



## **DRAFT Charter Amargosa Vole Team**

### **Purpose and Background**

The Amargosa vole (*Microtus californicus scirpensis*; vole) is a uniquely adapted endemic rodent whose current distribution consists of small, isolated habitat patches within about twenty square kilometers of scattered wetlands primarily on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Tecopa, California. Historically, the range of the vole extended north to Shoshone where the type specimen was collected in 1891. The vole has apparently been extirpated from the Shoshone area and today is only found in the wetlands surrounding Tecopa. Despite being listed as an endangered species by the state of California in 1980 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in 1984, the Amargosa vole has received little conservation or research attention until recently. Due to increased interest in the vole and its current status, this group has recognized the need to coordinate their efforts to improve their ability to recover the vole.

The purpose of the Amargosa Vole Team (AVT) is to function as a work group to the Desert Managers Group (DMG) to provide a collaborative forum for BLM, FWS, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and researchers to plan, coordinate, and implement actions that would prevent the extinction of the vole and ultimately result in its recovery.

### **Mission**

To discuss, identify, coordinate, and plan the scientific investigations, management studies, data management, and conservation actions required to prevent the extinction of the critically endangered Amargosa vole and eventually lead to the recovery of the species throughout its current and historic range.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

- Meet at least annually to:
  - identify emerging threats to the vole and its habitat;
  - identify and prioritize management actions;
  - coordinate and plan scientific investigations, management studies, and conservation actions that will benefit the vole and lead to its recovery; and
  - share data and information about the vole and its habitat.
- Develop an Internet accessible database to house information related to vole research and studies.
- Seek funding for implementation of vole research, management studies, and conservation actions.
- Coordinate implementation of vole research, management studies (including habitat needs), and conservation actions.

- Interface with the Amargosa Basin DOI Coordination Group to gain a better understanding of how hydrology affects the vole and its habitat, and to inform future conservation actions.
- Promote the conservation and recovery of the vole by partnering with the Amargosa Conservancy (AC), the Nature Conservancy, and other partners to provide education and information regarding the vole and the sensitive ecosystem it lives in to the residents and visitors of Shoshone and Tecopa.
- Report periodically to the DMG regarding recommendations for recovering the vole and implementation of conservation actions

### **Work Group Participants**

The work group will consist of designated agency staff from the BLM's Barstow Field Office, CDFW, the FWS Ventura Field Office, the United States Geological Survey (USGS), University of California Davis (Davis), the University of California Berkeley (Berkeley). Upon consensus of work group members, other entities may be invited to fully participate in the work group on an ad hoc or permanent basis. Final decisions regarding on-the-ground research, studies, and conservation actions inherently reside with BLM, CDFW, and FWS as public trust agencies whose decision authority cannot be abrogated or delegated.