

# nevada update

FALL 2023

YOUR  
NEVADA  
NEWS

## Collaborating to Tackle Today's Biggest Challenges

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The Nature  
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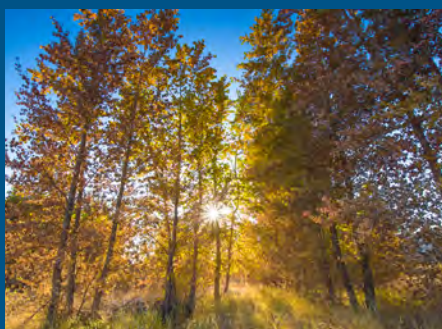
**Mauricia M.M. Baca**  
NEVADA STATE DIRECTOR



*Nevada Update* is the biannual newsletter for friends of The Nature Conservancy in Nevada. If you have questions or feedback, please contact Sara Burluson at [sara.burluson@tnc.org](mailto:sara.burluson@tnc.org).

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ON THE COVER Independence Lake Preserve © Chip Carroon/TNC; THIS PAGE Mauricia M.M. Baca © James Lavish; Fall on the Truckee River © Chip Carroon/TNC; OPPOSITE PAGE Springs at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge © Simon Williams/TNC

# DEAR FRIENDS,

Nevada is at the center of so many challenges facing the West. Lithium and rare earth minerals needed for the clean energy revolution will come from our lands. Drinking water for multiple states depends on the future of Lake Mead and the Colorado River. The sagebrush sea that stretches across the eastern part of our state and gives life to local economies and communities is shrinking every year, due to wildfires and development.

Amidst our challenges, there is hope. Here at The Nature Conservancy in Nevada, we are creating innovative solutions that are both supporting Nevadans and reaching far beyond our borders. What we do here can help people and nature thrive everywhere. We are rising to the challenge of balancing the needs of communities and the environment when it comes to industrial-scale energy development and the rare earth minerals needed for decarbonization. We are protecting the health of our freshwater systems, including our groundwater and the Colorado River. We are leading the Sagebrush Sea program to revitalize our rangelands for people and wildlife. We are also partnering with the U.S. Forest Service and Tribes to help bring fire and nature back into balance.

Over the summer, I joined my fellow state directors from TNC's Western U.S. and Canada Division in Idaho, and we spent a week at the beautiful Silver Creek Preserve. Protecting lands like Silver Creek and our Nevada preserves still informs our mission today and is such a big part of what we do even as we adapt and meet future challenges. I am excited to share with you how our organization is evolving and how we are thinking even bigger.

Our time in Idaho was focused on aligning around shared priorities, discussing how to achieve our 2030 goals, and planning how to elevate our impact by working together as a division. TNC has always focused on collaboration, but now we are scaling up. The climate and biodiversity challenges in the Western U.S. and Canada are so profound that our division must work together closely and focus on solutions to problems that don't stop at our state borders.

The impact we can make by working together is incredible. We are big: Our continental-scale division encompasses 11 western U.S. states, including Alaska, and Canada, the second largest country on the planet. It excites me to think about how we will make an even bigger impact across this massive geographic scale when we're working together with intention. It also makes me so hopeful: while we do face profound challenges, I see the an abundant future that we can create and the inspiring results that we've already achieved together.

As I spent time with the other directors, I was inspired by our spirit of collaboration and the positive, united energy that was created when we were together in one room. (I was also thrilled to celebrate the Golden Knights winning the Stanley Cup, though my Canadian counterpart was less happy). We are fortunate to have a great team led by wonderful leadership, including

## OUR INITIATIVES



our division director Toni Hardesty. (You'll read more about her later in this newsletter!) I am also thrilled that we're about to hire a division-wide climate director so that we can work at local, regional and global scales to balance decarbonization and biodiversity.

The Nevada chapter recently completed our new strategic plan, and you'll see our new structure reflected in this newsletter and our communications going forward, with our focus on resilient lands, resilient waters, climate action and people. As we work toward a Nevada where people and nature thrive, we are also contributing to a more sustainable future for our region and our planet. So many of the lessons that we learn here in Nevada will be scaled to other places and will inform and support work happening around the globe. Thank you—your generous support is making a difference here and everywhere. Together, we find a way.

With gratitude,



P.S. Next year we will be celebrating our 40th anniversary as a chapter! Stay tuned for more information on upcoming events and ways to connect with us. I am so excited to see what we will accomplish together in the next 40 and beyond.

We also share a birthday with Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, because when TNC helped to protect this extraordinarily diverse place outside of Las Vegas 40 years ago, it became clear that Nevada needed its own chapter in our organization. We are excited to celebrate the refuge's anniversary, and our role in helping to protect it, on Earth Day 2024. More details to come, and we hope you will join us!



TNC Western U.S. and Canada state directors at their retreat in Idaho © Jamie Wentz



SAVE THE DATE

# Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge 40th Anniversary Celebration

April 20, 2024





## MIDDLE TRUCKEE RIVER WATERSHED FOREST PARTNERSHIP AWARDED \$8M TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISK

Climate change and a century of fire suppression in western forests has increased the risk of catastrophic wildfire in the Sierra Nevada. But the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership is working hard to change that.

“Our research shows there is a high likelihood of intense wildfire in the Sierra Nevada absent the important work this partnership is tackling,” says Heather Giger, strategy director for land and stewardship for TNC Nevada. “But by working together, we are improving forest management for a healthier and more resilient watershed.”

The partnership, made up of The Nature Conservancy, the National Forest Foundation, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Truckee River Watershed Council, and the United States Forest Service–Tahoe National Forest, is working on accelerating the pace and scale of forest management in the Middle Truckee River Watershed to increase resilience for communities and nature. The group signed a formal partnership agreement last year with a 10-year plan and a goal of treating 62,000 acres.

In September, the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) awarded the partnership \$8.3 million in grant funding to support forest treatments that will improve ecological resilience. The grant will fund forest treatments across 1,924 acres of the Five Creeks Project, just south of the Town of Truckee, California, as well as support planning for future projects across 6,000 acres near three important reservoirs. The forest treatments will help significantly enhance high-quality wildlife habitat conditions while reducing the potential wildfire severity and restoring forest health conditions. They will help restore the balance of tree species, reduce ladder fuels, create varied forest stand densities, and reconnect hydrology within and across meadow and upland habitats.

The Middle Truckee River watershed spans approximately 315,000 acres and touches three counties in California and one in Nevada. It encompasses important forest and meadow ecosystems, the Truckee River, communities, recreational resources, and water supply reservoirs. Improving forest resilience can also benefit communities downstream by reducing wildfire impacts on clean water supplies.

“Northern Nevada relies on the forested headwaters of the Truckee River for a high-quality water supply,” says Kara Steeland, hydrologist at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. “It’s essential that we cooperate with our upstream partners to mitigate water quality impacts that result from wildfires.”

Although the partnership is focused on the next 10 years, it is expected that additional work will be needed beyond the next decade. But by working together, the partnership can achieve more than any of the individual organizations could on their own.

“By uniting multiple organizations with a shared vision, the partnership exemplifies the power of collective action in addressing complex conservation challenges,” says Dan Alvey, Tahoe area program manager for the National Forest Foundation.



**LEARN MORE** about the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership at [truckeeforests.org](https://truckeeforests.org).



## The Gary and Lajetta Atwood Preserve

*Oasis Valley preserve renamed to honor longtime TNC donors*

The 7J Ranch Preserve in the Oasis Valley is now The Gary and Lajetta Atwood Preserve! We renamed the preserve near Beatty to honor two longtime generous donors to TNC: Lajetta Atwood, and her late husband, Gary Atwood. In April, we held a small ceremony with the Atwood family to recognize the couple’s extraordinary generosity and unveil a new sign.

The Atwoods have supported TNC since 1997 and have supported the Nevada chapter since 2016 when they moved from Seattle to Las Vegas. The vast majority of their contributions have been for the TNC Nevada’s work in the Oasis Valley, one of the most important hotspots for biodiversity in the country. Gary and Lajetta have made plans for TNC in their estate and their future generosity will also support our work.



I am so proud to have The Gary and Lajetta Atwood Preserve join our network of special places that are contributing to our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

**Jennifer Morris**, CEO, *The Nature Conservancy*

“The Atwoods’ generosity is important for our chapter and for our organization as a whole,” says Mauricia M.M. Baca, state director for TNC Nevada. “Gary and Lajetta have been integral to our ability to purchase and restore properties in the Oasis Valley, including the Atwood Preserve. I am always humbled by people who dedicate their legacy to a better future for people and nature, and we are so grateful to the Atwoods for their current and planned transformative contributions.”

Lajetta and Gary, an Army veteran, met in Los Angeles, and they both worked as accountants throughout their careers. After leaving California, they owned, ran and sold a motel in Utah. They then lived in Seattle until Gary retired from the Washington Department of Transportation and Lajetta retired from a private mortgage lender. They moved to Las Vegas in 2016, where Lajetta continues to make her home. Gary passed away unexpectedly in March 2022.

The Atwoods were prolific travelers: They traveled all over the U.S. in the early years of their marriage, and over the course of four decades, they visited more than 80 countries, many more than once. They also enjoyed rock hounding, a hobby that took them all over the West.

TNC Nevada acquired the 900-acre Atwood Preserve in early 2019, after nearly two decades of effort, thanks to generous support from the Atwoods. The springs and wetlands found on the property form the headwaters of the Amargosa River, a primarily underground river that emerges to the surface as springs along its path. When the river emerges aboveground, it gives rise to oases harboring a remarkable diversity of life, including rare fish, plants, amphibians and more than 250 species of resident and migratory

birds. The highest concentration of endemic species anywhere in the United States is found along the middle region of the Amargosa River system, at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. This preserve was an important purchase so we can protect and restore the river’s headwaters and the property’s exceptional ecological value.

“We are so grateful to the Atwoods for their exceptional gifts, and we deeply appreciate all of their incredible support to help us acquire and steward important places for birds and other wildlife,” says Jennifer Morris, CEO of The Nature Conservancy. “I am so proud to have The Gary and Lajetta Atwood Preserve join our network of special places that are contributing to our mission to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.”



**LEARN MORE** about the Atwood Preserve and other TNC preserves at [nature.org/placesweprotect](https://nature.org/placesweprotect).



# A Brighter Water Future

Exploring a way forward for farmers in Diamond Valley

**Diamond Valley**, a remote area in central Nevada with a rich agricultural history, is facing the same challenge that is occurring in many places across the state: more groundwater is being pumped out than is being replenished, so groundwater levels are declining.

To help transition to a sustainable water future, the State Engineer designated Diamond Valley a Critical Management Area in 2015, empowering water rights-holders to come up with a local groundwater management plan (GMP) to stabilize groundwater levels or face mandated curtailment in 10 years (without a local GMP). In 2019, Diamond Valley water rights holders came up with a GMP signed by a majority of water rights holders that was challenged in court and upheld by the Nevada Supreme Court in 2022.

As the GMP is implemented, it's important to figure out how the economy and culture of Diamond Valley can continue to thrive with less water. Many Diamond Valley families have been in the area for generations and the sales of primarily grass and alfalfa hay grown there are crops that require irrigation and are a major economic driver for the community.

Jake Tibbitts, Eureka County's natural resources manager, who helped facilitate the crafting of the GMP, has been thinking about alternative land uses. "We know farmland will be coming out of irrigated production," Tibbitts says, since the GMP mandates reductions in water use. There is growing interest in solar leases in the area because it is close to existing and planned electrical transmission lines, including NV Energy's proposed Greenlink North powerline. Agrivoltaics (using the same land

for both solar panels and agriculture) is an alternative land-use option that could accompany the retirement of groundwater rights (taking water out of use permanently).

"Water rights retirement would assist in more quickly meeting the ultimate objective of the Diamond Valley Groundwater Management Plan of stabilizing drawdown of the water table,"

Tibbitts says. "Agrivoltaics is a land use that could be a natural fit and an incentive for the valley to transition to." He explains, "It could assist in meeting alternative energy goals while including an agricultural component and providing another value-added economic opportunity for landowners."

Laurel Saito, TNC Nevada's water strategy director, has worked with Tibbitts on water issues for years, and she's been tracking



Consultant Bryant Kuechle leads a community meeting in Diamond Valley in partnership with TNC and Eureka County © Laurel Saito/TNC

developments on the GMP. Saito, Tibbitts and Jeff Fontaine, executive director of both the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority and Humboldt River Basin Water Authority, recently worked together with State Senator Pete Goicoechea at the Nevada 2023 legislative session to propose legislation for a water buyback program in which Nevadans could voluntarily and permanently retire groundwater rights. Though the legislation did not pass in that session, even with broad stakeholder support, the group continues to work toward the goal of a statewide program, and Diamond Valley could be a great proving ground.

"Diamond Valley is a place where there could be folks who would voluntarily retire their groundwater rights if there was a groundwater rights retirement program," Saito says. "And that would help them in achieving the goals of their groundwater management plan."

Diamond Valley could also be ideal for solar energy development. Tibbitts says several residents have already signed solar leases, and more will likely do so soon.

Tibbitts and Saito agreed that now is the best time to do research and make sure any projects related to agrivoltaics or groundwater rights retirement would be supported by and would benefit the community. They came up with the idea to do a feasibility study and began working on it in September.

Saito brought in Peter Gower, TNC Nevada's strategy director for energy, infrastructure and land use, to see if Diamond Valley would be a good location for agrivoltaics. Building renewable energy development on already-disturbed lands is one of TNC's priority strategies for tackling carbon emissions.

"These are two of the biggest issues in the West right now: the renewable energy buildout and the overall water scarcity, groundwater in particular, for Nevada," Gower says. "This study explores a possible solution that could address both while still allowing communities to thrive."

The feasibility study was made possible thanks to funds from Eureka County and Eureka Conservation District, as well as grants from the Lincoln Dynamic Foundation and TNC's Catalyst Fund, which supports innovative ideas in science. The ultimate

goal of the study is to provide community members with useful information so they can decide how to move forward, Saito says.

"It has to be done with the vision and comfort levels of the land-owners and the community," Gower added. "That's why we're doing this in-depth community engagement process."

Making decisions in a way that preserves Diamond Valley's economy and culture is key. As land is transitioned out of agriculture, it has to be done in a way that minimizes impacts on neighbors, resources, and the overall community, Tibbitts says.

"The agricultural and open space aspects of Diamond Valley are valued by many people," he explains. "Decisions around water scarcity and farmland conversion can't only focus on economics but must also consider the social aspects and how ways of life tied to agricultural operations in Diamond Valley are much of the social glue of our community."

Saito, Tibbitts, Gower and their consultant, Bryant Kuechle with The Langdon Group, held community meetings and interviews in Diamond Valley in September. The next phase of the project will explore the technical and logistical aspects of implementing agrivoltaics and groundwater rights retirement. Another community meeting in early 2024 will share the preliminary findings of the feasibility study, and a final report will be released in February.

For Tibbitts, serving the people in Diamond Valley is particularly meaningful.

"I thrive on helping to provide the community with the data and information to shape its future when faced with undesirable realities, rather than just allowing things to happen with no foresight," he says.

## DIAMOND VALLEY Groundwater Management Plan Goals

- 💧 Stabilize groundwater levels
- 💧 Reduce consumptive use to not exceed perennial yield
- 💧 Increase groundwater supply
- 💧 Maximize the number of groundwater users committed to achieving GMP goals
- 💧 Preserve economic outputs
- 💧 Maximize viable land-uses of private land
- 💧 Avoid impairment of vested rights
- 💧 Preserve the socioeconomic structure of Diamond Valley and southern Eureka County

# TREES

*A nature-based solution  
for Nevada*

**On Tanya Anderson's morning commute** to The Nature Conservancy's office in southwest Las Vegas, she sometimes looks across the valley to the east side of the city and notices the smog.

Seeing that air pollution, and wanting to help the city's residents reduce it, drives her efforts to get more trees planted in local communities. For the past year, Anderson, the Nevada project manager for TNC, has been helping to convene what she calls the "Tree Coalition." It's a collection of researchers, planners, park managers, and community members from 18 different organizations who are all working to increase urban tree canopy in the Las Vegas Valley.

"Trees are a way to help mitigate air pollution and help people where they are," Anderson says. "I care about nature for nature's sake, but I also care about nature for people. It's important for us to address the issues that affect us where we live."

## Growing trees and partnerships

Anderson has experience in convening groups of partners on behalf of people and nature. In 2017, she helped to organize the Virgin River Coalition, a group of community members, irrigation and water districts, nonprofit organizations, city representatives, and county, state and federal partners, with a focus on ensuring that the Lower Virgin River Watershed is protected for local communities and wildlife. That experience helped her learn how to work with big groups of people and make sure she is bringing everyone to the table—from the large organizations like the city and water utilities to local place-based nonprofits and the communities affected by the work.

"Including those local groups that are place-based, that are really focused on equity, is important, and so is bringing them in from the very beginning," she says. "It's all very relationship based. Our partners have been so great to work with and this has been an incredible team effort."

Urban tree canopy, and the intense urban heat that's present in areas without enough trees, is an equity issue. Last summer, NASA recorded sidewalk temperatures of 122 degrees in Las Vegas. The areas of the city that were primarily covered in asphalt were 23 degrees hotter in the summer than were shady areas with more green spaces. Neighborhoods in east Las Vegas with lower tree canopy are among the hottest areas, while suburban locations tend to be comparatively cooler.

The right trees in the right locations can have positive outcomes on communities and the planet. "Trees are a nature-based solution to climate change," says Peter Gower, TNC Nevada's strategy director for energy, infrastructure and land use, who is co-leading the project with Anderson. "Expanding tree canopy is a way to directly mitigate climate change and provide climate change resiliency, especially in underserved communities and areas that are disproportionately affected by extreme heat." It is important that the trees

*We are one of the fastest-warming cities with one of the worst urban heat islands in the country. The best way to fight that is to expand our tree canopy.*

**Alison Sloat, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor-in-Residence, College of Sciences, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

can tolerate hot temperatures and do not require a lot of water. The Southern Nevada Water Authority publishes a list of recommended tree species, including their associated water needs.

"People are part of nature, so we have to take care of them," Anderson says. "Especially vulnerable communities, children and older people."

TNC Nevada has previously done some work in this area. In partnership with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) School of Architecture and the City of Henderson, we supported a class project where students were tasked with designing parking lots at UNLV with additional tree canopy without losing any parking stalls.

After that collaboration, we joined UNLV again, along with the Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF), to submit a proposal to the National Science Foundation to evaluate tree canopy in Las Vegas. We sought to understand how to help communities that are disproportionately experiencing the effects of extreme heat. While that proposal wasn't funded, NDF ultimately provided funding to TNC and UNLV to study the current efforts around urban tree canopy in Las Vegas and identify opportunities to expand it in the Las Vegas Valley.

"There's a whole bunch of organizations doing their own research, planning, and tree planting projects," Gower says. "We were asked to step in and bring all of these groups together, document who's doing what, and see where there might be opportunities for improvement. We are so grateful to our partners at NDF and UNLV for supporting our efforts."

Anderson, Gower and their partners from UNLV hosted an initial workshop in February 2023 with all stakeholders to learn more about their research, plans and projects. Their team, including UNLV associate professors Alison Sloat and Phillip Zawarus, assembled those materials into a baseline report that was shared with stakeholders at a second workshop in September.

## A greener future

The next steps of the Tree Coalition's work will be to study gaps in the research and develop strategies for getting more trees into communities. Efforts might include helping city residents with tree plantings where they live and developing a strategic planning tool that can guide a coordinated approach to expanding urban tree canopies.

The impacts of having more trees in the ground can go far beyond Las Vegas. In addition to the other benefits they provide, trees can also help support our renewable energy goals and reduce the amount of infrastructure we need to build and the land we have to develop. Gower is working hard on this issue with TNC's "smart from the start" energy planning strategy.

"More shade from tree canopy in cities can have direct benefits to non-urban areas," Gower says. "Shaded buildings, for example, use less energy for cooling in the summer. The more efficient and sustainable our urban environments are, the less energy they need and the less pressure that puts on rural areas and our public lands in Nevada for energy and transmission development."

TNC and UNLV will also continue to work together on urban forestry, thanks to funding from the federal Inflation Reduction Act. In September, the U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry Program awarded UNLV \$5 million as part of more than \$1 billion for 385 projects across the country. The UNLV team, led by Sloat, Zawarus and professor Dale Devitt, will use the funding to create the Las Vegas Urban Forest Center, which will provide education and workforce development opportunities to the city's residents to help increase urban tree canopy and combat extreme heat in disadvantaged communities. TNC will contribute science and strategic support for the project. After it kicks off in early 2024, trained arborists and volunteers will plant trees around UNLV and in nearby disadvantaged communities.

"We are one of the fastest-warming cities with one of the worst urban heat islands in the country," Sloat says. "The best way to fight that is to expand our tree canopy. The trees will provide additional shade for pedestrians, help reduce air and surface temperatures, and improve air quality."

There is also growing interest in trees across the state: Nevada state legislators passed AB 131 in 2023, a bill that creates an urban and community forestry program within NDF. Las Vegas' future is looking greener—something both Gower and Anderson are looking forward to.

"We are excited to continue this partnership, to build and strengthen it, and to have a more strategic process for tree canopy going forward," Gower says.

"I am excited to see an equitable increase in the distribution of canopy across Las Vegas," Anderson adds, "as well as a group of stakeholders working collaboratively to implement the planting, maintenance and monitoring of those trees."



From left: UNLV Provost and Vice President Chris Heavey, Phillip Zawarus, UNLV Interim Vice President for Research David Hatchett, Alison Sloat, Tanya Anderson and UNLV President Keith Whitfield at UNLV urban forestry initiative grant ceremony © Jennifer Leal-Flores; OPPOSITE PAGE Urban tree canopy in Reno © Chip Carroon/TNC



**VOLUNTEER** Want to get involved and help plant trees in Las Vegas in spring and fall 2024? Email [alison.sloat@unlv.org](mailto:alison.sloat@unlv.org).

# Meet Toni Hardesty

## Western U.S. and Canada Division Director



**Toni Hardesty** is the Western U.S. and Canada Division Director for The Nature Conservancy. She leads the division (made up of 11 state programs and Canada) to advance The Nature Conservancy's highest priorities, ensure execution of division-wide projects, facilitate cross-boundary work, raise funds, engage volunteer trustees and develop leaders.

Previously, Toni served as Idaho State Director, focusing on collaborative conservation projects that benefit nature and people. She also was appointed by three separate governors as the director of Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality, and she worked for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. As an environmental consultant in the private sector, she worked with private industry, government agencies and nonprofits on a wide range of environmental issues. Toni has a bachelor's degree in environmental health from Boise State University.

### How did you become interested in conservation, and what brought you to TNC?

I grew up on a farm in rural Idaho, so I was always very interested in nature. I loved being outside, hiking and horseback riding. In college, I majored in environmental science. I tried a number of different sciences and it was the one that really stuck with me. I then worked on environmental issues in a number of ways, including for the state and federal government and as a private consultant.

When the opportunity came up to work for The Nature Conservancy, I jumped at it. This has been my favorite job and I've really enjoyed it. I was a big supporter of TNC even before I worked here. I've always really appreciated the approach that TNC takes to find pragmatic solutions and to work with both people and nature in a way that supports communities and the people who are living there.

### What's your favorite part of your job? What accomplishment has been most meaningful to you so far?

That's a hard question! One of the great things about this role is that I actually get to see work across such a large geography—11 western states and Canada. I get to see things that are happening across the board, and so it's really hard to pick a favorite, because it depends on the week you talk to me and what's happening!

At the end of the day, the projects that I really think resonate with me are those where we have an outsized impact and are doing things at a scale that we couldn't do just independently: like our work with the Sagebrush Sea program, our work on the Colorado River, with helping to pass legislation to fund how we fight forest fires. The times we create conditions that will make an impact across large areas and the big policy wins are the ones that are always near and dear to my heart, and that I think will have long-term positive outcomes.

### Why do you think it's important that the western states and Canada work together as a division?

When we look at the results of when we have operated that way, we see something that is bigger and better than what we could have accomplished if we just stopped at our state borders or worked in isolation. So many of the issues we are dealing with today are complex issues, meaning they also don't recognize state borders. It's not like the border between Nevada and Idaho is going to stop a forest or a rangeland fire. The same things that are causing the challenges in Idaho are causing the challenges in Nevada. And most of these challenges need solutions that work across the entire geography and the whole system.

I think the only way we can address these systemic issues is by working together. That might be a policy or policies that need to be in place, or how we address the entire ecosystem by applying the best practices from one area to another. With the scale of the problems that we need to solve right now, that I feel inspired to get up each day and work toward solving, we need that collective thought process and the broad, compelling solutions that we all bring to the table. I think that's what is driving us to think about how



Toni speaking at the Atwood Preserve dedication ceremony © Chip Carroon/TNC

we move from the franchise to the enterprise scale model of our work.

### What inspires you?

I'm incredibly inspired when I see us do meaningful conservation work that is supported by the communities and requested by the people living there. I'm inspired by the conservation that I know is going to be tangible and lasting, meaning that we've done all of the right work to build it up and know that it's going to be durable. And at the end of the day you really can see that the environment, and the people in that environment, are going to benefit in the long run. Those are the projects that make me excited to get up each day and work with The Nature Conservancy and work with the teams across the West. I think we do it really well.

All the people I work with at TNC are thinking about the same things. Trying to create those enabling conditions where people can show up and do their very best work in this way is also one of the things that makes me super inspired. The best thing I think that I can do is leave a legacy of great, talented people whom we have hired and who will continue to do this work in such a thoughtful and compelling way.

### What's your vision for the future?

Collectively across our organization, we're working toward TNC's 2030 Goals; the world needs us to achieve them in order to survive and be healthy. The work and the science that has gone into developing those goals tells us that 1) we can achieve this (it's not going to be easy, but we can do it) and that 2) both nature and people will thrive if we can make this work happen. It's so rewarding to think about the fact that we are all getting up each day thinking about, *What is the biggest contribution I can make toward these 2030 goals?* Whether it's in climate, in land protection, or water quality, and whether someone is sitting in Nevada, or Canada, or Africa—each one of us has something we can contribute and each one of us and our projects are furthering our collective goals.

I think there are times when you can feel sort of hopeless, right? There's a lot happening right now where it feels like we're losing ground; for example, we're losing acres of the Sagebrush Sea each year to cheatgrass and wildfire. Yet our 2030 goals actually tell us we can make a difference and we can have an impact that creates a viable, healthy future for all of us. To me, that is super inspiring, and I believe we can do it!

### What's something people don't know about you?

I just adopted a cat, Bella, from The Humane Society. She is a total delight and spoiled rotten. I've always had dogs and am learning that training cats is not nearly the same thing! It's more like she is training me.

### What do you like to do outside of work?

I'm a voracious reader. I also love to cook, so I spend a lot of time doing that. Outdoors, I love hiking, cross-country and downhill skiing, and I just recently took up paddleboarding. I'm not very good at it yet but I sure do like it! I'm getting braver with each stroke that I take.

## TNC's Global 2030 Goals

By working together with partners, communities, and decisionmakers across the globe, we're overcoming barriers and finding solutions to the interconnected crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.



### REDUCE OR STORE 3 GIGATONS OF CO<sub>2</sub> EMISSIONS YEARLY

We will use the power of nature and the strength of policy and markets to reduce emissions, support renewable energy, and store carbon to reach our goal of avoiding or sequestering 3B metric tons of carbon per year.

### BENEFIT 100M PEOPLE

We will help 100 million people at severe risk of climate-related emergencies by protecting and restoring the health of natural habitats—from mangroves and reefs to floodplains and forests—that help protect communities from storm surge, extreme rainfall, and severe wildfires and sea level rise.

### CONSERVE NEARLY 10B ACRES OF OCEAN

We will conserve 4 billion hectares (9.9 billion acres) of ocean through new and better-managed protected areas, global-scale sustainable fishing, innovative financing, and positive policy changes to how the world governs the seas.

### CONSERVE 1.6B ACRES OF LAND

We will partner with communities around the globe to conserve 650 million hectares (about 1.6 billion acres) of land. Together we will restore and improve management of working lands, support the leadership of Indigenous Peoples as land stewards, and conserve critical forests, grasslands and other habitats rich in carbon and biodiversity.

### CONSERVE MORE THAN 620,000 MILES OF RIVERS

We will conserve 1 million kilometers (621,000 miles) of river systems and 30 million hectares (74 million acres) of lakes and wetlands by engaging in collaborative partnerships, promoting innovative solutions, and supporting policies that improve the quality and amount of water available in freshwater ecosystems and to communities.

### SUPPORT 45M LOCAL STEWARDS

We will support 45 million people whose well-being and livelihoods depend on healthy oceans, freshwater, and lands. We will partner with Indigenous Peoples and other local communities to learn from and support their leadership in stewarding their environment, securing rights to resources, improving economic opportunities, and shaping their future.



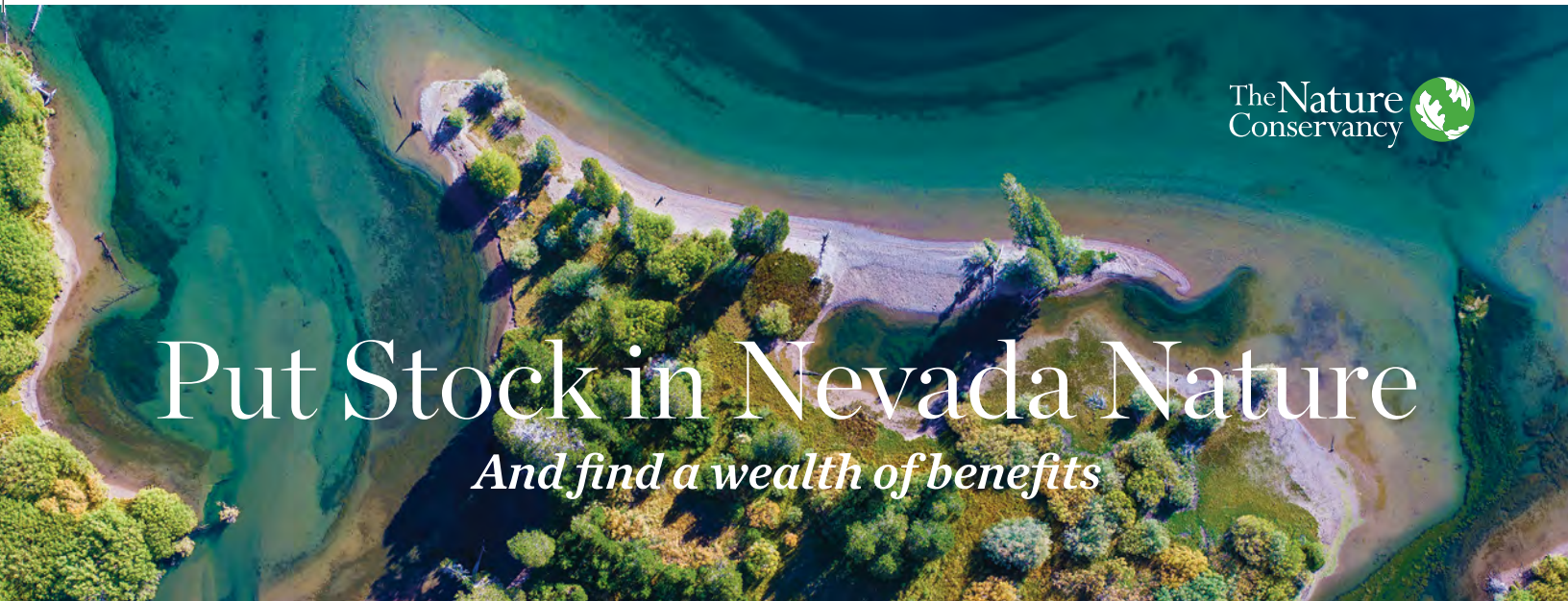
The Nature Conservancy in Nevada  
639 Isbell Road, Suite 330  
Reno, NV 89509  
775-322-4990

8329 W. Sunset Road #200  
Las Vegas, NV 89113  
702-737-8744

[nevada@tnc.org](mailto:nevada@tnc.org)  
[nature.org/nevada](http://nature.org/nevada)

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**PAGE 4** TNC Nevada state director Mauricia Baca, board of trustees chair Andrew Strain and Lajetta Atwood at the Atwood Preserve naming ceremony in April © Chip Carroon/TNC; Gary and Lajetta Atwood at Torrance Ranch Preserve © Kristen McInnis; Headwaters of the Amargosa River at the Atwood Preserve © Chip Carroon/TNC; **PAGE 5** New funding will support treatments for stands like this one that have extensive fuel buildup resulting in unhealthy forests susceptible to impacts from fire, drought, and insect disease © Eben Swain; Representatives from member organizations of the Middle Truckee River Watershed Forest Partnership at a California Wildlife Conservation Board meeting in Sacramento © Jonathan Cook-Fisher; **PAGE 6** Aerial view of Diamond Valley © Chip Carroon/TNC; **PAGE 10** The Roberts Mountains © Chip Carroon/TNC; Toni Hardesty © Snapshots by Jolene



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Independence Lake, NV © Chip Carroon/TNC

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