorate and finish a birdhouse. During this, they will also learn the importance of birds, the specific species that might inhabit their birdhouses, and where they should be placed, as well as gaining trade skills in wood fabrication, construction, painting and finishing.

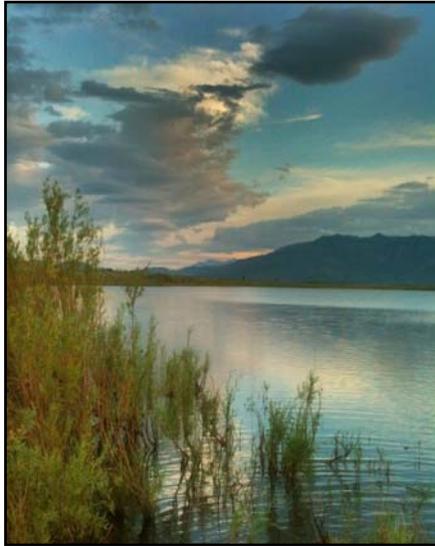
We have several ambitious projects completed or underway this season. Among them:

- The Children’s Maze: Located at the edge of a broad meadow interspersed with epic sagebrush and completed in August. This 80 x 60 foot oval maze began in May and is constructed mostly of recycled/reused materials obtained from sister parks, as well as our own. With its five concentric rings culminating in a central area (which will contain a mystery structure in September), this maze will challenge the most perceptive of children (even the adults who worked on it had a hard enough time finding their way out). Located next to the overflow parking area, it is also adjacent to the beach trailhead and has fine views across the park’s savannah, dunes, lake and Slide Mountain. A small seating area for parents to watch their children will also be constructed at the edge of the area.

As our summer season slowly winds down, we continue to get many enthusiastic compliments from campers and users regarding the quality and cleanliness of the park, with special appreciation for the trees planted and the preservation of the established ones, such as the big cottonwoods in the Day Use Areas. Foreign visitors in particular find the silence and long vistas afforded by the park stunning. And for some locals, who have not seen the park since the 1970’s, the quality and improvements come as a shock and a bright surprise in the desert jewel that lies so close to where they live.

**WASHOE LAKE STATE PARK (con't)**

- Little Washoe at sunset: An old deck platform was removed from the paved parking area and relocated to the north approximately 100 feet along the existing beach trail. Re-envisioned, rebuilt, and re-using all existing materials along with a small bench for reflection, it sits above the Little Washoe beach and looks directly toward Slide Mountain and Mt. Rose. The original location was re-graded and returned to its original topography.



Bellevue: On the west side of the lake, **Dave Pardew** and crew have been building a picnic area and informational kiosks adjacent to the existing paved parking. The new pad, approximately 100' x 80' of compacted fill will feature a connecting path and picnic table. This will be the first improvement to the Bellevue areas since the park's creation in 1975. This work was funded by a generous dedicated gift from a park visitor in memory of her mother and the park extends its thanks to her.

- New corrals have been added to the Equestrian area in the main section of the park. This comes on the heels of increased year over year use of the popular area, not only by large overnight groups such as those for the **Moonlight Ride and the Gaited Horse Association** in June, and an **Endurance Ride** at the end of May featuring over 70 horses, but also smaller informal groups and families who spend the occasional night or so camping in the area.
- Signage throughout park was replaced or added, with over 30 new signs marking trailheads, trash container locations and allowed usage. In addition, over 15 trees have been planted, either replacing dead or dying ones or enhancing the shade structures already provided. Accompanying these developments, an improved irrigation system and rigorous watering schedule has been put into place.
- At the south end of the park, repairs were completed to the split rail fence which borders the trail to the Wetlands Observation Deck. Repairs were also carried out on the platform itself, with the guardrail repaired and reinforced as well as the two existing Trex benches. Throughout the park, many structures such as the Wetlands have received attention, including repairs and new coats of paint or stain.
- An effort to repair the curbs in the park which have suffered damage over the years has been completed. Many of the parking stops have been painted or spruced up, and wood bollards have been replaced or straightened. At the main fee booth, the flowers have been augmented on the dividing median and repairs to the split rail fence bordering the entry have been completed.

- In conjunction with Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and contracted through Douglas County, the White Top spraying program at the Washoe Wetlands has grown in scale and impact within the park.
- At the Hang-gliding Area adjacent to the main entrance fee booth, the increase in maintenance and grounds keeping has continued to reap benefits for hang-gliding enthusiasts, who launch above and to the east of the park. From what they tell us, the view of the lake and park in general is spectacular and becoming more popular.
- In the fishing category, catches of catfish and carp have been good and consistent considering the water levels. Off Willow Beach at the south end of the main park, a 23 pound Channel Cat was taken in May, with several not-much-smaller ones in double digits.
- Speaking of fish and fish tales: One of our employees performing a beach cleanup came across a large catfish doing a little fishing of his own. The catfish tried to eat a white bass and choked himself to death. It was quite a sight!



- We continue to see boaters of all types using the park in spite of lowered levels, with the more ambitious using shovels to gain access. As of this writing, the lake has fallen to the bottom of the ramp at North Ramp, but there is still a steady diet of local boaters, kayakers, and paddle boarders coming to enjoy the lake with its long views of the Sierra to the west. In addition, we see many kite-surfers, windsurfers and their admirers at North Ramp when the reliable afternoon zephyrs come up.

**WILD HORSE STATE RECREATION AREA**

*By Andrew Bass*

There is lower water this year, but only one rumor is true: "I hear they are draining the Lake" First off, who are they? This reservoir was built for agriculture on the reservation and during a year with little run off, it is normal for the water level to drop significantly. This is what a reservoir is for. There is no logic to the idea that anyone would want to drain the reservoir as that would leave no water in reserve. The tribe does want to get a couple cuts of hay in though. Lastly, there is a minimum required pool, so the reservoir cannot be drained. By the way, even at the current levels Wild Horse is still the largest body of water in Elko County.

"All the fish are going to die." A few years ago there was a trout die off due to low oxygen levels, but the level of the water has nothing to do with the amount of oxygen in it. As long as there is significant wind or thunderstorms (which we have had a lot of) oxygen continues to be added to the water. Again Wild Horse is still the largest lake in the area and none of the other lakes are forecasted for die offs. Yes fish could still die, but not likely in any large amount.

**WILD HORSE STATE RECREATION AREA (con't)**

“There are no fishing limits.” In anticipation for a trout die off, the Division of Wildlife did temporarily lift the limit on trout until October. All other regulations still apply.

On a fun note, a couple of years ago the park received a donation of three sickle mowers from 1930s. They were used in the Duck



Valley area and then left to rust away like most old farm equipment. This summer, park staff restored two of them. The most difficult part was to confirm paint schemes and color. I was able to find the original memo about paint colors from the McCormick-Deering Paint Committee. Yes, the faces of the wheels really were blue. One has been restored for function and is now on display. All parts work and it actually does a pretty good job of mowing even with the original cutting teeth. The other mower is not quite done as a little more effort is being taken to match original graphics and logos. This one is for display only and while it is functional, we don't want to scratch the paint. I kept the third mower in an arrested state of decay also for display.

Wildfires in this state and in near-by areas kept our skies hazy with a smell of smoke in the air. There were a couple of lightning strike fires in the parks, but luckily they were fairly easily controlled.

We were fortunate to have **Nicki Kendrick, Eric Johnson** and **Kirsten Hettrick** here for several days helping with the inventory and getting the Point of Sale (POS) system installed in the gift store. The new system is wonderful, it is just getting all of us trained properly that is the key. **Nicki** has been very patient with my phone calls for help!! Thanks **Nicki!!!** ☺

In less than two months, we will have our annual Dutch Oven Cook-off. It is still in the planning stage, but looking good. We hope to have a lot of people signed up as cooks. If any of you are Dutch oven enthusiasts, plan to come and participate on September 21.



**Dawn** is working hard on the Park to Park bicycle event. Each year it gets bigger and better. October 12 is the day! We have over 100 people enrolled already and more are signing up all the time. Remember, the price goes up September 1, so get enrolled now. This event has gotten a lot of attention and the participants love it. It is very well organized, safe and the riders come from many states to participate.



**Nevin May** and all of the full time and seasonal employees are working hard keeping the park weeded, cleaned and ready for visitors. The next couple of months will be very busy indeed.

**SOUTHERN REGION**

**CATHEDRAL GORGE & BEAVER DAM STATE PARKS**

*By Marcia Wadsworth*

As one of my good friends used to say, “Things are hopping and popping around here.” Unseasonably hot weather slowed all of us down and visitation too. We are happy to get a few more visitors recently, cooler weather and a bit of much needed rain helped.

In May, we were very busy with school and tour groups. Everyone seemed to have a great time and learned a lot about our area and the wildlife. School kids love this park!!! **Cody** and **Dawn** teach the children new and exciting things.

**Shaylen Budreau** and **Vicki Castaldo** have been working like beavers (pun intended) at Beaver Dam getting things in shape for their busy season. Much needed work and maintenance done by **Jim Cole** and **Matt Elmer** got the living areas in good shape for the workers. Beaver Dam is such a lovely, quiet and peaceful park. This year was our first **Gravel Grinder** event in June; the turnout was small, but next year we hope to have more mountain bikers enjoy our beautiful tour of the park.



**EACH CANYON & SPRING VALLEY STATE PARKS**

*By Josh Rhein*

This spring and early summer have been busy out at Spring Valley and Echo Canyon. Our annual \$50,000 tagged fishing event was a big success, even though the three caught, tagged fish weren't worth big money. Memorial Day weekend saw both parks fill up. Our other fishing event took place on Nevada's Free Fish Day and “The Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs” kid's fishing event was also a huge success. We had a turnout of over 340 kids plus all their parents. Despite the unseasonably hot weather, everyone had a good time. The goal of the event is to help kids get interested in fishing, so they develop a positive hobby they can do with their families.



**EACH CANYON & SPRING VALLEY STATE PARKS (con't)**

The seasonal staff at both parks worked hard to keep the visitors happy and the parks looking good. Coming back this year we had **Phil Trousdale, Dave Powers** and **Sue Lewis**. We welcomed three new staff **Alec Lloyd, Ryan Lloyd** and **Kyle Hunt**. All seasonal staff take a great deal of pride in the parks. If not for the seasonal staff, we certainly wouldn't have happy campers returning year after year. Also joining the staff early this spring was **Matt Fretwell**, our new Maintenance Repair Specialist. **Matt** comes to us from Spring Mountain Ranch and he is tough on Christmas trees.



Timing and luck were very much in our favor when I met **Laura Oslund** of the **Nye Communities Coalition** this June at Echo Canyon's Annual Kid's Fishing Derby. **Laura** offered the services of **Movies Under the Stars**, under a Federal Grant, for an outdoor showing of *Despicable Me*. Needless to say, I accepted

and a couple of weeks later we enjoyed a great turn out of around 140 participants. The weather was perfect and everyone enjoyed a good view of the three-story big screen. We furthered the movie experience by providing fresh popcorn and beverages. We had such a positive response from the community, with many requesting more showings, that we are hopeful for more of these in the future. **LCAT** and the local **Rotary Club** have recently been in contact with the **Nye Communities Coalition** and will be showing movies with the same vendor in Alamo, Caliente, Panaca, and Pioche. Thank you **Laura Oslund** for helping Kershaw-Ryan and Lincoln County!

**KERSHAW-RYAN STATE PARK**

*By Andrew Porter*

A year has gone by and this afforded me the opportunity to become accustomed to the rhythms and routines of Kershaw-Ryan throughout the seasons. Although it is one of our smaller, lesser known parks (this seems to be changing quickly), I found there is no down time here. Whether we are dealing with local interests, special events, educational outreach or caring for our trees, flowers, and greenhouse, this park requires a huge investment of focus and man hours. Fortunately our dedicated team worked tirelessly to keep it beautiful this year.

Once again we were very lucky to have Master Gardener **Ken Adams** return for another season: **Ken** oversees the park's annual and perennial flower crop from germination to planting. All of his efforts are responsible for that sparkle which Kershaw is well known. We would also like to welcome new recruit **Dyllon Cluff** of Panaca. **Dyllon** brings extensive grounds maintenance experience, which made him a great fit – welcome aboard! **Mark Goin**, camp host and volunteer extraordinaire, can't seem to get enough of being here! **Mark** works daily and logs in over 250 hours a month! **Matt Elmer** has a busy schedule and is seen working in all our parks, but his knowledge and experience with Kershaw's facilities is invaluable. We would like to thank **Matt** for his devotion to researching, designing, and installing our new **Campground Vineyard**. The vineyard required (and continues to require) efforts from volunteers, service workers, youth workers, and all staff to finally become a reality. This winter we started with



over 140 grape cuttings from Oregon's Willamette Valley by propagating them on a heat table in the residence garage, then transferred those that rooted to the greenhouse for budding and further growth, and eventually with the arrival of warm weather, planted the grapes in their new home. Some months later, we are proud to say we have around 100 plants acclimating nicely in our completed vineyard. If we can keep the local critters from feeding on our young plants, we should have a good crop in a few years. Great idea **Jonathan!**

**VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK**

*By Valley Crew*



Yeaaaahhhh! After being closed for almost a year, Fire Canyon/Silica Dome is finally complete and opened June 1. Now it's accessible for visitors in tour buses, RVs, and cars. In addition, the roof improvement and HVAC projects are almost complete, which in turn was perfect timing for the most recent heat wave where Valley reached a high of 119°. The new air conditioner units really got a test run!

Ranger **Amber Heman** resigned from her post in May for a new position with the Discovery Children's Museum in Las Vegas. We wish her the best of luck and will miss her running around like a mad person during program seasons. **Tracy Strassburg** recently achieved her 6-month anniversary as our Administrative Assistant II. She has not run screaming out the door yet, though we have installed preventative measures just in case. However, she does have the typical eye twitch that everyone develops while working at Valley.



Rangers **Craig Robinson** and **Kyle Groth** have been busy reconditioning and/or designing signs to improve safety and visitor information. There are plenty of signs in need of restoration to keep them functional throughout the summer.

Supervisor **Hammons** has been reviewing applications to find a new ~~victim~~ (sorry) candidate for the non-commissioned ranger position before his wife drags him out of the park for a well-deserved vacation.





#4162  
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Nevada Division of State Parks  
901 S. Stewart St., Ste. 5005  
Carson City, NV 89701-5248

Return Service Requested

### VALLEY OF FIRE STATE PARK (con't)

**Trisha** and **Jennifer** don't quite believe we are in our slower season, since gift shop store sales have been averaging over \$1,000 daily. This is great support for the gift shop program, while increasing visitor services. Ranger **Santee** was one of the first "guinea pigs" to try out the new point of sale software system recently installed by the **Nicki Kendrick** and **Paul Brady** team. When he stated the system was a massive improvement and more user-friendly than the previous system, the rest of us knew we had it made.

**Heather Jolley** recently joined our team as a Park Aid I and will join **Thomas Fitzsimmons** to work the summer season. She made it through her first heat wave, where records were broken for 10 consecutive days with temperatures above 110°. As a result, she now fondly refers to the park as, "Valley of Stop, Drop, and Roll." Assuming she survives the summer, she will be a positive and welcome addition to our staff.



### PERSONNEL

*By Anke Simpson*

It seems like the seasonal hiring went pretty smoothly this year after the initial adjustments to the reestablished "Application To Agency" hiring process. Hopefully this adjustment will provide us with applicants that truly want to work for us. We currently have 101 seasonals on board throughout the State.

I am sure by now everybody is aware of the budget changes for the 2013-2015 biennium impacting State Employees, but here is a brief summary:

- Employees received an approximate 2.5% increase in pay effective July 1, 2013.
- Effective July 1, 2014 classified employees that are not topped out will receive their step increases (MSI) again on their anniversary date, date of last promotion or after working 2088 hours as in the case of our seasonals.
- Furlough requirements remain unchanged. Full time employees are required to take 48 hours of furlough per fiscal year and part time employee will take a prorated amount.
- The PERS contribution rate increased by 1%.
- Health insurance premiums remain unchanged for both the High Deductible plan and for the HMO.
- Longevity pay is suspended for the upcoming biennium.

### New Permanent Employees:

**Anthony Howerton** started in the Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Valley of Fire on 5/13/13. **Daniel Wassmund** accepted the non-commissioned Park Ranger I position at the Old Las Vegas Mormon Fort on 6/11/13.

### Good Byes:

**Jeff Jones** resigned from his Maintenance Repair Specialist II position at Northern Region Headquarters on 4/23/13. **Amber Heman** left her non-commissioned Park Ranger II position at Valley of Fire on 5/2/13 to take a position at the Discovery Science Museum in Las Vegas. **Dave Morrow** retired from his position as State Parks Administrator with 10 years of service with Nevada State Parks. His last day at work was 7/31/13.