



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE MOJAVE SPECIAL PROJECTS OFFICE

Accomplishments Report 2012

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Who We Are

Inspired by a shared vision of agriculture as a valued component of the landscape, NRCS works in partnership with private landowners and many others to improve, restore and protect the Nation's natural resources.

Side-by-side, we work with landowners and partners to sustain and improve the quality of our soil, water, air and wildlife habitat. We develop conservation plans that work for the land and for farmers and ranchers. Farm Bill programs help with the cost of putting conservation on the ground, which benefits the farm, the watershed, and the community. Conservation easement programs, also in the Farm Bill, help to protect the agricultural and natural resource values of the land over the long-term.

With our help, Nevada is balancing economic goals with a high quality environment – ensuring productive lands to supply food, fiber, forest and energy products for the Nation and the world.



“Managing to preserve a species is a monumental occurrence. Pulling people together while doing it is a cosmic experience. I am moved by the results of what has happened here. This has been a long process, not in getting our toad healthy in his only home, but in creating a common goal that serves all of us . . . including our friend. Attention now comes to us regarding our successes, not our failures, a far cry from where we started. Instead of facing lawsuits, we receive praise. We should all congratulate ourselves in the fact that it can be done, as long as we continue to ‘make a difference everyday’. Trust in this.”
David Spicer

David Spicer holds an Amargosa toad at a restoration project on his private property in Beatty, Nev.

Locally-led Conservation Efforts Keep Toad Off of Endangered Species List

David Spicer, a rancher in Beatty, Nevada and founder of a non-profit organization, Saving Toads Though Off-Road Racing, Ranching and Mining in the Oasis Valley (STORM-OV), has successfully rallied his community to protect the Amargosa toad (*Bufo nelsoni*) and keep it off of the list of endangered species.



Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, other federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, local government, fellow landowners, and by acquiring grants, Spicer and his STORM-OV partners have restored 11 springs, enhanced one mile of river, and created or enhanced 57 acres of toad breeding and foraging habitat mostly on private land.

The Amargosa toad was first petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act in 1994 due to threats which included invasive species, habitat loss, vegetation encroachment and ground water pumping. In response to the petition, an Amargosa Toad Working Group was formed to provide management and conservation guidance for the toad. Members of this group include the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Natural Heritage Program, Beatty Habitat Committee, Nye County, local residents, the town of Beatty, Nevada, and NRCS.

The Fish and Wildlife Service was petitioned to list the toad a second time in 2008 and completed a 12-month review of the toad's status in July 2010. The Service determined that the species did not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act, due to the coordinated conservation work by the local community, and agency partners. Their conservation efforts demonstrate that a community working together can help preclude the need to list a species.

Photos: USFWS

New Irrigation System Increases Crop Production for Moapa Paiute Tribe

The Moapa Band of Paiutes replaced a portion of the degraded concrete-lined ditch flood irrigation system on their farm with a more efficient wheel line sprinkler irrigation system, thanks to financial assistance from the Farm Bill's Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The project will provide improved sprinkler irrigation for 181 acres of farmland on seven fields that produce forage crops. The improved irrigation delivery pipeline will also deliver irrigation water to six flood-irrigated fields consisting of 117 acres.

NRCS also worked with the Moapa Band to install a seasonal high tunnel and drip irrigation system. The seasonal high tunnel is being used for as Tribal community garden to supply fresh vegetables to the Tribal Senior Center cafeteria.



Members of the Moapa Paiute Farm crew and NRCS employees pose in front of the new irrigation system.

New Pocket Park in Beatty Makes Community a Better Place for Everyone

The rural Nevada town of Beatty celebrated the grand opening of the Beatty Pocket Park this summer. Teri Knight, former Resource Conservation and Development Program coordinator, was instrumental in helping the community secure funding to establish the park, install a river trail, and clear debris and vegetation along the river.

Breeding habitat for the Amargosa Toad will also be protected by the new park.



The new pocket park in Beatty protects habitat for the Amargosa Toad.

NRCS Helps Meet Demand for Local, Healthy Food Supplies in Las Vegas

In the city of Las Vegas and throughout Nevada, NRCS is helping local growers install seasonal high tunnels. The high tunnels, or hoop houses, are temporary structures that extend the growing season, enabling farmers to plant earlier and grow longer. Their popularity is on the rise. Eighteen high tunnels were installed in Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, and more applications have been received for FY 2012.

In addition to extending the growing season, high tunnels help ensure a local supply of fresh produce for city residents and are helping connect people with the land, a goal of the *Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food* Initiative.



A farmer in the heart of north Las Vegas raises produce in his 91-foot high tunnel.

Sustaining Agriculture and Restoring Wetlands are Priorities for NRCS

NRCS and the High Desert Resource Conservation and Development (HD RC&D) Council have been working with local ranchers to raise native seed on their farms. The seed is purchased by the Bureau of Land Management to reseed lands to native vegetation along rivers and restore wetlands and riparian areas invaded by noxious weeds. The project is a win-win situation since raising the seed provides a steady source of income for the farmers.



John Hunt, HD RC&D member, surveys a native seed field.