

WATER TOPICS IN OUR COMMUNITY: GROWTH

THE WATER YOU SAVE IS NOT USED FOR GROWTH

CAN THE WATER WE CONSERVE EVERYDAY BE USED FOR GROWTH - TO BUILD MORE HOUSES OR BUSINESSES?

The answer is no. Some people mistakenly believe that when our residential customers use less water through conservation, the water saved is used for growth. That is not what happens. Unused water is retained for our drought reserves or is released to benefit river system health. Reselling of conserved water to serve new houses does not occur.

IF CONSERVATION MAKES MORE WATER AVAILABLE, WHY CAN'T IT BE USED FOR GROWTH?

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) holds water rights dedicated to serving each business or home. Water conserved during times of drought cannot be used for growth. The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) requires that TMWA use conserved water to increase drought storage availability and enhance instream flows in the Truckee River for wildlife purposes. TMWA cannot reallocate any unexercised portion of water rights to serve additional customers. New growth must have new water rights to serve new homes and businesses.

WHERE DOES THE WATER COME FROM FOR NEW GROWTH?

New developments must acquire water rights from a willing seller. Anytime someone wants to build a house, a subdivision, or a business, they must bring existing water rights to TMWA. In most cases, agricultural irrigation rights are purchased by developers and converted to municipal use for new projects.

The amount of Truckee River water available for use in the Truckee Meadows was determined by a 1944 court decree and has not changed. Developers generally purchase water rights that were originally designated for agricultural use and convert the use of those water rights for new homes and businesses. There is no increase in the amount of water that can be taken from the river. The only thing that changes is how the water is used.

WHAT DO WATER RIGHTS HAVE TO DO WITH IT?

A detailed topic paper on water rights is available. But, when people who own irrigation water rights decide not to use them any longer, they can sell them like any other real property. If they are sold to a developer, the developer must then legally change the use to municipal purposes and transfer them to TMWA so they can serve new customers. Additional water is not diverted from the river and/or underground aquifers – it is the same amount of water, simply re-dedicated from agricultural use to municipal use.

DOES GROWTH PAY FOR GROWTH AT TMWA?

Yes, it does. The development community pays for all new facility and water rights expenses related to growth when they want to build a new project. The TMWA Board of Directors instituted this policy shortly after TMWA was formed in 2001.

QUICK FACTS

Remaining water rights:
Approximately 45,000 acre-feet of Truckee River and creek water rights remain available for future conversion, plus an additional 8,000 acre feet of groundwater from Fish Springs Ranch.

Total converted irrigation and groundwater water rights available for use in the Truckee Meadows:
approx. 111,000 acre-feet

Potential drought storage:

TROA allows for two to three times more storage than previously available. Visit tmwastorage.com/reserves for both historical and current storage levels.

Use of Truckee River:

TMWA customers use only 3 percent of the water in the Truckee River in a non-drought year and 9 percent in a drought year.

Number of new Truckee River water rights:

None since 1944

Investment in new water

facilities:

\$75 million since 2002 paid by developer fees.

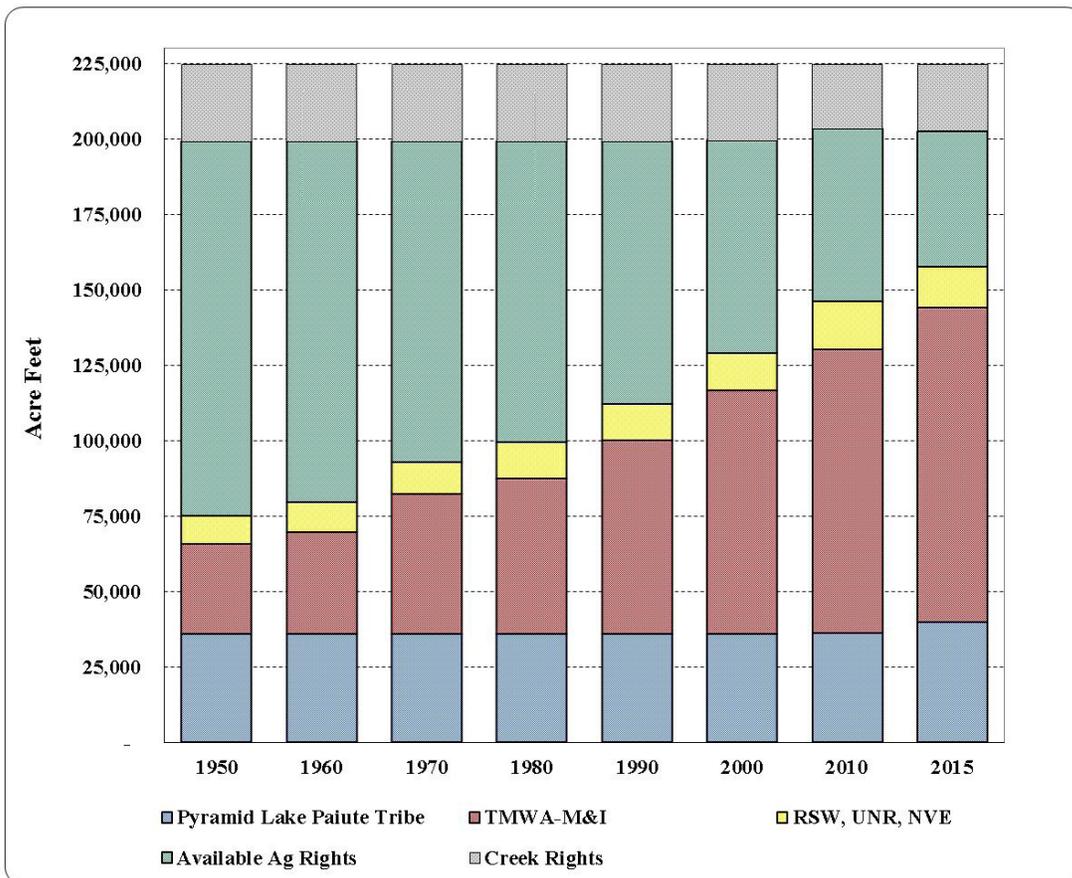
Growth is paying their full cost of new facilities to provide new service. The fee that developers pay includes the cost of new water mains, pumps and tanks, plus expansion of water treatment plants. The development community has agreed to this policy, which ensures that existing customers do not pay for new facilities to serve new development and new customers.

New development funds: facility charges, feeder main fees, inspection charges and engineering services, as well as \$1,830 per acre-foot of demand to fund meter retrofit. Thus, TMWA's existing customers do not pay the cost for growth or meter retrofit. These fees and charges are reviewed regularly and updated based on the most recent facility plan, construction and other cost information.

WHAT IS TMWA'S ROLE IN GROWTH IN OUR COMMUNITY?

Local governments set the communities' direction on growth. TMWA is a water provider and a facilitator to serve local government in managing and developing existing or future water supplies and resources. We cannot deliver more water than is allowed by water rights and drought reserves -- for any purpose, including growth. The community sets the course for growth through regional planning and local government directives. If anyone would like to have input in the issue of growth, contact your elected representative and/or the planning commissions.

TRUCKEE RIVER WATER RIGHTS SAME WATER, DIFFERENT USE



About TMWA:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 385,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

About this series:

"Water Topics in Our Community" is a series of papers designed to provide the citizens of the Truckee Meadows information about key water topics in this region.

To access all of the papers, go to www.tmwa.com/topics.

About TMWA's Board of Directors:

The TMWA Board welcomes you to attend and comment at any board meeting. Meeting schedules are posted at

www.tmwa.com/meetings.

To send a question to the Board, visit us online at

www.tmwa.com/comment.

Questions or feedback?

We'd like to hear from you. Please call our Community Communications line with any remaining questions you have on this topic or other water topics. The number is

(775) 834-8290.

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