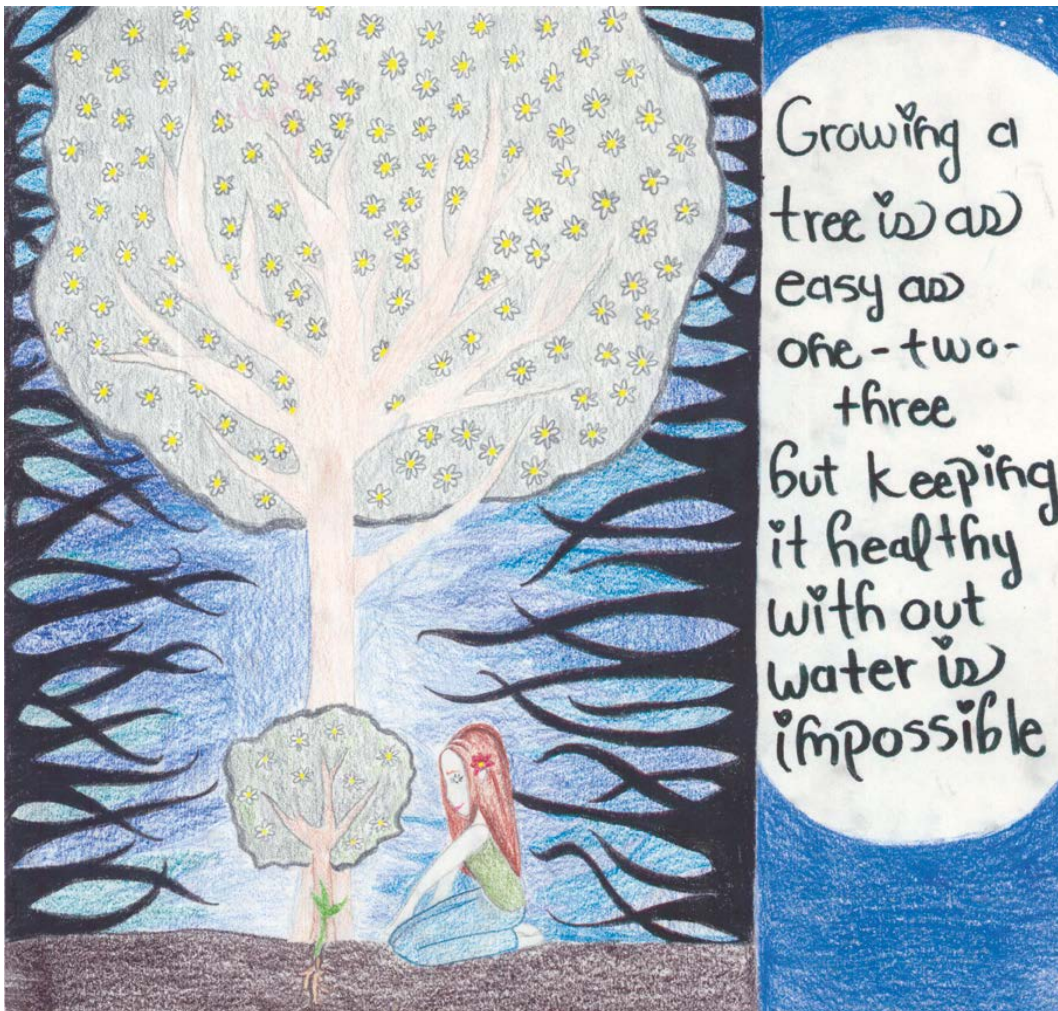


## TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 15, 2014

### Press Clippings

September 15, 2014 – October 8, 2014



*Ryeli Pferschy (Mendive Middle School)  
2010 Poster Art Contest - Second Place, Grades 7-8*

**Resent-From:** <[tmwaboard@tmwa.com](mailto:tmwaboard@tmwa.com)>  
**From:** Bruce [REDACTED]  
**Date:** September 11, 2014 at 2:54:29 PM PDT  
**To:** "'[tmwaboard@tmwa.com](mailto:tmwaboard@tmwa.com)'" <[tmwaboard@tmwa.com](mailto:tmwaboard@tmwa.com)>  
**Cc:** "'[kcompchel@tmwa.com](mailto:kcompchel@tmwa.com)'" <[kcompchel@tmwa.com](mailto:kcompchel@tmwa.com)>  
**Subject:** Thank You

Dear Board Members,

Recently late on a Sunday night, I heard strange noises coming from our home. After listening closely, it appeared to be coming from our water system. I opened the front door and heard a rushing noise and saw water flooding out of our water meter box into the street. It was late at night that Sunday when I called TMWA hoping that someone would answer. To my surprise, I got a person right away and she was wonderful. She dispatched someone out to our home and within a half-hour one of your technicians arrived.

Inspector Kevin Compchel was on call that night and I am so glad he was. Kevin explained that the bottom of our water meter had "blown out" and that caused the water rushing out of the box. He quickly shut off the water in the box, pumped out the box and installed a new water meter. His customer service was sensational and he represented you very well.

The next morning, TMWA called Savage and Son plumbing because dirt and sand had sucked back into our water lines. Savage and Son sent a young man named Robbie Jana to the house and he worked to blow out the lines and unblock some of our fixtures. When one of the fixtures couldn't be cleared of rocks, TMWA approved replacing it. Thank you. Thanks to your dispatch, Mr. Compchel and to who it was that help the plumber and my wife fix the issues. If you can determine who the dispatch people were, please forward my compliments to them.

I'm proud of the customer service you offered, especially on a Sunday night.

Respectfully,

**Bruce** [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

# No water worries for Tesla at Reno industrial park

Mark Robison, RGJ 5:56 a.m. PDT September 5, 2014



(Photo: Handout )

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The Tahoe Reno Industrial Center east of Sparks is already home to such heavy hitters as Walmart, Toys R Us, FedEx Supply Chain Services, Petsmart and Kal Kan/Mars pet food.

It has just landed Tesla Motors' massive battery factory..

Lance Gilman, marketing director for the industrial park, said water won't be a problem for Tesla or anybody else there.

"We're really not impacted by the drought situation," he said. "Our water source appears to be incredibly stable and we haven't seen a change in it at all (during the drought). We can pump 2 to 3 million gallons a day or more under today's capacity and that's, of course, expandable dramatically."

The industrial center has three different water sources. The smallest involves water rights for the Truckee River — it has an extraction well to get water from the river.

The biggest source involves an aquifer that's a thousand feet underground, has about 30,000 acre-feet of water (9.8 billion gallons) and serves only Tahoe Reno Industrial Center. This water is pumped throughout the park to numerous tanks, which then pipe the water to individual businesses.

"It's been tested by Tesco Gatorade for bottling and it's a very pure bottling water right out of the ground," Gilman said.

Mother Nature uses rain and snowmelt to recharge the aquifer.

A third source involves reclaimed water. The industrial park is a closed-loop system, meaning that when companies use water and it goes down the drain, this water is pumped to the center's own treatment plant, which cleans up the water and stores it in an above-ground reservoir.

This lake — about 100 surface acres and 60 to 70 feet deep at its deepest point — holds all of the park's treated water.

This recaptured water can be used in manufacturing for concrete or cool-down processes.




Gilman said water is a frequent discussion with businesses looking to locate here.

"The good news for our economic development community is, we can deliver large quantities of water, and I don't believe that that's really been available in our market in the past," he said.

# Sandoval launches Western Governors' Drought Forum

Article

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Lahontan reservoir — Gov. Brian Sandoval launched the Western Governors' Drought Forum on Thursday, Sept. 11, with the announcement of the regional initiative's first four meetings and the rollout of an online resource library to collect case studies and best practices.

Sandoval created the Drought Forum, his main initiative as Chairman of the Western Governors' Association (WGA), to foster a regional dialogue in which states and industry can share best practices on drought policy, preparedness and management.

The governor made the announcement at Lahontan Reservoir in Nevada, where low lake levels caused by extended drought conditions have forced the closing of all boat launches.

"The impact of drought in the West is clear to everyone here today. But it extends far beyond what's happened at Lahontan Reservoir," Sandoval said. "California is experiencing exceptional drought, the most severe measurement reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor. And extreme drought conditions continue in much of Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas."

Participants at Drought Forum meetings will identify ways to avoid and mitigate the impact of drought on communities, economies and the environment. Each meeting will feature experts from government, industry and other arenas. Meetings are as scheduled:

The governor also announced the launch of the Western Governors' Drought Forum online resource library, a collection of best practices, case studies and news about drought. It will offer links to a wealth of resources, such as state drought plans and current conditions in the West as reported by the U.S. Drought Portal.

Western Governors' Association Executive Director Jim Ogsbury joined Gov. Sandoval at the announcement to discuss the role of the bipartisan association, which is managing the Drought Forum.

The Western Governor's Drought forum is being conducted in partnership with NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System. The initial meeting in Norman, Okla., is being sponsored by the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment and National Hydropower Association.

# Drought likely to extend through 2014

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 8:56 a.m. PDT September 19, 2014



(Photo: Tim Dunn/RGJ)

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Northern Nevada's drought will continue through the remainder of 2014, with mounting impacts felt across a withering region, federal experts said Thursday.

The Truckee River flows at a trickle. Reno's skies are clouded with choking smoke from a wildfire exploding through more than 100 square miles of kiln-dry timber near Lake Tahoe. No one needs reminding of the fact the area is firmly in drought's grip and that big changes in weather are needed for things to improve.

TRUCKEE FISH: [Western drought imperils Truckee River trout](#)

HISTORIC DRY SPELL: [Drought threatens region's way of life](#)

Not anytime soon.

Persisting or intensifying drought is expected across most of Nevada and California for the remainder of September and through October, November and December, according to the center's new seasonal drought outlook.



The outlook comes as Reno-Tahoe and much of the West is now in a third year of a drought that has diminished water supplies, shut down farming and raised the danger posed by wildfire to alarming levels.

On even wet years October and November don't typically contribute much in terms of rain and snow. December, however, is the start of the primary snow season in the Sierra and the long-term forecast suggests a slight likelihood that month could trend dry as well.

"Even if December was wet, the drought wouldn't be over yet," said Zach Tolby, a

meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Reno.

10-15-2014 BOARD Agenda Item 19.E

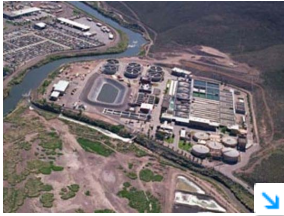
"It's going to take a real sustained winter to change anything," Tolby said. "The central Sierra is missing about one year of precipitation."

Last spring, many held hope that a developing El Nino, looking to be strong at the time, might bring needed winter storms to help end the drought. El Nino, characterized by warm ocean temperatures in the east Pacific, has produced heavy winters for the Reno-Tahoe area in the past.

Experts still think an El Nino will develop this fall or winter but say it's now shaping up to be weak, lessening always uncertain chances that it could help bring a big winter to the region.

# Reno-area sewage plant fined as it nears full capacity

Anjeanette Damon, RGJ 8:11 p.m. PDT September 24, 2014



(Photo: City of Sparks)  
the valley.

[f 61](#) | [t 13](#) | [in 3](#) | [2](#) | [EMAIL](#) | [MORE](#)  
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State environmental officials have fined the cities of Reno and Sparks \$16,500 because their joint sewage plant is violating standards for how much nitrogen is discharged into the Truckee River — a fine that will be borne by sewer ratepayers across

The Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility was unable to clean enough nitrogen from the water last year to meet Nevada Division of Environmental Protection regulations designed to protect fish and plant life in the river. Although the problem continued early this year, plant operators say they are on track to meet the standard by the end of 2014.

Still, the cities' inability to consistently keep up with the nitrogen load has brought to light a more pressing problem that the treatment plant is nearing its capacity for additional sewer hookups, which could limit development.

Also, the violation means the state may begin stalling approval for new subdivision maps, which would need sewer hookups, if the cities can't prove they can mitigate the nitrogen.

According to an internal memo obtained by the Reno Gazette-Journal, the treatment plant has capacity for only 3,800 more hook-ups — a very limited number for a community that is beginning to crawl out the recession.

"If the treatment plant is not performing to meet the permit conditions, NDEP may not approve final maps," Assistant City Manager Bill Thomas wrote in the memo. "As a result of the 2013 plant performance, approval of subdivision maps ... is being evaluated on a month to month basis."

According to the memo, the plant is at 99 percent capacity. Reno Public Works Director John Flansberg said cities typically are required to start producing plans for increasing capacity if a plant hits 85 percent.

"This one came up fairly quickly on us," Flansberg said.

Sparks Assistant City Manager Neil Krutz said the 3,800 additional sewer hook-ups does not include about 16,000 hookups for subdivisions that have been approved but not yet built.

But he acknowledges the capacity issue is a problem.

"It's certainly a big concern for us," Krutz said. "We are approaching being out of capacity at TMWRF. We do need to plan for either a treatment alternative or other ways to handle the effluent."

Those plans are not cheap. Krutz said a new oxidation process could cost \$30 million to \$40 million to construct.

The potential costs come at a time when Reno sewer customers are already shouldering 8 percent annual increases in their sewer rates until 2015. Sparks sewer customers also saw their rates increase 8.25 percent on July 1.

The plant processes 28 million gallons of waste water from Reno, Sparks, the Sun Valley General Improvement District and other parts of Washoe County

Thomas said he's not too concerned about the capacity issue blunting new growth, noting that capacity numbers depend on a 100 percent build-out rate. Generally, only 20 percent of approved projects are built in a given year, he said.

That could change, however, with the growth expected to accompany the construction of Tesla's \$5 billion battery gigafactory, which could add as many as 22,000 jobs to the Northern Nevada economy. Although the factory will be built in Storey County, many of its workers would probably live in Washoe County.

He also noted that the problem is not one of how much sewage the plant can receive, but how much effluent the plant can release back into the Truckee River.

Right now, the plant has difficulty managing the nitrogen because it relies on sensitive microorganisms to consume the nitrogen. Those microorganisms don't function as well in the winter. They also are in danger of being consumed by other organisms in the system.

"It comes down to process control with a natural organism," Krutz said.

In coming months, the Reno City Council and the Regional Planning Governing Board will consider additional options for dealing with that effluent, which could open up capacity.

The plant could remove nitrogen for fertilizer production. Reno and Sparks could also make better use of the effluent for irrigation or manufacturing needs rather than putting it back in the river.

The Tahoe Reno Industrial Center has already expressed interest in the effluent. The Regional Plan, however, prohibits the gray water from being shipped out of the service area.

Krutz said city staff will recommend amending the plan to allow for the water to be sent to Storey County.

"We are generating more than we can use," Krutz said, adding that Reno and Sparks does not have the "purple pipe" infrastructure needed to transport the water to properties throughout the valley.

The industrial park in Storey County — which Tesla recently announced it would build its battery gigafactory — already has a purple pipe system.

Although the Tesla project wasn't designed to use Washoe County's effluent, TRI's Lance Gilman said earlier this year that he has other potential projects that would need it.



## California's water agencies look to budget water

*Posted: Sep 28, 2014 10:11 AM PDT  
Updated: Sep 28, 2014 10:15 AM PDT*

By Associated Press

ADVERTISEMENT

LOS ANGELES (AP) - As California's severe drought continues, state and local agencies are looking at budgeting water use by creating a daily water allocation for each household.

The San Gabriel Valley Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/1xsETsi>) that under such a scheme, a household would get a certain number of gallons allotted to it for indoor water use and another for outdoor water use.

The amount allocated is calculated using census data, aerial photography and satellite imagery to determine a property's efficient water usage amount. Those using above their designated amount would pay extra.

The Irvine Ranch Water District factors the number of residents, landscaping and medical needs into a household's water budget. In Santa Monica, the City Council votes next month on whether to assign every single-family home with four people an indoor water budget.

Information from: San Gabriel Valley Tribune

# Leaky toilet puts Reno Councilwoman on list of biggest water users

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 6:58 a.m. PDT September 29, 2014



(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ)

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It all came down to a darned leaky toilet.

The fact something was wrong surfaced in June, when first-term Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon found out her home was on a list of the top 100 water users served by the Truckee Meadows

Water Authority. The list was the subject of a public records request filed by the Reno Gazette-Journal.

She wasn't on the top of the list, far from it. Among the top 100 residential metered customers, the Jardon residence in Somerset came in at No. 91, with 885,000 gallons of water consumed in 2013.

DROUGHT: [Tahoe will dip below its natural rim this month](#)

Jardon wasn't pleased. When directors of the water authority – a panel she serves upon – voted to release the names, she let that be known. She didn't know how the RGJ was going to use the information and as an elected official, she said at the time, she was an easy target.

Beyond that, she and husband Brad wondered, what landed them on that list in the first place? Sure, they own a big house, but there's a relatively small amount of lawn outside. There's an infinity pool that's filled in the summertime. She figured it maybe had something to do with that.

"It was kind of 'wait a minute, how did this happen?'" Jardon recalls. "It was absolutely a surprise. We don't waste water. We abide by all the rules. We follow every watering guideline."

So Jardon contacted the water authority and asked what to do. She was made aware of a free program, called a water audit, developed by the utility for just such a purpose – to pinpoint a water-wasting problem so it can be rectified.

A utility employee came out to Jardon's home and started the process. The water meter was checked. Irrigation riser pipes and control valve boxes were inspected, the overall system examined for problems. In this case, the process took a little over two hours.

A couple of minor breaks in the irrigation system were discovered, as was a leaky faucet. But the primary culprit was determined to be a toilet that was silently leaking water to the tune of 5 gallons every 10 minutes.

"It was shocking," Jardon said.

Maybe not so much. As it turns out, leaky toilets are probably the biggest culprit when it comes to water waste indoors.

"It can be a big problem," said Kim Mazeres, director of customer relations for the water authority. "It can waste tens of thousands of gallons if they don't realize they have leaking toilets."

This year through the end of August, the utility conducted 987 water audits across its service area.

If anyone suspects a leak and wants help in finding it, a free-of-charge audit is always an option, Gebhardt said.

"It can run the gamut of a couple of minutes to a few hours," Gebhardt said. "We'll do whatever the customer needs."

To Jardon, the program offers a clear benefit of which she thinks folks should take advantage. The primary problem identified through the audit cost about \$45 to fix. Water use between the period of mid-August through mid-September dropped 25 percent compared to the same period in 2013.

"I wonder how many other people have a similar problem and just don't know it," Jardon said. "Had we not done the audit, we would have never known about it."

Want a water audit?

Call the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's conservation hotline at 834-8005

# Drought hits Lake Tahoe, drying up Truckee River

Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal 8:25 a.m. EDT September 29, 2014



(Photo: Marilyn Newton, RGJ)

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The summer of 2014 ends up just like it started. Dry.

[Anytime now, Lake Tahoe will drop so low](#) no water will flow from the alpine jewel into the Truckee River.

Already, the river flowing through the northern Nevada metro area of Reno and Sparks is slowed to a trickle. Sun-bleached boulders protrude from sluggish waters like rounded bones.

The river will basically dry up below Lake Tahoe about the end of this month

Chad Blanchard

It's drought, now three years in duration. And while no one can say how long it will last, the event has already had a widespread impact across Nevada, withering agricultural fields, stressing livestock and wildlife and producing dangerous conditions fueling wildfires like the one that recently layered Reno's skies in choking clouds of smoke.

For now, at least, water flows from taps as normal, nourishes lawns as normal. But the situation is as serious as anything seen since 1994, the last time drought caused Lake Tahoe to dip below its natural rim so early in the year and the last time Reno's primary water supplier was forced to tap reserve supplies stored in the Truckee River's upstream reservoirs.

"We haven't seen this for 20 years. We're extremely dry," said Chad Blanchard, federal water master. "The river will basically dry up below Lake Tahoe about the end of this month."

In late July, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority exhausted normal water supplies as the flow from Boca Reservoir was cut off. An unusually long stretch of monsoonal storms in August offered some relief, but river flows continued to diminish as the authority first turned to drought reserves stored in Stampede Reservoir. Shortly after Labor Day, it began draining water from Donner Lake, as well.

## Customers cut water use

On July 28, the utility turned to its 93,000 residential and commercial customers and asked them to help out by reducing outdoor water use by 10% – an action officials said would allow them to avoid having to tap the area's largest drought reserve at Independence Lake.

Folks rose to the occasion, cutting water use by 10% as asked and saving about 1,150 acre-feet of water, or enough to serve about 2,500 homes for a year.

Nobody really complained, though some customers suggested the utility was not going far enough. There was even a suggestion by someone, immediately rejected, that it use drones to patrol for water wasters from the air.



USATODAY  
California's 100-year drought

"When we asked for help, the customers responded," said Mark Foree, general manager for the water authority.

While the need to use drought reserves marks an unfortunate milestone of sorts, Foree points out only a small portion has been tapped thus far. By late October, he expects the utility will use about 5,000 acre-feet of its drought reserves, or about 18%. That water should be replaced during the coming winter even if it is an under-performer.

What if the drought continues?

And that's the big question, of course. What happens if the winter of 2014-15 produces another poor winter snowpack like the last three in a row?

"If we were to have another poor winter we would likely have to use drought reserves again and it could be sooner than we did this summer," Foree said, adding that another year with a winter as dry as the last three would be decidedly significant.

"I don't think there has been four years as bad as the last three we've seen," he said.

The utility has plans in place to withstand a drought as long as the last major one to hit the region from 1987 to 1994, with an extra year thrown in. That span did include one average and one big winter mixed among the dry ones.

"That's what we plan for. That's the worst of the worst that we've had," said John Erwin, the utility's natural resource manager.

Some are concerned there could be worse to come, including Steve Bradhurst, a former Washoe County commissioner and former director of the county Department of Water Resources. Bradhurst is executive director of the Central Nevada Regional Water Authority, which is comprised of eight counties containing 65% of the state's land mass.

Last April, Bradhurst warned a legislative subcommittee that Nevada is on the cusp of a water supply crisis brought on by explosive population growth, limited water supplies and an emerging threat associated with extended drought and a warming climate.

Parts of the Great Basin have faced drought conditions longer than three years and the Colorado River Basin, which provides Las Vegas with water, has experienced the driest 14 years in 100 years of recordkeeping, Bradhurst said.

There's no reason not to suspect the three-year drought now affecting Western Nevada and the Sierra might not be the beginning of a longer event, Bradhurst said.

"I would be concerned this is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to drought," Bradhurst said. "I hope our drought plan is not tested severely. We've really got our fingers crossed Mother Nature is going to give us some moisture. If that doesn't occur, we're going to have some problems no matter how much reserves we have in the mountains.

"I would be taking a look at dusting off that drought plan," Bradhurst said.

The coming winter

Of the three dry winters, the last was the worst. On April 1, when the snowpack is typically at its peak, it measured only 34% of normal in the Truckee River Basin. 10-15-2014 BOARD Agenda Item 19.E

That situation has been worsened by a trend that saw the first eight months of 2014 the warmest on record in Western Nevada and across California. In the Sierra, mean temperatures were about 4 degrees above normal for each month compared to previous years dating back decades. The previous warmest year was exceeded by about 1 degree, said Kelly Redmond of the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno.



"Warmer temperatures don't help anything when it comes to drought. It just speeds up the loss of water," Redmond said.

With Lake Tahoe and its other reservoirs, the Truckee River system is in far better shape than many places to weather extended drought, Redmond notes.

Still, Redmond said, much attention is focused on the coming winter and the need for sustained snow to help reverse the situation and refill diminished reservoirs.

"The clear thing is that it's going to take some wet winters, probably more than one, but one good one can get you a lot of mileage," Redmond said. "We're hoping to at least get an average winter."

What kind of winter is coming is unknown. A developing El Niño – characterized by warm ocean temperatures in the east Pacific – is still expected but appears to be weak or moderate in strength at best. Strong El Niños can, but don't necessarily, improve the storm track for the Central Sierra. Another unknown is the presence of unusual warmer-than-normal waters in the north Pacific that could affect the coming winter in some way, Redmond said.

Bottom line, another dry winter is the last thing the region needs.

"We just hope this doesn't deteriorate any further because we've used up all the wiggle room," Redmond said.

# Water authority board may force flat rate users to meters

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 3 a.m. PDT September 26, 2014



(Photo: RGJ)

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The last holdouts who are billed the same no matter how much water they use will likely soon be hooked to water meters, ending years of effort in a move linked to the on-going drought.

Mike Carrigan, the Sparks councilman who chairs the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, said he will ask fellow board members next month to discuss the possibility of requiring all of the utility's customers to be connected to water meters, which bill according to the actual amount of water used.

"I just think it's the right time," Carrigan said. "If the drought persists, this is the right action to take."

Carrigan, who is termed out of office in November, won't participate in any decision. The vote would come after the water authority merges with the Washoe County Department of Water Resources and South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District, expected next December. The change will establish a single water provider serving about 115,000 homes and businesses in Reno-Sparks and adjoining unincorporated areas.

"Even if we weren't in a drought I was probably going to ask for this anyway," Carrigan said.

The idea of "flipping the switch" and requiring all so-called flat rate water users to convert to metered service has been discussed on and off for decades. Eventual conversion to metered service was a key requirement of the 1990 Truckee River Negotiated Settlement, which provides for a long-term water supply for the region. It is also a component of the Truckee River Operating Agreement, designed to do the same thing in the future.

The number of customers billed through meters has increased steadily over the years. In 2003, two years after the Truckee Meadows Water Authority was established and took over from Sierra Pacific Resources as the area's primary water provider, the number of both classes was close to even. Residential flat rate customers numbered 31,805 while metered customers numbered 34,185.

By last June, the water authority had 73,873 residential metered customers while those billed at a flat rate numbered only 4,469.

"We don't have many left. There's been a huge amount of conversions," said Mark Foree, general manager for the water authority.

The idea of requiring everyone to hook to a meter has been met with controversy. In December 2007, the utility's board of directors considered the issue during a sometimes emotional hearing during which some customers, many of them elderly, strongly objected to the idea of being forced to connect. By split vote, the board

decided to require meter connection by January 2010.

In April 2009 during a discussion on proposed rate adjustments, the board decided that conversion should be required “no sooner” than June 2010, largely due to projected impacts on that year’s budget.

The matter has not been discussed by the board since and while the number of conversions increased steadily in the years since, the notion of requiring everyone to be billed through meters has largely stayed off the radar screen.

There’s little question that those paying for water with flat rates cover their cost of delivering water to everyone. A series of six rate adjustments imposed since 2003 resulted in flat rate customers steadily paying higher rates, increasing from \$49.53 per month for typical residential service to the current monthly rate of \$100.63.

Average bills for metered customers over the same period went from \$31.53 to \$42.76.

“They are paying their fair share. They are paying more than their fair share,” Carrigan said.

Many are also using much more water. According to a list of the top 100 water users obtained by the Reno Gazette-Journal through a public records request, the top residential metered water customer, the mansion built on Reno’s Manzanita Lane by Nevada gaming pioneer William Pennington, used more than 6.1 million gallons of water in 2013.

The larger Harrah family estate on Talbot Lane in Reno used just under 4 million gallons, according to water authority records obtained by the RGJ.

Last year in general, Foree said, residential flat rate customers used about double the amount of those on meters – 282,000 gallons compared to 124,000.

The drought, now in its third year, has the authority facing challenges when it comes to providing water to its customers. For the first time since 1994, upstream drought reserves needed to be tapped to meet summer demand. Absent a heavy winter in the months ahead, the utility will likely again need to turn to backup supplies during the summer of 2015.

Foree agrees with Carrigan that the situation warrants another look at mandated metered billing for use of a precious, and currently scarce, resource.

“I think it is time to consider this again, particularly if the drought persists,” Foree said.

The discussion could come as soon as January 2015 but any requirement would likely be put off so customers can consider such things as landscaping changes, Foree said.

“They would probably look at not flipping the switch right away but some months down the road,” he said.

Peak water demand

July 3, 2014: 119.7 million gallons per day.

July 21, 2013: 121.4 million gallons per day.

July 12, 2012: 125.5 million gallons per day.

Aug. 9, 2011: 119.9 million gallons per day.



July 20, 2010: 123 million gallons per day.

July 26, 2009: 128.7 million gallons per day.

July 9, 2008: 131.1 million gallons per day.

Aug. 1, 2007: 139.9 million gallons per day.

July 26, 2006: 142.7 million gallons per day.

July 20, 2005: 148.8 million gallons per day.

July 11, 2004: 143 million gallons per day.

July 16, 2003: 141.2 million gallons per day.

July 11, 2002: 146.9 million gallons per day.

Aug. 5, 2001: 136.7 million gallons per day.

Source: Truckee Meadows Water Authority

## Winterization Workshops for Sprinkler Systems Start this Week

Posted: Sep 29, 2014 1:23 PM PDT

Updated: Sep 30, 2014 11:29 AM PDT

**Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA)** is offering three winterization workshops in October and November to help residents prepare their homes for cold weather and freezing temperatures.

Join TMWA's conservation staff for one of three free workshops to learn how to turn off your sprinkler system and protect water pipes from breaking this winter. The workshops will take place on Wednesday, Oct. 1; Tuesday, Oct. 28 and Wednesday, Nov. 12. All workshops start at 5:30 and are led by TMWA's conservation staff. The workshops will be at TMWA's main office, located at 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno.

TMWA customers can avoid the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes by attending one of these workshops to learn how to protect pipes inside and out the home from freezing temperatures this winter.

For more information about **winterization**, please visit the conservation section of [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com). To RSVP, please e-mail [conservation@tmwa.com](mailto:conservation@tmwa.com) or call 834-8005.



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# TMWA Says Water Supply is Good, Despite Drought

Posted: Sep 22, 2014 4:08 PM PDT  
Updated: Sep 22, 2014 4:13 PM PDT

By Paul Nelson - [email](#)

More than 80% of Nevada is in a severe drought or worse. But the Truckee Meadows Water Authority says planning ahead now means our water supply will stay in good shape. That is despite river flows down to just 80 cubic feet per second. The Truckee River flows are usually at about 500 cubic feet per second, this late in the year. Almost all of that water is coming from drought reserves. TMWA has a 9-year plan for drought reserves.



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"To start the summer, we had about 28,000 acre feet of water stored upstream and we've only used about 3,500 of that," Bill Hauck, TMWA Senior Hydrologist said. "So, we're still in pretty good shape from a drought perspective."

Hauck says Lake Tahoe could drop below its natural rim by the end of the week. The Truckee River is flowing at its lowest level since the early 1990s.

"Right now, there's no water to release," Hauck said. "The gates at Boca are closed. The gates at Lake Tahoe are wide open and there's nothing coming out."

"It's a stark contrast but it still has kind of a healthy look to it," Hauck said. "It's got pools and ripples and areas where the water moves through the rocks."

A voluntary cutback of outdoor water usage has been in place for nearly two months. Hauck says customers are saving about 8% of their average water usage but demand is still high, at 100 million gallons used per day.

"Continue being diligent and watering wisely, and truly, every drop that they save now is water that we're going to have in reserve, for next year, in case we do have another dry year," Hauck said.

TMWA is using about a 50-50 split between surface water and ground water. Levels will stay low for the rest of the year, and any improvement will depend on snow pack this winter.

"This has been three exceptionally dry years and we're sure hoping for a wet winter this time around," Hauck said.

Hauck says river flows will likely get worse before they get better, and they won't get back to normal until spring unless we get some heavy winter rains to raise the elevation of our reservoirs



# Courthouse News Service



Wednesday, October 01, 2014 Last Update: 4:59 PM PT

## Tribe Gets Remaining Truckee River Resources

By MIKE HEUER



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LAS VEGAS (CN) - A century-long legal battle regarding water use rights along the Truckee River system likely is over after a federal judge ordered all remaining resources to be given to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

The Tribe earlier asked that the federal court in Las Vegas, "provide for the enforcement of the permits issued to the Pyramid Tribe by the Federal Water Master"; to approve the Tribe's application to "appropriate all of the remaining unappropriated water of the Truckee River for the Pyramid Lake fishery"; and give the Tribe "up to 477,851 acre feet per year of Truckee River water."

The Tribe also asked the court to declare "that the waters of the Truckee River in Nevada are fully appropriated and closed to new appropriations."

The Tribe says the actions are necessary because the governing 1944 Orr Ditch Decree "directing the manner in which water must be passed through or released from Lake Tahoe and Boca Reservoir to satisfy water rights is not in the public interest and no longer is equitable in light of the substantial changes in legal and factual circumstances."

The 1944 Orr Ditch Decree arose from a 1913 legal action by the federal government seeking determination of who owned water rights along the Truckee River and had rights to store water in Lake Tahoe, according to the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District website. The decree incorporated the 1935 Truckee River Agreement among the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District, Washoe County Water Conservation District, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Sierra Pacific Power Company, which now is the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, and other users of Truckee River water.

The 1935 Truckee River Agreement established reduced flow rates at the California-Nevada state line and enabled construction of the Boca Reservoir in Nevada County, Cal., which is overseen by a federal water master, according to the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District.

"As the court has previously recognized, there exists on a river system 'a conflict

between pure theory of priority rights and the practical realities of the river system," U.S. District Judge Lloyd George wrote. "The Truckee River Agreement is the priority concept and the well-established principle of western water law that water must be economically, practically and beneficially used, so far as is possible. In this court's view, the waste of water must be avoided, for wasted water benefits no one." "The final decree in this matter embodies just such a modification, adjudging not only ownership and priority of water rights, but further establishing that such rights are subject to an obligation to divert only that amount of water that can be reasonably, economically and beneficially used," the judge said. "Management of a river system both protects vested water rights and furthers the efficient, beneficial use of water."

The Truckee-Carson Irrigation District opposed the Tribe's request.

"Both the Orr Ditch Decree and the Settlement Act contain provisions designed to protect the interests of water rights owners," the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District said. "The Orr Ditch Decree provides that the points of diversion and the place and manner of use may be changed, so long as it is 'without injury to the rights of other persons whose rights are fixed by this decree.' Further, it prohibits anyone 'from ever taking, diverting, using or claiming any of the water so decreed in any manner or at any time so as to in any way interfere with prior rights'" of water use.

The Truckee-Carson Irrigation District also challenged the court's authority to modify the agreement.

"They suggest the Truckee River Agreement remains a legally enforceable contract separate from the Orr Ditch Decree. As such, the terms of the Truckee River Agreement cannot be modified by this court without the consent of all parties to that agreement, and all parties have not consented to the proposed modifications," George wrote. "The arguments are without merit. This court has authority to modify all provisions of the Orr Ditch Decree, including those of the Truckee River Agreement, because the Truckee River Agreement no longer remains a contract separate from the Orr Ditch Decree, but was incorporated into the decree."

The Tribe "submitted extensive evidence establishing both legal and factual changes in the circumstances of the Truckee River system since the entry of the Orr Ditch Decree," the judge said.

"Since the Orr Ditch Decree was entered, additional reservoirs in the Truckee River basin have been constructed and are being used for the management of water on the river system," George wrote. "The beneficial use of water has shifted, and continues to shift, away from agriculture and toward municipal and industrial uses and other uses. The population depending on the water of the Truckee River has increased greatly and will continue to grow, while farmland irrigated with diverted water has decreased. The recognized beneficial uses of water have increased to include fish, wildlife and wetland purposes, water quality and recreation."

The judge ordered the remaining unappropriated water from the Truckee River to

be allocated to the Tribe with no more water appropriations available.  
U.S. Attorney Daniel G. Bogden represents the Tribe in filing  
the request on the Tribe's behalf.

# Fish appear to have weathered third summer of drought

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 7:55 a.m. PDT October 1, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file)

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Nevada's fish were certainly affected but on the whole appear to have weathered a third summer of drought without any serious crash in population.

While some die-offs occurred, trout in the region's rivers and streams, lakes and reservoirs made it to

the fall season in relatively good shape, biologists report. With temperatures now cooling and some precipitation likely on the way before long, the danger appears past.

"It's good news. At the beginning of the season I really did fear the worst," said Kim Tisdale, supervisory fisheries biologist for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. "We actually were able to pretty much dodge the bullet this summer."

DROUGHT: [Tahoe will dip below its natural rim this month](#)

TROUT AT RISK: [Western drought imperils Truckee River trout](#)

Three dry winters in a row have lowered water levels across Northern Nevada and the Sierra. The result is a challenging aquatic environment for trout and other fish. In rivers, fish are crowded into shrinking pools of water where smaller fish – pushed clear of habitat where they can hide – become vulnerable to predation by larger fish.

"All of our rivers are very low," Tisdale said. "The fish are all squeezed together."

Perhaps the biggest danger lay with the possibility that temperatures in shallow waters of places like the Truckee River could rise in summertime heat to the point they no longer are able to hold adequate dissolved oxygen to support fish survival. That's what can cause massive die-offs with the possibility of wiping out entire fisheries.

Fish kills did occur at Topaz Lake in southern Douglas County and at Squaw Creek Reservoir north of Gerlach. At Onion Valley Reservoir in the Pine Forest Range of Humboldt County, drought and irrigation demands lowered water levels to the point that trout fishery was lost, Tisdale said.



Nevada Department of Wildlife personnel walk the river during a fish survey in 2012. Biologists say the fishery appears to have made it through a third summer of drought, but they said they will be unable to conduct a similar survey this fall due to low water levels. (Photo: Marilyn Newton/RGJ file)

Sufficient water remained in the diminished Lahontan and Rye Patch reservoirs for fish – bass, walleye, crappie and catfish among them – to survive there.

At the Truckee River, things could have worked out far worse.

"It was pretty close. If we had a few more weeks of hot weather, we could have seen some fish kills, especially in the lower river," Tisdale said. Most fish also apparently made it through the summer in the Carson and East Walker rivers.

An unusual string of wet monsoonal weather in August was a big help in getting through the summer overall.

"Those summer storms helped postpone the inevitable. We had longer than we would have otherwise," Tisdale said.

In an irony of sorts, lowered water levels will prevent Tisdale and colleagues from getting an adequate reading on just how much the drought did impact those fish in the Truckee River. Each fall, biologists use electrofishing gear to shock the river's fish to help determine population, distribution and other characteristics of fish in the river that year.

This fall, there's too little water left flowing in the river to float the barge used for the fish survey. Some limited work using gear mounted on backpacks may still be possible.

"We're going to need a good winter to catch us up," Tisdale said of the months ahead.



Local Voices

Editorials

## Editorial: Time to end flat rates for water users

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REN



The much-diminished Truckee River flows under the Center Street Bridge in downtown Reno in late-September.(Photo: Marilyn Newton/RGJ )

The meters already are installed. The drought has required the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to dip into its drought reserves. The Truckee River is down to a rock-strewn trickle.

There no longer are any excuses for allowing some Truckee Meadows residents to pay a flat rate for the water they use.

It's time for the board of TMWA, which soon will control nearly all of the water in the area, to stop procrastinating and require that all customers pay for what they actually use based on a metered rate.

REQUIRED BY SETTLEMENT

TMWA, in fact, was required to do exactly that nearly 15 years ago, when decades of fighting among Northern Nevada water users — including Reno-Sparks, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and Fallon-area farmers — finally ended with the approval of the Truckee River Negotiated Settlement.

That agreement was particularly important to TMWA because it allowed the water provider to store water in a series of reservoirs for the sort of drought that we're seeing today.

In return for drought storage, TMWA was to require all of its customers to pay for the water they use based on meters. The same requirement was included in the Truckee River Operating Agreement.

The meters were installed, and today TMWA has nearly 74,000 metered residential customers, more than twice as many as it had when the water company was purchased from Sierra Pacific Resources in 2001. The number of flat-rate customers has fallen to just 4,469.

Yet, the TMWA board has shied away from requiring the hold-outs to switch to metered rates, despite its promise to the other groups that depend on the Truckee River.

#### SAVING WATER

There is no better way to ensure that customers save water than to bill them according to how much water they actually use because nothing catches a customer's attention quicker than a bill that suddenly jumps from, say, \$100 to \$300 with no obvious cause.

Water leaks can run the gamut from a subtle drip, drip, drip of a leaky toilet to the rush of water from a broken underground sprinkler pipe. The leak might not be obvious, but the meter knows: A sudden increase in cost is a warning that it's time to call a plumber.

The irony is that a metered rate often will save a customer money even if there's no leak. All homes have meters today, so TMWA pools all of the water that flat-rate customers use and designs its rates to cover the total amount they use together. That means a small home paying a flat rate is subsidizing the owner of a McMansion on a large grassy lot. TMWA tells them every month in their bills how much they'd save at the metered rate, and still some resist making the change.

Meanwhile, the flat-rate customers are using far more water than those paying metered rates. According to TMWA, metered customers use about half — 124,000 gallons — as much water as flat-rate customers — 282,000 gallons. (As the Gazette-Journal's Jeff DeLong reported on Sept. 28, the biggest water user in the Truckee Meadows was a home on Manzanita Lane, which used more than 6.1 million gallons in 2013.)

#### REACHING INTO RESERVES

Maybe we could afford the luxury of flat rates when Lake Tahoe was flowing over the rim of the Tahoe City dam and the water was rushing down the Truckee Meadows to Pyramid Lake.

Now, however, TMWA, which is near completion of a merger with the Washoe County Department of Water Resources and the South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District, is reaching into its reserves for the first time in 20 years to keep the taps from running dry.

Sparks City Councilman Mike Carrigan, who is chairman of TMWA's board, told DeLong that he will ask the board this month to consider requiring all customers to pay metered rates. If the board takes up his proposal, it'll be the first time in five years that it has discussed the idea, which it already is committed to by the negotiated settlement.

It's time to stop procrastinating. Everyone should be required to switch to metered rates.



# Ask the RGJ: How much Truckee water do TMWA customers use?



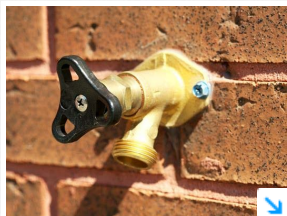
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Emerson Marcus, RGJ 8:16 a.m. PDT October 8, 2014



(Photo: Jupiterimages, Getty Images)

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Question: I have heard that the Truckee Meadows uses a small percentage of Truckee River water. Less than 20 percent. Is this an accurate statement?

Dan M.

Answer: Actually, the number is usually much lower than 20 percent.

In regular years, an estimated 3 percent of Truckee River water is diverted annually for Truckee Meadows Water Authority use. In dry years, TMWA estimates that number is about 8 percent.

But given the region's three-year drought, it is possible that number is actually higher than 8 percent this year. However, data proving that isn't immediately available.



RGJ

Leaky toilet puts Reno Councilwoman on list of biggest water users

This year, TMWA operated normally for the first seven months, close to 3 percent, said Bill Hauck, TWMA senior hydrologist. However, daily diversion this month is closer to 50 percent for Truckee Meadows use, but that's not that unusual this time of year, Hauck said.

TMWA meets 85 percent of its annual customer demand with Truckee River water, with remaining 15 percent mainly coming from groundwater, according to TMWA.

Truckee River diversions

Dry year

Truckee-Carson Irrigation District: 46 percent

Pyramid Lake: 32 percent

Other irrigation: 14 percent

Truckee Meadows Water Authority: 8 percent

Average year

Pyramid Lake: 80 percent

Truckee-Carson Irrigation District: 10 percent

Other irrigation: 10 percent

Truckee Meadows Water Authority: 3 percent