

CONTACT: Paul Echohawk– 208–478–1624, or Asher Koles– 801–633–7201

Nevada State Engineer Over-allocates Water to Las Vegas

CARSON CITY, NV – Jason King published a decision today on the most important water rights battle ever decided by any Nevada State Engineer. The ruling could allow for 83,988 acre feet of water to be removed from four valleys in the Great Salt Lake Desert aquifer to send to Las Vegas under a proposal made by the Southern Nevada Water Authority. SNWA had applied for 125,976 acre-feet from these valleys and plans to request more from Snake Valley.

Details on the ruling can be found online at: <http://water.nv.gov/hearings/past/springetal/documents.cfm?DIR=Final%20Rulings>

The Goshute Tribe has been defending itself from the threat of this project for nine years, but with little support from the federal government, which has a trust responsibility to protect the tribe's interests. On its own, the tribe interviewed almost every one of its tribal elders to document cultural uses and sites they consider sacred within its ancestral landscape in preparation for this hearing. The tribe detailed its hunting and gathering areas, massacre sites, historic villages, burial sites, sacred springs, and more as part of this process. This substantive information was presented to the State Engineer during the six week hearing (see [cultural map online](#) which is available for media use), but does not appear to have influenced the decision in any meaningful way.

Tribal Chairman Ed Naranjo stated, "I fear Mr. King's decision today might literally wipe out our tribe. What is most frustrating though, is that millions of people who will be severely impacted by this project, have never even heard of it. Goshute people never damaged the earth, we never messed with the balance, but others are out to destroy us, and seemingly for only one reason, the almighty dollar."

Additionally, six Goshute witnesses testified and detailed the Goshute's strong cultural ties to this area and spiritual beliefs about the importance of water. During this testimony, SNWA's attorney asked the Goshute witness to explain the difference between Goshute spiritual beliefs, and his own childhood belief in the bogeyman. There were numerous protestants arguing against SNWA's proposal during the hearing, including the LDS Church, Salt Lake, Millard, Juab, and Tooele Counties in Utah, Great Basin Water Network, and the Ely and Duckwater Shoshone Tribes.

The Goshute tribe has 30 days to decide whether to appeal of the State Engineers decision in court.

Vice-Chair of the Goshute Tribal Council, Madeline Greymountain says, "Las Vegas might believe it has hit the jackpot with today's decision, but the tribe has no intentions of letting this go without more fight. Goshute People are determined to protect the abundant life that exists in Spring Valley. These natural resources are vital to our existence, spiritual balance and well-being. This land is part of our ancestral lineage. It is as important to our people today, as it was to our past, and will be to our future generations. So we must protect it in every way we can.

