

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 4, 2008

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Gian Galassi, UNLV Public Affairs Office
702-895-3104
LaNelda Rolley, Public Lands Institute
702-895-5168

**UNLV PUBLIC LANDS INSTITUTE AWARDED
ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR CONSERVATION INITIATIVES**
*ACTIVITIES ON SOUTHERN NEVADA'S PUBLIC LANDS WILL LEAD TO
INCREASED ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND STEWARDSHIP*

LAS VEGAS – The UNLV Public Lands Institute (PLI) has announced that it has signed task agreements totaling more than \$3 million to enhance conservation initiatives on public lands in Southern Nevada. PLI will provide interagency outdoor education programming in Clark County and monitor and evaluate vegetation and sensitive wildlife at Lake Mead National Recreation Area

“Over the past few years, we have worked closely with the four federal land-management agencies in Southern Nevada to enhance public land stewardship,” said Margaret N. (Peg) Rees, PLI’s executive director. “Through a series of cooperative agreements, we manage several programs on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service. The modified agreements with the National Park Service are crucial to extend the activities taking place on public lands through the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act,” Rees explained.

The Education in the Environment task agreement calls for PLI to work with the Hispanic community to increase environmental awareness and stewardship by developing interpretive projects and educational programs at community events. In addition, current outdoor education programming will be expanded and assessed to determine changes in Clark County student and teacher outdoor recreation knowledge and performance.

Under the Sensitive Wildlife task agreement, PLI will implement four Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Program wildlife projects related to the monitoring, management, and research of relict leopard frogs; wintering bald eagles; peregrine falcons; and lowland, upland, and riparian bird species. Three additional projects will lead to the monitoring of aquatic shorebird, desert bighorn sheep, and desert tortoise habitat compliance.

The Vegetation Monitoring task agreement will focus on the inventorying and monitoring of rare plant species, such as the Las Vegas bearpoppy, and conducting surveys to identify new infestations of exotic weed species, such as the Sahara mustard, and recommending treatment. PLI will also provide

technical assistance to monitor land disturbance from illegal off-road driving on Lake Mead National Recreation Area and assist the National Park Service in developing ecological restoration protocols for remediation of gypsum soil sites.

“We are looking forward to the next round of projects,” said Rees. “Because of the funding and partnerships, PLI has documented a measurable impact in the past three years.” Those include:

- More than 3,000 students, teachers, and researchers, and others in Clark County participated in outdoor education programs.
- Approximately 300 residents were recruited to become cultural site stewards to monitor more than 400 archaeological sites in Clark County.
- Nearly 4,000 active and prospective volunteers were recruited to serve as Southern Nevada public land volunteers.
- An anti-litter messaging campaign was created, reaching nearly 250,000 residents.
- More than 6,700 acres were inventoried or monitored and 96 newly discovered archaeological sites were documented on Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Parashant National Monument.
- More than 750 miles of federal lands in Clark County were surveyed for invasive, exotic plant species and over 600,000 individual invasive plants were removed from federal lands.
- PLI coordinated and conducted the annual winter count of bald eagles on Lakes Mead and Mojave.

The Public Lands Institute was established in 2005 to work in collaboration with federal, state, and non-profit partners to create new knowledge, advance technology, improve education, and engage the community to enhance public lands stewardship. More information about the institute is available at <http://publiclands.unlv.edu>.

-30-

UNLV is a doctoral-degree granting institution with more than 28,000 students and approximately 3,300 faculty and staff. Founded in 1957, the university offers more than 220 undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees. UNLV is located on a 350-acre campus in dynamic Southern Nevada and is classified in the category of Research Universities (high research activity) by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.