

U.S. Department of Interior Cooperative Ground Water Protection in the Amargosa Basin

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U. S. Department of Interior



Water and the DMG

Water in the desert

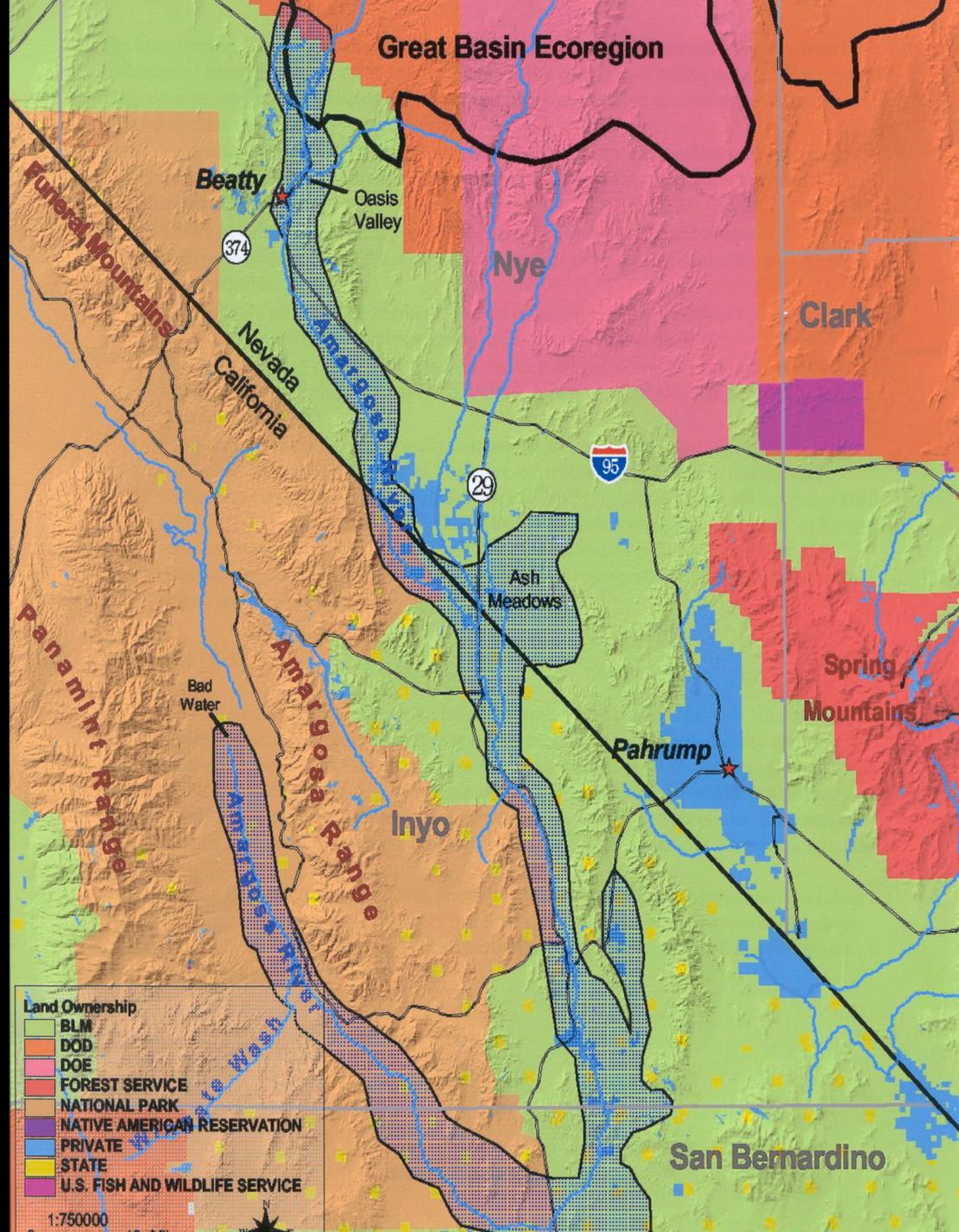
- Critical and scarce resource (people and the environment)
- Transcends jurisdictional boundaries

DMG 5 year plan (Goal 10):
Inventory, monitor, and protect critical water resources

- Develop spring monitoring protocols (complete)
- Monitor springs-share data (database)

Ambitious Water Work Plan developed but not funded (FY 01)





Land Ownership

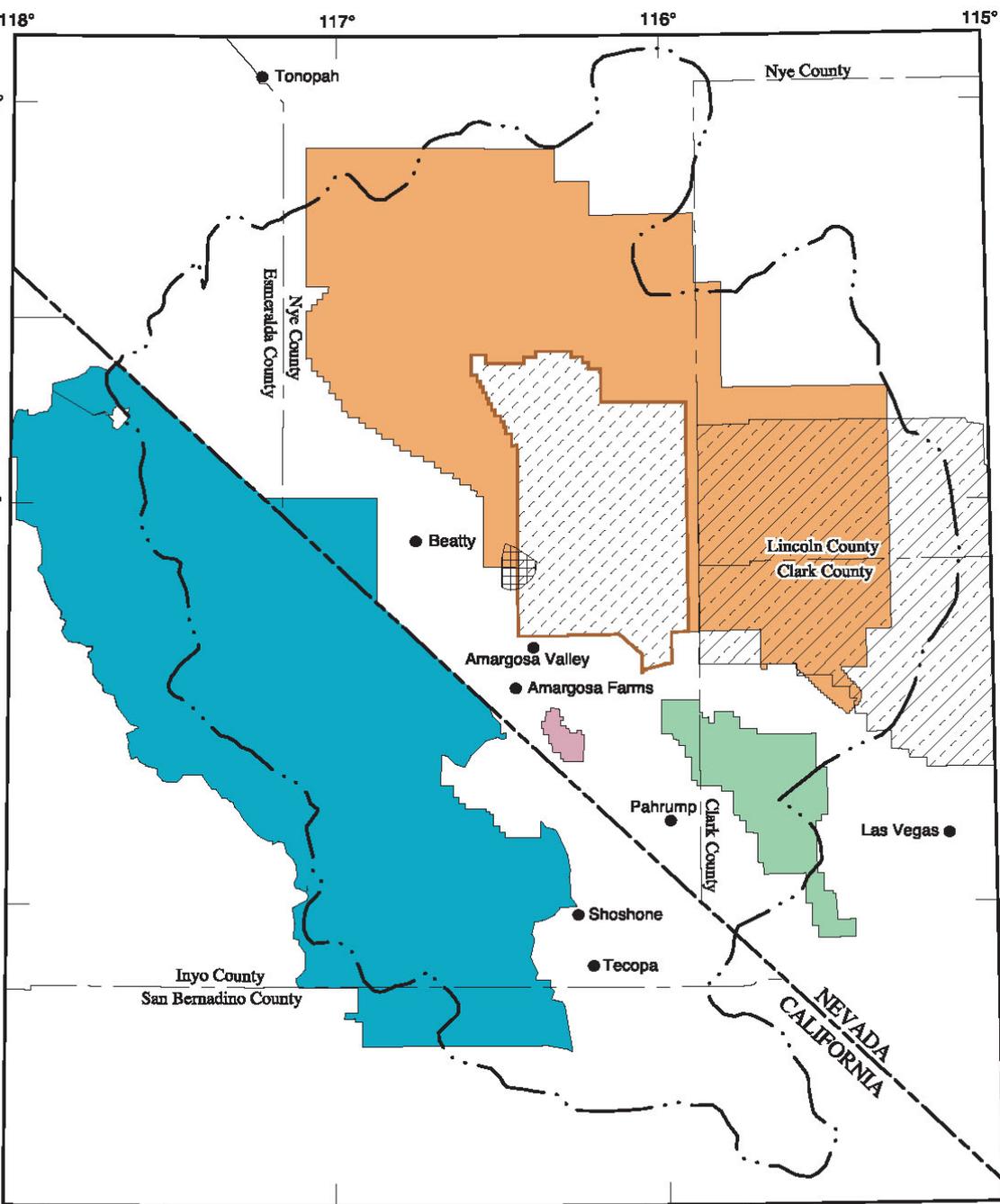
BLM
DOD
DOE
FOREST SERVICE
NATIONAL PARK
NATIVE AMERICAN RESERVATION
PRIVATE
STATE
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

1:750000



Major Areas of Federally Administered Land in Death Valley Regional Flow System

-  Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge
-  Death Valley National Park
-  Nellis Air Force Range
-  Toiyabe National Forest
-  Desert National Wildlife Range
-  Nevada Test Site
-  Yucca Mountain Control Area
-  Death Valley Regional Flow System Boundary

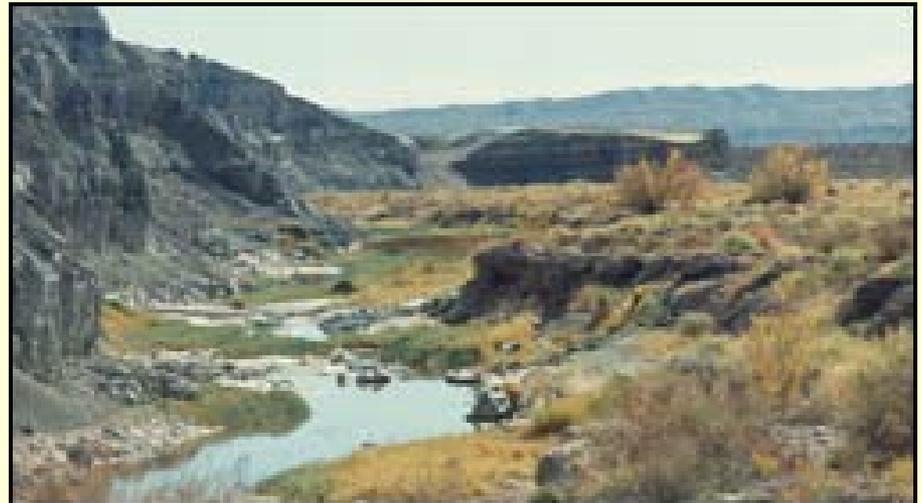


Base from U.S. Geological Survey digital data, 1:100,000,
1978-89: Universal Transverse Mercator Projection Zone 11

0 20 40 MILES
0 20 40 KILOMETERS

Amargosa Natural Resources

- Important Riparian and Spring Habitat
- Recreational Values
 - Hiking
 - Mountain Biking
 - Photography
 - Sight Seeing
 - Nature Study
- Wilderness Values
- Eligible Wild and Scenic River



Sensitive, threatened and endangered species



GROUND WATER—There's only so much – It's a Desert

Threatened and Endangered Species

Riparian Habitat



Endemic Species



Agriculture



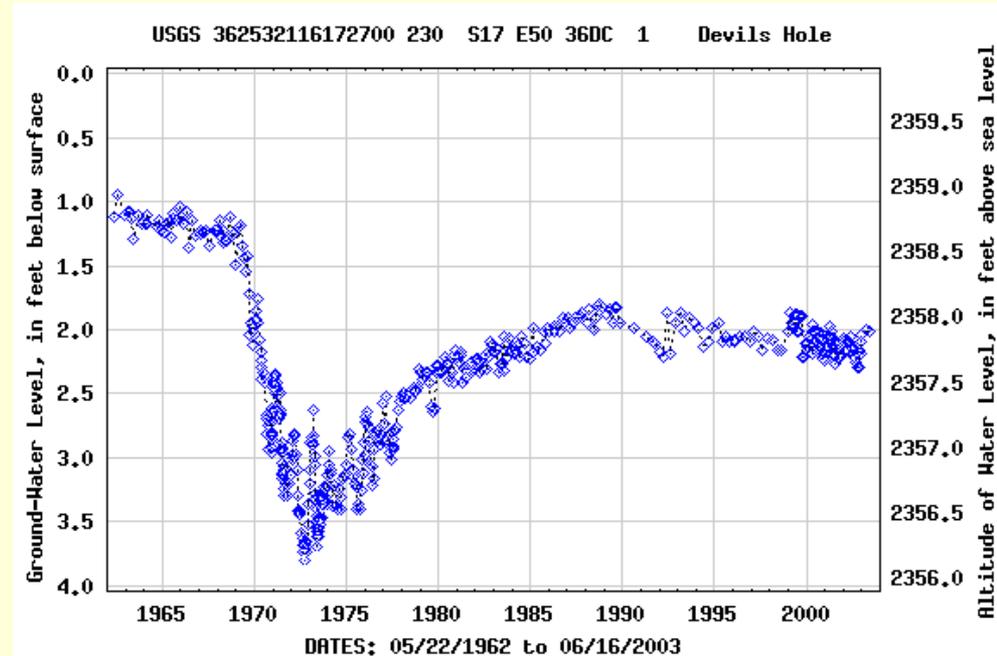
Development



Urban Sprawl

Technical Uncertainty

- Timing, magnitude, and location of groundwater withdrawals
 - Current
 - Future
- Relationship between groundwater withdrawals and spring discharge and dependent resources
- Availability of water to meet competing needs



Death Valley Regional Flow System Model

- USGS Developed; DOE (Yucca Mountain) primary sponsor
- Provides common framework for data management and analysis
- Long term support and use is uncertain
- Needs multi party support and acceptance as permanent management tool.
 - Federal Agencies
 - State Engineer
 - Local governments
 - Water users

Institutional Issues

- No cooperative plan or strategy to balance the competing needs for water and address trans-boundary flow and legal issues
- No clear authority/leadership/forum for such a plan

Federal Amargosa Basin Coordination Process

- DOI MOA Signed: January 04
- Parties: BLM, FWS, GS, NPS
- Purpose:
 - Establish ongoing communication and coordination process
 - facilitate a unified DOI/Fed position
- Scope: CA and NV
- Additional participants: Nellis AFB, DOE, Inyo County, Nye County, NV State Engineer, Stakeholders



Current Agenda

Amargosa Coordination Process

- Support and Application of USGS Regional Ground Water Model
- Unified Groundwater Monitoring
- BLM Land Disposal
- MOU among Nye County, Nye County citizens and DOI to work cooperatively to share info and resolve water rights disputes

What are the benefits of a cooperative approach?



- More secure water supplies (environment and people)
- Fewer ESA listing and conflicts
- Increased certainty
- Increased cost effectiveness

18-Month Plan

- Support and refine GS Regional Model
- Develop unified DOI position on critical issues e.g.
 - Monitoring
 - Mitigation of impacts
 - Land disposal
- Explore and create collaborative partnerships (Nye County and others)



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