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FINAL

New hope for restoration of Colorado River wetlands



JAMES GREGG / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Border Patrol Agent Eric Anderson maneuvers through an area referred to as "Hunter's Hole" on the Colorado River near San Luis, Ariz. The area is notorious for being dangerous and difficult to patrol because of the thick-growth vegetation, making it difficult for agents to see what's coming across the border.

Dreary area shelters smugglers, bandits, hampers U.S. agents

By Brady McCombs
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

The 23 miles of Colorado River bed that straddles the U.S.-Mexican border near Yuma has eroded over the years into a virtual wasteland.

Thick, invasive vegetation has overtaken the riverbed, robbing Border Patrol agents of visibility and creating ideal cover for smugglers and bandits. The only water comes from leaks in

an upstream dam or from rainfall, eliminating crucial habitat for endangered birds and other wildlife.

There is new hope, though, that a small stretch of this grim wetlands will be transformed into a mini-oasis thanks to a restoration plan that has earned approval from both environmentalists and the U.S. Border Patrol.

The project — estimated to cost \$7 million to \$9 million — would clear harmful non-native vegetation and

See WETLANDS, A4

On StarNet: Find more coverage of border issues in the blog "Working the Line" at go.azstarnet.com/borderblog.



SOURCES: Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area; U.S. Border Patrol 9/20/07 KORI RUMORE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

New CPS policy: Heed court directives

Agency: Custody-case rule not linked to Payne kids

By Josh Brodesky
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Child Protective Services is now requiring its investigators to check court records for all cases involving custody disputes and not to take action that might conflict with pre-existing court orders.

Officials with the state agency said the change was not prompted by the death of Ariana Payne and the presumed death of her brother Tyler, which came after a court order granting custody to the children's mother was ignored by Tucson CPS workers and the police.

The policy change, and others, went into effect Wednesday. CPS workers were notified of it in a mass e-mail on Tuesday.

CPS caseworkers are now required to "make efforts to confirm and obtain copies of orders restricting or denying custody," says the e-mail from Ken Deibert, deputy director of the Arizona Department of Economic Security. The new rules also require that workers not make a child placement that "in any way conflicts with the order."

The new policy comes about seven months after the case of 4-year-old Ariana and 5-year-old Tyler was made public. Documents have shown that CPS workers and Tucson police did not follow a court order that gave the children's mother, Jamie Hallam, sole

See CPS, A4

On StarNet: Read in-depth coverage of crime and safety issues at azstarnet.com/crime

Most marriages don't last 25 years: new data

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Don't stock up on silver-anniversary cards. More than half the Americans who might have celebrated their 25th wedding anniversaries since 2000 were divorced, separated or widowed before reaching that milestone, according to the latest census survey, released Wednesday.

For the first time at least since World War II, women and men who married in the late 1970s had a less than even chance of still being married 25 years later.

"We know that somewhere between 40 percent and 50 percent of marriages dissolve," said Barbara Risman, executive officer of the Council on Contemporary Families, a research group. "Now, when people marry, everyone wonders: Is this one of those marriages that will be around for a while?"

But David Blankenhorn, president of the Institute for American Values, a marriage research and advocacy group, said he was struck that the percentage of people who celebrated their 15th anniversary had declined. "This seems to be saying more recent marriages are more fragile," he said.

About 80 percent of first marriages that took place

See MARRIAGE, A4

There's no shortage of flu shots this time around

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — After years of shortages and confusion, this fall promises plenty of flu vaccine to go around — up to 132 million doses, more than the nation has ever produced.

The ample supplies have the government urging vaccinations not just for people at highest risk of dying from influenza, but for anyone who wants to avoid a week of aching misery.

"Flu is a formidable foe," Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Wednesday. "It is not an illness we should be complacent about."

But new CDC data show only a fraction of people who need flu shots the most get them, including just one in five babies and toddlers. And there's wide

See FLU SHOTS, A4

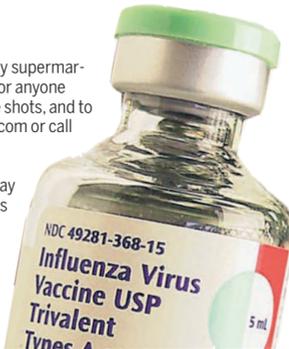
On StarNet: Read more news and information about the flu at go.azstarnet.com/flu.

IF YOU GO

The Mollen clinics — held at Fry's and Food City supermarkets and CVS pharmacies — opened this week for anyone age 4 and older. For more information about the shots, and to find a clinic near you, visit www.mollenflushots.com or call 1-602-277-3588.

The Maxim Health System clinics — at Walgreens, Wal-Mart, Osco Drug, Costco and Safeway stores — open Sept. 29. For information on dates and locations, go to www.findaflushot.com

Walk-in shot clinics for children only — including those as young as 6 months — are now scheduled by the Pima County Health Department. Call 243-7797 for dates and locations.



WEATHER, C8

Mostly sunny
High 92 / Low 70



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