

Mission Statement

To manage the property as a natural area for the benefit of native species and for the recovery of the endangered Moapa Dace - consistent with the Southern Nevada Water Authority's commitments to the Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act funding of the property

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Warm Springs Natural Area

Like a gemstone stashed away in the upper Moapa Valley, the Warm Springs Natural Area holds the secret to the headwaters of the Muddy River. Here, five major thermal spring complexes gush from the deep carbonate aquifer and converge in tributaries before flowing into the Muddy River and on to Lake Mead. Through time, the Warm Springs Natural Area has sustained many unique species that occur here and nowhere else in the world. This area has a long history of use by humankind. Native Americans, prehistoric peoples, outlaws, and early settlers were sustained by the abundant natural resources in the area. Howard Hughes considered the property worthy of his ownership. Showgirls came from Las Vegas to sun themselves under palm-thatched cabanas, and today the Warm Springs area attracts birders, naturalists, and wildlife enthusiasts.

When the property became available in 2005, the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) recognized the important conservation value and moved to acquire the 1,220-acre parcel formerly known as the "Warm Springs Ranch" – the largest tract of private property along the Muddy River. This unique environment is home to the Moapa dace – a small, endemic fish living on the Warm Springs Natural Area and Moapa Valley National Wildlife Refuge and nowhere else in the world. The Moapa dace is a key species to management of SNWA's water

resources in the Muddy River and Coyote Spring Valley due to its ties to the deep carbonate aquifer and its limited distribution. The Secretary of the Department of the Interior approved Southern Nevada Public Land Management Act (SNPLMA) funding for acquisition of the Warm Springs Ranch. Upon acquisition in September of 2007, SNWA became the steward for managing this significant property to preserve its important ecological integrity. Once SNWA became the new landowner, it renamed the property the "Warm Springs Natural Area."

Stewardship Plan

SNWA committed to join with stakeholders to develop a long-term stewardship plan for the property. The purpose of this document is to establish the framework and direction for management of the Warm Springs Natural Area. It is SNWA's intention that the Stewardship Plan will lay a foundation for the property that will foster relations between SNWA and the property neighbors (the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Moapa Band of Paiutes, Coyote Springs Investment, LLC., Moapa Valley Water District, Clark County, Moapa Town Advisory Board, and others) while preserving the important ecological integrity of the property.

Management Direction

The Stewardship Plan is intended to establish a framework for appropriate land uses for the property that preserve the integrity of the natural resources and allow for management of water resources of the valley. This framework clarifies SNWA's responsibilities and management direction as they pertain to conservation of the Warm Springs Natural Area and ensures consistency with SNWA's commitments in the SNPLMA Nomination and the Muddy River Recovery Implementation Program. The Stewardship Plan establishes direction and clarifies SNWA's intentions for property management.

SNPLMA OBJECTIVE

“The property will be acquired as a Parks, Trails, and Natural Area acquisition with the objective to develop a natural area. The natural area will provide controlled public access to enjoy the abundant natural resources, will include interpretation of the resources and Threatened and Endangered species located on the site, and will include measures to preserve and protect those resources. Natural Resources on the Property include, aquatic habitat for the Virgin River Roundtail Chub, the endemic Moapa Dace, the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, and the Yellow-Billed Cuckoo. The property includes Nevada's largest breeding population of Vermilion Flycatcher. Within this section of the Muddy River reside pockets of native Mesquite Bosque and Cottonwood-Willow riparian habitat.”
(SNPLMA Financial Assistance Agreement)

PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Provide a clear statement for future management

Clarify SNWA's intentions and direction for property management

Give neighbors, visitors, governmental and non-governmental organizations an understanding of SNWA's management actions on and around the property

Ensure management actions consistent with the SNPLMA Nomination Package and Financial Assistance Agreement

Ensure management actions consistent with the Muddy River Recovery Implementation Program

Provide a basis for the development of staffing plans, budget needs, maintenance operations, and capital improvements