

It's All About the Mussels!

By Donna Potter, Public Affairs Specialist

On April 26, 2014, the Bureau of Reclamation's Lahontan Basin Area Office Natural Resources Specialists Julia Long and Selena Werdon and Public Affairs Specialist Donna Potter participated in the annual Spring Wings Bird Festival in Fallon, Nev., with an educational booth that attracted the attention of many participants.

Children and adults alike were very interested in learning about zebra and quagga mussels and the impacts they can cause to our environment and facilities.

Children were especially thrilled to participate in an interactive "game" and experience how mussels attach



Children see firsthand how mussels easily attach to boats.

to boats while in the water. Small shells (make-believe mussels) with magnets were hidden in gravel on the bottom of trays filled with water. When the children moved the boats around, the shells stuck to the bottom of the boats. This showed the children how mussels can be transported by boats and the importance of removing them to prevent the spread of these invasive species. A display case exhibited mussel-encrusted items which included shoes, a nylon rope and a pipe.

Information on the Newlands Project, one of the first Reclamation projects, was also part of the Reclamation booth. The

Newlands Project provides irrigation water from the Truckee and Carson Rivers for about 57,000 acres of cropland in the Lahontan Valley near Fallon and bench lands near Fernley, in western Nevada.

In addition, water from about 6,000 acres of project land has been transferred to the Lahontan Valley Wetlands near Fallon. These wetlands are a designated Important Bird Area in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network. The Spring Wings Bird Festival celebrates the return of migratory waterfowl to the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge, Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribal Wetlands and other important wetlands in the Fallon Area. These wetlands receive much of their water from the Newlands Project. Festival participants also enjoyed guided birding tours of the wetlands.



A visitor examines the Newlands Project display.



Mussel-encrusted items in a display case provide an informative view.



LBAO Natural Resources Specialist Selena Werdon discusses the Newlands Irrigation Project with a visitor.



LBAO Natural Resources Specialist Julia Long describes zebra and quagga mussels and their impacts.