

Project Update January 2010

The Hughes Middle School Mitigation Site has had significant progress in 2009. Initiation of the project commenced with tamarisk and trash removal. Approximately 35,140 tamarisks were removed from the site ranging from 1 to over 5 feet in height. A total of 119 cubic yards of tamarisk have been removed. This project has had great community support and nearly all of the work was completed by volunteers in the community. Volunteers consisted of several small groups and a large community event, which had several individuals and business owners who participated. The community event was organized by the Chamber of Commerce Mesquite Leadership 2009 group, with several local sponsors that helped make this event successful. In total, 1,443 volunteer hours have contributed to the project.

The 'bowl' portion of the site has been nearly completely cleared of tamarisk and native vegetation has begun to grow successfully. Some native revegetation has begun in selective areas, with the help of graduate students from the University of Santa Barbara and community volunteers. Nearly 500 willows, cottonwoods, mesquites and acacias were planted. This initial effort will be monitored and studied, in order to study methods for future revegetation on the site.

Even with the successful efforts thus far, many tamarisk and revegetation efforts will occur over the next several years. It is anticipated that small tamarisk will continue to grow and this will require consistent maintenance, until native vegetation can become established. Many opportunities to volunteer will be available for those in the community. Those interested in participating, are encouraged to contact Elise McAllister with Partners In Conservation at (702) 219-2033 or email at picorg@mvdsl.com.