

Nevada's Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems

Ruby Lake National Wildlife Refuge © Simon Williams/TNC

Did you know that a lot of Nevada's water is located underground, and it is important for people and nature?

Nevada is the nation's driest state, receiving on average less than 10 inches of rainfall each year. However, underground water helps that limited rainfall to sustain the state's 3 million residents and Nevada's natural environment.

Here are more fascinating facts about Nevada's groundwater dependent ecosystems:

- 💧 The Silver State has more than 350 endemic species (species found nowhere else), and almost half of them rely on groundwater dependent ecosystems (GDEs) for all or part of their lives.
- 💧 Of the 242 wetland-dependent species recorded by the Nevada Natural Heritage Program, 143 occur nowhere else but in Nevada.
- 💧 It may be the driest state, but Nevada has more than 25,000 known springs!
- 💧 Most of Nevada's rivers, streams and lakes are groundwater dependent.
- 💧 Nevada's rivers and streams support more than 600,000 acres of riparian habitat.
- 💧 There are more than 900,000 acres of groundwater-dependent forests in Nevada, with trees such as aspen, mesquite, and riparian Jeffrey pine conifers. That's almost the size of Rhode Island!
- 💧 Nevada has more than 800,000 acres of meadows, most of which are groundwater dependent.
- 💧 Plant communities that depend on groundwater cover at least 10% of Nevada, creating more than 7 million acres of groundwater dependent habitat, which is about the size of Belgium!
- 💧 Of all groundwater dependent plant communities, greasewood shrublands cover the largest area of Nevada (more than 2 million acres).

To learn more about Nevada's groundwater resources and GDEs, please visit nature.org/NVgde.



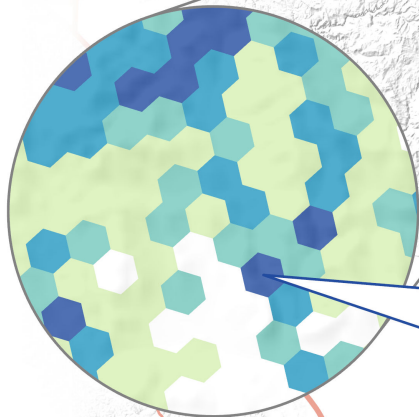
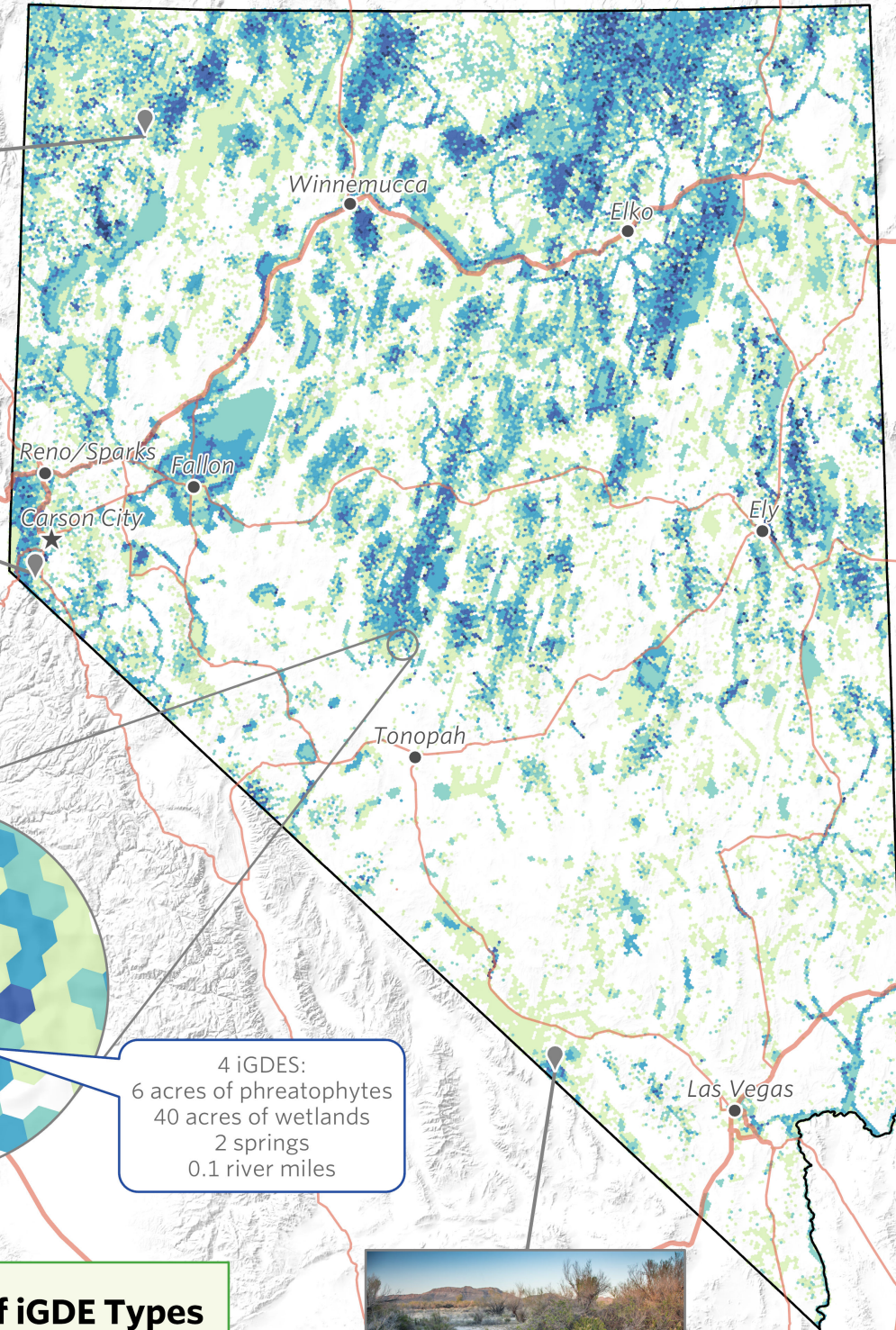
Indicators of Groundwater Dependent Ecosystems in Nevada



iGDE Phreatophytes: greasewood in Soldier meadows (C. Fichtel/TNC)



iGDE Rivers: Carson River at River Fork Ranch (S. Williams/TNC)



4 iGDES:
6 acres of phreatophytes
40 acres of wetlands
2 springs
0.1 river miles

Number of iGDE Types

0	1	2	3	4	5

Rivers & Streams, Lakes & Playas, Springs, Wetlands, Phreatophytes*

*Phreatophytes are plants that can tap into groundwater with their roots



iGDE Springs: Crystal Spring at Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (S. Williams/TNC)