

# DEFENDING GROUNDWATER DEPENDENT ECOSYSTEMS: 2 CASE STUDIES

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Groundwater is one of the most imperiled resources in the southwestern United States, and utilization of the resource is accelerating due to urbanization, agriculture, mining, and other uses. Groundwater dependent ecosystems are of central to supporting the biological diversity of the Great Basin and Mojave deserts, and are at dire risk of drying out and blowing away in the wind due to drawdown of aquifers. This talk will focus on two examples of the Center for Biological Diversity utilizing regulatory, legislative, and legal mechanisms, supported by robust hydrologic and biological science, to defend groundwater dependent ecosystems from destruction due to existing and proposed overexploitation of resources. In eastern Nevada, the Southern Nevada Water Authority has long pursued an enormous groundwater development project intended to send tens of thousands of acre feet of water down a 300 mile pipeline to Las Vegas. And in the Death Valley region, aquifers are in decline due to agricultural and residential overdraft in the Amargosa River Basin. In both instances, interventions are ongoing to stop development which threatens the very existence of groundwater dependent ecosystems.