



HISTORIC OVERVIEW

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978, the Las Vegas Springs Preserve is a 180-acre tract of land located approximately three miles west of downtown Las Vegas. The site represents one of the richest and most unique cultural and biological resources in Southern Nevada.

Palatial artesian springs here once nourished all fragile life – plant, animal and human – that happened upon them. Although the springs have since dried, evidence of their role in Las Vegas history remains in rich artifacts and other archaeological clues.

Man’s first imprint on the Las Vegas Springs dates back nearly 5,000 years. Generations of nomadic Native American tribes dwelled here seasonally, hunted small game and drank their fill of the spring’s flowing waters.

Harboring visions of the rich California coast, Spanish traders of the early 19th century forged a path that became known as the Old Spanish Trail. Upon discovering this vale of sanctuary, they christened it “Las Vegas,” which means “the Meadows” in their native language.

In the years that followed, the Las Vegas Springs welcomed weary travelers, explorers, traders, settlers and Mormon missionaries – all of them drawn here by one common denominator: water from the springs.

Enticing many to remain and make use of its waters, land near the springs was purchased by the railroad, which created the Las Vegas town site. It was water from the natural springs that powered the railroad’s steam locomotives.

Acquiring the water rights with the land, the railroad established the Las Vegas Land & Water Company to manage the fledgling town site and its water supply.

In later years, when the springs had dried, the Nevada Legislature created the Las Vegas Valley Water District. Among the Water District’s inherited holdings was the Las Vegas Springs property, which remained relatively untouched.

Today, while remaining a National Historic Site, the Springs Preserve has evolved into a \$250 million world-class attraction, providing access to the true origins of Las Vegas when it opens to the public in June 2007.

###