

https://www.havasunews.com/news/trash-bag-program-returns-despite-coronavirus-threat/article_8ofd3d10-a30e-11ea-a378-e33357ace74d.html

Trash bag program returns despite coronavirus threat

BRANDON MESSICK

Today's News-Herald

May 31, 2020



The beaches of Lake Havasu are lined with posts this summer, offering trash bags.

Brandon Messick/Today's News-Herald

Budget shortfalls caused by the ongoing coronavirus crisis threatened the Lake Havasu Marine Association's waste bag program this year, but last-minute donations by the organization's benefactors have helped maintain the program throughout the summer.

More than a decade ago, Lake Havasu City's beaches had become an eyesore. With discarded waste lining the shore and coastal waters reduced to dumpsites for bags of trash and even entire heavy appliances, the Marine Association's waste bag program began as

an effort to curb littering and beautify Havasu's greatest natural resource. A lack of funding nearly prevented those efforts from continuing this year.

"It was because of the coronavirus," said Marine Association President Alan Oleson. "People and businesses who were normally didn't have the money to offer for the program."

The waste bag program is typically funded through the Marine Association's annual Sand & Water Expo, at Lake Havasu State Park. The event was canceled this year due to coronavirus concerns, depriving the organization of about 60% of its annual funding, according to Oleson.

"We managed to get some late money from vendors who wanted to help," Oleson said. "Desert Land Group (and Havasu Riviera Marina LLC) really came through for us ... we're deeply appreciative for their help. We couldn't get by without them. Without donations like this, we couldn't survive."

According to Oleson, the waste bag program requires as much as \$18,000 per year to maintain. The cost includes not only the bags themselves, but replacement posts and plates to identify them throughout the Lake Havasu region.

"So many people are coming to the lake right now," Oleson said. "And not all our California and Nevada people are cleaning up their messes. We couldn't believe how much trash people left on Memorial Day. We'll be getting the bags here by June ... everything worked out, but it's been a long, slow process."

Desert Land Group was a contributing sponsor for the program last year as well, and representative Mychal Gorden says its an undertaking needed by the Havasu community.

"With the amount of traffic we have on the lake, it's important for us to support efforts that keep our beaches and community clean, and keep things beautiful for the future," Gorden said.

Brandon Messick

Reporter

