

Natural springs create an oasis within the desert

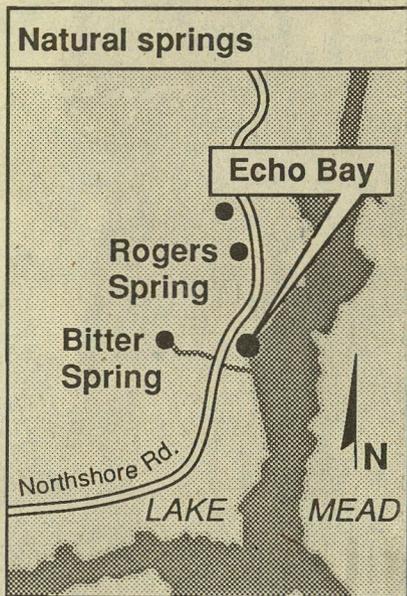
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An oasis is always a point of interest in the desert. Along Lake Mead's Northshore Road, there are several oasis-like spots created by natural warm water springs. Two of these, Rogers Spring and an adjacent spring, are easily reached by paved road. A third lies in a major wash a few miles off the highway in the desert back country.

The two springs close to the Northshore Road have been developed for picnicking and day use by the National Park Service. At Rogers Spring, visitors will find shaded picnic tables, grills, a parking area and a warm water pool for wading. The second spring site about a mile farther is smaller with picnic facilities, but no wading pool. The third spring off the highway is completely undeveloped, but a good site for tailgate picnics and exploration of old roads in the Bitter Spring Valley.

The primitive road to Bitter Spring departs from the highway just before the Northshore Road crosses on a bridge over Echo Wash, about a mile south of the turnoff to Echo Bay Resort. The road follows the wash in both directions down

Trip of the week



the lake and up toward the springs some two miles. The road in the wash cuts through the shallow runoff from the

spring several times before reaching a little box canyon. To go beyond that point, it is best to use heavy-duty vehicles like trucks or four-wheel drive jeeps. Equip yourself first with a detailed map; carry plenty of water and make sure your vehicle and spare tire are in good repair.

Although the major attraction is splashing in the pond at Rogers Spring, there is more to enjoy. The little runoff stream meanders down toward Lake Mead, crossing under the highway and gurgling onward. Its banks are choked with brush, palms, trees and blooming shrubs. Overgrown paths snake along parallel to the stream, creating tunnels through the underbrush. It is a fascinating walk downstream, always within sound of running water, but with the water often hidden by the tangle.

Any of the three springs may be reached in about an hour's driving time from Las

Vegas. Allow yourself time to stop when you want to to enjoy the varied scenery and the light showing of roadside wildflowers blooming despite our prolonged drought. The Northshore Road may be reached either by way of Lake Mead Drive through North Las Vegas or by way of Lakeshore Drive from Henderson. Distance to Rogers Spring from Las Vegas is about 60 miles.

Weekday users of the Northshore Road may encounter delays as road improvements continue. On weekends, there may be frequent dusty detours. Keep your speed down and follow signs.

Vary your return to take in more of the lovely scenery this region offers. You may choose to go home by way of Valley of Fire State Park. Another option is to enjoy the road through the farming communities of Logandale and Overton, a verdant valley surrounded by desert mountains.