



U.S. Forest Service Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest



SPRING MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

June 2006

Issue 2

Landscape Assessment Funding

This project is funded by the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA). The Act allows the Bureau of Land Management to sell public lands surrounding the Las Vegas Valley. A portion of revenue derived for the land sales is designated to implement the Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), which is managed by the Clark County Desert Conservation Program. The purpose of the MSHCP is long-term conservation and recovery of natural habitats and native species, and the orderly and beneficial use of land. The Clark County Desert Conservation Program approved project funding. They also are responsible for reviewing project progress.

Mailing Address:
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
4701 N. Torrey Pines
Las Vegas, NV 89130
Phone number:
(702) 515-5400

Update

Over the last year, the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA) achieved several successes on gathering information to support the Landscape Assessment. Forest Service employees, consultants and contractors collected and compiling existing information pertaining to the Spring Mountains NRA's plant and animal species; vegetation; soils; water; geology; cultural sites; historic uses; and recreation needs, uses and experiences.

These efforts resulted in the following ten information packed reports, studies, and maps:

- **Biological Information Assessment**
- **Areas of High Biodiversity**
- **Impact to Species and Habitats**
- **Physical Data**
- **Soil Survey**
- **Social Science Data**
- **Visitor Use Monitoring**
- **Mapping of Fire Occurrences**
- **Transportation Study**
- **Facilities Master Plan**

These reports are providing a wealth of knowledge for the analysis. They also are helping the Forest Service understand the NRA's special resources and uses.

The Forest Service is conducting the Landscape Assessment to evaluate and analyze the biological, social, and physical elements of the Spring Mountains NRA. The assessment is focusing on the following two issues:

- **Species and Habitat Protection**
- **Recreation and Human Uses**

Landscape Assessment outcomes will include management recommendations and strategies for future projects. Ultimately, it will assist the Forest Service in managing native species and habitat conservation, while providing recreation opportunities.



Timeline

The Spring Mountains NRA is happy to report that the Landscape Assessment recently initiated the final and most important stage, the analysis. The Landscape Assessment will be completed by winter 2007. Thereafter, management recommendations will be refined, a citizen guide will be created and an open house will be held to display the findings and outcomes.



Process

The Landscape Assessment Team adopted the "Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale" process to conduct the Landscape Assessment.

The process includes:

- **Characterization** - Identifying physical, biological, and human processes or features that effect the ecosystem
- **Issues and Key Questions** - Determining key factors, issues, and core questions that will be analyzed during the analysis
- **Current Conditions** - Documenting information about the NRA's current conditions, which are relevant to the issues and key questions
- **Reference Conditions** - Explaining how the NRA changed over time as a result of human influences and natural disturbances
- **Synthesis and Interpretation - (WE ARE HERE)** Comparing the NRA's current conditions with the reference conditions, explaining differences and why they occur, and evaluating and analyzing interactions between human uses and species.
- **Recommendations** - Using all the information and findings, develop recommendations, for management actions that promote native species and habitat conservation, while providing recreation opportunities.



Forest Service, USDA

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Las Vegas, NV 89130

TO:

Key Questions

The Landscape Assessment Team developed seven key questions to focus and/or drive the analysis. The answers to the following questions will assist in identifying management recommendations and strategies.

- How do recreation activities affect key species and habitats? Which types and locations of recreation activities are having more substantial effects on species and habitats?
- How does current fire management affect key species and habitats compared to historical fire patterns?
- How is development affecting key species and habitats? Which types and locations of development are having a more substantial effect on species and habitats?
- How are non-native species affecting key species and habitats? Which are having more substantial effects on species and habitats?
- How have natural and human modification of hydrologic and stream channel systems affected key species and habitats?
- How does current agency management direction affect the availability and diversity of recreation opportunities on the Spring Mountains NRA?
- What potential strategies would be most effective in providing for recreation opportunities while maintaining species viability?

How Can I Stay Informed?

Landscape Assessment Website

Would you like to learn more about the Landscape Assessment? If so, please visit our website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r4/htnf/districts/smnra/landscapeassessment.shtml>

The Landscape Assessment website contains detailed information about the project, process, Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, other NRA projects, photos, and much more.

There also will be one additional newsletter distributed near the end of the assessment.

If you have any questions or comments on the Landscape Assessment or would like to be added to the mailing list please contact Beth Moore at (702) 839-5567 or send an email to:
smnra_landscape_assessment@fs.fed.us

Thank You!

