

Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act  
Special Account Reserve Request  
Conservation Initiatives Category

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument:  
Education, Engagement and Resource Protection

Contact Person:  
Jennifer Haley  
Tule Springs Fossil Beds National  
Monument  
National Park Service  
702-293-8939 (office)  
702-379-5578 (cell)  
702-293-8925 (fax)  
[Jennifer\\_haley@nps.gov](mailto:Jennifer_haley@nps.gov)

Requested Amount: \$327,234

Approval: Patrick Gubbins  
Acting Superintendent, Lake Mead NRA  
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## **I. Purpose Statement**

This project will result in increased resource protection, visitor services, and connection with the community for the newly established Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument (TUSK), a new unit of the National Park Service (NPS). This project will be managed by the NPS and in conjunction with initial contingency funding from the NPS will result in the development of 1) visitor education and use materials such as kiosks, signs, maps and brochures 2) site protection through additional fencing, fencing repairs and NPS presence 3) a meaningful and sustainable volunteer program aimed at improving the understanding, quality, and protection of the resources within the national monument.

## **II. Background**

The Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument was established on December 19, 2014 with the transfer of lands from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to the National Park Service (NPS) with the passage of the Defense Authorization Bill. The purpose of this NPS unit is to “conserve, protect, interpret, and enhance for the benefit of present and future generations, the unique and nationally important paleontological, scientific, educational, and recreational resources and values of the land...”

Scientists have long known that the Tule Springs area contains large concentrations of paleontological resources. The first recorded paleontological exploration of the area occurred in 1933 by the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Excavations in the 1950s and 1960s revealed abundant large animal fossils such as mammoths, camels, bison, ground sloths, and exotic fauna such as the giant North American lion. A 1962-63 excavation of the area involved massive bulldozed trenches. The investigation became the first site in the United States where scientists applied the newly discovered technique of radiocarbon dating. In 1979 the area encompassing these trenches was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) for its historic significance in scientific research using radiocarbon dating methods. The monument is also home to rare desert species including the Las Vegas bearpoppy, Merriam's bearpoppy, Las Vegas buckwheat, and habitat for the endangered desert tortoise.

The Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is the only unit in the National Park System that is specifically dedicated to the preservation of Pleistocene fossils. Fossils from the Pleistocene (ice age) help to tell an important story regarding climate change and the extinction of late Pleistocene mega-fauna (mammoth, saber tooth cat, camel, horse, sloth, etc.). The composition of the modern fauna and flora are a reflection of those animals which survived the last ice age and now dominate the North American landscape, including our nation's parks.

While under the stewardship of the BLM and with the assistance of the community, recognition of the importance of the site and many initial measures to protect the site were taken including educational programming and post and cable fencing. However, much of the monument continues to be under extreme pressure from a wide variety of uses that have an impact on the important resources and visitor experience at the site. These include uncontrolled off-highway vehicle use, a proliferation of social trails, target shooting, littering and desert dumping.

Additionally, the new monument enjoys extraordinary public and local government support and interest. Consequently, action needs to be taken to engage, educate, and harness the community activities related to the site.

### **III. Need for the Project**

The Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument was established on December 19, 2014, but Congress did not allocate any funding to manage the monument, provide visitor services, or protect the extraordinary resources on the site. Although much of the southern portion of the monument has been fenced, there remain many areas of extensive impact and resource loss. It is imperative that work initiated by the BLM continue in order to protect the resources, educate visitors about appropriate uses of the site as a unit of the NPS, and engage the community in volunteer protection and education efforts. In addition, the change from 43 C.F.R. (governing the management of BLM lands) to 36 C.F.R. (governing the management of NPS lands) will require a period of education for the public. For example, hunting and target shooting are generally allowed on BLM lands, but not on NPS lands, on NPS lands, where dogs are allowed, they must be on a leash, collection of firewood for personal use is generally allowed on BLM lands, but not on NPS lands whose famous motto is, "Take only photographs, leave only footprints). The NPS Pacific West Region made an emergency contingency allocation of \$167,000 for FY15 to support basic startup operations but there are a number of crucial project components and work that cannot be accomplished with this basic startup funding that will be supported by this SAR request.

### **IV. Project Goals**

Goals for this project are:

- a. Development and production of materials to support visitor use and education (such as kiosks, signs, maps, website, social media, and brochures),
- b. Provision of site protection through additional fencing, fencing repairs and NPS presence and
- c. Development and management of a meaningful and sustainable volunteer program aimed at improving the understanding, quality, and protection of the resources within the national monument.

### **V. Relationship to Executive Committee Values**

This project supports the Executive Committee values through a) increasing the protection of the monument through NPS presence, volunteer projects, and fence repairs and installation; b) providing outdoor recreation and educational opportunities at the monument, and c) fostering shared support through the development of a long-term volunteer program. This project will capitalize on the urban setting of the monument to connect residents and visitors with the site through volunteerism and educational programming.

### **VI. Project timeframe in years and months**

The project timeframe is a maximum of 2 years. (It is likely that the project could not be funded until July of 2015 at the earliest and even if NPS receives funding for this park in the 2016 budget, funds will likely not be available for expenditure until January of 2017). Project funds will be used for initial resource protection and visitor service activities to allow for immediate action in the newly designated monument before permanent funding is made available. (The NPS understands that while TUSK may submit for regular funding in Round 16 of SNPLMA, it understands that this SAR request is the only one that will be recommended by the Executive Committee for funding to the Secretary of the Interior).

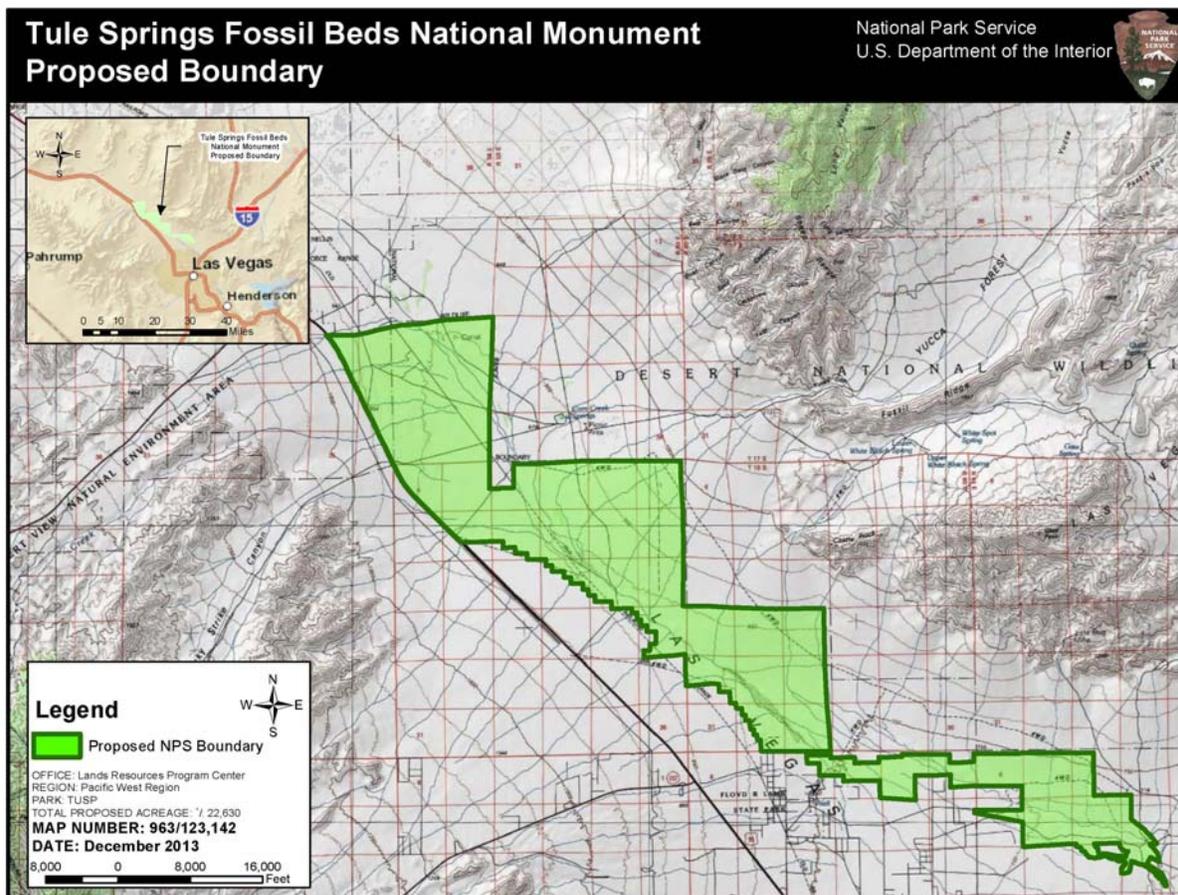
## VII. Location of the project, including required maps

The monument encompasses 22,650 acres located in the northwest Las Vegas Valley of Clark County Nevada and north of the greater Las Vegas Metropolitan area. It is bordered by Desert National Wildlife Refuge and the Clark County Shooting Park to the north, Nellis Air Force Base to the east and northwest, the Las Vegas Paiute Indian Reservation and US Highway 95 to the west, and privately owned residential areas of the cities of Las Vegas and North Las Vegas to the south with Corn Creek to the east (see Map 1).

The approximate coordinate for the new Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is: 36°22'N, 115°18'N. This coordinate approximates the center of the linear monument boundary and is rounded to the nearest minute for clarity.

The monument is in Nevada's 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District.

Map 1. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument Proposed Boundary



## **VIII. Project deliverables**

### **Primary Deliverables**

#### ***Visitor Education and Use***

- a. Identify two to three appropriate visitor access points to the monument
- b. Produce and develop 2-3 NPS “Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument” signs,
- c. Design and manufacture 2-3 kiosks for access at these locations,
- d. Develop educational brochures and visitor maps for local distribution reaching 5000 people and
- e. Continue development of website, social media and other media reaching 5000 people.
- f. Lead education tours
- g. Issue and Administer Special Use Permits

#### ***Site Protection***

- a. Establish NPS presence on site by hiring one term (non-law enforcement) park ranger and one term volunteer project manager.
- b. Check on and repair fences contingent on need.
- c. Identify locations for new fences and install up to ½ mile of fence with funds provided by this project. Additional fence will be installed as possible working with partners.
- d. Educate visitors on appropriate use and resource values at site by contacting visitors on site.

#### ***Site Stewardship and Education Volunteer Program***

- a. Identify site protection and education programs that can be managed by volunteers,
- b. Identify four lead volunteers,
- c. Establish volunteer goals and work-plan,
- d. Purchase necessary equipment for clean-ups and fence repair and installation,
- e. Develop appropriate volunteer education talking points, curriculum, and program schedules and
- f. Implement volunteer lead projects and educational activities providing 30 programs over the course of the project.

### **Anticipated Deliverables**

- a. A final report will be developed describing project completion metrics and processes.

### **Standard Deliverables**

Standard deliverables include:

- NEPA if required for volunteer projects
- Agreements with volunteer and/or partner organizations

## **IX. Relevant performance measures**

**Outcome:** Increase visitor awareness and appreciation for the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument through educational programs and products. Achieving the following outputs will accomplish this outcome:

- Output: Identify two to three appropriate visitor access points to the monument and produce NPS Monument signs and kiosks for these locations
  - **Performance Measure 06-** 2 to 3 NPS Monument signs fabricated and installed, 2-3 kiosks designed, fabricated and installed
- Output: Develop education brochures and visitor maps
  - **Performance Measure 06-** 5000 people reached through educational/informational brochures and visitor maps
- Output: Continue development of website, social media and other media
  - **Performance Measure 06-**5000 contacts through social and other media made

**Outcome:** Increase Site Protection of the Tule Springs National Monument through fence repair and installation and NPS on-site visitor information and education. Achieving the following outputs will accomplish this outcome:

- Output: Establish on-site educational interactions
  - **Performance Measure 05-**1000 contacts made on-site
- Output: Repair fence and install fence
  - **Performance Measure H15-**1/2 mile of new fence installed and fence repaired as necessary (there remains a total of 8 miles of fencing required in order to complete all necessary fencing).

**Outcome:** Increase site protection and awareness of the Tule Springs National Monument through the development of an active and sustainable volunteer and site stewardship program. Achieving the following outputs will accomplish this outcome:

- Output: Develop Volunteer Work Plan that outlines educational and resource management projects, schedules and safety processes
  - **Performance Measure O12-**1 Volunteer Work/Safety Plan developed
- Output: Implement volunteer programming in education and resource management
  - **Performance Measure 07-** 30 Educational or resource management volunteer programs provided during the course of the project.

## **X. A description of the project implementation process**

The project will be implemented through the following steps:

### **Year 1- Quarter 4 (July 2015-September 2015)**

- Hire Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator (Term)
- Hire non-law enforcement/Outreach Park Ranger (Term)
- Identify office space
- Purchase necessary equipment including computers, radios, and cell phones
- Lease for vehicles

### **Year 2- Quarter 1 (October 2014-December 2015)**

- Identify 2-3 appropriate visitor access points
- Produce and install 2-3 NPS “Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument” signs

- Identify site protection and education programs that can be managed by volunteers
- Identify four lead volunteers
- Develop necessary volunteer or partner agreements
- Purchase necessary equipment for clean-ups and fence repair and installation
- Develop appropriate volunteer education talking points, curriculum, and program schedules
- Develop volunteer safety plan
- Design kiosks
- Establish NPS Park Ranger presence on site
- Check on and repair fences and boundary signs
- Educate visitors on appropriate use and resource values at site
- Begin regular monitoring of illegal uses to determine restoration, fencing, and volunteer project needs

**Year 2- Quarter 2 (January 2016-March 2016)**

- Manufacture and install kiosks
- Develop and produce visitor materials including a map and brochure
- Produce and distribute visitor map and brochure
- Continue NPS presence on site
- Check on and repair fences
- Identify locations for new fences and secure additional funding if necessary
- Educate visitors on appropriate use and resource values at site
- Establish volunteer goals and work plan
- Advertise volunteer education and project activities
- Begin regular education and work project schedule

**Year 2-Quarter 3 (April 2016-June 2016)**

- Continue NPS presence on site
- Check on and repair fences
- Educate visitors on appropriate use and resource values at site
- Advertise volunteer education and project activities
- Continue regular education and work project schedule

**Year 2-Quarter 4 (July 2016-September 2016)**

- Continue NPS presence on site
- Check on and repair fences
- Install additional fence as needed
- Educate visitors on appropriate use and resource values at site
- Advertise volunteer education and project activities
- Develop volunteer talking points and curriculum
- Continue regular education and work project schedule

- Working with partners, develop sustainability plans for volunteer programs including site steward and education programs based on best practices learned in previous quarters
- Write-up and share sustainability plans for volunteer activities including curriculum, schedules, project safety plans

### **Year 3- Quarter 1 (October 2016-December 2016)**

- Implement sustainability plans as determined above
- Project Close-Out

#### **XI. Level of readiness for project implementation**

The level of readiness to implement this project is high. Three staff members at the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE) have taken the lead to start-up the monument. In addition, the Pacific West Regional (PWR) office has dedicated staff in support of start-up and an interim superintendent (the first official staff member) will be onsite by late March, 2015. Although all current staff involved in the start-up of the monument are participating as a collateral duty, the effective start-up of the monument is a very high priority for LAKE and the NPS Pacific West Region. Additionally, there are many community members and local government staffs and officials ready to assist as requested.

#### **XII. Relationship to previous phases and anticipated future phases**

There have not been any previous phases to this project. A Round 16 Request will be prepared to implement the planning activities for the park.

### XIII. Proposed Project Budget

Budget Item	Year1 (July 2015-September 2015)	Year 2-3 (October 2015-December 2016)
<b>Personnel</b>		
Park Ranger (GL-025-09/05 including 32% benefits)	\$17,828	\$89,139
Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator (GS-025-09/05 9 months including 32% benefits)	\$17,828	\$89,139
<b>Vehicles</b>		
2 Vehicles @ \$500/month each	\$3,000	\$15,000
<b>Supplies and Materials</b>		
Patrol Vehicle Equipment	\$0	\$0
Radio/Computers	\$6,000	
Cell Phones	\$300	\$1,500
Monument Signs	\$5,000	
Clean-up and Education Materials	\$5,000	
Volunteer supplies/uniforms/gas reimbursement other	\$2,500	\$2,500
Fence Construction/Repair Supplies	\$10,000	\$45,000
2-3 Kiosks	\$7,500	
Printing of Visitor Materials	\$5,000	\$5,000
<b>Total</b>	\$79,956	\$247,278
<b>Grand Total \$327,234</b>		

A combination of funding sources will be utilized to start-up operations at the new monument. The funding strategy by Fiscal Year is listed below:

**FY15 NPS/PWR Contingency Request-** Fills 2 key leadership positions (Superintendent and Public Affairs/Visitor Services Lead) with vehicles, supplies and materials. Focus on basic monument start up and transition from BLM, establishment of an advisory council as directed in legislation, community outreach, management, and basic visitor services. The Superintendent and Public Affairs staff will begin coordination with the Monument Advisory Council.

**FY 15 LAKE, NPS Pacific West Regional Office (PWR), and other NPS parks in the Mojave Network.** In-kind contributions including park management oversight, resource specialists, visitor services, graphic design, land and right-of-way expertise, volunteer management, maintenance, and lands specialists will be provided until such time that the monument is staffed at a level to provide these services. Southern Nevada Agency Partnership (SNAP) agencies (BLM, USFWS, FS, and NPS) will work together to provide law enforcement until permanent funding is secured for the monument for this purpose. Additionally, BLM will be providing expertise in cadastral surveys, right-of-way transfers, realty, and resource expertise during the initial transition period.

**FY15 SNPLMA SAR Request-** Focuses on site protection and volunteerism. Fills 1 non-LE position and SNPLMA project manager to over-see volunteer clean-up projects as well as

fencing projects and other volunteer projects as necessary. This person would also do all work regarding reporting and close-outs for the project.

**FY 16 LAKE and PWR in-kind contributions** will continue until permanent base funding is secured for the unit for basic operations.

**Round 16 SNLPMA Nomination-** Focused on Planning for the monument including implementing and planning for the monument with the Advisory Council.

**FY16 OFS Request-** Basic operational staff for the monument including Public Affairs, Interpretation and Education, Maintenance, Law Enforcement and Resource Management.

**FY17 OFS Request-** Develop based on additional projected needs of monument as identified in FY15 and FY16 including Monument Resource Management staff.

### **IX. Discuss how the proposal represents the best value option for available project**

The main cost of the proposal is salary for two years for a Project Manager/Volunteer Coordinator and a Park Ranger (Protection). These costs are essential to provide for resource protection and to capitalize on volunteer educational and resource protection projects. The resources in the new monument are under extreme pressure from inappropriate and illegal uses including dumping, littering, shooting, and uncontrolled off-highway vehicle use. It is essential that there be consistent presence on-site to initially educate visitors to appropriate uses. Although, BLM and USFWS have committed to assist with Law Enforcement, due to the size of the park, the amount of illegal activity, the shape of the monument, and the number of law enforcement staff available from these agencies, it is necessary to fund one additional ranger that will be on site 5 days per week for approximately 6 hours per day. (FWS is understaffed by 2 rangers, the FS is understaffed by 2 rangers, the BLM is understaffed by 4 rangers and the NPS, at LAKE over 45 minutes away, is understaffed by 23 rangers).

This proposal dove-tails with other funding requests, is dependent on significant in-kind contributions by the NPS, and capitalizes on volunteer activities to protect the resources, serve the visitors, and educate the public about the values and appropriate uses of the monument. In-kind staff support by the NPS is estimated to be well in excess of \$150,000 annually. Contingency funding for initial monument leadership and public affairs is estimated to be \$167,000 and \$180,000 in years 1-3. Volunteer hours are estimated to be approximately 50-100 hours per month beginning in the second quarter of this project. The value of this contribution is estimated to be \$15,000-\$30,000 annually at \$15/hour. In addition, Law Enforcement assistance will be provided by the Bureau of Land Management and the US Fish and Wildlife Service with an estimated value of \$15,000 annually and by the Lake Mead NRA up to ½ FTE (\$40,000). The Fish and Wildlife Service has also committed to provide office space estimated at a value of \$7,200 per year. Nevada State Parks has also committed to provide office space for the Monument Superintendent estimated at \$7,200 per year.

This proposal offers the best value option since the project relies heavily on in-kind contributions and volunteerism to achieve project results with the contributions conservatively estimated at \$240,000. Additionally, the two term positions filled will have multiple areas of expertise and

multiple duties including project management, public outreach and education, volunteer management, and resource protection. Each of these individuals will focus heavily on creating positive public connections through their various activities. The SNAP agencies have agreed to assist in a Service First model to monitor and protect the site resources resulting in additional value to the project. Reciprocally, the monument park ranger will be able to assist other agencies in the area if necessary.

**X. Conservation Initiatives Ranking Criteria**

The Conservation Initiative Ranking Criteria have been met as described in the nomination.

**XI. Letters or statements of support**