



Conservation Project Spotlight

Students Collect Native Seeds to Restore Parklands

By Jennifer Winston, Asst. Volunteer Coordinator

Over a week in December, eleven students and two teachers from the Montessori Visions Academy in Las Vegas worked with the staff at Lake Mead to collect native rabbitbrush seeds for future revegetation around the Hoover Dam Bypass and road widening project.

The students and teachers camped in the park at Temple Bar.

On Monday, they were introduced to the Lake Mead Nursery, the importance of their project, and educational activities based on the Leave No Trace ethic. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, they were outfitted with rackets to knock rabbitbrush seeds from bushes and buckets to collect them. Over 65 gallons were collected.

On Wednesday evening, the students held a parents' night in the campground. Students were eager to present their project findings and perform a skit for the audience.

The Montessori Visions Academy curriculum is based on multi-age classrooms designed to develop the whole person mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally. The middle school students are to focus on service, excursions, and the government within basic school studies. After a six week in-classroom curriculum, the students then choose a land lab in the field incorporating the previous lessons.

The students' assignment was part of a larger scale project involved with the new \$234 million Hoover Dam Bypass currently under construction in Nevada and Arizona. With the development of the new highway, 65 acres of parkland have been disturbed and will be in need of revegetation. The seeds collected will be used to help restore the native plants along the new highway before invasive species have the chance to establish themselves.

