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News Release



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Construction at Desert NWR Impacts Access to Trails Preparing to Build New Visitor Center at Corn Creek

LAS VEGAS – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is advising visitors to the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (Desert NWR) that they might encounter temporarily closed trails at Corn Creek. Public access to the trails will be limited or blocked occasionally as workers prepare the site for construction of a new visitor center.

According to Desert NWR Manager Amy Sprunger, portions of the established trail around the pond and the newly-constructed Birdsong Loop Trail are impacted at this time. Construction crews are installing the utilities to support the new visitor center. Sprunger said the trails remain open to the public, but visitors must use caution and comply with signs denying entry to construction zones.

All roads on the Desert NWR remain open. However, minor detours to the back country roads could be in effect as the construction work progresses. Corn Creek and the entire wildlife refuge are open as usual. Visitors to the Desert NWR are asked to follow all signs and directions, and be especially aware of heavy equipment and construction activities.

The FWS announced last week the closing of the Corn Creek Visitor Contact Station. The contact station was closed on October 31, 2010, and the trailer housing the station has been moved to another location at Corn Creek. Groundbreaking for the visitor center is planned for late spring of 2011, and construction is expected to take approximately 15 months. The new 11,000-square-foot facility will include visitor services and exhibits, as well as administrative offices.

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In the meantime, the FWS is seeking volunteers to staff the Desert NWR on weekends. The volunteers will be stationed at Corn Creek to assist visitors with directions, provide literature, and answer questions about the wildlife refuge or the construction of the new visitor center. Persons interested in volunteering are asked to contact Harry Konwin, Volunteer Coordinator, by phone at (702) 515-5494 or via email to harry_konwin@fws.gov.

The Desert NWR (www.fws.gov/desertcomplex/desertrange) is approximately 23 miles north of Las Vegas on U.S. Highway 95. A sign on the east side of the highway marks the turnoff to the four-mile gravel road leading to Corn Creek. The wildlife refuge was established May 20, 1936, for the conservation and development of wildlife resources, including the desert bighorn sheep. At 1.5 million acres, it is the largest national wildlife refuge in the continental United States.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.