

CLARK AND NYE COUNTIES, AREAS OF CRITICAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, NEVADA

THE PLACE:

In 2009 the Bureau of Land Management adopted vital protections for desert tortoises, archaeological and cultural resources, and special wildlife and riparian values by introducing a 20-year mining ban for 24 areas of critical environmental concern in southern Nevada's Clark and Nye counties. These protections cover [944,343 acres of public lands](#). The BLM designates [areas of critical environmental concern](#) to protect important resources and scenic landscapes or to protect people and property from hazards on federal public lands.

WHY IT'S SPECIAL:

These areas include Mojave Desert shrublands that provide habitat for threatened desert tortoises and riparian areas that are habitat for southwestern willow flycatchers, woundfins and Virgin River chub — all protected under the Endangered Species Act. The mining withdrawal also gives important safeguards to Amargosa mesquite trees and Mormon Mesa tortoise habitat. And it protects the biological hotspot of Ash Meadows, Arden and Gold Butte historic town sites, Hidden Valley, Keyhole Canyon, Rainbow Gardens, Red Rock Spring, River Mountains, Sloan rock art and the Virgin River.

THE STAKES:

Nevada is ground zero for the country's "critical minerals" boom, with vast tracks of public land being claimed for lithium mining. Rolling back protections for Clark and Nye counties' areas of critical environmental concern could fling the doors open to mining in these highly sensitive areas and imperil the plants and animals whose survival depends on them.

Contact:

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