

Note from the Deputy Forest Supervisor

The Upper Kyle Trailhead Improvement Project may look familiar to some of you. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was done for this project in 2004; however, the original Proposed Action did not meet our management criteria, so we reviewed our options.

I am proposing development of a three-acre parking lot that would be accessible year round in the Trail Canyon wash northwest of the intersection of Forest Road 111 (Big Falls Road) and Echo Road, based on new information as discussed under Project Background.

I hope you take the time to review the new proposal and provide comments. I look forward to your insights about the project. To ensure your comments will be helpful in making modifications to the Proposed Action, or developing new alternatives or mitigation measures, please be sure your comments are specific to the Proposed Action.

Stephanie Phillips
Deputy Forest Supervisor
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest

Project Background

My staff developed the new proposal by revisiting an alternative that was previously identified in the EA, but was not analyzed in detail. The proposal was to develop a parking lot in the Trail Canyon wash. We did not consider this alternative in detail due to its impact to Biological Hotspots. Since 2004, we have revised how we determine the impacts to hotspots. Instead of considering acres impacted, we now look at the effects to individual species viability. Further effects analyses are expected to show that developing a centralized parking area in the Trail Canyon wash would have fewer effects to species in the area than the original proposal. A centralized parking area would offer year-round access to some of our most popular trails.

Parking to access trailheads in the area has long been a problem. Parking for the Mary Jane Falls trail has been a challenge both in the number of parking spaces available and the availability of parking during the winter months. Access to the Trail Canyon trail requires visitors to park on the county road right-of-way on Echo Road, which can result in congestion on heavy use days. There is a need for safe trailhead parking that would provide accessible parking spaces and accommodate larger vehicles and vehicles with trailers.

Dispersed camping in and around Mary Jane Falls Trailhead parking area and Old Ski Tow Historic site has resulted in illegal tree cutting, litter, and improper disposal of human waste demonstrating the need to close these areas to dispersed camping.

Spring Mountains National Recreation Area Upper Kyle Trailhead Improvement Project

Proposed Action

The project includes the following actions:

- Construct and pave a three-acre parking area in the Trail Canyon wash with wheelchair-accessible restrooms; the parking area may be screened and divided with islands of vegetation, as space permits.
- Install a gate on FR 111 to close vehicular access to the existing Mary Jane Falls parking area allowing it to return to a natural condition, remove the outdated restrooms, and construct a trail corridor through the Mary Jane Falls parking area to the trail.
- Construct connector trails leading from the new parking area to Trail Canyon trail and utilize FR 111 as a connector trail to Mary Jane Falls trail.
- Issue a closure order prohibiting dispersed vehicle camping in and around the Old Ski Tow Historic area.
- Pave approximately 300 feet of FR 111 from Echo Road and install a low water crossing.
- Define a gravel parking area at Old Ski Tow to provide overflow parking during periods of high use and regulate vehicle access by installing a gate at the entrance to the parking area.

USDA Forest Service
Spring Mountains National Recreation Area
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Project Timing

Construction on the new parking area is expected to begin this summer. During construction, access to both Mary Jane Falls and Trail Canyon trails will remain the same.

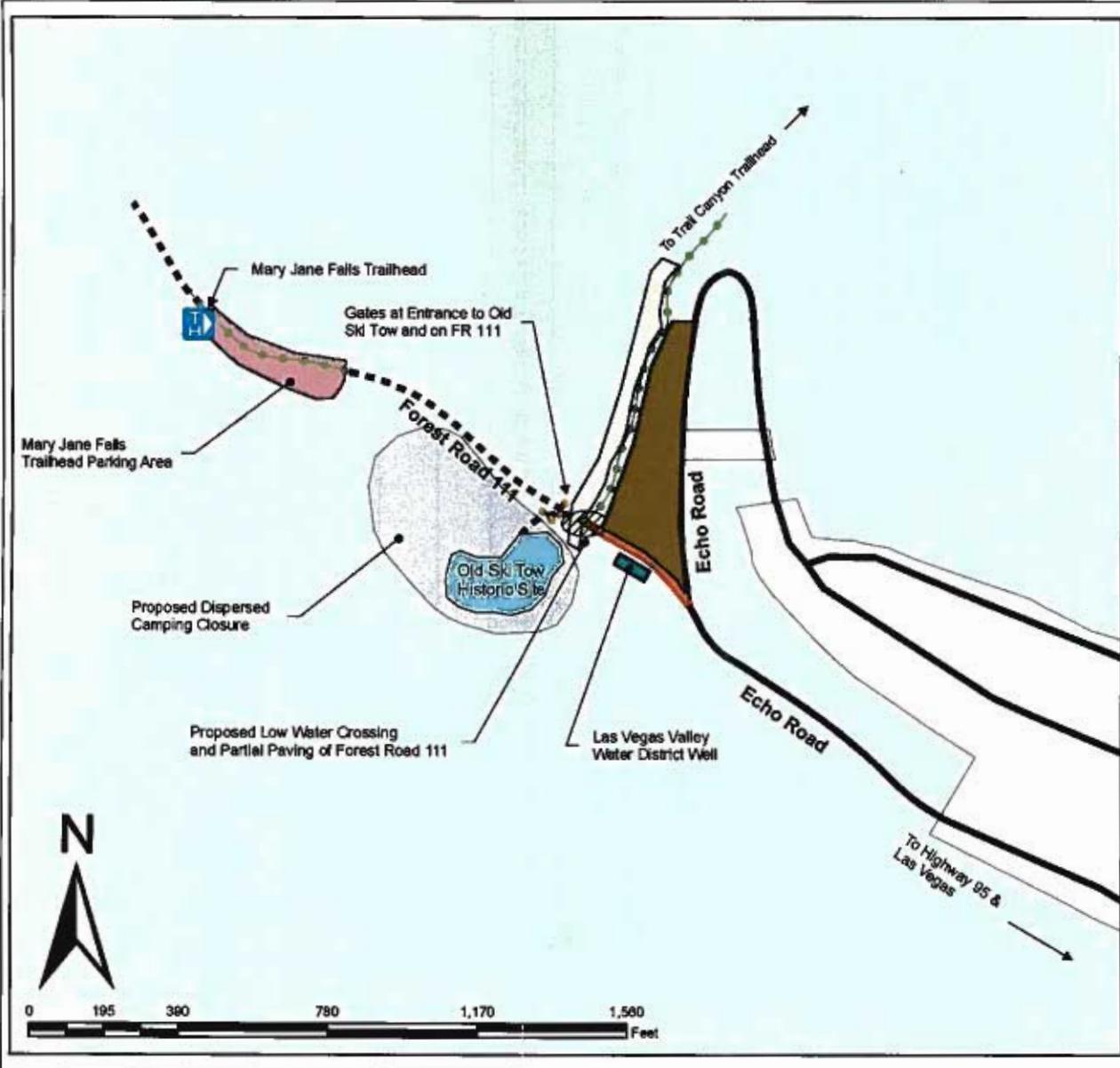
Access to either trailhead may be closed for short periods of time while constructing the new parking lot entrances.

Both trailheads will be permanently relocated only after the new trailhead parking is completed. The new parking area will be completed after Labor Day 2011.



Where to Send Comments

Please email your comments to: UpperKyleTrailhead@fs.fed.us or use the form on the reverse side of this notice. Just cut along the dotted line and fold as instructed.

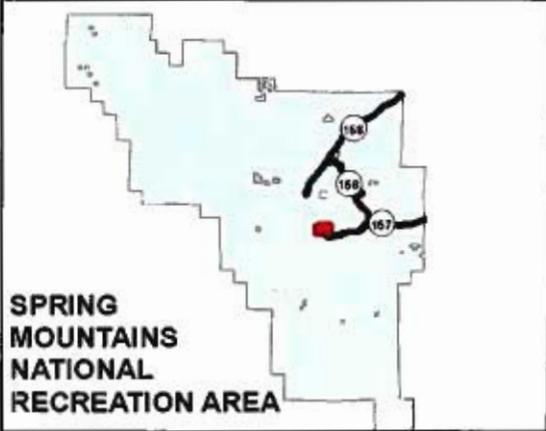


Upper Kyle Trailhead Improvement Project

March 2, 2011

Legend

- Proposed Paving on FS111
- Forest Service System Road 111
- County Road
- Proposed Trail Connections
- Proposed Gates (2)
- Proposed Dispersed Camping Closure
- Proposed Paved Parking Lot with Vault Restroom and Informational Kiosk
- Spring Mountains NRA
- Mary Jane Falls TH Parking Area
- Old Ski Tow Historic Site
- LVVWD Well
- Channel
- Private Land
- Proposed Low Water Crossing



SPRING MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

