

History of the Spring Creek / Lamoille Area

Existing archaeological information indicates that the presumed earliest inhabitants were during the Paleo- Indian stage. While no Paleo- Indian sites are known in the area, their major characteristic was that they were primarily big game hunters. During the same period, there were people in the Great Basin who used various types of large stemmed points. Archaeologists proposed the name of "Western Pluvial Lakes Tradition" for the flaked stone artifacts, and associated the users of these artifacts as Proto-Archaic. The Western Pluvial Lake Tradition represented a hunting-foraging based economy practiced by people who may have camped on or near the shores of receding lakes and along the rivers much of the time.

The Archaic stage, which began about 6,000 years ago, was a long and highly successful period of adaption to the Great Basin environment. Commonly divided in to two or three time periods by the changes in subsistence, material culture, or settlement patterns, the people of the archaic stage ranged from sedentary villages in the Owens Valley to small hunting groups that foraged over a large territory. Archaeologists postulate a settlement pattern adapted to a foraging / collecting economy, often consisting of a winter base camp, sometimes a secondary summer base camp, and numerous small temporary camps. The arrival of the Euro-American brought the Archaic stage to an end, however their presence is commonly associated with the ancestors of the Western Shoshone and other Numic - speakers.

The Western Shoshone's presence in the area has been postulated by linguists to have been from a rapid spread of Numic-speaking peoples from the southwest. These people have inhabited the regions for approximately 1,000 years. Throughout the Great Basin, Numic-speaking groups such as the Western Shoshone were known to use various techniques to modify wild plant harvest in addition to hunting and gathering. Today, a branch of the Te-Moak Western Shoshone reside on the South Fork Indian Reservation South of the Plan area.

The first white man to see any portion of what is now Nevada, was a company of some fur trappers led by the noted mountaineer, Jedediah Smith in the 1820's. The route of that expedition was through a portion of what is known now as western Wyoming, down the Humboldt River country to the Walker River, out through as Walkers Pass into California.

During this time the Hudson Bay Company claimed the region between the Rockies and Sierra Nevada Mountains as their exclusive grounds for trapping. Peter S. Ogden began trapping the region in 1831 and traveled down the Humboldt River following the same route as Smith. Captain B.L. Bonneville and Joseph Walker also took trapping and exploration trips into Nevada and traveled the area around the Humboldt River during the 1830's. In 1833 Kit Carson along with the Hudson Bay Company expedition also visited the region of the Humboldt River. These were the first explorers who opened the way across the Great Basin to California, and were followed by emigrants who sought the western coast as their home.

The first emigrant party to cross Nevada passed through the South Fork area in 1841. The Bidwell - Bartleson party crossed the Ruby Mountains at Harrison Pass and proceeded down the South Fork Canyon to the Humboldt River Valley. This trail known as the Hastings Cut-off of the California Emigrant trail, was also used by the Reed-Donner party. Ironically almost 30 days of travel time was lost, sowing the seeds for the disaster which overtook them in the Sierras in December of that year.

History within the Spring Creek / Lamoille Master plan area is as diverse as the Master Plan itself. The origins of the Town of Lamoille originate in the 1800's revolving around the rich wet soils. The acceptance of this area by early settlers was for farming and ranching. The proximity of the nearby Ruby Mountain Range offered shelter from the sweltering heat in the summer and a break from the mountainous winds during the cold bitter winters. The area also gave a haven for various types of wildlife, creating an eco-system that would sustain human life.

The Lamoille Valley was settled in the late 1860's by ranchers and farmers primarily from the east coast. The name Lamoille was given to the valley by John P. Walker, because the valley reminded him of his home in Lamoille County, Vermont. The name Lamoille is a result of a notable typographical error. The word Lamoille was originally given to Lamoille, Vermont by Champlain in 1609, however he gave it the name La Moutte meaning water fowl. The name was mis-spelled in the Maps of Discovery of North America published in 1764 where it was listed as Riviere la Mouelle. The transcriber failed to cross the ll's to make them t's. So in essence the town of Lamoille, as we know it today could have very well been called La Moutte.

The valley was primarily farming country producing grain and truck garden freighted by teams to be sold in mining camps. Most settlers ran a few cattle and as herds increased, ranchers shifted from grain to raising cattle. Over the years the valley also produced dairy products, and honey as well as butchered meat for sale in the nearby Town of Elko.

The Town of Lamoille had its beginning in 1869 when John P. Walker built a log store, saloon, blacksmith shop, and the Cottonwood Hotel. In 1906 the Lamoille Mercantile Company was formed by George F. Talbot. The company constructed a two story hotel with 20 beds, dining room, kitchen, and billiard hall. Over the years other stores had been created, many of them were also saloons. During prohibition these saloons provided whiskey under the counter that had been produced by numerous bootleg stills located in the valley. The valley was known as a bootlegger's haven. Lamoille was the first among agricultural valleys to fulfill educational needs. A school was opened by private subscription in the Walker-Waterman cabin in 1871. Fifty students from the Lamoille, Pleasant Valley and Halleck area attended the six month summer school. In 1905 the first service was held at the newly dedicated Lamoille Presbyterian Church that had been built by generous donations from Reverend George Greenfield. The Church, as it stands today, is known to be Nevada's oldest standing Presbyterian church.

A post office was established August 27, 1872, at Walkers cross-roads and operated until it was discontinued October 21, 1874. Reestablished on May 10, 1880, it functioned until August 2, 1882, after which mail was secured in Elko. May 14, 1883, the post office was reestablished and still serves Lamoille today. The town was surveyed, platted, and streets named in 1924.

Access to the Valley from the Elko area was a dirt road known as the Hamilton Stage route that traversed over the Elko mountains, through the Spring Creek Valley, and Pleasant Valley to Lamoille. The trip to and from Lamoille to Elko was generally an all day and possible overnight trip. In 1947, an oiled road was completed connecting the Elko and Lamoille areas. This access afforded the development of recreation for tourists throughout the state and nation. The Lamoille Valley, in addition to the continued ranching and farming, now offers many types of outdoor recreation including helicopter skiing in the Ruby Mountain range, guided hunts, as well as fine restaurants, and hotels. The Valley still maintains much of its pristine beauty, as it did for the settlers of the Valley.

Spring Creek Association is a private, property owners association with 5,420 lots that provide rural Nevada residential living opportunity with several amenities. Located near the base of the Ruby Mountains lies the 23.4 square mile rural community of Spring Creek. Outdoor Recreation and Spring Creek have become synonymous. Lamoille Canyon, Southfork Reservoir State Park, and the Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge are all within a short drive.

There is easy access to Spring Creek via Lamoille Highway (SR227) from Interstate 80 in Elko, Nevada. Newcomers are welcomed and considered a valuable resource who bring fresh perspective and experience. It is easy to become involved in the many active youth and adult clubs and organizations available. Spring Creek is family friendly. An example is the outdoor recreation at our 32 acre stocked private marina, which provides opportunities for fishing, canoeing, wildlife viewing, covered picnic areas with grills, open space and playground equipment. Spring Creek Association property owner assessments are used for the maintenance and operation of all amenities as well as the expenses involved with managing such a large area and diversified Homeowner's Association.

There is approximately 150 miles of roadways in Spring Creek, all of which have chip-seal surfacing. Elko County School District operates two Elementary schools, a Middle School, and a High School in our area. Our access to quality healthcare professionals and facilities is expanding. Public Safety is provided by the Elko County Sheriff's Department, Nevada Division of Forestry and our Volunteer Fire Department. The business climate in Spring Creek allows home-based businesses. You will find a major grocery store, pharmacy, post office, credit union, dental offices, barbers, beauty salons, hardware store, variety store, gas stations, convenience stores, pizza parlors, sandwich shops, variety of restaurants, lounges, gaming, fitness centers, legal services, pet grooming, car washes, realty offices, manufactured home sales, refuse collection services, propane services, feed store, multiple churches, auto repair, building and construction contractors with space still available for new businesses to locate and grow.

The Spring Creek Association (SCA) provides its residents with the following services and amenities: road maintenance; security; Committee on Architecture (enforcement of Declaration of Reservations); an 18-hole golf course and Fairway Community Center; a Horse Palace; a trap and skeet range; a rifle range; a campground; Schuckmann's Sports Complex and Vista Grande Park; and a marina.

The Association owns all of the infrastructure associated with these services and amenities with the exception of roads. Elko County accepted the dedication of all roads for public uses, except for maintenance, in 1974. The Association maintains about 140 miles of roads, and about 45 percent of the SCA's annual budget is spent on road maintenance. The Association is concerned that due to the significant expense of maintaining roads and amenities infrastructure, necessary improvements are being deferred.

The Spring Creek area was primarily a Valley or flat that was used by the Lamoille ranchers for graze land. Several smaller ranches were located within the flat area along the Ten Mile Creek and Spring Creek. The earliest ranches in this area were very secluded and did not expand as much as the Lamoille Ranches. Today, operation of the Whear Ranch located along the Ten Mile Creek in the geographic

center of the Plan area continues to provide some memory of the historical use of this land over the past 150 years. Several small ranches still are in operation including what we now know as the animal farm, located in Spring Creek. This was one of the first ranches settled within the area.

In the Late 1960's, a large portion of the ranch land was sold to a developer from Texas, the intention was to developing a 6,000 unit subdivision including a 18 hole golf course and reservoir along the Spring Creek. As we know it today, the Spring Creek subdivision is developed into two separate areas, the Mobile Home Section and the Housing Section.

Several smaller subdivisions have been created throughout the Valley. The creation of these subdivisions has provided diverse types of dwelling possibilities in the area ranging from semimetropolis housing to the full development of large ranching companies, as well as the development of Commercial and Industrial corporations within the Valley. The Spring Creek / Lamoille area has become an area that Elko County and its inhabitants are proud of due to the diversity of planned development, and the beauty of the area, including the Ruby Mountains.

Recreation

Opportunities within the plan area are oriented toward outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, boating, camping and rafting. The nearby South Fork State Recreation Area accommodates for much of the desired activities. The Lamoille Canyon area is also well utilized for a great deal of outdoor recreation. Areas of Recreational designation have also been planned within the Town of Lamoille area, to accommodate for bed and breakfast, heli ski operations, and possible hunting lodge facilities. Planned recreation facilities within the plan area will maintain the ideas, to maintain the historic values, scenic values, natural features, and key wildlife habitat.