

# Gratitude...

to all of our partners and donors, without whom this event would not have been possible!

## Planning Partners

Clark County Fire Department  
County Commission Rural Towns Liaison  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Great Basin Institute  
Nuwuvi Working Group  
Outside Las Vegas Foundation  
Silent Heroes of the Cold War  
Southern Nevada Conservancy



Southern Nevada Conservancy



## Contributors

American Medical Response  
AmeriCorps  
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Cheyenne High School Madrigals  
Clark County Fire Department  
Clark County School District  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Great Basin Institute  
Las Vegas Area Council, Boy Scouts of America  
Nellis Air Force Base  
Nevada Division of Forestry  
Nevada Highway Patrol  
Nuwuvi Working Group  
Outside Las Vegas Foundation  
Republic Services  
Rural Towns Liaison, Clark County Commission Districts C & F  
Silent Heroes of the Cold War  
Southern Nevada Conservancy  
Southern Paiute Veterans Association Color Guard  
University Medical Center

*We recognize the tireless efforts of Senator Harry Reid and other legislators to position our partners and us for success.*

## Special thanks to our architecture and construction principals

Architecture - LGA, Inc.

Construction - West Coast Contractors of Nevada, Inc.  
Forest Service road crews performed all earthwork at the site, saving \$500,000 and five months on the project schedule.

*USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*



## Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway

# Grand Opening Celebration

*Your Journey starts here!*

Friday, May 29, 2015 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

2525 Kyle Canyon Road, Mt. Charleston, NV 89124



## Welcome!

Welcome to the Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway (SMVG) grand opening! I am delighted you could join Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest staff as our guests today to celebrate the result of many people's tireless efforts and the beginning of a new chapter in the management and operation of the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

The SMVG project began many years ago when Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funds were used to purchase the land and then fund the resources required to build this world-class public facility that serves as both a destination and portal to the greater 316,000-acre Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has been privileged to work closely with the Nuwuvi Working Group (representatives from seven Southern Paiute tribes), the Silent Heroes of the Cold War, and other partners to envision, design, and construct the SMVG complex that includes a sustainable visitor center, an educational research building, two amphitheaters, group picnic sites, and over 40 miles of adjoining new trails.

Among the elements at the SMVG site that celebrate the area's rich cultural heritage is the Seven Stones Plaza. Designed in collaboration with Nuwuvi, the plaza symbolizes these tribes' ancestral and spiritual relationship with the Spring Mountains as their creation place.

Also featured at the SMVG complex is the National Cold War Memorial, designed and built to honor all Cold War veterans, in particular the 14 Air Force crew members, Central Intelligence Agency personnel, engineers, and scientists who perished when their plane crashed on Charleston Peak in 1955. Their mission and fate remained top-secret for decades.

Thanks again for your presence that makes this event even more special! Have fun and be safe today!



**Bill Dunkelberger**  
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor

## About the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area

In southern Nevada, the Spring Mountains rise up out of the Mojave Desert to provide a forested, spring-fed oasis that offers a haven for wildlife, a sacred area for Native Americans, a cool retreat for visitors, and a vital watershed fed by numerous springs. Known locally as Mt. Charleston, the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA) offers visitors a landscape filled with panoramic snow-capped mountain peaks surrounded by desert—areas where dozens of sensitive plants and animals exist—some of which are found nowhere else in the world.

Senator Harry Reid and Senator Richard Byran introduced the legislation that ultimately led to the area's designation as a National Recreation Area in 1993. The SMNRA encompasses three Wilderness areas, houses the only ski resort in southern Nevada, and is only a short drive from downtown Las Vegas. With the Las Vegas population growing from 127,000 in 1960 to over two million in 2014, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has set aside this area to conserve natural assets that contribute to the area's biological diversity, to ensure appropriate management of these assets, and to provide public recreation opportunities for present and future generations.



## Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial

*"That America emerged victorious from the Cold War was due largely in part to those who worked in secret. Without their contributions, the Cold War could very well have had a different ending."*

—Silent Heroes of the Cold War Chairman Steve Ririe

still be a mystery today had it not been for the Boy Scout leader who in 1998 began a long and difficult journey to uncover the truth about the crash at the top of the mountain.

On November 17, 1955, at 7:25 a.m., USAF military aircraft 9068 departed from Burbank, California, with a crew, engineers, scientists, and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) personnel on a routine flight bound for Watertown, Nevada, now known as Area 51. At 8:40 a.m. the aircraft was reported missing.

Due to the super-secret nature of the work being conducted by the 14 men aboard the doomed flight, their fate remained classified for over 40 years following the crash. Also classified as top-secret was the account of those who risked their lives when they braved subzero temperatures at 11,500 feet in elevation during rescue and recovery operations on Charleston Peak.

Family and friends endured years of uncertainty following the disappearance of their loved ones—their grief lacking a true sense of closure—until Las Vegas resident and Boy Scout leader Steve Ririe succeeded in uncovering the story behind the wreckage that littered the mountain slope near the Charleston Peak summit—debris that he had seen often during decades of hiking on Mt. Charleston.



Ririe's two-year investigation involved seeking records from the USAF, National Archives, and the CIA. Eventually he found the official accident report that the CIA had declassified, released, and sent to Maxwell Air Force Base in September 1998, ironically the same month and year that Ririe had first felt compelled to research the crash. Marian Kennedy, a Las Vegas resident with a talent for finding people, helped locate the 14 families who finally learned the circumstances surrounding their loved ones' deaths. Learning the truth surfaced painful memories but offered opportunities for closure.

The families' appreciation and the encouragement of State Senator Ray Rawson drove Ririe's resolve to envision and spearhead building a memorial—not only for the 14 lost when USAF 9068 crashed but also for unknown numbers of silent heroes and their loved ones involved in similarly painful outcomes during the Cold War.

The Nevada legislature approved SJR9 asking the U.S. Congress to recognize the crash site of USAF 9068 as a Cold War-protected area and to establish a memorial. Senator Harry Reid spearheaded the effort by submitting a bill to protect the nation's Cold War sites and create the Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial.

The memorial project has been underway for 15 years. The Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial, located on the SMVG campus, was completed in 2015. In addition to being the first national Cold War memorial on National Forest System land, it is the only national memorial to the Cold War-era of its kind and the first in the state of Nevada.



# Special elements on the visitor gateway campus

## Seven Stones Plaza

One unique area at the Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway (SMVG) is the Seven Stones Plaza that celebrates indigenous people—seven Southern Paiute tribes known collectively as Nuwuvi (or “the people”)—and their long-standing ancestral relationship with their creation place in the Spring Mountains.

Developing the SMVG for the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area provided an ideal opportunity to engage the Nuwuvi Working Group (tribally-appointed representatives from the seven tribes) to tell the story of the mountains.

According to tribal elders, Nuwuvi have been a part of this landscape since the beginning of time. The land is considered sacred and treated as a close relative. The Mountain Institute (an international non-profit organization dedicated to conserving mountain ecosystems and empowering people in mountain communities) and Portland State University have worked with the Forest Service to involve Nuwuvi in strengthening their cultural ties to the Spring Mountains and providing resource-management input. The cooperative effort has also helped develop opportunities for visitors to learn about the indigenous people’s connection and stewardship of these mountains.

The collaboration between Nuwuvi and the Forest Service illustrates mutual respect and enduring appreciation for the land. This collaboration was an important aspect during the SMVG planning and design phases that sparked the development of the Seven Stones Plaza and enhanced additional Native American features within the visitor center, along interpretive trails, and in campgrounds and picnic areas.

Forest Service architecture and engineering design teams integrated the Nuwuvi Working Group’s wisdom into conceptualizing and creating the Seven Stones Plaza. The concept emerged from ethnographic research conducted by Nuwuvi Working Group members, whose interviews of Nuwuvi tribal elders and other key knowledge holders reaffirmed Nuwuvi’s strong and ongoing relationship with the Spring Mountains landscape.

The plaza includes a compelling Nuwuvi welcome statement that invites visitors to open their senses and truly experience the land. The plaza’s center stone represents *Nuwagantu* (a point in the Spring Mountains landscape), the Nuwuvi creation place. The seven stones surrounding the center stone symbolize each Southern Paiute tribe. The plaza’s meandering rain-water channels depict the rivers and trails on the landscape to reinforce the never-ending connection between each tribe and the center of the world (or center stone).



**Southern Paiutes**  
 The Chemehuevi Indian Tribe  
 Colorado River Indian Tribes  
 Las Vegas Paiute Tribe  
 The Moapa Band of Paiute Indians  
 Pahrump Paiute Tribe  
 The Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians  
 Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah

# Creation and evolution

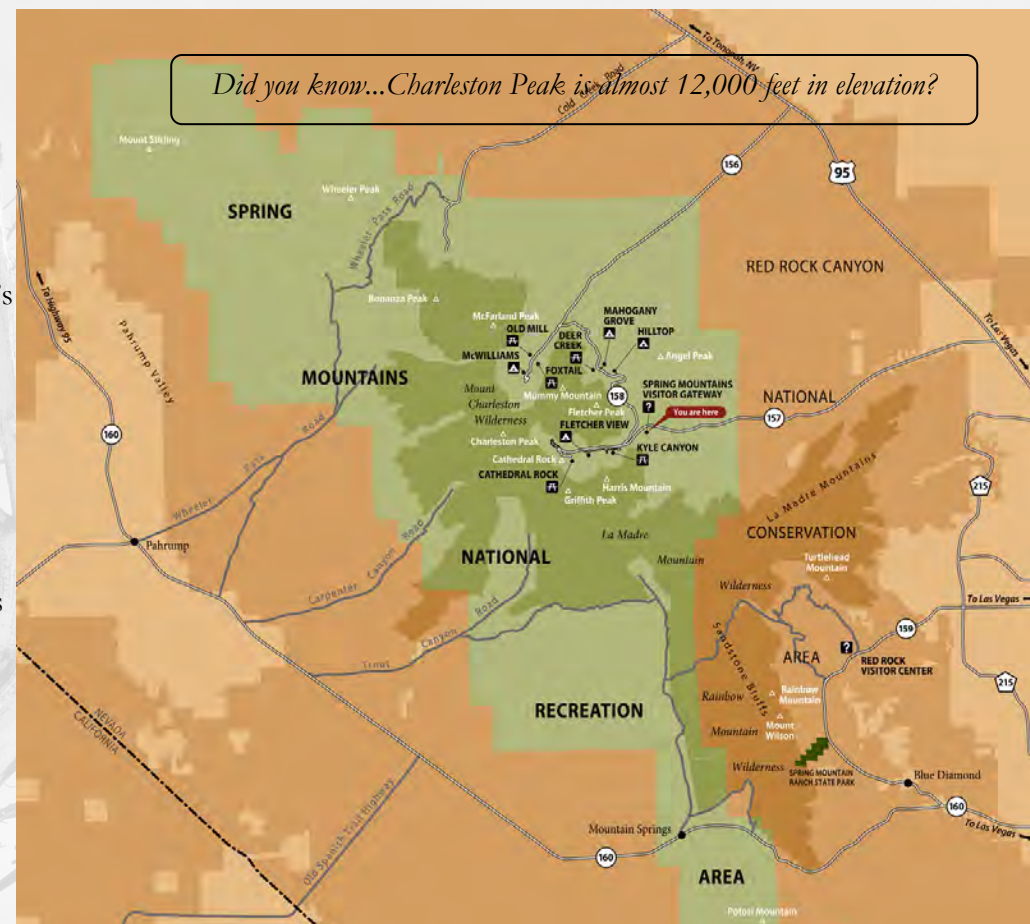
Known as the Nuwuvi (Southern Paiute) creation place, the Spring Mountains have a long and interesting history. Settlers found the high peaks to be a source of timber and minerals. Locals soon realized the mountain’s cool temperatures offered respite from the arid, often-sizzling valley climate.

Established as a Forest Reserve in 1906 by the newly formed USDA Forest Service, the area saw little development until the 1930s. Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration workers built much of the initial recreation infrastructure such as campgrounds, picnic areas, roads, and water systems, including the first ranger station in Kyle Canyon.

When World War II began, work stopped in response to the war effort. Beyond some upgrades in the 1970s, little had changed in the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area until the recent complete overhaul of most of the east-side developed recreation areas. These upgrades now provide more space for people in safer environments.



Ranger station buildings (as they looked in 1940) are still being used in Kyle Canyon today.



*Did you know...Charleston Peak is almost 12,000 feet in elevation?*

*Did you know...the SMNRA has over two dozen endemic species?*



At Foxtail Picnic Area in Lee Canyon, visitors can enjoy a new picnic shelter and interpretive sign.

## Working with nature to enhance sustainability

The design and construction of the visitor center building and other Spring Mountains Visitor Gateway (SMVG) elements demonstrate the Forest Service's commitment to a sustainable balance between the built environment and the surrounding natural environment.

At this site, new technology and ancient wisdom have been merged through architectural and engineering design into structure and form that uses natural and sustainable energy sources such as sunlight, wind, rainwater, and geothermal heat to reduce the carbon footprint related to building operations. For example, a complex geothermal heating-cooling system embedded in the floor extracts heat from the building during warm summer days and stores that heat in the ground where it can be returned to the building during cold winter days. Thermostatically controlled windows open and close automatically to help regulate the building's inside temperature, sensing the wind speed and direction as they operate in concert with the geothermal system.

### Preserving history and celebrating nature

The wood used on visitor center walls, furniture, and displays was salvaged from obsolete campground picnic tables and benches on the SMNRA. Wilderness Ranger Tim McKenzie (from the Superior National Forest in Cook, Minnesota) worked with designers and engineers to accomplish the artisan work. McKenzie, a master carpenter, and his helper painstakingly fashioned each piece of reclaimed wood to the beautiful finish seen today. A Las Vegas Centennial High School shop class helped plane each piece of wood in preparation for final crafting.

Three Bristlecone Pine stumps (ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 years old) salvaged from other spots on the SMNRA now grace the gateway complex.

Themed artwork on the complex embodies natural elements found on the SMNRA.

Collaborators envisioned the SMVG as an information hub about the greater Spring Mountains National Recreation Area (SMNRA) and a new destination for previously untapped recreation activities. This goal is reflected in the slogan, "Your journey starts here!"



A portion of the geothermal system is exposed in the visitor center floor.

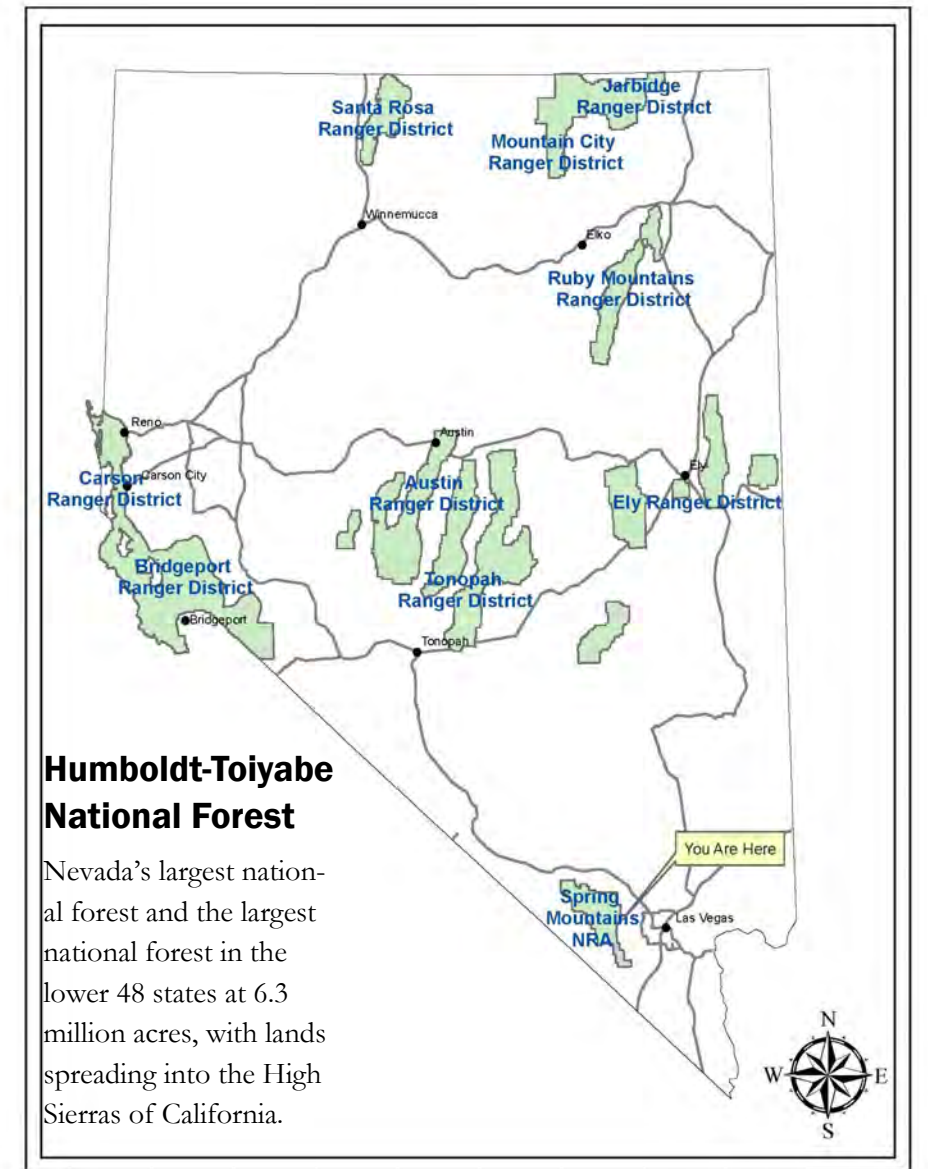
Artisan Tim McKenzie stands near visitor center paneling fabricated from obsolete picnic tables and benches from around the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area.



Visitor center exhibits tell the area's compelling stories.

### The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest...

- ◇ Known as Islands in the Sky, with mountains rising thousands of feet from the Great Basin's arid floor.
- ◇ Vast scenic landscapes and amazing year-round recreational opportunities, including one of only 19 Forest Service National Recreation Areas.
- ◇ Includes 24 Wilderness Areas—the most of any national forest.
- ◇ Rich in heritage resources, with thousands of pre-historic Native American sites and historic ghost towns dotting remote landscapes.
- ◇ Largest Forest Service range program outside of the national grasslands.
- ◇ Contains 24 wild horse and burro territories (over 50 percent of the Forest Service territories).
- ◇ Largest precious minerals program in the Forest Service and largest gold mine on National Forest System lands.
- ◇ Adjoins the largest and most culturally diverse urban areas in the Intermountain Region.



### Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Nevada's largest national forest and the largest national forest in the lower 48 states at 6.3 million acres, with lands spreading into the High Sierras of California.

### Building on the legacy

In 2004 the Forest Service purchased approximately 128 acres in Kyle Canyon with Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funds to help raise awareness about the area's unique natural features and abundant recreation opportunities. The acreage, a former golf course, is the site of the complex intended to help visitors better connect to the surrounding environment and its amazing heritage. Additional SNPLMA funds supported over 100 projects to sustain the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area's (SMNRA) biological diversity and enhance outdoor recreation activities. Significant efforts to modernize campgrounds, picnic areas, overlooks, and trailheads are noted below.

#### Other major SMNRA SNPLMA-funded projects

Cathedral Rock Trailhead and Trail Renovation

Desert View Overlook Rehabilitation

Foxtail Group Picnic Area Rehabilitation

Mahogany Grove Group Campground Rehabilitation

Cathedral Rock Picnic Area Renovation

McWilliams Campground Renovation

Kyle Canyon Picnic Area Renovation

Old Mill Picnic Area Reconstruction