



U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Conserving the Biological Diversity of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra, and Mojave Desert



A Passion for Amargosa Toads



David Spicer holds Amargosa toads at a restoration project on his private property.

Photo:
C.Manville/USFWS

With a passion for conservation of the Amargosa toad, David Spicer, a rancher in Beatty, Nevada, has successfully rallied together his community. His leadership brought

together environmental organizations, off-road vehicle users, mining interests, ranchers, members of the Nevada business community not usually associated with species conservation, as well as the local community, to implement conservation actions for the Amargosa toad. Their conservation efforts for the Amargosa toad have helped preclude the need to list the species.

In addition to his community leadership, Spicer founded a non-profit organization, Saving Toads Though Off-Road Racing, Ranching and Mining in the Oasis Valley (STORM-OV), and designed and constructed spring outflows to maintain functional toad habitat through Nevada's hot, dry summers.

In response to a petition to list the Amargosa toad, an Amargosa Toad Working Group was formed to provide management and conservation guidance for the toad. Members of this group include Nevada Department of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Bureau of Land Management, Nevada Natural Heritage Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Beatty Habitat Committee, Nye County, local residents and the town of Beatty, Nevada.

On September 14, 2011, Rob Moroka, Ecologist and Nevada Conservation Advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity wrote Mr. Spicer a letter commending him and the other partners as follows:

“STORM-OV has been able to bring the community, miners, ranchers, motorized recreation enthusiasts, and conservation organizations together to effectively work with the FWS and the Nevada Department of Wildlife in accomplishing significant on-the-ground conservation actions that have benefited the toads and resulted in an increasing population trend. Dave Spicer has been at the heart of these activities and instills a contagious enthusiasm and spirit into the conservation efforts.”



Amargosa toad breeding habitat. Photo: J. Milmoe/USFWS

These partners completed habitat improvement projects with the assistance of the Service’s Partners for Fish and Wildlife program by partnering with federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, local government, and fellow landowners, and acquiring grants. David Spicer and partners have restored 11 springs, enhanced one mile of the Amargosa River, and created or enhanced 57 acres of toad breeding and foraging habitat mostly on private land. This community working together is the perfect example of successful habitat restoration and species conservation.