

## WATER TOPICS IN OUR COMMUNITY: TRUCKEE RIVER FUND

### FACTS ABOUT THE TRUCKEE RIVER FUND

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) Board of Directors established the Truckee River Fund (the Fund) in 2004 as an innovative method of maximizing public funds for projects devoted to protecting the primary source of water for our customers. Through the Fund, non-profit organizations raise funds to augment TMWA's resources for implementing projects/programs that benefit Truckee River water quality and watershed and thus, our customers. The Fund is held at the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, but all TMWA funds remain in the sole control of the TMWA Board and all expenditures from the Fund must be approved by TMWA.

### WHAT REQUIREMENTS MUST PROJECTS MEET TO BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING?

All projects must meet strict criteria requirements and must provide a direct benefit to TMWA and TMWA customers in the form of protecting and enhancing water quality or water resources. To be considered for funding the project/organization must:

- Have a direct effect in promoting or improving the health of the Truckee River system and watershed
- Be exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the code
- Be able to provide financial details and/or reports of their organization upon request
- Be able to commence the approved projects within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year in which the distributions were received
- Be able to secure matching funds from a partner organization or agency

### HOW DOES A PROJECT GET APPROVED FOR FUNDING?

Projects are solicited twice a year through an open and competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Once applications are received, Fund advisors review each request and submit a list of projects that meet all the requirements to the TMWA Board of Directors. The Board reviews each recommendation at a public meeting and can approve funding or veto any project.

### WHO MAKES UP THE FUND'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

The Fund's Advisory Committee has nine members. Washoe County, City of Reno and City of Sparks each appoint three representatives to the committee. Committee members cannot be elected officials. The Advisory Committee reviews project requests at noticed public meetings, prior to submitting their recommendations to the TMWA Board.

### DOES THIS SAVE CUSTOMERS MONEY?

Yes. Because funds are in a separate, tax-exempt foundation, TMWA requires that all projects have matching funds. This enables TMWA to complete projects at a much lower cost than if TMWA was paying the entire amount.

### IF THE FUND GOES AWAY, WILL MY MONTHLY BILL BE LOWERED?

No. Your bill was not raised when the Fund was created. Even if the Fund did not exist, these types of projects would continue to be implemented by TMWA to protect your water quality – only without the benefit of matching funds from other organizations.

### QUICK FACTS

#### Distributions:

To date, nearly \$20 million has been distributed from the Fund to qualifying projects.

#### Matching funds:

Additional matches of nearly \$12 million in cash and in-kind services.

#### Multi-jurisdictional projects:

Many of the projects are multi-jurisdictional in nature, but the Fund allows TMWA to secure matching funds and partnerships with other public agencies. This allows our customers to spend less money to protect our river and watershed.

#### Audit findings:

In its 2005 audit of TMWA, the Nevada State Bureau of Consumer Protection stated the creation of the Fund "was appropriate to assure continued access and use of TMWA's primary water supply commodity."

#### Legal findings:

In 2005, the Nevada Attorney General concluded TMWA's participation in the Fund was appropriate and "consistent with TMWA's mission."

#### Website with more information:

[www.truckeeriverfund.org](http://www.truckeeriverfund.org). All meeting minutes and funded projects are listed on the website.



## WHY DOES TMWA USE CUSTOMER MONIES TO FUND PROJECTS THAT PROTECT AND ENHANCE WATER QUALITY OF THE TRUCKEE RIVER, OR ITS WATERSHED AND RAW WATER SUPPLY?

Eighty-five to 90 percent of the water delivered by TMWA comes from the Truckee River. TMWA is responsible for providing customers with potable water that is safe, clean and meets all Federal EPA Standards. Proper management of the Truckee River is critical to insure such standards are met. The projects funded by the Truckee River Fund normally involve areas of the watershed that are multi-jurisdictional in nature which makes a watershed improvement project difficult, if not impossible, to implement by one entity or agency. However, the creation of a fund allows TMWA to secure matching funds and partnerships with other public agencies; thus, our customers spend less money to protect our river and our watershed.

## FUNDED PROJECTS AND MATCHING FUNDS:

Since its inception in 2004, nearly \$7.4 million has been approved for distribution from the Fund qualifying projects. Organizations provided additional matches of nearly \$15 million in cash and in-kind services. The projects range from watershed restoration projects to invasive weed removal programs. For a detailed list of all current and completed projects, including the project information and benefit to TMWA, visit [www.truckeeriverfund.org](http://www.truckeeriverfund.org). The site's interactive project map provides an overview of all

### 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 400,000 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](http://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](http://www.tmwa.com/meetings).

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

[www.tmwa.com/comment](http://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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