



National Parks Conservation Association®
Protecting Parks for Future Generations®

Statement of Lynn Davis Program Manager, Nevada Field Office National Parks Conservation Association Before a meeting of the North Las Vegas City Council

September 1, 2010

Thank you Mayor Buck and North Las Vegas Council Members.

I am Lynn Davis, Nevada Field Office Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA). NPCA is a non-profit organization representing 325,000 members, which was organized nearly 100 years ago to assist the National Park Service in building stewardship and funding for America's treasures, our national parks.

With that perspective, it needs to be noted that creating a new unit of the National Park System is a rare and uncommon privilege. Right now, there are hundreds of proposals from communities across the country asking for specific areas and cultural resources to be included in the National Park System. The majority of these proposals will never make the cut because it takes a lot more than desire to be considered for inclusion in the National Park System. The National Park Service requires that all sites meet the rigorous criteria of national significance, suitability, and feasibility.

Tule Springs has been scientifically documented as meeting the criteria for national—and possibly international—significance. A dense population of Ice Age fossils dating back nearly 200,000 years makes this place exceptionally significant and of interest to visitors and scientists, worldwide—and worthy of National Park Service consideration.

As for meeting the other criteria of suitability and feasibility, Mayor Buck and the North Las Vegas Council have led the way. Last summer, Mayor Buck convened a pivotal meeting with the city of Las Vegas and Clark County to poll them about their interest. By last November, North Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Clark County and the Southern Nevada Paiute Tribe all passed unanimous resolutions asking Nevada's Congressional delegation to designate this area—if found suitable by the National Park Service—a national monument. Nellis Air Force Base, UNLV and several dozen citizen groups also expressed their support.

Then the hard work began, defining boundaries and figuring out just how suitable and feasible this new national park unit might be. By this spring, both North Las Vegas and Las Vegas voted on proposed boundaries for the new national monument. Other entities like Nevada State Parks, Clark County, the U.S. Air Force and citizen groups all “put some skin in” and came to agreement on how this national monument will become a reality.

This site is significant for its fossils, wildlife, and the environment. But it's also significant for the way it has been created—through an open and collaborative process. This collaboration has been noted locally and nationally. We hope these efforts can serve as an example to be both applauded and replicated by national conservation groups, urban planning organizations, and other communities working to balance preservation and conservation with changing energy needs and economic growth.

North Las Vegas deserves special thanks in all this, and special praise in making certain this park unit is developed in a way that honors what it is—a site of significance to the American public. We applaud North Las Vegas in their vote this evening to intervene in the issue of NV Energy's attempts to locate massive transmission lines within the national monument.

On July 30, 2010, the Nevada Public Utilities Commission (PUC) rejected NV Energy's request to study the idea of a transmission line in the area. We understand that NV Energy is appealing this decision—as they ask Nevada's Congressional delegation to circumvent the PUC's findings.

We believe that if a transmission line is to be located in this area, it needs proper review and that the regulatory authority for such a review lies with the Nevada Public Utilities Commission. We believe the PUC will examine projected needs, alternate routes, and the risk to Nevada Power ratepayers. We believe that renewable projects can be developed without this transmission corridor. North Las Vegas' intervention into the PUC process will underscore these points.

In closing let me say again, North Las Vegas has demonstrated leadership in creating and honoring the privilege of designating a new national park unit. We thank North Las Vegas for bringing attention to the PUC process, and supporting the vision of the community to share and preserve this special site for the nation and the world.

Thank you.