

Desert Wars - Transcript

[Narrator:] IT'S A LANDSCAPE FILLED WITH OCEANS OF SAGEBRUSH AND REMOTE MOUNTAIN RANGES. GROUNDWATER AQUIFERS ARE CAMOUFLAGED BY STARK BEAUTY; HIDDEN THROUGH MILLENNIA. SNAKE VALLEY CROSSES THE UTAH/NEVADA LINE. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY PROPOSES PIPELINES TO TAP GROUNDWATER FOR LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. RURAL RESIDENTS DEBATE WITH THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY AS TO WHETHER THERE IS ENOUGH WATER FOR ALL POTENTIAL USERS.

[Cecil Garland – Rancher:] IT IS A WATER GRAB, AND IT CAN'T BE ANYTHING ELSE.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] I'M NOT ASKING THEM TO TRUST ME. WHY WOULD I ASK THEM TO TRUST ME? I'M ASKING THEM TO PARTICIPATE AND TRUST THEMSELVES.

[Narrator:] IT'S A STORY OF CONFLICT-- WHO HAS WATER AND WHO WANTS IT. WATER AND TRUST ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY. SNAKE VALLEY IS A BATTLEGROUND WHICH SYMBOLIZES CHOICES FACING THE AMERICAN WEST.

THE GREAT BASIN'S SNAKE VALLEY IS IN UTAH'S WESTERN DESERT AND EASTERN NEVADA. THE VALLEY IS ONE HUNDRED MILES LONG. THE LANDSCAPE OF BASIN AND RANGE IS ONLY OCCASIONALLY BROKEN BY SMALL TOWNS AND THE SILHOUETTE OF A RANCHER'S HOME. DUSTY, ARID FLATS APPEAR BARREN ON THE NORTH END OF SNAKE VALLEY. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WIND WHIPS SNAKE VALLEY WITH GALE FORCE. JUST AS ABRUPTLY, SILENCE MAY RETURN. UNDER SNAKE VALLEY IS A LARGE CARBONATE AQUIFER CONTAINING WATER THAT IS THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD. AN AQUIFER IS PERMEABLE WATER-BEARING ROCK LAYERS CONTAINING GROUNDWATER. AQUIFERS PROVIDE WATER FOR WELLS AND SPRINGS. THE AQUIFER IS PART OF AN ELABORATE, DEEP GROUNDWATER SYSTEM LYING BELOW PARTS OF UTAH, NEVADA, AND CALIFORNIA. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY PROPOSES 285 MILES OF BURIED WATER PIPELINES TO TAP GROUNDWATER. THE WATER WOULD BE SENT TO LAS VEGAS, NEVADA. IT'S ONE PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO SUSTAIN FUTURE GROWTH FOR LAS VEGAS. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY HOPES THE PROJECT WILL YIELD 200,000 ACRE FEET OF WATER PER YEAR FROM SIX BASINS. AN ACRE FOOT OF WATER IS THE APPROXIMATE AMOUNT NEEDED TO SUPPLY A FAMILY OF FOUR FOR ONE YEAR. AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT WILL BE WRITTEN AFTER SCIENTIFIC STUDIES. THE PROJECT WILL TAKE YEARS TO COMPLETE. THE LONG TERM EFFECT OF TAPPING THIS AQUIFER IS SCIENTIFICALLY UNKNOWN. RURAL RESIDENTS ARE WORRIED THIS MAY IMPACT THEIR WAY OF LIFE.

[Alan Welch – Hydrologist, United States Geological Survey:] THIS PART OF THE WORLD HAS HAD RELATIVELY LITTLE STRESS ON IT, BY WHICH I MEAN VERY LITTLE PUMPING. AND SO WE KNOW QUITE A BIT ABOUT THE SYSTEM, BUT THAT UNDERSTANDING IS LIMITED BECAUSE OF THE STRESSES ON THE SYSTEM SO FAR HAVE BEEN QUITE LIMITED.

[Narrator:] SNAKE VALLEY HAS AN ACQUIRED DEFINITION OF BEAUTY. IT'S FURNACE HOT IN SUMMER. WINTER BRINGS BITING COLD WITH SNOW. THE SMALL RANCHING COMMUNITY OF CALLAO, UTAH, EXISTS QUIETLY IN SNAKE VALLEY. CALLAO IS A

COMMUNITY OF RANCHES CENTERED AROUND A SMALL SCHOOL. THE DEEP CREEK MOUNTAINS RISE ABOVE CALLAO. THE RANGE IS WILD. THE DEEP CREEKS ARE HOME TO MOUNTAIN LIONS AND BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TROUT. UNDER THIS OCEAN OF DESERT IS A VAST RESERVE OF GROUNDWATER. CECIL GARLAND'S RAFTER LAZY C RANCH IS ON THE DIRT ROAD THAT WINDS THROUGH CALLAO. HISTORY REVEALS THE MAIN HOUSE WAS ONCE A HOTEL. CECIL GARLAND'S LIFE IS SPENT RUNNING A RANCH.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] SOME OF MY NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN HERE FIVE GENERATIONS NOW. THEY DON'T-- THEY DON'T WANNA LEAVE. IT'S A TRAGEDY TO THINK, WHAT WOULD THESE PEOPLE DO? I'VE BEEN HERE 33 YEARS. I'M KIND OF A JOHNNY COME LATELY. WHAT WOULD I DO? I LOVE BEING HERE. I'VE BEEN TO LAS VEGAS, I'VE WORKED IN LAS VEGAS. I'M NOT SURE THERE'S ENOUGH MONEY DOWN THERE TO JUSTIFY ME SELLING MY RANCH AND THE FUTURE OF MY CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN TO LAS VEGAS FOR ANY PRICE.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] WE KNOW THAT OUR NUMBER ONE AND NUMBER TWO RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS IS TO NOT HARM THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO NOT HARM THE RANCHING AND THE FARMING OPERATIONS. THAT IS GOING TO BE DIFFICULT FOR SOME PEOPLE TO BELIEVE, WHICH IS WHY WE HAVE OFFERED THEM A SEAT AT THE TABLE.

[Narrator:] A SINGLE SCHOOLHOUSE CONNECTS CALLAO.

[Annette Garland - Teacher:] LET'S PICK A NUMBER TO SEE WHO GOES FIRST...

[Narrator:] CECIL'S WIFE, ANNETTE, IS THE TEACHER.

[Annette Garland:] (teaching)...WHAT WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT MICRO-ORGANISMS.

[Narrator:] THE CHILDREN COME FROM NEIGHBORING RANCHES.

[Annette Garland:] (teaching)...THE RED GROUP AND THE BLUE GROUP. AND WE'LL HAVE REVIEW QUESTIONS...

[Narrator:] DIFFERENT AGES AND GRADES ARE TAUGHT TOGETHER.

[Annette Garland:] (teaching)...COLLABORATE WITH YOUR GROUP BEFORE YOU GIVE AN ANSWER, BECAUSE THE FIRST ANSWER I HEAR IS THE ANSWER I TAKE.

[Annette Garland: Teacher] FOR ONE THING, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE LAS VEGAS LIVE WITHIN THEIR MEANS. THEY LIVE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT AND THEY SHOULD LIVE WITHIN THEIR MEANS THE SAME AS WE LIVE WITHIN OUR MEANS.

[Amanda Cyphers – Chairman, Southern Nevada Water Authority Board of Directors:] WE WANT TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH PEOPLE. WE'RE NOT HERE TO RAILROAD A PLAN OR TO TAKE ANYTHING AWAY FROM EACH OTHER. WE'RE ASKING TO WORK WITH PEOPLE SO THAT WE ALL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY.

[Narrator:] CECIL GARLAND IS CONCERNED SPRINGS AND WELLS MAY DRY UP IF GROUNDWATER PUMPING FOR LAS VEGAS IS ALLOWED.

[Cecil Garland:]FOR MANY, MANY YEARS THIS POND HERE WAS A POND AND IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL POND. IN THE SPRING OF THE YEAR IT WAS RECHARGED. BUT IN THE WINTER, THE ICE WOULD FORM ON IT. AND THERE ARE ICE SKATES HANGING ALL AROUND CALLAO HERE THAT HAVEN'T BEEN USED FOR YEARS BECAUSE THIS POND IS DRIED UP. AND THAT IS THE DIRECT RESULT OF NOT HAVING THE RECHARGE FROM

THE MOUNTAIN AQUIFER THAT KEEPS THESE STREAMS AND PONDS ALIVE.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] I THINK FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE PUMPING, THEIR WELLS ARE NOT VERY DEEP. THEY DON'T HAVE THE SAME ABILITY FOR RECHARGE THAT WE DO. IN THE ENVIRONMENT THAT THEY'VE EXPERIENCED, THEY'VE PROBABLY SEEN A HIGHER DEGREE OF VULNERABILITY FOR THE GROUND WATER BASIN. ON THE OTHER HAND, I THINK THEY OVERSTATED TOO.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] WE'RE GOING TO RESIST. WE WILL RESIST BECAUSE WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE TO RESIST. WE'RE GOING TO RESIST BECAUSE IT'S MORALLY CORRECT THAT WE DO RESIST.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] IT WOULD BE BRAZEN OF US TO JUST GO UP INTO RURAL NEVADA AND SAY, WE'RE THE BIG BAD LAS VEGAS AND WE'RE GOING TO STAKE OUR CLAIM ON WATERS AND, YOU KNOW, TO HELL WITH YOU. THAT'S NOT WHAT WE'RE TRYING TO SAY.

[Narrator:] A COMMUNITY MEETING IS CALLED IN CALLAO TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. IT'S LED BY KEN HILL, A RESIDENT FROM NEARBY PARTOUN, UTAH. HE'S CONCERNED ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE AREA.

[Ken Hill: Teacher's Aide] WE JUST GET THE FEELING THAT WE'RE BEING STEAMROLLED BY SOMETHING THAT'S OUT OF CONTROL AND UNCONTROLLABLE.

[Amanda Cyphers – Chairman, Southern Nevada Water Authority Board of Directors:] WE WANT TO PROTECT THAT USE THAT THEY HAVE, BUT WE ALSO WANT TO LOOK AT THE VIABILITY, HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER THAT WE CAN PRESERVE BOTH OF OUR FUTURES TOGETHER.

[Narrator:] THE GROUP IS MADE UP OF RANCH FAMILIES AND CONCERNED RESIDENTS. THEY ARE FACED WITH WHAT THEY SEE AS UNCERTAINTY.

[Kathy Hill - Teacher:] IN THE LONG RUN I REALLY HOPE THAT WE CAN MAKE AWARE THE PROBLEMS OF AQUIFERS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. THERE ARE A LOT OF AQUIFERS THAT ARE IN DANGER, AND I THINK THIS IS MAYBE ONE BATTLE IN A BIG WAR WE'RE FIGHTING HERE.

[Hal Rothman, History Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:] S.N.W.A. HAS REVOLUTIONIZED WESTERN WATER. IT HAS TAKEN IT FROM THE OLD "WHISKEY'S FOR DRINKING, WATER'S FOR FIGHTING" MOTTO TO A SIDE WHERE EVERYBODY SITS AT THE TABLE AND THEY NEGOTIATE LIKE GROWNUPS. AND I THINK THAT WOULD BE A REMARKABLE STEP FORWARD, NOT ONLY FOR WESTERN RANCHERS BUT FOR ALL OF US IN THE WEST.

[Leah Layland:] IF THEY REALLY NEEDED IT AND WE HAD IT TO SPARE, I'D SAY FINE. BUT PROBABLY IF THEY GET IT AND OUR WATER ALL GOES DOWN THERE, THEY'LL BOTTLE IT AND SELL IT BACK TO US.

[Narrator:] UTAH GOVERNOR JON HUNTSMAN MEETS WITH THE COMMUNITY TO DISCUSS THEIR CONCERNS. HE VISITS THIS REMOTE PART OF UTAH TO HEAR THEIR THOUGHTS IN PERSON.

[Jon Huntsman, Jr., Governor, State of Utah:] FOR NEVADA TO SELL ME ON THE PROJECT, THAT WILL BE A VERY DIFFICULT SELL. AND I THINK TO A PERSON, THEY WOULD TELL YOU THAT THEIR LIFESTYLES WOULD BE THREATENED OUT HERE. THEY HAVE TO

KNOW THAT THEIR STATE, RIGHT UP TO THE VERY TOP-- AND I'VE HAD THEM IN MY OFFICE A COUPLE OF TIMES, AS I'VE GONE OUT TO SEE THEM ON SITE-- WILL STAND WITH THEM AND FIGHT FOR THEIR INTERESTS.

[Amanda Cyphers – Chairman, Southern Nevada Water Authority Board of Directors:] I UNDERSTAND THEIR CONCERNS, AND IT'S UP TO THE WATER AUTHORITY TO CONTINUE THAT LINE OF COMMUNICATION AND TO PROVE OURSELVES EVERY SINGLE DAY THAT WE CAN WORK WITH EVERYONE TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

[Narrator:] LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, IS A BOOMING CITY OF THE WEST. WITH EVERY BLIZZARD IN THE EAST, THOUSANDS SEEMINGLY FLOCK TO THE WARM WEATHER OF LAS VEGAS. THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY METRO POPULATION APPROACHES 2 MILLION PEOPLE; DOUBLING SINCE 1990. LAS VEGAS IS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES. NEVADA IS CONSIDERED THE DRIEST STATE IN THE NATION. UTAH IS SECOND. WHERE WILL RESOURCES COME FROM TO SUPPORT EXPANDING, THIRSTY POPULATIONS? IT'S AN ISSUE COMMON TO THE EVER-GROWING CITIES OF THE WEST SUCH AS PHOENIX, TUCSON, AND SAN DIEGO.

[Brian Greenspun, Editor, Las Vegas Sun:] THERE'S A FASCINATION ABOUT THIS PLACE. IT USED TO BE GAMBLING. IT STILL IS TO SOME EXTENT, OR TO A LARGE EXTENT GAMBLING, BUT IT'S SO MUCH MORE. IT'S A STATE OF MIND. SO WHEN YOU ASK ME WHAT'S SO GREAT, I'D SAY TO YOU, WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT YOUR STATE OF MIND? THAT'S WHAT IT IS.

[Ed Firmage, Environmentalist/Photographer:] MY ADVICE TO THE RANCHERS WOULD BE TO FIGHT LIKE HELL. THIS IS AN ISSUE WORTH FIGHTING. I THINK IT COULD BE A PRECEDENCE-SETTING ISSUE WHERE PEOPLE AT STATE AND LOCAL LEVELS, ENVIRONMENTALISTS, RANCHERS PUT SOME SORT OF BREAK ON GROWTH.

[Narrator:] THE HISTORY OF LAS VEGAS IS UNIQUE IN THE STORY OF THE AMERICAN WEST. MUCH OF IT IS TOLD BY THE COLORADO RIVER. JOHN WESLEY POWELL EXPLORED THE COLORADO RIVER IN 1869 AND 1871. POWELL WAS A ONE-ARMED CIVIL WAR VETERAN. HE LOST HIS RIGHT ARM AT THE BATTLE OF SHILOH. THE POWELL VOYAGE WAS ONE OF PERIL AND IMPENDING DOOM DOWN AN UNKNOWN RIVER. THE POWELL EXPEDITION WAS SURROUNDED BY THE BEAUTY OF GRAND CANYON-- SHEER TERROR COMBINED WITH MOMENTS OF GENUINE SERENITY. THE COLORADO RIVER IS A STORY OF CONTROVERSY. JOHN WESLEY POWELL BECAME THE SECOND DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY IN 1881. POWELL HAD CONCERNS AS TO WHETHER THE COLORADO RIVER COULD BE THE ANSWER TO THE WEST'S AGRICULTURAL WATER NEEDS. LAKE POWELL BEARS HIS NAME. COLORADO RIVER WATER FILLS THE LAKE BEHIND GLEN CANYON DAM IN UTAH AND ARIZONA. THE 1922 COLORADO RIVER COMPACT IS THE FOUNDATION OF THE LAW OF THE RIVER. THE COMPACT DIVIDES WHAT WAS THEN ESTIMATED TO BE 15 MILLION ACRE FEET OF WATER. IT WAS HARD TO PREDICT THE EXPLODING THIRST OF THE WEST IN 1922. THIS WAS LONG BEFORE CITIES LIKE LOS ANGELES AND PHOENIX ROARED TO LIFE. WATER SHARES WERE DIVIDED AMONG THE UPPER BASIN STATES OF COLORADO, UTAH, NEW MEXICO, AND WYOMING; AND THE LOWER BASIN STATES OF NEVADA, ARIZONA, AND CALIFORNIA. THE REMAINING WATER WAS ALLOCATED TO MEXICO. MEXICO DIVERTS COLORADO RIVER WATER FOR AGRICULTURAL USE IN THE MEXICALI VALLEY. THE COLORADO RIVER ONCE FLOWED FREELY TO ITS HISTORIC DELTA AT THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA. AS THE RESULT OF UPSTREAM USE, THE COLORADO RIVER ONLY REACHES ITS RENDEZVOUS

WITH THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA IN VERY WET YEARS. NEVADA RECEIVES 4% OF COLORADO RIVER WATER ALLOCATED TO THE LOWER BASIN STATES. LAS VEGAS RELIES ON THE COLORADO RIVER FOR 90% OF ITS WATER. ONLY 10% COMES FROM GROUNDWATER. THE DESERT BLOOMS, QUENCHED BY THE LIQUID GOLD OF THE WEST: WATER.

[Hal Rothman, History Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:] PEOPLE CALL THE COLORADO RIVER COMPACT "THE LAW OF THE RIVER." I CALL IT "THE FICTION OF THE RIVER." WHY? BECAUSE IT'S NOT BASED IN ANY REALITY. IT ALLOCATES TOO MUCH WATER. ITS ALLOCATIONS TO RURAL DISTRICTS FAR AWAY FROM URBAN AREAS THAT GENERATE MONEY. IT'S AN 85-YEAR-OLD PIECE OF LEGISLATION NOW THAT WAS FLAWED WHEN IT WAS CREATED AND IT IS ABSURD NOW.

[Michael Styler, Executive Director, Utah Department of Natural Resources:] UTAH'S POSITION ON SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER PROPOSAL WAS ORIGINALLY A PROPOSAL THAT CAME FROM UTAH. THEY WANTED TO TAKE MORE OF THE COLORADO RIVER, AND WE SAID, "NO, YOU CAN'T HAVE "MORE OF THE COLORADO RIVER. "YOU MUST DEVELOP THE WATER WITHIN YOUR OWN STATE." SO CAN THEY LEGALLY TAKE WATER FROM WITHIN THEIR OWN STATE? YES, THEY CAN. OUR POSITION IS IF THEY GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE BORDER THAT THEY'RE PUMPING OF WATER FROM THE SNAKE VALLEY IMPAIRS UTAH WATER RIGHTS, WE CAN'T ALLOW THAT.

[Narrator:] LAS VEGAS WAS NAMED BY SPANIARDS WHO USED ITS WATER. THEY CALLED IT THE SPANISH WORD FOR MEADOW OR VEGA. LAS VEGAS WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A DREAM IN THE DESERT IN THE EARLY 1900s. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ERA SHOW LITTLE HINT OF THE CITY IT WOULD BECOME. THAT CHANGED WITH THE BUILDING OF HOOVER DAM IN THE DEPRESSION ERA. [Rushing Water]

THE COLORADO RIVER CHANNEL IN BLACK CANYON WAS DIVERTED. THE CANYON WALLS WERE SCULPTED TO FIT A MONOLITHIC DAM. THAT STUNNED THE WORLD. 21,000 MEN WORKED ON THE PROJECT FROM 1931 THROUGH 1936. CANYON JOCKEYS RODE JACK HAMMERS LIKE UNRULY STEEDS. WORKERS REPELLED OFF SHEER WALLS WITH BALLET-LIKE PRECISION. 112 MEN DIED ON THE PROJECT. A CITY OF WORKERS SPRANG UP SEEMINGLY OVERNIGHT. NEARBY LAS VEGAS PROVIDED ENTERTAINMENT. EARLY VEGAS GIVES A TANTALIZING GLIMPSE OF WHAT THE CITY WOULD BECOME. HOOVER DAM WAS NAMED FOR THE 31st PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HOOVER DAM WAS ONE OF THE MOST DRAMATIC ENGINEERING MARVELS THE WORLD HAD EVER SEEN. PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT DEDICATED HOOVER DAM ON SEPTEMBER 30, 1935. [Radio Announcer:] IN JUNE 1935, THE DAM STRUCTURE ITSELF STOOD COMPLETED, TWO-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS IN ADVANCE OF THE TIME ORIGINALLY DESIGNATED. IN SEPTEMBER OF THE SAME YEAR, PRESIDENT FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT, VOICING HIGH PRAISE FOR BOTH DESIGNERS AND BUILDERS, DEDICATED BOULDER DAM TO THE PROGRESS OF THE NATION.

[Narrator:] THE RESULT WAS TWENTIETH CENTURY SCULPTURE. WATERS OF THE COLORADO RIVER FILLED LAKE MEAD BEHIND HOOVER DAM. AN ARID CITY IN THE DESERT BECAME WHAT FEW, EVEN IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS, COULD IMAGINE.

[Burton Cohen, Retired Hotel/Casino Manager:] WELL, EVERYBODY WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE TIME WHEN EGGS WERE 25 CENTS A DOZEN, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, A LOT OF US DIDN'T HAVE A QUARTER IN THOSE DAYS. OF COURSE, THE GOOD OLD DAYS-- WE

LOOK BACK ON THOSE, BUT YOU CAN'T STAND IN THE WAY OF PROGRESS. WHAT WE HAD THEN WAS ONE THING AND WHAT WE'VE GOT TODAY IS A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THING.

[Narrator:] STARLIGHT IN DESERT SKIES WAS REPLACED BY A NEON GLOW. THE LAS VEGAS STRIP BECAME KNOWN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD FOR ENTERTAINMENT. BRIAN GREENSPUN IS THE EDITOR OF THE LAS VEGAS SUN NEWSPAPER. HE'S THE SON OF LEGENDARY NEWSPAPERMAN HANK GREENSPUN.

[Brian Greenspun, Editor, Las Vegas Sun:] I'VE HEARD ABOUT GROWTH FOR HALF A CENTURY. THE REST OF THE WORLD HAS HEARD ABOUT GROWTH, LET'S SAY, SINCE THE EARLY 1990s BECAUSE I THINK WE'VE REACHED SOME KIND OF CRITICAL MASS, WHERE INSTEAD OF GROWING FROM 50,000 TO A 100,000 AND FROM A 100,000 TO 200,000 WE GREW FROM 500,000 TO A MILLION AND NOW WE'RE APPROACHING TWO MILLION. SO PEOPLE SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE, AND IT'S NOT STOPPING. IT JUST CONTINUES. THERE'S A GREAT ENGINE HERE AND THE ENGINE IS CALLED ENTERTAINMENT. ENTERTAINMENT AND THE GREAT SOUTHWEST-- THOSE ARE THE TWO THINGS THAT ARE DRIVING THE GROWTH IN LAS VEGAS.

[Narrator:] LAS VEGAS EVOLVED INTO A CITY OF BRIGHT LIGHTS AND GLAMOUR. IT'S ALSO A CITY WHERE PEOPLE LIVE. CLUSTERED AROUND THE STRIP ARE SUBDIVISIONS BURSTING WITH GROWTH. ROOFTOPS STRETCH TO THE HORIZON UNDER A DESERT SUN. PEOPLE COME FOR WARM WEATHER, EMPLOYMENT, AND SOMETIMES, A NEW LIFE.

[Burton Cohen:] WE'VE GOT ALL OF THE THINGS THAT SEEM TO ATTRACT THE ENTIRE POPULATION OF CALIFORNIA.

[Narrator:] WITH GROWTH COMES NEED FOR WATER AND RESOURCES FOR THE FUTURE. IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR CITIES OF THE WEST TO LOOK BEYOND THEIR IMMEDIATE AREA FOR WATER? NEVADA WATER LAW STIPULATES GROUNDWATER BELONGS TO ALL RESIDENTS OF THE STATE. GROUNDWATER MAY BE TRANSFERRED TO WHERE IT IS NEEDED.

[Margo Wheeler, Director of Planning and Development, Las Vegas, Nevada:] GROWTH IN LAS VEGAS IS A CONSCIOUS-LEVEL DECISION BY THE ELECTED OFFICIALS, NOT ONLY IN THE CITY OF LAS VEGAS, BUT REALLY IN ALL OF SOUTHERN NEVADA. IN THE CREATION OF CITIES, THE PURPOSE OF DOING SO IS TO HAVE LOCAL CONTROL. AND IN THESE CITIES, THE LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS HAVE CHOSEN TO CHAMPION GROWTH, AND THAT IS SOMETHING THAT WE WISH TO SEE HAPPEN, WE WISH TO HAVE CONTINUING, AND WE WISH TO DO SO IN A RATIONAL, LOGICAL WAY THAT WE PROVIDE THE INFRASTRUCTURE NECESSARY TO GO FORWARD WITH THE GROWTH THAT WE WANT AND EXPECT.

[Mike Prather, Owens Valley Outreach Coordinator:] I DON'T THINK THAT'S REALLY A VALID ARGUMENT BECAUSE THEY'RE REALLY NOT ARGUING ABOUT JOBS AND ECONOMY FOR THE CURRENT PEOPLE IN THIS CITY. THEY'RE DEALING WITH BOOSTERS AND SPECULATORS. THEY'RE DEALING WITH PEOPLE THAT WANT TO INCREASE THE LAND BASE IN THOSE CITIES, AND THAT'S A CANCER. THERE'S SIMPLY NO END TO THAT.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] I HAVE HEARD OVER AND OVER AGAIN IT DESCRIBED AS A WATER GRAB, AND I HAVE TO SMILE. THE ONLY REASON IT'S CALLED WATER GRAB IS BECAUSE IT'S SOUTHERN NEVADA. NOBODY'S

CALLING RENO'S IMPORTATION OF HONEY LAKE WATER A WATER GRAB. NOBODY'S CALLING FARNLEY'S MOVEMENT OF WATER FROM ANOTHER BASIN A WATER GRAB. NO ONE CALLED WHAT VIRGINIA CITY DID, WHAT CARSON CITY DID A WATER GRAB. AND IT IS THE GREAT DIVIDE BETWEEN RURAL NEVADA AND URBAN NEVADA.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] HOW CAN YOU COME TO ONE OF THE DRIEST VALLEYS IN THE DRIEST REGION OF THE WHOLE UNITED STATES AND EXPECT TO TAKE A SURPLUS WATER WITHOUT DESTROYING THE SURFACE WATER THAT EXISTS THERE, WITHOUT DESTROYING THE COMMUNITY, THE ABILITY TO FARM, THE ABILITY TO PEOPLE WHO LIVE THERE? AND THAT'S ESSENTIALLY WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO. I WISH, MS. MULROY AND PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN NEVADA, THAT WE HAD AN ABUNDANCE OF WATER THAT WE COULD LET YOU HAVE. WE DON'T. I'M SORRY--WE DO NOT.

[Narrator:] DEAN BAKER'S A RANCHER FROM BAKER, NEVADA. HIS PLANES ARE USED FOR RANCH CHORES, CROP-DUSTING, AND TRAVEL TO WATER MEETINGS IN LAS VEGAS.

[Dean Baker: Rancher] THERE ARE A GREAT MANY LIVES THAT DEPEND ON THIS, WHETHER IT'S THE LIVESTOCK-- WE PRODUCE MILLIONS OF POUNDS OF MEAT OUT OF THIS VALLEY. THERE ARE TONS AND TONS OF HAY THAT GO TO PRODUCE MILK THAT'S DRANK IN LOS ANGELES OR SAN FRANCISCO OR LAS VEGAS, AND THOSE THINGS ALL COME UNDER JEOPARDY IF THIS AREA ISN'T ABLE TO CONTINUE TO PRODUCE THE LIVESTOCK AND THE HAY...

[Narrator:] THE BAKER RANCH SITS IN THE SHADOW OF GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK. THE RANCH IS ALONG THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF SNAKE VALLEY.

THE LANDSCAPE IS PUNCTUATED BY BALD EAGLES, MIGRATORY BIRDS, AND CATTLE. DEAN BAKER IS CONCERNED GROUNDWATER PUMPING FOR LAS VEGAS COULD AFFECT WATER ON HIS RANCH.

[Dean Baker: Rancher] IF THE WATER TABLE WERE TO DROP EVEN A FOOT, IT WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IN THE CARRYING CAPACITY. IF IT DROPS 15 TO 20 FEET, WHICH I THINK IS VERY LIKELY IF THEY PUMP THE AMOUNT OF WATER, THEN IT WOULD GREATLY LESSEN THE AMOUNT OF CARRYING CAPACITY AND THE NUMBER OF CATTLE IT WOULD CARRY AND FEED IN THE SUMMER.

[Narrator:] ACCURATE SCIENCE IS MANDATORY TO DETERMINE IF SURPLUS WATER EXISTS. AT ISSUE IS THE RATE OF RECHARGE FOR THE AQUIFER AND HOW A LONG-TERM DROUGHT MIGHT PLAY A ROLE. RECHARGE IS THE ADDITION OF WATER TO AN AQUIFER. RECHARGE OCCURS NATURALLY BY PRECIPITATION OR ARTIFICIALLY BY DIVERTING OR INJECTING WATER.

[Kathy Hill: Teacher] FOR A LONG TIME I FEEL LIKE WATER HAS BEEN CONSIDERED A RENEWABLE RESOURCE, PARTICULARLY GROUND WATER BECAUSE IT GETS RECHARGED DURING THE WINTER MONTHS AND THEN WE USE IT. BUT SCIENCE IS STARTING TO SHOW A LOT MORE NOW THAT A LOT OF THE WATER THAT'S IN THE GROUND CAME DURING THE ICE AGE. IN OUR AREA PARTICULARLY, LAKE BONNEVILLE WAS THE RESULT OF THE ICE AGE MELTING, PUT DOWN A LOT OF WATER AND THAT WATER IS SLOWLY DIMINISHING AND THE RECHARGE IS GOING TO BE VERY INSIGNIFICANT COMPARED WITH WHAT WAS PUT DOWN THERE WITH LAKE BONNEVILLE. SO IT'S A VERY SLIGHTLY RENEWABLE RESOURCE. IT'S NOT THE RENEWABLE SOURCE THAT WE THOUGHT ABOUT IN THE PAST.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] THERE'S NEVER ENOUGH DATA BECAUSE THE DATA ALWAYS CHANGES. AND EVERY TIME YOU ADD TEN YEARS, YOU WILL HAVE GENERATED NEW STATISTICS BASED ON A NEW WEATHER PATTERN, ON A NEW RAINFALL DURING THAT TEN YEAR PERIOD. SO IT'S NOT THE MAGIC OF FINDING THE NUMBER. THE MAGIC LIES IN MANAGING THAT BASIN.

[Alan Welch: Hydrologist, USGS] FROM A SCIENCE STANDPOINT, THE IMPACT OF PUMPING ON CURRENT WATER USERS, INCLUDING PEOPLE WHO ARE USING WATER FOR AGRICULTURE, IS A LEGITIMATE CONCERN FROM THE STANDPOINT THAT IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT WATER TABLES WILL DECLINE AND LIMIT THEIR SPRING FLOW, AS WELL AS REQUIRING GREATER PUMPING DEPTHS. WHETHER THAT WILL OCCUR IS DEPENDENT ON WHERE PUMPING IS TAKING PLACE, THE VOLUME AND LENGTH OF THAT PUMPING.

[Narrator:] AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT MUST BE WRITTEN UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT. THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT WILL ADMINISTER THE STUDY. THE STATE ENGINEER GRANTS WATER RIGHTS FOR NEVADA. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IS SOLICITED.

[Dean Baker: Rancher] THE BIGGEST FEAR THAT I HAVE IS THAT THEY JUST TAKE THE WATER. THAT'S PRETTY HARD TO KNOW WHAT SPRINGS, HOW MANY SPRINGS, HOW MUCH THEY'LL LOWER THE WATER TABLE.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] WE'VE NOT TRIED TO ROLL OVER THEM. WE HAVE NOT TRIED TO BULLY THEM. WE HAVE SIMPLY, IN EVERY WAY WE'VE KNOWN HOW, TRIED TO FIND A WAY FOR THEM TO BE ABLE TO ALLEVIATE THEIR FEARS.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] IS IT RIGHT TO TAKE WATER FROM A PLACE THAT REPRESENTS-- IS PERSONIFIED BY CATTLE, CHILDREN, CHURCH, AND COUNTRY, AND GIVE IT TO A METROPOLIS THAT IS PERSONIFIED BY GLITTER, GLUTTONY, GAMBLING, AND GIRLS? YOU MAKE THE CHOICE-- WHAT WILL IT BE? CROPS OR CRAPS?

[Brian Greenspan: Editor, Las Vegas Sun] WE'RE THE SAME PEOPLE THAT LIVE NEXT DOOR TO YOU IN SALT LAKE CITY, LIVE NEXT DOOR IN DES MOINES OR NEW YORK CITY OR LOS ANGELES. THEY'VE JUST COME HERE TO LIVE. THEY'RE THE SAME PEOPLE. SO THAT'S WHAT I THINK IS THE LARGEST MISCONCEPTION, AND IT'S A MISCONCEPTION THAT'S WAY OFF.

[Narrator:] THE POPULATIONS OF RURAL UTAH AND RURAL NEVADA ARE SMALL. MILLIONS COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS WATER IN LAS VEGAS. SHOULD THE FEW SACRIFICE SO THAT MANY MAY BENEFIT?

[Governor Huntsman:] I THINK THAT'S A DISINGENUOUS ARGUMENT. WE HAVE A WAY OF LIFE THAT OUGHT TO BE PROTECTED. PEOPLE HAVE INVESTED THEIR LIVELIHOODS IN THEIR WAY OF LIFE FOR GENERATIONS, AND I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE THE ARROGANT ONE WHO COMES ALONG SAYING THAT THEIR LIFESTYLE IS NOW ANACHRONISTIC AND WE'VE GOT TO FEED THE BURGEONING CASINO AND HOTEL BUSINESS JUST SOUTH OF THEM. FOR HEAVEN SAKE, IF THAT'S WHERE OUR COUNTRY IS GOING IN TERMS OF PUBLIC POLICY, THEN YOU CAN EXPECT AN OUTBREAK OF CIVIL WAR AT SOME POINT.

[Hal Rothman, History Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas:] IN THE RURAL PARTS OF

THE STATE, VERY FEW PEOPLE BENEFIT FROM THE WATER. YOU SEE VERY LITTLE JOB GROWTH, VERY LITTLE EMPLOYMENT, VERY SMALL OPPORTUNITIES. AND SO THE RESULT IS THAT PEOPLE COME TO THE CITIES FROM INSIDE NEVADA, NOT OUTSIDE, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IS. MEANWHILE, WE'RE USING ALL OF THE WATER TO GROW ALFALFA IN RURAL PLACES. IT MAKES NO SENSE.

[Narrator:] SNAKE VALLEY RANCHERS POINT TO OWENS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, AS AN EXAMPLE OF THEIR WORST FEARS. OWENS VALLEY SITS ALONG THE EAST SLOPE OF THE SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAIN RANGE NEAR BISHOP, CALIFORNIA. WILLIAM KAHRL IS AN AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN. HE'S A LEADING EXPERT ON WATER ISSUES OF THE WEST.

[William Kahrl: Author/Historian] OWENS VALLEY IS A SYMBOL FOR WESTERN STATES-- WHAT CAN HAPPEN WHEN A SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY THAT HAS ABUNDANT WATER RESOURCES RUNS INTO A CITY THAT IS THIRSTY AND THAT NEEDS TO TAP INTO THOSE RESOURCES. IN THE CASE OF THE OWENS VALLEY, THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES DRAINED THE VALLEY, BOUGHT OUT THE RANCHES, AND THEN BEYOND THAT, DEVASTATED THE REGION, TORE OUT THE ORCHARDS, REMOVED THE VEGETATION SO THAT THERE WOULD BE NOTHING TO INTERFERE WITH THE FLOW OF WATER INTO THE AQUEDUCT AND DOWN TO THE CITY.

[Narrator:] OWENS VALLEY WAS WILLIAM MULHOLLAND'S DREAM. WILLIAM MULHOLLAND RAN THE LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND POWER IN THE EARLY 1900s. HIS PLAN WAS TO BUILD A 223 MILE AQUEDUCT SYSTEM. THE LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT WOULD BRING WATER FROM OWENS VALLEY TO THE GROWING POPULATION OF LOS ANGELES. FARMERS AND RANCHERS OF OWENS VALLEY SOLD WATER RIGHTS. THEY LOST MUCH OF THEIR WATER TO BENEFIT LOS ANGELES.

[Mike Prather: Owens Valley Outreach Co-ordinator] WHAT HAPPENED IN THE OWENS VALLEY, IN SIGNIFICANCE OF ITS HISTORY, CAN HELP US LEARN ABOUT THE PRESENT, ESPECIALLY IN NEVADA, IS THAT A LARGE CITY-- AN URBAN AREA FAR AWAY--TOOK WATER FROM HERE. AT FIRST IT WAS SURFACE WATER, AND THEN IN 1970 THEY BEGAN MASSIVE GROUND WATER PUMPING AND BECAUSE OF THAT PUMPING, THERE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT DAMAGE TO VEGETATION THROUGHOUT AREAS IN THE OWENS VALLEY, AND MANY OF THESE MAY NEVER BE HEALED. IN TERMS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AND ECONOMIES, WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR WATER, YOU'VE LOST YOUR FUTURE. YOU'VE CERTAINLY LOST MANY OF THE CHOICES AND THE OPPORTUNITIES, SOME THAT WE MAY NOT EVEN KNOW ABOUT.

[Narrator:] THE RESULT WAS DUST BOWLS OF PARCHED FLATS AND LOST DREAMS. THE DRY LANDSCAPE OF OWENS LAKE TELLS THE STORY.

[Mike Prather: Owens Valley Outreach Co-ordinator] WE'RE WALKING ALONG THE SKELETONS AND MATURE WILLOWS THAT GREW AROUND THE POOL HERE AT HINDS SPRINGS. THESE WILLOWS LOOK TO BE 60 TO 90 YEARS OLD. THEY EXISTED BECAUSE WATER CAME THROUGH THE GROUND HERE. SNOW MELTS IN THESE MOUNTAINS AND MOVES UNDERGROUND UNTIL IT HITS SOMETHING WHERE IT CAN'T FLOW ANYMORE AND IT COMES TO THE SURFACE AND WE CALL IT A SPRING. IT'S A VERY SIMPLE THING. MUCH LIKE YOUR BANK ACCOUNT, HOWEVER THOUGH, IF YOU BEGIN TO TAKE MORE WATER THROUGH PUMPING THAN WATER IS COMING IN, IN RECHARGE, THEN YOU BEGIN TO LOSE. THE BANKRUPTCY HERE IS THE EXTINCTION OF THIS SPRING THAT IS GONE FOREVER, THE WILDLIFE THAT DEPENDED ON IT, THE

BEAUTY, AND THE DUST CREATED IN TERMS OF HUMAN HEALTH PROBLEMS... JUST A COMPLETELY NEGATIVE SITUATION.

[Narrator:] WATER FROM OWENS VALLEY RAN TO LOS ANGELES AND THE SAN FERNANDO VALLEY.

[Mike Prather: Owens Valley Outreach Co-ordinator] BEHIND ME IS THE LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT THAT IS CARRYING WATER 230 MILES DOWN TO THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES. THE PORTION THAT IS BEHIND ME AND UNDER ME IS A PART THAT WAS ACTUALLY DUG-- IT'S A MANMADE CANAL THAT WAS DUG. UPSTREAM IT DIVERTS THE OWENS RIVER-- THE ENTIRE VOLUME OF THE OWENS RIVER-- INTO THIS DUG DITCH AND THEN ON TO LOS ANGELES. SO IN OUR VALLEY WE LOST AROUND 62 MILES OF THE LOWER OWENS RIVER-- IT DRIED UP, AND THEN THE LAKE ALSO.

[Narrator:] HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS REPLACED ORANGE GROVES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. OWENS VALLEY WATER HELPED LOS ANGELES BECOME THE METROPOLIS IT IS TODAY. WITH INCREASED POPULATION CAME CONSEQUENCES OF TRAFFIC, AIR POLLUTION, AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS. 1/3 OF THE DRINKING WATER FOR LOS ANGELES FLOWS THROUGH THE AQUEDUCT. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY COUNTERS THAT THE CONSEQUENCES OF OWENS VALLEY COULD NEVER HAPPEN TODAY. THEY BELIEVE CURRENT WATER LAW AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION LAWS WILL OFFER SAFEGUARDS. CONCERNED RURAL RESIDENTS BELIEVE IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN TODAY AND THAT LAWS ARE NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] QUITE FRANKLY, THE OWENS VALLEY WAS DEVELOPED BY LOS ANGELES IN THE EARLY PART OF THE LAST CENTURY. THERE WERE NO ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS ON THE BOOKS. THE VALUES THAT WE AS A COUNTRY AND AS THE WEST EMBRACED WERE VERY DIFFERENT THAN THEY ARE TODAY. AND PART OF OUR OBJECTIVE IN DEVELOPING THESE WATER SUPPLIES IN LINCOLN AND WHITE PINE COUNTY IS TO ONCE AND FOR ALL RELEGATE OWENS VALLEY TO ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE IN HISTORY WITH THE DINOSAUR AND THE CAVE MAN. WATERS CAN NO LONGER BE DEVELOPED THAT WAY.

[Mike Prather: Owens Valley Outreach Co-ordinator] WE SHOULD NOT ALLOW PEOPLE TO JUST RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER RURAL AREAS IN NEVADA-- PEOPLE LIKE FROM LAS VEGAS-- WITHOUT THEM KNOWING WHAT THEY'VE DONE. IF, AFTER SEEING ALL OF THE FACTS, ALL OF THE THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO HAPPEN, IF THEY CHOOSE TO DO IT, THEN THAT CAN'T BE HELPED. BUT THEY NEED TO BE EDUCATED AND SHAMED IF NECESSARY.

[Hal Rothman: History Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas] THERE ARE NO PARALLELS TO OWENS VALLEY. A HUNDRED AND TEN YEARS AGO WE LIVED IN A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF WORLD. YOU SIMPLY COULD NOT DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT TODAY. EVERYTHING TODAY GOES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES, THROUGH A WHOLE RANGE OF PHENOMENA THAT DIDN'T EXIST IN 1900. AND SO THE IDEA THAT SOMEBODY CAN DRAW A BASIN DRY IN THE WAY IT HAPPENED IN 1900 IS SIMPLY NOT FEASIBLE TODAY.

[Cecil Garland:] IN SOME WAYS, OWENS VALLEY WAS MUCH MORE PREPARED TO GIVE WATER THAN WE ARE BECAUSE THEY HAD LAKES AND THEY HAD A RIVER AND THEY HAD A MUCH HIGHER RATE OF PRECIPITATION THAN WE DO, SO THIS VALLEY IS GOING TO SHOW THE STRESS AND DISTRESS MUCH QUICKER THAN OWENS VALLEY

EVER DID.

[William Kahrl: Author/Historian] THE WATCH WORD HERE IS THE SAME AS WHAT RONALD REAGAN USED TO TALK ABOUT--TRUST, BUT VERIFY.

[Narrator:] THE ISSUES REVOLVE AROUND THE LAND AND ITS RESOURCES. WHAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR USE AND WHO DECIDES? THE AMERICAN WEST HAS LONG BEEN A BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN COMPETING INTERESTS. THE WATER WARS OF THE WEST ARE ONLY A CURRENT CHAPTER. [Explosion]

THE NEVADA TEST SITE SIZZLES IN SUMMER'S SCORCHING HEAT. IT'S SOME 60 MILES NORTH OF LAS VEGAS. THE DESERT IS SOME OF THE MOST HOSTILE AND FORBIDDING TERRITORY IN THE UNITED STATES. [Explosions] MUSHROOM CLOUDS AND UNDERGROUND ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS WERE PART OF THIS AUSTERE LANDSCAPE IN THE 1950s. ONE CAN IMAGINE PEOPLE SITTING ON BLEACHERS WATCHING NUCLEAR BLASTS FROM WHAT THEY THOUGHT WAS SAFE DISTANCE. THE LAND TELLS THE STORY. EXPERIMENTAL HOUSES BEAR SILENT WITNESS TO A CONTROVERSIAL HISTORY. [Explosions]

WINDOWS ALLOW VISITORS TO PEER BACK IN TIME. THE STORY IS THE INFERNO HEAT OF AN ATOMIC BLAST. [Explosions]

NOT FAR AWAY IS THE YUCCA MOUNTAIN NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE FACILITY. YUCCA MOUNTAIN IS ABOUT 100 MILES NORTHWEST OF LAS VEGAS. A POTENTIAL REPOSITORY FOR HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE WASTE FROM THE NATION'S NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS LIES UNDER THIS STARK NEVADA MOUNTAIN RANGE. A TUNNEL WAS BORED THROUGH LAYERS OF ROCK IN THIS WIND-SWEPT PART OF THE WEST. POSSIBLY THE MOST HAZARDOUS INDUSTRIAL BYPRODUCTS ON THE PLANET MAY BE STORED HERE. YUCCA MOUNTAIN WAITS FOR CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL.

WHAT ARE SOLUTIONS TO THE ENERGY AND RESOURCE NEEDS OF THE NATION? WHAT ARE APPROPRIATE USES OF THE AMERICAN WEST? RANCHERS DEAN BAKER AND CECIL GARLAND ARE VETERAN FIGHTERS OF THE MX MISSILE WARS OF THE LATE 1970s.

THE MX MISSILE WAS PROPOSED DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER. THE MX PROJECT WAS A NETWORK OF INTERCONNECTED MISSILE SILOS PROPOSED FOR THE WEST DESERT. TEST WATER WELLS WERE DRILLED FOR THE MX MISSILE PROJECT. POSITIVE RESULTS SPARKED INTEREST IN WATER BENEATH THE WEST DESERT.

[Dean Baker: Rancher] THERE ARE SEVERAL PARALLELS WITH THE MX MISSILE. ONE OF THEM IS WHAT IT DOES TO THE ENVIRONMENT. THAT'S PROBABLY THE MAJOR PARALLEL. A LOT OF THE INFORMATION SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER IS USING WAS DEVELOPED FOR THE MX MISSILE. THE MX MISSILE WOULD HAVE CHURNED UP HUGE NUMBERS OF ACRES OF LAND, WOULD HAVE HAD A REAL AFFECT ON THE AREA. THE OTHER IS THERE'S THE ELEMENT OF BLUFF, AND I THINK PART OF SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER COMING HERE IS THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF BLUFF. AND I THINK THEY'VE UNFORTUNATELY GOT THEMSELVES TO THE POINT WHERE THEY HAVE TO CARRY THE BLUFF THROUGH TOO FAR.

[Hal Rothman: History Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas] I'D LIKE TO SEE THE RANCHERS COME TO THE TABLE AND TAKE AND SEAT AND NEGOTIATE LIKE GROWNUPS AND CUT THE GRAND STANDING AND SIT THERE AND SAY,"WHAT CAN WE

DO HERE "TO MAKE THIS A FAIR, BETTER SYSTEM FOR EVERYBODY?"

[Narrator:] IT'S A LATE WINTER'S DAY NOT FAR FROM OWENS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA. MONO LAKE SUFFERS A COLD, BITING WIND UNDER GRAY SKIES. TOWERS OF CALCIUM CARBONATE PUNCTUATE BLUE WATERS. PILLARS FORM BY COMBINING FRESH SPRING WATER AND ALKALINE LAKE WATER. MONO LAKE IS OVER A MILLION YEARS OLD AND MORE SALTY THAN THE OCEAN. FRESHWATER STREAMS FLOWING TO MONO LAKE WERE ONCE LOOKED AT FOR THE WATER NEEDS OF LOS ANGELES. DIVERSION OF THESE STREAMS BEGAN IN 1941. MONO LAKE IS GRADUALLY BEING RESTORED. MONO LAKE REMAINS A CAUTIONARY TALE OF THE WEST. MUCH IS ASKED OF THE AMERICAN WEST. IS DAMAGE TO THE LANDSCAPE, THE SIGNATURE VALUE OF THE WEST, ALSO INEVITABLE? THE ISSUE MAY ULTIMATELY BE ONE OF TRUST.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] I DON'T TRUST N.W.A. FOR WHAT WE ARE ABOUT TO LOSE. I HONESTLY DON'T. I CAN'T. I LIKE TO TRUST PEOPLE, BUT I CAN'T DO THAT BECAUSE THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE HERE, TOO MUCH OF OUR FUTURE, TOO MUCH OF VALUE.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] I'M NOT ASKING THEM TO TRUST ME. WHY WOULD I ASK THEM TO TRUST ME? I'M ASKING THEM TO PARTICIPATE, TRUST THEMSELVES. TRUST YOURSELF AND YOUR COMMUNITY TO ALWAYS HAVE WHAT'S THE BEST FOR YOUR COMMUNITY AT HEART, AND TAKE A SEAT AT THE TABLE TO PROTECT THOSE INTERESTS.

[Narrator:] ED FIRMAGE IS A NATIONALLY KNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER AND ENVIRONMENTALIST FROM SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH. HIS PHOTOGRAPHY SPECIALIZES IN LARGE FORMAT LANDSCAPES OF THE WEST. PRINTS SHOW A WEST HE HOPES WILL BE PRESERVED.

[Ed Firmage: Environmentalist/Photographer] THE PROBLEM WITH LAS VEGAS' SO-CALLED WATER GRAB IS THAT IT REPRESENTS THE CONTINUATION OF THE WAY WE'VE USED WATER IN THE WEST, WHICH IS A VERY WASTEFUL APPROACH TO THE USE OF WATER. AND IT REPRESENTS A CONTINUATION OF THE ATTITUDE THAT EVERYTHING HAS TO BE BASICALLY SUBORDINATED TO OUR NEEDS AS HUMANS. WHAT HAPPENS TO THE ENVIRONMENT, WHAT HAPPENS TO NATURAL COMMUNITIES THAT DEPEND ON THAT WATER IS BASICALLY NOT EVEN UNDER DISCUSSION IN A LOT OF CIRCLES.

[Brian Greenspun: Editor, Las Vegas Sun] I THINK WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT THE TRUST ISSUE AS IT RELATES TO THE RANCHERS AND FARMERS-- EITHER IN UTAH OR IN THE EASTERN PART OF NEVADA--I THINK THAT'S A VERY PROPER AND A VERY REASONABLE POSITION FOR THEM TO TAKE. HOW CAN THEY TRUST US DOWN HERE THAT WE WILL KEEP OUR WORD? I'VE LIVED IN THIS TOWN MY WHOLE LIFE. I KNOW THAT SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T TRUST THIS POLITICIAN OR THAT POLITICIAN, OR YOU CAN'T EVEN TRUST PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER KNOWN THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF LAS VEGAS TO EVER GO BACK ON ITS WORD, ESPECIALLY IN SOMETHING LIKE WATER.

[Narrator:] FISH SPRINGS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE IS AN OASIS IN UTAH'S WEST DESERT. JEWELS OF BLUE WATER SEEM A MIRAGE. THE REFUGE IS OVER THE HILL FROM CECIL GARLAND'S RANCH, SOME 20 MILES FROM CALLAO, UTAH.

[Jay Banta – Superintendent, Fish Springs National Wildlife Refuge:] THE WATER THAT FEEDS

THE MARSHES OF FISH SPRINGS COMES FROM THE CARBONATE AQUIFER--A VERY DEEP PREHISTORIC AQUIFER-- AND IT ALLOWS US TO MAINTAIN ONE OF THE LARGEST WETLAND COMPLEXES IN THE WESTERN UNITED STATES.

[Narrator:] A CRACKED, DRY LANDSCAPE STRETCHES FOR MILES. SHIMMERING WATER IS SUPPLIED BY SPRINGS AND SEEPS. IT IS WINTER AT FISH SPRINGS. ICE RIMS DESERT POOLS. FISH SPRINGS IS AN IMPORTANT FLYWAY FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS. THE CONCERN IS THE EFFECT THAT GROUNDWATER PUMPING IN SNAKE VALLEY MAY HAVE ON THE REFUGE.

[Jay Banta:] AT FISH SPRINGS, OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE HABITAT FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF MIGRATORY BIRDS--PARTICULARLY WETLAND MIGRATORY BIRDS. WATER IS WHAT ALLOWS US TO MAINTAIN THE WETLANDS, AND WE'RE CONCERNED THAT ANYTHING THAT MIGHT DIMINISH THE FLOW AS IT COMES OUT OF THE SPRINGS AT THE REFUGE WILL DIMINISH OUR ABILITY TO MAINTAIN AND CREATE HIGH-QUALITY HABITAT FOR THOSE BIRDS.

[Narrator:] THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY COUNTERS THE FEDERAL ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT, AND STRINGENT MONITORING WOULD PROTECT FISH SPRINGS FROM ANY ENCROACHMENT. THE DEEP CREEK RANGE RISES BEHIND CALLAO, UTAH. ANOTHER WINDY SQUALL PELTS THE RANGE ON THE UTAH-NEVADA BORDER. DON DUFF IS AN AQUATIC BIOLOGIST, AND PRESIDENT OF THE GREAT BASIN CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED. HE'S BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN RECOVERING THE ENDANGERED BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TROUT IN UTAH'S DEEP CREEK MOUNTAINS. IT IS SPRING. BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TROUT SPAWN IN HIDDEN POOLS. THE GOSHUTE NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBE, TROUT UNLIMITED, AND UTAH'S DIVISION OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES HAVE MADE EFFORTS TO FULLY RECOVER THE ENDANGERED BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TROUT.

[Don Duff: Aquatic Ecologist:] (fishing) OH, WE HAD A BIG ONE THERE! LOOKS LIKE A NICE RED FISH.

WE'RE LOOKING AT THE BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT, THE NATIVE FISH OF LAKE BONNEVILLE. THE GOSHUTE'S RED FISH... FROM THEIR SACRED RED FISH SPRINGS AND CONSERVATION AREA POND HERE. THERE'S A POSSIBILITY, A REAL THREAT THAT WITH THE LAS VEGAS WATER PROJECT, THESE SPRINGS AND STREAMS COULD LOSE SOME FLOW AND THEREFORE ENDANGER THE BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT AGAIN. OUR CONCERN IS LOSING OUR WATER HERE AND A LOT OF OUR INTERESTS. WE FEEL THAT OUR AQUIFER MAY BE AFFECTED, MAY BE DEPLETED, AND THAT WOULD NOT PROVIDE WATER FOR FISH HABITAT-- OUR BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT, OUR DIFFERENT WALLEYE SPECIES WE HAVE HERE WHICH ARE A SOURCE OF REVENUE.

[Narrator:] CUTTHROATS ARE THE ONLY TROUT NATIVE TO UTAH. THEY REQUIRE PRISTINE CONDITIONS. CUTTHROATS NEED COOL, OXYGENATED WATER WITH DEFINED GRAVEL BEDS.

[Don Duff: Aquatic Ecologist] WE'VE BEEN WORKING THE LAST DECADE IN BRINGING BACK THE NATIVE BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TO THIS STREAM, THIS SPRING CREEK SACRED STREAM, AND NOW WE HAVE THE FISH RECOVERED IN HERE, AND THIS IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF A SPRING POOL. THERE ARE LOTS OF FISH IN THERE. WE'VE RECOVERED THEM FROM ZERO AND SO WE HAVE A GOOD POPULATION NOW, AND SO WE'RE USING THIS TO RESTOCK THE REST OF THE DEEP CREEK RANGE WITH THE UTAH DIVISION OF WILDLIFE, AND WE'VE BROUGHT THE BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT,

WHICH IS THE UTAH STATE FISH, BACK FROM EXTINCTION ALMOST TO A GOOD RECREATIONAL FISH AND NATIVE FISH, AND WE'RE WORRIED THAT THIS LAS VEGAS WATER PROJECT, THROUGH THE GROUND WATER PUMPING OF THE CARBONATE AQUIFER SYSTEM, MAY LOWER THE SPRING HEAD AND FLOW OUT OF HERE AND ALSO THE HEAD WATER STREAMS OF THE DEEP CREEK MOUNTAINS.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] BECAUSE WE'RE SO ARID, WE HAVE TO MOVE WATER AROUND, AND NEVADA WATER LAW ENVISIONED THAT IN 1905 WHEN THE LAW WAS PUT ON THE BOOKS. THAT'S WHY THE WATERS BELONG TO THE STATE AND YOU CAN MOVE THEM AROUND.

[Don Duff: Aquatic Ecologist:] THERE ARE A LOT OF CITIES IN THE WEST THAT ARE GROWING--URBAN POPULATIONS LIKE LAS VEGAS-- AND THEY NEED TO MANAGE THEIR WATER AND MANAGE THEIR LAND FOR THE AMOUNT OF POPULATION. AND IF IT NEEDS TO BE POPULATION LIMITED OR GROWTH LIMITED, THEY NEED TO TAKE THAT INTO CONSIDERATION AND PLAN THEIR WATER RESOURCES ACCORDINGLY. TO COME OUT OF LAS VEGAS AND TO GO HUNDREDS OF MILES TO THE NORTH AND IMPACT OTHER PEOPLE'S WATER AND THE RESOURCES ASSOCIATED WITH IT, I DON'T THINK IS RIGHT.

[Amanda Cyphers, SNWA:] AT THE END OF THE DAY, I THINK WE'VE ALL REALIZED GROWTH IS OPPORTUNITY, AND OPPORTUNITY IS A GIFT, AND YOU HAVE TO ALLOW THAT OPPORTUNITY TO HAPPEN. IF YOU STALL THAT OPPORTUNITY, PEOPLE WILL GO OTHER PLACES TO GROW.

[Don Duff: Aquatic Ecologist:] THEY JUST NEED TO LIMIT THEIR GROWTH AND HAVE THE WATER AVAILABLE OR NOT GROW.

[Narrator:] GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK IS AN ISLAND IN THE DESERT. SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS SURROUND OCEANS OF SAGEBRUSH. GLACIERS OF WHEELER PEAK ARE IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THE DESERT FLOOR BELOW. IT'S A LANDSCAPE OF ANCIENT BRISTLE CONE PINE TREES WITH MEANDERING HIGH MOUNTAIN STREAMS.

[Cindy Nielsen – Superintendent, Great Basin National Park:] THIS IS ROWLAND SPRINGS, ONE OF THE SPRINGS ON THE LEHMAN CREEK DRAINAGE JUST INSIDE THE PARK. IT'S A GOOD EXAMPLE OF ONE OF THE SPRINGS THAT COULD BE AT RISK FROM PUMPING IN THE GROUND WATER BASIN AQUIFER IN SNAKE VALLEY.

[Narrator:] WATER DRIPS FROM LEHMAN CAVES DEEP UNDERGROUND IN GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK.

CONCERNS ARE RAISED WHETHER GROUNDWATER PUMPING COULD AFFECT GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY PROPOSES AN ELABORATE GROUNDWATER MONITORING SYSTEM. MONITORING WOULD WARN OF ANY POTENTIAL DANGER TO GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK AND FISH SPRINGS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY BELIEVES THERE ARE CURRENTLY FEDERAL REGULATIONS IN PLACE THAT WOULD PROTECT THESE AREAS.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] I SEE NO IMPACT ON EITHER THE GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK OR THE FISH SPRINGS REFUGE BY THIS PROJECT. AND I THINK YOU NEED TO LOOK AT THE AGREEMENT THAT WE JUST NEGOTIATED WITH U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE ABOUT PROTECTING THE HEAD WATERS OF THE MUDDY RIVER AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH WE'RE WILLING TO GO TO MAKE

SURE THAT THE ENVIRONMENT IS NOT DEVASTATED.

[Cindy Nielsen:] THE CHALLENGE AGAIN IS WHEN THE TWO BILLION DOLLAR, HUNDRED PLUS MILE PIPELINE IS BUILT, WHEN THAT WATER IS SOLD AND PROVIDED TO THE PEOPLE DOWNSTREAM IN SOUTHERN NEVADA WHO NEED IT... AND EVEN IF YOU HAVE MONITORING ON YOUR WELLS AND YOUR STREAMS AND EVEN IN THE CAVE POTENTIALLY, WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU FIND THAT THERE'S AN AFFECT? HOW TO YOU MITIGATE THAT?

[Brian Greenspun: Editor, Las Vegas Sun] LAS VEGAS IS THE AMERICAN DREAM. AT LEAST IT'S THE AMERICAN DREAM IN THE 21st CENTURY. I THINK IT WAS FOR THE LAST HALF OF THE 20th.

[Ed Firmage: Environmentalist/Photographer] IN THE CASE OF LAS VEGAS, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE BUT PROFIT. I MEAN, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A TOWN THAT IS SYNONYMOUS WITH SIMPLY MAKING MONEY, FOR NO PURPOSE BUT MAKING MONEY.

[Narrator:] WATER FEATURES LINE THE LAS VEGAS STRIP. FOUNTAINS AND VOLCANOS ERUPT, DEFINING THE ENTERTAINMENT CAPITOL OF THE WORLD. THERE'S ANOTHER SIDE TO THE STORY IF ELABORATE FOUNTAINS AND WATERFALLS SEEM WASTEFUL IN A DRY DESERT.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] WHEN YOU DRIVE DOWN THE LAS VEGAS STRIP AND YOU SEE THE FOUNTAINS, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF? YOU THINK OF WATER WASTE. PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT THE HOTELS ARE OUR MOST EFFICIENT USERS, ACTUALLY. THEY ONLY USE 3% OF ALL THE WATER IN SOUTHERN NEVADA. THEY GENERATE THE VAST PREPONDERANCE OF THE GROSS PRODUCT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA. AND I THINK THERE'S A MISPERCEPTION THAT THERE IS NOTHING BUT WASTE AND DISREGARD FOR THE RESOURCE GOING ON.

[Narrator:] DEEP IN THE BASEMENT OF A LAS VEGAS HIGH RISE IS A WATER RECYCLING PLANT. THE PLANT IS SHARED BY THE TREASURE ISLAND AND MIRAGE RESORTS. THE WATER IS USED AND RE-USED. MANY RESORTS USE PRIVATE WATER, NOT CITY WATER.

[Jamie Cruz – Director of Energy and Environmental Services, MGM Mirage:] THE WATER FOR THIS TREASURE ISLAND COVE COMES FROM THE THREE THOUSAND GUEST ROOMS HERE AT TREASURE ISLAND. THE WATER THAT IS USED ONCE IN THE SHOWERS AND THE SINKS IS PUT THROUGH A SOPHISTICATED PROCESS OF FILTRATION CALLED REVERSE OSMOSIS IN A STATE-OF-THE-ART PLANT LOCATED HERE AT TREASURE ISLAND, AND UP TO A HUNDRED THOUSAND GALLONS OF WATER A DAY CAN BE PROCESSED AND RECLAIMED TO FILL THIS WATER FEATURE.

[Narrator:] EFFORTS ARE MADE BY LAS VEGAS TO CONSERVE WATER. SOME CONSIDER LAS VEGAS A MODEL OF WATER CONSERVATION. GRASS IS THE BIGGEST WATER USER. NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED GRASS IN FRONT YARDS AND ONLY 50% GRASS IN BACK YARDS. THIS HOUSE FEATURES ARTIFICIAL TURF IN THE FRONT. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY REBATES ONE DOLLAR PER SQUARE FOOT FOR REPLACING GRASS WITH A WATER SMART LANDSCAPE. THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY REPORTS THEIR WATER SMART LANDSCAPES PROGRAM HAS RESULTED IN THE REMOVAL OF MORE THAN 67 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF GRASS. THAT'S ENOUGH TO LAY A ROLL OF SOD ONE THIRD OF THE WAY

AROUND THE EARTH.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] PEOPLE HAVE TO CHANGE THEIR VISUAL APPRECIATION. YOU KNOW, PEOPLE MOVE HERE FROM THE EAST AND THEIR EYES ARE USED TO A VISTA THAT IS VERY GREEN, AND ALL OF A SUDDEN, THAT LANDSCAPE CHANGES. SO THEY TRY TO RECREATE THE WORLD FROM WHENCE THEY CAME AND YOU CAN'T DO THAT. YOU CAN'T LIVE IN DEFIANCE OF THE AREA THAT YOU ARE MOVING INTO.

[Narrator:] THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY HAS THE ABILITY TO TREAT INDOOR WATER TO CLEAN WATER ACT STANDARDS. THE WATER IS RETURNED TO THE COLORADO RIVER SYSTEM. INDOOR WATER USE HAS VIRTUALLY NO IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY'S COLORADO RIVER SUPPLY. WATER CONSUMPTION IS LARGELY A FUNCTION OF OUTDOOR IRRIGATION RATHER THAN POPULATION. KEN NICHOLS FROM THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY BEGINS A WATER PATROL ON A SPRING DAY.

HE'S LOOKING FOR POTENTIAL WATER WASTE IN LAS VEGAS. IT'S PART OF A PLAN TO CONSERVE WATER AND GENTLY REMIND RESIDENTS IT'S THEIR DUTY TO HELP.

[Amanda Cyphers: SNWA] WE CONTINUALLY STRIVE TO LOOK FOR NEW AND INNOVATIVE WAYS ON HOW WE CAN BE BETTER WATER STEWARDS. THE TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT WE BRING, THE RESTRICTIONS WE HAVE REGARDING OUTDOOR USE TO INDOOR WATER USE, AND HOW WE'RE PLANNING DEVELOPMENTS THAT ARE GOING UP OR BUILDINGS THAT ARE GOING UP INSTEAD OF OUT--WE'RE TAKING THAT ALL INTO CONSIDERATION AS WE'RE MOVING FORWARD SO THAT WE MAKE SURE THAT WHAT WE ARE GROWING OR HOW WE ARE GROWING IS WISE AND WE'RE BEING RESPONSIBLE WITH THE OPPORTUNITY WE'VE BEEN GIVEN.

[Don Duff: Aquatic Ecologist:] THE FACT THAT LAS VEGAS HAS 60 GOLF COURSES AND A 300-ACRE LAKE, IT TAKES A LOT OF WATER TO DO THAT. AND THEY NEED TO LIMIT THEIR GROWTH AND LIMIT THEIR POPULATION BASE AND HAVE THE WATER FOR THOSE PEOPLE, BUT NOT COME NORTH OR SOUTH OR GET WATER FROM OTHER AREAS.

[Hal Rothman: History Professor, UNLV] THE BIGGEST MISCONCEPTION ABOUT WATER USE IN LAS VEGAS IS THAT IT IS WASTEFUL. DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR, LAS VEGAS HAS THE MOST EFFICIENT USE OF WATER IN THE STATE. AT NO POINT DOES URBAN NEVADA USE ANY MORE THAN 20% OF THE STATE'S WATER. IT GENERATES MORE THAN 99% OF THE STATE'S REVENUE. ANY WAY YOU MEASURE IT-- JOBS, TAXATION, ANY WAY YOU WANT TO MEASURE IT.

[Kathy Hill: Teacher] FOR ME IT'S NOT AN ISSUE OF WHAT LAS VEGAS STANDS FOR. I DON'T APPROVE OF LAS VEGAS, BUT LAS VEGAS HAS THE RIGHT TO BE WHAT THEY ARE. WHAT I DO DISAPPROVE OF IS WHEN THEY ARGUE THAT WHY SHOULD A DESERT WHO RAISES ALFALFA HAVE ANY RIGHT TO WATER? ISN'T THAT A WASTE OF WATER? COMPARED TO WHY SHOULD A GREAT BIG CITY RAISED IN THE DESERT TO DO GAMBLING-- WHY SHOULD THEY GET THE WATER? I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE COMPLEXITY OF THE ISSUE THAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SPELL OUT FOR US. IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

[Narrator:] THE SOUTHERN NEVADA WATER AUTHORITY POINTS TO LAS VEGAS WASH AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SUCCESS OF THEIR RECLAMATION EFFORTS. LAS VEGAS

WASH DATES TO NATIVE AMERICAN PREHISTORY AND RARE WETLANDS IN THE DESERT. IT'S A CONDUIT FOR LAS VEGAS TO RETURN WATER TO LAKE MEAD.

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] THE LAS VEGAS WASH IS THE DRAIN FOR THE ENTIRE VALLEY. ALL GROUND WATER, BE IT SHALLOW OR DEEPER GROUND WATER, ALL STORM WATER, AND ALL WASTE WATER EXIT THE LAS VEGAS VALLEY VIA THE LAS VEGAS WASH INTO LAKE MEAD.

[Narrator:] 95% OF LAS VEGAS WATER USED INSIDE IS RECLAIMED. 85% FLOWS THROUGH THE WASH AND ON TO LAKE MEAD. 2/3 OF THE WATER USAGE BY LAS VEGAS IS USED OUTDOORS AND NOT RECLAIMED.

ISSUES OF GROWTH IN THE WEST ARE NOT UNIQUE TO LAS VEGAS. POPULATION EXPLODES, DEMANDING EVER MORE WATER, LAND, AND POWER.

ST. GEORGE, UTAH, MAY BE A MICROCOSM OF THESE ISSUES. ST. GEORGE IS LOCATED NEAR THE NEVADA BORDER IN SOUTHERN UTAH. ST. GEORGE FACES STARTLING CHOICES EXPECTED OF LARGER CITIES. AN INVITING CLIMATE HAS MADE ST. GEORGE A POPULAR RETIREMENT AND VACATION DESTINATION. THE LANDSCAPE IS VARIED. IT'S NEAR UTAH'S ZION NATIONAL PARK AND THE VIRGIN RIVER. THIS COMBINATION HAS BROUGHT A POPULATION BOOM. ST. GEORGE LED THE NATION IN HOME VALUE APPRECIATION FOR 2005. HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS STRETCH TO THE HORIZON, SURROUNDED BY SNOW-CAPPED PEAKS AND RED CLIFFS.

[Ed Firmange: Environmentalist/Photographer] WHAT I SEE HAPPENING IN ST. GEORGE IS BASICALLY CANCEROUS GROWTH. EVERY TIME I DRIVE INTO TOWN, FOR EXAMPLE, AND I SEE THAT BIG SCAR ON THE MOUNTAIN ABOVE TOWN WHERE THEY BASICALLY DUG OUT A PIECE OF THE MOUNTAIN TO ACCOMMODATE HOMES AND CONDOMINIUMS, I JUST GET THIS WRENCHING IN MY GUT.

[Daniel McArthur – Mayor, St. George, Utah:] BECAUSE WE'RE IN THE LAND OF AMERICA AND WE BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT AND FREEDOM TO DO THOSE THINGS-- SELL THEIR LAND, MOVE AND LIVE WHERE THEY WANT TO LIVE--OUR CHARGE AS GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, IN MY OPINION, IS TO TRY TO PROVIDE AND TAKE CARE OF THAT GROWTH WITHOUT LOSING THE QUALITY OF LIFE.

[Narrator:] CAN THE LANDSCAPE SURVIVE AN EVER-GROWING DEMAND? CAN SCIENCE BE AN ANSWER? DESALINATION OF OCEAN WATER IS CONSIDERED. TECHNOLOGY IS CHANGING RAPIDLY. SEEMINGLY FAR-FETCHED SCHEMES ARE PROPOSED. TOWING ICEBERGS FROM ANTARCTICA AND WATER PIPELINES FROM THE GREAT LAKES MAY COMPLEMENT MULHOLLAND'S DREAM.

[Kathy Hill: Teacher] I WOULD LIKE TO ASK PAT MULROY TO PUT HERSELF INTO OUR POSITION-- NOT THINK OF HERSELF AS A POWERFUL FIGURE GETTING A LOT OF WATER FOR LAS VEGAS, BUT AS FOR SOMEBODY WHO LIVES HERE. THIS IS OUR HOME. THIS IS ALL WE HAVE. WE'RE NOT WEALTHY, AND DOES SHE REALLY WANT TO TAKE AWAY ONE OF THE FEW THINGS THAT WE HAVE?

[Patricia Mulroy – General Manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority:] "THE DAYS OF WINNERS AND LOSERS"--WHICH IS A PHRASE THAT I HEARD EMANATING OUT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA WHEN I FIRST STARTED IN THIS BUSINESS AND WOULD JUST RUB IN MY EAR--ARE OVER. AND THAT'S NOT OUR ETHIC. WHEN WE ENTER AN AREA OR WE PARTNER WITH SOMEBODY, THEN WE ASSUME PARTIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR FUTURE AS WELL.

[Cecil Garland: Rancher] THE FUTURE OF THE WEST-- IT'S PRETTY EVIDENT. IT'S OFTEN SAID THAT THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE MISTAKES OF THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT THEM, AND WE'RE REPEATING THEM ALL IN SPADES. WE'RE BUILDING THE MEGALOPOLISES WITH AN UNQUENCHABLE, INSATIABLE DESIRE FOR ALL RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY WATER.

[Narrator:] IS IT APPROPRIATE TO TAKE RESOURCES FOR EXPANDING CITIES FROM BEYOND THEIR BASIN? IS AGRICULTURE PRACTICAL IN ARID REGIONS OF THE WEST? WHAT WILL BE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AS POPULATION GROWS? CAN THE LAND, AS WE KNOW IT, SURVIVE? WHOSE DECISION WILL IT BE? THE ANSWERS WILL DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN WEST.