Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument
Teacher Resources

Grades 9-12

Tule Springs Fossil Beds is one of our newest National Park Service units, located in the Las Vegas Valley. We are providing these educational resources for K-12 educators together with our partners: the Protectors of Tule Springs. Over the last ~570,000 years, water has transformed the Upper Las Vegas Valley. Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is an urban park that preserves the unique story of this ever-changing ecosystem

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument preserves thousands of Pleistocene (Ice Age) fossils that help tell the story of a dynamic environment. These fossils were preserved within expanding and contracting wetlands between 100,000-12,500 years ago. Many of the Pleistocene animals of Tule Springs are still alive today, including the coyote (Canis latrans), jackrabbit (Lepus sp.), and aquatic snails. Some animals went extinct, disappearing from North America entirely.

The Monument also protects Mojave Desert habitat from urban development. This wildlife and plant corridor is home to a diverse group of native plants and animals. Flash floods are also common seasonally in the upper Las Vegas Wash. Important cultural resources, such as historic objects, cultural sites, and artifacts are also protected within the Monument.

Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument is in the early phases of park planning, so we do not have facilities on site. Further information can be found at NPS.gov/TUSK

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Past vs. Present

Instructions:

- Read *The Geology and Paleontology of Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument, Nevada*. While you read, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the climate of Tule Springs during the Pleistocene (be sure to discuss water).

2. List at least 4 different species that lived in Tule Springs during the Pleistocene.

3. How long did megadroughts typically last for during the Ice Age?

4. What is one potential explanation for the extinction of the mammals of Tule Springs at the end of the Pleistocene?

- Research Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument and the Las Vegas Valley today.

7. What is the climate like in/around Tule Springs today?

8. List at least 4 different species that live in Tule Springs today.

- Read the article *Las Vegas Holds Key to Abrupt Climate Change* (https://www.usgs.gov/news/las-vegas-holds-key-abrupt-climate-change)

7. If Tule Springs Fossil Beds were to experience a megadrought today, hypothesize what might happen to the species that live there.

- As a class, discuss your predictions as to what might happen during a megadrought.