

A MONUMENTAL OPPORTUNITY IN THE AMARGOSA

The crown jewel of the Mojave Desert: The Amargosa Basin. This rich landscape between Death Valley National Park and the Mojave National Preserve is home to rare ecology and intact wild lands found nowhere else, world-class geology showcasing the history of the earth, exceptional recreational opportunities, and a living laboratory for scientific and broadly educational purposes. These lands have further been, and continue to be, part of ancestral practices and lifeways for local Indigenous groups since time immemorial. Recent Euro-American history also abounds, as settlers, explorers, and prospectors once traveled through the basin on the Old Spanish and Mormon trails. Despite its harsh exterior, the Mojave desert is fragile. Plants, animals, and people depend on limited essential resources here, especially the vital desert springs and the Amargosa River. The resources of the Amargosa Basin need appropriate and comprehensive protection and management. It is vital that we care for the Amargosa Basin, to support life here, connect to other nearby wild spaces, and respect its past and present communities. This is a uniquely special place worth protecting, and we can honor it for generations to come through a National Monument designation.

WHY A NATIONAL MONUMENT? WHY NOW?

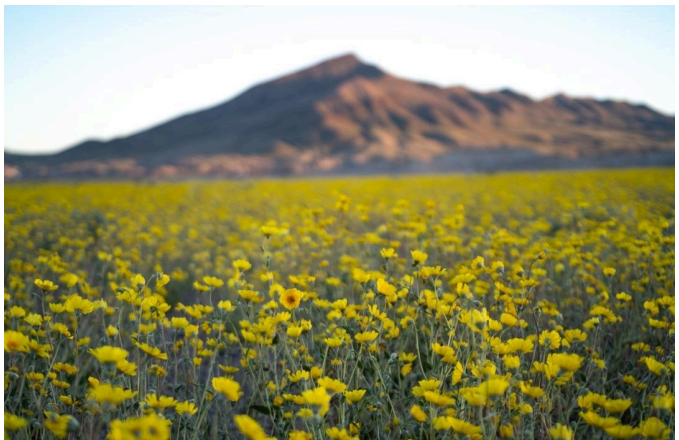
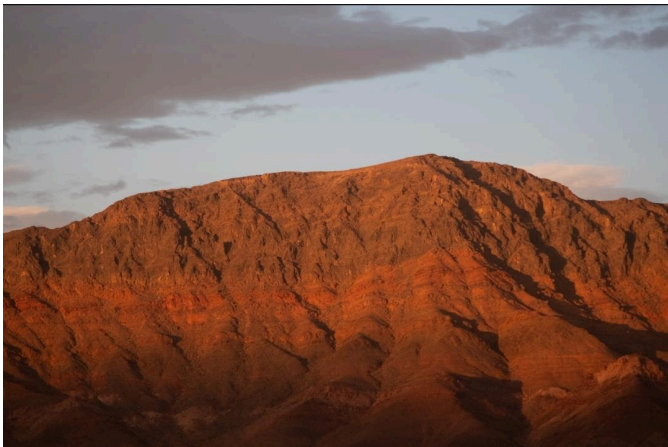
The purpose of a National Monument designation is to “conserve, protect and restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations” (National Landscape Conservation System Act). Parts of the Amargosa region are already administratively protected through National Conservation Lands designations under the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), including a Wild and Scenic River (WSR), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), a National Historic Trail (NHT), and Wilderness Areas designated by Congress, but each such designation applies to a particular, not necessarily connected, part of the Amargosa Basin, and management guidelines differ for each. Furthermore, *not all of these designations have durable, lasting protection guarantees*. Establishing the Amargosa Basin as a National Monument will ensure the region has a holistic, consistent management plan with a broader perspective. However, because National Monuments and National Conservation Lands *have no jurisdiction over privately owned lands, such designations also respect the autonomy of tribes, the state, and private landowners*.



This diverse region and its connected parts face existential threats, such as unsustainable groundwater use and flow changes from large-scale industrial project proposals, “discovery” of the area and impacts from increasing visitation, lack of adequate protection for Indigenous cultural sites and artifacts, loss of wildlife and habitat connectivity, and climate change, among others.

Establishing the Amargosa Basin as a National Monument would help ensure it is appropriately managed with a proactive plan in place that involves maximum tribal and public input and direction. Monument status would also connect the basin to its neighboring desert ecosystems and public spaces in Death Valley National Park and the Mojave National Preserve, allowing for a balancing of conservation with multiple uses, and public access in perpetuity. National Monument status would also offer further opportunities to protect and restore habitats and ecosystems, while adding capacity to community resources already in the Amargosa Basin.

The Amargosa Basin’s iconic landscapes and communities are facing numerous pressures that could significantly impact quality of life at a local scale. Inadequate management is no longer an option. We have an opportunity to safeguard an iconic slice of the California desert from uses, trends, and changes that would be destructive to the land and all who live upon it. While not all shifts or uses are negative, all must be thoughtfully considered within a broader vision or context. Establishing a National Monument in the Amargosa Basin would help to sustain the land and people long into the future, providing clear and complete guidelines for the region, including new economic and tourist opportunities to sustain local communities and businesses.



HOW YOU CAN HELP & LEARN MORE

We need your help to achieve National Monument status in the Amargosa Basin. The Friends of the Amargosa Basin and a coalition of diverse organizations are building collaborations, engaging local communities about their needs, and delivering results that protect and support the species and people of the region.

You can get more information and join us at our website at www.friendsoftheamargosabasin.org, contact Executive Director Cameron Mayer at Cmayer@friendsoftheamargosabasin.org or President Susan Sorrells at ssorrells@shoshonevillage.com.

