



TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY
Board of Directors

AGENDA

Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.
Sparks Council Chambers, 745 4th Street, Sparks, NV

Board Members

Chair Vaughn Hartung
Member Neoma Jardon
Member Jenny Brekhus
Member Paul Anderson

Vice Chair Kristopher Dahir
Member Jeanne Herman
Member Naomi Duerr

NOTES:

1. The announcement of this meeting has been posted at the following locations: Truckee Meadows Water Authority (1355 Capital Blvd., Reno), Reno City Hall (1 E. First St., Reno), Sparks City Hall (431 Prater Way, Sparks), Sparks Justice Court (1675 E. Prater Way, Sparks), Washoe County Courthouse (75 Court St., Reno), Washoe County Central Library (301 South Center St., Reno), Washoe County Administration (1001 East Ninth St., Reno), at <http://www.tmwa.com>, and State of Nevada Public Notice Website, <https://notice.nv.gov/>.
2. In accordance with NRS 241.020, this agenda closes three working days prior to the meeting. We are pleased to make reasonable accommodations for persons who are disabled and wish to attend meetings. If you require special arrangements for the meeting, please call (775) 834-8002 at least 24 hours before the meeting date.
3. Staff reports and supporting material for the meeting are available at TMWA and on the TMWA website at <http://www.tmwa.com/meeting/> or you can contact Sonia Folsom at (775) 834-8002. Supporting material is made available to the general public in accordance with NRS 241.020(6).
4. The Board may elect to combine agenda items, consider agenda items out of order, remove agenda items, or delay discussion on agenda items. Arrive at the meeting at the posted time to hear item(s) of interest.
5. Asterisks (*) denote non-action items.
6. Public comment is limited to three minutes and is allowed during the public comment periods. The public may sign-up to speak during the public comment period or on a specific agenda item by completing a "Request to Speak" card and submitting it to the clerk. In addition to the public comment periods, the Chairman has the discretion to allow public comment on any agenda item, including any item on which action is to be taken.
7. In the event the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are absent, the remaining Board members may elect a temporary presiding officer to preside over the meeting until the Chairman or Vice-Chairman are present (**Standing Item of Possible Action**).
8. Notice of possible quorum of Western Regional Water Commission: Because several members of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority Board of Directors are also Trustees of the Western Regional Water Commission, it is possible that a quorum of the Western Regional Water Commission may be present, however, such members will not deliberate or take action at this meeting in their capacity as Trustees of the Western Regional Water Commission.

1. Roll call*
2. Pledge of allegiance*
3. Public comment — limited to no more than three minutes per speaker*
4. Approval of the agenda (**For Possible Action**)

¹The Board may adjourn from the public meeting at any time during the agenda to receive information and conduct labor-oriented discussions in accordance with NRS 288.220 or receive information from legal counsel regarding potential or existing litigation and to deliberate toward a decision on such matters related to litigation or potential litigation.

5. Approval of the minutes of the March 20, 2019 meeting of the TMWA Board of Directors **(For Possible Action)**
6. Introduction of TMWA's new International Brotherhood Electrical Workers 1245 representative, Mike Venturino — Jessica Atkinson*
7. Discussion and possible action, and direction to staff regarding 2019 legislative activities, current bills, and TMWA recommended positions on legislative proposals— John Zimmerman and Steve Walker, Walker & Associates **(For Possible Action)**
8. Water Supply Update — Bill Hauck*
9. Discussion and possible action, and direction to staff on adoption of a new Conflict of Interest Policy related to Procurement — Michele Sullivan **(For Possible Action)**
10. Presentation on proposed Conservation, Communications and Outreach Plan for 2019, discussion and possible direction to staff — Andy Gebhardt and Marlene Olsen **(For Possible Action)**
11. Discussion, possible action, and direction to staff and authorization to General Manager regarding negotiation and execution of possible option agreement with State of Nevada for purchase of water from Marlette Lake Water System, including the right to use 3,090 acre feet for option fee of \$250,000 — John Enloe **(For Possible Action)**
12. Discussion and action on appointments to the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) to fill the irrigation customer representative alternate position, for term ending December 31, 2020, and the at-large 2 customer representative alternate position for term beginning May 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021 from the following pool of candidates listed in alphabetical order: Susan Hoog and Kar Katt — Sonia Folsom **(For Possible Action)** *(continued from February)*
13. General Manager's Report*
14. Public comment — limited to no more than three minutes per speaker*
15. Board comments and requests for future agenda items*
16. Adjournment **(For Possible Action)**

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TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE MARCH 20, 2019
DRAFT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met on Wednesday, March 20, 2019, at Sparks Council Chambers., 745 4th Street, Sparks, Nevada. Chair Hartung called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Paul Anderson, Jenny Brekhus, Kristopher Dahir, Naomi Duerr, Vaughn Hartung, Jeanne Herman, and Neoma Jardon.

A quorum was present.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice Chair Dahir.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

4. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Hartung requested to move agenda item #6 to be heard after agenda item 13 or 14 to allow time for TMWA's lobbyist, Steve Walker, to arrive.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Duerr which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the agenda as amended.

5. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 20, 2019 MEETING

Upon motion by Member Brekhus, second by Member Anderson, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the February 20, 2019 minutes.

7. WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

Bill Hauck, TMWA Senior Hydrologist, updated the Board on the status of the TMWA's water supply: the Truckee River and Tahoe Basins are at 175% and 185% of average, respectively; All reservoirs on the

system will fill and spill except Boca Reservoir, which will only half fill due to the seismic retrofit construction on the dam; expect high river flows through the summer, peaking in May/June and tapering off in August; Independence Lake is approximately 86% full; TMWA currently has approximately 32,000 acre feet of reservoir storage; and Lake Tahoe is approximately one foot below the natural rim, which is at elevation 6229.1.

Member Brekhus inquired about the impact of the precipitation on the irrigation ditches. Mr. Hauck replied each company turns on their own irrigation at different times, it is not mandated; and due to the wet year, the ditches will be turned on later, but will have a full irrigation season.

8. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENTS OF TRUSTEE(S) TO THE WESTERN REGIONAL WATER COMMISSION (WRWC) FROM THE TMWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

A) PURSUANT TO SEC.25(3)(A) OF THE WRWC ACT FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST OF QUALIFIED PERSONS: JENNY BREKHUS AND NEOMA JARDON TO FILL THE VACANCY OF DAVID BOBZIEN.

Mr. Foree presented this agenda item for consideration.

Upon motion by Member Jardon, second by Member Duerr, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved Jenny Brekhus to the WRWC, pursuant to Sec.25(3)(a) of the WRWC Act, to fill the vacancy of David Bobzien for a new two year term April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021.

9. REPORT ON STATUS OF WEST RENO WATER SYSTEM ACQUISITION AND RELATED IMPROVEMENTS AND POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF ON SYSTEM ACQUISITION

John Zimmerman, TMWA Water Resources Manager, informed the Board that the acquisition is now closed and there are 14 closing documents that need to be recorded. Mr. Zimmerman thanked staff for all their hard work in completing this complicated transition.

Member Jardon confirmed there were a total of 62 closing documents and thanked staff for their efforts.

Upon motion by Member Jardon, second by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the acquisition of the West Reno Water System.

10. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION AND DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A PORTLAND LOO PUBLIC RESTROOM AT BRODHEAD MEMORIAL PARK TO BE FUNDED FOR NO MORE THAN \$150,000

John Enloe, TMWA Director of Natural Resources, presented this item to the Board for consideration.

Discussion followed regarding the cost of supplies and personnel (approximately \$25k); support of placing a public restroom along the river to improve water quality; concern about it becoming a shelter, which would be difficult as it would be located on TMWA property (trespassing laws would apply and TMWA would have security cameras) and across the street from the Reno Police Station; concern about TMWA being responsible for providing public restrooms, which is the responsibility of the Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County (TMWA would fund the first public restroom with the intention of the other 10 restrooms funded through other entities); and construction funding is contingent upon stakeholder funding of operations and maintenance and public outreach (potential funders were waiting for TMWA funding of the Portland Loo first).

Mr. Enloe explained the \$150,000 will be taken out of the Truckee River Fund annual contribution (the Fund) as a one time deduction to establish the first Portland Loo. He stated the desire is to garner public interest for it to be established on its own; much like the boat inspections at Lake Tahoe started at the Fund and now is its own entity. Also, an update will be provided to the Board once it has been set-up.

Vice Chair Dahir expressed concern of the public restroom being on TMWA property and not at the public park and he would not support a motion to move forward with this project.

Upon motion by Member Jardon, second by Member Duerr, which motion duly carried six to one with Vice Chairman Dahir dissenting, the implementation of a Portland Loo public restroom at Brodhead Park to be funded for no more than \$150,000 contingent on funding partner for operations, maintenance and outreach, TMWA to provide an evaluation success criterion, and locating the restroom closer to the trail.

11. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON RESOLUTION NO. 274: A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE FUNDING FOR THE PROJECTS RECOMMENDED BY THE TRUCKEE RIVER FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND AN AUTHORIZATION FOR THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION TO FUND SUCH PROJECTS FROM FUND PROCEEDS

Mr. Enloe presented the staff report and informed the Board that project #218 was pulled from the list of projects for approval and project #221, One Truckee River, funding is also contingent on acquiring a funding partner for operations, maintenance and outreach for the Portland Loo.

Vice Chair Dahir stated he does not support project #221, One Truckee River, because of where the public restroom would be located, on TMWA property.

Upon motion by Member Brekhus, second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board adopted Resolution No. 274: A Resolution to approve funding for the projects recommended by the Truckee River Fund Advisory Committee and an authorization for the Community Foundation to fund such projects from Fund proceeds.

12. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON THE TMWA TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020 AND DRAFT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2020 THROUGH 2024

Mr. Bowman informed the Board TMWA's FY 2020 operating revenue is expected to be 2% more than the FY 2019 budget, due to growth and not counting a rate increase since it was deferred; hydroelectric revenues are expected to be \$3.3M in FY 2020 (an increase of \$531k from FY 2019; operating expenses increased by \$6.4M or 7% and salaries and wages are up \$2.1M or 10%, benefits are up \$2.2M (22%) and services and supplies are up \$2.9M (10%); interest expense is expected to fall due to principal reduction in debt of \$7.8M; and TMWA will be reimbursed for two FEMA grants (Glendale diversion and repairs to the access road to Fish Springs) of \$1.9M.

The Board discussed the reason for the increase in employees (due to growth in service territory and overstaffing to prepare for retirements in the next 3 years) and directed staff to provide more details on the reason for the increase in employees when the final budget is presented; the Board also discussed benefits (due to noncash amortization of deferred outflows of PERS benefits); Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) system shown in the budget at \$0.5M and in the capital improvement plan as \$1.8M (the difference is operating budget and implementation); and \$0.5M related to Fish Springs power costs are greater than water right commitments using Fish Springs groundwater resources it is a little more expensive to operate, but Fish Springs is the source of supply for the area, and it is beneficial to keep it running continuously to maintain good working order and avoid additional start-up costs.

Joe Petrelli, TMWA Financial Analyst, reported on the FY 2020-2024 Capital Improvement Plan (FY20 CIP). TMWA plans to spend \$213.4M over the next five years of which \$56.2M is expected to be spent in FY20 and \$45.9M in FY21.

Member Brekhus requested to know what year the projects are introduced and evaluation of prior year to better understand which projects were completed or pushed out; requested an explanation of priority for projects (such as Bedell Flat); and requested more information on the Stonegate project. Mr. Bowman explained priority ranking is contingent on whether the project is needed to maintain existing water service. Scott Estes, TMWA Director of Engineering, added that TMWA is not spending any money on the Stonegate development; TMWA will design and construct the pump station using funds advanced by Stonegate and the developers will ultimately pay for all water facilities required to serve their development. In addition, Stonegate will pay Area 10 fees reflecting the use of existing facilities to move Fish Springs water through the system.

Upon motion by Member Brekhus, second by Member Duerr, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the tentative budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020 and Draft Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2020 through 2024.

6. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION AND DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING 2019 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES, CURRENT BILLS, AND TMWA RECOMMENDED POSITIONS ON LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Steve Walker, TMWA Lobbyist, informed the Board the TMWA Legislative Subcommittee met on March 18 and approved staff recommendation for most of the bills except for the following, which staff has recommended to oppose: AB136 (revises how prevailing wage is determined), AB138 (relating to workers; compensation), SB 231 (this is the same as AB136), and SB245 (increases the award in tort actions from \$100k to \$250k and adds a new class for gross negligence with a liability maximum of \$1M).

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Anderson, which motion duly carried five to two with Members Brekhus and Duerr dissenting, the Board approved staff recommendation to oppose AB 136.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Herman, which motion duly carried five to two with Members Brekhus and Duerr dissenting, the Board approved staff recommendation to oppose AB 138.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried five to two with Members Brekhus and Duerr dissenting, the Board approved staff recommendation to oppose SB 231.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Herman, which motion duly carried six to one with Member Brekhus dissenting, the Board approved staff recommendation to oppose SB 245.

Mr. Zimmerman presented a new bill for Board consideration, SB287, and stated that staff's recommendation is to oppose. Michael Pagni, TMWA General Counsel, informed the Board SB287 creates a liability penalty regarding public records requests.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Herman, which motion duly carried six to one with Member Brekhus dissenting, the Board approved staff recommendation to oppose as written SB 287.

Mr. Walker updated the Board on: AB265 (DRI study for alternative water sources), TMWA amendment would expand the area of study, and SB250 (water rights tied to parcel map or permit) proposed amendment will possibly be approved.

13. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) TO FILL THE IRRIGATION CUSTOMER REPRESENTATIVE ALTERNATE POSITION, FOR TERM ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2020. AND THE AT-LARGE 2 CUSTOMER REPRESENTATIVE ALTERNATE POSITION FOR TERM BEGINNING APRIL 1, 2019 TO DECEMBER 31, 2021 FROM THE FOLLOWING POOL OF CANDIDATES LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER: SUSAN HOOG AND KAR KATT

Upon motion by Member Duerr, second by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved to continue this item to the next meeting.

14. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

There were no updates.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

16. BOARD COMMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Member Brekhus inquired about the Farad property. Mr. Zimmerman stated there is no update at this time. Vice Chair Dahir requested more information regarding the staffing levels presented today. Mr. Bowman replied that staff can include a more detailed strategic overview during the succession planning item to be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

17. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Chair Hartung adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Approved by the TMWA Board of Directors in session on _____.

Sonia Folsom, Recording Secretary



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Zimmerman, Manager of Water Resources
DATE: April 9, 2019
SUBJECT: **Discussion and possible action and direction to staff regarding 2019 legislative activities, current bills, and TMWA recommended positions on legislative proposals**

The TMWA legislative subcommittee will meet on Friday, April 12, 2019 to review all new bills staff has recommended TMWA watch or take a position on. Staff will provide a list of those bills to the Board after receiving the subcommittee's direction so that the Board has the most-recent information. Staff, TMWA lobbyist Steve Walker, and General Counsel Michael Pagni will update the Board regarding the new legislation and the subcommittee's recommendations. Additionally, we will update the Board on any relevant new information regarding the session and existing bills the Board has already directed TMWA to support or oppose.

Staff requests the Board provide direction regarding TMWA's position on, and possible action regarding, the new and existing legislation.

2019 Legislative Deadlines:

February 4-----Session Begins
February 11----Legislators' BDR Requests
March 18-----Legislators' Bill Introductions
March 25-----Committees' Bill Introductions
April 12-----Committee Passage (1st House)
April 23-----First House Passage
May 17-----Committee Passage (2nd House)
May 24-----Second House Passage
June 3-----Session Ends

Bill	Sponsor	Last Meeting and Action	Next Meeting	Tags	Board/LSC Position or Staff Recommendation
AB30		Revises provisions governing the appropriation of water. (BDR 48-214)			
	Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining 4/10/2019 4:00 PM		Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	WATCH
		Amend, and do pass as amended			
AB51		Revises provisions governing the management of water. (BDR 48-213)			
	Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining 2/27/2019 4:00 PM		Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	WATCH
		Heard			
AB62		Revises provisions related to water. (BDR 48-215)			
	Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining 4/3/2019 4:00 PM		Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	WATCH, OPPOSE
		Amend, and do pass as amended			
AB86		Revises provisions relating to governmental purchasing. (BDR 27-182)			
	Committee on Government Affairs	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 4/11/2019 8:30 AM		Financial, Risk Management	WATCH, SUPPORT
		Without recommendation, and rerefer			
AB101		Authorizes a private plaintiff to bring an action for a declaratory judgment regarding a violation of state law or a local ordinance by certain governmental entities. (BDR 3-26)			
	Daly	Assembly Committee on Judiciary 2/14/2019 8:00 AM		Financial, Risk Management, Open Meeting, Records, Boards, Elections, Public Works	OPPOSE
		Heard			

Bill	Sponsor	Last Meeting and Action	Next Meeting	Tags	Board/LSC Position or Staff Recommendation
AB136		Makes various changes relating to public construction. (BDR 28-145)			
	Frierson, Benitez-Thompson, Carlton, McCurdy, Daly, Assefa, Backus, Bilbray-Axelrod, Carrillo, Cohen, Duran, Flores, Fumo, Gorelow, Jauregui, Martinez, Miller, Monroe-Moreno, Munk, Neal, Nguyen, Peters, Spiegel, Sprinkle, Swank, Thompson, Torres, Watts and Yeager	Assembly Committee on Ways and Means 4/1/2019 8:00 AM		Public Works	OPPOSE
		Heard			
AB138		Revises provisions governing workers' compensation. (BDR 53-708)			
	Sprinkle, Carrillo, Flores, Monroe-Moreno, Frierson, Assefa, Backus, Benitez-Thompson, Bilbray-Axelrod, Cohen, Daly, Duran, Fumo, Gorelow, Martinez, Miller, Munk, Neal, Nguyen, Peters, Swank and Yeager			Human Resources	OPPOSE
AB163		Revises provisions governing water conservation. (BDR 48-798)			
	Assemblymen Watts, Cohen, Nguyen, Peters and Swank; Senators Brooks and Scheible	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining 4/1/2019 4:00 PM Amend, and do pass as amended		Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	WATCH
AB265		Requires the Desert Research Institute to conduct a study concerning water treatment and recycling. (BDR S-901)			
	Assemblymen Peters, Swank and Watts; Senators Brooks, Goicoechea and Scheible	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Mining 4/3/2019 4:00 PM Amend, and do pass as amended		Water Quality (NDEP), Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	SUPPORT if amended

Bill	Sponsor	Last Meeting and Action	Next Meeting	Tags	Board/LSC Position or Staff Recommendation
SB245		Revises provisions relating to civil actions. (BDR 3-965)			
		Senate Committee on Judiciary 3/11/2019 8:00 AM Heard, No Action		Financial, Risk Management, Governance	OPPOSE
SB250		Revises provisions relating to the dedication of water rights. (BDR 48-664)			
	Settelmeyer, Goicoechea, Hardy, Hansen and Seevers Gansert	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 4/4/2019 4:00 PM Heard, No Action	Senate Committee on Natural Resources - Work Session Item 4/11/2019 4:00 PM	Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	OPPOSE unless amended
SB280		Revises provisions relating to state lands. (BDR 26-975)			
	Settelmeyer, Kieckhefer and Goicoechea	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 4/4/2019 4:00 PM Heard, No Action		Property, Water Rights (WR-rights, resources, conservation)	OPPOSE as written
SB287		Revises provisions governing public records. (BDR 19-648)			
	Parks, Hansen, Spearman, Denis and Woodhouse	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 4/3/2019 1:00 PM Heard, No Action	Senate Committee on Government Affairs - Work Session Item 4/12/2019 Upon Adjournment	Governance, Open Meeting, Records, Boards, Elections	WATCH
SB358		Revises provisions relating to the renewable energy portfolio standard. (BDR 58-301)			
	Brooks, Cannizzaro, Denis, Spearman, Woodhouse, Ohrenschall, Parks, Scheible and Washington	Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure 4/4/2019 1:00 PM Amend, and do pass as amended		Energy	OPPOSE, unless amended

Northern Nevada Water Supply Outlook

TMWA Board of Directors Meeting

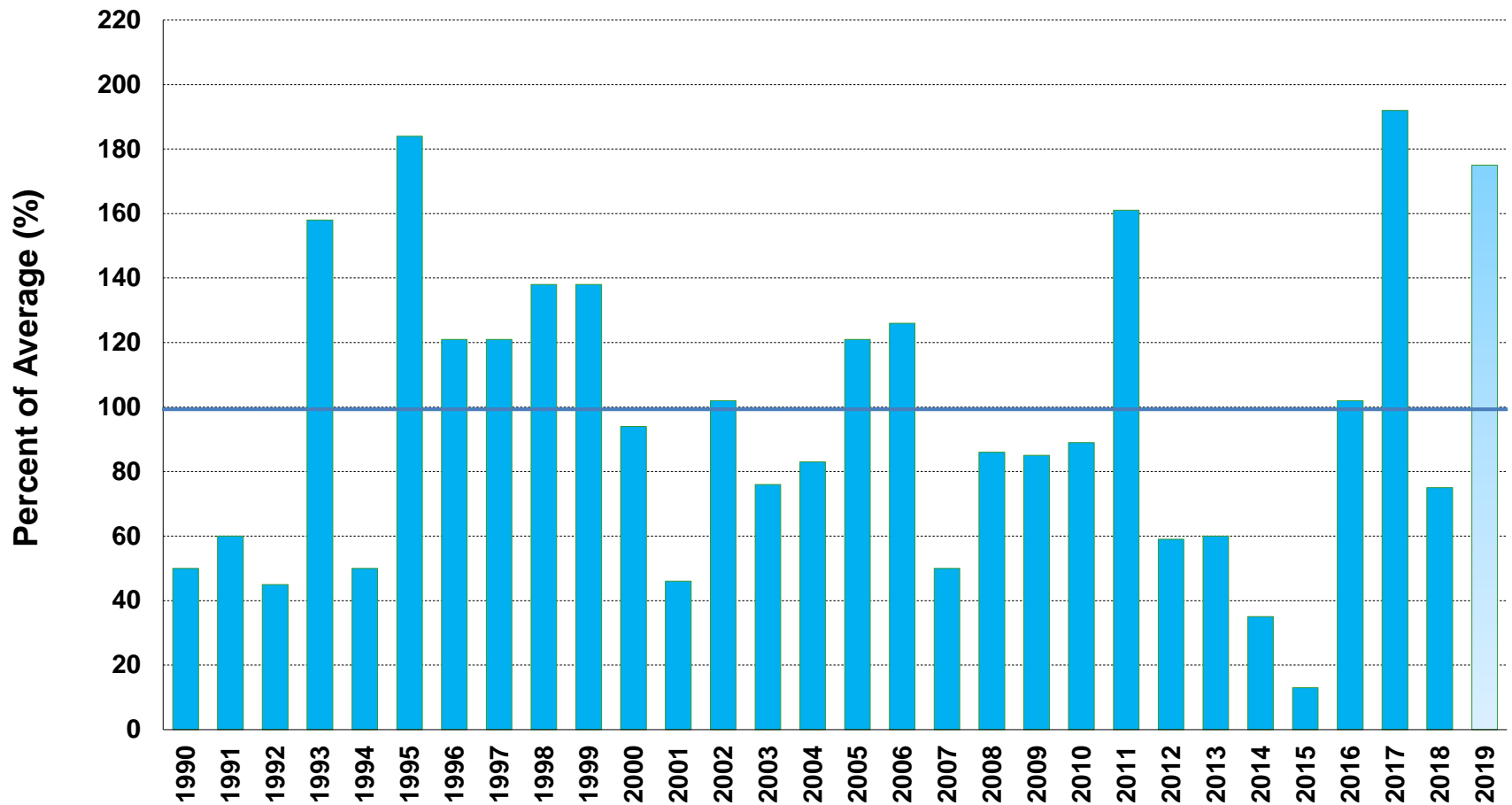
Bill Hauck, Senior Hydrologist

April 17, 2019

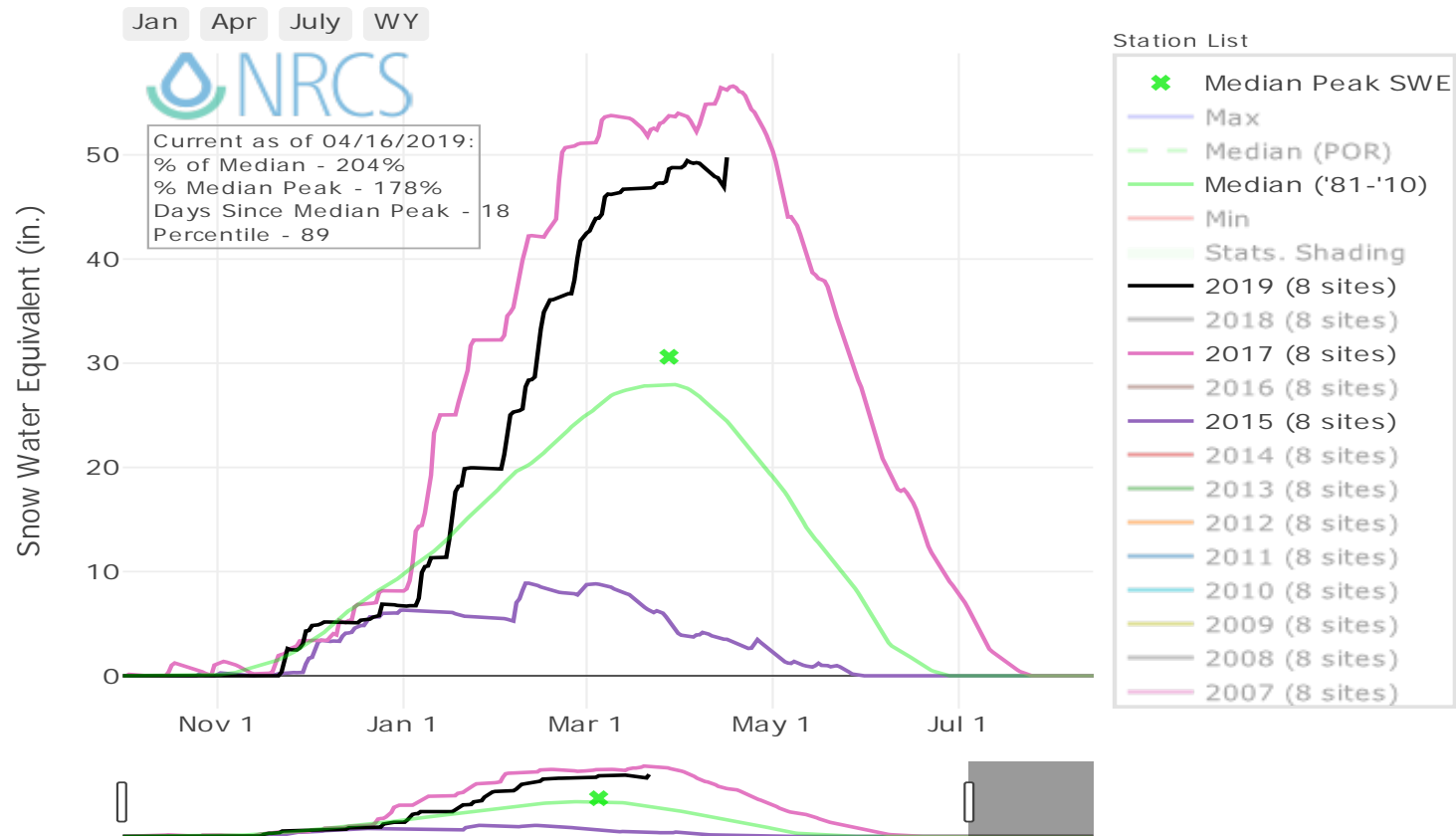




Truckee River Basin Snowpack



Truckee River Basin Snow Water Equivalent



Statistical shading breaks at 10th, 30th, 50th, 70th, and 90th Percentiles.

For more information visit: [30 year normals calculation description.](#)

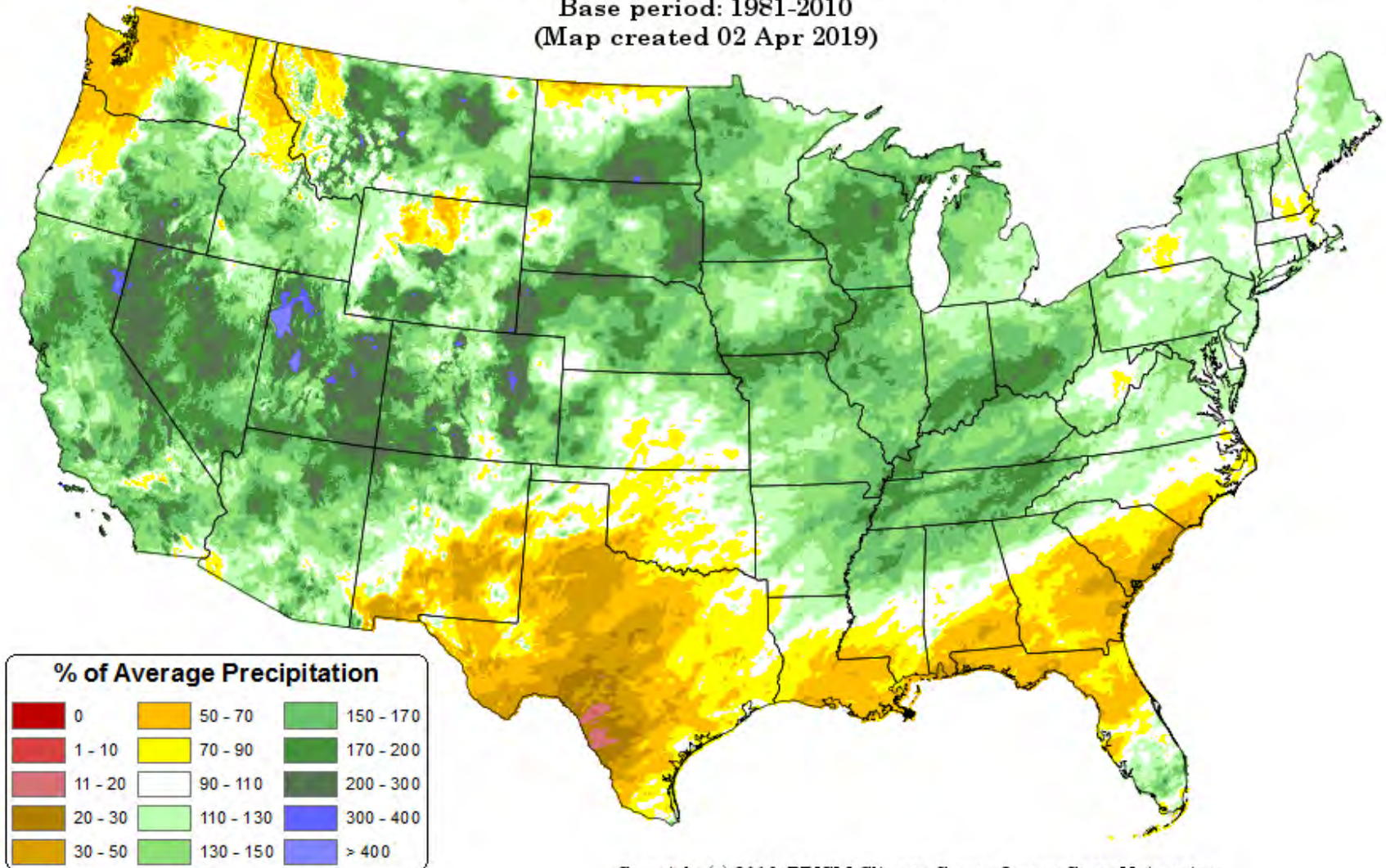


Total Precipitation Anomaly: Jan 2019 - Mar 2019

Period ending 7 AM EST 31 Mar 2019

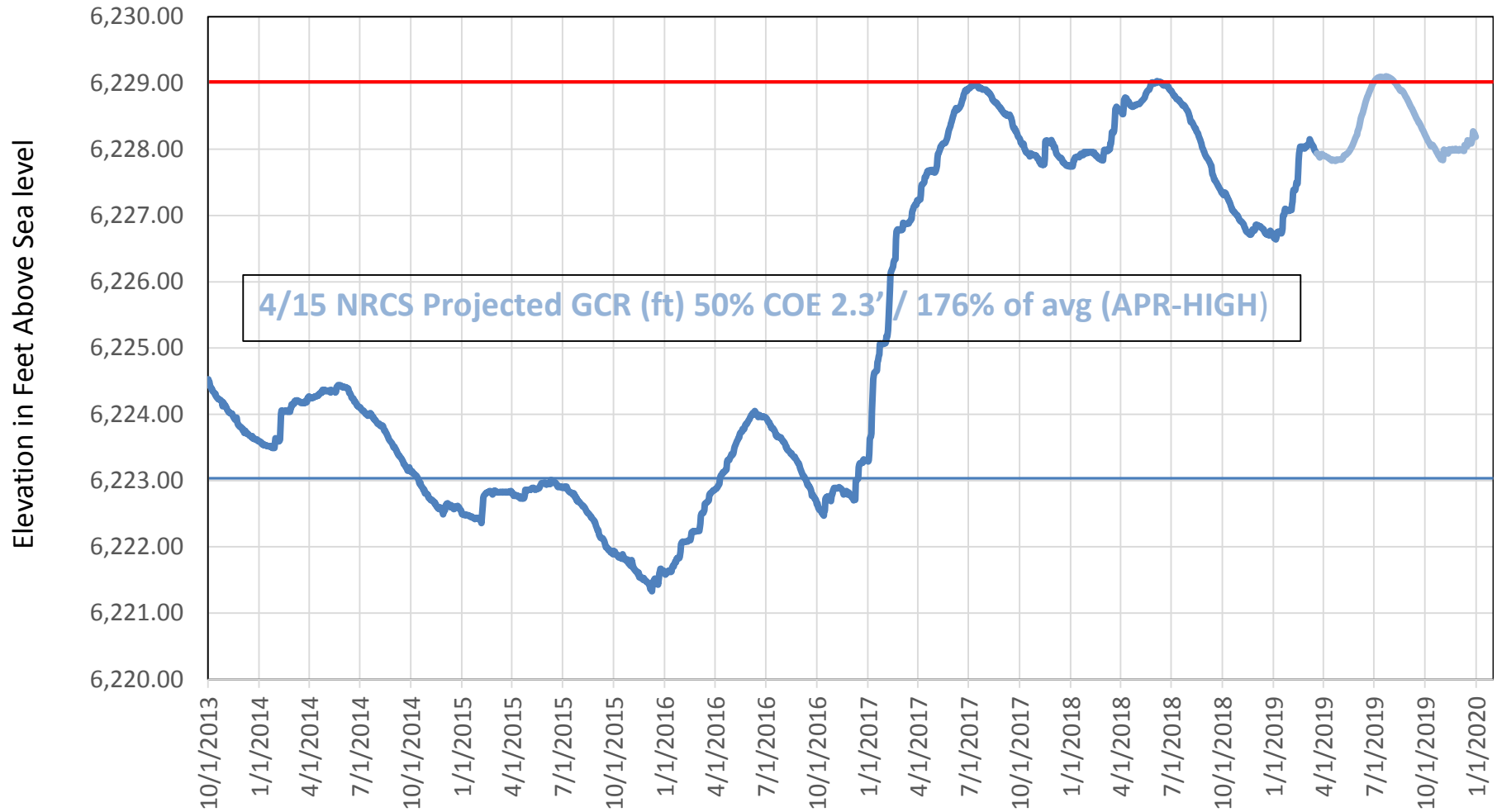
Base period: 1981-2010

(Map created 02 Apr 2019)



Copyright (c) 2019, PRISM Climate Group, Oregon State University

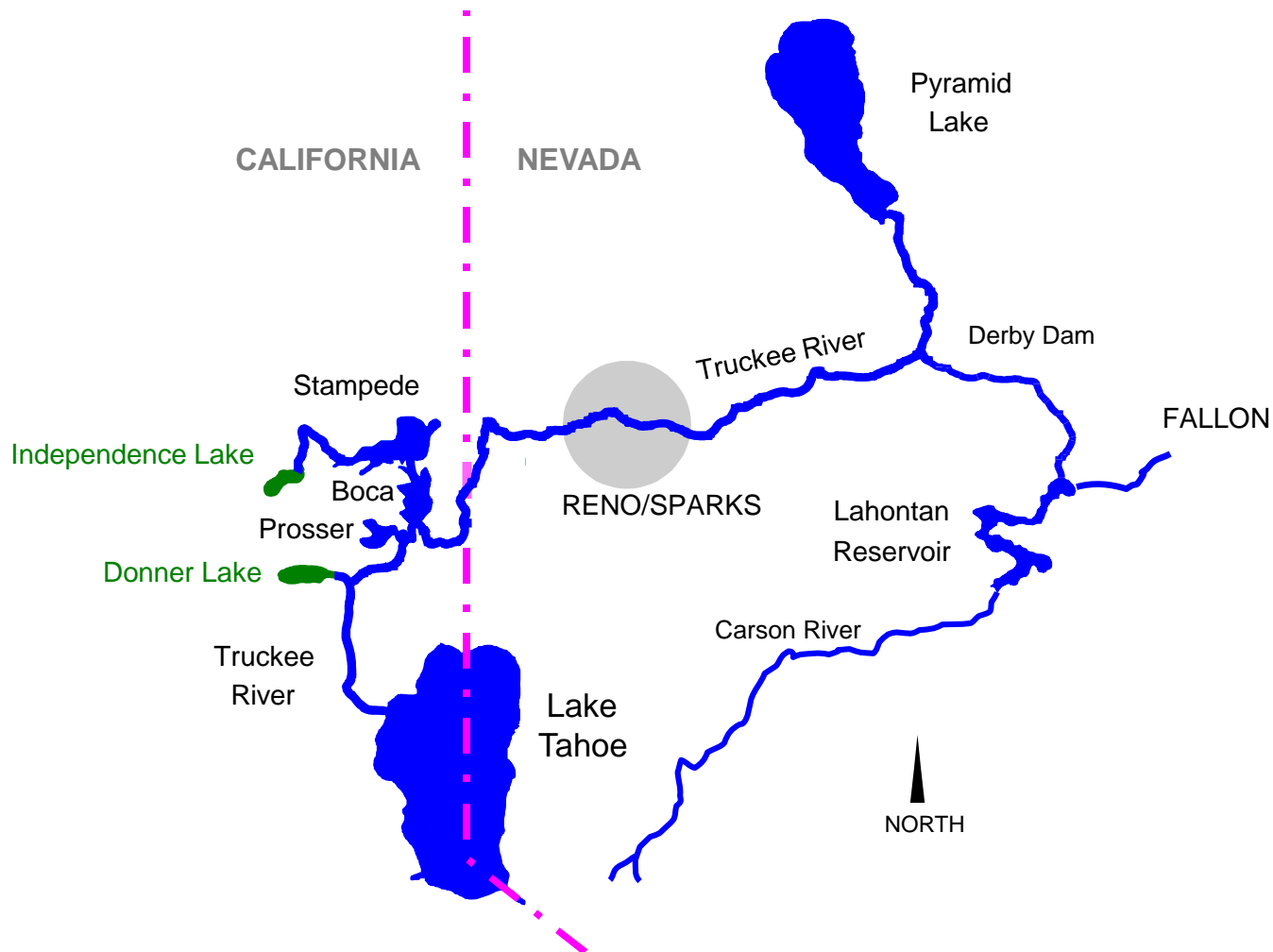
Lake Tahoe Elevation (actual and projected through 2019)



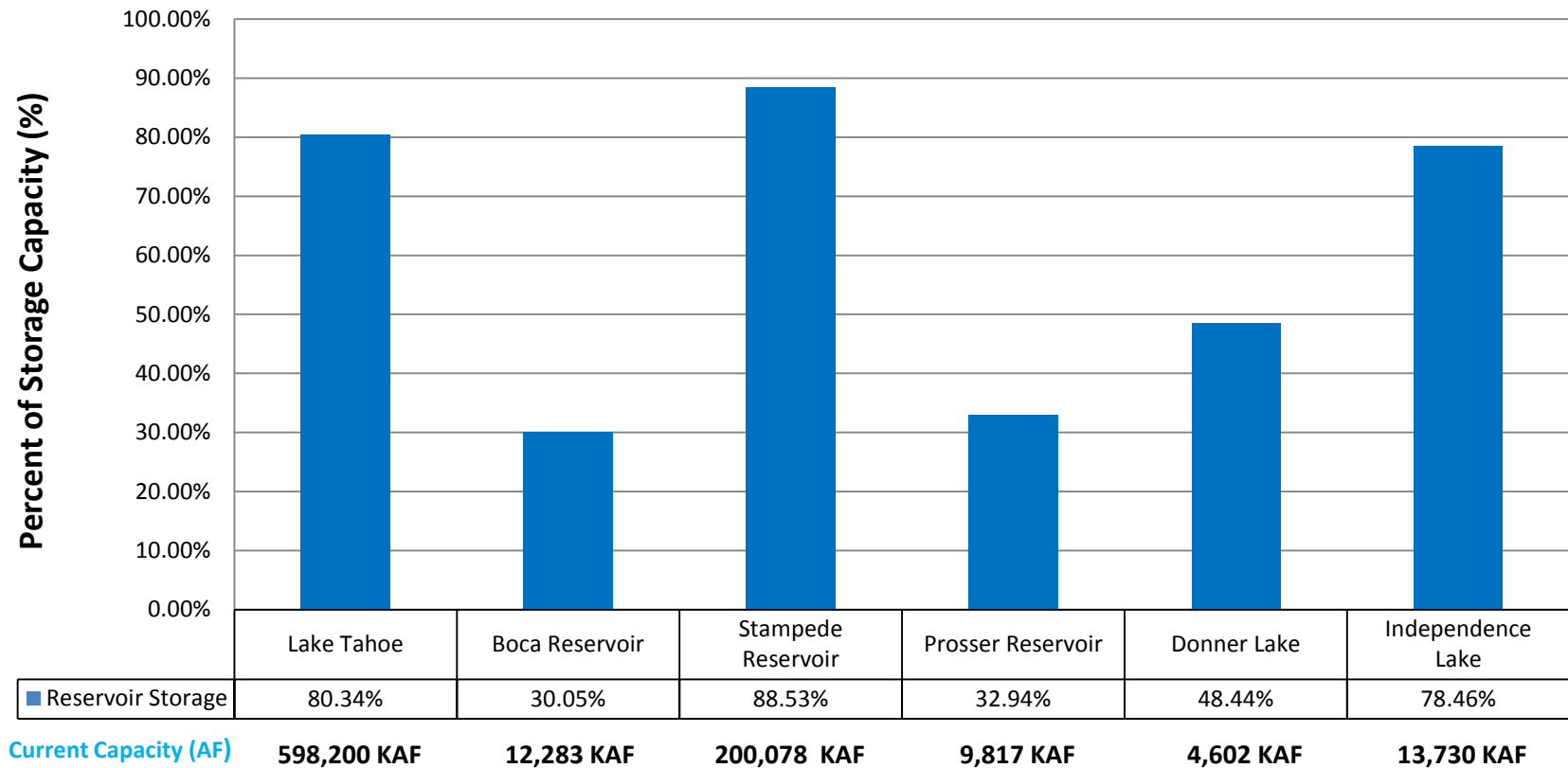




The Truckee River System



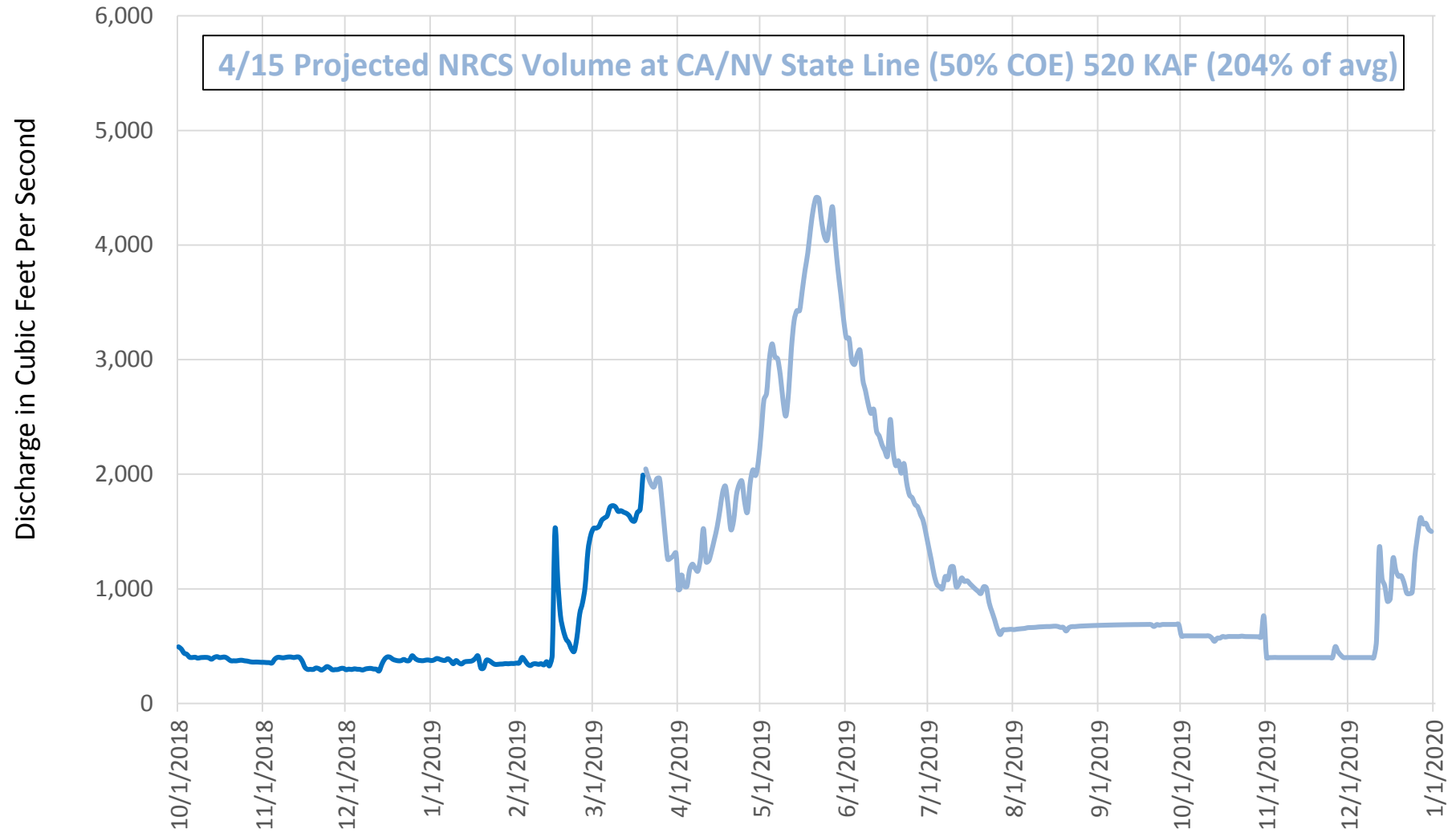
Truckee River Reservoir System Storage (April 16, 2019)



MAX CAPACITY 1,068,270 AF

CURRENT CAPACITY 838,710 AF (78.5%)

Truckee River at Farad (actual and projected through 2019)



U.S. Drought Monitor West

04-17-19 BOARD Agenda Item 8

April 9, 2019


(Released Thursday, Apr. 11, 2019)


Valid 8 a.m. EDT


Drought Conditions (Percent Area)


	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	74.42	25.58	6.22	1.65	0.00	0.00
Last Week 04-02-2019	71.08	28.92	9.32	1.65	0.00	0.00
3 Months Ago 01-08-2019	28.70	71.30	52.84	26.62	7.99	2.82
Start of Calendar Year 01-01-2019	28.03	71.97	53.25	27.22	8.35	2.88
Start of Water Year 09-25-2018	13.91	86.09	59.57	39.68	18.15	4.36
One Year Ago 04-10-2018	37.62	62.38	43.70	27.96	13.68	0.81


Intensity:

 D0 Abnormally Dry

 D1 Moderate Drought

 D2 Severe Drought

 D3 Extreme Drought

 D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

Author:

Deborah Bathke

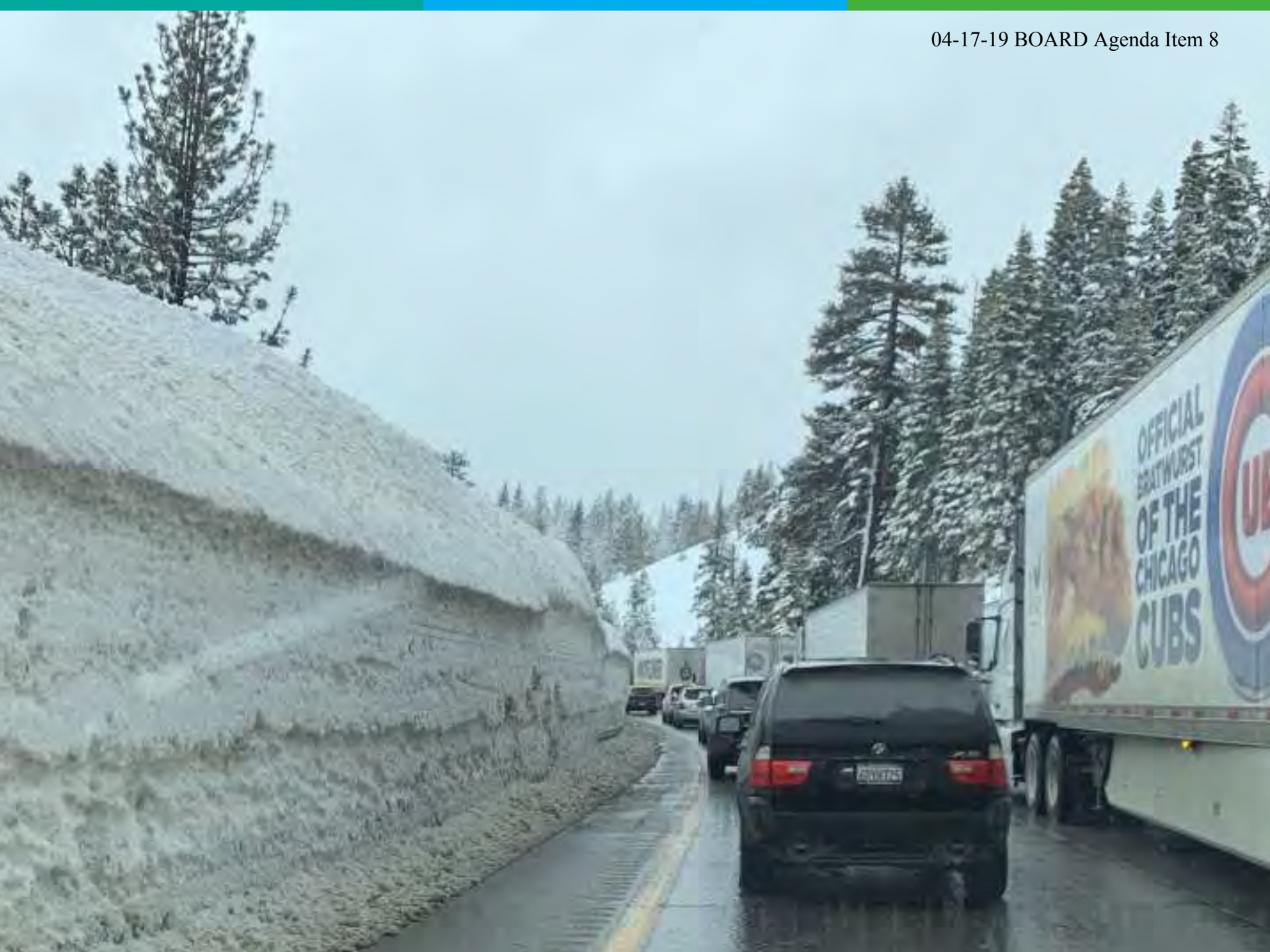
National Drought Mitigation Center



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

USGS Gage at Farad (CA/NV state line) #10346000





Thank you!

Questions?

Bill Hauck, Senior Hydrologist

Email: bhauck@tmwa.com

O: (775) 834-8111 M: (775) 250-1333



STAFF REPORT


TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Michele Sullivan, CFO
DATE: April 8, 2019
SUBJECT: **Discussion and possible action and direction to staff on adoption of a new Conflict of Interest Policy related to Procurement**

RECOMMENDATION

The Board approve the new Conflict of Interest Policy related to procurement which is drafted in compliance with Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG).

SUMMARY

TMWA's Administrative Instructions contain guidelines for all employees. They do contain some instructions related to gifts, and other conflicts of interest, however, a more specific Conflict of Interest Policy should be adopted related to purchasing and contract negotiation for compliance with UGG. This will include a disclosure form for covered employees to sign annually to affirm that they have no conflicts of interest related to the selection, award and administration of TMWA contracts.

 <p>TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY <i>Quality. Delivered.</i></p>	Finance Policy	
Title: Conflict of Interest & Disclosure Requirements	Standard #: P-XXXX-00-num	
Department: Purchasing	Subject: Procurement & Contracts	
<i>Printed copies are for reference only. Please refer to the electronic copy for the latest version.</i>		

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to establish conflicts of interest guidelines that meet or exceed the requirements under federal and state law when procuring goods (apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment), services, construction or repair projects, the selection, award and administration of a contract.
- 1.2 This policy is also intended to protect the interests of TMWA when TMWA is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interests of a covered person. To prevent any potential conflict of interest, there should be proper disclosure of those matters concerning potential conflicts that could arise.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to any TMWA board member, employee, contractor or agent of TMWA involved in making procurement decisions on behalf of TMWA including the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- 2.2 All procurement decisions are to be made solely on the basis of a desire to promote the best interests of TMWA.

3. Policy

- 3.1 **General Policy Statement:** We must avoid any relationship or activity that might impair, or even appear to impair our ability to make objective and fair decisions when performing our job duties. At times, we may be faced with situations where the business actions we take on behalf of TMWA may conflict with our own personal or family interests. We owe a duty to TMWA to advance its legitimate interests when the opportunity to do so arises. We must never use TMWA property or information for personal gain or personally take for ourselves any opportunity that is discovered through our position with TMWA.
- 3.2 **Conflict of Interest Statement:** There is a strict prohibition against self-benefiting from procurement decisions including the selection, award and administration of a contract. No covered person may participate directly or indirectly in the selection, award, or administration of a contract if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. A real or apparent conflict exists when any of the following parties has a financial or other interest or receives a tangible personal benefit from a firm considered for purchase or for an award of a contract:
 - 3.2.1 The TMWA board member, employee, contractor or agent involved in the selection, award, or administration of a contract;
 - 3.2.2 Any member of his or her immediate family;
 - 3.2.3 His or her partner; or

- 3.3.4 An organization which employs or is about to employ any of these parties.
- 3.3 **Conflict of Interest Examples:** Examples of situations that may constitute an actual or potential conflict of interest include but are not limited to:
- 3.3.1 A covered person had direct or indirect financial interest in a TMWA procurement transaction;
- 3.3.2 A covered person has a material financial interest in a procurement transaction involving TMWA. This includes entities in which the interested person and all individuals or entities having significant relationships with the covered person own, in the aggregate, more than five (5) percent;
- 3.3.3 An action by a covered person involving TMWA procurement which has or may have an adverse effect or impact on TMWA and results or may result in the personal gain of a covered person or their immediate family;
- 3.3.4 A procurement transaction involving TMWA, where a covered person obtains or assists in obtaining for a third party an improper gain from, or an unfair advantage of TMWA.
- 3.4 **Conflict of Interest Disclosure:** Any board member, employee, contractor or agent with an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest as defined in the policy shall disclose the existence of the actual or possible conflict of interest and shall be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the purchasing department and the Director or General Manager involved in the proposed transaction or arrangement even if such interest, relationship, or responsibility has otherwise generally been disclosed to TMWA via the annual disclosure form.
- Full disclosure of any situation in doubt should be made so as to provide for an impartial and objective determination.
- 3.4 **Gifts:** There is a strict prohibition against accepting gifts and favors from vendors and contractors or parties to subcontractors. Board members, employees, contractors and agents of TMWA are prohibited from accepting or soliciting gifts, gratuities, favors, or anything of a substantial monetary value from contractors, suppliers, or parties to subcontracts. Items of nominal value valued at less than \$50 or items which fall into one of the following categories may be accepted: 1.) promotional items; 2.) honorariums for participation in meetings; or, 3.) meals furnished at banquets.
- Any employee who knowingly accepts an item of nominal value or an item allowed under this policy shall report the item to his or her immediate supervisor.

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 The purchasing department is responsible for initial and annual distribution of this policy.
- 4.2 All covered persons will be required annually to sign a statement which affirms that such person: 1.) has received a copy of this policy; 2.) has read and understands the policy; 3.) has agreed to comply with the policy; and, 4.) has agreed to disclose any possible personal familial, or business relationships that could reasonably give rise to a conflict of interest.

5. References

- 5.1 2 C.F.R. §200.318(c)(1)
- 5.2 Nevada Revised Statutes NRS 281.230

6. Acronyms & Definitions

- 6.1 **Covered Person** means any board member, employee, contractor or agent of TMWA involved in making procurement decisions on behalf of TMWA including the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- 6.2 **Financial Interest** means any financial, or tangible personal benefit when the interested person has directly or indirectly through business, investment, or family has: 1.) an ownership interest or investment interest in any entity with which TMWA has a transaction or arrangement; 2.) a compensation or lending arrangement with any entity or individual with which TMWA has a transaction or arrangement; or, 3.) a potential ownership or investment interest in, compensation or lending arrangement with an entity or individual with which TMWA is negotiating a transactional arrangement.
- 6.3 **Immediate Family** means a parent, spouse, sibling, child, grandparent, grandchild, great-grandchild, in-law, or partner of an interested party or any step relation to an interested person.

7. Accountability

- 7.1 Failure to follow this policy will lead to corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination even on a first offense.
- 7.2 Contractors violating this policy will result in termination of the contract and may not be eligible for future contract awards.

8. Modification & Maintenance

- 8.1 This policy may be amended at the direction of the General Manager with notification provided in redline format to TMWA Board members. Amendments shall become effective immediately unless otherwise noted.

9. Attachments & Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – TMWA CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

10. Approvals

APPROVAL(S): _____ Name, Title	APPROVAL(S): _____ Name, Title
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Appendix A

TMWA CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

To be completed by TMWA board members, employees, contractors and agents involved in the selection, award and negotiation of TMWA contracts.

It is mandatory that this form be completed within 30-days of entering into any new position and on an annual basis thereafter.

1. Have you been provided with a copy of the Procurement and Contracts Conflict of Interest and Disclosure policy?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Have you read and do you understand the Policy?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Do you agree to comply with the policy, including the disclosure of any personal, familial, or business relationships that could give rise to a conflict of interest?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Is there any direct or indirect business relationship between yourself or a member of your family in a company that does business with TMWA?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. If yes to the above, please list or elaborate such relationships and the details of annual or potential financial benefit as you can best estimate them:
6. Did you or a member of your family receive, during the past 12 months, any gifts or loans totaling greater than \$50 from any source from which TMWA through procurement of goods or services or otherwise has significant business dealings?
☐ Yes ☐ No
7. If yes to the above, please list such loans, gifts, their source, and their approximate value:
8. Please identify your main employer, and any consulting contracts or board seats you may have with TMWA business partners, members or sponsors:

Type/Print Name

Date

Signature



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Andy Gebhardt, Director Operations and Water Quality
Marlene Olsen and Cammy Elquist LoRé, GoodStanding
DATE: April 5, 2019
SUBJECT: Presentation on proposed 2019 Conservation, Communication, and Outreach Plan; discussion and possible direction to staff

Report Highlights:

- *This plan combines outreach activities of TMWA into one comprehensive communication plan (summer campaign, water leadership, and general/internal communications) and identifies TMWA stakeholders. It anticipates numerous forms of communication: multimedia advertising, news coverage, direct customer messages in bills, social media, digital media, and website content.*
- *With water storage at capacity this year, a standard summer conservation plan will be in effect. The focus will be to reinforce smart water use in general, as well as encourage a more in-depth understanding of water utility operations and planning; see Smart About Water summer campaign brief on page 9.*
- *The long-term goal of this communications plan is to establish high levels of regional water system and water resource management knowledge among all stakeholders.*

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW _____	3
ANNUAL OVERVIEW OF COMMUNICATION TACTICS BY SEASON _____	4
TACTICS AND MESSAGING: LEADERSHIP NETWORK _____	5
TACTICS AND MESSAGING: CONSERVATION _____	6
TACTICS AND MESSAGING: CUSTOMERS-AS-CONSUMERS _____	7
TACTICS AND MESSAGING: EMPLOYEE CORE _____	8
THE 2019 SUMMER CAMPAIGN _____	9
TMWA INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS MAP AND MATRIX _____	10
OVERVIEW OF TMWA’S MARKETING CHANNELS _____	12

Overview

Through an effective combination of regional governance, community ownership and operational expertise, TMWA plays a primary leadership role for the management of water resources in the Truckee Meadows. This strategic communications plan seeks to further establish levels of public confidence in the utility through four core outreach focus areas: Customers-as-Consumers, Conservation, Water Resource Leadership, and Employee Core. With this approach, TMWA will foster a communication strategy that advances positive customer experiences, elevates responsible water use, and promotes knowledge and understanding of the water supply and TMWA's prudent management of water resources.

The Smart About Water Framework

Established just three years ago, the **Smart About Water** (SAW) communication framework has provided a solid theme for messaging to our customers, our partners, and the community at large. The framework supports events such as Smart About Water Day as well as off-season outreach through traveling exhibits on educational topics. Building from these successful initiatives, a key focus this year will be the phased advancement of smartaboutwater.com into a timely, informational resource not only for TMWA customers but for water-service-affiliated partners in the City of Sparks, City of Reno, and Washoe County. In fact, the use of Smart About Water is now trademarked with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

This year, message positioning within the SAW framework continues to focus on perceived issues that have been consistently identified in multiple community surveys; these issues include community growth, safeguards to our water supply, and long-term water resource management. By building messages through the four outreach focus areas below, the long-term goal of this activity is to establish high levels of regional water-management knowledge among civic, political, and public stakeholders.

Campaign Outreach Focus

Smart About Water Messaging Objectives

Leadership Network

To further inform engaged citizens and civic groups about TMWA's water resource management, water quality, and infrastructure stewardship from a community-level perspective

Conservation/Resource Economy

To encourage smart water use that aligns with the region's demand-side projections from a user-level perspective





Employee Core

To ensure workforce members are informed about water issues and recognized for their roles, their dedication, and the ownership applied as TMWA team members

Customers-as-Consumers

To ensure customers know about the factors that may affect their bill statements, water rates, water service, or water quality

Annual Overview of Communication Tactics by Season

Engagement Tactics and Outreach Focus Areas		Core	Customer	Conserve	Leaders
	Civic presentations: Topics include water supply outlook, infrastructure projects		√	√	√
	Advertising campaign: Smart About Water paid messaging	√	√	√	√
	Electronic distributions:				
	<i>From the Source</i> eNews for Employees (monthly)	√			
	<i>Employee Spotlight</i> Email blast on a TWMA employee and their job (monthly)	√			
	<i>Project Shout-out</i> Highlight of projects TMWA has completed or been involved	√	√		
	<i>Quality.Delivered.</i> Customer eNews (quarterly)		√	√	√
	Social Media Posts Facebook (weekly)				
	Bill inserts/envelope backers: Timely news and tips (monthly)	√	√	√	
	Workshops and tours: Sprinkler maintenance, landscape/garden tours		√	√	
	Civic presentations: Topics include water supply outlook, infrastructure projects		√	√	√
	Electronic distributions: Continuation of eNews, email blasts, social media posts	√	√	√	√
	Info guide: Update new employee onboarding and continued training with customer FAQs and resource management information	√			
	Bill inserts/envelope backers: Timely news and tips (monthly)	√	√	√	
	Workshops and tours: Winterization, Chalk Bluff Plant, hydroelectric plants		√	√	√
	Civic presentations: Topics include water supply outlook, infrastructure projects		√	√	√
	Exhibit: Smart About Water year-in-review exhibits placed in high-traffic areas		√		√
	Electronic distributions: Newsletters and social media	√	√	√	√
	Bill inserts/envelope backers: Timely news and tips (monthly)	√	√	√	
	Civic presentations: Topics include water supply outlook, infrastructure projects		√	√	√
	Electronic distributions: Newsletters and social media	√	√	√	√
	Workshops and tours: Irrigation start-up, landscape, drip systems, Glendale tour		√	√	√
	Community event participation: Community spring cleanup			√	
	Community-owned events: Smart About Water Day	√	√	√	√
	Media education: Reporter-focused engagement at Smart About Water Day	√	√	√	√
	Bill inserts/envelope backers: Timely news and tips (monthly)	√	√	√	

While this plan focuses on paid campaigns and community outreach, this framework also supports TMWA in a cross-functional capacity in the following ways:

Natural Resources:	Water Resource Plan- <i>Communication planning and execution</i>
	Potable Re-use Projects- <i>Media relations</i>
Human Resources:	Employee Engagement- <i>New topic education and outreach</i>
Distribution & Maintenance:	Water Breaks/System Updates- <i>Media relations</i>
Operations:	Water Quality- <i>Media relations and paid media</i>
	Emergency Response- <i>Communication guidelines</i>

Tactics and Messaging: Leadership Network

Partners ■ Government Agencies ■ Elected Officials ■ Civic and Professional Organizations ■ Schools

Objective: To further inform regional leaders, civic organizations, and engaged citizen groups about TMWA's water resource management and infrastructure stewardship from a community-level perspective.

Tactics and Deployment Examples

- **Paid advertising:** Implement 2019 Summer Campaign with Smart About Water messaging from a community resource-management perspective.
- **Group presentations:** Demonstrate more complex topics or important seasonal updates to civic and professional groups.
- **Direct outreach:** Send information directly to community leaders as needed.
- **Owned events:** Leverage events such as Smart About Water Day in the spring to educate the community.
- **Educational exhibits:** Provide portable messaging at locations where civic business is conducted or where highly-engaged citizens tend to gather. Displays will feature multiple topics, rotating for four to five months in between summer paid advertising campaigns.
- **Partnership coordination:** Engage with key community partners to distribute messaging and materials on partner-owned channels.
- **Elected official tours:** Provide tours of water treatment facilities and hydroelectric generation plants.

Message Points to Reinforce

1. **Three plans, one solid future:** Through three coordinated plans (water resource, facilities, and funding plans), TMWA incorporates a long-term horizon into its management strategies to directly contribute to the quality of life for years to come by delivering high quality, affordable water.
2. **Supply continuity:** By leveraging a solid conjunctive-use strategy, TMWA provides consistency in water service to customers through management of river water, reservoirs, reserves, and aquifers.
3. **Growth:** As the service area expands, surface water is delivered to places previously reliant on groundwater. Access to surface water has resulted in aquifers recharging, which is stored until we need to use it.

Media Frequency

Monthly Features	Quarterly or Seasonal Features	One-Time Features
Newsletter	Paid summer campaign Group presentations Educational exhibits Events	Media publicity As-needed direct communication

Tactics and Messaging: Conservation

Residential Customers ■ Commercial Customers

Objective: Encourage smart water use (from a user-level perspective) that aligns with the region's water resource projections.

Tactics and Deployment Examples

- **Paid advertising:** Implement the 2019 Summer Campaign with Smart About Water messaging from an individual-user perspective.
- **Owned channels:** Use to raise awareness about events, videos, tours, workshops, and programs.
- **Owned events:** Produce informative events such as Smart About Water Day in the spring as well as workshops and tours.
- **Community events:** Create interactive opportunities at appropriate large community events.
- **Educational program:** Pursue school district partnerships to educate students and their families about conservation programs.
- **Publicity leverage:** Invite members of the media or high-profile personalities to fix something in their homes by using one of TMWA's videos.

Message Points to Reinforce

1. **Smart water use is commonplace.** Regardless of record snow years, smart water use is not a seasonal phenomenon; it's our norm.
2. **Smart water use is our expression of stewardship.** Celebrate how the community continually has stepped up over the years.
3. **TMWA conservation programs help customers stay resourceful.** There's always something to learn about or fix within the home to make it water efficient.

Media Frequency

Monthly Features	Quarterly or Seasonal Features	One-Time Features
Social media Bill inserts/envelope backers Partner program (TBD)	Paid summer campaign Workshops and tours Owned events Community events YouTube channel	Media publicity (as workshop season starts)

Tactics and Messaging: Customers-As-Consumers

Residential Customers ■ Commercial Customers

Objective: To ensure customers know about factors that may affect their bill statements, water service, or water quality.

Tactics and Deployment Examples

- **Owned events:** Ensure that billing and water quality information are available at public events. Inform customers about infrastructure status and needed forthcoming investments.
- **Owned channels—bill inserts:** Use to communicate details of planned infrastructure projects and educate on programs and tactics that can help customers conserve and save. Provide link access to water quality reports.
- **Owned channels—e-newsletters:** Use to communicate details on infrastructure projects, supply updates, and events. Educate on programs and tactics that can help customers conserve and save. Inform customers regarding infrastructure status and needed forthcoming investments. Provide link access to water quality reports.
- **Owned channels—social media:** Use to inform customers about workshops, tours, infrastructure projects, and employee highlights. Leverage digital format to provide helpful links to water quality update map and reports.
- **Direct email or phone calls:** Use to update customers on unplanned water service interruptions and/or upgrades.

Message Points to Reinforce

1. **System upkeep is a normal part of any utility operation.** As in any system with moving parts, regular maintenance and infrastructure investment normally keep everything running smoothly. Sometimes, temperatures or unexpected forces can cause breakdowns.
2. **TMWA crews are ready 24/7, 365 days per year.** Our teams get there as soon as possible after we are notified of problems and will work until all customers have water service restored.
3. **TMWA ensures water quality through diligence.** Reinforce TMWA's diligence in delivering high-quality water (i.e., 1,000 tests per month).
4. **Infrastructure rehabilitation is ongoing.** TMWA continually assesses the system infrastructure and proactively plans for replacement to keep water service consistent and reliable.

Media Frequency

Monthly Features	Quarterly or Seasonal Features	As-Needed Features
Bill inserts Envelope backers Bill copy messages	E-newsletters Events	Social media posts Direct email or phone calls New customer packets

Tactics and Messaging: Employee Core**Staff ■ Management ■ Bargaining Leaders**

Objective: To ensure the workforce is informed about water issues and is recognized for their roles, their dedication, and the ownership applied as a TMWA team member.

Tactics and Deployment Examples

- **Owned channels:** Give monthly, casual introductions of employees and their jobs. Distribute internally to foster more social connections and cross-functional awareness.
- **Internal operational materials:** Ensure that onboarding and training materials include common community concerns for Customers-As-Consumers, Resource Conservation, and Water Resource Management.
- **Owned channels:** Feature important or meaningful TMWA projects or initiatives. Distribute internally to raise awareness of TMWA's workforce expertise and/or community involvement.

Message Points to Reinforce

1. **TMWA's employees directly contribute to our community's quality of life.** TMWA's employee base provides the 24/7 dedication and grit that dependably delivers high-quality water to homes and businesses around the Truckee Meadows.
2. **TMWA's workforce has a solid legacy of doing the right thing.** TMWA's employees (current and past) know that the region is a special place to live and that work done over the years has helped ensure it stays this way through innovative solutions, foresight, and prudent infrastructure investments.
3. **TMWA's workforce skill set is robust.** From engineers to scientists to maintenance and machinery technicians, TMWA's workforce has the right skills to get the job done.

Media Frequency

Monthly Features	Quarterly or Seasonal Features	One-Time Features
Internal newsletters Customer bill inserts Employee spotlight	Paid summer campaign Project shout out (awareness)	Video interviews Media publicity

The 2019 Summer Campaign

Customers-As-Consumers ■ Employee Core ■ Conversation ■ Water Leadership

Smart About Water (SAW) Key Themes and Facts

The SAW campaign weaves together messages from each outreach focus area with recurring themes:

- **From surface to ground, this year's snowpack has delivered.** We are maximizing storage in upstream reservoirs, recharging wells in the Truckee Meadows, and resting the wells that we can—all thanks to this year's plentiful Truckee River supply.
- **Conservation is timeless.** With successful assigned-day watering since the mid-1980s, community stewardship helps our system respond to extreme weather realities. Our established conservation programs further empower customers to keep home and business systems efficient and water bills low.
- **Three paths, one solid future.** TMWA charts its service for the foreseeable future through three management plans: water resource, facilities, and funding. These plans collectively guide the utility to best manage water, invest in infrastructure, and keep customer costs low.
- **Reinforce Smart About Water facts.** Reinforce knowledge of watering days and times, water-quality testing, drought planning, reserves stored, hydroelectric benefits, growth/water rights, and key infrastructure projects.

Deliverable Formats and Channels: *Print, radio, TV, social, Web, distributed collateral*

The campaign will rotate a series of ads to reach our target audience. Web formats will be most varied, followed by print, radio, and TV. Distributed collateral will be unique to each format (e.g., monthly bill insert copy and e-newsletter). The media buy will integrate paid space and sponsorships with added-value requirements for each buy (additional space, website content, on-air contests, etc.).

Target Audiences: *Customers 25 years and older, community leader network*

In addition to traditional advertising, we will continually refine demographic targeting for our online ad buy. Channels may include news websites, high-impact local news videos, geo-tagged search engine advertising, and online activity categories via social media.

Tone: *Neighborly, responsive, unassuming, collaborative, capable, prudent*

We have established high levels of trust with our customers not only through consistent service levels over the years but through a proactive, responsive approach to managing customer relationships. The direct connection of water to residents' quality of life is important and an underlying tenet of stakeholder expectations and interaction.

Timing of Campaign Deliverables

Conservation exhibits: February 1–May 1

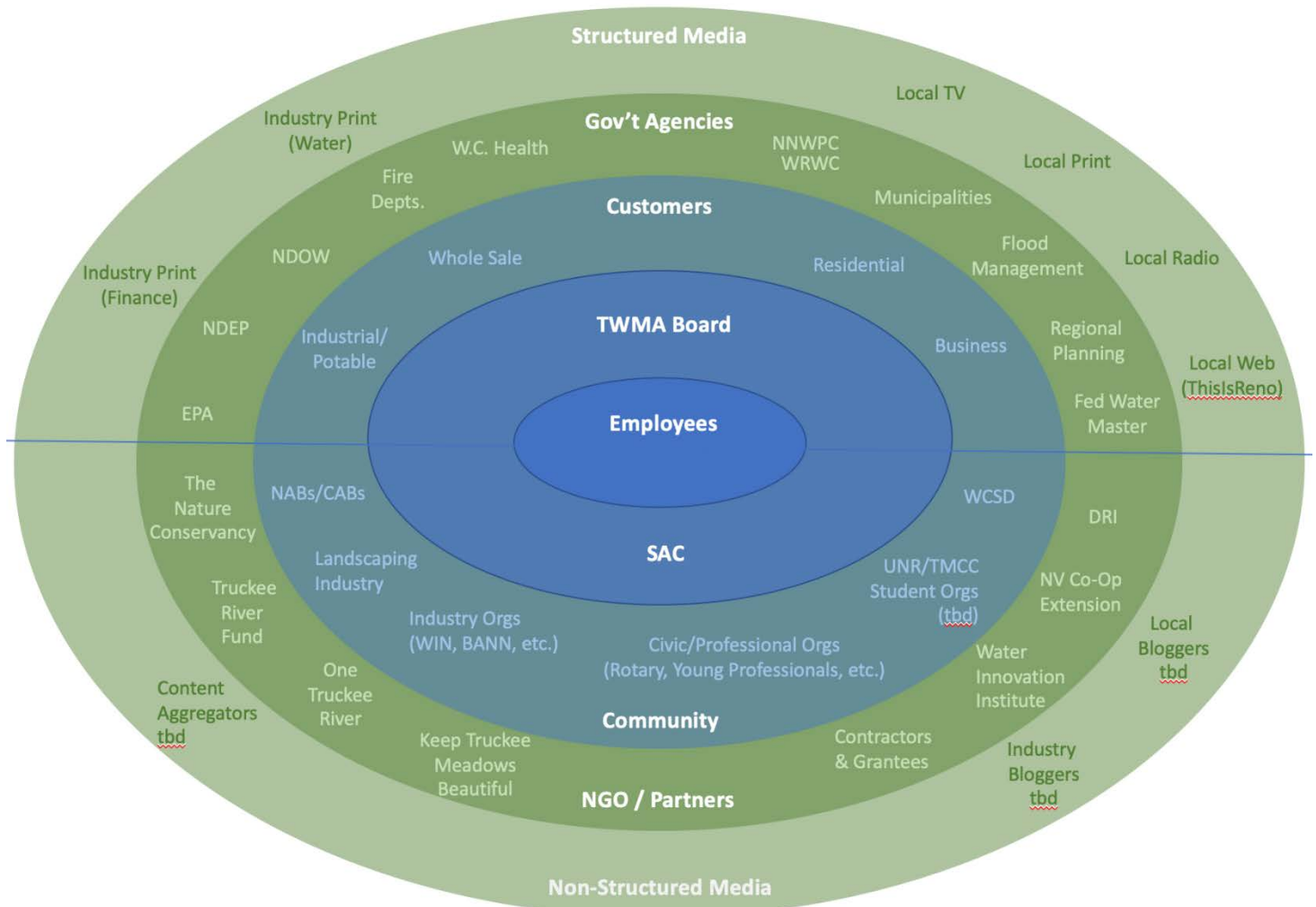
Paid space: May 22–September 20

Bill inserts/envelope backers: May, June, July, August, September

e-Newsletter: July

TMWA Internal and External Stakeholders Map and Matrix

The stakeholder map below is a categorized list of TMWA's stakeholder community. This graphic, subject to change over time, is intended to reasonably and comprehensively represent the internal and external stakeholders we interact with, serve, and affect. The blue dividing line is meant to bring additional context to critical affiliation stakeholder groups (above the line) and relative affiliation stakeholder groups (below the line).

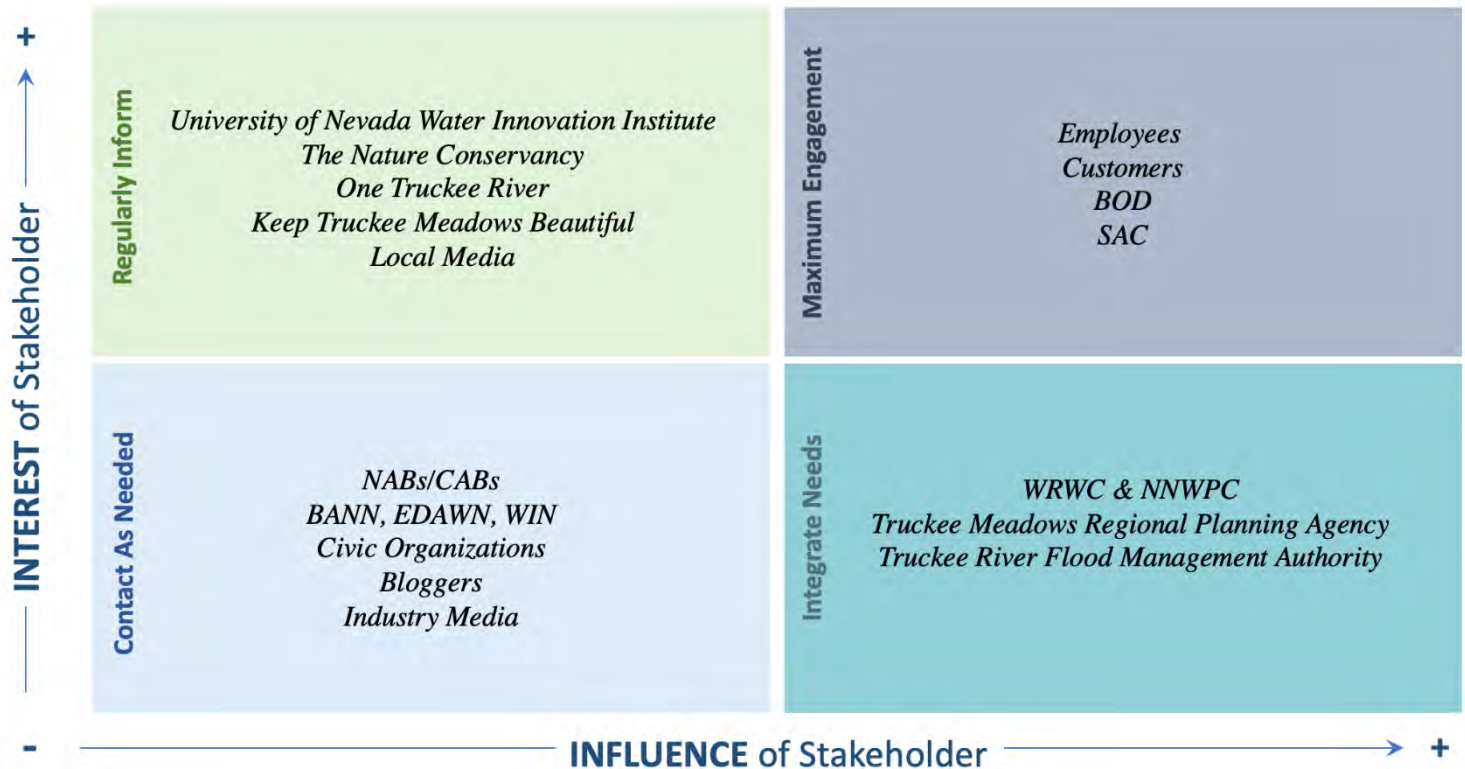


This map is a visual guide to comprehensively assess and ensure audience communication is as relevant as possible. A communications plan to address *all* critical and relative affiliation stakeholder groups on this graphic would certainly exceed the time, funds, and energy available, and it would be unnecessary to attempt to do so. TMWA's water system and resource management may shift each year, which will help determine stakeholder priority for communication outreach. Each year, review of a prioritization matrix (page 11) based on this map will help guide engagement strategies.

Prioritization Matrix of Key Stakeholder Audiences for 2019

In the context of the 2019 communication plan, the following matrix identifies key stakeholder groups that will help TMWA assign outreach prioritization for outreach. These are stakeholders who are important to stay closely connected to in order to establish or maintain high levels of regional water-management knowledge.

The stakeholder groups below may be partners in community events, presentations, or paid campaign audiences, or they may be focus groups for other public relations efforts.



For example, beyond paid campaigns and direct mail outreach, we will continue to employ the following tactics to stay engaged with high-priority stakeholder groups:

- We will invite Truckee River Flood Management, Truckee Meadows Regional Planning and similar partners to display and present during the May Smart About Water Day.
- We will continue to present spring water-year updates to our SAC and local NABs/CABs.
- We will continue to prioritize direct correspondence with SAC and BOD members regarding TMWA's community outreach events.
- We have, and will continue to have, an ongoing relationship with local media.

In 2019, we will employ similar and expanded levels of inclusion to explore ways to include and/or integrate our priority stakeholders into TMWA's activities.

Overview of TMWA's Communication Channels

The following are TMWA's current inventory of controlled communication channels in order of distribution frequency. Content structure will adjust to accommodate tactical shifts in communication objectives or in the way the public utilizes the channel.

TMWA Facebook Page

Audience: Community
 Frequency: Weekdays
 Distribution: Facebook
 Content: + Links to educational or informational content
 + Links to workshop information and signup pages
 + Promotion of TMWA and community partner events
 + Employee highlights

From the Source Newsletter

Audience: Employee
 Frequency: Monthly
 Distribution: Email
 Content: + Updates from board of directors meeting
 + Spotlight from a mid-level-manager perspective on interesting projects or service calls
 + Employee milestones section to announce upcoming retirements, promotions, or other types of warranted recognition

Quality.Delivered Newsletter

Audience: Customers
 Frequency: Monthly
 Distribution: In billing statements and online
 Content: + Updates from board of directors meeting
 + Features *Employee in Service* snapshots
 + Updates on snowpack and water storage
 + Notices about upcoming workshops
 + Updates on water quality reports
 + Updates on large-scale projects and improvements
 + Tips on conservation and lowering bills
 + In-depth topic education and/or analysis when needed
 + Pertinent community news or partner announcements
 + All billing and rate information
 + Contact information, hours, and planned holiday closures

Bill Envelope Backers

Audience: Customers
Frequency: Monthly
Distribution: With bill statements
Content: + Quick spotlight on key topics
+ Reinforcing call to action when needed (e.g., start of 3x-per-week watering)

YouTube Channel

Audience: Community
Frequency: Topic dependent
Distribution: Social media, newsletters, TMWA websites
Video Content: + Do-it-yourself home water system projects
+ Spotlight on major infrastructure accomplishments
+ In-depth analysis of key topics or relevant historical perspectives

Smart About Water Website

Audience: Community
Frequency: Updated with summer campaign
Distribution: n/a
Content: + A quick-consumption complement to information featured on TMWA.com
+ A go-to source for all things water in the region
+ Home of Smart Facts for summer campaign
-> Water quality
-> Water system
-> River operations (anchored to Truckee River Operating Agreement)
-> Water use
-> Assorted fun facts



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Enloe, Director Natural Resources
DATE: April 11, 2019
SUBJECT: Discussion, possible action, and direction to staff and authorization to General Manager regarding negotiation and execution of possible Option Agreement with State of Nevada for purchase of water from Marlette Lake Water System, including the right to use 3,090 acre feet for Option Fee of \$250,000

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board authorize the General Manager to finalize negotiations and execute an Option Agreement with the State consistent with the terms outlined below, for the right to use 3,090 acre-feet of water from Marlette Lake for an Option Fee of \$250,000 and to negotiate a Cooperative Agreement regarding the allocation of all Marlette Lake Water System water resources, including the amount, rate and source of water to which TMWA shall be entitled in the event TMWA exercises the Option.

Summary

In late 2018, the Nevada Department of Administration approached staff to determine TMWA's interest in purchasing wholesale water supplies from the Marlette Lake Water System, which includes Marlette Lake, Hobart Reservoir, and the so-called "East Slope" facilities. The Water System currently provides water from Hobart Reservoir and its East Slope Facilities to Carson City and Virginia City. The Water System includes water rights totaling approximately 10,585 acre-feet, only a portion of which are currently used by the State for water service deliveries. Since late 2018, TMWA staff has conducted due diligence and held several discussions with the Nevada Department of Administration and staff from the State Engineer and Federal Water Master's offices.

Based on TMWA's due diligence, staff concludes that purchasing available wholesale water from Marlette Lake Water System under a long-term contract could prove beneficial for TMWA customers and the greater Reno/Sparks/Washoe County community. For instance, possible uses of the water include return flow augmentation for TMWRF and drought storage augmentation.

To provide time to conduct thorough analyses and receive necessary authorizations for the long-term use of a portion of the water available from Marlette Lake Water System, TMWA and Department of Administration staff have negotiated the terms of an Option Agreement. The Option Agreement would also provide time for developing a long-term water service Agreement, which among other matters, would address water rates and future rate setting procedures, memorialize Nevada Department of Wildlife's operating restrictions on Marlette Lake for the benefit of fisheries, water rights permitting requirements, TMWA's ability to amend or obtain a revised storage contract from the Bureau of Reclamation, and other general terms and conditions. In general, the terms of the Option Agreement will include the following key provisions:

Option Period. The term of the Option Agreement would be three years.

Option Payment. As consideration for the State granting the Option, TMWA would pay the State Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000).

Option Water. As consideration for the Option payment, the State would grant TMWA the right to use 3,090 acre feet of Marlette Lake water, to be delivered in whole or in part at TMWA's discretion, at any time during a period of five (5) years from the Option date. All Option water would be discharged from Marlette Lake and delivered to TMWA into Lake Tahoe. The State would retain the Option payment regardless of whether TMWA elects to exercise the Option or uses the Option water.

Permitting of Option Water. TMWA and the State will work cooperatively to obtain all authorizations necessary to use the Option water for municipal or instream flow purposes once discharged to Lake Tahoe. The State must cooperate with TMWA and execute such documents reasonably requested by TMWA as necessary to apply for such permits.

The State currently provides water service to Carson City and Virginia City, as such, TMWA and the State explicitly agree that Virginia City and Carson City's existing water supplies will not be diminished. However, much of the Marlette Lake Water System water resources remain unallocated and available for future use. Therefore, to determine the amount and source of available water resources to which TMWA shall be entitled in the event TMWA exercises the Option, TMWA has agreed to delay any exercise of the Option during a "Standstill Period" while a Cooperative Agreement is explored.

Standstill Period. "Standstill Period" means the period commencing on the Option date and ending on the date which is the earlier of i) approval of the Cooperative Agreement; or ii) two (2) years after the Effective Date. During the Standstill Period, TMWA will work cooperatively and in good faith to negotiate and develop an agreement (the "Cooperative Agreement") among TMWA, Carson City and the State which establishes an allocation and use of the available water resources from Marlette Lake and other Marlette Lake Water System resources delivered through Hobart Reservoir and the East Slope Facilities. The intent of the Cooperative Agreement will be to i) develop agreeable terms and conditions for establishing a long-term operating agreement which maximizes the beneficial use of the State's available water resources from the Marlette Lake Water System among TMWA and Carson City and provides an agreed upon delivery schedule, special conditions of service, and pre-determined adjustments to

the quantity of water available for sale each water year to address variable year to year hydrologic conditions; and ii) provide predictable revenue sources to the State and reduce the per acre foot charge to each water user by fully allocating the available water resources. In the event TMWA and Carson City are unable to agree on terms and conditions of the Cooperative Agreement during the Standstill Period, the State would have final authority to determine the amount of water to be allocated and made available to TMWA from Marlette Lake and the East Slope Facilities under the Option, which determination shall be made within ninety (90) days after the expiration of the Standstill Period. Said determination shall establish the amount, rate and source of water to which TMWA shall be entitled in the event TMWA exercises the Option.

In conclusion, staff is seeking direction, and if approved, authorization for the General Manager to finalize negotiations and execute an Option Agreement with the State for the right to use 3,090 acre-feet of water from Marlette Lake for an Option Fee of \$250,000 and to negotiate a Cooperative Agreement regarding the allocation of all Marlette Lake Water System water resources, including the amount, rate and source of water to which TMWA shall be entitled in the event TMWA exercises the Option.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Standing Advisory Committee
FROM: Sonia Folsom, TMWA SAC Liaison
DATE: March 11, 2019
SUBJECT: **Discussion and action on appointments to the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) to fill the irrigation customer representative alternate position, for term ending December 31, 2020. and the at-large 2 customer representative alternate position for term beginning April 1, 2019 to December 31, 2021 from the following pool of candidates listed in alphabetical order: Susan Hoog and Karl Katt (*continued from March meeting*)**

Recommendation

Staff is presenting to the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) for its review, and possible recommendation to the Board, applications submitted by local residents to fill two vacancies.

Background

The SAC was created in 2005 to review budgets, rate proposals and other matters as directed by the Board. In 2016, the TMWA Board decided to remove the two appointments made by the Northern Nevada Water Planning Commission and the Office of Consumer Advocate and replace those with two at-large positions. The committee currently consists of Board-appointed representatives of ten customer classes and four other seats held by representatives of community-interest groups (Attachment 1). TMWA customers interested in becoming a SAC member can submit a letter of interest at any time and will be presented to the SAC when a vacancy opens for consideration.

Discussion

TMWA received two applications for the two vacant positions:

- At-Large – Two (2) Vacancy; 1 Applicant
- Irrigation Alternate – One (1) Vacancy; 1 Applicant

The applications submitted are compiled in Attachment 2. In addition, Attachment 3 is a map showing locations of all current SAC members, as well as all applicants.

Staff is pleased to have such skilled and diverse applicants express interest in representing customer issues to the TMWA Board as part of the SAC.

TMWA Standing Advisory CommitteeTerm Appointments
2019 Membership List

Customer Class	Primary Representative	Member Since	Term Ends	Alternate Representative	Member Since	Term Ends
Wholesale (Sun Valley)	Fred Schmidt	2005	12/31/2019	N/A		
Irrigation	Neil McGuire	2005	12/31/2020	Vacant		
Multi-family Residential	Mike Schulewitch	2013	12/31/2020	Jonnie Pullman	2012	12/31/2019
Commercial	Donald Kowitz	2017	12/31/2020	Bruce Gescheider	2009	12/31/2019
Senior Citizen	Robert Chambers	2005	12/31/2020	Karl Katt	2013	12/31/2020
At-Large 1	Ken McNeil	2013	12/31/2020	Ken Becker	2017	12/31/2020
At-Large 2	Jordan Hastings	2017	12/31/2020	Vacant		
Residential:						
Representative 1	Carol Litster	2014	12/31/2020	Dale Sanderson	2017	12/31/2020
Representative 2	Harry Culbert	2006	12/31/2020	Fred Arndt	2017	12/31/2020
Representative 3	Jerry Wager	2014	12/31/2020	Scot Munns	2017	12/31/2020
Appointments:						
BANN	Colin Hayes	2010	12/31/2019	Jim Smith	2010	12/31/2019
Reno-Sparks Chamber	Ann Silver	2019	12/31/2019	Bill Hughes	2016	12/31/2019

Submitted January 10, 2019

Dear Sonia,

Here is the certifications that you requested for the position of Irrigation Alternate for the SAC Committee:

1. Water Management and Landscape Irrigation Auditor Class by the Irrigation Training and Research Center, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo - 4/4/03, recognized by the Regional Water Planning Commission and TMWA
2. Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor by the Irrigation Association -- 3/18/05, with the California-Nevada Section of American Water Works Association
3. Water Distribution Operator Grade D1 by the Division of Environmental Protection Bureau of Safe Drinking Water -- 10/5/06
4. Water Distribution Operator Grade D2 by the Division of Environmental Protection Bureau of Safe Drinking Water --4/16/07
5. Conservation Practitioner Grade 1 by the American Water Works Association, California-Nevada Section (Cert #1521) -- 3/30/10

In addition, I am a Board member of the Vistas Homeowners Association, as well as a member of their Architectural Control Committee. If you wish for me to provide you with copies of the certifications listed above, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Karl W. Katt

February 14, 2019

To the Standing Advisory Committee,

I am interested in becoming a member of TMWA's Standing Advisory Committee. I was a member of Ward 1 Neighborhood Advisory Board for 2 years, 2016-2018. I participated in the Reno Citizens Institute Program and learned about how the City of Reno works in 2011.

Water management in the Truckee Meadows is important for our community. I would look forward to learning more about it and suggesting ideas from the perspective of a homeowner and Realtor in our community.

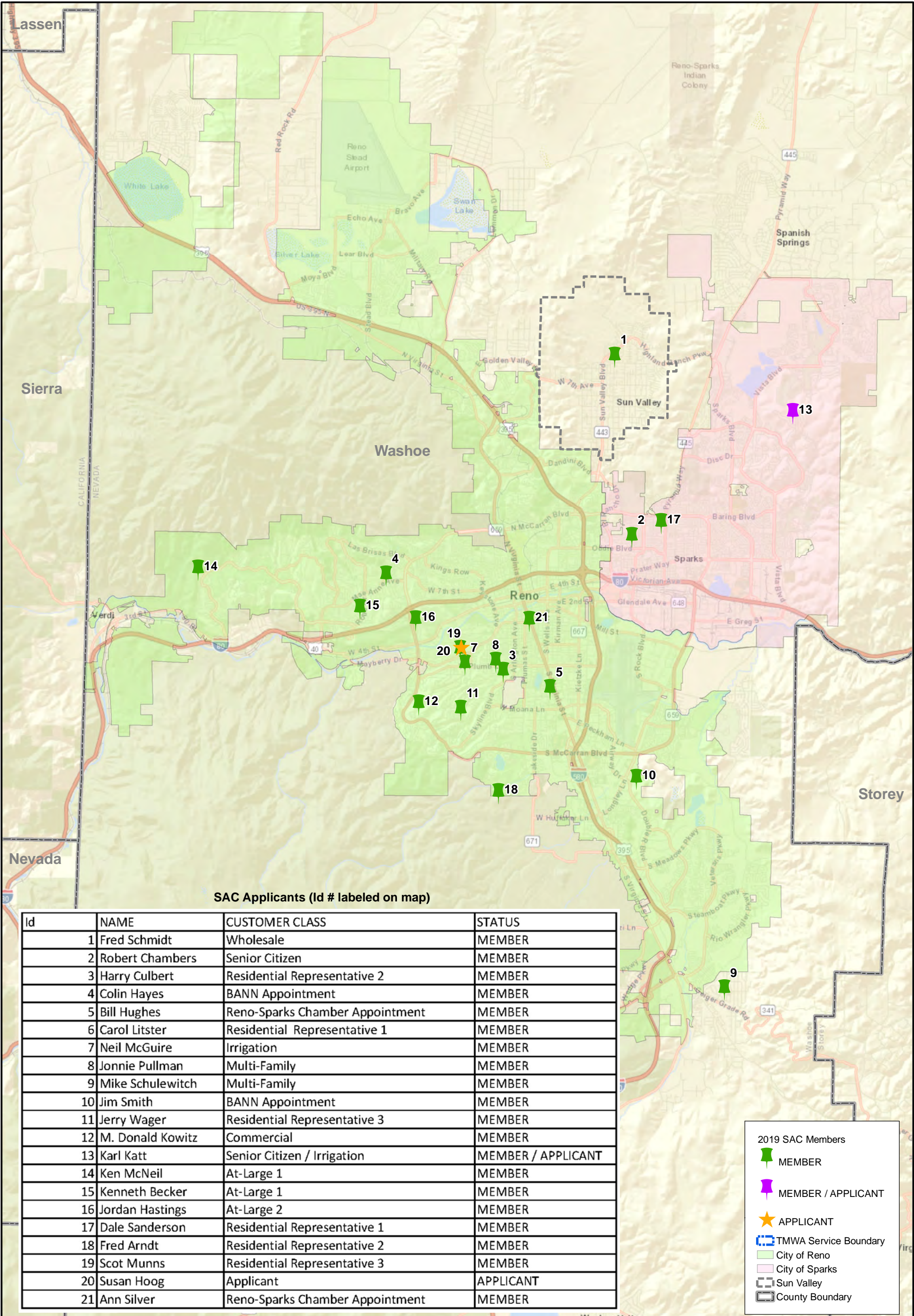
I am a current member of Sierra Sunrise Toastmasters and I am familiar with Robert's Rules.

I would attend each monthly meeting with consistency and enthusiasm. I will prepare for each meeting I attend and participate to the best of my ability at each meeting.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Hoog

Reno, NV 89509



Distribution of SAC Members & Applicants

DATE 3/12/2019
MAP BY: JAK
REQUESTED BY: SF
SCALE: 1 in = 2 miles





STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Mark Foree, General Manager
DATE: April 9, 2019
SUBJECT: General Manager's Report

Attached please find the written reports from the Management team including the Operations Report (*Attachment A*), the Water Resource and the Annexation Activity Report (*Attachment B*), and the Customer Services Report (*Attachment C*).

Also, included in your agenda packet are press clippings from March 14, 2019 through April 10, 2019.

In June 2018, the Board directed staff to work with the Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit conservation organization based in Truckee, regarding a potential conservation easement for TMWA's Farad property. For unknown reasons, TDLT was not able to meet with staff until late 2018. In January 2019, TDLT sent a written request for TMWA to donate the property in fee to TDLT. In response, staff sent TDLT a letter of intent (LOI) outlining the terms on which TMWA could convey the property to TDLT. Staff made clear, and the LOI expressly states, that any transfer of the Farad property would be subject to TMWA Board approval. The LOI states that the property, if transferred, would be conveyed in an as-is where-is condition with all faults and that TMWA would not retain any liability for the property. TDLT is working on a response to the LOI and staff has given them until June 1, 2019 to respond. Also, as directed by the Board, staff has conveyed an easement to the Tahoe-Pyramid Trail (formerly Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway) for the existing trail through the property. Lastly, staff has obtained an appraisal of the property as requested by the Board. In June, staff will update the Board regarding this item and take further direction.

TMWA is filing an amicus ("friend of the court") brief in a case pending before the Nevada Supreme Court involving Walker Lake, which could have state-wide impacts on Nevada water law. The case originated in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which asked the Nevada Supreme Court to answer two questions under Nevada law involving the public trust doctrine. General Counsel Michael Pagni and Debbie Leonard, also from McDonald Carano, represent TMWA and prepared the attached summary of the case.

**Summary of TMWA Amicus Brief
Mineral County, et al. v. Lyon County, et al.
Nevada Supreme Court Case No. 75917**

Background:

Like the 1944 *Orr Ditch Decree* that settled competing claims over the waters of the Truckee River, a federal decree was entered on the Walker River in 1939. And like the Truckee River, there has been ongoing litigation related to conflicting interests in the Walker River waters. Unlike the Truckee River, however, where disputes have been settled and the river is now managed through the Truckee River Operating Agreement (“TROA”), the Walker River litigation remains ongoing.

The case of *Mineral County, et al. v. Lyon County, et al.*, which is currently pending in the Nevada Supreme Court, is one piece of the larger Walker River litigation. The scope of the case is simply to answer two questions of Nevada law that a federal appeals court asked the Nevada Supreme Court to answer. They are:

1. Does the public trust doctrine apply to rights already adjudicated and settled under the doctrine of prior appropriation and, if so, to what extent?
2. If the public trust doctrine applies and allows for reallocation of rights settled under the doctrine of prior appropriation, does the abrogation of such adjudicated or vested rights constitute a "taking" under the Nevada Constitution requiring payment of just compensation?

The public trust doctrine provides that the waters of the State belong to public such that the State has a trust obligation to manage those waters in furtherance of the public interest. Mineral County and a citizens’ group called the Walker Lake Working Group argue that the public trust doctrine requires the court to order that additional water flow into Walker Lake to promote fishing and recreation. That water is already appropriated and used according to the first-in-time, first-in-right principles of prior appropriation.

TMWA’s Interest:

TMWA owns some of the highest priority water rights on the Truckee River and, to serve its customers and ensure water supplies into the future, relies on the certainty that comes with those rights. TMWA spent years negotiating and implementing TROA, which triples the amount of drought storage available for TMWA, protects and enhances TMWA’s run-of-the-river hydroelectric operations, and guarantees the sustainability, availability and priority of municipal water supplies while also protecting fish, wildlife and recreation values.

TROA was negotiated based upon the fundamental understanding of the parties’ respective rights on the Truckee River. The questions of law posed to the Nevada Supreme Court are worded broadly enough such that the answers could encompass TMWA’s rights and disturb TROA. TMWA believes the filing of an amicus (or, “friend of the court”) brief is appropriate to inform

the Nevada Supreme Court of the potential unintended consequences that could ensue from its answers to these legal questions.

TMWA's brief takes the position that the public trust doctrine does not authorize a court to reallocate rights already established under the doctrine of prior appropriation. The Nevada Legislature has set out numerous ways to enhance water available for recreation and fisheries to fulfill the State's public trust obligations, and the separation of powers doctrine prevents the Court from acting in a legislative capacity. TMWA takes no position on the question of whether reallocation of rights settled under the doctrine of prior appropriation constitutes a taking.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Scott Estes, Director of Engineering
BY: Bill Hauck, Senior Hydrologist
DATE: April 8, 2019
SUBJECT: April 2019 Operations Report

Summary

- Overall, the water supply outlook for the region as of April 01 is exceptional
- The official NRCS April 01 snowpack measurements were 183% and 172% of normal, respectively in the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River basins
- Upstream storage reservoirs will all be filled to start the summer months
- Significantly above average river flows are projected through the summer months
- Hydroelectric revenue for March 2019 was an estimated \$204,000
- Customer demands are now beginning to climb

(A) Water Supply

- **River Flows** - Truckee River flows at the CA/NV state line are above average for this time of year at 3,320 cubic feet per second (CFS). The average flow for April 8th based on 109 years of record is 793 CFS.
- **Reservoir Storage** - Reservoir storage is in excellent shape. The elevation of Lake Tahoe is just 1.2 feet below its maximum legal elevation of 6229.10 feet. In anticipation of the significantly above average runoff projected for Lake Tahoe, precautionary releases have been occurring since the third week of February. Overall, Truckee River reservoir system storage is in exceptionally good shape as well at 78% of maximum capacity. Storage values for each reservoir as of 4/8 are as follows:

Reservoir	Current Storage (Acre-Feet)	% of Capacity (Percent)
Tahoe	597,000	80%
Boca	12,399	30%
Donner	4,048	43%
Independence	13,617	78%
Prosser	10,119	34%
Stampede	196,737	87%

In addition to the 17,665 acre-feet of storage in Donner and Independence reservoirs, TMWA has approximately 10,228 acre-feet of water stored between Boca and Stampede reservoirs under the terms of TROA. TMWA's total combined upstream reservoir storage is approximately 27,903 acre-feet as of this morning.

- **Snowpack** - This ended up being one of the biggest snowpack years on record. Snowpack totals were padded through the month of March and right now really couldn't be any better. The official Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) April 1st measurement showed the Lake Tahoe Basin at 183% of normal and the Truckee River Basin snowpack at 172% of normal. The official April 01 measurement last year for both basins was 75% of normal last year.
- **Runoff and River Flows** - The streamflow runoff projections for Sierra Nevada lakes and rivers are also significantly above average. Projected runoff for the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River basins is coming in at almost two times the normal volume typically seen between April and July. Forecasts show 180% of normal runoff for Lake Tahoe, and 205% of normal for the Truckee River. This means big flows in the Truckee River this spring through the early part of the summer, and full reservoirs all summer long.
- **Outlook** - The water supply outlook for the region doesn't get any better than this. Full capacity upstream storage reservoirs all-around on the Truckee River system (including Lake Tahoe) and significantly above-average river flows forecasted through the spring and early summer months (and normal flows projected for the next two to three years) has Northern Nevada positioned extremely well from a water supply perspective.

(B) Water Production

Demand - Customer demand has been inching upward despite the cooler, blustery weather this region has experienced through the first week of April. Consumption averaged 40 million gallons per day (MGD) last week. Surface water from the Chalk Bluff water treatment plant provided 92%, and groundwater the other 8% of supply required to meet demand. Demands will continue creeping upward until the weather breaks, and at that point will begin to climb noticeably week over week as we approach the summer months.

(C) Hydro Production

Generation - Truckee River flow at Farad (CA/NV state line) for the month of March averaged 1,870 cubic feet per second (CFS). Both TMWA's Verdi and Washoe Hydroelectric power plants were on the line for the entire month and 100% available. The Fleish plant remained off-line the entire month for scheduled improvements and maintenance. Statistics for March are:

Hydro Plant	Days On-Line	Generation (Megawatt hours)	Revenue (Dollars)	Revenue (Dollars/Day)
Fleish	0	0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Verdi	31	1,445	\$ 104,820	\$ 3,381
Washoe	31	1,352	\$ 99,129	\$ 3,198
Totals	62	2,797	\$ 203,949	\$ 6,579



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Zimmerman, Manager, Water Resources
DATE: 10 April 2019
SUBJECT: Report Water Resources and Annexation Activity

RULE 7

Rule 7 water resource purchases and will-serve commitment sales against purchased water resources through this reporting period:

Beginning Balance	4,574.55 AF
Purchases of water rights	1.51 AF
Refunds	0.00 AF
Sales	– 37.52 AF
Adjustments	– 0.01 AF
Ending Balance	4,538.53 AF

Price per acre foot at report date: \$7,600

FISH SPRINGS RANCH, LLC GROUNDWATER RESOURCES

Through the merger of Washoe County's water utility, TMWA assumed a Water Banking and Trust Agreement with Fish Springs Ranch, LLC, a subsidiary of Vidler. Under the Agreement, TMWA holds record title to the groundwater rights for the benefit of Fish Springs. Fish Springs may sell and assign its interest in these groundwater rights to third parties for dedication to TMWA for a will-serve commitment in Areas where TMWA can deliver groundwater from the Fish Springs groundwater basin. Currently, TMWA can deliver Fish Springs groundwater to Area 10 only (Stead-Silver Lake-Lemmon Valley). The following is a summary of Fish Springs' resources.

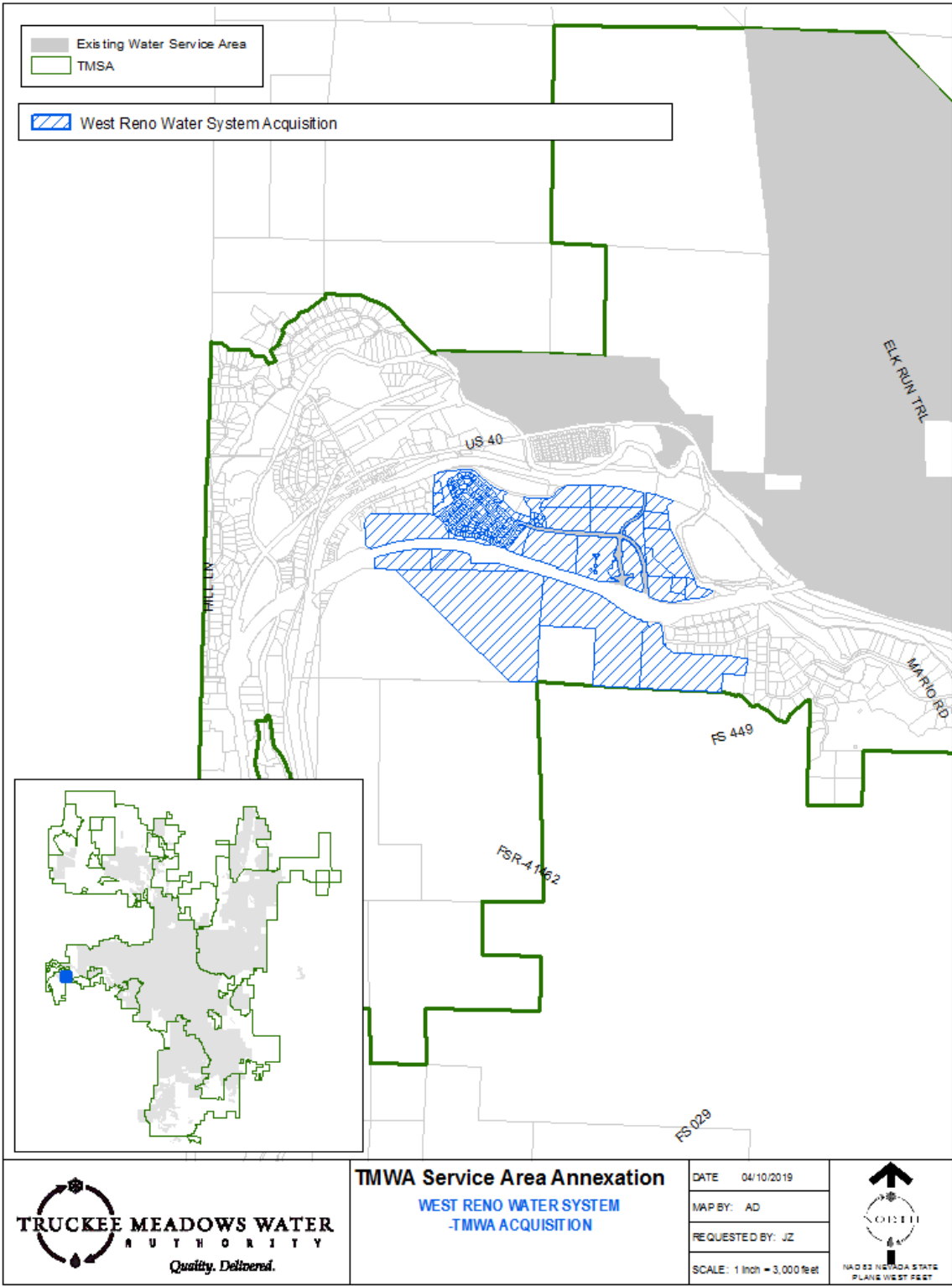
Beginning Balance	7,856.53 AF
Committed water rights	35.59 AF
Ending Balance	7,820.94 AF

Price per acre foot at report date: \$35,000¹

¹ Price reflects avoided cost of Truckee River water right related fees and TMWA Supply & Treatment WSF charge.

WATER SERVICE AREA ANNEXATIONS

The only annexations are related to the West Reno Water System acquisition (Bates Stringer-Reno, SJP Reno Property, and Reno Land and Development (see attached maps)).





STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Marci Westlake, Manager Customer Service
DATE: April 4, 2019
SUBJECT: **March Customer Service Report**

The following is a summary of Customer Service activity for March 2019.

Ombudsman

- No calls this month.

Communications

Customer outreach in March included:

- Chuck Swegles and Lauren Kunin held an Irrigation System Start-up Workshop at TMWA and 11 people attended.
- Laine Christman and Kara Steeland had a Watershed and Conservation presentation at Van Gorder Elementary School and 25 people attended.
- Laine Christman had two televised interviews with KTVN for Spring Start-up and Workshop Series information.
- Laine Christman did a Conservation Water Auditing presentation for Envirolution and 50 people attended.
- Brent Eisert had a Hydroelectric Power presentation at the Verdi Hydroelectric Plant and 10 people attended.
- Will Raymond and Bill Hovda had 2 presentations for Water Treatment for the TMWA employees and 10 people attended.
- Mike Guerra had a Water Treatment presentation for Sorority Alumni Group and 10 people attended.
- Scott Knecht had a Water Treatment presentation for Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Employees and 2 people attended.
- Will Raymond had a Water Treatment presentation for Nevada Rural Water Conference Attendees and 30 people attended.
- Mike Guerra had a Water Treatment presentation for UA Local 350 Pipe Trades Apprenticeship and 15 people attended.

Conservation (2019 Calendar year to date)

- 0 Water Watcher Contacts
- 315 Water Usage Reviews

Customer Calls – March

- 6,667 phone calls handled
- Average handling time – 4 minutes, 36 seconds per call
- Average speed of answer – 18 seconds per call

Billing – March

- 129,360 bills issued
- 0(0%) corrected bills
- 19,372 customers (15.0%) have signed up for paperless billing to date.

Service Orders –March (% is rounded)

- 6,058 service orders taken
- 3,398 (56%) move-ins / move-outs
- 419 (7%) cut-out-for-non-payment and cut-in after receiving payments, including deposits and checks for tamper
- 745 (12%) zero consumption meter checks
- 364 (6%) re-read meters
- 464 (8%) new meter sets and meter/register/ERT exchanges and equipment checks
- 158 (3%) problems / emergencies, including cut-out for customer repairs, dirty water, no water, leaks, pressure complaints, safety issues, installing water meter blankets, etc.
- 73 (1%) high-bill complaints / audit and water usage review requests
- 437 (7%) various other service orders

Remittance – March

- 29,257 mailed-in payments
- 26,213 electronic payments
- 32,597 payments via RapidPay (EFT)
- 17,248 one-time bank account payments
- 6,129 credit card payments
- 901 store payments
- 1,900 payments via drop box or at front desk

Collections –March

- 11,465 accounts received a late charge
- Mailed 6,900 10-day delinquent notices, 5.3% of accounts
- Mailed 953 48-hour delinquent notices, 0.7% of accounts
- 147 accounts eligible for disconnect
- 146 accounts were disconnected (including accounts that had been disconnected-for-non-payment that presented NSF checks for their reconnection)
- 0.18% write-off to revenue

Meter Statistics – Fiscal Year to Date

- 0 Meter retrofits completed
- 695 Meter exchanges completed
- 1,079 New business meter sets completed
- 126,250 Meters currently installed



TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, April 17, 2019

Press Clippings

March 14, 2019 – April 10, 2019



Washoe Flume Reconstruction

Nevada Assembly panel urged to approve Lake Tahoe bonds

Geoff Dornan
Nevada Appeal

March 13, 2019



File photo

Lake Tahoe

CARSON CITY, Nev. — The Assembly Government Affairs Committee was told Tuesday, March 12, that approval of the next phase of Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program bonds is critical to the continuation of efforts to restore and improve the environment in the Tahoe Basin.

Assemblyman Mike Sprinkle, D-Sparks, said the \$8 million in this biennium's bonding package will cover Nevada's share of the program for the coming two years.

State Lands Administrator Charlie Donahue said the bonding program was originally authorized for some \$53 million in bonds in 1999 and reauthorized for up to \$100 million in 2009. He said in addition to Nevada's share, money for the environmental programs comes from California, from local and tribal governments in the basin as well as private funding.

He said since its inception, the program has funded 139 capital projects ranging from watershed habitat, water quality, forest health and fire risk mitigation. This past biennium, he said some money also went to address the invasive Asian clam situation at Sand Harbor and water treatment plus improving wildlife habitat.

After he mentioned the removal of more than 5,000 dead trees, Assemblyman John Ellison, R-Elko, praised those efforts saying, "we don't need another California fire."

Alan Biaggi representing the Tahoe Fund, a private fund raising group, said they're in strong support of the bonding in AB220. Kyle Davis representing the League to Save Lake Tahoe and the Nevada Conservation League as well as a spokesman for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and Sierra Club also backed the bill.

Steve Walker of the water authority said they have a stake in water quality at Tahoe since the "top six feet" of the lake is essentially a reservoir for the Truckee Meadows. The committee took no action on the bill.

Explore and Discover Information about Groundwater with DWR Apps

Published: March 14, 2019



Groundwater irrigation for a rice field in the agriculture region of Yuba County east of Marysville, California. DWR/2009

Groundwater may be out of sight, but it doesn't have to be out of mind. Groundwater provides 30 to 60 percent of the state's water supply and is an important drought buffer. It also is important to the state's economy and the environment. The Department of Water Resources offers numerous [web-based mapping applications](#) that make information about this unseen resource easily accessible.

The web apps reveal details about groundwater and related activity on the land surface. The information is colorfully illustrated on interactive maps with a choice of base maps and data layers that include land subsidence, agricultural crops, wells, vegetation, wetlands, springs, groundwater basin boundaries, disadvantaged communities, and more. The apps also offer data that can be used by water agencies to plan for the effects of climate change. While meeting the needs of water agencies, the apps also provide the public with an opportunity to explore and discover information about groundwater.

The mapping apps were designed to help with the department's implementation of the [Sustainable Groundwater Management Act \(SGMA\)](#) which requires local water agencies in high- and medium-priority basins to create plans to sustainably manage their groundwater resources by establishing a long-term balance between the amount of water they pump and

recharge. Local groundwater sustainability agencies and others can utilize the apps as they prepare groundwater sustainability plans.

During Groundwater Awareness Week, we invite you to explore these informative apps:

- [SGMA Data Viewer](#): Information on groundwater basin boundaries, critically over-drafted basins, water quality, land subsidence, agricultural crops, well locations and climate change data.
- [Natural Communities Dataset Viewer](#): 48 publicly available state and federal agency datasets that map vegetation, wetlands, springs, and seeps in California.
- [CADWR Land Use Viewer](#): Statewide and existing county land use data sets collected over the last 30 years including crop specific information, and land use change over time.
- [Well Completion Report Map Application](#): Contains well location, dates of construction, planned use, depth of the well, subsurface geologic units encountered, well construction, and well yield.
- [Groundwater Information Center Interactive Map Application](#): Individual geographic information systems (GIS) layers containing geospatially-referenced groundwater-related information, with downloadable layers.
- [Water Management Planning Tool](#): Overlay numerous data layers onto a map of California including Tribal Reservation Boundaries, hydrologic regions, critically overdrafted basins, basin prioritization, and groundwater basins.
- [The Groundwater Basin Boundary Assessment Tool \(BBAT\)](#): Current information on groundwater basin boundaries, hydrologic characteristics and other relevant geologic and geographic data.
- [The Disadvantaged Communities \(DAC\) Mapping Tool](#): Identifies disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities throughout California.

IndyBlog

Public Utilities Commission chair resigns



[Jackie Valley](#)

March 14th, 2019 - 12:19pm

Ann Wilkinson has resigned from her post as chair of the Public Utilities Commission, effective March 22, the governor's office announced Thursday.

The brief announcement noted that Wilkinson, who has been chair of the regulatory body since September 2018, is leaving to explore other opportunities. Former Gov. Brian Sandoval appointed her as chair. She previously served as chair of the Nevada Transportation Authority.

"As I leave to pursue new opportunities, I leave honored to have chaired Nevada's first all-female Public Utilities Commission," Wilkinson said in the news release. "It has been a privilege to transition the Commission during such a dynamic time, and I am grateful to Governor Sisolak for his support during these initial months of his administration."

Wilkinson could not immediately be reached for further comment

Water Grab Update in California

In September, Sierra Club joined Mono County's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) complaint against the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP) for withholding irrigation water that negatively impacts the environment.

LADWP filed a demur asking the court to dismiss the CEQA complaint challenging whether it is legal to file this complaint. In February, the judge denied LADWP's demur. The CEQA complaint still stands and the reasons for it being filed can be discussed. LADWP just announced that it will provide water to the ranchers this year because of a good snowpack. However, the CEQA complaint, if it prevails, will ensure water is provided every year until the environmental review process is completed and the impacts of de-watering are documented.

Electric Vehicle Charging Stations 101

Do you know your H2O? Arlington citizens will with these remote read meters

BY RICK MAUCH SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM

MARCH 14, 2019 10:00 AM,

The only guarantee for cheaper water bills is to use less water. [The city of Arlington](#) is helping citizens toward that goal with its Know Your H2O program.

“What we’re trying to do is educate so our customers can make wiser decisions with their water usage,” City of Arlington Director of Water Utilities Craig Cummings said.

For residents with remote read meters, the updated Arlington Water Utilities online account page now includes access to daily water usage totals.

“They also can compare their water use over time and have a better idea of what they will pay at the end of the month,” said Arlington Communication and Legislative Affairs Director Jay Warren.

Cummings said slightly more than half, almost 60,000 of the city’s water meters, are already part of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) network. Their water meters transmit usage readings remotely, in a safe and secure manner, to the city’s billing system.

“What we really like is the customer can set a bill limit and we’ll send an email that tells them if they’re getting close to that dollar amount or volume amount,” Cummings said about a new alert tool that will be available this spring “This is a lesson learned from last summer, when it got so hot and we had so many bills that were so high.”

Cummings also said the system is helpful in such instances as a leak, or if someone left a hose running. The customer will be alerted so they can inspect the situation.

An additional 9,000 remote read meters are scheduled to be installed annually until all of the meters in Arlington are remotely read.

“In Texas, we know that the next extremely dry summer isn’t a matter of if, it’s a matter of when,” Cummings said. “That’s why we continue to encourage residents to use water efficiently throughout the year. Being able to track their account daily gives residents control over their water use. It’s an effective way to prevent surprises in your monthly utility bill.”

And Cummings said every meter in the city will be replaced when the program is finished.

“From Cowboys Stadium to the little old lady,” he said with a chuckle.

Cummings also said there is a plan for customers to be able to monitor their usage on an hourly basis, something that can only be done currently by calling the water department.

Cummings assured citizens there is no cost to them for changing to the remote read meters. He said the batteries are guaranteed for many years, in some cases lasting as long as 15 years.

“We think it’s truly a game changer, allowing consumers to make decisions with real time data,” he said. “This is virtually mistake-free.”

Also on the updated website, residents can view monthly readings for up to two years, comparing them to usage connected with monthly temperatures.

And Cummings said no, the switch to remote read meters doesn’t mean the loss of jobs for meter readers.

“We’re migrating the folks who would be displaced reading meters to installing meters, or bidding on a number of other positions. We’re not laying anyone off,” he said. “This is not Big Brother heavy-handed. It’s just a way to help people manage another part of their life.”

Nevadans encouraged to save water during Fix a Leak Week March 18-24

Submitted by [Brett Fisher](#) on Sat, 03/16/2019 - 7:41pm

[Tweet](#)



Nevada Public Utilities Commission

As part of an ongoing campaign supported by the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN), this year's Fix a Leak Week encourages Nevadans to help put a stop to the more than one trillion gallons of water wasted nationally from household leaks each year.

Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense Program, Fix a Leak Week is March 18-24. In support of this public awareness campaign, the PUCN encourages Nevada consumers to find and fix residential leaks to save water.

"Household leaks can account for more than 10,000 gallons of water in an average home every year. Fixing easily corrected household water leaks can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills," said PUCN Water Engineer Cindy Turiczek. "The Public Utilities Commission is proud to be a WaterSense partner and encourages consumers to take a few simple steps that can add up to a significant positive impact. Consumers are not just losing water, but also money that communities put into keeping our water clean and healthy."

The EPA's Fix a Leak Week tips include:

- Check for leaks. Look for dripping faucets, showerheads and other fixtures. Don't forget to check irrigation systems and spigots, too.
- Twist and tighten hose and pipe connections. To save water without a noticeable difference in flow in your bathroom, twist on a WaterSense labeled faucet aerator.
- Replace the fixture if necessary. Look for WaterSense labeled models, which are independently certified to use 20 percent less water and perform as well as or better than standard models.

In many cases, fixture replacement parts pay for themselves quickly and can be installed by handy do-it-yourselfers or local plumbing professionals. Irrigation professionals certified through a WaterSense labeled program can also check systems for leaks.

For more information, visit www.epa.gov/watersense or www.puc.nv.gov to find WaterSense labeled products or an auditor in your area.

Swan Lake water rising again in Lemmon Valley — and nearby residents are worried

[Anjeanette Damon](#), Reno Gazette Journal

Published 6:30 a.m. PT March 18, 2019 | Updated 7:10 a.m. PT March 18, 2019

The waters in Swan Lake started rising two years ago. Residents there are still worried. Sam Gross and Benjamin Spillman and Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette Journal

[Click here for aerial video](#)

Editor's note: Anjeanette Damon is the government watchdog reporter for the RGJ. You can reach her at adamon@rgj.com or follow her on Twitter @AnjeanetteDamon. If you care about shining a bright light on decisions made by your elected officials, [please consider subscribing](#) to the Reno Gazette Journal.

Swan Lake, which inundated Lemmon Valley in 2017, is again burgeoning under a heavy winter and has already inched past the high water mark from the floods two year ago.

Washoe County officials charged with managing the flooded lake say they have a handle on the situation and there's nothing to worry about.

But residents, who once again have flooded yards and are watching water percolate under the barriers erected to hold the lake back, are pleading with government officials to do more.

"It's a failure," Lemmon Valley resident Denise Ross told the Reno City County on Wednesday. "The residents are terrified they are going to lose their animals, they're going to lose their homes, and even perhaps lose their lives."

RGJ Investigates: [Reno knew Lemmon Valley would flood, but it allowed development anyway](#)

Of particular concern to residents is the water seeping through the berms built by Washoe County along the north end of the lake to protect homes flooded in 2017. Water is bubbling up through Pompe Way.

Officials need to "realize how catastrophic it's going to be, not if, when that road collapses and that lake comes rushing through," Ross said.

Washoe engineer: 'misinformation' causing needless worry



Floodwaters encroach on a home near Swan Lake, an ephemeral lake north of Reno. Residents are worried snowmelt will push the water beyond the ability of barriers to contain it. March 13, 2019. (Photo: Benjamin Spillman and Sam Gross)

Washoe County Engineer Dwayne Smith, who has personally kept a watchful eye on the temporary barriers designed to corral flood waters, said the barriers are not in danger of collapse. Water that bubbles through is returned to the lake by a series of pumps, he said.

"Seepage is expected, anticipated and dealt with by the pumps," Smith said. "There are no areas where catastrophic failure would occur due to these minor seepage issues. I don't like seepage, but I don't worry about seepage."

Flooding mitigation: [South Dayton residents' input sought on flooding mitigation](#)

Smith said he empathizes with residents who have had to deal with the flooded lake, but said "misinformation" is causing people needless worry.

"I don't want people going to bed at night thinking they're going to wake up with water in their house."

Washoe County Engineer Dwayne Smith

"I'm hoping through these discussions to get the truth out," he said. "I don't want people going to bed at night thinking they're going to wake up with water in their house."

Smith refused to describe the high water levels as flooding, saying it's a different situation than two years ago when the lake water ran into neighborhoods unchecked.

"We don't have flooding in Lemmon Valley," he said. "We have water in Swan Lake. I want to be real cognizant, this is not the same situation as the first two months of 2017 when we had water on streets, we had water on properties and in (some) cases we had water in people's houses. That was horrible."

Not everyone's property is dry this year, though. When asked about photos of flooded properties, Smith walked his statement back a bit.

"We have maybe five properties with water on the property," he said. "That is a problem for us. I'm concerned about that. What the team is doing right now, we are going to be installing some additional protections as soon as we can to get the water off the property to the greatest degree possible."

Concerns over inundated sewage treatment plant

Residents also are concerned about water that has inundated the county's sewage treatment plant on the southeast corner of the lake. Ponds normally used for evaporating treated effluent are filled with lake water. And the county is pumping water that has seeped from the lake into one of its sludge ponds back into the lake.



Residents near Swan Lake, an ephemeral lake near Reno, are worried about rising water encroaching on evaporative ponds at a Washoe County sewer plant. The plant is shown here on March 13, 2019. (Photo: Benjamin Spillman and Sam Gross)

That water has edged up to the playground at Lemmon Valley Elementary School.

Smith says the water poses no health risks and is in compliance with its state environmental permit.

Nevada Division of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Jo Ann Kittrell confirmed the plant is operating within its permit and said state and county officials are testing water quality to ensure there is no danger to the public.

Meanwhile, the county is actively building higher berms around the sludge ponds to keep the ponds from being flooded, Smith said.

Lemmon Valley Drive also remains closed along on the northwest edge of the lake so the county can add additional water pumps and rails to protect the barriers from cars. Smith said crews hope to have the road open this week, but said weather or work delays could push back the opening date.

More water? That depends on the snowpack melt

As the year's heavy snowpack begins to melt, Smith said he anticipates the lake will rise even more. On Wednesday, the lake was about a tenth of an inch over the high water mark reached in mid-April 2017.

"I don't know if we're talking an inch or six inches, but I do expect over the next four to six weeks we'll have enough precipitation and snow melt that we'll have some amount of lake rise," Smith said.

Reducing flooding impacts: [River project aims to reduce flood impacts](#)

He added the barriers in place can handle another two feet of water before they become ineffective.

"We could see another two feet of water rise and not have issues," he said.

Meanwhile, the Reno City Council decided Wednesday to spend an additional \$125,000 to a consultant who is helping the city defend itself against a class action lawsuit filed by Lemmon Valley residents who claim the city worsened the flooding by approving rampant development in the North Valleys and pumping effluent water from its sewage plant into the lake.

HDR Engineering will now be paid up to \$325,000 to help the city with the litigation.

The case is expected to go to trial in June.

Why we did this story

Usually when a flood hits the Truckee Meadows, the water comes from raging rivers and streams to run roughshod over properties. But within hours, or maybe a few days, the water is gone. In Lemmon Valley, the flood water is trapped in a closed basin. For two years now, residents have lived with closed roads and leaky barriers standing between them and the lake. Some still have property underwater. The residents are now a constant presence at local government meetings demanding services and pleading for a halt to additional building that could worsen the problem. The Reno Gazette Journal has been covering this story since the flood water first began to rise in January 2017. And we will continue to tell the story as residents continue to fight for their community.

Amid 19-Year Drought, States Sign Deal to Conserve Colorado River Water

Lake Mead, the reservoir formed by the Hoover Dam, is at its lowest levels since the 1960s. Credit: John Locher/Associated Press

• March 19, 2019



By John Schwartz

Image

Lake Mead, the reservoir formed by the Hoover Dam, is at its lowest levels since the 1960s.

Credit: John Locher/Associated Press

The water is saved, for now.

Seven Western states have agreed on a plan to manage the Colorado River amid a 19-year drought, voluntarily cutting their water use to prevent the federal government from imposing a mandatory squeeze on the supply.

State water officials signed the deal on Tuesday after years of negotiations, forestalling what would have been the first federally enforced restrictions on the river's lower basin. But any victory may be short-lived. Climate change promises to make the American West increasingly hot and dry, putting further pressure on the Colorado and the 40 million people who depend on its water.

"We all recognize we're looking at a drier future," said Tom Buschatzke, director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

The water in Lake Mead, the vast reservoir formed by the Hoover Dam that supplies the lower basin, has dropped to levels not seen since the 1960s. Lake Mead and Lake Powell, another reservoir on the river, are essential sources of water for Southern California and Arizona, and sit at less than 40 percent full.

By the beginning of March, the water level in Lake Mead had dropped to 1,088 feet above sea level. At 1,075 feet, under guidelines agreed to in 2007, the federal government would declare a shortage on the lower Colorado River, and mandatory water restrictions would go into effect.

Without sacrifices by the states — Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming in the upper basin, and Arizona, California and Nevada in the lower basin — the reservoir could reach the trigger point next year, though recent heavy snowfall in the mountains that feed the river may help for a time.

Brenda W. Burman, commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal agency that oversees the river, pressured states and their water agencies to make a deal. Without an agreement, she said, she would "take action to protect the river," without specifying what that action would be.



Image

Intake pipes that once sat underwater on the banks of Lake Mead near Boulder City, Nev. Credit: John Locher/Associated Press

In a conference call with reporters on Tuesday, she said she was “pleased to see their hard work is done.” The seven states and participating water districts sent a drought contingency plan to Congress, seeking legislation “for immediate implementation,” according to a statement from the bureau.

“It’s a hard-to-put-together puzzle, all about sharing some burdens,” said Sharon B. Megdal, director of the Water Resources Research Center at the University of Arizona. The plan builds on water conservation efforts that have, for example, [kept Southern California water use relatively flat](#) for decades despite a population boom.

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The Imperial Irrigation District, California’s largest user of water from the river, threatened to derail the process when it demanded \$200 million from the federal government to help restore the Salton Sea, [the state’s largest lake](#). But other state water districts said they would cover Imperial’s share of water cuts without requiring that flows to the Salton Sea be reduced.

The Salton Sea is drying up in part because of measures taken by California farmers to use less water, which result in less runoff flowing into the lake. As it dries, fine dust from the lake bed blows into the air, which has been linked to childhood asthma and other illnesses.

Robert D. Schettler, a spokesman for the Imperial District, called the decision to move forward without its participation “unfortunate,” adding that a pact without the Imperial District “may mean getting it done, but not getting it right.”

The federal government regulates the water, but the states own the rights to it, said Jennifer Pitt, an expert on river issues with the Audubon Society. “So there’s a tension there,” she said. “The federal government’s consistent approach is to use that authority as a stick, but not ever go so far as to have to claim it.”

The river is important to the people who use its water, but also to “all of nature that depends on the river in the arid landscape of the Southwest,” Ms. Pitt said.

Another big risk is that Lake Mead could eventually drop below 950 feet, when water could no longer turn the dam's turbines, or even 895 feet, when the lake would reach "deadpool" status and no water could flow out. That, said Patricia Aaron, a spokeswoman for the Bureau of Reclamation, need never happen. "That's what the drought contingency planning on the river is about," she said.

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Brad Udall, a senior scientist at Colorado State University and an expert on water supplies in the West, told a congressional panel last month that the lower basin uses about 10.2 million acre-feet of water from the river each year, while upstream flows provide just nine million. (An acre-foot is the volume of one foot of water over one acre, about 325,000 gallons.)

Beyond that drain, climate change is bringing on a long-term crisis. "The Colorado River, and the entire Southwest, has shifted to a new hotter and drier climate, and, equally important, will continue to shift to a hotter and drier climate for several decades after we stop emitting greenhouse gases," he said in his testimony.

In an interview, Mr. Udall said the influence of climate change was already apparent in the West. "Climate change is not some distant process," he said. "It's here, it's now, it's in our faces. It's creating messes we have to deal with."

Jonathan T. Overpeck, a climate scientist at the University of Michigan, said that politicians and policymakers needed to factor climate change into their plans. Lack of river water will lead people to pump more groundwater, which was deposited in the ice ages. "We're using this fossil groundwater in unsustainable ways," he said.

In a warming world, Dr. Overpeck said, less water in rivers and lakes is inevitable, whatever relief a wet season might bring. But for the most part, Western political leaders "don't want to talk about it," he said. "It is the disaster that's over the horizon, if we don't talk about it."

An earlier version of this article stated incorrectly that Lake Mead began to fill in the 1960s. While it is true that water levels in the lake in recent years have dropped to levels not seen since the 60s, the lake began to fill in the 1930s.

John Schwartz is part of the climate team. Since joining The Times in 2000, he has covered science, law, technology, the space program and more, and has written for almost every section. @jswatz · Facebook

For more news on climate and the environment, [follow @NYTClimate on Twitter](#).

Correction: March 20, 2019

High-tech fight on aquatic invasive plants in Lake Tahoe shows promising results



Staff Report

March 19, 2019

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Courtesy of Tahoe Resource Conservation District

President of Inventive Resources, Inc. John Paoluccio operates the ultraviolet light treatment boat at Lakeside Marina.

SOUTH LAKE TAHOE, Calif. — A pilot program that used ultraviolet light to combat aquatic invasive plants has shown promising results.

Results from the program, which was deployed [in Lakeside Marina in the summer of 2017](#), show the use of ultraviolet-C light successfully killed submerged aquatic plants, according to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

Most of the submerged plants showed signs of deterioration or complete collapsing withing seven to 10 days following the treatment, which was administered via a specially-made boat fitted with a drop-down panel of UVC lights.

The results were so successful that the conservation district, which teamed with Inventive Resources Inc., on the pilot program, is recommending continued use and analysis of ultraviolet light as a control tool at Lake Tahoe.

"Invasive plant populations can be reduced, and with continued treatments and a combination of tools available, we will be better equipped to manage populations around the

lake in the future," Nicole Cartwright, executive director for Tahoe RCD, said in a press release. "We are encouraged by the results and look forward to additional UV-C light treatment projects to explore the full potential of this new tool."

Inventive Resources Inc., a private engineering firm with a focus on environmental services, touted the results as an example of how technology can be successfully used to fight invasive plants.

"We are pleased that our company was able to participate in such an exciting project that demonstrates the innovative positive impact technology can have on the environment and our community," John Paoluccio, president of Inventive Resources Inc., said in a press release. "We are so proud that we were able to help add a new treatment control method to combat the spread and reduce the amount of aquatic invasive plants in Lake Tahoe."

Although complete eradication of aquatic invasive plants may not be achieved with only one treatment, a decrease in plant percent cover, height and density was observed. Officials believe that with a consistent and comprehensive treatment plan, Ultraviolet-C will be a successful tool to control aquatic invasive plants in Tahoe waterways, especially when paired with other approved techniques.

In addition to determining the basic efficacy of using UV-C light to treat invasive plants, the pilot program also provided information to support future environmental document analysis.

The conservation district says it is currently working on that analysis, which will expand available methods and techniques to implement lake-wide control methods for treatment of aquatic invasive plants at Lake Tahoe. This revised document will include Ultraviolet-C light along with other proven mechanical techniques, according to the conservation district.

That would make UV-C light the latest tool used to fight aquatic invasive species, which are a threat to Tahoe's famed clarity. Invasive species compete with native species and can increase algae growth.

In 2018 the League to Save Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association installed a "bubble curtain," a device intended to stop the spread of invasive aquatic plants by creating literal barriers in water channels. The [deployment in the Tahoe Keys](#) was the first time the technology was used at Lake Tahoe.

More traditional measures, such as [the use of bottom barriers](#), continue to be used in different areas around the lake.

The pilot program was funded by a Proposition 1 grant from the California Tahoe Conservancy and private contributions from the Tahoe Fund.

To view the full final monitoring report from the pilot program, visit tahoercd.org/tahoe-aquatic-invasive-species-resources/.

Debates Ebb & Flow Over Smart Water Meters



RSWD

Running Springs Water District

Posted: Thursday, March 21, 2019 9:00 am
BY HEIDI FRON, Reporter | 0 comments

When the Running Springs Water District began its Smart Water Meter program, some residents expressed concern over possible adverse health effects that may result from exposure to Radio Frequency (RF) Radiation.

Smart meters, which record the amount of water, electricity or other products consumed over time, differ from traditional meters in that they are electronic and can communicate with a central computer system. They “talk” to the central systems using RF transmissions, based on cell phone, pager, satellite, radio, power line, Wi-Fi or Internet communication, according to an article in the March/April 2012 issue of *Electric Light & Power* magazine. Internet and cell phone applications are preferred options due to their flexibility and ease of deployment.

In the past, deployments of Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) and Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) systems in some states were completed with little publicity. Consumers often were not aware that an RF transmitting meter had been installed at their house.

A primary public concern is the belief that RF emissions from smart meters are harmful to human health.

When a Running Springs resident contacted the *Mountain News* about the issue, we soon learned that it is not just a local problem. Concerns have been raised nationwide, and many studies have been conducted to determine the extent of possible threats to health. Most studies conclude that RF Radiation exposure is minimal and is less threatening than use of a cell phone, Wi-Fi, a microwave oven or a cordless phone.

Among the notable studies are those by the California Council on Science and Technology, American Cancer Society, Environmental Health Trust, World Health Organization and many others.

Paul Bender of Running Springs shared with the *Mountain News* his concerns, which he brought to his local water district. “My wife, Rita, and I cited health reasons and presented numerous documents of studies listing the major diseases and conditions that RF radiation can cause. I told them that I have a heart arrhythmia condition, Atrial

Fibrillation that is proven to be exacerbated by radio frequency radiation. We also mentioned that both of us are having symptoms such as sudden headaches, sleep problems, ringing in the ears, trouble concentrating, anxiety and a couple other things that just started happening out of the blue and that are called out as symptoms of RF exposure.”

Bender provided to the *Mountain News* one of the letters he sent to the Running Springs Water District along with the marketing information from the water meter company, an American Cancer Society document, general information from the utility industry dated 2013, an industry marketing consultant presentation dated 2012, the district’s handout entitled “No Health Threat from Smart Meters” and a sample opt-out request form.

“I thought if I could get an ‘opt-out’ exemption, that would set the precedent for others to apply if they are bothered by these things,” Bender said. “I didn’t expect the Running Springs Water District Board to consider our ‘opt-out’ request without a fight let alone accommodate our wishes.”

Bender’s neighbors also got an opt-out exemption because their water meter is in the same location. “The opt-out exemption really was quite easy to get,” Bender said, “but then again I wasn’t asking for a full-blown public program either.”

Setting a precedent and establishing a full-blown public program were unnecessary. The Running Springs district was able to grant Bender’s request because California is one of only a few states with guidelines enabling utility companies to address customers’ concerns.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) had already ordered the implementation of a postponement list for customers who request that a smart meter not be installed.

As far back as February 2012, the CPUC ordered Pacific Gas & Electric to implement an analog meter opt-out option that other utility companies also use.

Opt-out programs require the customer to pay a meter exchange fee of approximately \$100 to replace the AMI meter with a manual read meter. Thereafter, they pay a monthly meter reading fee (which varies by location) in addition to the existing electric utility charges.

Bender said his agreement allows him to read his own meter for five months. “Then the district reads it on the sixth month and charges us \$17.50. As long as we don’t get behind on our water bill we can keep the exemption.”

The concerns have been alleviated at the Bender home, but Paul Bender wants to push the water district to issue an informative newsletter about the opt-out program. “I do believe it is our right to be able to protect ourselves and our families from harm and although the mainstream media is not reporting it, more and more people, counties and states are becoming aware of the dangers of RF Radiation.”

Ryan Gross, the general manager of the Running Springs Water District, was not available for comment prior to the newspaper deadline. The district is located at 31242 Hilltop Boulevard in Running Springs. Call (909) 867-2766 during regular hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday; 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

Heidi Fron can be reached at hfron@mountain-news.com.

Energy | Legislature

[After 2017 veto, lawmakers again consider boosting renewable standards to 50 percent by 2030](#)

By



[Riley Snyder](#)

March 19th, 2019 - 3:41pm

Nearly two years after an ambitious attempt to increase Nevada’s renewable energy production went down in flames, lawmakers are again considering a measure to raise the state Renewable Portfolio Standard to 50 percent by 2030.

Introduced late Monday by Democratic Sen. Chris Brooks, [SB358](#) would increase the state’s current renewable standard growth from 25 percent by 2025 to 50 percent by 2030 — the same concept vetoed by former Gov. Brian Sandoval in 2017 but approved at the ballot by nearly 60 percent of voters in the 2018 election.

Brooks said he didn’t want to wait through another election cycle to see an increase in the portfolio standard, and called the RPS “the number one way” to reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable energy generation.

“I introduced it two years ago, it should have passed and been enacted two years ago, and I’m not going to wait two more years for a ballot initiative to be voted on and then acted in 2022 as part of the ballot initiative,” he said. “The people of Nevada clearly wanted this two years ago.”

The measure has been highlighted by clean energy advocates and Democratic lawmakers as a major legislative priority ever since Sandoval’s veto.

“Setting a higher Renewable Portfolio Standard is critical to advancing Nevada’s clean energy economy, improving air pollution, and fighting climate change,” Nevada Conservation League Executive Director Andy Maggi said in a statement.

Opportunities for the bill's success appear more likely in 2019; Gov. Steve Sisolak pledged to support an RPS increase to 50 percent in his [State of the State address](#) and more recently [signed the state on to a multistate alliance](#) to reduce carbon emissions. Democrats, who control both legislative chambers, unanimously [supported the measure in 2017](#).

But a Renewable Portfolio Standard is slightly more complex than mandating a certain percentage of electricity come from renewable sources. Like a "cap-and-trade" program for carbon emissions, an RPS is, in essence, a state-created marketplace where utilities and power plants earn Portfolio Energy Credits (PECs) for the generation of renewable energy from solar, wind or geothermal sources. A PEC is equal to one kilowatt-hour of generated electricity, equivalent to a 100-watt television running for 10 hours.

What an RPS does is require utilities and certain other entities to generate or obtain a certain number of PECs equal to a percentage of their total electric generation — in theory ensuring that a certain percentage of electricity generated comes from renewable sources. The state Public Utilities Commission runs a marketplace where PECs can be sold or transferred, and entities are allowed to "roll over" unused credits for use in future years.

But raising the RPS isn't necessarily a guarantee that renewable energy generation will see an equal increase; NV Energy [reported a 24 percent clean energy portfolio](#) in 2017, but the company's actual renewable fuel mix was closer to 18 percent renewable and 76 percent natural gas.

Although the overarching aim of the bill is similar to the 2017 legislation and the proposed constitutional amendment approved by voters in 2018, the bill does contain a few variations. Unlike in 2017, the bill does include any bonus credits for renewable energy generated by geothermal plants, and continues an expected phase out of RPS credits for energy efficiency programs.

NV Energy CEO Doug Cannon [told lawmakers last month](#) that the utility would support a 50 percent RPS (a concept the utility was neutral on in 2017), but noted that the utility would like to see hydropower be credited towards the renewable standard and the continued inclusion of energy efficiency measures in the RPS.

In addition to the change in governors and NV Energy, Brooks said he believed the bill would win new supporters this session amid declining prices in large-scale solar costs poking holes in the fear that committing the state to increased renewable generation would lead to higher power bills.

"The folks who opposed it based on pricing last time were wrong, and it's pretty obvious they were wrong," he said. "And the pricing has come down even more dramatically than was anticipated in the last couple of sessions, and I think that right there has changed a lot of minds."

The bill allows utilities and other entities required to meet the RPS to use a three-year rolling average which includes the previous two years when determining their compliance with the standard.

The bill would raise the RPS to 22 percent by 2020, and gradually increase the standard over that next decade:

- 24 percent by 2021
- 29 percent by 2022 through 2023
- 34 percent by 2024 through 2026
- 42 percent by 2027 through 2029
- 50 percent by 2030

Like the 2017 version of the bill, SB358 also requires businesses that have left NV Energy as an electric customer comply with the RPS; current law only requires them to [meet the renewable standard in place at the time](#) they departed the utility. It also requires electric cooperatives and municipal power districts (such as Lincoln County Power District and Overton Power District) to meet the RPS standards once they report more than 1 million megawatt hours in sales.

The measure also requires that electric utilities such as NV Energy include in their triennial Integrated Resource Plan (a state-mandated planning document for the utility's future supply and demand) information on the construction or expansion of transmission facilities that can be built within areas to "expedite or facilitate" renewable energy generation.

It further allows utilities to acquire an existing or in development renewable energy plant without approval from the Public Utilities Commission under certain circumstances, as long as the utility does not add the cost of acquiring the plant to its base electric rate and instead charges a "just and reasonable price" to its customers for the renewable power.

Lawmakers created an initial RPS in 1997, and in 2009 passed a law raising the standard to 25 percent by 2025. Thirteen jurisdictions have a [higher RPS](#) than Nevada, including Hawaii (100 percent by 2045), California (100 percent by 2045) and Vermont (75 percent by 2032). New Jersey, New York and Oregon have set 50 percent RPS targets by 2030, while Maryland has a 40 percent target by 2030, Colorado has a 30 percent target by 2020 and Connecticut has a 27 percent target by 2020.

A Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS, is a government-mandated regulation requiring energy companies to obtain a percentage of their fuel mix from renewable sources such as wind, solar or biomass. Twenty-nine states have some form of an RPS in place, including Nevada, which is scheduled to gradually increase its RPS to 25 percent by 2025.

[New NV Energy CEO says utility supports 50 percent RPS, calls departing businesses a 'concern' In his first presentation to legislators as the utility's CEO, Cannon reiterated his predecessor Paul Caudill's pledge to eventually transition the utility to 100 percent renewable power while](#)

[supporting an increase in the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard to 50 percent by 2030, a position the company staked out last year.](#)

[With utility support in tow, lawmakers look to push RPS to 50 percent or higher in 2019 Nevada voters may have overwhelmingly approved a ballot question that would double the state's renewable standards if approved again in 2020, but several top lawmakers are pushing for bills that could make that initiative effectively irrelevant. At least two Democratic lawmakers say they plan to push for measures raising Nevada's Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS, above the 50 percent by 2030 goal laid out in Question 6, which Nevada voters approved by 59 to 41 percent in the 2018 election.](#)

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Films Highlight NV Water Issues for World Water Day



A large pit lake remains at the site of the abandoned Anaconda Copper Mine in Mason Valley, Nev. (Ian Bigley) March 20, 2019

LAS VEGAS - In honor of World Water Day, some new documentaries on water pipelines and mining pollution in Nevada are making their debut.

The films are being presented free to the public on Thursday night in Las Vegas, Friday night in Reno and Saturday at the Pyramid Lake Museum in Nixon.

Ian Bigley, mining justice organizer for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, which produced the films, said one documentary, "Tainted Thirst," looks at the repercussions for local communities when mines leak highly toxic water that will have to be treated forever to make it safe.

"Once the perpetual pollution is set off, there's really no way of stopping it, so that's why we want a ban of it as a mine closure plan," he said. "If it likely is a perpetual treatment site, mine somewhere else - because beyond the pollution issue, it's inherently not an economical mine if you're going to pay to treat water for thousands of years."

Nevada currently allows new mines to open with full disclosure that they will pollute the water indefinitely. So, advocates are calling for a ban on new mines that would require open-ended remediation.

More information about the films is on the [Facebook page of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada](#).

Many mine pits are dug below the water table and, when abandoned, fill up to become vast lakes. Glenn Miller, a retired professor of environmental chemistry at the University of Nevada-Reno and a board member of Great Basin Resource Watch, said he'd like to see the state regulate the mine pits more closely.

"The Rain Mine has, for the last 20 years, been draining seriously contaminated water," he said. "They are treating that water. But unless they move that waste rock dump, they are going to have that problem - and they may have it even after they move it. You know, the question is, what do we leave for future generations?"

A second documentary follows the story of the Great Basin Water Protectors, a Native American-led group that organized a long-distance run last summer from Great Basin National Park to Las Vegas to protest a proposed water pipeline.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority to host free landscape, sprinkler workshops

by News 4 & Fox 11 Digital Team
Friday, March 22nd 2019



sprinkler.jpg

RENO, Nev. (News 4 & Fox 11) — Truckee Meadows Water Authority will be hosting several free workshops on landscaping and maintaining sprinkler systems.

Scheduled dates for March and April are:

- Irrigation System Start-Up on March 26, April 3 and April 10
- Landscape Planning & Design on April 6; and River-Friendly Landscaping on May 2

The workshop sessions will be at TMWA's office located at 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno. TMWA's conservation specialists will take participants step-by-step through the process of properly starting up sprinkler systems and how to make your landscaping beautiful while saving water.

Also planned on Wednesday, May 8 at 5:30 p.m. is Understanding Your Drinking Water, a two-hour tour of the Glendale Water Treatment Plant.

TMWA's water quality staff will discuss what it takes to get high-quality drinking water to your tap.

The workshop series will continue in May and June, with more topics including tree care, biodiverse gardens, drip system and irrigation maintenance and how to be a watershed warrior.

While all tours and workshops are free and open to TMWA customers, space is limited and RSVPs are required.

Reservations can be made through email at rsvp@tmwa.com or phone 775-834-8005.

For those who cannot attend, TMWA has helpful information about water-efficient landscaping and conservation at www.tmwa.com/landscape.

Audit finds no problem with Haltom City's water meters

BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

MARCH 23, 2019 11:37 AM,
UPDATED MARCH 23, 2019 11:37 AM

Some Haltom City residents are upset with the higher water bills they have received after the city outsourced its billing and meter reading. **PAUL MOSELEY** PMOSELEY@STAR-TELEGRAM.COM

A recent audit showed that Haltom City's new smart water meters are giving accurate readings and the billing system is working properly.

Don Rankin, from UtiliWorks Consulting, the company hired to conduct the audit after some residents complained that their water bills were too high, told City Council members on Monday that the water system is in much better shape now because of meter replacement.

Assistant city manager Rex Phelps said the city was losing \$1 million and 50 million gallons of water a year because the 30-year-old analog meters were leaking and not accurately registering the amount of water use, Phelps said.

Haltom City outsourced its meter reading and billing to Fathom Water Management in 2018. The city replaced the 14,000 outdated meters by the summer. Since the smart meters were installed Haltom City has brought in \$1.4 million, Phelps said.

"It has been a good thing for the city. If we become more efficient, maybe we can slow down increases in water rates," he said.

Less than 15 percent of customers saw changes in their bill, Phelps said.

"When they got a meter that was accurate, it was a shock to them," he said. "They didn't know they were underpaying. We empathize. It was not because of some unfair, assessed rate hike."

50,000 new jobs coming in next 5 years— now what?

By Mike Kazmierski

In case you are one of the many people that thinks our recent growth spurt will slow down, you may want to think again.

The recently released EPIC (Economic Planning Indicators Committee) Report projects more than 51,585 new jobs and 54,470 new people in the next five years in the five-county region (Washoe, Storey, Lyon, Carson and Douglas counties). Before you say “no way,” just realize that the same report four years ago projected more than 52,000 new jobs in five years between 2015 and 2019, and we are up over 58,000 new jobs in just four years. So will this growth continue and why are we so sure of the projection?

EPIC 2 is a conservative estimate: Why are we so sure that we will exceed 50,000 new jobs in the next five years?

First of all, that number is just a 2.4 percent average increase per year over the next five years, while we have exceeded a 4 percent average per year during the past four. Second, there is no indication of a slowdown. In fact, our EDawn prospect visit numbers for the past six months are at record levels and RCG Economics recently highlighted in their monthly “The Fact Pack” newsletter that the Reno area’s jobs growth rate of 6.5 percent in January was the fastest in our history, surpassing the previous high of 6.4 percent in January 1996.

Third, EPIC 2 did not take into consideration possible major employment events like the production of Tesla’s Model Y, their all-electric compact SUV; or the Blockchains Inc. development of their new smart city on the 67,000 acres they recently purchased; or the growth of Google and their land at the industrial park; or even the potential opportunity zone (OZ) investments into the region, as we are ranked in the top 20 communities on the OZ index for best investment potential. Any or all of these could significantly impact on the EPIC 2 jobs projection.

Finally, we built into the projections a national recession and some negative impact from our growing housing shortage. I think, like EPIC 1, our jobs goal is a conservative estimate.

EPIC 1 was a warning that we did not heed: The first EPIC report released in early 2015, projected 52,400 new jobs and a population increase of between 42,400 and 64,700 by 2020. Most people chose to ignore the projections and maintain a “business as usual” attitude. After all, we had never grown that fast before and even when we did (boom) we always had a pullback (bust). Hence, our boom-bust mindset. Well, it’s been four years since EPIC 1 and there is no bust in sight, so we need to get more serious about the impacts of this growth and act. If we acknowledge that this high growth will continue for another five years, then we must address issues like housing, traffic, sewage, zoning, government funding, school funding, etc. A community in transition: This new economy is more diversified than ever, with an increasing number of the Fourth Industrial Revolution jobs; quality jobs that will replace many of the jobs that exist now.

We must continue to attract these transformative jobs and companies to ensure that we are not replaced by robots and AI. Significant actions and fundamental changes in the way we do our business will not happen until we acknowledge this growth, stop ignoring or downplaying the challenges and work together to resolve the problems while they are still manageable.

We can do better – no more business as usual. It is the lives of our kids and grandkids and the future of our region that requires us to act now.

Mike Kazmierski is president and CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.

Details of Newsom's drinking water tax plan revealed

By **Filipa Ioannou**

Updated 12:53 pm PDT, Friday, March 22, 2019

•

California Gov. Gavin Newsom revealed new details of his plans to charge water customers in the state a new tax to fund safe drinking water for disadvantaged communities.

He announced Wednesday his plans to charge water customers an extra amount ranging from 95 cents to \$10 a month — money that, combined with fees on animal farmers, dairies and fertilizer sellers, he projects would raise \$140 million a year that could be put toward testing wells, aiding public water systems and treating contaminated water. The amount paid would depend on the size of one's water meter. Newsom called the drinking water situation faced by some of the state's low-income communities "a moral disgrace and a medical emergency."

ALSO: Newsom calls SF-to-LA high speed rail unrealistic

But some observers say that with limited appetite for more taxes, the plan faces an uphill battle in the state Legislature, where tax and fee increases must be approved by two-thirds of lawmakers, some of whom are wary after a vote to approve the gas tax led to the recall of a Democratic senator last year.

Democrats from agricultural districts may be hesitant to support the tax. One such senator, Anna Caballero, has introduced a competing proposal that would create a trust fund for water improvements using money from the state's existing surplus.

"We are being taxed to death," wrote Twitter user @dcibbott.

"This \$120 water tax on top of the highest gas tax, vehicle registration fees, and one of the highest state income taxes. No! Work with what you have already," wrote Pamela Adger on Twitter. "Then start undoing all those tax breaks for corporations. Maybe Nestle can pay for the cleanup."

Newsom first floated the idea of the water tax back in January when he introduced his 2019-20 budget.

He called for establishing a "safe and affordable drinking water fund" to "enable the State Water Resources Control Board to assist communities, particularly disadvantaged communities, in paying for the short-term and long-term costs of obtaining access to safe and affordable drinking water."

Six million Californians rely on water providers that have violated state standards at some point in the past six years, a McClatchy investigation found in 2018. According to the report, the majority of Californians that lack safe drinking water live in the southern San Joaquin Valley and the Mojave Desert.

MORE: Newsom shares his side of his phone call with President Trump
Former Gov. Jerry Brown attempted a similar proposal last year, but it died in the Legislature. Under Brown's plan, residents would have been taxed a more modest sum than under the Newsom plan — 95 cents a month.

Earlier this year, Newsom took his Cabinet on a trip to the Central Valley to hear from residents who lack clean drinking water.

"We met with residents who cannot drink or bathe with the water in their homes, while paying more for it than those in Beverly Hills," Newsom tweeted.

Central Valley residents who support the tax echoed those themes at Wednesday's press conference.

"We are the poorest families," said Lucy Hernandez, a resident of Tulare County, "and we are willing to pay the tax because we spend a lot more money than the tax buying water bottles for our families."

The AP and SFGATE staff writer Eric Ting contributed to this report.

Column: Fees benefit water quality and trails

Submitted by [paula](#) on Thu, 03/21/2019 - 7:32pm



Joanne S. Marchetta, TRPA

While it still feels like winter, with a healthy snowpack and ski resorts reporting record monthly snowfall in February, another building season is fast approaching. One of the questions people ask the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency each year is why they have to pay mitigation fees for their development, like new homes and remodeling projects.

We all know Lake Tahoe's pristine environment and spectacular natural resources are what make it special. To protect Tahoe's special qualities means we must each play our part to protect its resources. Development impact fees, common everywhere, take on special importance because they are how we give back to the place we love and enjoy.

Here at Lake Tahoe, as part of the historic compromises over managing development in the basin, stakeholders agreed that fees collected by TRPA should go toward air and water quality to help offset the impact of development projects on the environment. These fees do not pay for TRPA staff or agency operations. Instead, the fees provide a steady funding source for local governments to pay for a wide range of projects needed to protect and restore Lake Tahoe's environment.

Since 2015, TRPA has released nearly \$3.5 million in mitigation fee revenue to local governments. In 2018, the agency released more than \$1.2 million in mitigation fee revenue to contribute to local projects that will improve air and water quality and prevent soil and pollutant runoff into the lake.

Douglas, El Dorado, and Washoe counties are using money from the fees to help buy new street sweepers, expensive equipment needed to keep Tahoe's roadways clean. Street sweeping helps keep fine sediment particles from washing off urban areas and roads into Lake Tahoe. This work is important because polluted stormwater harms the famous lake clarity that partners around Tahoe are working to restore to its historic levels.

Washoe County is using more than \$600,000 to improve water quality in Lower Wood Creek, a tributary that flows into Lake Tahoe. The project will reduce soil erosion, treat stormwater before it reaches the creek, stabilize road shoulders, and upgrade failing

culverts. The county will also use \$35,000 to restore a failing retaining wall on Beowawie Road in Crystal Bay to prevent soil eroding into the lake.

Placer County is using \$230,000 from the mitigation fees to help buy a new bus for the Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit service. More frequent and reliable transit service is critical as local, state, and federal partners work to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and make it easier for residents and visitors to travel in the Tahoe Region without driving personal vehicles.

South Lake Tahoe is using \$300,000 to improve the Lower Bijou Park Creek, an area that suffers from significant flooding and currently discharges polluted stormwater runoff directly into Ski Run Marina. The project will improve water quality, reduce flooding, and restore environmentally-sensitive stream areas, complementing stormwater reduction measures that a property owner is installing to redevelop the former Knights Inn site for a holistic solution to water quality and flooding issues in this area.

El Dorado County is using \$60,000 for the San Bernardino Bike Trail. The separated Class 1 path will run about one-third of a mile between West San Bernardino and East San Bernardino avenues for better bike and pedestrian access to Washoe Meadows State Park, Tahoe Paradise Park, and Lake Tahoe Environmental Science Magnet School. El Dorado County is also using \$50,000 to help plan the Meyers Corridor Operational Improvement Project. In coming years, this project will deliver safer intersections, lighting, signage, and landscaping along Highway 50 and state Route 89.

These air quality, water quality, and coverage mitigation fees have invested tens of millions of dollars into restoring Lake Tahoe's environment and improving local communities over the years. The fees help ensure new development projects are offsetting their environmental impacts throughout the Tahoe Region and provide local governments with funding needed to meet regional goals for a healthier natural environment at Tahoe. Every community around the lake has benefitted from this work to protect and improve the natural environment and quality of life that keeps Tahoe such a special place to live, work, and play.

Joanne S. Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Council to Hear Prado Ranch Proposal Wednesday

March 25, 2019 John Seelmeyer



Prado Ranch site. Google Earth image.

A hotly contested development proposal northeast of the Reno-Stead Airport heads to Reno City Council on Wednesday morning. The city's Planning Commission in January recommended that the City Council deny approval of the **Prado Ranch project**, which envisions development of 176 houses, 529 apartments, 3.6 million square feet of industrial buildings and 57,750 square feet of commercial space.

The plan also includes nearly 450 acres of parks and open space.

The project would be developed by Lansing Companies, a major development firm headquartered in San Diego, in partnership with Arcus Private Capital Solutions, a private-equity fund in the Phoenix area.

Neighbors who oppose the proposal worry that the development would worsen flooding in the North Valleys.

They also contend the project would bring industrial development into areas that currently aren't envisioned for that kind of development. And they say the new homes would lead to crowded schools and roads.

The developers, meanwhile, note that the project would strengthen the local economy, as it would provide space for companies that could employ 2,000 to 3,000 residents.

They say, too, they are working closely with city and county officials to ensure that the Prado Ranch development would help to resolve flooding — including through the possible expansion of Swan Lake. The lake is at the southwest edge of Prado Ranch.

The city annexed the Prado Ranch property in 2015. **An earlier proposal, which called for development of 130 houses on part of the property, was denied by the city in late 2016.**

Truckee Meadows Water Authority Hosts Free Workshops

Learn how to be smart about water, care for your landscaping and maintain your sprinkler systems at upcoming free workshops hosted by Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

Tuesday, March 26th 2019, 7:59 AM PDT by Jaimie Hays

[PLAY VIDEO](#)

Learn how to be smart about water, care for your landscaping and maintain your sprinkler systems at upcoming free workshops hosted by Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA).

Scheduled dates for March and April are: Irrigation System Start-Up on March 26, April 3 and April 10; Landscape Planning & Design on April 6; and River-Friendly Landscaping on May 2.

The workshop sessions will be at TMWA's office located at 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno.

TMWA's conservation specialists will take participants step-by-step through the process of properly starting up sprinkler systems and how to make your landscaping beautiful while saving water.

Also planned on Wednesday, May 8 at 5:30 p.m. is Understanding Your Drinking Water, a two-hour tour of the Glendale Water Treatment Plant. TMWA's water quality staff will discuss what it takes to get high-quality drinking water to your tap 24/7.

Prado Ranch Development Decision Delayed

March 29, 2019 John Seelmeyer

A decision on the contested Prado Ranch development in Lemmon Valley will be delayed until June. **The Reno City Council voted unanimously today to delay its hearing of the proposal** until the evening of June 5. The delay was requested by Wood Rogers, the engineering firm working with the developer of Prado Ranch.

Stacie Huggins, a planner with the engineering firm, said Wood Rogers needs more time to address some of the concerns that residents of the area raised during recent neighborhood meetings.

Neighbors worry that the Prado Ranch project will worsen flooding around Swan Lake and throughout the North Valleys. They also have raised questions about traffic and school crowding that would result from the development.

The project northeast of the Reno-Stead Airport is envisioned to include 176 houses, 529 apartments, 3.6 million square feet of industrial buildings and 57,750 square feet of commercial space. Nearly 450 acres of parks and open space also would be part of the plan.

It would be developed by Lansing Companies, a major development firm headquartered in San Diego, in partnership with Arcus Private Capital Solutions, a private-equity fund in the Phoenix area. They've said the industrial and commercial areas at Prado Ranch would employ more than 2,000 people, and they've said their plans would help to resolve flooding in the area.

The city's Planning Commission in January recommended that the City Council deny approval of the Prado Ranch project.

Before the June meeting, City Council members hope to meet with representatives of Washoe County. The county is making decisions on parts of Prado Ranch that are outside the city limits.

SECURITY

Hackers force water utilities to sink or swim

[Blake Sobczak](#), E&E News reporter Energywire: Thursday, March 28, 2019



Claudine Hellmuth/E&E News(illustration/animation); EPA (faucet); Kjpargeter/FreePik (binary code)

Last month, hackers tied computers into knots at a small Colorado water utility.

It wasn't the first time the Fort Collins-Loveland Water District and its wastewater counterpart had been hit by "ransomware," a type of malware that encrypts victims' computer files and demands online payment to unlock them.

While operations weren't harmed, the infection prompted the water district to switch out its information technology service provider and call in the FBI. The case, first reported by the [Coloradoan](#), remains under active investigation. FCLWD and the South Fort Collins Sanitation District treat and distribute water to 45,000 customers in northern Colorado.

Colorado water officials aren't alone in their cybersecurity woes. The nation's nearly 70,000 water and wastewater utilities are struggling to keep their heads above a rising tide of online threats, based on interviews with security experts and water company operators.

As one IT manager at a midsize water utility put it, "It's not a question of if, it's a question of when" hackers disrupt vital U.S. water systems. "Most small and midsize utilities are overstressed," said the manager, who requested anonymity.

Some larger utilities are well-positioned to thwart an attack by hackers backed by a foreign government, said Michael Arceneaux, managing director for the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center, the industry's clearinghouse for getting the word out about the latest hacking threats and vulnerabilities.

But in a sector that encompasses tens of thousands of local water systems, securing America's vast and disparate drinking water supply remains a significant challenge.

"Drinking water utilities run the gamut in terms of cybersecurity preparedness," Arceneaux said. "What we try to do to compensate for that is make sure people are aware of the threats, so they have some motivation to invest the resources that should be invested."

He said the ISAC and its membership recently reached the level of maturity needed to start partnering with other sharing and analysis centers, including the multistate government ISAC and the electric power sector's E-ISAC.

Water utilities and power distributors share similar industrial control systems, rely on many of the same equipment providers and can encounter similar cyberthreats.

While the water system is inherently not as interconnected as the U.S. electricity system, "it's very plausible that the water sector is less prepared than the power sector for dealing with cybersecurity threats," Arceneaux said. "We are so fractured, so the water sector as a whole is at a little bit of a disadvantage."

The decentralized nature of the U.S. water industry has left policymakers with a dilemma. Cybersecurity for water treatment and supply networks is only loosely monitored at the federal level and is often ignored by state utility commissions that may have limited cybersecurity expertise and tend to focus on water quality.

What keeps you up at night?

"Water cybersecurity is not on everyone's — or certainly not every commissioner's — radar screen, although I've tried to make it that way," said Mary-Anna Holden, a commissioner on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

In many emergency planning exercises, it isn't the lack of electricity that triggers chaos and widespread casualties. It's the lack of clean water that forces people from their homes.

"Nobody thinks about wastewater systems until they break," said Holden, who chairs the Committee on Water at the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

You could cause cholera or dysentery downstream, which could be a major city. How do you counteract that?

-- Mary-Anna Holden, commissioner of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

New Jersey is one of the few states to have taken any regulatory action on the issue of water security. It's required utilities to report cyber events to state environmental officials and directed regulated utilities to include cybersecurity in risk management plans.

"If someone's hacked into the operational network and can control chlorination, do something to the [wastewater] digesters or can get control of the wastewater plant, that's the thing that keeps me up at night," Holden said. "You could cause cholera or dysentery downstream, which could be a major city. How do you counteract that?"

In New York, staff members from the Department of Public Service conduct "frequent and regular audits of company defenses" against emerging cyberthreats, according to a spokesman. The agency conducts annual reviews of water companies' cybersecurity plans and is weighing data security requirements for certain firms that receive sensitive personal and billing information from water, electric and gas utilities.

'Scotch tape and bubble gum'

In the summer of 2013, a small New York dam saw its control systems hit by a suspected Iranian hacker. The Justice Department accused Hamid Firoozi of gaining access to the dam's supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system, costing city managers in Rye, N.Y., roughly \$30,000 to remediate the threat.

While a few flooded basements might have been the worst-case scenario from the dam breach in New York, the case still drew scrutiny to SCADA system security and the water sector writ large.

In 2016, the same year DOJ unveiled its charges against Firoozi, the security branch of telecom giant Verizon Communications Inc. reported responding to another bona fide hack of a water utility's control systems.

In the report detailing Verizon's data breach investigations, its analysts used a pseudonym called "Kemuri Water Co." to stand in for multiple data breaches at water utilities of varying severity.

Verizon reported that the hackers modified settings without knowing exactly what they were doing to the control system. The unnamed water company was able to quickly identify and block what they were doing.

Other industrial cybersecurity experts said that the baseline scenario outlined by Verizon was plausible: a hacker gaining a foothold in a water utility's business networks; crossing over a firewall or "DMZ" to land in the industrial control network; and from there fiddling with valves, flows and physical processes.

Dave Weinstein, vice president of threat research at Claroty Inc., said water and wastewater are among his top concerns. "It gets the least attention, and they're probably the least mature sector from a cybersecurity standpoint," he said.

Many tiny water utilities simply don't have the bandwidth to square off against hacking teams that may be backed by foreign militaries, he explained.

Small mom-and-pop operators, I've visited a number of those sites. A lot of them are being held together by Scotch tape and bubble gum.

-- Dave Weinstein, vice president of threat research for Claroty Inc.

"Small mom-and-pop operators, I've visited a number of those sites. A lot of them are being held together by Scotch tape and bubble gum," Weinstein said. "It's pretty precarious."

The number of exploitable cybersecurity weaknesses found in water-sector equipment also appears to be growing, based on statistics from the U.S. Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team (ICS-CERT) and analyses by Kaspersky Lab's ICS-CERT.

Sixty-three cyber vulnerabilities were uncovered in the "water supply" sector in 2018, according to federal data, accounting for 15 percent of all industrial security problems. Only the energy and manufacturing sectors had more vulnerabilities in 2018.

Risk and resilience

Federal lawmakers have started to take note.

Last fall, Congress passed the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018, sponsored by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) and signed into law by President Trump on Oct. 23.

Any water utility serving 3,300 or more people is now expected to carry out a "risk and resilience" assessment of its networks, including a review of cyber defenses. The nation's biggest water providers have until next March to comply, while smaller companies can wait to act until June 2021.

EPA is now the go-to agency for water cybersecurity. It's tasked with issuing guidance to utilities on implementation of the new law and following up on compliance. "EPA is very aware that cyberattacks are a significant threat to critical infrastructure sectors, including water and wastewater systems," an EPA spokesperson said in an email. "EPA works through a voluntary partnership approach to help water utilities enhance the cybersecurity of their water systems."

The voluntary approach signed off by Congress means utilities are not required to hand over data to the federal government that could help it assess how vulnerable the nation's water systems are. That contrasts to electric utilities, which are required to report major cybersecurity incidents and gaps through both the Department of Energy and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Robert Powelson, a former FERC commissioner who's now CEO of the National Association of Water Companies, said the federal push to ramp up cybersecurity guidance and regulation includes water. "Looking at the posture with DHS and the Department of Energy's new cyber office, everyone's like, 'We've got to bring water into this conversation.' I think it's healthy; I think it's a great opportunity."

Industry groups like the National Rural Water Association and American Water Works Association have released some of their own assessment tools and cybersecurity resources, warning members to ignore cybersecurity at their peril.

'Perfect target'

News of a few water-sector cyber intrusions has trickled out publicly, including an attack on a North Carolina water utility in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence last year.

Jeffrey Hudson, CEO of the Onslow Water and Sewer Authority in southeastern North Carolina, [announced](#) on Oct. 15, 2018, that "a sophisticated ransomware attack" had effectively wiped out many of the small utility's computers. He emphasized that the safety of the water supply and the environment was never jeopardized.

"ONWASA will undertake the painstaking process of rebuilding its databases and computer systems from the ground up," Hudson said, rather than pay off the digital hostage-takers.

Cybersecurity experts project that targeted ransomware attacks are set to rise. In a recent threat outlook, analysts at Booz Allen Hamilton predicted "a plausible uptick in state-sponsored attacks and intrusions at water utilities," citing a March 2018 alert from DHS that claimed Russian hackers had already targeted U.S. water networks.

Booz Allen described the water sector as a "perfect target" for hackers.

So far, the U.S. water utilities hit hardest by hackers have been "collateral damage," explained Booz Allen chief technologist Kyle Miller, falling prey to common threats like ransomware.

"Most water utilities have less robust, less mature network security than a lot of the other [infrastructure] verticals," Miller said. "A lot of that comes down to size and funding. It's hard to compare a county water system to a Fortune 100 oil and gas company."

Miller said he's most concerned about targeted threats, as water companies follow global trends in industrial automation and digital connectivity.

Even if supply interruptions or chemical releases don't become a full-blown crisis, a hack that causes people to lose faith in the quality of their water is "certainly within the realm of possibility" for nation-state hackers, he said.

The stakes are high. "Nearly every facet of life relies on clean and reliable water to function," he said.

Understanding cyberthreats is now essential for energy policy. [Sign up](#) to strengthen your cybersecurity intelligence with eight weeks of special E&E News updates.

California Wants To Aim Lasers At Snowpack To Better Predict Runoff

By [Steve Large](#) April 1, 2019 at 9:22 am
Filed Under: [NASA](#), [snow](#)

SACRAMENTO (CBS13) – Lawmakers are considering spending \$150 million to fund new high-tech measurements of the snowpack using lasers.

A pilot program with NASA has been in place for several years and results show lasers record snowpack measurements with near perfect accuracy.

Up until now, California has measured the snowpack manually, with experts physically sinking a metal pole into the snow at various monitoring locations.

Snow survey expert Frank Gehrke has been doing the manual measurements for thirty years and says the manual approach has resulted in measurements that are up to 60 percent incorrect.

“It could range from inaccuracies of 20 to 40 to 60 percent of basically not being correct,” Gehrke said.

The new hi-tech approach is meant to help water managers know exactly how much water they can expect in water runoff from the snowpack – and when that runoff will arrive in reservoirs, rivers, and streams.

Officials say data collected is nearly perfect.

“We can pretty much guarantee the water manager that he’s going to get within a few percent,” Gehrke said.

California is proposing funding the technology for the next decade to record the entire Sierra Nevada mountain range and Trinity Alps

California's Monster Snow Year ... 'It's Been a Wild Ride'

Apr 1 [Craig Miller](#)



Heavy snow from an atmospheric river storm in February covers evergreen trees in the Sierra Nevada near Phillips Station meadow, about 90 miles east of Sacramento. *(Ken James/California Department of Water Resources)*

It's been a big year for snow in the Sierra Nevada range.

This is the time of year—April 1—when the snowpack is typically at its peak and on Tuesday, when surveyors do their monthly manual survey, they're likely to find a [snowpack at about 160 percent](#) of the average.

Ski slopes are still expecting to be open this summer on the 4th of July. Mammoth Mountain, which soars to 11,000 feet in the central Sierra, has had 50 feet of snow pile onto its sweeping inclines. The nearby Mammoth ski resort tweeted that it had broken its snowfall record for February—and it was only two weeks into the month.

"Absolutely fantastic," is how Ben Hatchett sums up the snow season. Hatchett is an atmospheric scientist at the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno, but he'll rhapsodize at length about how the storm sequence lined up to produce a "dream season" on the slopes, with few intermittent melts and little rain at high elevations to create the fabled "Sierra cement" snow conditions.

"We never got those storms that end and then the sun comes out and it goes to 42 degrees, and everything gets cooked," Hatchett recalls. "It just really stayed incredible for what we were hoping would be days, but then turned into weeks and then even to months."

"It's been a wild ride," admits Lara Kaylor, who works in the tourism office in Mammoth Lakes. She lives in a lower-elevation part of town, known locally as the Banana Belt.

"Our snow banks are probably only about 20 feet high," she muses, "versus 40 to 50 feet high." And she's not kidding.

Kaylor says some extra snow shoveling is a fair trade-off for the obvious benefits. Tax collections from the tourist economy have already topped \$3 million in the town of Mammoth Lakes, setting a local record. The town is nestled just below California's highest ski slopes, which are projected to be open on the Fourth of July this year.



Tabletops outside of Smokeyard Restaurant in the Village at Mammoth. (*Mammoth Lakes Tourism/Dakota Snider*)

"It's just kind of mind-blowing to people that you can come and ski in June," says Kaylor.

The string of cold storms was also a boon to California's water supply, increasing snow cover even at lower elevations.

"We had such low [elevation] snow levels that we were able to accumulate snow over a humongous area of the Sierra Nevada," notes Hatchett. "There's a snowpack at two-or-three-thousand feet this year."

Californians count on Sierra snow for about a third of their water supply.

For flood managers, though, it's right on the brink of having too much of a good thing. An abrupt warm-up at this point could melt much of that accumulated snow and send it cascading into reservoirs that are [already brimming](#)—or at least at the point where operators are required to start releasing water to maintain room for flood control.

It was a pulse of runoff two years ago that caused the collapse of both the primary and emergency spillways at Oroville Dam in Butte County. The state's Department of Water Resources says [the first test](#) of the newly rebuilt spillway could come as early as this week.

And Hatchett says that, unlike the winter just passed, the outlook for this spring is for above-average temperatures throughout most of California.

Drone footage shows flooded Lemmon Valley school playground, WCSD has installed fencing

[Siobhan McAndrew](#), **Reno Gazette Journal** Published 4:39 p.m. PT April 1, 2019 | Updated 4:51 p.m. PT April 1, 2019

Drone footage captured on Sunday March 31 shows water on the playground at Lemmon Valley Elementary. Provided to the Reno Gazette Journal, Reno Gazette Journal

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There's water, lots of it, filling up basketball courts and a baseball field behind the classrooms and swing sets at Lemmon Valley Elementary School.

Swan Lake, considered a historic wetlands dating back thousands of years, is now spilling into the school yard on West Patrician Drive, 8 miles north of Reno.

The lake, which flooded portions of Lemmon Valley in 2017, is again [flooding nearby homes](#) and now the back of the school of 620 students.



A view of the playground on Sunday, March 31, 2019 at Lemmon Valley Elementary School. (Photo: Provided to the Reno Gazette Journal)

According to drone footage shot Sunday and obtained by the Reno Gazette Journal, the water has come into the school yard.

The Washoe County School District said it is monitoring the situation and that school administrators and staff are watching that no students or stray kick balls go near the water.

The school is closed this week for spring break.

The district said it has installed fencing around the flooded area and that there is additional playground space that has not been affected.

The district also said buildings are not threatened.

"The school buildings themselves are at an elevation approximately equal to the top of the Hesco barriers along Lemmon Drive currently," said district spokeswoman Victoria Campbell. "It would require a rise in lake surface elevation of over two feet to impair any of our facilities at Lemmon Valley Elementary School or the playground to an extent where it was unsafe."

Read more: [Lemmon Valley field closure could be 'death sentence' for league, coach says](#)

Read more: [Swan Lake water rising again in Lemmon Valley — and nearby residents are worried](#)

The district said the Washoe County Health District said that the water is safe for human contact and does not pose a health risk for students.

The district has also been in communication with the Washoe County Manager's Office and has been offered sandbagging assistance if required, Campbell said.

RGJ Investigates: [Reno knew Lemmon Valley would flood, but it allowed development anyway](#)

Siobhan McAndrew tells stories about the people of Northern Nevada and covers education in Washoe County. Read her journalism [right here](#). Consider supporting her work [by subscribing to the Reno Gazette Journal](#).

It's not time to turn sprinklers on, despite the warmth | Martinez

Jeff Martinez Published 9:17 p.m. PT March 30, 2019

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A beautiful weather pattern will take us through the weekend with sunny skies and afternoon highs will be in the low to mid 60s with light winds. Next week a series of storms will head our way, with clouds increasing on Monday. The first storm will bring us valley rain and mountain snow showers by Monday evening and Tuesday with another one by the end of the week.

The mountains will see snow showers Monday night that could give us chain controls along our passes by Tuesday morning.

As our temperatures warm up you may be thinking about turning your sprinklers on, but water experts say give it a few more weeks.

Laine Christman, conservation supervisor for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority says you should; "Hold off a little bit so we don't have any deep freezes at night, if people turn on their sprinklers and we get a deep freeze they run the risk of a pipe breaking."

Our last hard freeze for Reno usually happens around mid-April. However our colder valleys like Carson City and Gardnerville can still see freezing temperatures through mid-May.

TMWA will have sprinkler startup workshops on April 3rd and April 10th.

This played in the RGJ, from a KTVN report

'One of the big ones:' In the Lake Tahoe Basin, this winter ranks as 4th-largest

[Sam Gross](#), Reno Gazette Journal Published 5:03 p.m. PT April 1, 2019 | Updated 9:38 a.m. PT April 2, 2019

Photos: See how much snow there is in Truckee California



[LINK TO ALL PHOTOS](#)

If you shoveled snow in the Lake Tahoe or Truckee area in the past few months, you don't need to be told this has been a big winter.

But Jeff Anderson, hydrologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, can confirm what you already knew: This was a notably large winter, particularly for the cities and communities that dot the shore of Lake Tahoe and surrounding mountains.

For the Lake Tahoe Basin, this winter ranks as the fourth largest since consistent record keeping began in 1981 and in the Truckee River Basin, it's the fifth largest.

"This is one of the big ones," Anderson said.

This year's big snow totals are partially thanks to a string of strong and sometimes dangerous series of winter storms that pounded the Tahoe area and surrounding Sierra through February.

Scientists like Anderson measure snowfall by the amount of liquid water contained in the snowpack, as opposed to measuring it in inches.

They also keep track of snow depth, but consider that measurement much less reliable because snow depth can change rapidly due to things like compression and evaporation.

On April 1, at a set of snow-measuring instruments perched at 8,801 feet in elevation near the Mt. Rose Ski Area called a SNOTEL, Anderson measured 157 inches of snow with a water content of 59.9 inches.



Buy Photo

A man walks down a recently shoveled sidewalk in Tahoe City on Feb. 26, 2019. (Photo: Jason Bean/RGJ)

That reading is high — currently the 7th highest on record since the site was installed in 1981 — but snowfall on high-elevation measuring sites like Mt. Rose aren't what put this winter near the top of record books.

It was actually the amount of snow measured at lower elevation SNOTEL sites — between the 6,225-foot surface height of Lake Tahoe and 7,500 feet — that inched the winter of 2018/19 towards the top.

First-hand accounts: [How two skiers survived an avalanche on Jobs Peak](#)

Weather: [Tahoe snowplow strikes car buried in snow, police find woman inside](#)

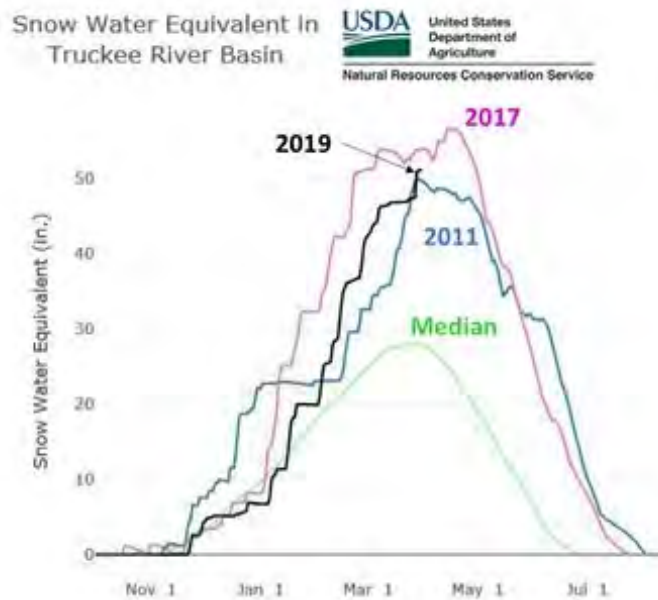
A graph showing the snow water equivalent totals for the Truckee River Basin. This year is shown in black. (Photo: USDA)

"That's kind of the elevation that a lot of people had to shovel at this year." Anderson said.

"Between lake level and 7,000 feet there's a lot of houses, so that's where our snowpack really shines this year."

"It's definitely been one of the biggest winters at lake level."

At a SNOTEL site near Fallen Leaf Lake, which at 6,204 feet is the lowest measuring site in the Lake Tahoe Basin, 13 inches of water content and a snow depth of 30 inches was recorded on April 1.



"That site has usually melted out by now," Anderson said, adding that this is the second-largest winter recorded at that site since 1982. Only the winter of 1983 was larger.

As of April 1 there hasn't been much melt despite a slowing of winter storms and more sunny, warm days. But as that hefty snowpack does begin to melt off, we can certainly expect high river levels and a very full Lake Tahoe, Anderson said.

Sam Gross is a breaking news reporter for the Reno Gazette Journal who covers wildfires, emergencies and more. [Support his work by subscribing to RGJ.com right here.](#)

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Press Release

Wine Walk to Support One Truckee River



RENO, Nev. - April 1, 2019 - ([Newswire.com](#))

Help support One Truckee River and the Reno Riverwalk District during the **Reno Wine Walk, on Saturday, April 20, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.**, a perfect occasion to show your appreciation for community, and wine.

It's not only the love of your favorite red or white wine worth celebrating this April, but it's also a day to show your support for your favorite charity. Each month portions of the proceeds for the Reno Wine Walk benefit local charitable organizations. In **over eight years the event organizers have donated more than \$103,000** to local non-profits.

This April the Riverwalk District's monthly event will be supporting One Truckee River (OTR). The Truckee River is a complex and vital stream of water that flows from Lake Tahoe in California into Nevada and through the Truckee Meadows, crossing the boundaries of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County before completing its journey at Pyramid Lake.

OTR works to implement the [One Truckee River Management Plan](#). Nevada Land Trust and Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful act as lead agencies in collaboration with the larger One Truckee River stakeholder group to execute the management plan.

The Wine Walk is a monthly event held on the third Saturday where you purchase a decorative wine glass for a \$20 wine-tasting fee. With wine glass in hand and a valid photo ID, you'll receive an ID bracelet, which allows you to sample wine at any of the twenty-plus participating merchant locations. Many of the businesses hand paint each individual wine glass, which attendees get to take home. At the end of the event, attendees enter to win over \$800 in gift cards from all the participating merchants during a 5 p.m. raffle.

To find out more information about the monthly Reno Wine Walk or how to participate, visit www.RenoRiver.org or call 775- 322-7373.

Read more: <http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/4234303#ixzz5jrSJJHH9>

Here's How Much the Pure Water Project Could Raise Your Water Bill

The city is working on a multibillion-dollar plan to purify enough sewage to provide a third of the city's drinking water by 2035. Of course, that will come at a cost.

[Ry Rivard](#)
[10 hours ago](#)



A rendering of the Pure Water plant / Image courtesy of the city of San Diego

San Diego water customers will soon pay \$6 to \$13 more a month to fund the first part of the city's new recycled water project, [according to a newly released estimate](#).

The city is working on a multibillion-dollar plan to purify enough sewage to provide a third of the city's drinking water by 2035.

Most of Southern California's water now comes from either the rivers of Northern California or the Colorado River, which are not only hundreds of miles away but prone to drought. The city's wastewater recycling project, known as Pure Water, is meant to provide more reliable water.

Of course, that will come at a cost.

There are numerous caveats to all the projections, but the takeaway is that rates will continue to climb in the short term. The San Diego region already has [some of the highest water rates in the country](#), thanks in part to an expensive ocean water desalination plant that opened several years ago in Carlsbad.

Right now, the average San Diego customer pays \$135 a month for water and wastewater service. Though, since bills are sent every two months, what customers have to pay at once is twice that.

Planning for the Pure Water project has already increased city bills by about \$4 a month. By 2022, customers will be paying about \$17 a month for Pure Water.

The number is particularly high that year because the city will be building the first, \$1.4 billion phase of the project but it won't be up and running yet. That means the city will have to continue to buy all the water it does now. It's a bit like paying rent on an old apartment while you're moving into a new one. As soon as Pure Water is up and running, that problem isn't so bad. The city projects costs will begin to fall and hold steady at around \$10 per month until the late 2040s.

By the mid-2050s, officials say Pure Water may save money because the recycled water could be cheaper than the water from the San Diego County Water Authority, which sells the city water imported from Northern California, Colorado and the Carlsbad desalination plant.

Charles Modica, the new deputy director of finance for the city water department, said over the next 40 years, customers will end up paying an average of \$6 more a month, given current assumptions.

For years, city officials have declined to estimate publicly how much Pure Water will affect city water customers.

Officials prepared the analysis in response to [repeated questions from Voice of San Diego](#).

"Pure Water is a major initiative of the mayor, a commitment that we've made to the ratepayers and to the citizens in terms of the longevity of making sure we have a long-term water supply going forward," said Johnnie Perkins, the city's deputy chief operating officer in charge of the water department.

In the long term, officials argue Pure Water may save ratepayers money and will certainly provide a more reliable supply of water.

Few, if any, customers are likely to see the exact increases described above. For one thing, the city is probably going to reconfigure its rate structure.

The city is also relying on a few assumptions that may not be true. Its estimates for how much it costs to generate recycled water are stale and haven't been updated. It also expects San Diego County Water Authority prices to rise faster than that agency's own estimates show.

The city's new estimates also only cover the first part of the project, which is expected to generate 30 million gallons of drinkable water each day starting in 2023. Right now, the average San Diego water customer uses about 60 gallons of water per day and the state's goal is to lower than number even further.

The second part of Pure Water will be even bigger and generate 53 million gallons per day of drinkable water. But serious planning for that project isn't yet underway and any new facilities won't be up and running for another decade and a half.

Back in 2015, the city expected it could do the entire multi-part project for [about \\$3 billion in construction costs](#). Now, the city is looking to spend no less than \$4.8 billion and perhaps as much as \$9 billion.

Pure Water is ultimately an attempt to kill two birds with one stone. Not only will it provide a drought-proof source of water, but it helps with another long-standing city problem. For years, the city has promised to build Pure Water in order to avoid spending \$2 billion to upgrade the Point Loma treatment plant, which dumps treated sewage into the ocean.

If Pure Water were only about treating sewage or only about getting a new water supply, it probably wouldn't make financial sense. But, since it doesn't make much sense to spend \$2 billion on a plant that treats water that is dumped into the ocean, the city decided to spend more to treat the water so it is drinkable.

Washoe County to install temporary inflatable dams at Swan Lake to help manage flooding

[Sam Gross](#), Reno Gazette Journal

Published 5:18 p.m. PT April 2, 2019 | Updated 5:37 p.m. PT April 2, 2019

The waters in Swan Lake started rising two years ago. Residents there are still worried. Sam Gross and Benjamin Spillman and Anjeanette Damon, Reno Gazette Journal

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Washoe County announced Tuesday that it will be installing temporary inflatable dams in Swan Lake to help provide "added security" to residents fearful of rising water levels.

The county announced the installation in a press release issued Tuesday afternoon.

The dams will be added to an already extensive system of temporary Hesco barriers and heavy-duty water pumps managing the rising lake level.



Floodwaters encroach on a home near Swan Lake, an ephemeral lake north of Reno. Residents are worried snowmelt will push the water beyond the ability of barriers to contain it. March 13, 2019. (Photo: Benjamin Spillman and Sam Gross)

Crews could begin installing the dams as soon as April 3.

Swan Lake flooded the area in 2017 and water levels have begun rising again this year as the region's heavy winter has worn on.

Flood waters this year have begun [creeping back into homes and property](#) along the lake and have partially [inundated the playground](#) of Lemmon Valley Elementary School.

Sam Gross is a breaking news reporter for the Reno Gazette Journal who covers wildfires, emergencies and more. [Support his work by subscribing to RGJ.com right here.](#)

WEATHER NEWS

How healthy is California snowpack? Snow survey site has 4th-best start to April ever

BY MICHAEL MCGOUGH

Already having soared past average statewide snow-water levels for the calendar year, Tuesday saw some more good news for California's water health.

Department of Water Resources officials announced a measurement of 106.5 inches of snow at Phillips Station, good for a snow-water equivalent of 51 inches. Tuesday's result marked the fourth-highest level ever recorded at that location to kick off April.

Just like the three prior months' manual surveys at the station near Echo Summit, the results align with a continued statewide boost as snowy weather has been present virtually all of 2019.

At 45.1 inches of average snow-water equivalent statewide, California is now 162 percent of normal for the start of April, according to DWR's data center. The Phillips Station was a full 200 percent of normal — in other words, double the average snow-water equivalent.

"It's been a great, great winter," DWR Chief of Hydrology and Flood Operations John Pasch said, "but it's not all fun and games."

Water managers will need to analyze data to make decisions about runoff releases. Manual snow surveys like Tuesday's are critical in that regard, Pasch said.

The healthy snowpack is also well-distributed. The northern two-thirds of the Sierra are about 165 percent of average, and the southern Sierra is 153 percent of average, data show.

January through March saw sustained moderate to heavy storm systems drop consistent blankets of snow throughout Northern California. A total of at least 30 atmospheric river systems in California has contributed to some of those storms.

Moderate snow storms have continued into April, with 1 to 2 feet of snow expected this weekend in parts of the Sierra.

RELATED STORIES FROM SACRAMENTO BEE

Read more here: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/weather-news/article228731659.html#storylink=cpy>

Public comment period open for the draft 2019 Clean Water Intended Use Plan

by News 4 & Fox 11 Digital Team

Wednesday, April 3rd 2019



CARSON CITY, Nev. (News 4 & Fox 11) — The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection Bureau of Administrative Services — Office of Financial Assistance is seeking public comments for the Draft 2019 Intended Use Plan for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF).

The federal Clean Water Act, as amended, authorizes the CWSRF to assist public wastewater, storm water, or other non-point source systems to finance the costs of infrastructure needed to achieve or maintain compliance with the Clean Water Act requirements, protect public health, and protect the environment.

The CWSRF Intended Use Plan is required by federal and state requirements to outline the program's goals and objectives, sources and uses of funds, and terms for different types of funding from the program within a state fiscal year. Comments are being solicited to give the public an opportunity to comment on the program's intended use of funds.

Persons wishing to provide written comment regarding the intended use plan should submit their comments, by April 30, 2019, to Jason B. Cooper, CGFM, Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, Office of Financial Assistance, 901 South Stewart Street, Suite 4001, Carson City, NV 89701-5249.

Bill could fine agencies who delay records

Some say new legislation raises privacy concerns

James DeHaven Reno Gazette Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly three dozen states penalize officials who violate public records laws. Nevada isn't one of them.

A bill heard Wednesday at the state Legislature would change that by imposing fines of up to \$250,000 on public agencies or officials that improperly delay or deny records requests.

Senate Bill 287, proposed by state Sen. David Parks, D-Las Vegas, would discourage government officials from slow-walking requests by requiring them to provide a date when they will make records available.

The measure would also bar agencies from charging record-seekers for overhead and labor costs associated with fulfilling such requests. It goes on to eliminate the possibility of adding extra fees when a request requires "extraordinary" resources. SB 287 is backed by Right to Know Nevada, an eclectic, bipartisan coalition of good government groups and media organizations. Members include the Reno Gazette Journal, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, the ACLU of Nevada and the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

Each has successfully sued to force government compliance with the state's sunshine law, though they suspect they'd spend less time in court if teeth were added to the statute.

Patrick File, who teaches media law at the University of Nevada, Reno, said the wording of the current law contributes to a culture of non-compliance.

"The word 'must' only appears 33 times in the Nevada Public Records Act," File said.

"The word 'may,' meanwhile, appears 58 times in the law, almost twice as many.

"The overall effect of this is that government agencies and entities may consider compliance with the Nevada Public Records Act to be an option, not an obligation."

Trevor Hayes, a former reporter now serving on the Nevada Board of Regents, was one of several supporters who recounted instances when they said public officials had needlessly stonewalled a reasonable records request.

"(Government) does business on behalf of the people and it does it with tax dollars," he told lawmakers on the Senate's Government Affairs committee. "I've heard much about nuisance requests. ... It doesn't exist."

Local governments resist bill

Hayes and other bill proponents faced stiff resistance from cities and counties worried the measure could violate privacy protections and cost millions of dollars to implement.

“Cities and local governments are very, very serious about their obligation to fulfill public records requests,” said Warren Hardy, a Republican former state senator now lobbying for the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities. “I would somewhat strenuously object to the notion that local governments, as a rule, are trying to hide information from the public. Local governments have a much more difficult task than that. “We would respectfully submit that the process we currently have is not broken.” The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department said it has had to pull eight officers off the streets to help redact and fulfill the flood of records requests it received last year. Metro lawyers and lobbyists fear SB 287 would only add to that workload.

They said the bill could even create a “cottage industry” centered around the profits generated by posting photos and videos handed over by police.

The City of Reno argued it would require officials to convert all of the city’s records into an electronic format, threatening to “dismantle the transparency and customer service initiatives we’ve put forward as a local government.” City Clerk Ashley Turney said Reno did not have a dedicated employee tasked with responding to records requests.

The RGJ in 2018 reported the Reno Police Department charged \$45 for a copy of a police report – more than any other department or sheriff’s office in Nevada. That same year, the newspaper had to sue the Washoe County School District to gain access to records from an investigation into bullying and harassment allegations within the special education department.

Lawmakers closed Wednesday’s three-hour hearing without taking action on SB 287. **Senate Bill 287, proposed by state Sen. David Parks, D-Las Vegas, would discourage government officials from slow-walking requests by requiring them to provide a date when they will make records available.**

Local Government | Water & Land

Water authority purchases West Reno water company, allowing for approved development in Verdi to continue

April 7th, 2019 - 2:10am

Construction in Verdi, on the western edge of Reno. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent)
Water authority purchases West Reno water company, allowing for approved development in Verdi to continue



[Daniel Rothberg](#)

April 7th, 2019 - 2:10am

After months of negotiations, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority closed on a deal in late March to purchase a small private water company in west Reno to serve homes in nearby Verdi.

On the surface, that transaction might sound routine. But as with so many water issues, it is a complex case that highlights the conflicts between growth, city permitting and state regulations.

The water authority's purchase of the West Reno Water Company marks the end of a stalemate between a developer and the city of Reno — a case of construction outpacing infrastructure. It also connects a groundwater-dependent area with water from the Truckee River, a more secure long-term supply for an area that is zoned for more growth. But residents worry that connecting the area to the Truckee River could mean more development in an area that's already strained.

"It's pretty significant in that there was recognition that the development approvals got out ahead of the infrastructure," said Reno City Councilwoman Jenny Brekhus, a former city planner who sits on the water authority's board and applauded the purchase of the company.

"And then there was regional cooperation to get the infrastructure out there in a timely fashion. I think that's reflective of where we are at right now in our regional development," she added.

The water authority finalized the purchase of the West Reno Water Company on March 20 at a price of about \$800,000 for the cost of the system and improvements. Those costs, as well as other updates to the system, will [ultimately be paid by the developers](#) that benefit from them.

Reno Councilwoman Naomi Duerr, who also sits on the water authority's board, said the deal would benefit the area because the water authority, given its scale, can provide a service that a smaller private company might not be able to. From her experience serving as a state water planner, she said a water system is often "one of those things that is better when it's scaled up."

"It's incredibly important to supply a secure water supply to the Verdi area, regardless of what developments get approved moving forward," Duerr said in an interview this week.

But residents of Verdi, who have pushed back against growth on the city's western edge at council meetings and in court, described the transaction as a "double-edged" sword. On one hand, they want a secure water supply that alleviates all of the issues that come with domestic wells. On the other hand, it removes one of the main arguments against new growth in the area.

"It's a double-edged sword. It will provide the water to the project — the 273 homes," said Addie Argyris, a critic of Verdi development. "It will provide the water to those warehouses and it won't drain the aquifer. The bad side of it is, it will allow more development to go forth."

The Argos project is known as Meridian 120 North. It was approved by the Reno City Council in 2016, and it was a key driver behind the water authority's deal to purchase the private utility.

As Interstate 80 stretches toward the California border, Meridian 120 North sits to the north side of the freeway. The city approved the construction of the homes with the knowledge that water would be provided by West Reno Water Company, the small water provider that serves other local businesses. Accordingly, the developer started constructing homes. But when it came time to sell the homes, the developer was limited by state rules regulating water companies.

Under state law, small private water companies must get authorization from the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada and the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection if they want to service more than 25 residents. West Reno Water Company did not have those authorizations. As a result, the city of Reno capped the number of homes Meridian 120 North could sell at 10, even though there was water available. That put more pressure on the water authority, an already permitted water purveyor, to close the purchase of the small private water company.

Once the water authority took over the company in March, the developer was able to sell more than 10 homes. But the timing of the deal, lagging behind the project's construction, created a strange case where a developer was unable to sell homes that had been approved by the city.

"In that regard, where you already have a development under way — all the construction and the permits — to have this impact to their development is very problematic," Duerr said.

Bates Stringer Reno, the Argos developer, did not respond to emailed requests for an interview.

John Enloe, who directs the water authority's natural resources and planning, said such a situation is unique to this one particular situation. He said that the deal, overall, would benefit the area by diversifying its water supply so it is not solely dependent on groundwater.

"For some of the projects that are already approved, it provides some certainty with respect to the water supply," Enloe said. "There remains some question on how much groundwater is available to serve existing and future demands out there in the long term."

The connection could make it easier for the construction of Meridian 120 South, a project on the other side of I-80. The planning commission issued a technical denial on maps to build an initial 78 homes, a decision that the city council affirmed after a temporary restraining order from a local judge in an area of Reno that has a history of intense litigation, [KRNv reported](#). The decision remains the subject of litigation and a hearing is scheduled for later this month.

THE OPINION OF THE RGJ

Why we support reforms to records law

Addressing obstacles to access protects democracy in Nevada
Democracies depend on government transparency.

We need transparency to make important decisions before elections. We need it to hold those in power accountable. And we need it to have a constructive public conversation about our government.

That's why the Reno Gazette Journal joined a statewide coalition of media organizations, good government groups and individuals to support a major reform to Nevada's public records law during the 2019 Legislature with Senate Bill 287. Nevada's public records law gives you the right to a copy of a police report,

empowers you to know how much we pay our public employees, lets you know the outcomes of investigations after major tragedies or scandals.

So why does this law need reform?

Too often, Nevadans are denied access to public records because of unreasonable fees, potential expensive court battles to get access to documents or because their request is ignored altogether.

Examples of public records nightmares are not hard to come by in this state, unfortunately. Just look at a few examples on the Right to Know Nevada coalition's website (<https://righttoknownevada.com>):

■ The Incline Village General Improvement District refused to provide its own board treasurer with basic financial records.

■ The Washoe County School District concealed a taxpayer-funded investigation regarding allegations of bullying and harassment within its special education department.

■ The Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department refused to release basic information regarding the Las Vegas mass shooting, creating a level of secrecy and uncertainty that contributed to wild speculation and conspiracy theories in the months that followed.

Senate Bill 287 would be a step in the right direction toward solving some of those problems.

See DUGGAN, Page 6A



Brian Duggan

Columnist Reno Gazette Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

Duggan

Continued from Page [1A](#)

Limit fees: Public documents should only cost what's literally needed to reproduce them – like the cost of paper and ink. What shouldn't be included in that fee? The staff time used to make the document available to the public – which is exactly what the city of Reno did last year when it started charging \$45 for a copy of a police report. Add penalties: If a government official willfully and unlawfully withholds or restricts access to public records, a court must be allowed to impose monetary sanctions in response. Without a strong incentive to follow the law there's often little recourse for citizens facing the most egregious government behavior.

Provide help: The bill would also require government officials to actively offer help to citizens in search of a public record. In other words, government officials should lend a hand in the pursuit of transparency rather than simply shut down if a requester doesn't know the specific terminology of the records they're after.

Senate Bill 287 got a hearing April 3 in Carson City. The RGJ's James DeHaven reported the opponents to the bill included state and local government agencies like the city of Reno and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department.

Their primary concern could be boiled down to this: The time and cost to fulfill records requests would be too much to bear if the proposed reforms were approved.

That's an implicit admission by our government officials that the status quo is bad for public records transparency: We currently don't have the resources dedicated to providing the public the documents that are rightfully theirs.

That's wrong and it needs to change. Nevada is a transparency backwater compared to 23 other states that already have "teeth" in their public records laws to ensure compliance by government agencies.

Our coalition includes the Nevada Press Association, news organizations and advocacy groups including KOLO-8, This Is Reno, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, the Nevada Independent as well as the ACLU of Nevada and the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

If you also care about the future of government transparency in Nevada, the Reno Gazette Journal encourages you to speak up in favor of Senate Bill 287.

Brian Duggan is the executive editor of the Reno Gazette Journal.

Says he wouldn't benefit directly from measure

James DeHaven Reno Gazette Journal USA TODAY NETWORK

State Sen. Ben Kieckhefer, R-Reno, has close ties to a company that stands to benefit from one of his latest bills in the Nevada Legislature. Too close, according to the measure's critics.

They say Senate Bill 327 offers builders a way to plow ahead with the massive, hotly debated Stonegate development on the northern outskirts of Reno. They suspect Kieckhefer is pushing the measure to help out his bosses at McDonald Carano, the Renobased law firm that helped get the project past the City Council in February. Kieckhefer said the bill – which greases the skids for a controversial new type of subdivision that developers plan to debut at Stonegate – merely gives cities another option to put up muchneeded roofs amid a statewide housing crunch.

He acknowledged it was brought to him by a Stonegate lobbyist, and aims to topple the biggest hurdle the project's developer faced at Reno City Hall. But he denied the bill would directly benefit him or his law firm, where he works as director of client relations.

"I don't think it does anything specifically for a client of the firm," Kieckhefer told the Reno Gazette Journal. "I thought about that. When I was told it doesn't impact (Stonegate), I agreed to sponsor it.

"It doesn't affect (Stonegate) because they're already done (getting approvals). My understanding is that it's an optional approval process the city can implement if it chooses to do so."

That explanation didn't pass muster with Stonegate foes, who count Kieckhefer's bill as yet another example of self-dealing in Nevada's citizen Legislature.

Stonegate developers eye third-party builders

Stonegate developers want to sell off large chunks of their sprawling, 1,700acre housing plot in Cold Springs to third-party builders.

And SB 327 offers a ready selling point – fast-tracked planning approvals for builders who work on the 5,000-unit blueprint.

"This bill would substantively benefit Stonegate," said Steve Wolgast, a former county commission candidate and outspoken opponent of the project. "If you're Stonegate, your business isn't so much to build, as to sell these (lots).

"If SB 327 passes, you're all set, because you don't have to go back to the planning commission."

Bob Fulkerson, a progressive activist who has vocally opposed the project, took an even sharper tack.

“Looks like old Ben K is up to it again – introducing legislation to help clients of his law firm,” he wrote in a recent email. “This would be a big gift to the Stonegate developers, whom McDonald Carano represent, in that it would allow the creation of superpad parcel as a subdivision mechanism, which has never been used before the city implemented the Stonegate (planned unit development).”

The bill would create ‘superpads’ – so what are they?

The subdivision method in question is called a “superpad.”

It would allow Stonegate’s developers, the Heinz Ranch Land Co., to lay down the project’s water and sewer infrastructure before selling off subdivided lots to future home builders.

Under current law, builders working on these smaller chunks of Stonegate’s superpad would still need the city’s OK to break ground on new homes.

But SB 327 would ensure those approvals can be provided by city staff and without the hassle of a City Council meeting, where Reno residents have regularly raised a ruckus over Stonegate.

City Councilwoman Jenny Brekhus, the lone council member to oppose the development’s approval last month, made a particular stink over the “dubious” use of superpads in a formal appeal filed with the city. She and other opponents fear superpads’ multistage approval process is susceptible to sudden market downturns that could leave developers sitting on dozens or hundreds of “zombie” lots – unsold, blighted tracts of land that could spend years awaiting interest from a builder. Brekhus, a former city planner, said Kieckhefer’s bill could head off future legal challenges against the practice.

She hesitated when asked if the measure posed a conflict of interest for its sponsor. “I don’t know if this is a Ben Kieckhefer issue or a Nevada Legislature issue,” Brekhus said. “My understanding is that conflicts of interest aren’t well defined for legislators in Carson City.”

Nevada ranks low for political transparency

Nevada has regularly ranked at or near the bottom of nationwide political transparency surveys. Legislators have rarely led the way in efforts to repair that rickety reputation.

Kieckhefer said he’d never heard his bill described as a way to short-circuit challenges.

Ultimately, he said, it’s a pro-development proposal.

“These big project processes sometimes get bogged down,” Kieckhefer said. “With housing shortage issues, things like that, trying to close gaps in that timeline, when appropriate, makes sense to me.

“I’ve supported the development community in Northern Nevada for a long time. It doesn’t affect Stonegate at all, even though they’re the ones that ran into problems with (superpads). It’s really about future development.”

Lobbyist: Bill needed to improve approval process for homes

Mendy Elliott – the Stonegate lobbyist that first brought the bill to Kieckhefer’s attention – said it grew out of talks with Don Tatro and Aaron West, the heads of the state’s two largest building trades groups. She, like Kieckhefer, said the bill wouldn’t benefit Stonegate.

So why seek a sponsor for a bill that doesn’t benefit her client?

“It’s multifaceted,” Elliott explained. “There needs to be housing on the market faster. In discussing why it’s taking so long, they knew there was a different process in place in different (cities).”

“(West and Tatro) wanted consistency in the statute.”

West, CEO of the Nevada Builders Alliance, confirmed that account. Tatro said he wasn’t involved in drafting the legislation.

“My membership actually has concerns it will have a negative impact on the industry,” the head of the Builders Association of Nevada wrote in a Friday email. “I was told there was a bill that could have a positive improvement for larger developments by Aaron and Mendy’s team, and told them we would support any legislation that achieved process improvements for the industry.

See KIECKHEFER, Page 11A



Kieckhefer

Continued from Page [3A](#)

“I’m not sure this bill does that after hearing recently from local governments and (builders association) members.”

Elliott said the bill was tough to sell to Kieckhefer.

“He’s cautious; he wanted to make sure it was appropriate and really needed,” she added. “The person who really benefits the most from this bill is the homebuyer.”

Kieckhefer's past votes scrutinized

SB 327 does not mark the first time Kieckhefer's been accused of putting his bosses' interests ahead of his constituents.

A 2017 analysis from the Associated Press found the Reno Republican voted at least six times to advance measures benefiting McDonald Carano's clients. In one case, he voted for a bill in committee that would have hastened a sales tax break for medical equipment, a measure backed by his firm's client.

Kieckhefer also voted to approve \$750 million in taxes to help build the Oakland Raiders' new stadium in Las Vegas. His firm was lobbying for the team at the time.

Nevada law says that if legislators feel they have conflicts of interest, they must disclose them before voting. But Kieckhefer didn't have to ahead of the Raiders decision: The Senate, in a historically unprecedented move, waived the normal conflict-of-interest provisions for that vote.

Kieckhefer at the time told the AP that a firewall divides his McDonald Carano lobbying from its work with legal clients. Kieckhefer is a former reporter for the AP and the Reno Gazette Journal.

He defended Nevada's citizen legislature, which meets every other year and pays lawmakers \$288.29 for every day of the session.

"I'm not reliant on support from lobbyists or special interests to keep the job I have to support my family," he said.

If approved, SB 327 would take effect on July 1. Lawmakers have not yet held a hearing on the measure.

Congress approves seven-state Colorado River deal addressing drought conditions

By Rebecca Beitsch - 04/08/19 06:43 PM EDT 39

The House and Senate both approved a seven-state agreement Monday night designed to reduce use of water from the parched Colorado River by drought-stricken Western states.

Sponsored by House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and Sen. Martha McSally



Martha Elizabeth McSally

Cain's nomination faces uphill climb
GOP fears Trump return to family separations
Congress approves seven-state Colorado River deal addressing drought conditions

MORE (R-Ariz.), the bill gives approval to a deal that was crafted through years of negotiations and designed to manage a limited water supply in the dry but rapidly growing West. It passed by voice vote in both chambers.

The Colorado River is a water source for some 40 million people in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming. But reservoirs along the river are increasingly drying up: Lake Mead and Lake Powell sit below 40 percent capacity.

McSally praised the House and Senate for passing a bill on the same day that was just introduced Tuesday, saying urgent effort was required.

“Unfortunately the last 19 years have been the Colorado Basin’s driest on record,” she said, leaving water supplies for major cities at risk of reaching crisis levels.

Congressional and presidential approval is required for interstate compacts, and supporters stressed the deal's importance to avoid dire consequences.

Lake Mead currently sits just 15 feet above the mark of 1,075 feet above sea level that would trigger mandatory water restrictions already hashed out by a 2007 agreement. The goal with this year’s deal is to stave off those cuts with progressively severe cutbacks as the water level at the lake drops.

But more troubling than future restrictions is what would happen if Lake Mead, located outside Las Vegas, falls too low. At 950 feet above sea level, the water would no longer be high enough to supply electricity from the dam. And at 895 feet, water would fail to flow over the dam at all.

“The drought created by climate change in the Southwest has made our area more arid, made water more precious and more finite, and we have to deal with that question,” Grijalva said in a video explaining the bill’s expedited passage.

The Senate bill, identical to the measure passed by the House, was co-sponsored by each of the other 13 senators who represent states in the Colorado River Basin.

“Severe droughts will become more frequent in the West as our climate continues to change, so we have to be prepared by saving more water from the wet years for the dry ones,” Sen. Dianne Feinstein



Dianne Emiel FeinsteinLawmakers get first crack at Barr post-MuellerCongress

approves seven-state Colorado River deal addressing drought conditionsDems face pressure from left

to step up court fight on 'blue slips' MORE (D-Calif.) said in a statement.

Many environmental groups were also supportive of the agreement, including the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund.

“Declining reservoirs threaten water supplies that are essential to the economy, environment, and health of the Southwestern United States,” the groups wrote in a letter urging passage.

The agreement avoids what would have been a startling first: The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation threatened to impose its own water restrictions on the states if they did not come to an agreement by the end of January.

Even so, the compact states needed a deadline extension in order to give Arizona and California time to work through issues.

Arizona required legislation to approve the deal and secured its passage with support from farmers between Phoenix and Houston, who may still have to leave 40 percent of farmland fallow with reduced access to water.

Another sticking point came from the Imperial Irrigation District, California’s largest user of Colorado River water, which demanded \$200 million to help restore the Salton Sea, California’s largest lake. Feinstein said she would work with the Department of Agriculture to secure additional funds for conservation efforts for the lake.

Swan Lake may take seven years or longer to recede

By [Terri Russell](#) |

Posted: Tue 6:59 PM, Apr 09, 2019 |

Updated: Tue 11:04 PM, Apr 09, 2019

RENO, Nev. (KOLO) Monday night on Lemmon Drive, the road was covered in water as wind-whipped flood waters jumped over the Hesco Barriers and onto the road.



Seven inches or more of water made it tough for cars to work their way through the major artery through Lemmon Valley, prompting a brief road closure. And according to the county manager, this scenario is not going to go away anytime soon.

“It looks like it might take a few more years than the six or seven we initially thought to evaporate back down to a dry playa,” said County Manager Dave Solaro, regarding Swan Lake levels.

Certainly not the news commissioners wanted to hear at their meeting April 9, 2019. Some had hoped natural evaporation would take Swan Lake down to manageable levels by now.

But for Lemmon Valley residents, this was something they predicted in 2017, when a wet winter flooded homes and properties.

Crews installed Hesco Barriers to keep the waters back. Pumps have been installed. Tiger Dams were put into place last week. Still, residents say they’ve seen little relief.

They once again scolded county commissioners for being naive or just in plain denial.

“As long as you guys continue to build you are just adding to the problem,” said Lemmon Valley resident Denise Ross. “Every one of those homes needs water. They are not going to be on wells. You are going to bring water in from outside sources. This is a closed basin,” she told commissioners.

Commissioners had asked the county manager to present them with a list of options to help mitigate the problem in Lemmon Valley. He gave the commission 14. But Commissioner Kitty Jung said the information was insufficient.

“There is no fiscal notes on this. I don’t know how much any of this costs, and where we would get the money,” Jung told Solaro.

Those options included trucking water out of the lake, drilling into the aquifer, levees and elevating homes. All of which will take time, money, and in some cases permission from the federal government.

There was frustration all around. Commissioners directed the county manager to make his next report more specific on what can be done.

San Jose Water Company wants to charge residents more for conserving water

Residents took to Nextdoor to say they felt penalized for following the rules



(LiPo Ching/Bay Area News Group) San Jose Water Company Director of Engineering, Water Services and Planning Bill Tuttle demonstrates the flow of hose water flowing through a flow restrictor at 10 gallons per minute at the San Jose Water Company offices in San Jose, Calif. on Tuesday, June 30, 2015. (LiPo Ching/Bay Area News Group)

By Emily DeRuy | ederuy@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: April 9, 2019 at 6:00 am | UPDATED: April 9, 2019 at 11:26 am

In recent years at the behest of then-Gov. Jerry Brown and other officials, residents in and around San Jose scaled back on watering lawns and long showers to conserve water.

But, as the saying goes, no good deed goes unpunished.

San Jose Water, the local water company, recently sent out a [public notice](#) saying it wants to impose a year-long surcharge beginning this summer. The reason? To recover what it described as an “under-collection” of more than \$9 million in fixed costs.

“The under-collection was a result of water conservation measures established by the State of California and the Santa Clara Valley Water District,” the notice said.

In other words, thank you for following the rules and limiting your water usage, but that’s hurt our bottom line, so we’ll be sending you a bill.

If the company gets what it wants, more than a million people in San Jose and surrounding areas, from Campbell and Los Gatos to Saratoga, will have seen their rates rise about 7 percent this year alone.

The latest notice has sparked anger from residents, who have taken to sites like Nextdoor to complain.

“Not our problem,” wrote one man, urging his neighbors to protest the move.

If the California Public Utilities Commission, which is tasked with regulating privately owned public utilities, approves the surcharge, the monthly bill for a typical customer will increase by \$2.19, or about 2.26 percent, according to the water company. Its parent company SJW Group recently filed a new application in Connecticut to merge with Connecticut Water after a [failed attempted merger](#) last year.

“We understand why a conservation-related surcharge might be difficult for a SJW customer to understand, particularly as they continue to practice conservation in their own lives,” Jayme Ackemann, a spokeswoman for the water company, said in an email. “The CPUC sets water rates up to three years in advance based on anticipated consumption. When consumption falls due to conservation or other factors, utilities cannot recover the fixed costs necessary to deliver safe, high quality and reliable water service.”

It’s not the first time the company has sought to impose a surcharge because of water conservation, and residents of other cities have also seen similar increases on their bills in recent years. In 2017, for instance, the East Bay Municipal Utility District agreed to [increase water rates](#) 20 percent for two years.

In November, San Jose Water announced it had received approval to increase rates 4.55 percent in 2019. The higher rates took effect in January. At the time, the company said the decision would reduce rate uncertainty for customers.

Terrie Prosper, a spokeswoman for the CPUC, said the company has been “recovering uncollected balances” since the drought was first declared in 2014.

The matter will be decided, she continued, before July 1, but she did not specify an exact date.

“Currently, the CPUC has authorized a more realistic consumption number that may be much closer to what customers will consume,” Ackemann wrote. “In this case, we are hopeful that this alignment between authorized and actual usage will allow us to recover our fixed costs thereby eliminating such future filings or significantly reducing the amount of under-collection we will seek to recover in future filings.”

Residents have until April 18 to lodge their protests.

Last year, the CPUC opened [an investigation](#) into whether the water company over-billed customers by millions of dollars for decades. The agency said it would consider whether the water company should refund customers and face penalties. That case is ongoing.

“This open investigation does not have any bearing on rate filings pending before the CPUC while the investigation is ongoing,” Prosper said.

Rita Benton, co-founder of the group Water Rate Advocates for Transparency, Equity and Sustainability, filed billing complaints that led to the ongoing investigation. The group, she said, was already sending protest letters in response to the latest proposed surcharge.

“They already increased rates, they’re already getting more than they should be getting and now they’re claiming it’s because of conservation?” Benton said.

“That’s ridiculous.”

April 10th, 2019 - 2:00am

County considers long-term projects to fix water trapped in Lemmon Valley north of Reno



Daniel Rothberg

For most of Nevada, heavy precipitation is a good thing. It means more water is available for cities, irrigators and wildlife. But for residents in Lemmon Valley, north of Reno, it has reignited concerns about water that remains trapped from flooding during a historic water year in 2017.

Their frustrations were aired during hours of testimony and discussion at a Washoe County Commission meeting on Tuesday about a long-term fix for the county's most prominent water issue. The commission also contemplated what to do about a sewage plant that sits in the corner of Swan Lake, where winter runoff collects in Lemmon Valley. Because the lake has no outlets, it is extremely difficult to remove water once it enters the valley and fills the lake.

In 2017, so much water inundated the lake that its elevation rose to its highest level since 1984, flooding several homes, a church and blocking access to homes for other residents. With water lost to evaporation, the elevation of the lake fell last summer.

But in December, the lake started rising again. This spring, it surpassed the high water mark from 2017, and the Washoe County School District fenced off part of a playground at a local elementary school where water filled a basketball court and baseball field, the Reno Gazette Journal reported. Even before the lake started filling again, residents of the roughly 5,000 person community eight miles north of Reno, expressed concerns about the stagnant water, urging the county and city of Reno to do more with new homes slated to come into the area.

On Tuesday, the County Commission heard a presentation from staff about potential long-term fixes to removing the water from the lake. So far, the short-term focus has been on containing the lake with temporary barriers to prevent rising water from entering homes. The question that county staff asked the commissioners on Tuesday was what a long-term fix should look like.

In a briefing memo, county staff said the current barriers were satisfactory for a two-foot rise in water, or about 2,400 acre-feet (an acre-foot is the amount of water that can fill one acre of land to a depth of one foot).

"However," the memo said, "based on the above normal precipitation and rise in water levels this winter, a policy discussion needs to occur before staff can prepare requested projects to solve the rising water levels and continue to protect existing residences and businesses."

Assistant County Manager Dave Solaro presented more than a dozen project concepts he had heard from engineers and residents over the past two years. The options varied widely. Some of the ideas Solaro's team analyzed were as customary as raising a roadway to block water or to back homes. Another proposal was to build a reservoir. Others were more audacious. Those ideas looked at renting large-scale mechanical evaporators or trucking water out of the basin.

All of them were a testament to how much physical energy is required to move water. The report found that it would take more than two years to remove a marginal one-foot of water from the lake using twelve 1,200-gallon water trucks hauling 24 hours a day at a haul time of 20 minutes.

Solaro said he wanted clarification from the board about what their goal was in dealing with the lake, noting that the potential path forward would probably include a mix of mitigation projects.

Commissioner Kitty Jung said she wanted more information about how much the projects would cost. She asked for “black-and-white data” about how much had already been spent. But at the end of the day, she said that the county did not have unlimited resources to spend.

“Nobody has money,” Jung said. “That’s the bottom line. I know everybody feels great and it feels like the economy is booming. [But] our projections are not beautiful for the next five years.”

Washoe County plans to pursue funding from the Federal Emergency Management Program.

Whether the county decides to raise the road or construct a reservoir, the general consensus among the commission was that the goal should be to manage Swan Lake levels so water did not spill over into homes or businesses in the growing valley. The board asked staff to come up with a plan that contained the water and to brief the commission at a future meeting.

But residents, in public comment, said the county should go further and halt new development.

With more than 2,000 homes tentatively approved for the area, residents worry that population could rapidly grow, damaging the character of the area and bringing with it new flood risks. At the meeting, Lemmon Valley resident Danny Cleous was one of the residents supporting a ban.

He said “there needs to be a moratorium” to create a permanent plan.

Cleous has a class-action lawsuit against the city of Reno, which controls the main road in Lemmon Valley. The lawsuit alleges that the city failed to follow a 2007 study recommending flood mitigation infrastructure, the subject of a story in the Reno Gazette Journal last year.

The newspaper reported last month that the case could go to trial in June.

The commission also voted on Tuesday to approve emergency funds for upgrades to an access road for a sewage plant that sits on Swan Lake. Staff argued that the funds, which also cover other improvements, were necessary to deal with lake levels as they began rising this year.

Washoe County operates the sewage plant under a state environmental permit and treats the water. The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection, which samples the effluent flowing to the lake each month, said there are “no public health issues related to bacteria levels in the lake.” Washoe County staff has also argued that the water is treated and closely monitored.

Yet there remains a gaping divide between that and how the residents see the lake. Residents have long expressed frustration about the discharge of effluent, especially as water levels have risen, including at Tuesday’s meeting. County staff said they plan to brief the commission again on the future of the plant, as some commissioners asked about how to better use the effluent.

“We are trying to develop alternatives to try and help us manage it in a different way,” said Dwayne Smith, who directs the county’s division for engineering and capital projects.

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