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Spring 2025

CONSERVANCY CONNECTION

FROM THE DESERT'S HEART

Cover: Amargosa River, Bob Wick (BLM) photo

SPRING 2025



OUR MISSION

Working toward a sustainable future for the Amargosa River and Basin through science, stewardship and advocacy.

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 Scott Williams • Restoration Project Manager
 Morrigan DeVito • Restoration & Plant Stewardship Coordinator

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To our Guardians of the Basin;

It's a true privilege to stand alongside so many passionate individuals who hold this wild and wondrous place close to their hearts. On behalf of myself and the Board, thank you for your unwavering support. As I meet you and hear your stories, I'm reminded how much you all really care about this unique and unassuming place. Please consider becoming a legacy donor for a more lasting impact.

With thanks from the bottom of my heart.

Ashley Lee

Bright Spots in the Dark

By Mason Voehl



A new moon night. My Subaru crunches to a stop on a gravel road just outside of Tecopa, CA. Stepping out into the darkness, a restless and thirsty Mojave wind grabs at my hair, my clothes, my everything. Under the red light glow of my headlamp, I jostle my tripod into position, westward facing out towards Death Valley National Park, the silhouette of a mudhill that used to be a pleistocene lake bottom

standing stark and black against a shimmering sky thick with stars. I lock the camera into the mount and will my cold fingers to start fiddling with the settings, adjusting the shutter speed and aperture to take in more light. One last critical step remains and it must be executed manually, without the aid of advanced technology: I must extinguish my headlamp, squint into the glass viewfinder, and use my thumb and index finger to gently rotate the wheel on the lens. The objective is to find a star, a single star, and bring it into full focus and clarity.

This is the approach Amargosa Conservancy is taking as we, like everyone else, try to find our way in these times. In the midst of upheaval and mounting threats to our beloved Amargosa River, our process has been to position ourselves to see the landscape clearly, prepared with the skills, knowledge, and grit to handle the conditions. We hold our mission of working toward a sustainable future for this extraordinary desert watershed through science, stewardship, and advocacy firmly in our minds. And perhaps most importantly, we keep our eyes open for opportunities, for the bright spots in the darkness, and pull them into clear view.

Our north star project has been the dogged pursuit of necessary safeguards for Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and the communities of life in the Amargosa Valley. In the face of threats to the region's precious and life-giving groundwater from new mining on public lands, we organized, seeking and empowering allies in the most-affected communities to call on our leaders to take action. We commissioned hydrological analyses using the best available science to demonstrate the danger



of allowing mining to occur in this sensitive region. We knocked on doors, hosted town hall meetings, and walked the halls of Capitol Hill, proselytizing to anyone who would listen about the unique values in abundance in these lands, and the eternal heartbreak that would be caused if they were degraded or destroyed.

And through all of this, through this blur of acts of undaunted courage from leaders of Tribal and rural communities and conservation partners alike, we find ourselves gaining ground. A process has been set in motion through which we may yet still achieve a monumental victory: securing a withdrawal of public lands in the Amargosa Valley from new mining. This north star project remains at the center of our field of vision, our course set upon it, unwavering.

Through my foray into night sky photography, I have learned that something extraordinary happens when one star is brought into focus. When one star clarifies, countless others spring into view.

Through building authentic coalitions, founded on person-to-person relationships, new exciting opportunities have emerged, and we have pursued them. As the convening force within

Mason Voehl photo

a newly formed Amargosa Restoration Working Group, our staff members Scott Williams and Morigan DeVito are assisting in the execution of perhaps a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore critical riparian, wetland, and rare plant habitats along the Amargosa Wild & Scenic River. Our organization continues to grow, and with it our capacity to stand up to threats from Beatty to Badwater, to conduct essential natural resource monitoring, and to partner with Tribal and local communities to protect and enhance the wild character of these unbroken riverlands.

In this issue you will learn more about this constellation of projects guiding Amargosa Conservancy's efforts, and the people in pursuit of them. Just as I feel as I gaze skyward, the cosmic carousel of stars whirling above, these projects and their magnitude humble me. These opportunities have only been possible because of the support given by our donors, partner organizations, and especially the local communities. I truly cannot express what it has meant to me and to our whole organization. With your help, we will continue to do everything in our power to keep these lands wild, their skies dark, and their ancient waters flowing.

Onward,
Mason Voehl
Executive Director

GET INVOLVED
WITH US!



SCAN
THIS QR CODE

ONE RIVER, MANY VOICES

THE MOVEMENT TO SAVE ASH MEADOWS

by Mason Voehl

On February 27th, 2025, something extraordinary happened in the heart of the Amargosa Valley. In a rare and powerful show of unity, leaders from Tribal Nations, rural towns, conservation organizations, and elected offices spanning both sides of the political spectrum gathered in common cause. Together, we raised our voices to protect Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and the Amargosa River, a vital desert lifeline threatened by new mining development. This was more than a hum-drum public meeting. It was a chorus of communities standing up for the future of water, wildlife, and cultural heritage.

The campaign to safeguard 309,000 acres of public land surrounding Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge has grown into a truly grassroots movement, an alliance that reflects the unique character and diversity of this region. At its heart is the Amargosa River, a mysterious and life-giving force that connects us all. From the snow-capped peaks of Nevada to the salt flats of Death Valley, this underground river sustains rare desert wetlands, endangered species, and generations of people who have called this place home.

About a year and a half ago, this vital ecosystem came under threat. A Canadian mining company, Rover Metals, proposed an exploratory lithium drilling project just outside Ash Meadows. The risks were enormous, verging on existential. Drilling could puncture the aquifer that supplies water to the springs, wetlands, and wells of nearby communities such as Beatty, Crystal, Amargosa Valley, Shoshone, and Furnace Creek. It wasn't just the environment at stake: it was the way of life and a future for people across the region.

But what happened next was nothing short of remarkable. The threat sparked action, not from one corner, but from all sides. The Timbisha Shoshone Tribe, local ranchers, conservation scientists, county commissioners, and everyday residents stood together and said: "Not here, not now, not ever." Scientific studies were commissioned, public comments poured in, and legal challenges were filed. We fought. We organized. And we won. The Bureau of Land Management rescinded Rover's approval and required a more thorough environmental review.

Still, the victory brought with it a sobering realization: the system had almost failed us. The fact that such a dangerous project could come so close to breaking ground made one thing clear: we needed more than a temporary fix. We needed real, lasting protection.

That's when the movement truly came into its own. Amargosa Conservancy rallied a coalition of Tribal governments, rural towns, environmental organizations, recreationists, elected officials, and concerned citizens from around the country who know and love Ash Meadows and the Amargosa River.



Left: Pahrump BLM Field Manager Nick Pay addresses the public meeting in Amargosa Valley. Right: February 27 rally in support of a mineral withdrawal in Amargosa Valley Scott Williams photos

er. Despite differing backgrounds and interests, we found shared purpose in one river and one goal: to protect the land and water that sustains us. Together, we called for a mineral withdrawal to prevent new mining claims across the most sensitive public lands in the valley, while preserving valid existing rights.

In January 2025, that collective pressure paid off. The Department of the Interior under Secretary Debra Haaland announced a two-year review of the proposed 309,000-acre withdrawal area. This process doesn't guarantee permanent protection, but it opens the door to the possibility of a 20 year pause on new mining claims. These next two years are a critical window of opportunity for our many voices to be heard again, loud and clear, calling on our leaders in government to see this action through.

What makes this campaign so special is the diversity of voices calling for protection. In a time of deep political division, this is a rare example of unity. Tribal leaders, ranchers, hunters, birders, scientists, Democrats, Republicans, and independents all agree: this valley and its beating heart of Ash Meadows are too special to risk. The support for this effort has been widespread and heartfelt, spanning

not just party lines but generational and geographic ones too. That's the strength of this movement, and that's what gives us hope.

We're not just protecting a landscape. We're protecting a future. A future where groundwater still flows beneath our feet. Where children can hear the call of the least bittern in the reeds of Ash Meadows. Where communities can continue to drink from their wells and walk their ancestral lands without fear.

With new leadership in Washington, the months ahead will be critical. We must remain vigilant and vocal. Amargosa Conservancy is proud to carry this work forward, and it is the power of this movement, of many voices speaking as one, that will see us through.

We are deeply grateful to our members and supporters who continue to stand with us: signing petitions, sharing our stories, speaking up for the places they love, and fueling this campaign with generous donations. Your voice, your advocacy, and your commitment are what make this movement not only possible, but powerful. Thank you for stepping into the fray with us. We're in this together.



BOREHOLE FIRE DEVASTATES AMARGOSA VOLE HABITAT

by Scott Williams

At approximately 7:50 pm on Tuesday, February 11, 2025, Southern Inyo Fire Protection District (SIFPD) received an emergency tone from dispatch followed by a report of a brush fire at the Borehole hot spring in Tecopa, California. SIFPD responded to the scene with a crew of six volunteer firefighters, myself among them. By the time Inyo County Sheriff and SIFPD arrived at the Borehole, the fire had spread into a ring nearly 400 feet wide in the bulrush and saltgrass north of Tecopa Hot Springs Road and east of the Borehole pool and outflow channel.

A northwest wind was blowing at about 10 miles per hour, pushing the front of the fire south towards the road. SIFPD quickly established a defensive line along the roadway, spraying water from the fire engine to prevent the blaze from jumping the road. This fire break was critical, since the wetland on the southwest side is a wide swath of dry rushes and grass extending to the southwest edge of Tecopa Hot Springs, where homes and businesses would be vulnerable.

By the time the fire front along the road was fully extinguished, most of the north and east sides of the wetland had been scorched. The fire had backed against the wind towards the Borehole and in some places jumped the springbrook on the western edge of the marsh. Fortunately, the wetland vegetation is hemmed in by bare alkali mud hills that helped to contain the fire from spreading out of control. SIFPD stifled the remaining spot fires with hand tools, and by 10:15pm the fire was fully extinguished.

The history of the Borehole is a paradox of human environmental meddling. This “spring” is not at all natural. The name Borehole hints at

its origin story: it was created by accident in 1967 when mineral exploration drillers encountered hot groundwater under so much pressure that it caused a blowout underneath the drill rig. The drillers attempted to stop the flow by backfilling the borehole but ultimately gave up and abandoned the site, leaving the new manmade spring to continue flowing out across the surface of the land.

This new flow reduced pressure in the surrounding system of hot springs, causing ongoing degradation of habitat as nearby springs went dry. Yet, in an ironic turn of events, the water released by this blunder has contributed to the creation of a lush marshland that sustains one of exactly two remaining wild populations of the endangered Amargosa vole, whose sole habitat is the three-square bulrush adjacent to the warm water of the outflow channel.

Biologists believe that the Amargosa vole evolved from its close genetic relative the California vole as the Amargosa River watershed gradually became geographically isolated from its larger range and population. The voles are extremely elusive, never



leaving the dense thatch of dead three-square bulrush that collects below the living bulrushes in and around springs.

People, too, were drawn to the new spring on the edge of Tecopa. Its waters rise from the same source tapped by the nearby hot spring resorts. The Borehole boasts some additional perks, though: views of the Resting Spring range and the Tecopa marsh, the clay mud, and free access, since it is located on public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

In recent years, recreational use of the Borehole has increased significantly. In spite of signage explaining the sensitivity of the marsh and the endangered voles, people regularly light campfires, camp, and let their dogs roam off-leash near the water. Various conservation organizations, including the Center for Biological Diversity and AC, have raised concerns over the years about this ramp-up of recreational impacts and the stress that increased use poses to the Amargosa vole and its limited habitat.

On February 13, Tecopa received 0.59 inches of rain, marking the beginning of a cycle of natural recovery for the marsh. The bulrushes rebounded immediately, sprouting out of the water-saturated soil where their roots were protected from burning. Less than a week after the fire, new growth could be seen pushing up through the ash, apparently stimulated by warmer spring weather and the fire itself.

In spite of this rapid regrowth, the fire disturbance left the marsh vulnerable to the establishment of opportunistic invasive plants. On March 13, BLM

issued a closure order for the burned area of the marsh (not including the access trail and hot spring pool, which were not directly affected by the fire). By March 21, BLM had completed a temporary fence around the closed area.

The Amargosa vole was certainly impacted. Regardless of how many voles may have been lost to the fire itself, their habitat was catastrophically reduced. The AC has mobilized to support the BLM fire response by soliciting volunteers to help install fencing and committing to provide monthly monitoring reports detailing the recovery of the marsh and observations on fire recovery issues such as invasive plants in March, April, and May.

The community of Tecopa responded with the full extent of its resources and support. SIFPD is a small, isolated, 100 percent volunteer emergency response team. Those who know Tecopa know that it is not a wealthy town, and the same is true for its fire department. Yet without this rapid local response, far more of the Tecopa marsh and possibly structures in Tecopa Hot Springs would certainly have been lost to the fire. This demonstration of selflessness and cooperation against the odds with limited resources are cause for hope, optimism, and pride.

Please consider donating to Southern Inyo Fire Protection District so that we can continue to promptly respond to future emergencies in this portion of the Amargosa River watershed. SIFPD accepts donations online at <https://www.sifpd.org/donate-to-sifpd> or via check made out to SIFPD and mailed to PO Box 51, Tecopa, CA 92389.

Facing: the fire in progress. Below: Aftermath of the Borehole fire, February 28 | Scott H. Williams photos



AC AND PARTNERS LAUNCH RESTORATION PROJECTS

HEALING A CENTURY OF DAMAGE

by Scott H. Williams and Morrigan DeVito

In February 2025, our organization initiated two major restoration projects in the California portion of the Amargosa River watershed. The projects, funded by grants from California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB), begin a significant new chapter for AC as sub-awardee of a restoration planning grant awarded to American Bird Conservancy and a restoration implementation grant awarded to California Botanic Garden.

Though advocacy has been our main focus in recent years, Amargosa Conservancy has a long history of working with partners to restore the watershed. The potential for active restoration and stewardship in this watershed is immense, especially along the Amargosa Wild and Scenic River, where the river runs perennially above ground and nourishes a vibrant and biodiverse riparian corridor.

Scott: After an initial 6-month contract with AC beginning in August 2024, I am fortunate to have a new role in the organization as Restoration Project Manager, a position that brings me into working relationships with professionals in a wide range of fields for a three-year restoration planning project.

In February, hydrologist Rachel Maxwell of Roux Inc. led team members from AC, California Botanic Garden, American Bird Conservancy, River Partners, and Timbisha Shoshone Tribe on a hydrology tour of the basin. Rachel described the regional groundwater flow system that sustains dozens of springs from Ash Meadows to Tecopa, and explained the hydrologic monitoring program of springs and wells that Roux will be continuing under the WCB grant.

Data collected by Roux provides crucial insight into groundwater flow paths, and tracks a steady trend of groundwater decline in the watershed. Roux will use this data to update the Death Valley Regional Flow System model and provide two new State of the Basin Reports for AC.

Riparian ecosystems are as sensitive as they are complex; inadequate knowledge of hydrologic con-



ditions and cycles can doom a restoration project. Roux's hydrologic monitoring and reporting helps build an understanding of the watershed that informs restoration planning.

On February 19, the team hiked along the Wild and Scenic River in the Amargosa Canyon to identify opportunities for restoration of the riparian wetland from Tecopa to the confluence with Willow Creek and up to China Ranch. We stopped frequently at springs and seeps along the river to discuss our observations; initial restoration targets may include incision of the river channel and invasive plants such as tamarisk.

Our partners in this project are diverse in their expertise: botanists, fish biologists, hydrologists, bird biologists, and restoration ecologists. I felt honored to be in the presence of so many passionate, experienced professionals during this exciting conceptual phase of revitalizing our river. Laurel Sebastian of River Partners pointed out that the Amargosa has largely been spared from the major alteration that most river systems have seen, such as dams and agricultural infrastructure. We can move directly into ecological restoration without having to re-engineer the river.

In March, we rounded out the launch of restoration planning with a tour of the marshes of Shoshone and Tecopa, where biologists from UC Davis and California Department of Fish and Wildlife are studying the health of the endangered Amargosa vole. The recent fire at the Borehole spring, which harbors the largest population of voles, drove home

the importance of increasing the vole's range. Our partners at UC Davis have proposed a "megamarsh" restoration project that would expand the vole's habitat. This restoration may be the lifeline that enables them to weather similar threats in the future.

Past restoration efforts have focused on tamarisk removal and local Amargosa vole habitat restoration, but these new projects are much more com-

owners, locals, and tourists. The Amargosa niterwort's health is tied to the health of the groundwater supply, so monitoring them and ensuring their population continues to survive in our changing climate is imperative to understanding the Amargosa River. Especially for the Tecopa population, which has been in steep decline since 2009, long-term recovery surveys, monitoring, seed collection, and resto-

In coming months we will engage Amargosa stakeholders from the Timbisha Shoshone to the long-time residents of Tecopa Hot Springs.

prehensive, targeting over 1,000 acres and addressing species from the tiny speckled dace to stands of large willows and cottonwoods.

In coming months we will engage Amargosa stakeholders from the Timbisha Shoshone to the long-time residents of Tecopa Hot Springs. There will be opportunities for AC members, locals, and businesses to share their knowledge of the land and volunteer in restoration projects.

Morrigan: I joined the Amargosa Conservancy in late February as a Restoration & Plant Stewardship Coordinator. I'll be working with Scott on our WCB grants, specifically on implementation and alkali wetland restoration.

My focus is on monitoring sensitive alkali wetland plant populations of the Amargosa River in California and establishing a cultural seedbanking program with the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe. My primary collaborators will be Naomi Fraga, AC Board Member and Director of Conservation Programs at California Botanic Garden, and Mandi Campbell, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Timbisha Shoshone.

The Amargosa niterwort (*Nitrophila mohavensis*) is a main focus in the implementation grant. This endangered plant is only a few inches tall and specialized to survive in highly alkaline soils, and its whole population grows in just a handful of spots in the Amargosa watershed. I'll be monitoring populations at the lower Carson Slough and Tecopa Hot Springs, where the niterwort is vulnerable to threats like groundwater declines, off-highway vehicle incursion, and hot spring recreation in the Tecopa area. Many people aren't familiar with the niterwort and why it's such a special plant; a big part of my job will involve niterwort education with business

owners, locals, and tourists. The Amargosa niterwort's health is tied to the health of the groundwater supply, so monitoring them and ensuring their population continues to survive in our changing climate is imperative to understanding the Amargosa River.

I will also be working with the Timbisha Shoshone to create a cultural seedbank. While we're still working out the logistical details of what this will look like, our team will collect seeds from at least ten populations of culturally important species through the duration of the project. Mesquite trees are a main focus for seed collection because of their ecological and cultural significance. Screwbean mesquite (*Strombocarpa pubescens*) in particular are facing widespread die-off throughout their range and especially along the Amargosa River, in part because of a fungal pathogen. Collecting seeds for future restoration will help mitigate this threat by providing seeds for future restoration. Seedbanking is a high priority conservation objective in the California desert, and our work will follow the BLM's Seeds of Success protocols alongside the Timbisha's cultural protocols for collection and propagation.

Many alkaline wetland plants have not been targeted for seed collection before, and since this vegetation community is unique to the Amargosa River, protecting these plants ensures their long-term success as changes in climate and water supply continue to alter this landscape.

As winter slips rapidly into spring here in the eastern Mojave Desert, I can't help feeling optimistic: this resilient river and all of the stubborn, unique flora and fauna who rely on its water will soon receive an opportunity to thrive again after decades of neglect. We had a beautiful two days on the land, and I couldn't be more excited to start working with this incredible team to start unlocking the ecological potential of our beloved Amargosa River.

AMARGOSA VALLEY SPEAKS

by Scott H. Williams

In the leadup to the BLM's January 14, 2025 notice of mineral segregation in Amargosa Valley, we sat down with two local government leaders in the town's community center to hear what motivates them to fight for a mineral withdrawal in their part of rural Nye County, Nevada. After Canadian exploration startup Rover Critical Minerals staked claims adjacent to Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge and near residents' homes, Amargosa Valley Town Board chair Carolyn Allen and Town Board member Mike Cottingim made the decision to pursue a federal moratorium on new mining claims on the area's public lands. The January 14 segregation notice initiated an environmental review process that could result in a 20-year withdrawal of Amargosa Valley from new mining exploration and extraction.

Scott Williams: Where are we? How long have you lived here?

Mike Cottingim: We are in Amargosa Valley in Nevada. We are about 90 miles northwest of Las Vegas. We are right on the border with California, in fact the Funeral Mountains are our western boundary and Death Valley is on the other side. The Amargosa River runs underground through Amargosa Valley and the Nevada Test Site is our northern boundary. Total of about 1,500 people live here. I've lived here for about 20 years.

For industries in the area we have the largest dairy in Nevada, there are a couple mines in the area that employ people, there is a hazmat recycling facility northwest of town, a casino, and a couple gas stations. Kind of a wide spot in the road really.

Carolyn Allen: I'm the Amargosa Valley Town Board chair. We are flanked by Ash Meadows, which is a beautiful wetland, a national treasure. We are completely in the middle of nowhere as far as being known as a town. You either stop at Longstreet [Casino] or you're going along the 95, and many people don't even know we are here.

SW: What do you love most about living here?

MC: The wide open spaces, mostly quiet. There is a lack of government oversight, rules, and so forth, but with that comes good and bad things.

CA: I came here about 10 years ago after I retired and moved to Vegas. It was right after somebody had an incident at the brothel. I googled Amargosa Valley and it was known for alfalfa and brothels. It was intriguing, so we came out here. When we got out here, it was kind of magical. It was in December and it had just snowed, everything looked so beautiful.

SW: Tell me about the relationship that your community has with the Amargosa River.

CA: It is life. Without the river, we wouldn't be here. Ash Meadows wouldn't be here. The things that we do have that we cherish, the treasures, the national parks and things, we wouldn't have them.

MC: When it comes to our water, we can't make the stuff. It is a finite resource, there is only so much of it. We need to manage it better so that however much gets replenished, that's what we should be restricted to using. Our water table has gone down 45 feet in the last 18 years, and with that comes a big cost. People have to get new wells put in, and right now, with a well costing anywhere from \$25,000-\$30,000, having to go down 250 to 300 feet — people don't have that out here.

SW: How could life here be improved for residents?

CA: Protect the groundwater at all costs. We understand our commitment to green energy. We think there are better ways to go about it, in better places.

MC: It would be nice if we had better emergency services, if our citizens had more employment options, and education opportunities for the kids.

SW: What would you think about new mines opening in your area?

CA: We have been in the fight for a mineral withdrawal. Mining has essentially stayed away from this area because of water. Our water is being threatened. Our open spaces are being threatened. Six, seven days a week, sometimes 10 to 12 hours a day or more that we are fighting.

There is a lot of over-pumping [of groundwater] already, and as Mike stated we've got wells going dry. They're going 300 to 500 feet in some areas, just to make sure they have water. And then we have the mines coming in, and they asked me if I would have a problem with piping water up to a gold mine from here. We can't sustain that.

SW: How do you think solar energy can be developed in a way that could benefit this community?

CA: The only way that it could benefit the community is to feed the Valley Electric system. We have

infrastructure that needs to be upgraded, and that's the only reason that we were backing this transmission line.

MC: They talk about the economic benefit to us. There is not an economic benefit. Our utility bills do not go down. That electricity gets shipped out of state most of the time. There are no permanent jobs. It does not offset the cost to our environment and our lifestyle. I am not looking forward to sitting in the middle of an industrial park. What sets Amargosa Valley apart from the rest of the rural parts of the country is we're going to have in excess of 25,000 acres of solar panels, transmission lines, substations, and battery storage within our township. Other places are getting them outside of town a ways, but they are in my town.

CA: When you go up through the center of town with solar, surround us completely by solar, we have no open spaces to work with. If you can find a way to feed our system, to lower our rates, or guarantee that we have

coverage if everything hits, then that would help. But otherwise it doesn't help us.

SW: How would you like to see the land around your town protected?

MC: Leave it alone. Leave it as is.

CA: With the loss of property values, private property owners are willing to sell out to these companies, and they are piecemealing it together with BLM land. We would like to see that stop. Put a blanket, an area where it is not allowed anywhere in the center of town, except what is already approved.

SW: What is one thing that you would like people to know about this community?

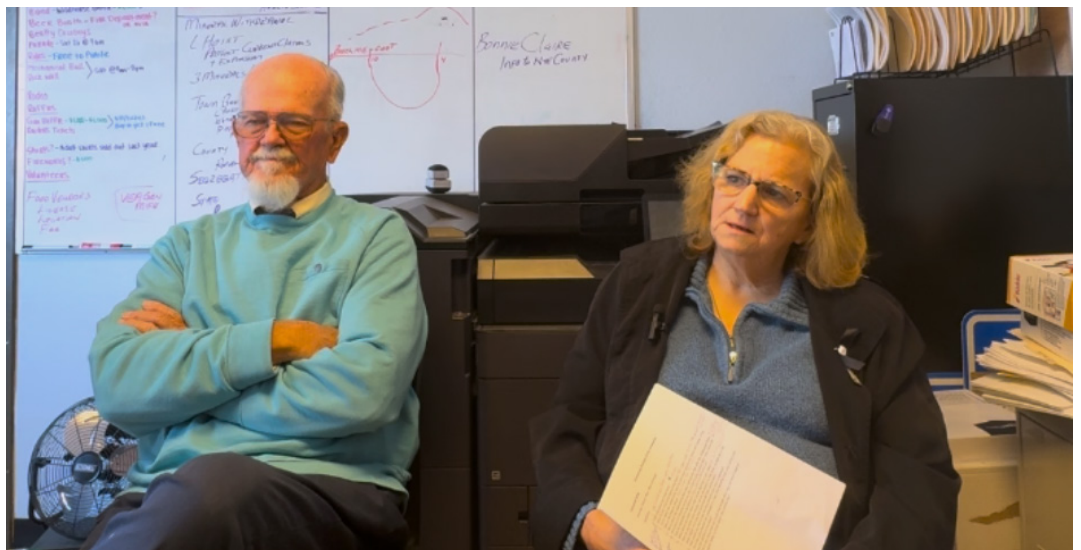
CA: Quite simply that it exists, and that we have fought very hard. I think a lot of people know about us now, and I think they found out when they started with the lithium and the solar, that there are people here that care.

MC: Politicians and big companies look out over this and they claim that the desert is barren. It is not. We live out here. We like this. It took Mother Nature thousands of years to create this. If they come out

here and strip it and put those damn solar things in, it will not grow back. We'll be left in a dust bowl.

For Nevada, we have the lowest number of people with college degrees, income level, money in the bank, education, and so forth, so it hits us particularly hard. And one of the biggest things, green energy lists all the benefits to the metropolitan areas. They have never talked about what it does to us in the rurals. We're the ones paying the price.

This all puts a tremendous load on our emergency services. We don't have the training or equipment to deal with the consequences of this. We have a little 865-acre solar site we've had for about five



Mike Cottingim and Carolyn Allen. | Scott H. Williams photo

years now. And a couple of years ago, we had five transformer fires in one summer. It took us two and a half hours to get somebody on the phone, and at that point, all they could tell us was to close your windows and turn off your AC. When it's 120 degrees and you're living in a mobile home, that is not an option. There is no consideration to the consequences to the people that live in these areas.

CA: I agree, wholeheartedly. We don't have the safety protocols that are required, we don't have the water. We run this town on \$520,000 a year, and that's everything. They promise all this money. Money is not going to save us when there is no water.

We don't mind doing our part, but we are 95% BLM land. When you are 95% BLM land, when you move here you think, "oh, nothing could happen, it's BLM, the land of the people." Nothing could be further from the truth. So now it's a matter of survival, fighting for our water, fighting for our way of life. They are trying to surround us.



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