Tule Springs Fossil Beds

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Monument
Nevada

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument General Management Plan Newsletter

The National Park Service is beginning a comprehensive planning effort for Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. The result will be a new general management plan (GMP) that will guide park management for the next 20 years or longer. All national park units are required to have an approved general management plan. The National Park Service will work with its partners, the public, and its stakeholders to develop the plan and to comply with legal and policy requirements.

The general management plan for Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument will provide a framework to guide decisions for long-range park management.

The plan will also define the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that should be achieved and maintained based on the park's purpose and significance and as described in the park's authorizing legislation and foundation document. This plan will set the direction for subsequent and more focused planning efforts, as well.

This is your opportunity to help create a vision for the future of Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument. We are asking for your help and ideas as we develop the general management plan and seek your feedback on the early concepts and ideas for the general management plan that are outlined in this newsletter.

Thank you for being involved in this process!

Management Concepts

A general management plan establishes a broad direction for resource preservation and visitor use. The National Park Service must articulate that direction using clear, convincing language that NPS staff, stakeholders, and the public will understand. To help accomplish this aim, management concepts are developed that consist of a concise, inspirational statement that eloquently and persuasively describes the kind of place that park could be.

A management concept may be viewed as a "vision statement" and summarizes the park's desired character and management emphasis using descriptive, often visual terms. A management concept helps establish a shared vision for park management by boiling it down to its essence. The following are preliminary proposed management concepts for Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument and are expected to evolve as the planning process develops.

1. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument strives to preserve and interpret sensitive Pleistocene fossils and associated resources in the landscape through ongoing scientific research, education, and restoration while maintaining continuity of important desert habitats and ecosystem services.
2. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument provides research opportunities and fulfilling visitor experiences while protecting the monument for future generations. These achievements are met through continuous conservation efforts, enhanced partnership opportunities, increased community involvement, and employee development for the future.
3. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is a place for active discovery and learning where visitors of all ages find personal and societal relevance in the resources and scientific values preserved in the monument. Recreation and interpretation opportunities optimize resource protection, and the monument serves as a model for science in the parks through outdoor field laboratories and citizen science projects.
4. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument provides for a year-round experience. Interpretive and educational programs focus on engaging youth and incorporating tribal perspectives and values to foster a generation of future stewards. Visitors have opportunities to learn about Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument through immersion in the monument's landscape with accessible trails, interaction with NPS interpretive staff, and self-guided opportunities. The monument provides for outdoor recreation and an escape from the urban environment.

5. Exploration of today's landscape at Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument inspires wonder and protection of our fossil past and understanding of our future. Pleistocene and other natural resources are managed and preserved to foster education, research, and wonder. The monument highlights the significance of the history of science and fosters ongoing understanding of the dynamic landscape through research and programming that actively engages visitors. Visitors are invited to explore the landscape, facilities, and exhibits that encourage understanding of the past environment and how the historic climatic shifts can inform our present-day experience.
    - Programming, exhibits, and facilities are situated to provide opportunities to connect visitors to the meanings of the resources and the values of public land. Both in-person and distance education programs promote scientific literacy.
    - Partnerships continue to support the monument's purpose and provide community connection. These partnerships provide inspiration for stewardship for public land locally and globally.
    - Sustainable operations work to restore habitats and maintain pristine resources.

Desired Conditions

The general management plan will include desired resource and visitor experience conditions for the park as a whole and for specific areas, called management zones. Desired conditions are statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that the park would strive to achieve and maintain. Desired conditions paint a picture of what the park would look like, feel like, sound like, and function like in the future. As the plan is developed, guidance for natural and cultural resource protection, facility development, visitor use, and other management needs will be developed.

Management Zones

The general management plan will include a map that lays out management zones or districts that describe the desired resource and visitor experience conditions for each area of the park. The management zones are developed with respect to neighboring management agencies and landowners, present and future urban development, other utilities, rights-of-way, and facilities.

With consideration for the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, the draft management zones are:

FRONTCOUNTRY ZONE

- Provide visitors with an orientation to the park, and support visitor engagement with opportunities for both virtual (such as QR codes) and physical (trailheads) connections to the natural setting of the park.
- Create opportunities for easy access to outdoor recreation while minimizing impacts to resources.
- Maximize accessibility for all visitors.
- Offer interpretive opportunities, trails, and associated amenities that feature park resources, and potentially include an exhibit and storage area for fossils, archaeological artifacts, and other natural resources.
- Accommodate high-to-moderate levels of day use.
- Include the following potential amenities: trails, trailhead parking, waysides, bathrooms, drinking water, benches, shade structures, and other components to support multiple recreational uses, depending on location.
- Help preserve a temporal perspective of resources that are part of a changing ecosystem spanning the Late Pleistocene, including the Last Glacial Maximum, a period of dramatic climatic and palaeoecological change.

BACKCOUNTRY NATURAL ZONE

- Ensure that the environment remains primarily unmodified and natural.
- Preserve and restore the natural resource integrity. The natural soundscapes, viewscapes, and native plants and animals would be managed and protected in response to the dynamic environment. Visitation levels would be managed to minimize impacts to resources.
- Provide few facilities, except those necessary for resource protection, such as trails, signage, and trail markers.
- Offer an undeveloped, primitive, adventurous, and self-directed visitor experience within a natural setting. Visitor opportunities would provide direct experience with natural resources, primarily from trails or overland travel by foot. Visitor experience highlights a sense of solitude and disconnection from the urban environment.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCE PROTECTION ZONE

- Provide the highest level of protection for fundamental park resources (fossils, natural, and cultural resources) that are sensitive to a variety of activities.
- Remain relatively undeveloped, provide guided access, and establish few trails. Visitor access would be managed in this area with guided tours that focus on context, education, and research potential.
- Manage resources to preserve or restore their fundamental values while monitoring and often studying them for scientific value.

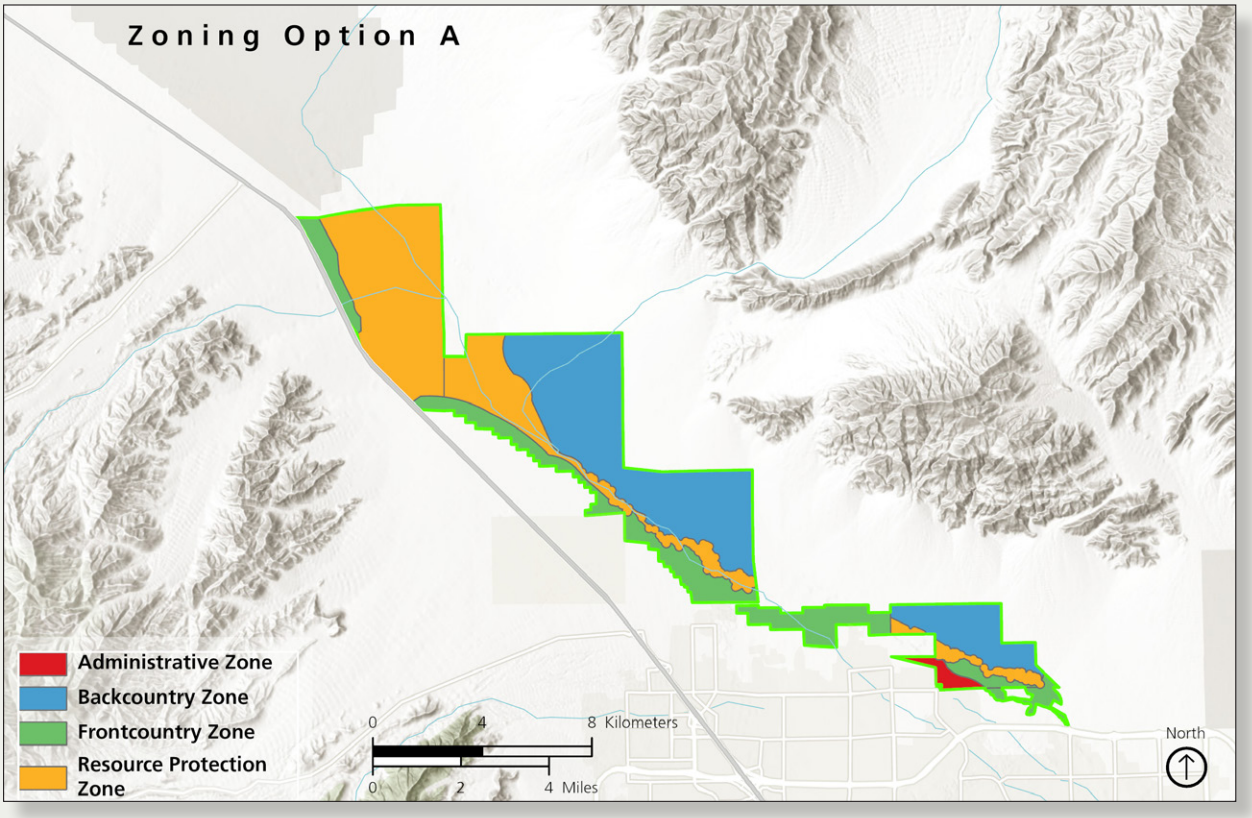
ADMINISTRATIVE ZONE

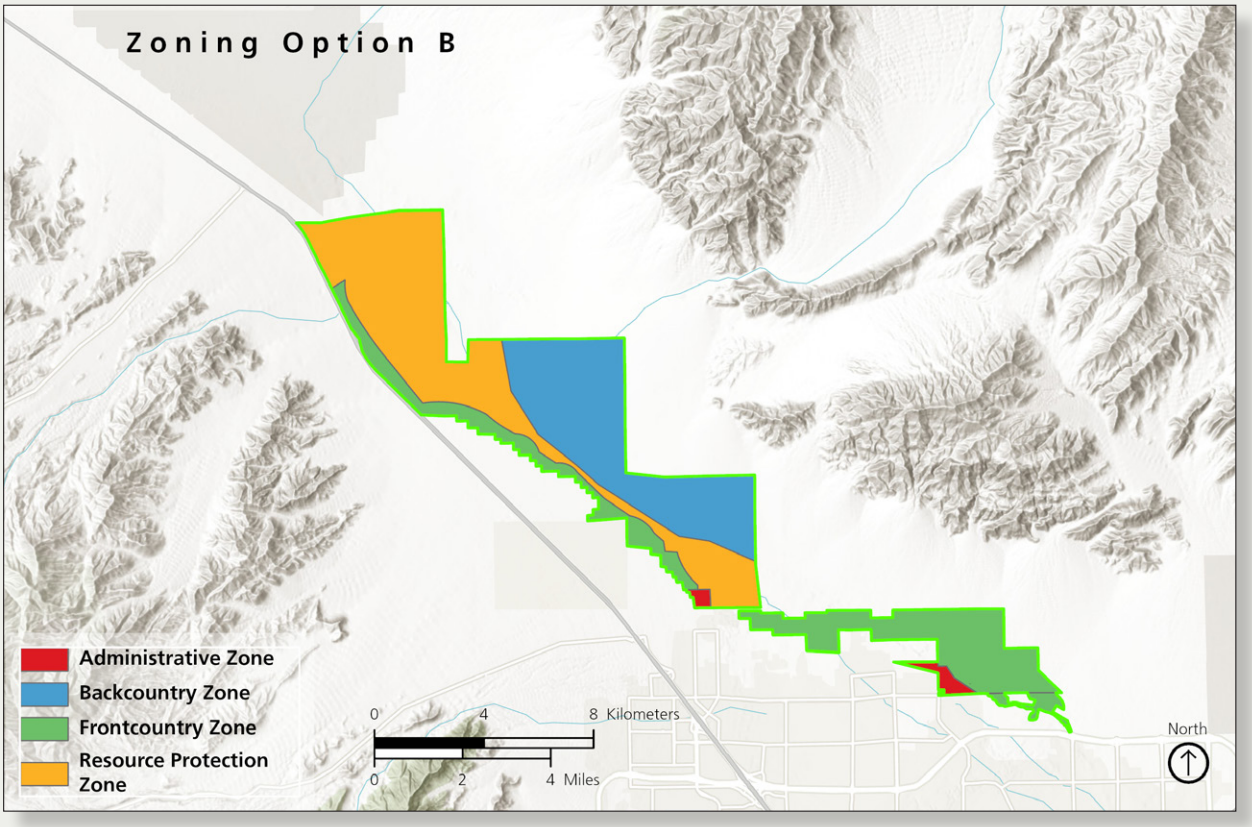
- Support park operations consistent with the overall purpose and significance of the park.
- Designate these areas for park administration, maintenance functions, and resource management operations.
- Provide facilities that are safe, secured, and appropriate for functions required for park management.
- Accommodate visitors within this zone only when on official business with the park.

Draft Management Zone Maps

The following maps illustrate two draft approaches for applying these zones across the park, and are included to elicit feedback. These are draft maps for consideration and are likely to change during development of the plan, using input from the public and park partners.

The Option A map emphasizes an approach for greater protection of the park resources; the Option B map focuses on visitor access.





Planning for the Future

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument preserves thousands of Ice Age fossils that help tell the story of an ever-changing ecosystem. At the park today, a variety of visitor opportunities are possible, including access to recreation and opportunities for enjoyment of solitude. Encountering desert landscapes and learning about fossils and the history of the landscape are important components of the whole visitor experience. When thinking about the future of this park, the National Park Service would like feedback on the following questions:

1. What experiences in Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument are most important to you? What kind of experiences do you want future visitors to have when they come to the park?
2. What are your thoughts on the draft desired conditions and management zones for the park? Is there anything that is missing?
3. What are your thoughts on the two alternative management zones maps? Do you prefer one over the other, and if so, why?
4. What activities, wayfinding tools, interpretive/educational materials, and services would make you feel more welcome, safe, or satisfied with your experience in the park?
5. Other thoughts you'd like to share with the project team?

Opportunities to Participate

Important steps in the planning process are outlined below, along with anticipated timelines for completion.

Once the National Park Service has gathered input on desired natural and cultural resource conditions and visitor experiences, as well as other important values related to the monument, the National Park Service will develop a draft general management plan and environmental assessment. During the planning process, the National Park Service will engage the Tule Springs Advisory Council, affiliated tribes through consultation, and other agencies, stakeholders, and the public to develop the general management plan.

Development of the general management plan is consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable laws and policies. At this time, the GMP planning process is expected to result in the development of an environmental assessment.

- Begin civic engagement to inform plan development.
- Hold public meeting series #1.
- Review and incorporate information learned from tribal consultation and civic engagement.
- Release draft general management plan and environmental assessment, public comment period, and review public comments.
- Complete general management plan (estimated).

General Management Plan Timeline

Time	Action	Details
Summer 2022	Public Engagement and Meetings	• Preliminary concepts • Meet with Advisory Council
Fall–Winter 2022	Refine Strategies and Develop Plan	Workshop #2, Sept. or Oct. • Refine the preliminary concepts and develop management strategies • Advisory Council members participate Workshop #3, Winter 2022, 2023 • Visitor capacity • Advisory Council members participate
Winter–Spring 2023	Draft Plan and Associated Compliance	
Summer 2023	NPS Review of Environmental Assessment	
Fall 2023	Public Review of General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment	• Public meetings • Meet with Advisory Council • Meet with tribes, partners, and stakeholders
Winter 2024	Share Results of Public Engagement with Advisory Council	
Spring 2024	Finalize General Management Plan	• Meet with Advisory Council • Announce finalization of general management plan

How to Participate

While all comments are welcome and appreciated, here are suggestions that will help you best contribute to helping shape the future of the park:

- Focus on the questions presented above.
- Be as specific as possible in your suggestions.
- Include any questions about the process that remain unanswered for you.

You may submit feedback in the following ways:

ON THE WEB (preferred method) at
https://parkplanning.nps.gov/TUSKgmp

BY MAIL:
Superintendent
Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument
601 Nevada Way
Boulder City, NV 89005

BY EMAIL:
tusk_information@nps.gov

The National Park Service will also hold an in-person meeting to provide members of the public a range of opportunities to learn more and ask questions about the project.

Date: August 4, 2022

Time: 6–8 p.m.

Location: Clark County Shooting Complex

Address: 11357 North Decatur Blvd.
Las Vegas, NV 89131

NOTE: Comments will not be accepted by fax or other means than those specific above. Please also note that your entire comment – including personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and e-mail address – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.