

**Protection of Natural Treasures Power Point Presentation**  
**Stephanie Phillips, Deputy Forest Supervisor**  
**Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest**  
**11/7/2005**

1. Hello and thank you, Chairwomen and committee members, for inviting me to speak to you about the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (NRA). My name is Stephanie Phillips and I am the Deputy Forest Supervisor for the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.
2. Map of Spring Mountains NRA
3. The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the agency responsible for overseeing the entire 316,000-acre Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. The area was designated a National Recreation Area in 1993 by Congress to recognize the unique attributes and special qualities of the area. The enabling legislation set forth three purposes, which have set the management direction for the NRA.
4. These purposes are to preserve the values contributing to public enjoyment and biological diversity,
5. Ensure appropriate conservation and management of natural and recreation resources, and
6. Provide and develop public recreation opportunities for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
7. We interpret the act as placing equal emphasis on both the recreation resources and on the natural resources, values, and biological diversity.
8. Some of the values that contribute to public enjoyment are the spectacular scenery, historic structures, cultural and spiritual places, springs and water, wildlife, a variety of ecosystems, and a great diversity of vegetation.
9. Mt. Charleston is most certainly the best-known portion of the Spring Mountains NRA.

It is a popular place where southern Nevadans go in the summertime to escape the heat, and partake in activities in natural settings that are not available in the Las Vegas valley. In the wintertime, they go to play in the snow.

10. Managing a spectacular National Recreation Area only 30 minutes from the Las Vegas strip, while exciting, is also challenging.

EXHIBIT C Treasures	Document consists of 7 pages.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire document provided.	
<input type="checkbox"/> A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775/684-6827) or e-mail <a href="mailto:library@lcb.state.nv.us">library@lcb.state.nv.us</a> .	
	Meeting Date: 11/07/05

The booming growth in Las Vegas does contribute to increased visitation on the NRA. There are 1.6 million people at our doorstep.

And Las Vegas is getting closer -- Kyle Gateway Community, located at the intersection of Highway 95 and Kyle Canyon Road, is a 1,700 acre tract of land. The area is being developed and within five-to-ten years, 25,000 people will be living in this area. The Kyle Gateway Community is only a few miles from the Spring Mountains NRA.

11. The Spring Mountains NRA becomes more popular each year as new people move into the Las Vegas valley and as the 37 million tourists visiting the area hear about this remarkable forest in the desert.

Most visitors to the NRA are local, repeat users, very urban, and expect easy access to National Forest System lands.

The Forest Service has a long tradition of providing settings for all types of recreational activities, however, the rapid increase of visitors to the NRA has increased impacts to the resources, and resulted in overcrowded camping facilities, littering and sanitation problems, traffic congestion, and more threat of wildfire.

To meet the challenge of increasing visitation the Forest Service -- and the other Federal Land Management agencies in Southern Nevada -- will need to be creative in finding new ways of doing business.

12. The Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act (SNPLMA) has been the greatest influence in enhancing our ability to meet the challenges we face.

13. SNPLMA has provided the funding for:

- acquiring sensitive lands,
- capital improvement construction and reconstruction projects,
- developing the Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, and developing
- Conservation Initiatives such as an anti-litter campaign and hiring more law enforcement officers.

14. A remarkable aspect of the Spring Mountains NRA is that it is home to 23 species found no where else.

To help guide us in protecting rare and sensitive plants and animals on the NRA, the Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and State of Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources voluntarily came together to develop the Conservation Agreement.

The Conservation Agreement was signed in 1998 and lists 165 actions to be taken by the Forest Service to ensure a balance between recreation opportunities and species protection.

Most of the 57 rare and sensitive species are known to occur in Upper Kyle and Upper Lee Canyons, which is where most of the recreation activities occur.

15. To provide the balance between recreation and species, we are actively pursuing opportunities to develop new facilities away upper Kyle and Lee Canyons.

One of the more exciting projects underway in the Mt Charleston area is the Middle Kyle Recreation and Administration Complex. This project is funded with SNPLMA capital improvement dollars, and is a direct result of our ability to purchase the Alan Nell golf course property.

This will be a destination facility – our objective is to have visitors stop and spend the day recreating here as opposed to going into upper Kyle and Lee Canyons, where much of the traffic congestion occurs and where rare and sensitive species thrive.

Our current plans call for:

- Several hundred camping sites,
- Trails for hiking, biking, equestrian, and OHV
- A parking facility for over 700 vehicles, and
- A central hub for a shuttle system.

There are also plans for a joint administrative and fire facility with NDF and Clark County Fire, which could enhance our ability to provide a coordinated response to wildfire in the area.

There are still many details to iron-out, but we plan on breaking ground for the facilities in summer 2007.

16. At the same that we are in the process of improving all of the all of the existing facilities in Kyle and Lee canyons and Deer Creek.

Our existing facilities are old, show signs of use, do not meet today's standards for people with disabilities, nor provide enough space for use by large groups (which is very much in demand).

To date we have completed a few reconstruction projects-- most notably the Fletcher View Campground. Our goal is to redesign, reconstruct all of our facilities within the next few years.

17. Litter and desert dumping has been a huge problem for all of the federal land management agencies. Specifically the litter problem at Mt Charleston has been the subject of several local news reports. In response we are developing an Anti-litter Program, which is also funded by SNPLMA monies.

In 2005, 22,000 pounds (or 11 tons) of litter was removed from the Mt Charleston area. However, collecting trash is not the answer. We need long term solutions that address changing public behavior. Currently, we are working with University of Nevada Las Vegas on a media campaign to change behaviors. We hope to model this campaign after other successful state programs.

18. Nationwide, driving for pleasure is always one of the top activities on National Forest System lands. People want to take leisurely drives in a scenic setting such as the NRA. Currently most of this activity occurs in the Mt Charleston Area.

More than 1.9 million persons visit the Spring Mountains NRA each year. About 90% travel Highway 157, which is the Kyle Canyon Road. This number is expected to increase to 4 million by the year 2015.

We would like to provide more opportunities for this activity, away from Kyle and Lee Canyons, and the Deer Creek Highway.

19. On weekends and holidays Kyle and Lee Canyons are extremely congested with traffic. Last New Year's Day over 6,600 cars crowded State Highway 157 in Kyle Canyon.

The Federal Highways Administration recently completed the Spring Mountains NRA Forest Highway Transportation Study. This study address issues and identifies short and long term solutions. Implementing most of these solutions will require the cooperation of multiple agencies.

While the Forest Service manages the land and resources, NDOT is responsible for the three major highways in the Mt Charleston area, and NHP, LV Metro, and Forest Service share responsibility for enforcement.

We look forward to working with Federal Highways Administration, NDOT, and the other agencies in implementing the recommendations made in the Transportation Study.

20. A situation associated with driving for pleasure is the need for more roadside sanitation facilities. Currently, the Forest Service has 37 restroom facilities located at 13 sites in Kyle and Lee Canyons and Deer Creek Highway.

Almost all restroom facilities are part of campgrounds or picnic areas. Our concessionaires are responsible for the maintenance.

We can use SNPLMA funding to construct more facilities; however, we cannot use SNPLMA funding for operations and maintenance. Therefore, we have avoided developing roadside facilities due to the lack of funding to cover the cost of operations and maintenance. Most of these facilities would occur in the NDOT right of way.

My question to NDOT would be – is there an opportunity to work together to provide more facilities for the public? The FS can construct the restrooms if NDOT would be willing to cover the operations and maintenance

21. An incredibly important topic for all of us and especially for those having homes on Mt Charleston is “Vegetation Health and the Risk of Wildfire”. We have many inquiries about the dead tree on the Spring Mountains NRA. People are concerned that the dead trees would contribute to the fire hazard.

In the past, fire was an important component of the ecosystem on the Spring Mountains NRA. Excluding fire for many years has stressed these ecosystems making the trees vulnerable to insect attacks.

To reverse the trend we need to both remove trees through thinning and reintroduce fire in the appropriate locations.

22. Protecting the public and the communities within the Spring Mountains NRA from wildfire is our top priority. This is where we focus our efforts in reducing fuels and the threat of fire.

The Nevada Fire Safe Council recently completed a fire risk assessment for Clark County. Of the seven communities that were ranked as high to extreme fire hazard by the assessment, six are located within the Spring Mountains NRA. Kyle and Lee Canyons are among those rated as extreme fire hazard communities.

The best defense is to take preventive measures prior to wildland fires occurring. This can be done by creating fuel breaks around private property. To be effective, these preventive measures need to occur on both private and National Forest System lands.

We are using the fire risk assessment as guidance for conducting 3,000 acres of fuel breaks on the NRA. This will be done in coordination with Nevada Department of Forestry and the Nevada Fire Safe Council.

The local Fire Safe Council has been invaluable at working with the Mt Charleston community to increase the homeowner's awareness of fire risks and what they can do to keep their homes safe.

23. Three thousand acres of fuel breaks will involve cutting many trees and result in creating tons of wood fiber. We do not want to leave the wood fiber in the forest, since it can become a fire hazard. We are very interested in finding beneficial ways of utilizing the wood.

Nevada Department of Forestry is already looking at the Mt Charleston area as a potential showcase for utilizing the wood as alternative energy sources, such as the fuels for schools program. We are in the early stages of discussion with NDF on this topic.

24. Senator Ensign, at the request of the Mt Charleston Visitor Use Task Force, recently secured \$500,000 earmark for the Forest Service to create a comprehensive "Early Warning System" for fires and avalanches on the Spring Mountains NRA.

The Visitor Use Taskforce is a grass roots group of Mt Charleston residents. They meet regularly with the various agencies that have jurisdictional responsibilities in the Mt Charleston area to explore solutions for some of the issues.

This system will be very important if evacuating communities during wildland fires is necessary. Later this week, we are meeting with the Nevada Department of Emergency Management to see how they might assist us in developing and implementing a comprehensive system.

25. This is just a sample of the many projects underway on the NRA. There are still many challenges ahead of us that will require creative solutions, strong partnerships, and good relationships with federal, state, and local governments.

We will continue to strive for a balance between recreation and species needs.

I am very grateful for the support and cooperation we have received from the Nevada agencies. They have been willing to work with us, to reduce fuels, fight wildfire, control traffic, and protect wildlife species and other resources.

26. Once again I would like to thank you for providing this speaking opportunity. Are there any questions?

