



TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY

Board of Directors

AGENDA

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 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 Alexis Hill
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. Public comment, may be provided by submitting written comments online on TMWA's Public Comment Form (tmwa.com/PublicComment) or by email sent to boardclerk@tmwa.com prior to the Board opening the public comment period during the meeting. In addition, public comments may be provided by leaving a voicemail at (775)834-0255 prior to 4:00 p.m. the day before the scheduled meeting. Voicemail messages received will be noted during the meeting and summarized for entry into the record. Public comment is limited to three minutes and is allowed during the public comment periods. The Board may elect to receive public comment only during the two public comment periods rather than each action item.
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.

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.

1. Roll call*
2. Pledge of allegiance*
3. Public comment — limited to no more than three minutes per speaker*
4. Possible Board comments or acknowledgements*
5. Approval of the agenda (**For Possible Action**)
6. Approval of the minutes of the May 20, 2021 meeting of the TMWA Board of Directors (**For Possible Action**)
7. Presentation of results of 2021 legislative activities and bills — John Zimmerman and Leo Drozdoff (**For Possible Action**)
8. Discussion and action on establishing a Legislative Subcommittee for the 2021-2022 Interim Legislative Session and appointment of two or more Board members to Subcommittee — John Zimmerman (**For Possible Action**)
9. Water Supply Update — Bill Hauck*
10. Presentation and informational report on proposed future adjustments to Schedule WSF and BSF Fees — Scott Estes and Danny Rotter*
11. Discussion and action on transfer of surplus real property located at 1905 E. 4th Street, Reno, Nevada to Washoe County for no consideration and request for adoption of Resolution No. 294: A resolution to approve donation of surplus real property to Washoe County — Andy Gebhardt (**For Possible Action**)
12. Discussion and action on request for adoption of Resolution No. 295: A resolution to approve donation of surplus vehicle to The Nature Conservancy for Independence Lake management activities — Pat Nielson (**For Possible Action**)
13. Discussion and action on nomination and election of Chairman and Vice Chairman and request for Board adoption of Resolution No. 296 appointing a Chairman and Vice Chairman for Fiscal Year 2022 — Mark Foree (**For Possible Action**)
14. General Manager's Report*
15. Public comment — limited to no more than three minutes per speaker*
16. Board comments and requests for future agenda items*
17. Adjournment (**For Possible Action**)

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TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY
DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MAY 20, 2021
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met on Thursday May 20, 2021, via Zoom Virtual Meeting, Reno, Nevada. Chair Hartung called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

1. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Paul Anderson, **Jenny Brekhus, Kristopher Dahir, *Naomi Duerr, ***Neoma Jardon, Vaughn Hartung, and Alexis Hill.

A quorum was present by telephonic appearance.

**Member Duerr left at 11:21 a.m.*

***Member Brekhus left at 11:33 a.m.*

****Member Jardon left at 11:56 a.m.*

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Andy Gebhardt, TMWA Operations & Water Quality Director.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Perry, representing Fahnestock Enterprises, and their DBA is Western Turf, stated, in relation to agenda items #11 and #12, they are the second largest water rights holder in Palomino Valley and were not communicated with prior to this board meeting. Ms. Perry said they do not oppose or support the feasibility study, but requested that Western Turf be kept informed going forward.

4. POSSIBLE BOARD COMMENTS OR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS*

Member Jardon thanked Mark Foree, TMWA General Manager, and staff for granting the City of Reno temporary access to TMWA's property on East 4th Street in assisting with the homeless population.

5. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

6. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 21, 2021 MEETING

Upon motion by Member Hill, second by Member Hartung, which motion duly carried by unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the April 21, 2021 minutes.

7. PRESENTATION OF FISCAL YEAR 2021 Q3 YEAR TO DATE FINANCIAL RESULTS

Matt Bowman, TMWA Financial Controller, presented the financial results through three quarters of fiscal year 2021: the change in net position was \$10.9m (42%) higher than budget (due to higher than budgeted water sales, lower operating expenses and higher capital contributions offset by lower investment income); operating revenue was \$2.7m (3%) higher than budget due to increased water sales offset slightly by lower hydroelectric and other operating sales; water sales were up \$3.2m (4%) due to higher water usage in residential and irrigation categories; operating expenses were \$6.1m lower (8%) than budget (due to position vacancies and increased labor charged to capital projects, and slower rates of spend on expensed projects expected to be completed in Q4), but staff still expects to be well under budget by the end of the fiscal year; non-operating expenses were \$3.1m (50%) higher than budgeted (due to lower investment income and a net decrease in value of investments due to lower interest rates on invested cash balances); and capital contributions were \$5.2m (20%) higher than budget (driven by developer facility charges).

8. PUBLIC HEARING ON ADOPTION OF BUDGET

A. DISCUSSION, AND ACTION ON REQUEST FOR ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 292: A RESOLUTION TO ADOPT THE FINAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2022 AND THE 2022-2026 FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Mr. Bowman and Sandra Tozi, TMWA Senior Financial Analyst, presented the final budget for FY2022 and the FY2022-2026 five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Mr. Bowman addressed the sponsorship cost allocation discussion at the March Board meeting and stated the \$950k remained the same and allocated as: \$700k to the Truckee River Fund, \$50k to Desert Research Institute (DRI) for the Cloud Seeding Program and the remaining \$200k to Truckee River Water Quality Projects.

Vice Chair Dahir thanked staff for their work especially during this difficult year; the flexible planning and projecting efforts to do what is best for the community.

Member Brekhus asked whether the projects addressed under agenda items #10 and #11 are in the CIP as well as the option to purchase the land for \$27M. Mr. Bowman stated that the portion to be paid by TMWA for the study would be expensed as a feasibility study, and the potential option price of \$27M was not in the CIP.

Member Duerr noted that since hydro production will be reduced as of August, when would TMWA expect to resume hydro power generation and if the drought continued would it impact revenues in future

years. Mr. Bowman replied hydro generation would resume in spring 2022 when river flows are adequate and yes, multi-year drought would impact hydro revenues.

Upon motion by Member Duerr, second by Member Dahir, which motion duly carried unanimous consent of the members present, the Board adopted Resolution No. 292: A resolution to adopt the final budget for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2022 and the 2022-2026 Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

9. DISCUSSION, AND ACTION ON REQUEST FOR ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 293: A RESOLUTION DESIGNATED BY THE SHORT TITLE “2021 REFUNDING BOND RESOLUTION” AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE BY THE AUTHORITY OF ITS “TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY, SUBORDINATE WATER REVENUE REFUNDING BONDS, SERIES 2021,” IN THE AGGREGATE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$13,350,000, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEFRAYING WHOLLY OR IN PART THE COST OF REFUNDING CERTAIN OUTSTANDING COMMERCIAL PAPER NOTES; PROVIDING THE FORM, TERMS, AND CONDITIONS OF THE BONDS AND THE SECURITY THEREFOR; PROVIDING FOR THE COLLECTION AND DISPOSITION OF REVENUES DERIVED FROM THE OPERATION OF THE AUTHORITY’S WATER SYSTEM; PLEDGING SUCH REVENUES TO THE PAYMENT OF THE BONDS; APPROVING THE FORM OF A CONTINUING COVENANT AGREEMENT TO BE ENTERED INTO BETWEEN THE INITIAL PURCHASER AND THE AUTHORITY; PROVIDING OTHER COVENANTS, AGREEMENTS, DETAILS AND OTHER MATTERS RELATING THERETO

Michele Sullivan, TMWA Chief Financial Officer, introduced Ryan Henry, Sherman & Howard Bond Counsel, and Thomas Toepfer, PFM Financial Advisor, who were present to answer any questions. Ms. Sullivan provided background information related to the commercial paper program. At the end of fiscal years 2017 and 2018 TMWA had about \$90M in commercial paper at which time they took a large portion out and fixed it as a senior lien debt, leaving about \$30M in commercial paper that was backed by a five-year letter of credit, and was projected to be paid off during FY2018-2023. Staff, along with TMWA’s financial advisors, considered the low interest rates, uncertainties surrounding drought and increasing construction costs, and recommended fixing out the commercial paper for a seven year period. The cash would then be available for longer than if TMWA continued with the plan to pay it off in the next two years. Ms. Sullivan noted they have an offer letter from Wells Fargo bank to fix this out over seven years for about 1.2% and would no longer worry about fluctuations going forward with the commercial paper which is on a variable rate.

Vice Chair Dahir asked if it affects TMWAs credit ratings. Ms. Sullivan replied the new loan would be at the same lien level, third lien level debt, as the commercial paper and it would not affect our debt service coverage ratio. Also, it is not a significant portion of TMWA’s debt, which is about \$350M currently. Mr. Toepfer confirmed they believe it would not have a significant impact on TMWA’s rating since the amount

being borrowed is the same, but at a low fixed rate and could be considered as 'de-risking' TMWA's profile while allowing for a longer period of time to have cash on-hand.

Member Brekhus asked whether this bond resolution was to issue commercial paper and the plan is to use Wells Fargo, as a private placement. Ms. Sullivan replied no, they are taking out the commercial paper for a note with Wells Fargo. Mr. Henry clarified the resolution authorizes refunding bonds to take out the commercial paper and fix the rate so the commercial paper will no longer be outstanding once the Board authorizes to move forward. The final rate will be set on June 1, and paying off the commercial paper will terminate the letter of credit. The bonds will then be tax exempt, privately placed held by, and payments made directly to, Wells Fargo.

Member Hill stated for staff this is a great step and completely supportive especially in the position TMWA, and the region, is related to water; thanked staff for being proactive and not rushing to pay off the outstanding commercial paper debt.

Member Brekhus inquired whether Nevada law allowed for TMWA to enter into a non-solicited private placement. Mr. Toepfer replied they analyzed and compared what was happening in the public market, but ultimately, due to the size of the issuance of \$13M, it would have been much more involved and costly which would have increased the cost of borrowing. Ultimately, the offer from Wells Fargo was more attractive than what they saw in the public market. Mr. Henry added there is a specific bank loan exception for this directly privately placing bonds with one purchaser and Wells Fargo will be required to make certain representations to make us meet those exceptions which allows us not to do an RFP and one of those is they are going to hold the bonds for investment and not resale.

Upon motion by Member Hill, second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried unanimous consent of the members present, the Board adopted Resolution No. 293: A resolution designated by the short title "2021 Refunding Bond Resolution" authorizing the issuance by the authority of its "Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Subordinate Water Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2021," in the aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$13,500,000, for the purpose of defraying wholly or in part the cost of refunding certain outstanding commercial paper notes; providing the form, terms, and conditions of the bonds and the security therefor; providing for the collection and disposition of revenues derived from the operation of the Authority's water system; pledging such revenues to the payment of the bonds; approving the form of a continuing covenant agreement to be entered into between the initial purchaser and the Authority; providing other covenants, agreements, details and other matters relating thereto.

10. DISCUSSION, ACTION AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AGREEMENT BETWEEN TMWA AND PALOMINO FARMS, LLC AND LW LAND COMPANY LLC AUTHORIZING FEASIBILITY STUDY IN COLLABORATION WITH ONEWATER NEVADA TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF USING RECYCLED WATER FOR IRRIGATION IN WARM SPRINGS VALLEY AND TO PROVIDE WATER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

11. DISCUSSION AND ACTION, POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO STAFF AND POSSIBLE APPROVAL OF AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT (ILA) WITH THE CITY OF RENO, CITY OF SPARKS AND WASHOE COUNTY FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY TO EVALUATE THE FEASIBILITY OF USING RECYCLED WATER FOR IRRIGATION IN WARM SPRINGS VALLEY (PALOMINO FARMS AND LW LAND COMPANY) AND TO PROVIDE WATER SUSTAINABILITY BENEFITS

Chair Hartung opened items 10 and 11 to be heard together. John Enloe, TMWA Director of Natural Resources & Planning, and John Zimmerman, TMWA Water Resources Manager, presented the staff report. Mr. Enloe thanked Ms. Perry for her comments and informed the Board that staff made the decision not to make any public announcements before having the informational presentation at the April Board meeting. The Interlocal Agreement is between TMWA, Cities of Sparks and Reno, and Washoe County with all parties contributing \$400k equally to the study that will span over 10 months to evaluate the feasibility of the project as well as to negotiate the option agreement, which includes a proposed \$27M purchase price for water rights and the right to use the land for recycled water and underground storage of water at the two properties, Palomino Farms and LW Land Company.

Chair Hartung inquired if the water rights to be included in the option are existing water rights. Mr. Enloe replied yes, there are approximately 2,500 acre feet (AF) currently being used for irrigation by Palomino Farms and LW Land. It also includes the right to use their land in perpetuity for irrigation and recharge, but not infrastructure, the cost of which will be determined over the 10 month period of the study. Staff is also investigating grant and loan opportunities.

Member Brekhus stated she supports feasibility studies, but expressed concerns with the proposed study since it appears it is a large non-competitive procurement and a capital project associated with this agreement, and inquired if staff conducted appraisals for the land. Member Brekhus suggested staff consider working with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT) since they have plenty of land and they want more water, and to consider the long-term cost analysis in addition to explaining how TMWA can buy land. Mr. Enloe replied staff is unable to answer questions about long-term cost analysis and feasibility today, which is why they are proposing the feasibility study to gain more information. Staff has been working with Mike Benjamin, Palomino Valley Farms, for over a year in order to propose the feasibility study. In addition, there is value for the Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County to control 1,500 acres of land to manage their effluent at substantially less cost than other alternatives available, particularly related to Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF).

John Martini, City of Sparks Assistant City Manager, added for years they have been trying to address the excess effluent water and finding land to irrigate in order to continue the effluent management program. Mr. Martini believes the feasibility study is valuable in that if they do not find a suitable site that can take effluent flow rates in large quantities, TMWRF has stringent limits on pollution, total dissolved solids (TDS), that can be put into the river. They have worked hard to make the plant more efficient to treat pollutants, however, TMWRF does not have a treatment system in place for dissolved organic nitrogen and if another solution is not found, they will have to create a process to treat this pollutant and TDS will become an issue as well since it is very expensive to build and operate.

Member Duerr disclosed she serves on a non-profit board with one of the partners affiliated with Palomino Farms, receives no compensation and asked about conflicts. Michael Pagni, TMWA General Counsel, advised her she did not need to recuse herself under the circumstances discussed. She is supportive of the feasibility study, but is not ready to enter into an option agreement at this time and would like clarification on the water rights acquisition. Mr. Enloe confirmed the Board would enter into the feasibility study agreement today, to allow staff time to conduct the study and negotiate in good faith over the next 10 months to develop an option agreement, which option agreement would be brought forward at a later date for the Board's future consideration. The interlocal agreement presented today is the cost sharing agreement, unrelated to the option agreement, between the four agencies and Palomino Farms is not receiving any payment now. Mr. Zimmerman added staff is considering the treated effluent going out to Palomino Valley as well as potable water for potential storage, which is part of the cost; to be able to store water beneath the land. Also, if treated effluent is used as a substitute for the irrigation water, those groundwater rights could potentially be brought into TMWA's service territory along with potable water stored beneath the land. These considerations would also be covered under the option agreement.

Vice Chair Dahir stated they have a responsibility to look at all options before making a decision that affects everyone in the region, it is beyond TMWA's responsibility and is part of each city, Washoe County and TMWRF. It is important to have robust conversations with the public and everyone involved, including PLPT, as part of the feasibility study, but not before the Board decides whether or not to move forward. Finally, these are big decisions to be made that will affect the region long after they all leave office, but it's their due diligence to ensure things are in place for the region in the future

Member Brekhus voiced concern with the proposal stated by Mr. Martini and inquired if an unsolicited proposal was offered and expressed concern over the apparent lack of transparency considering staff has been in discussions for over a year. As it is proposed today, she will not support moving forward due to its broad scope. Mark Foree, TMWA General Manager, recapped that the Board had a water resource workshop in 2019 where they had in-depth discussions about proceeding with potential water rights deals, and suggested that the Board view this as a water rights purchase opportunity. In that meeting, staff received clear direction from the Board that gave them the opportunity to go and look for water rights deals, and they changed TMWA's rule to provide that any purchase over 100 AF of water needs to be presented to the Board. This proposal is unique in that it is very close to the City of Sparks effluent system as well as TMWA system in Spanish Springs and there are not many options to address the effluent management issues.

Member Anderson reiterated Member Duerr's comments regarding the value proposition in comparison of this project to the expansions and equivalent work that would need to be done at TMWRF, in addition to other facilities. He would like to include the public and provide a history of feasibility studies conducted at TMWA. Mr. Martini replied the cost comparison will be determined as the study progresses and then Cities of Reno and Sparks will evaluate those results to gain a better understanding of how much potential effluent could be conveyed to the site for annual use versus expanding and upgrading TMWRF. TMWA has a history of conducting feasibility studies where some have proven successful and others not. Mr. Enloe discussed the American Flat project, where the City of Reno and TMWA are seriously considering the site for recharge of advanced purified water. At the outset of the project, they started drilling wells and recharging potable water to determine whether the site was feasible as a good storage location. This is

opposed to the Bedell Flat site, where they thought it was a good potential site for recharge, but spent about \$800,000 before it was determined it was not a feasible site; Staff has confidence in Palomino Valley to be able to store water due to its 40-year history of agriculture in the area.

Member Jardon thanked Mr. Enloe for the additional background information, recalled the in-depth discussion at the workshop meeting and appreciated staff doing the research and returning to the Board with information and requesting direction at the opportune time. To insinuate there are back room dealings is false and damages the organization's reputation which is phenomenal, and she is supportive of this project.

Chair Hartung stated he is not ready to spend \$27M today, but that is not what is before us today, rather are we willing to fund the portion, and if the Board agrees to moving forward with, the feasibility study.

Member Hill agreed they should move forward with the study, but noted the comments made by Member Brekhus with regards to engaging the PLPT and Reno-Sparks Indian Colony to continue to ensure they are part of these discussions and possible agreements to ensure TMWA is supporting them in their efforts to obtain water as well.

Member Brekhus stated she will not support the motion based on discussions today and information not included in the staff report and her motion against is related to that process. For example, hearing about the regional effluent management team, but not knowing about the meetings and its exclusion from Open Meeting Law is disconcerting as well as wanting to see a cost-basis analysis for the proposed \$27M purchase price.

Upon motion by Member Dahir second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried by five to one, with Member Brekhus dissenting, the Board approved the Feasibility Study Agreement between TMWA and Palomino Farms, LLC and LW Land Company LLC authorizing feasibility study in collaboration with OneWater Nevada to evaluate the feasibility of using recycled water for irrigation in Warm Springs Valley and to provide water sustainability benefits.

Upon motion by Member Dahir, second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried by five to one, with Member Brekhus dissenting, the Board approved the interlocal agreement with the City of Reno, City of Sparks and Washoe County for reimbursement of costs to conduct a feasibility study to evaluate the feasibility of using recycled water for irrigation in Warm Springs Valley (Palomino Farms and LW Land Company) and to provide water sustainability benefits.

12. DISCUSSION AND ACTION ON APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) TO FILL THE MULTI-FAMILY CUSTOMER PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE, AND SENIOR CITIZEN AND RESIDENTIAL 3 CUSTOMER ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVES, AND OTHER POSSIBLE VACANCIES FOR TERMS BEGINNING MAY 1, 2021 TO DECEMBER 31, 2023 FROM THE FOLLOWING POOL OF CANDIDATES LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER: AL BLACK, RUSS FOREMAN, JORDAN GRAHAM, TOM KURTZ, KEVIN RYAN AND ALEX TALMANT

Sonia Folsom, TMWA SAC Liaison, presented the staff report and informed the Board of the SAC's recommendation to appoint, from the applicant list, Kevin Ryan to the Residential Representative 3 Alternate and Alex Talmant to the Senior Citizen Alternate positions, and stated there were no applications to fill the multi-family primary vacancy position.

Member Anderson thanked all the applicants for their interest to volunteer on the committee.

Upon motion by Member Anderson, second by Member Jardon, which motion duly carried unanimous consent of the members present, the Board approved the Standing Advisory Committee recommendation to appoint Kevin Ryan to the Residential 3 Customer Alternate Representative and Alex Talmant to the Senior Citizen Customer Alternate Representative positions.

13. WATER SUPPLY UPDATE

Bill Hauck, TMWA Water Supply Administrator, reported the region did not see the storms necessary to ensure a substantial snowpack for the summer; we are entering our second consecutive dry year and are now in a drought situation; projected runoff for Lake Tahoe and Truckee River Basins are 15% and 31%, respectively, which were significantly downgraded over the last two months; expect normal river flows through Aug 20th which puts us in a drought situation; Lake Tahoe will be relied upon heavily in the coming months to provide river flows, but will continue to fall and by the end of October will be at or near the natural rim; TMWA has plenty of drought reserves, approximately 52k AF of stored water, which more than we have ever had in any given year and will be used to supply summer demands; TMWA has three different levels of drought response, and due to reduced river flows, TMWA's response is Level 2 – Enhanced Water Conservation Campaign (extended no watering times, additional water conservation consultants, increase media presence and 3-day Assigned Water Days);

Vice Chair suggested Mr. Hauck provide a similar update at Cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County to address the many questions that arise as the summer progresses. Mr. Hauck replied yes.

14. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION, AND DIRECTION TO STAFF REGARDING 2021 LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES, CURRENT BILLS, INCLUDING SCR 11, AND TMWA RECOMMENDED POSITIONS ON LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

Mr. Zimmerman informed the Board the session is nearing the end with 12 days left and many of the bills the Board has been updated on has remained the same. He added that staff and the TMWA Legislative Subcommittee strongly recommend creating an interim legislative subcommittee which will be presented to the Board for approval at the June meeting.

Michael Pagni, TMWA General Counsel, presented on SCR11, which proposes to create a special committee (made up of members of the Assembly and Senate) to evaluate innovation zones. The intent is that it would meet at least once a month to study the potential economic benefits of innovation zones. The committee is charged with soliciting input from interested stakeholders, including water authorities as

well as tribal governments, environmental groups, labor organizations and local governments; recommendations must be submitted to the Governor before December 31, 2021.

Leo Drozdoff, TMWA Lobbyist, updated the Board on AB146 (to address various requirements to control water pollution), working with entities in southern Nevada who had similar questions about implementation as well as Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) who has agreed to add a public hearing element to any work associated with regulations and regulatory processes, and to jointly work with entities throughout the state.

No action taken.

15. GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Foree had no other comments.

16. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

17. BOARD COMMENTS AND REQUESTS FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

There were no Board comments.

18. ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Chair Hartung adjourned the meeting at 11:59 a.m.

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

Sonia Folsom, Board Clerk.

****Member Duerr was present for agenda items 1 thru 11 only.***

*****Member Brekhus was present for agenda items 1 thru 11 only.***

******Member Jardon was present for agenda items 1 thru 14 only.***



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Zimmerman, Manager of Water Resources
DATE: June 4, 2021
SUBJECT: **Presentation of results of 2021 legislative activities and bills**

The 2021 Legislative Session ended on May 31st. Attached is a list of all bills that were passed this Session that TMWA was monitoring. Staff, TMWA lobbyist Leo Drozdoff, and General Counsel Michael Pagni will update the Board regarding the more significant bills and answer Board questions regarding other monitored bills.

BILL	DESCRIPTION	SPONSOR(S)	STATUS	PAST MEETINGS	PAST ACTION	LEG. SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS/ BOARD APPROVED
AB1	Revises provisions relating to training for Legislators. (BDR 17-438)	Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections 4/22/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB3	Revises provisions concerning the electronic transmission of certain maps and other documents relating to the approval of divisions of land. (BDR 22-406)	Committee on Government Affairs	Governor	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 3:30 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	SUPPORT
AB6	Revises provisions governing an application for a temporary change relating to appropriated water. (BDR 48-309)	Committee on Natural Resources	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/6/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	SUPPORT
AB28	Imposes an inverse preference on certain bidders for state purchasing contracts. (BDR 27-238)	Committee on Government Affairs	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB37	Revises provisions relating to the enforcement of obligations for the support of children. (BDR 3-301)	Committee on Judiciary	Enrollment	Senate Committee on Judiciary 5/25/2021 Upon Adjournment	Do pass	MONITOR
AB61	Revises provisions relating to trade practices. (BDR 52-424)	Committee on Commerce and Labor	Governor	Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/21/2021 9:30 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB65	Revises provisions relating to ethics in government. (BDR 23-257)	Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	Governor	Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections 5/30/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Do pass	MONITOR
AB87	Makes various changes to provisions governing the vacation or abandonment of certain easements. (BDR 22-460)	Nguyen and Roberts	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB95	Revises the membership of the Legislative Committee on Public Lands. (BDR 17-463)	Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections 5/13/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB97	Revises provisions governing toxic chemicals. (BDR 40-141)	Watts	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/13/2021 Upon Adjournment	Do pass	SUPPORT
AB100	Revises provisions relating to wildfires. (BDR 42-109)	Committee on Government Affairs	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB146	Revises provisions relating to water. (BDR 40-123)	Peters	Governor	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/13/2021 Upon Adjournment	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB153	Revises provisions governing performance contracts. (BDR 27-708)	Assemblywoman Bilbray-Axelrod; Senator Brooks	Governor	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB154	Revises provisions governing certain notice provided by public utilities. (BDR 58-510)	Assemblymen Roberts, Tolles, Nguyen, Watts and Monroe-Moreno; Senator Hammond	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure 5/12/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB222	Revises provisions governing employment practices. (BDR 53-739)	Torres	Governor	Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/14/2021 8:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB227	Revises provisions relating to contractors. (BDR 54-720)	Carlton	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/11/2021 8:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR

BILL	DESCRIPTION	SPONSOR(S)	STATUS	PAST MEETINGS	PAST ACTION	LEG. SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS/ BOARD APPROVED
AB250	Revises provisions relating to insurance to supplement Medicare. (BDR 57-142)	Jauregui and Hardy	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/14/2021 8:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB253	Revises provisions relating to governmental administration. (BDR 19-947)	Considine	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB325	Revises provisions relating to the recording of documents. (BDR 20-642)	Assemblymen Kasama, Titus, Leavitt, Dickman, Ellison, Hafen, Hardy, Krasner, Matthews, McArthur, O'Neill, Roberts, Tolles and Wheeler; Senators Buck and SeEVERS Gansert	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	SUPPORT
AB333	Makes changes to provisions relating to land use planning. (BDR 22-357)	Krasner, Roberts, Ellison, Hardy and O'Neill	Governor	Senate Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 3:30 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB338	Revises provisions governing the investment of certain public money in foreign bonds, notes or other obligations. (BDR 31-787)	Orentlicher	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Education 5/3/2021 1:00 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB356	Makes various changes relating to the conservation of water. (BDR S-1090)	Committee on Ways and Means	Governor	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/13/2021 Upon Adjournment	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
AB385	Revises provisions relating to compensation received by public officers and employees. (BDR 23-52)	Benitez-Thompson and Brittney Miller	Governor	Senate Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections 5/13/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
AB443	Revises the interim committee structure of the Legislature. (BDR 17-1045)	Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	Enrollment	Senate Committee on Finance 5/30/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Do pass	MONITOR
AB445	Revises provisions relating to financial administration. (BDR 18-862)	Committee on Growth and Infrastructure	Enrollment	Senate Committee on Finance 5/30/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Do pass	MONITOR
AJR2	Recognizes that the health of forests, rangelands and soils are inextricably linked to the quantity and quality of water. (BDR R-112)	Committee on Natural Resources	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/11/2021 Upon Adjournment	Do pass	SUPPORT
AJR3	Urges various actions relating to the protection and conservation of land and water. (BDR R-775)	Assemblymen González, Watts, Yeager, Cohen, Anderson, Brown-May, Flores, Brittney Miller, Nguyen and Torres; Senator Donate	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Natural Resources 5/13/2021 Upon Adjournment	Do pass	MONITOR
AJR7	Urges the Congress of the United States to pass the National Infrastructure Bank Act of 2020. (BDR R-765)	Assemblymen Bilbray-Axelrod, Peters, Anderson, Benitez-Thompson, Brown-May, Carlton, Considine, Duran, Flores, Frierson, González, Gorelow, Kasama, Krasner, Martinez, Marzola, Cameron Miller, Monroe-Moreno, Nguyen, O'Neill, Orentlicher, Summers Armstrong, Thomas, Torres, Watts and Yeager; Senators Brooks, Ohrenschall, Buck, Denis, Donate, Harris, Lange, Ratti, Scheible and SeEVERS Gansert	Secretary of State	Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure 4/28/2021 3:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR

BILL	DESCRIPTION	SPONSOR(S)	STATUS	PAST MEETINGS	PAST ACTION	LEG. SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS/ BOARD APPROVED
SB14	Revises provisions relating to certain emergency response plans and assessments. (BDR 36-280)	Committee on Government Affairs	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 9:00 AM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB18	Revises provisions governing penalties for certain violations relating to public utilities. (BDR 58-277)	Committee on Growth and Infrastructure	Governor	Assembly Committee on Growth and Infrastructure 5/13/2021 1:30 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB33	Revises certain provisions relating to natural resource management. (BDR 47-312)	Committee on Natural Resources	Governor	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources 5/12/2021 4:00 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB40	Provides for the collection of certain data relating to health care. (BDR 40-415)	Committee on Health and Human Services	Governor	Assembly Committee on Ways and Means 5/30/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Do pass	MONITOR
SB67	Creates a pilot program to gather data on the use of job order contracts for certain public works. (BDR S-400)	Committee on Government Affairs	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 9:00 AM	Without recommendation	MONITOR
SB71	Revises provisions governing unclaimed property. (BDR 10-398)	Committee on Judiciary	Governor	Assembly Committee on Judiciary 5/4/2021 9:00 AM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB107	Makes various changes relating to the statute of limitations for certain causes of action. (BDR 2-872)	Ohrenschall	Governor	Assembly Committee on Judiciary 5/14/2021 9:00 AM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB109	Revises provisions relating to the collection of certain information by governmental agencies. (BDR 19-95)	Spearman	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 9:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB141	Revises provisions relating to public works. (BDR 28-44)	Brooks	Governor	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/14/2021 12:00 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB150	Makes changes to provisions relating to housing. (BDR 22-221)	Harris, Donate, Buck, Denis and Lange	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/14/2021 9:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB247	Revises provisions relating to apprenticeships. (BDR 53-575)	Dondero Loop	Governor	Senate Committee on Finance 5/22/2021 9:00 AM	Mentioned No Jurisdiction	MONITOR
SB283	Revises provisions relating to local improvements. (BDR 22-792)	Brooks	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 9:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB289	Revises provisions relating to workers' compensation. (BDR 53-713)	Harris	Governor	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/14/2021 12:00 PM	Do pass	MONITOR
SB293	Revises provisions relating to employment. (BDR 53-907)	Senators Cannizzaro, Denis, Donate, Lange, Neal, Ohrenschall, Ratti and Scheible; Assemblywoman Duran	Governor	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/12/2021 1:00 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB294	Revises provisions governing collective bargaining by local government employers. (BDR 23-254)	Cannizzaro	Governor	Assembly Committee on Government Affairs 5/12/2021 9:00 AM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB297	Revises provisions relating to agriculture. (BDR 22-480)	Spearman	Governor	Assembly Committee on Revenue 5/28/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Do pass	MONITOR
SB327	Revises provisions relating to discriminatory practices. (BDR 53-574)	Neal and Harris	Governor	Assembly Committee on Commerce and Labor 5/12/2021 1:00 PM	Amend, and do pass as amended	MONITOR
SB368	Requires the issuance of bonds for environmental improvement projects in the Lake Tahoe Basin. (BDR S-366)	Committee on Government Affairs	Governor	Assembly Committee on Ways and Means 5/18/2021 8:00 AM	Do pass	SUPPORT
SB430	Revises provisions governing the Nevada State Infrastructure Bank. (BDR 35-1110)	Committee on Growth and Infrastructure	Governor	Assembly Committee on Ways and Means 5/29/2021 9:00 AM	Do pass	MONITOR
SCR9	Expresses support for the Nevada System of Higher Education to work collaboratively in its science and research efforts addressing the needs of the Lake Tahoe Basin. (BDR R-364)	Committee on Education	Secretary of State	Assembly Committee on Natural Resources 5/24/2021 4:00 PM	Be adopted	SUPPORT
SCR11	Creates a joint special committee to conduct a study concerning innovation zones. (BDR R-1148)	Committee on Legislative Operations and Elections	Secretary of State	Assembly Committee on Revenue 5/28/2021 Upon Call of Chair	Be adopted	MONITOR



2021 Water Supply Planning Overview

TMWA Board of Directors Meeting

Bill Hauck, Water Supply Administrator

June 16, 2021

June 01, 2021 NRCS Streamflow Forecasts

- Lake Tahoe Gates Closed Rise (GCR)

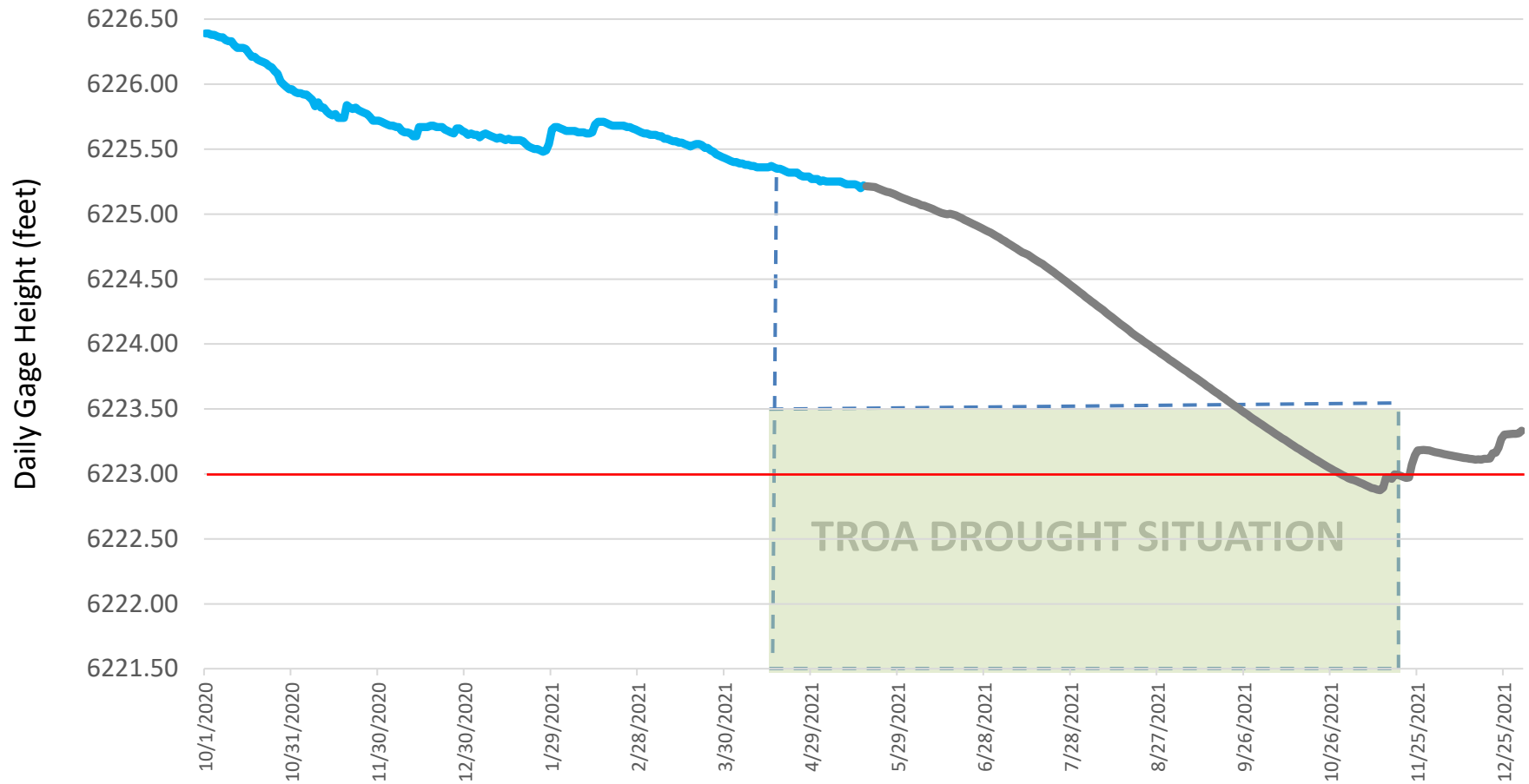
0.14' (11% Avg.) 50% COE (Apr-High)

- Truckee River at Farad, CA (A-J)

85 KAF (33% Avg.) 50% COE (Apr-Jul)



Actual and Projected Lake Tahoe Elevation through End of Year

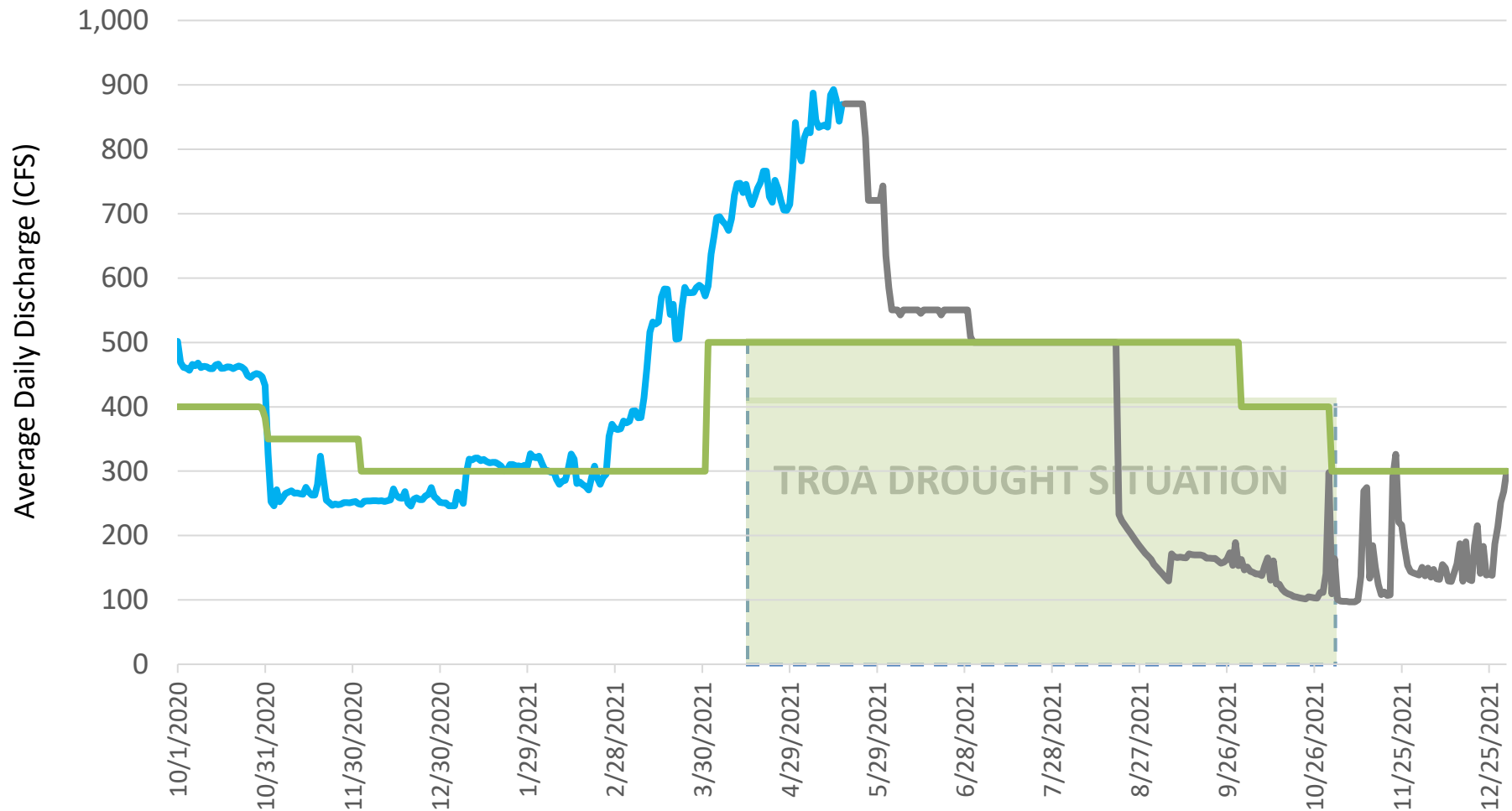




USGS Gage at Farad (CA/NV state line) #10346000



Actual and Projected Truckee River Flow at Farad through 2021



TMWA's Drought Severity Response Flowchart

NON-DROUGHT

"NORMAL"
RIVER FLOWS
(maintained
through October)

- Normal Operations
- No Drought Supplies Required
- Standard Water Conservation Campaign



DROUGHT LEVEL 1

"REDUCED"
RIVER FLOWS
(maintained
through Labor Day)

- Normal Operations
- No Drought Supplies Required
- Standard Water Conservation Campaign



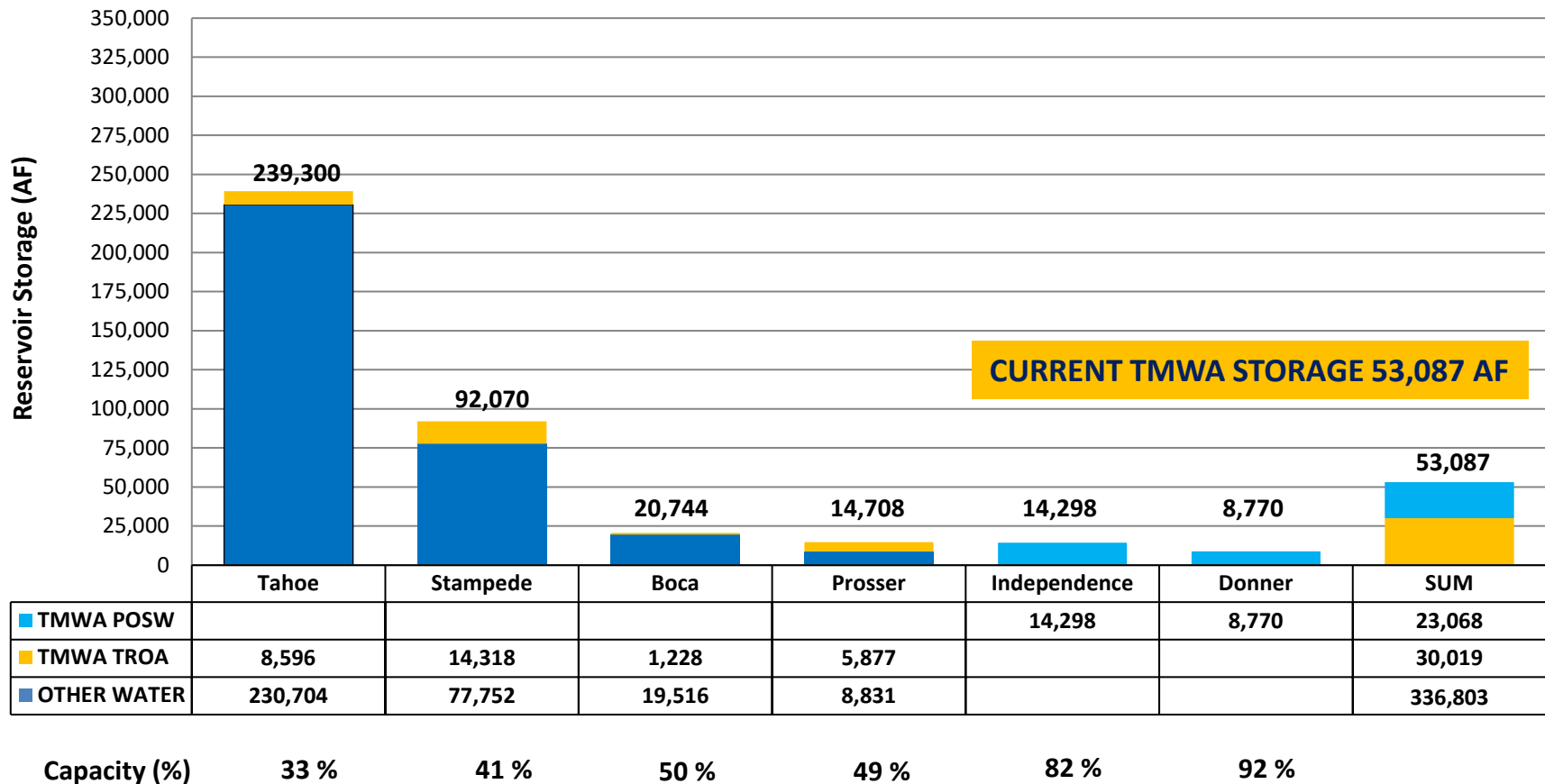
DROUGHT LEVELS 2 - 4

"REDUCED"
RIVER FLOWS
(fall short before
Labor Day)

- **Drought** Operations
- **Drought Supplies** Required
- **Enhanced** Water Conservation Campaign



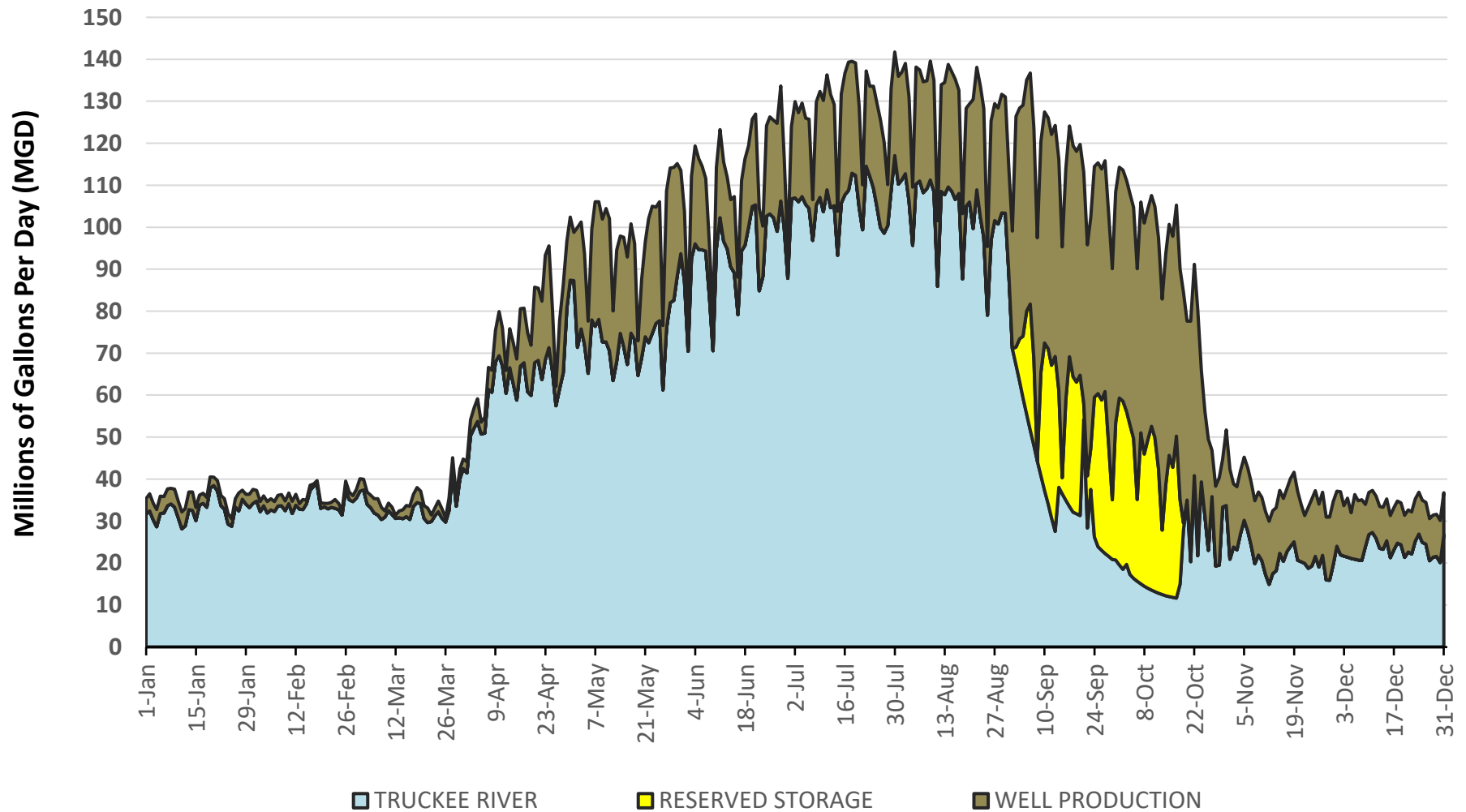
Truckee River System Storage (06/09/2021)



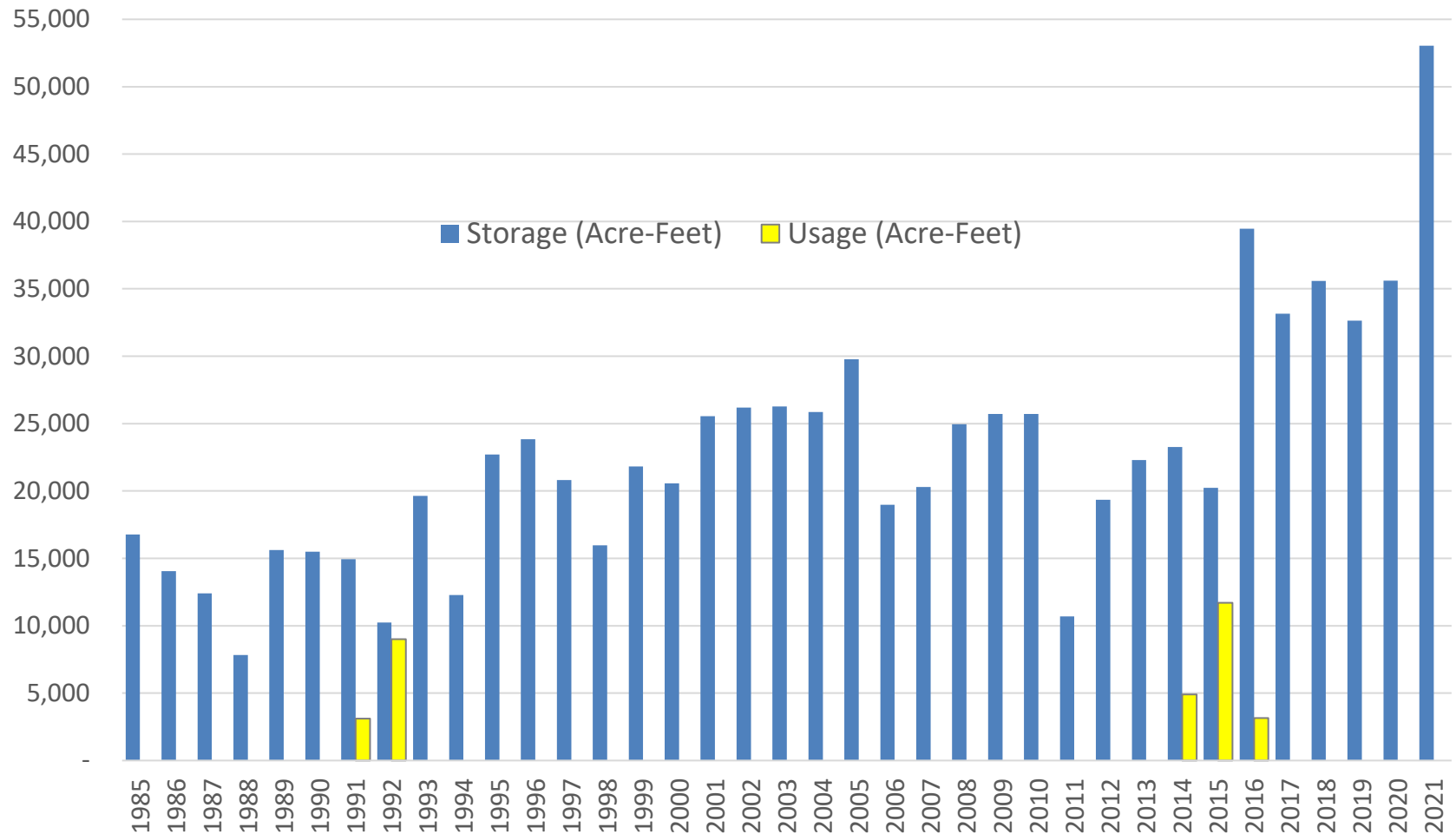
MAX SYSTEM CAPACITY 1,068,270 AF

CURRENT CAPACITY 389,890 AF (37% Capacity)

2021 TMWA Actual and Projected Sources of Supply



TMWA End of Year Storage and Use During Drought Periods







Thank you!
Questions?

Bill Hauck, Water Supply Administrator
Email: bhauck@tmwa.com
O: (775) 834-8111 M: (775) 250-1333



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Scott Estes, Director of Engineering
Danny Rotter, Engineering Manager
DATE: June 7, 2021
SUBJECT: **Presentation and informational report on proposed future adjustments to Schedule WSF and BSF Fees**

Summary:

Facility Charges (connection fees) and New Business Fees were last updated in 2018. Staff recommends that we once again analyze New Business Fees and Facility Charges to determine if revisions to Rate Schedule WSF (Water System Facility Charges) and Rate Schedule BSF (Business Services Fees) are warranted. In the previous update cycle, several developers complained that they were not given sufficient time to obtain approval of their projects prior to the implementation of revised Fees and Facility Charges. In consideration of these concerns, Staff would like to establish reasonable time frames for completing the analysis and implementing potential revisions as early as possible in the review process.

Background:

Rate Schedule WSF contains Area Fee and Facility Charge Unit Costs which are used to calculate fees that TMWA collects from new development to reimburse the utility for regional facility improvements installed by TMWA to meet the demands of new growth. Area Fee Unit Costs, Supply and Treatment Facility Unit Costs, and Storage Facility Unit Costs apply only to developers applying for new or expanded water service, and do not affect the costs or rates to serve existing customers. In other words, pursuant to prior Board direction on customer rates: growth pays for growth.

Area Fee Unit Costs are applied on a maximum day demand and geographic basis based on the cost to expand the capacity of the water system in specific areas where growth is occurring.

The process to update the Developer Fees are as follows:

1. Utilizing the current Water Facility Plan determine if recommended improvements are still applicable and/or if new/additional improvements are required.
2. Review historical construction costs and recent bid results. Modify and/or add facility cost estimates as needed.
3. Update estimated facility costs with actual costs where applicable.
4. Update Facility Charges and Area Fees collected.
5. Update the GPM added/sold in each Area.
6. Calculate New Unit Costs:

Actual Costs Allocated to Growth	
+ Applicable Finance Charges	
+ Estimated Cost of Future Facilities	Expected Growth (GPM)
- <u>Fees Collected</u>	- <u>GPM Added/Sold</u>
= Remaining Cost of Growth	= Remaining GPM

Remaining Cost of Growth ÷ Remaining GPM = Unit Cost (\$/GPM)

Actual Fee Paid \$\$ = Unit Cost (\$/GPM) x Max Day Demand (GPM)

A list of historical facility costs is attached to this report. Staff was anticipating a relatively non-contentious update cycle this time around; however, it appears significant construction cost increases are occurring on a level very similar to what we experienced in 2006-2007. The preliminary implications are disconcerting to say the least, but to be conservative and to acknowledge COVID-19 impacts to supply chains and material prices, staff proposes using the construction unit costs highlighted at the bottom of the historical facility costs list when updating facility cost estimates. Engineering/Construction Management costs, overheads and construction contingencies will be added to the construction cost to arrive at a total project cost estimate.

In addition to Facility Charges, we will also analyze our New Business Fees. Finance has been developing specialized reports that will pull new business labor costs directly from timesheet data and new business fees collected from our finance systems. The new process should result in a significant increase in accuracy when determining new business costs.

Staff proposes the following schedule for this process:

Announcement of Purpose and Schedule:	June 16, 2021
Complete WSF and BSF Analyses:	August 1, 2021
BANN I&P Committee Presentation:	August 2021 (date TBD)
NAIOP Comm. Real Estate Developers Assoc.:	September 2021 (date TBD)
Public Workshop:	September 2021 (date TBD)
Standing Advisory Committee Presentation:	October 5, 2021
First Reading – TMWA Board Meeting:	November 18, 2021
Second Reading – TMWA Board Meeting:	December 15, 2021
Implementation of Revised Rates:	January 3, 2022

RECENT HISTORICAL FACILITY COSTS - 2021 UPDATE CYCLE

Water Mains:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Diameter</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/in-LF</u>	
Caughlin-Mayberry Tie	2013	20	3460	\$1,317,402	\$19.04	
Lemmon Drive	2016	24	27630	\$9,635,646	\$14.53	
North Valleys Integ.	2016	18	2550	\$798,328	\$17.39	
Stead Ph. 2	2017	20	11880	\$3,251,300	\$13.68	
Arrowcreek Prkwy	2019	16	8100	\$2,508,370	\$19.35	
Verdi Main Extn.	2019	18	2700	\$1,444,052	\$29.71	no river xing
California-Marsh	2020	24	3500	\$2,332,324	\$27.77	
Boomtown Intertie	2021	16	1660	\$795,751	\$29.96	no J&B, no BPS
			AVG =	\$21.43	per in-LF	

Pump Stations:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>(gpm)</u>	<u>Hp</u>	<u>Cost</u>	
Sutro #2	2016	2450	125	\$992,901	
Satellite Hills	2017	1500	90	\$1,684,429	
D'Andrea #3	2018	1750	240	\$1,184,438	
Gulling (K-Row#1 Repl.)	2020			\$2,144,289	no pipeline costs
Disc Drive	2021			\$2,821,459	no pipeline costs
Common (Stonegate)	2022				
			AVG =	\$1,765,503	

Wells:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Hp</u>	<u>(gpm)</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/gpm</u>	
Huffaker PI Well	2016	60	600	\$1,303,284	\$2,172	equipping only - no drilling/casing
Innovation Well	2016	100	600	\$1,941,701	\$3,236	equipping only - no drilling/casing
Double Diamond 3 Well	2016	250	1800	\$1,733,427	\$963	equipping only - no drilling/casing
Callamont North	2023		400			
			AVG =	\$1,659,471		(drilling varies from \$500K-\$1M)

Storage Tanks:

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>(MG)</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>\$/gallon</u>	
Somerset #1	2005	2	PSC	\$2,499,281	\$1.25	
Pyramid	2007	4	STL	\$4,844,749	\$1.21	
Raleigh #3	2007	4	STL	\$3,722,356	\$0.93	
Hunter Creek Res	2008	4	STL	\$4,260,803	\$1.07	
Peavine	2018	2	STL	\$2,038,961	\$1.02	no excavation, minor sitework
STMGID East	2022	3.7	STL			not under construction yet
Caughlin #2	2023	1	STL			2 @ 500K gallons each
			AVG =	\$1.10	per Gallon	
Ridgeview	2006	1.5	PSC	\$5,531,292	\$3.69	not included in average cost

Summary - Construction Costs:

Pipeline	\$25	/dia in-LF	(assume current spike is extreme)
BPS	\$2,200,000	ea.	(Disc Dr is very tight site)
Wells	\$1,750,000	ea.	(may be light?, Callamont coming)
Tanks	\$1.1	gallon	(may be light?)



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
FROM: Andy Gebhardt, Director of Operations and Water Quality
DATE: June 16, 2021
SUBJECT: Discussion and action on transfer of surplus real property located at 1905 E. 4th Street, Reno, Nevada to Washoe County for no consideration and request for adoption of Resolution No. 294: A resolution to approve donation of surplus real property to Washoe County

DISCUSSION

TMWA owns 31,161 SF of land in Reno, located at 1905 E. 4th street (APN 008-382-01). This land is next to our 4th Street Well property, and currently serves no useful purpose for TMWA. It is located directly adjacent to the new CARES Campus facility for the homeless.

Since July of 2019, we have allowed the City of Reno to utilize this parcel as first a temporary nutrition site for the homeless, then subsequently as a location for the temporary homeless shelter while the CARES Campus was being constructed. The CARES Campus is a vital piece in providing resources and shelter for the homeless, and this parcel would provide some much needed land to expand that care.

The homeless camping along the Truckee River is currently of great concern to TMWA. With over 80% of our drinking water coming from the Truckee River, naturally the water quality of that source and our ability to safely treat that water is always in the forefront of our thoughts. The amount of human waste and needles that end up in the intake structures of our Treatment Facilities on a daily basis is daunting, and employee safety concerns, particularly at night, are increasing as there have been more and more instances of the homeless population brandishing weapons in the presence of our employees. In addition, the number of people that are finding their way onto our property, despite the locked gates and barbed wire topped fences, is increasing and alarming.

TMWA, and our customers, would directly benefit from the success of the CARES Campus as it would provide a location for shelter for the homeless that is not along the Truckee River.

RECOMMENDATION

This property currently serves no useful purpose to TMWA and would provide the CARES Campus with much needed land to expand their care and services to the homeless population.

If the Board adopts a resolution that the transfer is in the best interest of TMWA, then no appraisal or bidding process is required because the land is being transferred to another governmental entity.

Staff recommends the Board determine that the transfer is in the best interest of TMWA and adopt Resolution No. 294.

Attachments:

Exhibit Map
GM Certification
Resolution No. 294



**TRUCKEE MEADOWS
WATER AUTHORITY
1905 E. 4TH STREET
APN: 008-382-01**



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
FROM: Mark Foree, General Manager
DATE: June 16, 2021
SUBJECT: **Certification Pursuant to Surplus Property Disposal Policy –
1905 E. 4th Street Property – APN: 008-382-01**

The General Manager hereby certifies to the Board of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority that the real property commonly referred to as the 1905 E. 4th Street Property, which is more-particularly described in the attached Exhibit A, is not useful or necessary for the efficient operation of the water system and may be considered surplus property for purposes of the TMWA disposal policy as it is to be transferred to Washoe County, another governmental entity. This certification is made for the purpose of facilitating a transfer of the subject property in accordance with the foregoing policy.

Dated: June 16, 2021


By: 
Mark Foree, General Manager

EXHIBIT A

REAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

All that certain real property situate in the City of Reno, Washoe County, Nevada, as follows:

Commencing at a point on the East line of Section Twelve (12), in Township Nineteen (19) North, Range Nineteen (19), East M.D.B.&M., where the same is intersected by the North line of right of way of the State Highway leading from Reno to Sparks; running thence North, along the East line of said Section Twelve (12) , a distance of 146.7 feet; thence West a distance of 242.4 feet; thence South a distance of 103.7 feet to the North line of the said highway right of way; thence Easterly, along the North line of said highway right of way, a distance of 243.45 feet, more or less, to the Point of Beginning; said premises being a portion of Lot One (1) of the Northeast quarter (NE ¼) of Section Twelve (12), Township Nineteen (19) North, Range Nineteen (19) East, M.D.B. & M.

[The above metes and bounds description previously appeared in that document recorded July 15, 2014 in Document No. 4373420]

APN: 008-382-01

TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION NO. 294

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING TRANSFER OF 31,161 SF OF SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY
LOCATED AT 1905 E. 4TH STREET IN RENO, NEVADA TO WASHOE COUNTY FOR NO
CONSIDERATION**

WHEREAS, Authority owns the real property located at 1905 E. 4th Street in Reno, Nevada, and which is more-particularly described on the attached Exhibit A (Property). The Authority has determined that this Property is not useful or necessary for the efficient operation of the water system and may be considered surplus property for purposes of the TMWA disposal policy.

WHEREAS, Authority desires to transfer the Property to Washoe County, another governmental entity, for no consideration.

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Authority's surplus property disposal policy, the General Manager or its designee is authorized to sell, transfer and convey real property that is not otherwise necessary for the operation of the Water System if it is in the best interest of the Authority.

WHEREAS, the General Manager has certified in writing to the Board that the Property is being transferred to another governmental agency.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS
WATER AUTHORITY DOES RESOLVE:**

1. The Property is not useful or necessary for the efficient operation of the water system and may be considered surplus property for purposes of the TMWA disposal policy.
2. The transfer of the Property to Washoe County is in the best interest of Authority and is appropriate and justified;
3. The transfer of the Property for no consideration is hereby approved.

Upon motion of _____, seconded by _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted this 16th day of June, 2021, by the following vote of the Board:

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

Abstain: _____ Absent: _____

Approved this 16th day of June, 2021

Chairman

EXHIBIT A

REAL PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

All that certain real property situate in the City of Reno, Washoe County, Nevada, as follows:
Commencing at a point on the East line of Section Twelve (12), in Township Nineteen (19) North, Range Nineteen (19), East M.D.B.&M., where the same is intersected by the North line of right of way of the State Highway leading from Reno to Sparks; running thence North, along the East line of said Section Twelve (12) , a distance of 146.7 feet; thence West a distance of 242.4 feet; thence South a distance of 103.7 feet to the North line of the said highway right of way; thence Easterly, along the North line of said highway right of way, a distance of 243.45 feet, more or less, to the Point of Beginning; said premises being a portion of Lot One (1) of the Northeast quarter (NE ¼) of Section Twelve (12), Township Nineteen (19) North, Range Nineteen (19) East, M.D.B. & M. [The above metes and bounds description previously appeared in that document recorded July 15, 2014 in Document No. 4373420]

APN: 008-382-01



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Pat Nielson, Director Distribution & Generation
DATE: June 4, 2021
SUBJECT: **Discussion and action on request for adoption of Resolution No. 295: A resolution to approve donation of surplus vehicle to The Nature Conservancy for Independence Lake management activities**

Recommendation

Staff recommends the approval of the donation of a surplus vehicle to The Nature Conservancy (TNC), a nonprofit corporation.

Summary

TNC has inquired if TMWA would consider the donation of a surplus vehicle for their use in and around Independence Lake. TMWA does occasionally have surplus vehicles as we cycle through our vehicle replacement program. We will have a 2008 Dodge ½ ton standard cab pickup with about 68,300 miles available sometime this summer.

NRS 332.185 authorizes local governments to dispose of personal property “by any manner” once it is no longer required for public use, including by donation to a nonprofit organization. Similarly, TMWA’s surplus property disposal policy authorizes the Board to donate personal property to a nonprofit corporation if the property has reached the end of its useful life. Under our surplus property disposal policy, the General Manager must certify that the property is “not useful or has ceased to be necessary for the efficient operation of the Water System” and the Board must approve the donation by resolution if the value of the property exceeds \$2,500. Because we are considering this a donation and it has a value of more than \$2,500.00 dollars it requires Board of Directors approval.

Background

The vehicle that will become available is currently used by the Fleet and Warehouse Coordinator in his daily duties. This vehicle is being replaced with a 1-ton super cab flatbed truck to help facilitate the movement of materials for our warehouse stock. The current vehicle is a half-ton vehicle and is not suitable for moving of palletized material.

If TMWA were to donate a truck to TNC for use at Independence Lake Preserve, the vehicle would be used to advance multiple ongoing efforts aimed at achieving goals shared by both organizations. TNC's property surrounds this TMWA water supply resource and most of the property management activities are linked to protection of that resource. Those activities include:

- Quagga mussel monitoring: Each year the lake is monitored for the presence of quagga mussels, which requires a truck to move a boat and other monitoring equipment monthly during the season. The introduction of quagga mussels to the lake would be harmful to the aquatic environment and potentially harmful to water delivery infrastructure.
- Water craft program operation: As a key part of TNC's efforts to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species to the lake, it does not allow the public to bring any type of water craft to the Preserve. Since there is a history of use of water craft at the lake and an ongoing public demand for water craft at the lake, TNC maintains an in-basin fleet of watercraft for public use. A truck is also used for moving those water craft to and from on-site storage, seasonally, as well as to obtain gas and other supplies necessary to sustain the water craft program.
- Forest restoration and management: Ongoing forest restoration efforts at the Preserve are partly aimed at reducing the threat of wildfire and the subsequent threat of sediment, ash, and debris transport to the lake. TNC staff also require a truck for project management and oversight, during these forest thinning and prescribed burning activities.
- General property management: TNC staff need a truck for general facilities maintenance and other property maintenance activities, including patrolling the property to ensure the public is not using the Preserve in inappropriate ways, such as camping and building campfires.

TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY
(TMWA)

RESOLUTION NO. 295

**A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE DONATION OF SURPLUS VEHICLE
TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY FOR
INDEPENDENCE LAKE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

WHEREAS, NRS 332.185 and Authority's surplus property disposal policy authorize Authority to donate surplus personal property to a nonprofit organization created for religious, charitable or education purpose for a selected purpose.

WHEREAS, Authority desires to donate a surplus vehicle, 2008 Dodge ½ ton standard cab pickup ("2008 Dodge"), valued at more than \$2,500, to The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, for Independence Lake management activities linked to the protection of Independence Lake resources.

WHEREAS, Authority has determined the surplus vehicle is not useful or necessary for the efficient operation of the water system and may be considered surplus property for purposes of the TMWA disposal policy. Authority has deemed the donation of surplus vehicle is in the best interest of the Authority; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Authority's surplus property disposal policy, the General Manager or its designee is authorized to donate personal property to that is not otherwise necessary for the operation of the Water System to a nonprofit organization if it is in the best interest of the Authority; and

WHEREAS, the General Manager has certified in writing to the Board that the surplus vehicle, 2008 Dodge, is no longer of use to the Authority's water system.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY DOES RESOLVE:

1. The 2008 Dodge surplus vehicle is not useful or necessary for the efficient operation of the water system and may be considered surplus property for the purposes of the TMWA disposal policy; and
2. The donation of the 2008 Dodge surplus vehicle to The Nature Conservancy, a nonprofit organization, for purposes of management and protection of Independence Lake for no consideration is in the best interest of Authority and is appropriate and justified; and
3. The donation of the 2008 Dodge for no consideration is hereby approved.

Upon motion of _____, seconded by _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted on June 16, 2021 by the following vote of the Board:

Truckee Meadows Water Authority
Resolution No. 295 (continued)

Ayes: _____

Nays: _____

Abstain: _____ Absent: _____

Approved: June 16, 2021.

Vaughn Hartung, Chairman



TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Mark Foree, TMWA General Manager
DATE: June 8, 2021
SUBJECT: Discussion and action on nomination and election of Chairman and Vice Chairman of TMWA Board of Directors and request for Board adoption of Resolution No. 296 appointing a Chairman and Vice Chairman for Fiscal Year 2022

The Cooperative Agreement forming TMWA requires the Board to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman to serve one year terms coinciding with the fiscal year. Said appointments would take effect July 1, 2021 and continue through June 30, 2022.

TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION NO. 296

A RESOLUTION TO APPOINT OFFICERS

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority Cooperative Agreement among the City of Reno, City of Sparks, and County of Washoe, the Board of Directors is required to appoint a chairman and a vice chairman from its membership; and

WHEREAS, the officers appointed are to hold office for a period of one year commencing the first day of each fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the last day of the current fiscal year is June 30, 2021, and the terms of the current officers will expire as of that date,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby appoints:

_____ to serve as its chairman for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021.

Upon motion of _____, second by _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted June 16, 2021, by the following vote of the Board:

Ayes: _____
Nays: _____

Abstain: _____
Absent: _____

and

_____ to serve as its vice-chairman for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2021.

Upon motion of _____, second by _____, the foregoing Resolution was passed and adopted June 16, 2021, by the following vote of the Board:

Ayes: _____
Nays: _____
Abstain: _____
Absent: _____

Approved June 16, 2021

Chairman Vaughn Hartung
Truckee Meadows Water Authority



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
FROM: Mark Foree, General Manager
DATE: Jun 8, 2021
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 May 13, 2020 through June 9, 2021.



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Scott Estes, Director of Engineering
BY: Bill Hauck, Water Supply Administrator
DATE: June 08, 2021
SUBJECT: June 2021 Operations Report

Summary

- Lake Tahoe storage is @ 33% of capacity
- Combined total upstream reservoir storage is 37% of maximum capacity
- Customer demands averaged 108 MGD last week
- Hydroelectric revenue for May 2021 is estimated to be \$300,391

(A) Water Supply

- **River Flows** - Truckee River flows at the CA/NV state line were approximately 823 cubic feet per second (CFS) this morning. This is below average for this time of the year as the 112-year average flow at Farad is 1,410 CFS.
- **Reservoir Storage** - Truckee River reservoir storage is ~37% of capacity. The elevation of Lake Tahoe is 6225.00 feet (2.00' above minimum storage elevation). Storage values for each reservoir as of June 8th are as follows:

Reservoir	Current Storage (Acre-Feet)	% of Capacity (Percent)
Tahoe	243,000	33%
Boca	20,625	50%
Stampede	92,246	41%
Prosser	14,703	49%
Donner	8,787	92%
Independence	14,305	82%

In addition to approximately 23,100 acre-feet of storage in Donner and Independence reservoirs, TMWA has about 29,830 acre-feet of water stored between Lake Tahoe, Boca, and Stampede reservoirs under the terms of TROA. TMWA's total combined upstream reservoir storage is approximately 52,930 acre-feet (as of June 8th).

- **Runoff Forecast** - The season ending (June 01) NRCS runoff forecast is exceptionally below average for Lake Tahoe @ 11% of normal, and significantly below average for the Truckee River at Farad @ 33% of average. As a result, model runs are projecting that the required rate of flow at the CA/NV state line will begin to fall short by the middle of August.
- **Outlook** - The region is firmly entrenched in its second straight drought year. As the required rate of flow at the CA/NV state line is projected to be met only through mid-August, TMWA is making plans to release drought reserves from upstream reservoirs in order to augment river flows and help meet customer demand. Seven or 8 weeks of these supplemental releases are projected to be needed. Lake Tahoe is expected to be at or below its natural rim by the end of October, meaning that all of the carry-over storage in Lake Tahoe will likely be exhausted. With very little or no carry-over storage remaining in Tahoe by the end of the year, Truckee River flows for next summer will be entirely dependent upon the outcome of next winter.

(B) Water Production

- **Demand** - TMWA's customer demand averaged 108 million gallons per day (MGD) last week. Overall, surface water made up ~87% of our supply and groundwater the other 13%.

(C) Hydro Production

Generation - Truckee River flows at Farad (CA/NV state line) for the month of May 2021 averaged 823 CFS. Both the Fleish and Verdi power plants were on-line and available the entire month (100% availability). The Washoe Power plant was able come back into service running for the last 12 days of the month as the flume rebuild was completed. Statistics for the month as follows:

Hydro Plant	Days On-Line	Generation (Megawatt hours)	Est. Revenue (Dollars)	Est. Revenue (Dollars/Day)
Fleish	31	1,765	\$ 131,860	\$ 4,254
Verdi	31	1,723	\$ 127,519	\$ 4,114
Washoe	12	548	\$ 41,012	\$ 1,323
Totals	74	4,036	\$ 300,391	\$ 9,691



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Zimmerman, Manager, Water Resources
DATE: June 8, 2021
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		3,649.18 AF
Purchases of water rights	2.00 AF	
Refunds	0.00 AF	
Sales	– 11.22 AF	
Adjustments	0.00 AF	
Ending Balance		3,639.96 AF

Price per acre foot at report date: \$7,700

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		7,672.32 AF
Committed water rights	– 13.41 AF	
Ending Balance		7,658.91 AF

Price per acre foot at report date: \$41,500 (for SFR and MFR); \$36,000 (for all other services)¹

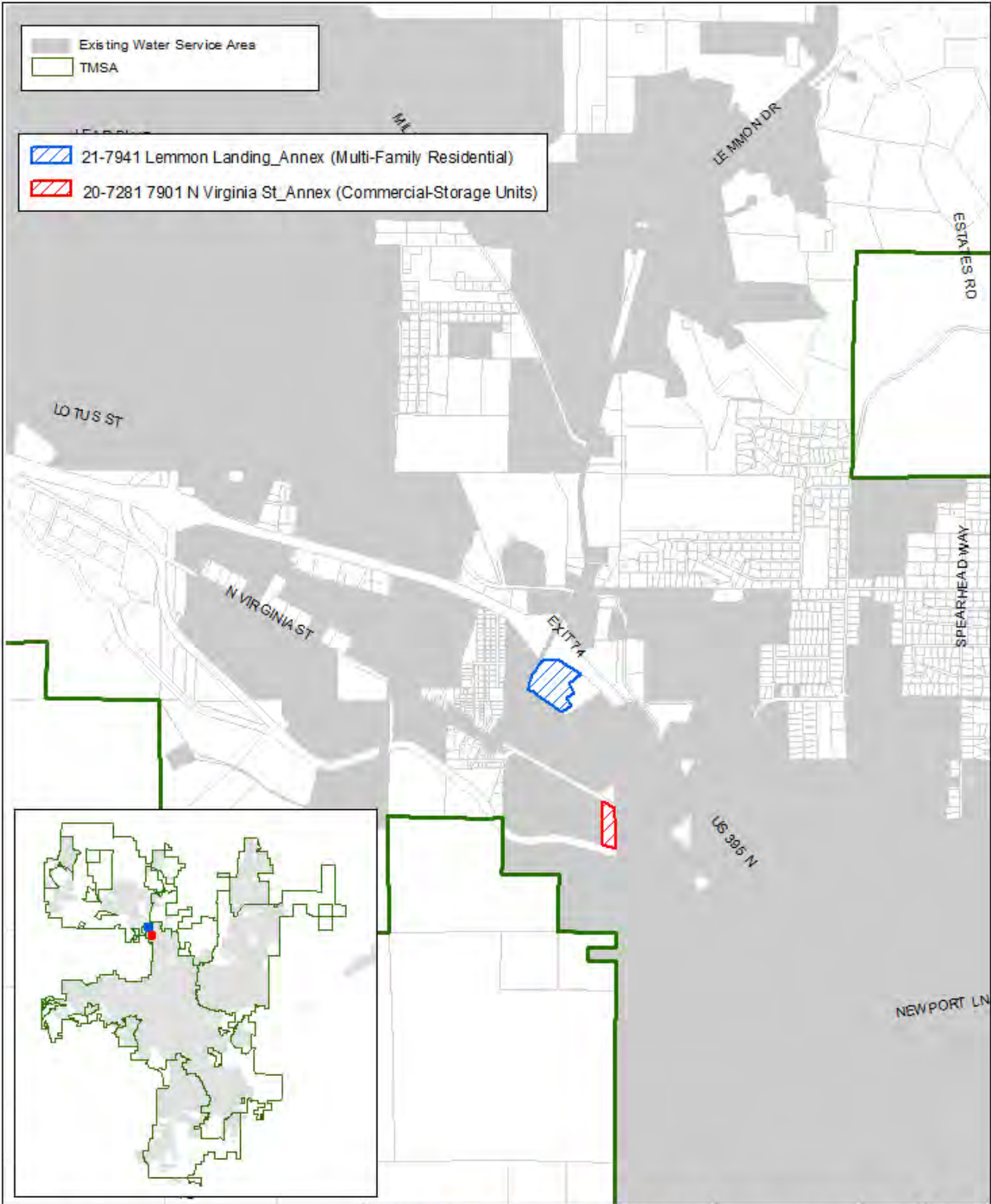
WATER SERVICE AREA ANNEXATIONS

Since the date of the last report there have been two annexations (19.93-acre multi-family residential and 6.69-acre commercial) (see attached map).

INTERRUPTIBLE LARGE VOLUME NON-POTABLE SERVICE

No new ILVNPS customers have been added during this reporting period.

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



 TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY <i>Quality. Delivered.</i>	TMWA Service Area Annexation	DATE: 08/09/2021	 NAD 83 NEVADA STATE PLANE WEST FEET
	APN: 570-081-27 (19.93 acres)	MAP BY: AD	
	APN: 082-270-24 (6.69 acres)	REQUESTED BY: JZ	
	SCALE: 1 inch = 3,000 feet		



STAFF REPORT

TO: Board of Directors
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: Marci Westlake, Manager Customer Service
DATE: June 16, 2021
SUBJECT: May Customer Service Report

The following is a summary of Customer Service activity for May 2021.

Ombudsman

- Customer called and wanted information on Water Supply-

Communications

- May 3rd Bill Hauck held a virtual Water Supply Outlook for Rotary Club of Reno, and TMWA staff and 30 people attended.
- May 13th Bill Hauck held a virtual Water Supply Outlook and TMWA staff and 30 people attended.
- May 20th Bill Hauck held a virtual Media Water Supply Outlook for Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce, and TMWA staff and 20 people attended.
- May 21st Bill Hauck held a virtual Stakeholder Water Supply Outlook, and TMWA staff and 15 people attended.
- May 25th Bill Hauck held a virtual Water Supply Outlook for Rotary Club Central Reno, and TMWA staff and 30 people attended.
- May 25th Kara Steeland and Matt Bowman held a virtual Integrated Planning session for the Environmental Finance Center and 25 people attended.

Conservation (2021 Calendar year)

- 439 Water Watcher Contacts
- 347 Water Usage Reviews

Customer Calls –May

- 7,972 phone calls handled
- Average handling time -5 minutes, 49 seconds per call

- Average speed of answer –5minutes 21 seconds per call

Billing –May

- 127,625 bills issued.
- N/A (0.00%) corrected bills.
- 6,570 customers (3%) have signed up for paperless billing to date.

Service Orders May (% is rounded)

- N/A service orders taken due to new CIS

Remittance –May

- 24,133 mailed-in payments
- 6,908 electronic payments
- 43,997 payments via AutpPay (EFT)
- 20,727 one-time bank account payments
- 2,942 credit card payments
- 134 store payments
- N/A payments via drop box or at front desk

Collections –May

- 19,699 accounts received a late charge
- 4,224 Mailed delinquent notices,
- 494 accounts eligible for disconnect
- 297 account were disconnected (including accounts that had been disconnected-for-non-payment that presented NSF checks for their reconnection)
- .04 % write-off to revenue

Meter Statistics – Fiscal Year to Date

- 0 Meter retrofits completed
- 3,551 Meter exchanges completed
- 1,981 New business meter sets completed
- 131,297 Meters currently installed

NOWCAST

Watch on Demand



Julie Brown / SFGATE



Lake Tahoe's waters are so low now, some boats can't be launched. It could get worse.

By Julie Brown , SFGATE

, — Amid drought conditions across the Sierra Nevada and California, Lake Tahoe is 2.5 feet lower than it was at this time last year, according to water data collected in Tahoe City on May 11.

“That’s definitely a significant drop,” said U.S. District Court Water Master Chad Blanchard, who is based in Reno, Nevada.

Lake Tahoe’s water typically gets a boost from spring’s snowmelt. But as of May 11, the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada has virtually melted, and Lake Tahoe’s water levels are the lowest they’ve been in five years, [according to USGS data. Snow surveys on May 11 indicate California’s snowpack is just 6% of average for this date.](#)

Barring significant precipitation this summer, Tahoe is on track to reach a critical low point, with lake levels reaching the rim by late summer, Blanchard told SFGATE. Water levels in Tahoe are based on the elevation of the lake’s surface. The natural rim of Lake Tahoe — a baseline measurement — is at 6,223 feet in elevation. The dam in Tahoe City was built to create a reservoir atop Lake Tahoe, holding an additional 6 feet of water above the rim elevation.

“Last year was a dry year to begin with,” Blanchard said.

A good winter in 2019 filled up Lake Tahoe. Typically, a big winter that fills the lake will carry Tahoe through several dry years, Blanchard said. But with a dry 2020 and what’s shaping up to be an even drier 2021, the lake is looking like it will drop to the rim sooner than expected.

“We’re going to have one of the lowest runoffs that we’ve seen,” Blanchard said. He points to last summer’s lack of precipitation, followed by the absence of rain in fall and then a below-average winter. As well, the moisture content in the soil has been low, which means a lot of the snowmelt was absorbed into the ground before it could run off.

In short, this past winter didn't do much to fill up the lake.

The top 6 feet of water in Lake Tahoe is the largest reservoir in the Truckee River watershed, explains Blanchard. Tahoe holds about 750,000 acre-feet of water for Blanchard to release downstream on the Truckee River, Lake Tahoe's only outlet. Blanchard manages the release of the water to meet targeted flows downstream. As well, the Truckee River watershed provides drinking water to Reno and also supplies water to sustain threatened and endangered species at Pyramid Lake, including the Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Since record keeping began in 1900, Lake Tahoe's lowest measurement was taken on Nov. 30, 1992, when the lake's water levels were nearly 3 feet below the rim, at 6,220.26 feet. At its highest, Tahoe's surface was measured at 6,231 feet of elevation in 1907.

On May 11, Lake Tahoe's water levels were measured in Tahoe City at just over 6,225 feet.

Lake Tahoe plays the top-tier role in sustaining the Truckee River watershed. However, the reserve of water in Lake Tahoe is shallow — remember it's just the top 6 feet or so of water on the lake. So, to complicate the scenario further, when lake levels approach the rim, its flow downriver weakens. Even though Tahoe's reserve still has tens of thousands of acre-feet of water to draw from, Blanchard said it's hard to draw water from Tahoe when it gets this low.

"So even though there's a significant amount of water still in the lake, you can't get very much out," Blanchard said.

Even after Lake Tahoe hits the natural rim, water levels may continue to go down. Evaporation is the biggest cause of drops in the lake, Blanchard said. "More water is released into the atmosphere than is ever released out the gate," Blanchard said. "So any time evaporation is greater than inflow, the lake is going to drop."

Tahoe's low water levels are due in part to a below-average winter, but 2020's dry summer also played a large role. Blanchard pointed out the absence of cloud cover and humidity last summer, which play a role to reduce evaporation on the lake.

Lake Tahoe is so low that already, a boat ramp in South Lake Tahoe will not open this year.

The city of South Lake Tahoe announced last week the boat ramp at El Dorado Beach will not open this year to motorized vessels. "At this time, the water is too low to safely launch a motorized boat at this location," the city stated on its website.

On the other side of the lake, a spokesperson from the North Tahoe Public Utility District said the water is knee-deep at the Tahoe Vista boat ramp. In Tahoe Vista, the lake is shallow, with two sandbars that make it hard for larger vessels to launch. The district is evaluating whether it will be able to open the ramp this summer because the lake is so low. There are six public launch boat ramps around Lake Tahoe.

The one silver lining — if there is one — is that Tahoe's beaches will be larger than normal this summer.



Photography by
Jarrette Werk

RESTORE AND PROTECT: Brian Wohlgemuth and other River Justice activists collect trash along the Truckee River.

RIVER JUSTICE

[desert companion](#) Essay

May 11, 2021 by Avory Wyatt and Jarrette Werk

Native water protectors show the way to care for houseless community members and the environment. Can non-natives follow?

Editor's note: Avory Wyatt is Wašiw and Numu, and grew up on the Hungry Valley Reservation in Sparks. He's a land defender, water protector, and social justice activist who has worked closely with both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Jarrette Werk is A'aniih and Nakoda from Fort Belknap, Montana, and has been living in Northern Nevada since 2014. He's an independent journalist and photographer who focuses on rewriting the narrative of Indigenous Peoples within the media. Wyatt and Werk are assistant producers for KNPR's Native Nevada podcast.

RENO/SPARKS— Autumn Harry, of Pyramid Lake, asked us to join her at the Sparks Marina on February 4 to celebrate the birthday of her mother, Beverly Harry. Beverly wanted to celebrate by giving back to our unsheltered relatives along the Truckee River.

Beverly, Autumn, and 15 community members and volunteers, including us, came together to make Beverly's wish come true. That morning, we prepared and distributed 120 burritos, dog and cat food, propane, firewood, trash bags, and other supplies to the encampments along the river.

"We organized a small roundup with trash bags, food, burritos, and different supplies that we would need to pick up trash. But we're mainly just concentrating on reconnaissance, trying to figure out what these individuals on the river needed, and how we could be better companions to them," says Beverly, who is Diné and serves as the native community organizer for the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada. "We were trying to address this as a relationship-building event, and then also not to be critical of the way that they lived, (and learn) how we could bring better understanding to what was happening on the river with the issues that they were facing."



Photography by
Jarrette Werk

CLEAN SCENES

Snapshots from the Feb. 4 River Justice cleanup along the Truckee River. Volunteers picked

CLEAN SCENE

Snapshots from

What began as a birthday wish to provide food and supplies to the most vulnerable populations living along the Truckee River blossomed into an Indigenous-led movement to establish collective justice for all the communities that rely on the Truckee River system.

Autumn, who is Numu and Diné, grew up on the rural Pyramid Lake Reservation with her mother and late father, Norm Harry, and didn't spend a lot of time in the urban settings of Reno or Sparks. Instead, she spent most of her time with her parents exploring the sagebrush-covered mountains or the turquoise waters of Pyramid Lake.

While distributing food and supplies to the houseless camps along the river, she got to know some of the people living there. She also saw how much trash had accumulated.

"That was a big eye-opener for us who do live at Pyramid lake, because we're concerned about the water quality and what's coming down the river because of our fish species," says Autumn, who works as the campaign strategist for Great Basin Water Network.

"Because there is a disconnection between the reservation and the cities of Reno and Sparks, I think a lot of our people aren't seeing those impacts directly."

It is striking to see firsthand. While we were distributing supplies to the camps, we noticed large amounts of trash near the water's edge, human feces in containers, and used needles littering the dirt and bushes.

The experience sparked something in our group. We came together to make a change and help the river. Within a few days, River Justice was born. The first cleanup, titled Protect River, Protect Life, attracted almost 90 volunteers. Beverly coined the term "River Otters" for team members. She describes the overall focus of River Justice as providing a voice for the river and addressing the injustices on the river that begin with the behavior, mindset, ideas, and systems brought by white society. We all wanted to educate and remind non-Indigenous volunteers that the Truckee River is still an Indigenous river, and Indigenous people are still here to take care of it.

"Our ancestors have been caring for these lands for thousands of years," Autumn says, "and there's been a lot of work and a lot of love that has been put into taking care of the land, the water, and especially the watershed."

Most watersheds drain into an ocean, but the Truckee River watershed starts in a lake and ends in a lake. Its unique flow is north to east — the opposite of most watersheds west of the Continental Divide.

The watershed is made up of a series of streams, creeks, and reservoirs that empty into the 121-mile-long Truckee River, which is also the sole outlet of Lake Tahoe.

The watershed drains 3,120 square miles of land in Truckee, Reno, Sparks, and out into the desert, finally connecting Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake.

Autumn and Beverly dedicated the first cleanup to Chief Truckee, who was Numu, reminding people that the Truckee River is named after him. They also showed the river's connection to the watershed and Reno-Sparks, as well as the connection that Indigenous peoples — specifically Washoe and Northern Paiute people — still have to these areas.

"We're all from different tribes or reservations, but we're all working together to take care of these lands that our ancestors have always cared for," Autumn says.

Bridging divides

Similar to Indigenous peoples in the United States, houseless individuals have been displaced by colonialism and colonization. This helps explain why we use the term "houseless" in place of "homeless." To say someone is "homeless" means they inherently do not belong to the place where they reside.

Throughout February and March, the River Protectors continued to perform periodic weekend cleanups along the Truckee River. As she got to know the community, Autumn educated herself on the term "houseless," and came to understand the negative impacts of using it.

"I was starting to hear more of a dialogue on why we shouldn't use the term 'homeless,'" she says, "because, when we say that you're homeless, that means you're without a home." But for the people she was getting to know along the Truckee River, their tents and shelters were their homes. She saw that using "houseless" could acknowledge that someone didn't have a house, but was still part of the community.

"I think it's always important for all of us, no matter who we are, or what background we have, to really understand and check our own privileges," Autumn says. "And so for me, when I first went into these camps and started talking with more people, you know, I had to understand my own privileges when entering those spaces."

At the same time, she acknowledges, it's our traditional ancestral homelands. We feel the responsibility to do what we can to take care of the river and the watershed.

As we all had our own intimate conversations with those living in the encampments along the river, we started developing relationships them. It became apparent they had nowhere to properly dispose of their waste. Different individuals in different camps shared similar experiences, telling us stories of taking trash to designated drop-off locations provided by the city, only to have dump trucks drive past them, refusing to pick up the trash because they knew where it was coming from. This, we believe, is what ultimately leads to the accumulation of trash along the Truckee River.

From our first river cleanup, it was apparent that the task at hand was not going to be easy. It was clear that much of the trash had been sitting and decomposing for years. We'd touch plastics, and they'd disintegrate into microplastics, which are extremely harmful to the environment. What looked to be spiderwebs turned out to be plastics intertwined with plants.

In one of several areas that had layers upon layers of garbage, we discovered a milk jug from 2007.

It's hard to know if that specific jug had been in that location for 14 years, but it does show how long plastics can last, and how long this area has been suffocating. Mother Earth was doing her best — plants were growing in and around the debris — but once it was all removed, it was like this big sigh of relief. She could finally breathe again.

Another thing we learned after our first cleanup was how expensive it is to dispose of waste. On average, each full truckload, around 36 cubic yards of waste, costs \$350 per to dispose of in the landfill.

“When we had gone through (the Vista) area, and just walked it and just observed what this land was being used for and how it wasn’t being respected, it made us realize that there was a larger part of this issue,” Beverly says. “This was just an example of what was happening throughout the Truckee Meadows, throughout the state, throughout the nation, and throughout the world.”

We could all see that the issue expanded further than the pollution associated with the houseless community. Couches, mattresses, and other large items were evidence of non-houseless people illegally dumping their waste at locations like Vista, the first area we cleaned up.

“I thought it was two loads, and people were saying three, and it ended up taking seven trips altogether,” Beverly says. “So, we have a huge problem that we didn’t correctly estimate. The problem was larger than we had even expected.”

Looking to the future

Beverly Harry, Autumn Harry, and the rest of the River Justice team have proven that it’s possible to remove a huge amount of waste along the Truckee River without harming communities near the watershed. However, more has to be done to prevent the trash from further accumulating in the future. Indigenous communities are stepping up to tackle the problem, but the weight of the issue should not be put entirely on the shoulders of the original caretakers of this land. The cities of Reno and Sparks must dedicate more resources to keeping the river clean, while minimizing harm to houseless communities.

City officials “need to be on the ground, witnessing and helping to remove the trash themselves, so that they can fully understand the impacts and all of the communities that are impacted by the waste accumulation,” Autumn says.

Our experience showed us that it’s not only local governing bodies, but the settler community as a whole, that needs to step up and take care of the waste in the watershed. Settler colonialism is a driving force of the waste issue along the river, as it perpetuates a mentality of haves and have-nots. Non-Indigenous residents and organizations must dedicate more time and funding to the waste issue to ensure this responsibility doesn’t always fall on Indigenous communities.

Time and time again, we hear settlers speak about how much they care about the land and water, yet their words rarely result in direct action. There are organizations who receive hundreds of thousands of dollars and whose sole purpose is to keep the river “beautiful,” yet, according to Autumn, “They are not doing their jobs.”

As Indigenous people, we face a multitude of challenges resulting from colonization and colonialism, including keeping our waters free from waste and other pollutants. Though we’re passionate about every single challenge, all of our energy can’t be put toward any single issue. “I don’t want to be picking up trash for the rest of my life,” Autumn says. And a majority of Indigenous organizers would agree. We agree.

And when you show up, do so with humility. “One of the things that we advocate for is, if you’re showing up for Indigenous peoples, provide them space, check yourself on how you’re showing up, and make sure that you’re ready to understand what Native people are all about, and not based on assumptions,” Beverly says.

Unless you are a Washoe or Northern Paiute person, you are a guest on these lands, obligated to take care of the land and water just as Indigenous peoples have done since time immemorial. It’s time for non-Indigenous communities to learn about the original peoples’ values and stewardship of the land, to stand up for Native communities in Nevada.

 MAY 12, 2021

Millions at risk as cities fail to adapt to climate change: report

by Kelly MacNamara



Fast-expanding urban areas are home to more than half the population of the planet

Hundreds of cities have no climate adaptation plans in place despite rising threats like floods, heatwaves and pollution, according to a report Wednesday that said this could put 400 million people at risk across the world.

Fast-expanding urban areas are home to more than half the population of the planet and are increasingly exposed to climate-fuelled disasters, economic shocks and health crises as the world warms, with fears that vulnerable communities will be hardest hit.

CDP, a global non-profit that collects data disclosed by companies, cities, states and regions on environmental impact, analysed over 800 global cities and found that 43 percent do not yet have a plan to adapt to the challenges of climate change.

With more and more people drawn to live in urban areas, CDP estimated that by 2030 around 400 million people will be living in poorly prepared cities.

"The urgent need to act and have adaptation measures in place to keep the citizens safe, is increasing together with (the growing urban population)," said Mirjam Wolfrum, CDP's Policy Director for Europe.

She said that 93 percent of the cities included in the report were facing "significant threats", while 60 percent highlighted "substantive" water security issues.

The top five hazards are flash and surface flooding—including from rising sea levels—heat waves, rainstorms, extreme hot days and droughts, she said, adding that air pollution is also a major health concern.

Ongoing adaptation strategies in the municipalities that reported to CDP include tree planting (20 percent), flood mapping (18 percent) and developing crisis management plans like evacuation systems (14 percent).

With cities responsible for some 70 percent of global emissions, the report said urban centres are also looking at schemes like increasing the use of renewable energy and improving green spaces, transport infrastructure and recycling.

'Investment in the future'

Under the 2015 Paris climate deal, countries agreed to limit global heating to 2 degrees Celsius, with a less damaging target of 1.5 degrees Celsius.



Floods like this one in Jakarta in February 2021, are seen as a major risk

The years since have been among the hottest on record, while severe storms, floods and wildfires have affected communities across the planet.

But in some cases cities are also moving faster and setting more ambitious climate targets than national governments, according to CDP.

The report highlighted Santa Fe County in the United States, Greater Manchester in the United Kingdom and Penampang in Malaysia—the first city in Southeast Asia to report a net zero ambition.

There has also been a marked increase in cities taking part in the CDP's annual report, with 812 cities disclosing in 2020, compared to just 48 in the first study in 2011.

Wolfrum said this could be down to the fact that the changes to the climate are increasingly visible.

"People in the city council, they can now feel this and see this," she said.

"They are already paying billions in climate hazards, and they see this as increasing."

But even those with climate plans are struggling to finance them, CDP found, with a quarter of all cities citing budget shortfalls as a barrier to action.

Globally, cities said they needed at least \$72 billion (59 billion euros) to finance planned environmental projects, with around three-quarters looking to the private sector for funding and innovation to help plug the gaps.

"As an investment in the future, the costs of action greatly outweigh the cost of inaction," said Wolfrum.

The World Bank says that the more people and assets are concentrated in urban centres the greater the exposure to climate and disaster risk.

Global average annual losses from weather-related and other disasters in cities were estimated at about \$314 billion in 2015 and the Bank says they are expected to increase to \$415 billion by 2030.

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Citation: Millions at risk as cities fail to adapt to climate change: report (2021, May 12) retrieved 25 May 2021 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-05-millions-cities-climate.html>

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knpr KNPR's State of Nevada

As Fire Season Begins, Nevada Faces Driest Conditions In 20 Years



(AP Photo/Lance Iversen, File)

In this Nov. 17, 2020, file photo, wooden steps burn after wildfires destroyed several homes in Reno, Nev.

May 18, 2021 by Bert Johnson

Summer is right around the corner. And with warmer weather and relaxed COVID-19 safety measures comes the potential for pool parties and barbecues.

But it also means fire season is upon us. In the wake of 2020, when more than 4 million acres burned in California alone, how is this year shaping up so far?

Nevada, like most Western states, gets a lot of its moisture from melting snow from the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, said Gina McGuire Palma, a fire meteorologist with the Great Basin Coordination Center.

However, this year there was not a lot of snow in the mountains.

“Coming from the past winter and spring, our snowpack has been below normal in the Sierra for much of the season, and also in the mountains of Nevada, we’ve seen below normal snowpack,” she said, “Over the southern portion of the state, our snowpack was even worse. We were pretty much near-record minimums in the south.”

In addition, she said the snow that is still in the mountains is melting quickly, which will have an impact on the fuel moistures, which is the amount of moisture in vegetation available to a fire.

“Our fuel moistures will likely peak earlier and lower than normal and will dry out quite a bit faster,” she said.

To make matters worse, McGuire Palma said Southern Nevada has not seen a significant amount of moisture from the past two monsoon seasons that roll through during July and August.

There is some good news the models for this year show that might be changing.

"Right now, it is looking like the monsoon should set up on schedule, which is typically early July for Southern Nevada, and that is mainly being based off the fact that we do need a strong ridge of high pressure to develop in the Southwest U.S. to bring us really hot and warm conditions going into later May and June for that monsoon to really develop," she said.

She said the monsoon season could be fairly robust this year based on the current models.

"There is always that caveat," McGuire Palma said, "We've expected it in the past and it hasn't materialized in some years, similar to last year."

Any monsoon moisture the state gets this year will be better than last year because there was no moisture at all last year.

Monsoons actually don't do much to increase the water supply to Southern Nevada, she said, but the cooler, wetter weather impacts firefighting efforts.

Plus, any moisture impacts the overall drought conditions.

"The more moisture we can get in parts of Nevada, the better our drought conditions will be," she said.

The connection between drought and wildfire fires is complex.

"It is not as simple as saying, 'just because we're in drought, it's going to be a horrible fire season,'" she said, "It depends on the fuel type and it depends on location."

Monsoon rain increases the growth of grasses which are excellent fuel for wildfires. If there is less rain, then there is less grass for fires to burn. McGuire Palma said the only benefit to a drought is that it decreases the amount of grass.

However, that is not true of fires in Nevada's timber areas.

"They respond very negatively to drought," she said, "They're drier, deeper down in the plant. They are more receptive to ignition and they're more receptive to extreme fire behavior."

Most of Nevada's large fires tend to be in grasslands where they can spread fast and far, but small fires can be more destructive if they're in populated areas.

Hot temperatures in the summer contribute to those fires because they lower the moisture levels in the vegetation to critical levels, McGuire Palma said.

With that said, she noted that wildfires can happen in any conditions at any time in any part of the state.

"Those fires truly can happen any year, but the bigger risk, especially when we have dry lightning outbreaks, of more extensive fires that become problematic would be over southern and eastern Nevada," she said.

Fire officials are also concerned about the Sierra Front once the snow melts later in the fire season.

Adam Mayberry is the Fire Communications Manager for the Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District, which jurisdiction covers 1,000 square miles. His agency has already responded to wildfires.

"We have already responded to a handful of wildfires, probably three or four, that have been in excess of 100 acres," he said.

Three of those fires have been in the Sparks area.

He said the fire behavior they're seeing now is similar to what they observe in June.

"We expect a very robust fire season," he said.

Mayberry explained that 40 percent of fires reported in unincorporated Washoe County are wildfires, and most of those are caused by human activity.

"It is really important to recognize that nine in 10 wildfires are started by humans," he said, "So, when you put that into perspective, it really sends a strong message that all of us need to work together and to take prudent action when we're out in the wildland."

Activities like target shooting, off-roading, and camping can be responsible for starting a wildfire, Mayberry said.

One spark from a campfire that wasn't properly extinguished or from steel-core ammo hitting a metal target can create a major problem. He suggests people doing those activities bring a fire extinguisher or water to stop a fire from spreading.

While people who live in the West are programmed to believe that fire season is late spring through early fall, both Mayberry and McGuire Palma say that is not the case.

"If the weather is just right late in the year, when we haven't had a lot of moisture, certainly can create just as much destruction as we typically think of as wildfire season," Mayberry said.

McGuire Palma said that even in the winter if a spark finds a dried-out patch of vegetation it can create a hazardous fire.

Guests: Gina McGuire Palma, Fire Meteorologist, Great Basin Coordination Center; **Adam Mayberry**, Fire Communications Manager, Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District

More from: [Nevada & the Southwest](#), [Climate change](#), [nevada prepares for wildfire season](#), [nevada wildfires](#), [monsoon](#), [sierra snowpack](#), [KNPR's State of Nevada](#)

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New homeless shelter in Reno opens, not all living outside want to move in

by Jenee' Ryan
Tuesday, May 18th 2021

RENO, Nev. (News 4-Fox 11) — Not all homeless people want to move into the shelter at [the new Nev Cares Campus](#).

News 4 traveled with an NCC outreach worker, Grant Denton, also founder of [Karma Box](#), to the homeless encampment along the Truckee River behind Greater Nevada Field where about 250 people live in tents.

None of the people the crew talked with said they wanted to transition into the shelter.

“ I think that's just natural,” said Denton. “I think a lot of times when there's any kind of change in out life, we're going to be hesitant or resistant and that's just across the board. It's a big change going from the outdoors and a tent and this environment and shifting to a shelter.

“ Denton said every person has their own struggle or barrier like, they want to keep their anonymity or they don't want to feel caged.

"All of these things can and will be addressed," he said. "There's nothing that has been presented to us so far that there isn't a solution for."

Even mental illness and substance abuse are things NCC can work with.

"This is a delicate situation. There is a lot of mental illness and substance abuse out here but knowing that, we can get ahead of it," said Denton. "We can be proactive and we can use trauma-informed care and we can use tactical empathy and all the things that are necessary to help our brothers and sisters."

Leaders with the cities of Reno and Sparks and with Washoe County say the goal of the NCC is to provide wrap-around services beyond just a roof over people's heads.

The shelter can hold up to 900 people but the plan isn't just to fill it up.

"It isn't a destination, it's a launch pad to the next phase, whatever that looks like for that person," he said. "If we do our job properly, we'll be creating a flow so that people are transitioning into independent living."

Outreach workers have been [telling people along the Truckee River about the new opportunity for weeks](#) and it will continue.

Reno officials have divided the Truckee River corridor into 11 zones:

1. Lake Street Bridge east to Kuenzli Street Bridge
2. Kuenzli Street Bridge to Wells Overpass
3. Wells Overpass to Sutro Street Bridge
4. Sutro Street Bridge to John Champion Park
5. John Champion Park to Kietzke Lane Bridge
6. Kietzke Lane Bridge to Galletti Way
7. Galletti Way to E. 2nd Street Bridge
8. E. 2nd Street Bridge to Greg Street Bridge
9. Greg Street Bridge to S. Rock Blvd. Bridge
10. S. Rock Blvd Bridge to N. Edison Way
11. N. Edison Way to S. McCarran Blvd.

The plan is to work east week by week, with people in the next zone being told about the coming clean-up each day in the week ahead.

Zone 2 will be cleared May 20 and while workers are on site, the area will be closed.

NEWS

Washoe County no longer flagged for elevated COVID-19 transmission

Kristin Oh Reno Gazette Journal

Published 4:24 p.m. PT May 18, 2021

This story is part of the Reno Gazette Journal's essential coronavirus coverage. Please consider subscribing for \$1 for 6 months to support our newsroom.

Washoe County is no longer flagged for elevated COVID-19 transmission according to data from Nevada Health Response.

The news was announced on the county's COVID-19 related Twitter account days after Washoe County hits its lowest test positivity rate since June of 2020.

COVID-19: Washoe County hits lowest positive test rate since June 21

Churchill, Humboldt, Mineral and White Pine Counties are also no longer flagged for elevated COVID-19 transmission, according to the data from Nevada Health Response.

The latest statistics

As of Tuesday afternoon, there have been a total of 45,775 COVID-19 cases and 677 deaths in Washoe County, according to data from the Regional Information Center.

The test positivity rate is 4.7%.

Approximately 45% of Washoe County residents aged 12 and older have been fully vaccinated while 53% have received at least one dose.

The test positivity across the state is 4.9%.

Approximately 37% of Nevada residents aged 12 and older have been fully vaccinated while 46% have received at least one dose.

Kristin Oh is a public safety reporter for the Reno Gazette Journal. She can be reached at koh@rgj.com or at 775-420-1285. Please help support her work by subscribing.

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A firefighter responds to the Owyhee Fire on July 21, 2018. (Naaman Horn/BLM Nevada)

Indy Environment: Fire managers prepare for summer blazes as the state faces severe drought conditions

Good morning, and welcome to the Indy Environment newsletter.

I'm writing this newsletter from Winnemucca. For the past month, I've been reporting out a story on the Thacker Pass lithium mine, which the [Trump administration approved in mid- January](#).

I'm getting a lot of community perspectives about the project, which would be located outside of Orovada. On Monday evening, I attended a public meeting about having the mining company relocate and rebuild the Orovada Elementary School because of safety concerns

with more trucks hauling materials and driving through the area. A lot of perspectives from parents. My story should be coming out in a few weeks. In the meantime, send me any thoughts you have about the project.

As always, we want to hear from readers. Let us know what you're seeing on the ground and how policies are affecting you. Email me with any tips at daniel@thenvindy.com

If you received this from a friend, [sign-up here](#) to receive it in your inbox.

Nevada is facing its worst drought in two decades.

Nearly 95 percent of the state is facing severe to exceptional drought, [according to the U.S. Drought Monitor](#). In April, most of the Great Basin experienced above-normal temperatures with little precipitation. As with much of the West, Nevada saw well below-average rain and snow for the water year, which begins in October. Snowpack peaked early, and snow is melting quickly.

Gina McGuire Palma, a meteorologist who forecasts fire in the Great Basin, presented those statistics at a [media wildfire briefing last week](#). The dry conditions, she said, are important for the forecasts facing fire managers as they start planning for the warm summer months.

When it comes to fire and drought in the Great Basin, the story is complicated. Although drought means less moisture, it also means that low-elevation grasses are less abundant and productive. That's important because those low-elevation grasses fuel many of the large-scale fires across the Great Basin. The amount of acreage burned and drought are not always related in the Great Basin. **But that doesn't necessarily mean less potential for a bad fire season.**

What it means is that in a drought year, like the one we are seeing, the fire risk tends to be in mid-to-higher elevation areas, McGuire Palma said at the briefing. **Another big factor is where the fire is. A smaller acreage fire in a highly-populated area or in sensitive wildlife habitat can have long-lasting effects.** And there have been notable fires during drought years before.

Prior to the media briefing, state, federal and local agencies briefed [Gov. Steve Sisolak about fire risks facing the state](#). At the briefing, Sisolak described wildfire as "one of Nevada's most challenging issues," but he said agencies are "better coordinated than ever before."

Kacey KC, the state forester for the Nevada Division of Forestry, said that better coordination is important in the Great Basin, where much of the land is managed by a variety of agencies. The federal government manages about 85 percent of land within Nevada, and one agency, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, manages about 65 percent.

"We learned through many years of being jurisdictionally challenged that we had to work better together," KC said. "And we actually also realized, awhile back, that not only do we have to be highly effective at wildfire suppression, but also need to work harder at really targeting our limited resources and funding at the areas that are most critical to reduce risk in."

In all of this, humans play a big role.

Sisolak, in his remarks, underscored the effects that climate change is having on fires: "While wildfires are a natural part of Nevada's landscape, the fire season is starting earlier each year and ending later. Climate change and cycles of drought are considered key drivers of this trend."

In addition to climate change, the vast majority of fires — about 67 percent — were linked to human activity last year. Sisolak implored residents to be aware of the risks of starting a fire.

"What we can do as residents in Nevada is be aware," Sisolak said.

More reporting on this from [KNPR](#) and the [Associated Press](#). And [tips for preventing fires](#).

Here's what else I'm watching this week:



Power lines from Hoover Dam stretch through Eldorado Valley south of Boulder City. (Jeff Scheid/The Nevada Independent)

CARSON CITY AND CONGRESS

A massive energy bill drops at the Legislature: Sen. Chris Brooks (D-Las Vegas) dropped a major energy infrastructure bill last week with less than three weeks left in the session, as my [colleague Riley Snyder reported](#). The legislation, presented at a roundtable with Sisolak and NV Energy, aims to increase the state's transmission capacity (crucial for putting more renewables on the grid) and to require more investment in charging for electric vehicles.

Both are central to the governor's climate strategy, and backers of the bill argue that it is vital in order to ensure the state plays a central role in the transition from fossil fuels toward renewable energy.

- **Most environmental groups support the broad components of the bill:** They want to see more deployment of renewable energy, and transmission is going to be an important element of that. At a hearing Monday, several groups, including the Natural Resources Defense Council and Nevada Conservation League, came [out in favor of the legislation](#).
- **But some groups believe the legislation shortcuts comprehensive planning:** For months, environmental groups have been pushing state agencies to identify land where energy development is appropriate and where it conflicts with other priorities, including recreation and wildlife habitat. They want to see policymakers working to prioritize new energy development, such as solar fields, on already disturbed land. The transmission lines matter, they say, because their alignment and siting often dictate where projects go. These groups want to see more comprehensive planning when it comes to building out a more renewable grid. **Based on my reporting, they are not alone. Public land has many constituencies, and permitting conflicts are not limited to environmental issues.**
- **There is also the question of regulatory oversight:** The legislation dropped with only a few weeks left in the session. But given the presence of the utility at the unveiling of the complex bill, it is clear that it came out of negotiations between legislative leaders, NV Energy and the Sisolak administration. It's worth noting that the [Nevada Resorts Association came out in "technical opposition"](#) because of the late bill introduction and sought changes that "retains authority and regulatory discretion to protect customers from increased rates and making projects more expensive than they need to be."

Swamp cedar bill passes both houses: The Senate on Monday passed legislation to grant state protection to unique stands of low-elevation Rocky Mountain juniper trees in Spring Valley (known as Bahsahwahbee in Shoshone). The legislation, introduced by Assemblyman Howard Watts III (D-Las Vegas), [would protect the trees](#), known as the swamp cedars, that stand as a sacred and spiritual place for Shoshone and Goshute communities. Sen. Ira Hanson (R-Sparks) was the only Republican senator who voted in favor of the bill, despite making remarks that questioned the accuracy of accounts of massacres that occurred at Bahsahwahbee and angering Indigenous advocates, as my colleague [Jazmin Orozco Rodriguez reported](#).

A few pieces of legislation I'm watching as the session nears a close:

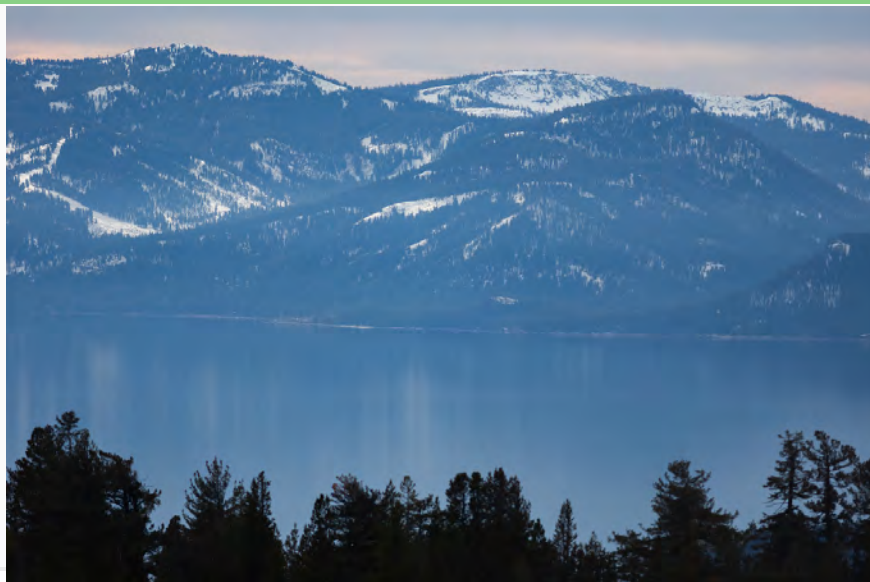
- [AB356](#): Banning Colorado River water from use in irrigating decorative turf
- [AB349](#): Ending a loophole allowing "classic cars" from evading smog rules
- [AB148](#): Preventing "bad actors" from getting a new mine permit
- [SCR10](#): Creating an interim study on hydrogen and lithium as energy sources
- [SCR11](#): Creating an interim study on Sisolak's "Innovation Zone" proposal
- [AB95](#): Adding an Indigenous representative to the interim public lands committee
- [AB146](#): Establishing a right to clean water, aims to better regulate indirect pollution
- [SB285](#): Better integrating bikes into our road infrastructure
- [AB97](#): Creating a working group to look at "forever chemicals" known as PFAS
- [SB430](#): Restructuring the State Infrastructure Bank to fund climate-related projects
- [SJR1](#), [AJR1](#), [AJR2](#): The mining tax resolutions. Anything could happen.

(This is by no means exhaustive. Let me know what I'm missing here

— daniel@thenvindy.com. h/t to the Nevada Conservation League, which puts together a weekly list of bills to watch).

Reauthorizing the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act: Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto introduced legislation last week to fund environmental protection at Lake Tahoe. The legislation has the backing of the entire Nevada delegation, the [Tahoe Daily Tribune reported last week](#).

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Lake Tahoe on Monday, November 26, 2018. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent)

WATER AND LAND

“We’re going to have one of the lowest runoffs that we’ve seen:” [SFGATE’s Julie Brown writes](#) about low elevations at Tahoe, with an interview from the Truckee River Water Master.

Diving to clean-up Lake Tahoe trash: “A team of scuba divers on Friday completed the first dive of a massive, six-month effort to rid the popular Lake Tahoe of fishing rods, tires, aluminum cans, beer bottles and other trash accumulating underwater,” [the Associated Press reports](#).

Biden considers new sage grouse rules: *Associated Press* reporter Matthew Brown reported last week that the Biden administration is considering a temporary ban on new mining across certain areas of public land in the West as part of efforts to recover the imperiled Greater sage grouse, which has seen significant population declines over the last half-century. [From the story:](#) “The Interior Department review comes in response to a federal court order and is expected to cover millions of acres of sagebrush habitat considered crucial to the bird’s long-term survival.”

Tracking a federal wild horse adoption program: “...records show that instead of going to good homes, truckloads of horses were dumped at slaughter auctions as soon as their adopters got the federal money. A program intended to protect wild horses was instead subsidizing their path to destruction.” [Incredible reporting from the New York Times’ Dave Philipps](#).

Federal regulators to rule on Tiehm’s buckwheat: “The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to make a determination on the listing of a rare Nevada wildflower as an endangered species by the end of the month,” reports [Jeniffer Solis with the Nevada Current](#).

Water data is as important as ever: [An example from California](#).

For the mappers out there: A new, peer-reviewed [Colorado River map is out](#).

For the mappers out there (Part II): What is a summit? [Great New York Times piece](#).

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

Google’s big geothermal announcement: Google is partnering with energy startup Fervo to develop a “next-generation geothermal project” that would help the company power its data centers and infrastructure in Nevada. Fervo expects to begin adding geothermal energy to the Nevada grid in 2022, [according to a Google blog post](#), and the company views the project as a crucial part in its transition toward meeting its [“moonshot” carbon-free energy goals by 2030](#).

- **From Google’s blog post:** “Not only does this Fervo project bring our data centers in Nevada closer to round-the-clock clean energy, but it also acts as a proof-of-concept to show how firm clean energy sources such as next-generation geothermal could eventually help replace carbon-emitting power sources around the world.”
- **“Next-gen:”** In the blog post, the project is referred to as “next-generation” geothermal, distinguished from conventional geothermal because it uses advanced drilling, fiber-optic sensing and data analytics (the press release mentions AI and

machine learning). But the project appears to be one step in the company's larger plan to make geothermal more viable. At a keynote for Google I/O, an annual developer conference, CEO Sundar Pichai said **geothermal "is not widely used today, and we want to change that."**

- **That last quote is a big deal:** [As I've written in this newsletter before](#), developers have long seen an opening to deploy more geothermal, and Nevada is uniquely positioned. It has expertise, with a top geothermal developer headquartered here, and according to the U.S. Geological Survey, high potential for more geothermal development. Having a major company make a high-profile investment in geothermal is pretty significant.

Bury power lines? News 4-Fox 11's Ben Margiott [asked a top NV Energy executive](#).

An important utility debate is brewing: [Los Angeles Times reporter Sammy Roth](#) writes about a national debate over whether utilities should be allowed to charge their ratepayers for trade association fees, especially when those trade associations engage in advocacy activities.



US Law Week

PFAS Action Act Would Reinforce, Accelerate Current Priorities

By Stephanie R. Feingold, Jeremy Esterkin, Drew Cleary Jordan, and Sarah M. Carter May 19, 2021, 1:01 AM

The PFAS Action Act would, among other things, require creation of a national drinking water standard for various PFAS chemicals. Morgan Lewis environmental attorneys say the act could also significantly accelerate the timeline for classifying certain PFAS compounds as hazardous substances and allows the EPA significant discretion over future PFAS regulation.

The PFAS Action Act, introduced April 13 by Reps. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) and Fred Upton (R-Mich.), is a bipartisan bill that directs the Environmental Protection Agency to enact multiple significant regulations related to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The bill largely mirrors legislation approved by the House in the last session of Congress in a 247-159 vote. Proponents are optimistic that the new Congress may be able to advance it into law this session.

Key Provisions

PFAS are a group of thousands of chemicals used in consumer and commercial products for their heat resistance and ability to repel moisture, oil, and grease, among other properties. The most sweeping proposals in the bill concern the two most studied PFAS compounds—perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS)—but certain provisions apply more broadly.

If passed, the bill would require the EPA to promulgate PFAS regulations by certain deadlines, including, in part:

- Establishing a national drinking water standard under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) for PFOA/PFOS within two years;
- Determining whether to list PFOA/PFOS as “hazardous substances” under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) within one year, and all other PFAS compounds within five years; and
- Designating PFOA/PFOS as “hazardous air pollutants” under the Clean Air Act (CAA) within six months.

Other significant provisions include an annual \$200 million grant to water utilities to treat PFAS in wastewater over four years; limiting industrial releases of PFAS under the Clean Water Act; prohibiting incineration of PFAS waste under the Solid Waste Disposal Act; voluntary labeling for PFAS in cookware products; requiring comprehensive toxicity testing of PFAS under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA); and imposing a five-year moratorium on approvals of new PFAS uses under TSCA.

Apart from the doubling of the annual grant to water utilities, the 2021 bill is nearly identical to the prior legislation.

Significance of the Proposed Legislation

The proposed legislation aligns with the Biden administration’s environmental priorities and “whole-of-government” approach to environmental regulation. Candidate Biden had pledged to prioritize the study and regulation of PFAS, and President Biden’s actions to date are consistent with that pledge.

For example, the administration’s proposed infrastructure bill would dedicate \$10 billion toward PFAS monitoring and remediation, while its fiscal 2022 budget earmarks \$75 million toward PFAS research. New EPA Administrator Michael Regan echoed this commitment at his Senate confirmation hearing, pledging to make PFAS an agencywide priority by designating PFAS hazardous substances, setting discharge limitations, prioritizing substitutes through procurement policies, and accelerating toxicity research.

While the legislation would compel the EPA to take action on PFAS in a relatively short time frame, the agency has already made progress in implementing its PFAS action plan—first issued in February 2019 and updated in 2020—which adheres closely to the legislation's goals. To date, the EPA has (among other things) established an "EPA Council on PFAS"; issued groundwater cleanup guidance for PFOA/PFOS; taken steps to develop a national drinking water regulation for PFOS/PFOA; issued final guidance under TSCA addressing new uses of certain PFAS compounds; begun the regulatory process for potentially listing PFOA/PFOS as "hazardous substances" under CERCLA; and validated new analytical methods for PFAS testing in drinking water.

Practical Impact

Given the work already being undertaken by the EPA, much of the bill's practical effect is not necessarily to force the EPA's hand. Rather, because many of the deadlines in the legislation would occur before January 2025, the bill would lock in the proposed changes to mitigate regulatory whiplash should the 2024 election result in a change in leadership.

The deadlines in the bill would also effectively truncate some of the existing rulemaking process requirements and timelines. For example, under the SDWA the EPA has three-and-a-half years (starting February 2021) to propose and then publish a national primary drinking water regulation and maximum contaminant level goals for PFOA and PFOS. Under the PFAS Action Act of 2021, the EPA would potentially have to compress this rulemaking process to two years.

If passed as proposed, PFOA and PFOS would become hazardous substances under CERCLA more quickly than the bill's one-year deadline. Specifically, the bill requires that those substances be designated hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) under the CAA within six months; but since CERCLA's definition of "hazardous substances" incorporates HAPs, the one-year CERCLA deadline would effectively be cut in half.

The bill's tight deadlines also highlight a tension between the administration's desire to regulate PFAS quickly, and its emphasis on sound science and defensible policies. While the proposed bill does focus on regulation of the more-studied PFOA/PFOS, it could also mandate regulation of certain other PFAS chemicals before the science can catch up.

Apart from setting deadlines, the PFAS Action Act of 2021 leaves the EPA with significant discretion over future PFAS regulation. Among other things, it does not require the phaseout of "non-essential uses" of PFAS, and does not amend the TSCA significant new use rule governing certain PFAS chemicals finalized under the prior administration—both priorities identified by Dingell and the Congressional PFAS Task Force in a Jan. 29, 2021 letter.

Nevertheless, this legislation is emblematic of a sea change in PFAS regulation at the federal level, and a likely harbinger of significant litigation and enforcement activity in the years to come.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. or its owners.

Write for Us: Author Guidelines

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The scoop on dog poop, Filthy, stinky and as toxic as insecticides

By **Priya Hutner** - May 19, 2021



Priya Hutner holding four bags of dog poop on Donner Lake. | Priya Hutner

It's a beautiful day in Tahoe as I set out for a late afternoon walk in the woods. Three miles into my walk, I hold four bags of dog poop left sitting along the trail. The following day it's a bike ride in Carpenter Valley and more bags than I can count. I don't think I am alone feeling frustrated. Both dog owners and non-dog owners alike are quick to lament the sight of poop bags littering the area, and no one wants to step in Fluffy's remains left on the trail filling their grooved trail runners with stinky poop.

Dog waste is categorized by the EPA in the same category as herbicides, insecticides, oil, grease, toxic chemicals and acid drainage from abandoned mines.

Just once, I'd like to catch a person leaving that plastic bag of dog poop on the trail steaming in the sun. I wonder, do they quietly look around before covertly place the fresh poop bag behind a rock or under a tree with the promise of retrieving it after finishing a walk? Alas, it is often forgotten to be left behind filled with your adorable pooches' poop for someone else to pick up. This is a daily occurrence on every beach and well-traveled trail in the Tahoe Sierra.

Wildlife poop vs. dog poop

There's no question that Tahoe is a dog-friendly region. And when it comes to dog poop, many dog owners don't see the difference between dog poop and coyotes or a bear pooping in the woods.

When I spoke with Amy Berry of the Tahoe Fund [in February about the amount of trash in the winter](#), I mentioned to Berry that I'd rather see dog poop left on the ground than plastic bags lying around the woods, which breaks down into microplastics that enter our lakes and waterways. Berry disagreed, saying that the dog waste left on the ground is a bigger problem.

"Dog poop contains toxins that leach into the lake, the source of our drinking water. Most people think of dog poop like bear poop. It's natural, so just leave it in the woods. Most dogs eat a diet of processed food that is not the same as bears eating berries. It is important to pick up dog poop to prevent the toxins from getting into our water source," explains Berry.

"We need to avoid making a false equivalence with wildlife scat. Food sources for dogs and bears are completely different. Leaving pet waste in the environment is like importing nutrients, which are bad for water quality," adds Laura Patten, senior science policy analyst for the League to Save Lake Tahoe, which keeps a close eye on pollution in the Tahoe Basin. "The best way to avoid contributing to the problem is to clean up after your pet each and every time. Then make doubly sure that the poop bag ends up securely inside of a trash can, preferably at your home."

Why does dog waste matter?

"Pet waste is one of many small sources of pollution that can add up to larger problems for Tahoe's water quality and clarity. It'd be a real shame if dog poop was the straw that broke the camel's back," says Patten. The League reports that volunteers picked up nearly 1,000 dog poop bags left behind in 2020.

Berry also notes that dog waste is labeled a non-point source pollutant by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This places it in the same category as herbicides, insecticides, oil, grease, toxic chemicals and acid drainage from abandoned mines.

According to the EPA, animal waste contains two main types of pollutants that harm local waters: nutrients and pathogens. When this waste ends up in water bodies, it decomposes, releasing nutrients that cause excessive growth of algae and weeds. This makes the water murky, green, smelly and even unusable for swimming, boating or fishing. In addition, dog poop is full of bacteria and parasites. One gram of dog poop can contain up to 23 million fecal coliform bacteria.

"Excess nutrients stimulate aquatic growth. Waste that goes into the system is nutrient rich, aquatic plant growth gets so high that it can have a really adverse impact on the ecosystem," explains Beth Christman, director of restoration programs for the Truckee Watershed Council.

According to Erin Ellis, community engagement director for the Truckee-Tahoe Humane Society, there are roughly 125 dogs per square mile in the region. With about 197 miles in the region (excluding Lake Tahoe) that equates to 24,625 dogs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a typical dog excretes three-quarters of a pound of waste per day. That's 274 pounds of poop per dog a year, which equates to about 6.74 million pounds of dog poop a year in the Tahoe-Truckee area.

"Dog poop contains toxins that leach into the lake, the source of our drinking water. Most people think of dog poop like bear poop. ... Most dogs eat a diet of processed food that is not the same as bears eating berries. It is important to pick up dog poop to prevent the toxins from getting into our water source." –Amy Berry

Bag it, bury it or flick it?

Nonprofits around Tahoe agree that plastic bags filled with dog poop and waste on the trail wreak havoc on the environment. Plastic bags pollute the environment and break down into microplastics that enter our water system. Plastic can take up to 500 years to decompose and therefore slows down the decomposition of the waste inside. Compostable dog bags are better, but some are also slow to degrade.

However, leaving the waste on the ground is a detriment to local watersheds, making it imperative to bag the waste it and dispose of it even if it has to be carried home.

With an influx of new residents and about 15 million people visiting Lake Tahoe every year, the region continues to battle the trash issue and poop bags are just another form of trash.

"I am a dog owner. I clean up after my dog and carry the filled bag with me when I walk or hike. Leaving the plastic bags on the trail is an environmental nightmare," says Truckee attorney Alison Bermant, who has an adorable chocolate lab named Layla.

While Bermant picks up after her pooch on paved trails and beaches, if she's hiking on a remote trail Bermant, she says she doesn't use a plastic bag. She believes there is a difference between walking dogs on paved trails and in neighborhoods as opposed to remote hiking trails, a sentiment that most local dog owners share.

"When I am hiking in a remote area, I believe in flick it or bury it. The solution to pollution is dilution. What's the difference between dog poop and goose poop around the lake? In most places around the Tahoe region, there is nowhere to dispose of the plastic baggies and that is a problem," says Bermant.

What is the best practice when hiking in a remote part of the woods – bury it or flick it off the trail?

"The best way is to treat it just like you would with human waste if you're out camping and bury it," explains Berry. This is a last resort if dog owners are unwilling to carry it out.

Berry explains that Tahoe Fund is also working with the Washoe and Placer Counties, the Town of Truckee and City of South Lake Tahoe to add more receptacles in high traffic areas.

"We are trying to put them everywhere," she says.

One challenge Berry explains is that any dog waste containers need to be bear proof. If a receptacle is put out that says to only put dog poop bags in, people will put other garbage in it, too.

The Clean Tahoe organization was also recently hired by Placer and Washoe counties to increase litter services on the North Shore, and have already been doing more on the South Shore. The Take Care Tahoe Program has been doing outreach to try to get people to pick up after dogs with catchy slogans like: "Be #1 at picking up #2."

Local organizations work hard to educate people, many through signage. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be working. How often do people see garbage left beside trash cans or under signs asking people to take their trash?

"We have to recognize that it's their responsibility as a dog owner to deal with their dogs. They can't just leave it. It's not OK. If they are going to take the time to bring their dog out on the trails, paved or dirt, they need to carry the burden of their poop with them," says Berry.

While Bermant is responsible when walking in neighborhoods, she has experienced first-hand the poop problem in her own neighborhood often finding dog waste by her mailbox and on her property just feet away from a bear box that invites people to put their plastic bags in the box.

She even went as far as to install a dog poop bag dispenser in front of her house, but hasn't really helped the situation.

And so goes the continued dilemma of where to put trash and dog bags in Tahoe. With little or no trash receptacles on many trails or paved paths, this leaves dog owners to either carry their stinky bags on their hike or leave them behind to pollute the area. With the summer season approaching and speculation that the Tahoe Sierra will receive even more visitors than last year's record-breaking summer, it will only compound an already strapped infrastructure.

Dog Bag tips

Be prepared | Always carry biodegradable dog bags. Tie bags to the dog's leash while on a walk and keep a roll of bags in your car.

Pick it up | To pick up poop, put your hand in the bag and pick up the poop then invert the bag and tie it off.

Pack it out | A lot of trailheads don't have garbage cans, so take the poop bags home to dispose of. Berry suggests hooking the bag under the back or front windshield wiper of the car. The bag will be secure there until it can be disposed of. Watch a video demo at TheTahoeWeekly.com.

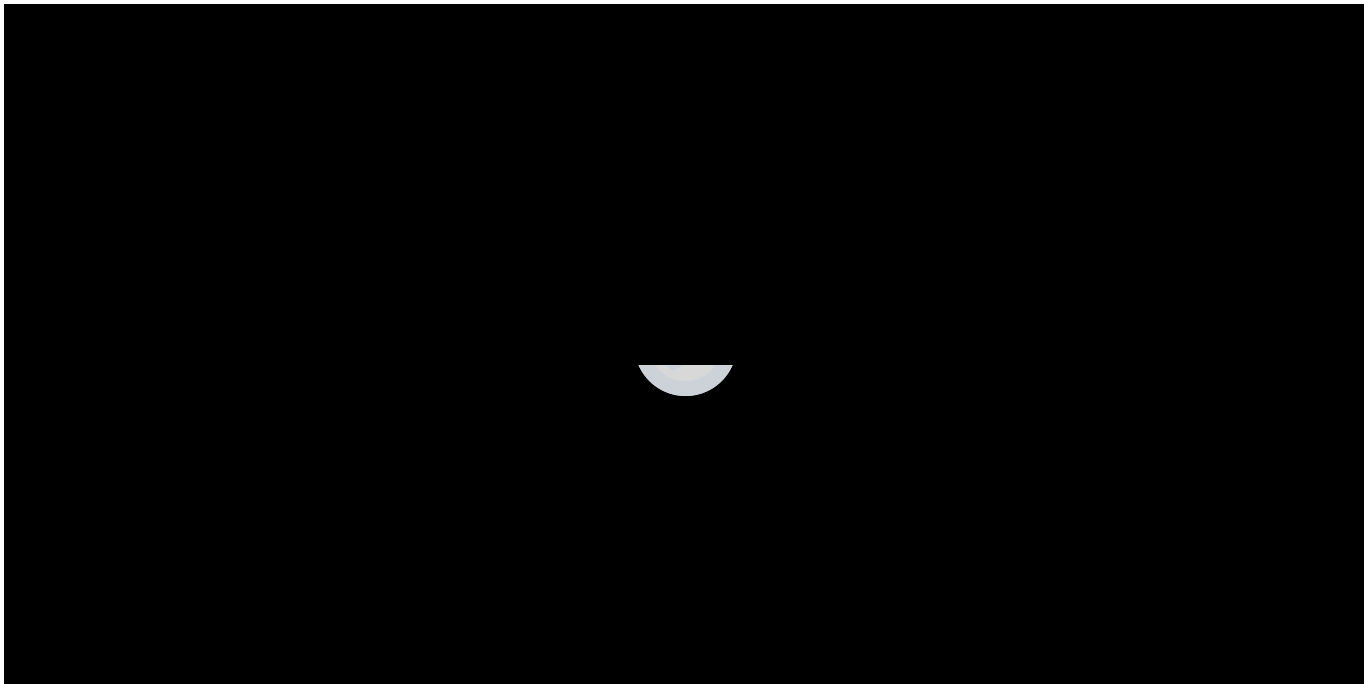
Priya Hutner

<http://theseasonedsage.com>

Priya Hutner is a food writer, personal chef and owner of The Seasoned Sage, a local meal delivery and catering company. Cooking is a meditation for Priya, it is from that place she curates her menus and recipes to create delicious and nutritious meals for The Seasoned Sage, her company catering to client's culinary preferences and dietary restrictions. Priya has been creating and preparing meals from an early age. She has worked in the restaurant industry in New York City, attended catering school, and was the head chef and executive director of a nonprofit spiritual community in Florida. She is also working on a series of cookbooks. Visit her website at TheSeasonedSage.com or contact her at priya@theseasonedsage.com. Send your comments, story ideas and food tidbits to priya@tahoethisweek.com.



TMWA announces water conservation measures



Published: May. 20, 2021 at 6:53 PM PDT

RENO, Nev. (KOLO) - Despite today’s weather, we’ve got some hot, dry months ahead of us and during that time we’re going to hear a lot about water conservation.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority held a water year forecast briefing this afternoon. They say the snowpack finished at 68 percent of normal after a second dry winter in a row. So they are declaring level 2 drought water conservation measures.

That means a public awareness campaign urging everyone to watch their water use. The standard odd-even address watering schedule remains, but we’ll also be asked *not* to water our lawns between the hours of 11 am to 7 pm.

And they’ve hired more water watchers to enforce that and other restrictions.

“We’ll have a bigger presence out in the community this year, says Bill Hauck, TMWA’s Water Supply Administrator. “They’ll be patrolling and responding to reports of waste, leaks and broken sprinkler heads.

Violators will get a notice and some advice, but Hauck says citations have been rare. “More often than not it’s helping people save money on their water bills and helping them be more water conscious.”

The river itself should look normal until late august when upstream storage will likely no longer be able to sustain its legal flow rate. Then the drop should be quite noticeable.

Hauck is comparing--conditions this year to those we saw during the last serious drought in 2015, adding it would take an above-average snowfall next winter to lift us out of where we are now.

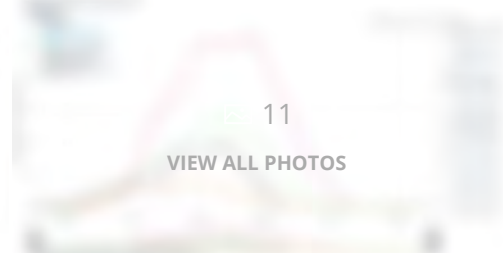
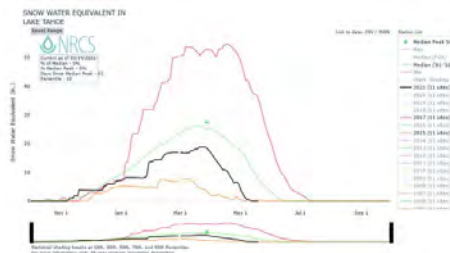
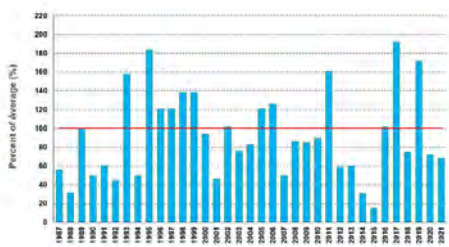
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TMWA orders water restrictions in Washoe County due to drought conditions

by Jenee' Ryan
Thursday, May 20th 2021

AA

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TMWA is not allowing lawn irrigation between 11 a.m and 7 p.m. from Memorial Day through Labor Day.<p>{p}

RENO, Nev. (News 4-Fox 11) — The [Truckee Meadows Water Authority](#) is declaring a level 2 drought which means water conservation measures are required this summer.

Here are the steps you are asked to take between Memorial Day (May 31) and Labor Day (September 6):

- Do not water between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Follow assigned watering days -
- Even addresses can run sprinklers Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday.
- Odd addresses can run sprinklers Wednesday, Friday, Sunday
- Do not water on Mondays (gives the system a day to recover)

To help make sure people are following these rules and reports are answered, TMWA has close to 20 Water Watchers working for them this year rather than the usual 14.

"They'll be patrolling and responding to reports of waste, leaks, broken sprinklers," said Bill Hauck, Water Supply Administrator for TMWA. "More often than not, it's helping people save money on their water bills and helping them to be more water conscious. Sometimes there's water waste they're not even aware of." Hauck said the main goal of the Water Watchers is to educate customers, not ticket them. They'll even show up to do water usage reviews if a customer asks for it.

TMWA expects water flow to drop noticeably come the third week of August.

It's because the Sierra Nevada has not gotten enough water for two years in a row.

Luckily, Hauck said, there is plenty of water stored up in reservoirs to help with this drought and it will be used to augment flow of the Truckee River system.

He also said the Lake Tahoe also has plenty of water from 2019 but the level will not rise this year.

TMWA leaders are not too worried, they said it's just a year to take extra care.

"The last 120 years it's always been like this," said Hauck. "We have big snowpack years and drought years and this is more of the same. This boom and bust cycle is one of the reasons all the dams have been put in to help manage water supply. We have these extremes year to year and we capture in good snowpack years and release in years like this."

Attached to this article are slides from TMWA's forecast presentation.

You can also go to [their website](#) for more on the water plan.

TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY WILL IMPLEMENT ENHANCED CONSERVATION MEASURES IN RESPONSE TO DROUGHT

By **Brian Bahouth** - May 20, 2021



The Truckee River flows through downtown Reno and a whitewater park where many swim and kayak during warmer months- photo: Richard Bednarski

Today, during a year in review and water supply outlook press conference, Bill Hauck, water supply administrator at the [Truckee Meadows Water Authority](#) (TMWA) said that in January the Truckee watershed was on track for an average water year, but the last two months have been exceptionally dry, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) stream flow runo projections are distinctly bleak.

"The NRCS forecast has been so dry, and we've all just been sitting there watching the forecast degrade. I don't think I've ever seen anything like this," said Hauck via Zoom.

TMWA gets most of its water from the Truckee River. Lake Tahoe, Boca Reservoir, Stampede Reservoir, Prosser Reservoir, Independence Lake, and Donner Lake are the primary storage basins on the Truckee River system. Water is captured to be released later to meet downstream flow requirements of the Truckee River Operating Agreement, but despite a good supply of water in storage this year, according to Hauck, later this summer, river flow will be low if projections are accurate.

"There still will be water in the Truckee, but after about the third week of August, river flows are going to look a little different, as all the stored water in Boca (reservoir) is exhausted and Lake Tahoe is in rim control," Hauck said during the meeting. "So with all 17 outlet gates open, you're only going to be able to get out what you can get out. Consequently, flows are going to fall off pretty sharply around the third week of August."

The NRCS stream flow runo projection for Lake Tahoe is 15 percent of normal. The projection for the Truckee River at the Farad gauging station is about 31 percent of normal, according to Hauck.

Hauck was sure to say that conservation measures are in effect all the time, but this year has formally been proclaimed a drought for planning purposes, which means enhanced conservation measures will be implemented.

Enhanced water conservation measures are enacted when drought conditions have been determined and upstream reserves are projected to be needed to meet customer demand. In addition to the typical odd/even watering schedule, enhanced demand and management practices include:

Enhanced communications and messaging to heighten community awareness of water usage.

No lawn watering between 11:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Additional "water watchers" have been hired to monitor for proper water usage.

Depending on the severity of the drought, TMWA has the ability to implement other conservation initiatives such as increased watering restrictions, and requests for reductions in water use.

The [TMWA website](#) has details for evaluating water usage and tips on how to make homes and businesses as water efficient as possible.



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"Smart" Water Meters Coming To Kalamazoo

By DAN NICHOLS • MAY 24, 2021

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The Kalamazoo City Commission has approved a plan to install new "smart" water meters.



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WMUK's Dan Nichols reports on the City of Kalamazoo's plan to install new smart water meters

Some people who get their water from the city will have smart water meters installed in 2020. Kalamazoo Public Services Director James Baker says that's a plus for customers.

"We're not changing anything in terms of billing cycles or anything like that. But we can get information much faster, so we can see if something is going on with that account, and we can alert the account holder of situations. It's going to be that much more beneficial to the customer."

Baker says that includes detecting water leaks and helping the system become more efficient. Baker says a 2018 pilot program tested the new technology. He says it exceeded expectations and the new meters will first be installed in Oshtemo and Texas townships, and in some parts of Western Michigan University's campus.

"This \$1.1 million project involves about 2,856 individual meter replacements, so it's a pretty good chunk. That's going to work towards that smart meter implementation."(P)

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MAY 17, 2021

IS THE NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF BAN COMING TO NORTHERN NEVADA

By **Kyle Roerink** - May 24, 2021



Throughout the Reno/Sparks region, potable water is sprayed onto chemically-dependent, decorative turf. Runoff from lawns is laden with pollutants from fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. Polluted water returns to the Truckee River through storm drains, untreated - photo: Kyle Roerink

Opinion

The 2021 legislative session is an anomaly. Notwithstanding COVID, the bad water bills died early and the good ones pressed on. That is not the norm. But it appears that more folks are beginning to believe these are not normal times.

Indeed, this year is different. Long-time foes are singing kumbaya in praise of [AB356](#).

The legislation, which passed both chambers, saves 10 billion gallons of water annually in Southern Nevada -- defending the dwindling supply of Colorado River water by mandating the removal of all non-functional turf by 2027 in Southern Nevada.

However, entities like the Truckee Meadows Water Authority are sitting on the sidelines along with other municipal providers in Western Nevada as it relates to water conservation. Reno, Carson City, Minden, Gardnerville and other communities may not be in the Mojave Desert. But they are in the Great Basin Desert. It is time that they follow the lead of Las Vegas.

Water officials in Northern Nevada must start advocating for similar residential conservation programs. We may not think we need them today. But we do.

This week, TMWA made an [anemic overture](#) to the abnormal conditions, prohibiting lawn watering between 11 AM and 7 PM and promising to hire more "water watchers."

Half measures like these are not fully recognizing that the 21-year drought is not a drought. It is aridification.

In California, towns are banning car washes and asking the community to limit use by 10 percent. Farmers are not getting their full allocations of water rights from rivers and reservoirs. Threatened species in the Klamath River are headed toward [extinction](#).

Rivers like the Truckee and the Carson need our help. Let's think about the cui-ui at Pyramid Lake, agricultural operations in Yerington, and recreation activities like Kayaking. Every drop wasted on a green lawn is one not benefiting something else. Across the west, about 60 percent of residential water is consumed outdoors. Throughout the region it is common to see sprinklers watering sidewalks and burned lawns in August -- along with other midwestern aesthetics in the high desert. It's time for a change. East coast grass doesn't belong west of the Mississippi River. However, TMWA still has a page advising on how to [plant green lawns](#).

Grass is low hanging fruit in the west because residents usually over-water what is inherently thirsty and easily singed in the heat of the summer.

To be fair, AB356 only targets non-functional turf, which is basically what we see at business parks and on roadway medians in neighborhoods. It does not mean backyards or community greenspaces in Southern Nevada. It is not perfect, but it is a good place to start.

This bill does not cost the state a cent. The Southern Nevada Water Authority pays entities to remove the grass via funds from bonds and federal grants. The SNWA's existing turf removal program is one of the most successful water conservation efforts in the West – having already removed enough blades of grass to measure the width of the world. AB356 bolsters that work.

The need for AB356 is vital for the future of Las Vegas. Fortunately, lawmakers recognized that. The need for something like it in Reno is long overdue – especially considering the explosive growth in the region and the likelihood of at least 14 to 17 percent demand increases in the next 15 years.

Water usage increased by more than nine percent in Southern Nevada during the last two years. There's plenty of reason to believe that could happen in Western Nevada. And as our rivers shrink, there is plenty of concern about water importation and over development.

A hedge fund in Winnemucca wants to export groundwater to the Truckee Meadows to bloom more subdivisions, warehouses and shopping malls in the desert. Blockchains wants to export groundwater to the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center to build a city in Storey County. This is the most expensive way to get water. Conservation is the cheapest.

For Vegas, less water in the Colorado River could mean that it will once again look to rural Nevada for groundwater supplies too. AB356 will deter that from happening soon. But it is a question of how long. This summer Lake Mead will go below elevation 1075', triggering a first-ever shortage declaration at the famed reservoir. The Bureau of Reclamation, which manages the reservoirs of the Colorado River, has grim outlooks beyond this year. It is likely that Lake Mead will drop to elevation 1050' in 2023 – with drops continuing in the following years. When water sinks below these elevation benchmarks, the Colorado River's current management framework activates cuts to the water supply of Nevada, Arizona and eventually California.

AB356 will recoup the losses Nevada will endure on the Colorado River in the coming years.

That is smart planning.

The principles behind AB356 are well suited for places like Reno. The Colorado River is not a disconnected waterway from residents of Northern Nevada. It is a barometer for other waterways in the west.

With annually decreasing snowpack in the Sierra Nevada, drier soils, and increased demand, it is time to consider how northern Nevada uses its precious water supply.

In Nevada and much of the west, residential water usage accounts for the majority of consumptive uses. Yes, take shorter showers. But rip up your lawn. Get a watering timer for your plants. And encourage TMWA to mandate the removal of non-functional turf. It's cheaper and smarter than water exportation.

Kyle Roerink writes columns on natural resource issues throughout Nevada and the West. Kyle is the executive director of the [Great Basin Water Network](#). He lives in Reno. [Support his writing](#).

The opinions expressed above are not necessarily those of the Sierra Nevada Ally. Our newsroom remains entirely independent of our opinion page. Published opinions further public conversation to fulfill our civic responsibility to challenge authority, act independently of corporate or political influence, and invite dissent.


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KUNR Today: Lawmakers Advance Education Funding Overhaul, TMWA Planning Water Conservation Measures

 By [PAUL BOGER \(/PEOPLE/PAUL-BOGER/\)](/PEOPLE/PAUL-BOGER/) & [MAGGIE MULLEN \(/PEOPLE/MAGGIE-MULLEN/\)](/PEOPLE/MAGGIE-MULLEN/) & THE ASSOCIATED PRESS • MAY 24, 2021

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A Senate Sergeant-At-Arms places copies of proposed legislation in the cubbies outside the chamber inside the Legislature on Monday, March 15, 2021 in Carson City, Nev.

DAVID CALVERT / THE NEVADA INDEPENDENT

Here are your morning news headlines for Monday, May 24, 2021.



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Listen to the morning news headlines for Monday, May 24, 2021.

'Ghost Gun' Ban, New Education Funding Plan Move Past Legislative Deadline

By Paul Boger (<https://www.kunr.org/people/paul-boger>)

Nevada lawmakers advanced a major education funding overhaul, a ban on so-called ghost guns and a measure lowering barriers to birth control.

With the constitutionally-mandated end of the 81st Legislative Session around the corner, lawmakers approved a bevy of measures ahead of last week's deadline to move bills through their second house.

AB286 (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021/Bill/7778/Overview>) was among those measures. It's a ban on firearms that can be assembled at home from a kit. So-called ghost guns lack identifiable serial numbers, and supporters of the ban say the guns are increasingly linked to violent crimes.

A measure making it easier to access birth control also squeaked past the deadline on a nearly party-line vote. SB190 (<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021/Bill/7622/Overview>) allows women to purchase birth control through a pharmacy without a doctor's visit.

Lawmakers also approved an amended version of the new Pupil-Centered Funding Plan. The measure appropriates funds to schools based on an individual student's needs instead of enrollment. Supporters say the measure directs money where it's most needed. Critics argue the plan freezes funding for rural schools.

Lombardo Building Out Campaign For Likely Run For Governor

By *The Associated Press*

Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo has begun building out a campaign for what appears to be a likely run for governor next year.

A person familiar with Lombardo's thinking who was not authorized to speak publicly said that Lombardo is leaning toward running, has hired political consultants and will make an announcement in the next month or so. Former Lt. Gov. Mark Hutchison confirmed he will be serving as chairman of Lombardo's campaign. Lombardo has previously said he's considering a run but did not respond to messages Friday.

Republican John Lee has already jumped into the race to challenge incumbent Democrat Steve Sisolak.

TMWA Plans To Implement Water Conservation Efforts

By Paul Boger (<https://www.kunr.org/people/paul-boger>)

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority will, once again, institute water conservation measures this summer. According to water regulators, Northwestern Nevada is facing a level 2 drought after two consecutive dry winters.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, home owners will only be allowed to water lawns on alternating days. No watering will be allowed on Mondays.

TMWA expects water flow to drop noticeably come the third week of August.

Lawmakers Want More - And Bigger - Prescribed Burns

By Maggie Mullen, *Mountain West News Bureau* (<https://www.kunr.org/programs/mountain-west-news-bureau>)

The National Prescribed Fire Act of 2021

(<https://www.wyden.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/National%20Prescribed%20Fire%20Act%20of%202021>) aims to ramp up the number and the scale of controlled burns. The idea is to reduce hazardous fuels so that when fires do ignite, they're not so hot and intense. It would also create a workforce development program to train and hire forestry workers for restoration and fire prevention.

Mary Mitsos (<https://www.nationalforests.org/who-we-are/staff>) is with the National Forest Foundation and spoke at the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing.

"We definitely need more people. The number of people who work in forestry, in particular, and natural resources in general has been dwindling, and without the assistance of building up a new workforce, we're going to struggle," Mitsos said.

The bill would put about \$310 million toward prescribed burns on both public and private lands.

UNLV, UNR, TMCC Drop Mandatory Masks For Fully Vaccinated

By *The Associated Press*

Officials at UNLV and the University of Nevada, Reno say those who are fully vaccinated no longer are required to wear masks on their campuses.

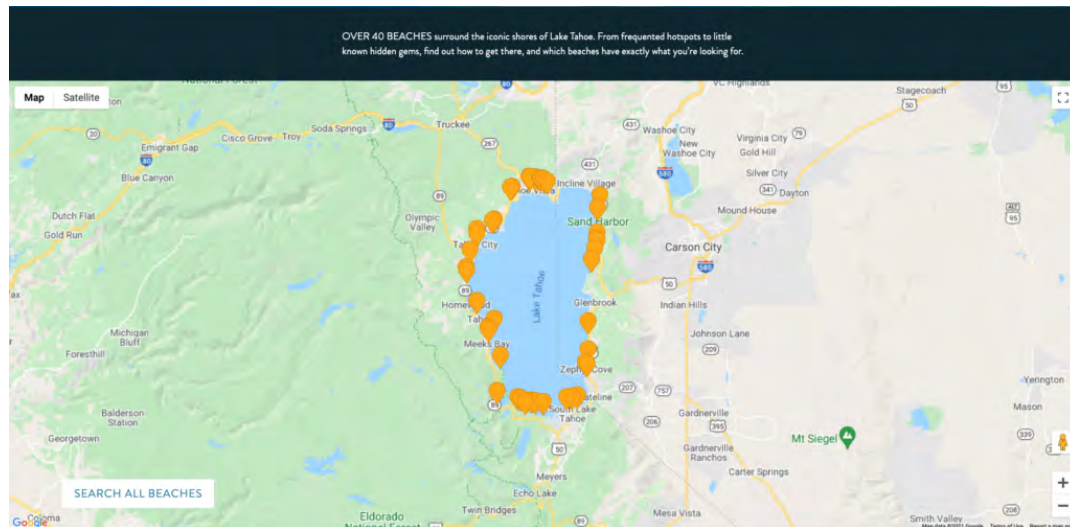
The move comes after the Nevada System of Higher Education announced Thursday masks will be optional beginning July 1 for anyone who is fully vaccinated at the eight schools in the system. Truckee Meadows Community College is among others that have dropped the mask requirement for those fully vaccinated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced this month that people who have been fully vaccinated no longer need to wear a face mask in most indoor and outdoor settings.

You are here: Home / News / Updated 'Tahoe Beaches' Website Helps Visitors Explore More of Lake Tahoe's Pristine Shoreline

UPDATED 'TAHOE BEACHES' WEBSITE HELPS VISITORS EXPLORE MORE OF LAKE TAHOE'S PRISTINE SHORELINE

MAY 24, 2021 BY SKYLER MONAGHAN



Created as a resource, [TahoePublicBeaches.org](https://tahoePublicBeaches.org) guides visitors and locals to over 40 public beaches in the Tahoe Basin

Ahead of Memorial Day weekend and the start of the summer season, the Tahoe Fund and eight agencies that manage Lake Tahoe's public beaches have updated tahoePublicBeaches.org. Designed as a resource to guide visitors and locals to over 40 beaches that surround the iconic shores of Lake Tahoe, the site offers details about frequented hotspots to little known hidden gems. Users will find information about how to get to each beach, where to park, hours of operation, and what amenities and services are offered if any.

"Because travel and outdoor recreation have changed over the past year, this type of tool—offering a one-stop-shop for information has become more important than ever," said Amy Berry, Tahoe Fund CEO. "As people seek refuge in the outdoors and land managers work to meet the challenges of rapidly increasing visitation to the Tahoe Basin, [TahoePublicBeaches.org](https://tahoePublicBeaches.org) is a great resource to help educate people about the 40+ beaches that surround the lake."

A collaborative effort, the site was developed by the Tahoe Fund and co-funded by the California Tahoe Conservancy through the Lake Tahoe License Plate Program. Eight public agencies assisted with the project to create one central place for beachgoers to find public beach information. The partners include: California Tahoe Conservancy, California State Parks, City of South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe City Public Utility District, North Tahoe Public Utility District, Nevada Division of State Parks, the U.S. Forest Service, and Tahoe Transportation District.

In addition to information about each beach, the facilities available and how to get there, [TahoePublicBeaches.org](https://tahoePublicBeaches.org) offers information about the Lake Tahoe Water Trail, convenient transportation options, and how people can do their part to help take care of Lake Tahoe. Website visitors can also find information including details such as which are the dog friendly beaches, where to BBQ, rent paddleboards, boats or find shade.

Visitors and Lake Tahoe area residents are encouraged to bookmark the mobile-friendly website and use it to plan their next trip to one of Tahoe's public beaches. Learn more at tahoePublicBeaches.org.

DROUGHT PROMPTS A 30 PERCENT REDUCTION IN WATER DELIVERIES TO TRUCKEE CARSON IRRIGATION DISTRICT FARMERS

Economic impact for Churchill County could be tens of millions of dollars

By **Brian Bahouth** - May 25, 2021



The Derby Dam was built in 1903. gates on the left of center direct water to Pyramid Lake. Gates to the right of center direct water into the Truckee Canal - photo: Brian Bahouth/The Ally

In response to drought, the Truckee Carson Irrigation District (TCID) will get 70 percent of it's annual allotment of water in 2021.

Not too far from Pyramid Lake, the Derby Dam diverts water from the Truckee River into an open, earthen canal that ows` some 40 miles to Lahontan Reservoir where it mingles with water from the Carson River. From Lahontan, the canal ows` on to Fallon and ultimately the Stillwater Marsh.

The TCID operates the Derby Dam as an agent of the US Bureau of Reclamation. They also represent 2,500 water rights holders along the vast system of water distribution. To administer and maintain the system, the TCID employs about 55 people directly and has an annual operating budget of \$3.5 million.

The federal water master based in Reno administers the Truckee River Operating Agreement and decides how water from the Truckee is distributed.

"In this cycle, our water users will have a 70 percent supply," said Rusty Jardine, general manager of the TCID. "What that means is, there's almost a 1 to 1 correlation between water supply and the impact on productivity. We're talking about 30 percent less in the pockets of the folks who are depending on irrigated agriculture for their way of life."

There are roughly 700 farms in Churchill County. More than half are smaller than 50 acres in size. A combination of groundwater and canal water irrigate crops, but the Truckee Canal contribution is significant.

Use the interactive map below to explore the Truckee Canal system. The blue star marks the location of the Derby Dam. The gold star marks the Carson River. The red stars mark the canal.

According to the Nevada Department of Agriculture, agricultural activity in Churchill County employs around 1,000 people with an annual labor income impact of \$26.5 million. The total agricultural economic impact for Churchill County is around \$172 million a year. Thirty percent of that total is nearly \$52 million.

"We function on the premise that our contribution to the economy in general terms is in the realm of hundreds of millions of dollars. So that productivity loss is the same as saying we're loosing tens of millions of dollars," Jardine said.

Livestock, poultry, and their products make up roughly 66 percent of total Churchill County agricultural output. Cash receipts from sales of other crops make up the remaining 34 percent.

Cattle and milk production made up nearly 90 percent of livestock production. Sheep, goats, wool, equine operations, poultry, eggs, hogs and other animals and their products make up the remaining 10 percent of livestock product sales.

Around 400 Churchill County farms grow only hay and grass silage, to include alfalfa. This crop uses more land and water than any other Churchill County crop.

A surprisingly wide variety of crops are grown in Churchill County with Truckee River and ground water. Farmers grow melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes, snap beans, beets, cantaloupes, carrots, onions, potatoes, pumpkin, squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, watermelons, and other vegetables harvested on proximity.

The High Cost of Efficiency

Cutting the supply by 30 percent does provide opportunity for greater efficiency. At the field level, according to Jardine, farmers line ditches when possible and laser-level fields for optimal water distribution. But the system is old, a registered historical landmark. President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Federal Reclamation Act into law in 1902. The Derby Dam and Newlands Reclamation Project opened in 1903.

Ideally, water would be distributed through a closed system of pipes, but according to Jardine, the cost of such an upgrade could only be met with the help of the federal government.

"It's an open channel system. It's not the most efficient in the world. The problem is, that because of the small nature of our user base, can you imagine coming up with hundreds of millions of dollars to provide for the highest level of conservation? We just cannot sustain that kind of outlay. We can't ask our water users to do that.

"Quite honestly, we labor with the open-channel system we have, unless or until we have some kind of congressional assistance, we're simply going to have to bump along as we do," Jardine said.

This section of the Truckee Canal is west of Fernley. The Truckee Carson Irrigation District serves some 2,550 customers with Truckee River water, 4-18-2020 - photo: Brian Bahouth/The Ally

In 2008, a small portion of the Truckee Canal burst, and nearly 600 homes were flooded in the desert city of Fernley, Nevada. Since then, the US Bureau of Reclamation has proposed a plan to line the canal as it passes through town, but the City of Fernley has led a lawsuit to prevent the repair.

The city contends the National Environmental Policy Act process was slowed and more, according to Jardine, they rely on the inefficiency of the canal to recharge the local aquifer, which the city uses for municipal purposes.

"The Truckee Canal as it flows through the City of Fernley provides a great amount of water to the underlying aquifer, recharging the water table there," Jardine said. "The city is saying, 'Look, we rely upon that, so if you go ahead and lined over the top of this canal, it's going to affect the connection between surface and ground water.' And that really is what the whole thing is about."

Lahontan Reservoir

Lahontan Reservoir is a central part of the TCID system where Truckee and Carson River water come together. When full, Lahontan Reservoir holds nearly 12,000 acre feet of water.

"With regard to this 70 percent season that we're currently in, what that means at the end of the day is, we will probably draw Lahontan Reservoir all the way down to what we call the minimum pool, so that'll be about 4,000 acre feet of water. And that's right at the very bottom," Jardine said. "And that's in a effort to, we preserve that level for, among other things, we don't want to move any sludge through the system, but it helps preserve the life of the fish species that'll remain at the end of the water season."

But Jardine says Churchill County farmers are resilient and endured the drought of 2015 when the TCID only had a 21 percent water supply. The looming concern for Jardine is if next year and the year after that are as bad if not worse than 2021 regarding water supply. A sustained drought over years could spell catastrophe for Churchill County agriculture.

"My concern is that next year's water supply will even be less. I hope that's not the case. I'm hoping against that kind of condition but I fear it. We hope Mother Nature will intervene and provide us with a bountiful water year, but it's kind of looking the other way at this point."

Brian Bahouth is the editor of the Sierra Nevada Ally and a career public media journalist.

[Support his work.](#)

BUSINESS

Reno-Sparks sees return of events, convention and group gatherings amid COVID-19 recovery

Jason Hidalgo Reno Gazette Journal

Published 12:19 p.m. PT May 26, 2021 | Updated 12:41 p.m. PT May 26, 2021

Reno-Sparks is seeing an uptick in events as well as convention and group business, a sign of the region's continued recovery from the impact of COVID-19.

The improvement includes returning events as well as new convention and group business — activities that were hit especially hard last year as safety concerns over the pandemic led to a host of cancellations. One such event is Star Spangled Sparks, which was canceled last year due to restrictions on events and group gatherings.

The city of Sparks confirmed that the Fourth of July celebration is returning this year alongside the food vendors and craft booths that traditionally accompany the event. Star Spangled Sparks will run from 4 to 10 p.m. on July 4 at Victorian Square, with the fireworks show expected to start at 9:40 p.m.

The Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitors Authority also announced three group events for the area, including two that will be held this year.

The first one is USA Climbing's 2021 Youth National Championships, which will be held from July 13 to 18 this year. The event, which features several of the best young climbers in the nation, will also be preceded by the organization's inaugural Youth Climbing Festival, which will run from July 9 to 11. An estimated 500 competitors will take part in the USA Climbing events, bringing more than 5,000 room nights to the area, according to the RSCVA. The events will be split between the Reno-Sparks Convention Center and the Mesa Rim climbing center.

The second event is the 2021 Airports Council International Annual Conference & Exhibition, which will be held in November at the Reno-Sparks Convention Center. The conference was originally supposed to be held in Toronto but was relocated to Reno due to

COVID-related travel restrictions in Canada. The event will be attended by more than 800 airport executives from North America, translating to about 2,400 room nights. Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority representatives are working with ACI on the organization's JumpStart event, which is scheduled to be held in the area in June 2022.

The region also secured the 2024 Shriners International Imperial Session, which is the largest of the three group events announced by the RSCVA. The event will bring more than 3,500 attendees to the area, generating about 11,000 room nights. The 2024 event is scheduled to run from late June to early July and will be held at various downtown facilities, including the Reno Events Center, National Bowling Stadium, Reno Ballroom and The Row.

Charles Harris, RSCVA president and CEO, called the return of events "encouraging" after a tough 2020. The RSCVA enacted austerity measures and cuts last year in response to the drop in business from the pandemic, which raised the possibility of the organization potentially running out of money. Since then, the RSCVA has seen improvement in the numbers, with Washoe County room tax revenue only down slightly from pre-COVID levels.

"We're currently experiencing a pattern where the post-pandemic model for short-term sports event bookings is being replicated by conventions and trade shows," Harris said. "When you look at the short-term recovery, and incorporate the apparent return of traditional, long-term booking windows, this is a wonderful sign for Northern Nevada's tourism economy and for the travel industry in general."

*Jason Hidalgo covers business and technology for the Reno Gazette Journal, and also reviews the latest video games. Follow him on Twitter @jasonhidalgo. Like this content? **Support local journalism with an RGJ digital subscription.***

May 26, 2021, 18:00 ET

"We were thrilled to work with the Reno-Stead Water Reclamation Facility to help them receive SHARP certification," said Todd Schultz, chief administrative officer for SCATS. "The company has shown its dedication to promoting safety in all facets of its culture. By working with SCATS, the company has been able to implement effective protocols that help keep everyone safe."

SCATS consultants provide employers with confidential hazard identification, program development, program implementation assistance and training. Employers who implement effective safety and health programs and have a days away, restricted, transfer (DART) rate below the national average for their industry group may be recognized by SCATS. Successful SHARP participants receive a three-year exemption from OSHA's general schedule inspections.

Businesses interested in the SHARP program can contact SCATS at 775-824-4630. For more information on SCATS, or for a schedule of training courses offered by SCATS free of charge, businesses can call 1-877-4SAFENV or visit 4safenv.state.nv.us.

About Nevada's Safety Consultation and Training Section (SCATS)

The Safety Consultation and Training Section (SCATS), part of Nevada's Division of Industrial Relations, provides free and confidential consultation and safety services to assist businesses in Nevada to be in compliance with OSHA standards. SCATS' top priority is to help Nevada businesses keep their employees safe and offers on-site consultation services designed to help employers recognize and control potential safety and health hazards at their workplaces, improve their safety and health programs, and assist in training employees. SCATS also offers Workplace Safety and Health Training classes in Northern and Southern Nevada. Bilingual services are also available. For more information, visit: 4safenv.state.nv.us.

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Related Images

[reno-stead-water-reclamation.jpg](#)

Reno-Stead Water Reclamation Facility Staff

[View this email in your browser](#)



The Humboldt River between Lovelock and Winnemucca on February 25, 2020. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent).

Indy Environment: “It's really bad for us.” Water managers prepare for extreme drought across the state

Good morning, and welcome to the Indy Environment newsletter.

As always, we want to hear from readers. Let us know what you're seeing on the ground and how policies are affecting you. Email me with any tips at daniel@thenvindy.com

If you received this from a friend, [sign-up here](#) to receive it in your inbox.

For the past few weeks, I've heard variations of the same line: "This is one of the worst water years I've seen in a long time." The drought is visible on the ground. There is less snow on the mountains and less water running off into streams. Soil is dry and reservoirs are far below full.

Exactly how challenging is this water year, and how is Nevada responding to it? For this week's newsletter, we include perspectives from across the state. **It's important to note** that drought affects different parts of the state in different ways, depending on **where water is coming from and how it's being used. But with extreme to** exceptional drought affecting [about 75 percent of Nevada](#), arid conditions are not limited to only a few pockets of the state.

Live in Las Vegas, Reno or Carson City, and you might not always think about where your water is coming from when you turn on the tap. In many cases, it starts with the snowpack. The water that comes out of your sink and shower often comes from snow melting into rivers and streams.

And this year, across the state, the amount of water flowing through streams is projected to be far lower than average. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which compiles statewide water supply reports, [expects that streamflow](#) will be 7 to 61 percent of average for May to July (the big range accounts for different conditions across the state).

Jeff Anderson, an NRCS water supply specialist, who helped compile and prepare the report, said the forecast has decreased each month, in part because Nevada saw little rain and snow during the spring. In the 12-month period between May 2020 through April 2021, Nevada and other Western states recorded their driest years since 1895. But that's not the full story.

Snowpack was well-below normal, but the soil underneath it was also dry. When soils are dry, it reduces the amount of water that makes it into streams. Instead, more water is absorbed by the parched landscape, and with little precipitation last fall, soil moisture was below average.

"The soil moisture is making the runoff different than it otherwise would be," Anderson said.

With less water making it into streams and rivers, urban and rural water users across the state are closely watching the situation and implementing drought measures.

In Northern Nevada, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), which serves Reno and Sparks, held a press conference last week to [announce new conservation measures](#), including additional public outreach, lawn watering restrictions from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00

p.m. and hiring more “water watchers” to patrol whether residents are complying with the conservation rules.

TMWA gets most of its water from the mountains around Lake Tahoe, where snow melts into the tributaries that form the Truckee River. At a critical point on the river, flows are expected to be about 22 percent of average, and water managers plan to pull water stored in reservoirs.

“Over the last two months, these forecasts have just deteriorated significantly,” said Bill Hauck, a senior hydrologist for TMWA and the agency’s water supply administrator.

By August, Hauck said the amount of water flowing through Reno will drop off noticeably. But he also stressed that the water agency is prepared for drought and has water stored in reservoirs.

In and around Las Vegas, the situation is a little more complicated. Las Vegas gets about 90 percent of its water from the Colorado River, fed by snowpack from the Rockies.

On the Colorado River, the situation was similar to the one that played out across Nevada. [Dry soils decreased runoff](#), and only about 26 percent of average is expected to reach Lake Powell, a key reservoir. Lake Mead, outside of Las Vegas, is projected to drop below a key threshold, triggering the [first ever federally declared shortage](#) — and cutbacks for Arizona and Nevada.

Officials with the Southern Nevada Water Authority have long prepared for cutbacks. In addition, the water authority is pushing an aggressive conservation measure through the Legislature. The bill, [AB356](#), would remove about 5,000 acres of decorative grass by 2026. Water officials expect the conservation push to save more than 10 percent of the state’s Colorado River allocation.

“When people see the headlines about the hydrology on the Colorado River, when they read about these looming shortages, I think they need to know that that is serious,” John Entsminger, the water authority’s general manager, said in an interview earlier this week. “That is not hyperbole. But we as a community have the tools at our disposal to meet that challenge.”

Farmers and ranchers are also feeling the early impacts of the drought in rural parts of the state. In Lovelock, which sits at the end of the Humboldt River, farmers are seeing less water, said Ryan Collins, who leads the Pershing County Water Conservation District.

Rye Patch, a reservoir that the district relies on to store water, is at about 32 percent of capacity, according to the NRCS water supply outlook. Last year, it was about 85 percent full.

“It's really bad for us,” Collins said. “We're going to use what little we have in the reservoir.”

Dan McEvoy, a researcher with the Western Regional Climate Center at the Desert Research Institute, said he has observed this drought intensify faster than the one that started in 2012.

“We're in our second year into the drought, and we're already seeing similar impacts to what we saw four years into the last drought,” McEvoy said.

Here's what else I'm watching this week:



The Nevada Legislature on Saturday, May 22, 2021. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent)

CARSON CITY AND CONGRESS

Governor signs bill to create state designation for “dark skies:” Gov. Steve Sisolak signed legislation, sponsored by Lt. Gov. Kate Marshall, to create a program for awarding a “Dark Sky Designation.” “The signing and implementation of the Dark Skies Bill celebrates this uniquely Nevadan asset by encouraging protection of this public resource, while also sharing it with visitors to our state and thereby increasing tourism

opportunities for rural cities and counties,” Marshall said. [Terri Russell from KOLO 8 has more](#) on the legislation and the bill signing.

A mining tax deal? The Clark County Education Association [is dropping cryptic hints.](#)

WATER AND LAND

“It’s literally the foundational shrub:” [Excellent piece](#) by *Science Friday*’s Lauren Young looking at the ecological importance of the sagebrush sea and the many threats facing it.

Why water communication is important: [The Record-Courier’s Kurt Hildebrand reported](#) on some startling survey numbers: “Not quite a tenth of the residents living in the Carson River Watershed could name the river in a recent survey. Carson River Subconservancy Watershed Program Manager Brenda Hunt told Douglas County commissioners on Thursday that 62 percent either didn’t know or think they lived in a watershed at all, and that 70 percent thought they didn’t affect the watershed, or only had a slight impact.”

A dispatch from the Extraterrestrial Highway: Former Sen. Harry Reid [wrote about UFOs in the New York Times](#): “Let me be clear: I have never intended to prove that life beyond Earth exists. But if science proves that it does, I have no problem with that. Because the more I learn, the more I realize that there’s still so much I don’t know.”

Ammon Bundy is running for governor as a Republican...in Idaho, [the Idaho Statesman’s Hayat Norimine reports](#). Last year, Bundy was banned from stepping onto the Capitol grounds.

**Do you appreciate the work that goes into this newsletter?
If so, please donate now to support the effort.**



A geothermal plant. Photo courtesy of Great Basin Center for Geothermal Energy.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

A big deal for those watching domestic mining: *Reuters* reporters Ernest Scheyder and Trevor Hunnicutt are reporting that the Biden administration is shifting course on its earlier statements that it would emphasize the domestic procurement of minerals needed for the energy transmission. [From the story](#): “U.S. President Joe Biden will rely on ally countries to supply the bulk of the metals needed to build electric vehicles and focus on processing them domestically into battery parts, part of a strategy designed to placate environmentalists, two administration officials with direct knowledge told Reuters.”

Remember that secret shipment of plutonium? The plutonium is still in Nevada. Reporter Colin Demarest with the *Aiken Standard* [has an update on efforts to move the plutonium](#).

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management approved [a geothermal project](#) in Washoe County.

Reno-based Ormat is acquiring [two existing geothermal projects and a transmission line](#).

SNWA warns Congress of a 'real and urgent' drought crisis

By Allison Winter - May 26, 2021



There is a high probability that Lake Mead could get close to the point in the next decade where the Hoover Dam could no longer deliver water downstream and power production there could come to a halt, the Southern Nevada Water Authority's general manager told members of Congress Tuesday. (Photo: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation)

WASHINGTON—A drought crisis unfolding across the West will require short-term relief and massive, long-term federal funding to help states weather the effects of climate change, the general manager for the Southern Nevada Water Authority told a U.S. House hearing on Tuesday.

"The situation is real and urgent. Current conditions require us to take bold and unprecedented steps to conserve and stretch our existing water supplies," SNWA's John Entsminger told members of Congress.

Nearly 90 percent of the West is now experiencing drought conditions, according to the federal [U.S. Drought Monitor](#). The problem is particularly acute in the Southwest.

Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah just had their driest year in 126 years. Colorado, where the western slope of the Continental Divide feeds into the Colorado River Basin, had its fourth-driest year, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Snowpack is well below average this year and early snowmelt is raising serious concerns for this summer.

"Droughts are not new, but many are experiencing the impact of one of the driest water years on record," Elizabeth Klein, a senior counselor at the Interior Department who is overseeing drought response, said at the hearing before a panel of the House Natural Resources Committee. "Competing demands for water can lead to more conflict."

Among those conflicts are who gets priority for limited water resources: upstream users, farmers, endangered fish, tribes, or municipal water systems.

In some cases, [states are in conflict](#) over who has rights to the water. The U.S. Supreme Court has several interstate water disputes on its docket, including cases between [Mississippi and Tennessee](#) and [Texas, New Mexico and Colorado](#).

'No more time to waste'

The drought conditions are part of an ongoing, concerning trend—due in part to climate change.

"Warmer dryer conditions are expected to increase in the future, leading to extended and more severe drought and fire seasons," said Craig McLean, acting chief scientist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Colorado River Basin is experiencing its driest 21-year-period in 100 years of record-keeping, according to the Interior Department. Extreme or exceptional drought is forecast to continue this year for most of the basin.

If the situation on the Colorado River does not improve, it could have serious consequences for people who rely on it for their water and power.

Reservoirs that the river feeds are already dangerously low. Lake Mead is at 37 percent capacity and Lake Powell is at 34 percent, according to the Southern Nevada Water Authority.

If hydrology levels continue, Entsminger said, there is a high probability that Lake Mead could get close to the point in the next decade where the Hoover Dam could no longer deliver water downstream and power production there could come to a halt.

"The reality that we knew was coming has arrived. From my part of the world, there seems to be no more time to waste," Entsminger said.

State officials have worked on water recycling programs and the Nevada state Legislature is considering a [proposal that would ban watering of decorative turf](#).

But Entsminger said the problem needs to go beyond what they can do at a state level, with a "focused and robust" federal investment in watershed conservation, water recycling and climate change response.

Biden administration plan

President Joe Biden included drought response in his massive infrastructure proposal, the [American Jobs Plan](#). The proposal includes investment in "nature-based infrastructure" for climate resilience and water efficiency and recycling programs to address the drought crisis.

The Interior Department has also pulled together a favorite federal response, the interagency working group, to address drought relief. The group had its first meeting earlier this month and is working to coordinate funding and programs on drought resilience, according to Klein.

Biden also [announced this week](#) he would double the amount of federal funding to help states prepare for natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires.

Rep Jared Huffman, (D-Calif.), the chairman of the Water, Oceans, and Wildlife Subcommittee that hosted the hearing, last week reintroduced his drought resiliency bill, [H.R. 3404](#).

It would direct the federal government to invest more than \$1 billion for various water projects, including water storage, recycling and desalination efforts.

"Climate change is making drought more frequent and severe, we know that. And we must help communities prepare now for the new normal of longer and more frequent dry conditions," Huffman said at the hearing.

He has endorsements from various local water districts, the Environmental Defense Fund and the National Wildlife Federation. The proposal previously passed the House within a large infrastructure bill in the summer of 2020, but it was never brought up in the Senate.

Rep. Bruce Westerman, (R-Ark.), the highest-ranking Republican on the House Natural Resources Committee, said Democrats should make more effort to work with Republicans on a long-term solution.

"You reintroduced your water legislation that did not go through regular order in the last Congress ... I hope this scenario is not repeated this Congress," Westerman said. "We must have the political will to act on a long-term strategy."

But while Democrats and Republicans may disagree on some specifics of how to address the issue, many agree that the drought problem has reached a crisis moment that will require a forward-thinking response.

"We've shot ourselves in the foot, and now we've got to take a long hike. There are some very tough decisions that have to be made because there is only so much water," said Westerman.

"If you look in the short term, it is not a very pretty picture," Westerman said.

Idaho's Craig Foss, state forester at the Idaho Department of Lands, told lawmakers that more aggressive management of dry forests that are prone to wildfire would be one way to help.

"Idaho, like much of the West, is experiencing wildfire seasons that are 30 to 60 days longer," Foss said. "We can't change the weather, but we can change the conditions of our forest."

Allison Winter

Allison Winter is a Washington D.C. correspondent for States Newsroom, a network of state-based nonprofit news outlets that includes Nevada Current.

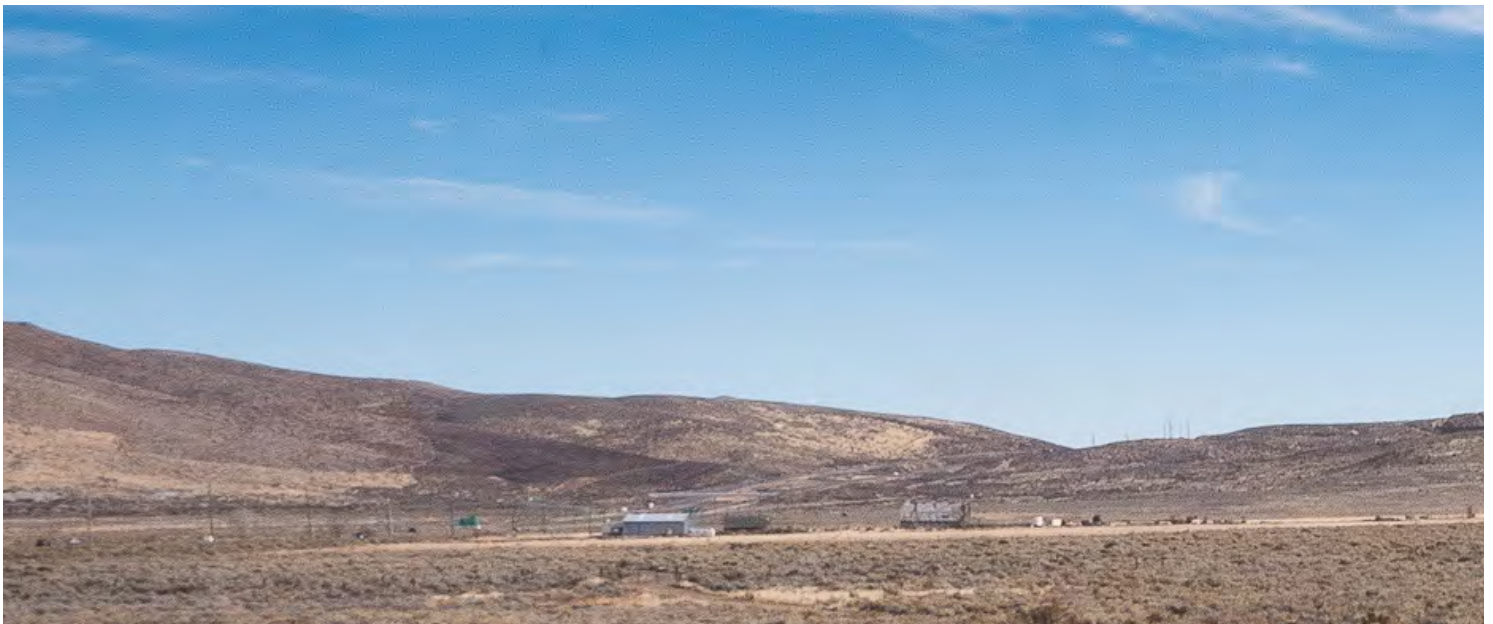


Home > News > **Developer proposes community support in exchange for StoneGa**

NEWS

Developer proposes community support in exchange for approval

By Kristen Hackbarth | May 25, 2021



Public notice for the StoneGate development hearing. The notice is posted at a dead-end overlooking the property to be developed. Photo: Bob Conrad.

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Reno City Council members are set to review on Wednesday a proposal by the developers of StoneGate to fund a \$1.5 million community benefit contribution and speed up development affordable housing units in exchange for approval of nearly \$37 million in bonds for its requested special assessment district (SAD).

[Read More](#)

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FACEBOOK: NAOMI DUERR

STONEGATE:

Love it or hate it, the 5000 unit [#Stonegate](#) development in the North Valleys was approved by the city several years ago. Assuming the developers can address all of the road improvements, water supply issues and related infrastructure, it will be built.

Stonegate asked us (City of Reno) to use our bonding authority to help them obtain lower cost financing for their infrastructure through an SAD. We have a number of smaller SADs in Reno, with Somerset being the largest to date. Over the months I have asked many questions and expressed reservations about whether the financing proposal would bring overall net benefits to the community.

In the last few months, I made some significant asks of the Stonegate developer in order to earn my support. In addition to providing funds for recreation amenities, I requested that they:

1. Move up their affordable housing component from some 20 years out to much earlier in the project.
2. Add electric vehicle ([#EV](#)) charging outlets to every Stonegate home as standard equipment.
3. Increase transparency.

The developer met my requests and those of other Councilmembers. Together we crafted a package that will bring a suite of benefits to our community.

Yesterday, the developer offered \$1.5 million in recreation and business development investments - up from their initially proposed \$800,000 due to the urging of several of my colleagues - and they:

1. Published a Community Benefits proposal with the key points.
2. Committed to moving the affordable housing component up 20 years to Phase 2 of their development (approx 2023), and
3. Committed to installing electric vehicle (EV) charging plugs in every home at no extra charge to the homebuyers. This will encourage new vehicle buyers to 'make the switch' and save hundreds if not thousands of dollars per home in retrofit costs.

I believe the EV Ready plugs will facilitate earlier EV vehicle adoption and thus help to mitigate the impact on air quality the additional vehicles due to the development will bring. I also believe the acceptance of the plugs may spur lasting changes to our city building code, helping us address some 50 years of not meeting air quality standards in the Truckee Meadows.

I am grateful to the support of my colleagues and the willingness of the developers to meet our requests.

We will get there one step at a time 🙏 [#BetterTogether](#)

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How drought conditions will impact Lake Tahoe

Lake Tahoe's sinking water levels

by: **Charles Clifford**

Posted: May 27, 2021 / 10:49 PM PDT / Updated: May 27, 2021 / 10:49 PM PDT

LAKE TAHOE (KRON) – After one of the driest winters on record, there's a lot of concern over how the drought conditions will affect Lake Tahoe.

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lake's water levels have already begun to fall, and there's simply not enough

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snowmelt to fill it back to normal.

Earlier this month, the city of South Lake Tahoe closed the El Dorado Beach boat ramp to motorized watercraft.

Bay Area under 'extreme' drought conditions →

The reason is that the lake's water level has dropped to the point where it's no longer safe to put boats in here.

In fact, the lake is the lowest it has been in five years — The reason is that the Tahoe region has seen two dry winters in a row.


David Wathen is the Chief Deputy Water Master for Lake Tahoe. He says there simply hasn't been enough precipitation to replace the lake water lost to evaporation and outflows.


"Lack of precipitation, snow, and runoff so we are currently sitting at about two feet above the natural rim of Lake Tahoe," Wathen said.

Disadvantaged communities hit hardest by drought →

Lake Tahoe has a natural maximum capacity where the water level sits at 6,223 feet. They call that the rim.

There is a dam at the north end of the lake that can raise the capacity of the lake to 6,229 feet, an additional six feet. That extra water is used as a reservoir to send water down the Truckee River in the summer months.

As the water level in the lake drops, less and less water will flow through the dam. ^{^+}
some point, there may be no water going over the dam at all. 

"When we reach rim control, which could be this summer, late July, early August we will not be able to fully meet our demands downstream," Wathen said. 

California expands drought emergency to large swath of state →

That means less water for irrigation, wildlife, and people but there is a silver lining of sorts. One that could make lake Tahoe visitors happy.

“A low water level at Lake Tahoe, however, you have more beaches. When we are high, we get a lot of complaints about lack of beach,” Wathen said.

As for what happens beyond this summer, no one knows.

If we have a rainy year, it could fill the lake back up again and we could be in good shape, but if it's another dry winter the elevation of the lake could remain low meaning very little water going down the Truckee River for other purposes.

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SHARE THIS STORY

To Fish These Big Trout, Bring a Ladder

Landing the highly coveted Lahontan cutthroat trout requires special skill — and equipment.

By Chris Santella

May 27, 2021, 7:00 a.m. ET

While I rounded a bend above the Windless Bay section of Pyramid Lake in Nevada, a strange sight appeared: a row of 40 or 50 ladders in the shallows, spread across half a mile.

It could have been mistaken for a public art installation or a painters' convention gone awry. But I knew better. The ladders suggested there had been a congregation of Pyramid's renowned Lahontan cutthroat trout. We'd do well to plant our own ladders for a chance to cast the distance needed to hook the trout of a lifetime.

Pyramid Lake rests in a bowl of stark mountains about 40 miles northeast of Reno, a mirage-like sight amid the harsh desert surroundings.

At 188 square miles and reaching depths of more than 300 feet, it's the largest remnant of the ancient Lake Lahontan, which once covered much of Nevada. Formations of tufa, a porous limestone, dot the lake, including one that gives Pyramid its name. The lake and its surroundings are part of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe Reservation.

Living in San Francisco 30 years ago, I'd occasionally hear whispers of the giant trout that once populated the Truckee River near Lake Tahoe. Named cutthroat for the streaks of red beneath their jaws, these fish were said to reach more than 40 pounds. They swam out of Pyramid Lake into the Truckee to spawn, sometimes reaching Lake Tahoe, 120 miles away. They seemed like mythical beasts. And they essentially were — the fish had been extirpated decades before.

"According to some accounts, the runs in the late 1800s were so prolific that you could walk across the fishes' backs," said Travis Hawks, a fisheries biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife who monitors the Truckee. "Commercial fishing efforts were substantial, and fish were used to feed miners in the Sierras and shipped to San Francisco. The Truckee isn't a big river. You can understand how a few well-placed nets could prove very effective."

Overharvesting depleted Pyramid Lahontan trout populations, as well as water diversion projects — most notably the Derby Dam, completed in 1905 — sealed their fate, as fish could no longer reach their spawning grounds. By 1943, Lahontans were declared extinct in Pyramid Lake.

But they weren't quite extinct.



The author of the article with a Lahontan cutthroat trout, which was safely released to grow larger.

Decades ago, a group of interested citizens began taking juvenile fish from Pyramid Lake and placing them in streams across the state. Many of the fish did not survive, but in one small stream near Pilot Peak on the Nevada-Utah border, they did.

Don Duff, a U.S. Forest Service fisheries biologist, discovered the fish there in the late 1970s, and shared his findings with Robert Behnke, an authority on classifying fish in the salmon family. Behnke believed these fish could be remnants of the Pyramid Lahontan strain.

In the mid-1980s, a strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout from Summit Lake in northwestern Nevada was introduced to Pyramid. The fish thrived and continue to reside in Pyramid, but they did not show the longevity or the incredible growth potential of the original Pyramid strain.

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In the early 1990s, word of the discovery at Pilot Peak reached Lisa Heki, who is now the project leader for the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A lifelong Nevadan and advocate for native fish species, she was intrigued. Heki used her station resources to oversee the development of the Pilot Peak broodstock program at the hatchery in Gardnerville, Nev.

“I trusted that the genetic legacy of the original Pyramid Lake population would be expressed if the fish were returned to their original habitat,” she said.

Heki contracted with Mary Peacock, a professor of biology at the University of Nevada, Reno, to do a DNA analysis, and Peacock's team established a protocol to extract DNA from museum specimens of Pyramid Lake Lahontans. The DNA matched with samples from the Pilot Peak fish.

The Paiute Tribe and U.S. Fish and Wildlife agreed to introduce the fish from the Lahontan Hatchery into Pyramid in 2006. "By 2010, anglers began catching big trout," Peacock said.

A milestone has been reached in the Pyramid Lahontans' resurgence: This year, nearly 1,500 fish have returned to the Truckee to spawn, some making it as far as the Derby Dam. Several fish were manually passed around Derby to continue swimming west. A \$48 million retrofit of the dam was recently completed to facilitate fish passage. Lahontans may one day reach Lake Tahoe again.

The lure of truly big trout — and the thrill of encountering a fish that was once thought to be extinct — had a friend and I strapping house ladders to our car roof for the 11-hour ride from Portland, Ore., to Pyramid in early April. Dwindling steelhead returns on our home rivers had made encounters with our local big fish rare. We hoped the Lahontans would fill the void.

Seasoned Pyramid Lake anglers favor a ladder (locally crafted) that features a padded seat and platform. Joe Contaldo

Our ladders seemed pedestrian next to the local models — custom contraptions made by a Reno craftsman which included a platform and a padded seat.

"When people first started fishing the lake, they used milk crates," recalled Joe Contaldi, principal guide with Pyramid Lake Anglers. "This helped them cast far enough to reach the drop-offs where the fish cruise looking for food. And it also helped them get above the cold water." The crates gave way to conventional ladders and then to chair ladders.

Pyramid Lake strain Lahontans grow so big in part by foraging on other fish — primarily tui chub and cui-ui, a sucker fish endemic to Pyramid Lake. But they will also eat beetles and chironomids, an insect the size of your pinkie nail. A number of flies have been developed for Pyramid, including the Popcorn Beetle and the Booby. The latter features two foam eyes that might resemble ... well, you can imagine.

Fly-fishing at Pyramid Lake is subsurface, and falls into two basic techniques: Anglers will cast sink tip or full sinking lines on sturdy 7- or 8-weight rods as far as they can and strip the fly — a tui chub or beetle imitation — slowly back. Alternately, anglers can cast a floating line with an indicator (fly-fishing lingo for a bobber) to suspend several flies, often a balanced leech and a chironomid pattern, in the water column. When the indicator moves, the angler sets the hook.

My angling threesome opted for sink tips and stripping most of our visit, lacking the patience for indicators. As the sun rose high in the clear Nevada sky, pods of Lahontans — some individuals approaching 20 pounds — slowly swam past our ladders.

We didn't land any fish in that class, but we each found trout eclipsing 10 pounds, fish large enough to jolt our rods like the steelhead we seek at home and to oblige a fellow angler to scramble off his ladder to assist with a net. While anglers are permitted to keep limited numbers of fish for consumption, most anglers practice catch and release. Releasing the fish into the slightly salty water was a moving experience, a brief dance with a troubled past and a hopeful future.

For anglers who crave seclusion, Pyramid may be less than ideal. With the assemblage of anglers lined up along Windless Bay, conversations were inevitable. On our last day, an adjacent angler, Alex Varner, invited us to an impromptu barbecue. "There's a camaraderie out there on the best beaches," Contaldi said. "People who don't want to be around others will find a different place."

Anglers queued up at Windless Bay on Pyramid Lake, awaiting the evening bite. Ken Matsumoto

ENVIRONMENT

As Lake Mead drops below shortage mark, shifting shorelines keep marinas in motion

Ian James Arizona Republic

Published 6:00 a.m. MT May 28, 2021 | Updated 3:46 p.m. MT May 28, 2021

LAKE MEAD, Nevada — People who fish for striped bass and catfish in Lake Mead are seeing their favorite stretches of shoreline transform around them.

The reservoir near Las Vegas has been dropping week after week, reshaping the moist, sandy ground where anglers cast their lines into the lapping water.

“Every week, it’s further and further,” said Stephen D’Agostino, who was fishing with a friend on the shore. He motioned to a pile of rocks about 40 feet from the water and said that was where the lake had been two months ago.

“It’s concerning. It really is,” D’Agostino said. “What’s the future of this lake if this is going to happen repeatedly every year?”

Lake Mead, the largest reservoir in the country, has declined dramatically over the past 22 years as the flow of the Colorado River has shrunk during a series of extremely dry years worsened by climate change.

The lake, which now stands just 37% full, passed a major threshold this week when its level fell below an elevation of 1,075 feet above sea level. The reservoir is headed for a first-ever official shortage and is dropping toward its lowest levels since it was filled in the 1930s following the construction of Hoover Dam.

Lake Mead’s surface has fallen more than 16 feet over the past year and is forecast to sink about 9 feet more by the end of the year.

This month, during peak irrigation season for downstream farms, the reservoir has been dropping about 1 foot a week. And each foot of vertical decline brings much larger changes as the water retreats along the shores.

At the bustling marinas in Lake Mead National Recreation Area, the shifting shorelines require costly and elaborate work: pulling the marinas out with cables and winches, extending power lines and fuel lines, using divers to unhook giant concrete anchors and dispatching barges to lower new anchors into the water.

Adapting to changing lake levels at the marinas and boat ramps has long been a crucial priority for the National Park Service and companies that run the marinas under contracts. But the pace of the water-level declines has accelerated over the past year, requiring a flurry of stepped-up work.

And as the boating infrastructure sinks lower, the changing shorelines have also become a barometer of the rapid declines in a critical water source that nourishes much of the desert Southwest.

The lake's level on Tuesday dropped below 1,075 feet, the trigger point for a shortage, which the federal government is expected to declare in August. That will bring substantial water cutbacks next year for Arizona, Nevada and Mexico.

And if Mead continues to shrink as projected, within two years the reservoir could fall 28 more feet, approaching the threshold at 1,045 feet at which California, under a 2019 shortage-sharing deal, would also be required to take less water.

With unrelenting dry years exacerbating the river's entrenched pattern of overuse, representatives of the seven states that rely on the Colorado River soon plan to start negotiating new rules for dealing with shortages after 2026, when the current set of agreements expire.

In the meantime, workers at the marinas are busy preparing for the next few feet of the lake's decline.

'It's shocking'

At Temple Bar Marina on the lake's Arizona side, manager Jeff Darcangelo said employees have been working hard to make sure the moving operations go smoothly.

"Every time we see it getting low, we've got to push it out more," he said. The previous week, they moved the marina out nearly 70 feet.

"We've just got to every day make sure that nothing is going to beach itself," Darcangelo said.

Motioning to an exposed spit of land, Darcangelo said that not long ago, this piece of land was underwater and people could steer their boats right over it.

“Now you could pretty much drive your vehicle over there,” Darcangelo said. “It’s shocking how abruptly the water is going down.”

Even bigger jobs of moving marinas are in the works if the lake continues to decline as projected over the next few years.

Temple Bar and another marina, Callville Bay, are operated under contracts by the company Guest Services, which also manages campgrounds, RV parks and two marinas downstream at Lake Mohave. Rod Taylor, the company’s area manager, said he’s looking ahead to prepare for the possibility of moving Callville Bay Marina to a different part of the lake, which could become necessary if the reservoir declines below an elevation of about 1,000 feet, or 75 feet down from its current level.

The plan would be to use boats to haul the marina to Swallow Cove, several miles away, he said, where the National Park Service would need to build a new road and parking lot.

“It’s an enormous amount of time and effort to do that,” Taylor said.

Taylor has been living at Lake Mead for 25 years, and early on he saw the lake nearly full.

In 2000, water was lapping at the spillway gates of Hoover Dam. Since then, the lake level has fallen about 140 feet, and the declines have required major adjustments.

Hoover Dam: Symbol of the modern West faces new test with an epic water shortage

In 2007, Taylor was involved in moving the Overton Beach Marina after it was shut down due to declining water levels. The marina was split into two sections for the move. He and his team used 11 houseboats to push each section of the marina across the lake.

They towed and steered one part of the marina 32 miles to Temple Bar and moved the other section 41 miles to Callville Bay.

While planning for the possibility of another big move, Taylor said, the staff at the marinas are working on more immediate tasks, which include using winches to pull the floating docks into new positions and pouring concrete to make more of the 4-foot blocks, each weighing 6,000 pounds, that serve as anchors.

To move submerged anchors, divers have been swimming down and hooking cables to the

“Moving the marina is a serious effort, with the anchors and the diving and the winching and all that kind of stuff. But then keeping the utilities connected to the marina is a whole other piece of the puzzle,” Taylor said. “We're having to buy cable. We're having to buy water lines, sewer line, fuel line.”

The additional costs at the two marinas this year will probably come to about \$600,000 in all, Taylor said.

And looking ahead, Taylor said, he and his colleagues are working closely with the National Park Service to plan for continuing declines.

By mid-June, Lake Mead is forecast to drop below 1,071.6 feet, a record set in 2016, and continue descending to the lowest levels since the reservoir was filled.

As the lake drops to new lows, Taylor said, “it's going down to a place we've never seen,” so adapting will require preparing for unknown terrain popping out, such as outcroppings that become islands. He said it will also require being prepared to shift gears in the event of a wet year like 2011, when the lake rose 46 feet.

“We've adapted,” Taylor said. “Every business out there has had to adapt. And they keep calling it the 'new normal,' but I don't think anything is really normal anymore. It's just changing. And so the only thing that is normal is change.”

Planning for low water levels

Lake Mead National Recreation Area is hugely popular among people who come to boat, fish, hike and swim. Among the parks administered by the National Park Service, it ranked number 5 last year, with 8 million visitors.

For the park's managers, keeping the boat ramps accessible is a priority. To extend launch ramps where the concrete ends, crews have been laying down “pipe mats” made of repurposed steel cooling pipes from decommissioned coal-fired power plants.

The work of installing these mats has required temporarily closing the launch ramp at Hemenway Harbor and reducing the number of open lanes at some ramps.

“It is a lot of work and it is a significant cost,” said Greg Hauburger, chief of staff at Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

He said extending launch ramps will cost \$5 million this year and \$12 million next year, and that doesn't include potential moves of marinas and parking areas beyond that.

"We're looking at potentially over \$100 million in 2023," Hauburger said, "depending on water levels."

As workers extend the boat ramps, they'll also lay down concrete panels, Hauburger said, and will ensure there are plenty of access points to the lake.

"We've got 200,000 acres of water. It's not all doom and gloom. There's a lot of launch ramps that are still going to be open," Hauburger said. "It's just going to be a little bit of a delay as we reposition the pipe mats to maintain access, as we do the construction to extend the launch ramps."

With the reservoir headed for a shortage, water allotments will be cut next year for Arizona, Nevada and Mexico. These reductions, which were laid out in a 2019 deal called the Drought Contingency Plan, are intended to give Lake Mead a boost and reduce the risks of the reservoir falling to critically low levels.

The agreement includes lower-level shortage thresholds that would trigger larger water cuts if Lake Mead continues to decline. The largest reductions would come if the lake reaches 1,025 feet, about 50 feet below the current level — a point the deal was intended to prevent the reservoir from reaching.

But the past year has been one of the driest on record in the Colorado River Basin, and the federal government's projections of Lake Mead's levels over the coming year have worsened.

"We've been expecting lower water levels," Hauburger said. "It's just happening faster than we thought it was going to happen."

The National Recreation Area has a low-water plan to maintain access and adapt marinas, launch ramps and other facilities if Mead drops 25 feet more below elevation 1,050 feet, which according to the latest projections could happen by October 2022.

Other changes are coming sooner.

At Boulder Harbor, an inlet shimmers in the sun next to desert slopes where the retreating lake has left lines etched in the dry soil among the creosote bushes. From the concrete launch ramp, boats slide off trailers into the inlet and navigate through a narrow channel to the lake.

For now, Boulder Harbor remains a good place to launch, Hauburger said. But sometime in June, he said, the channel will become too shallow for boats to pass.

'A clear signal'

The federal Bureau of Reclamation manages Lake Mead in conjunction with Lake Powell on the Utah-Arizona border. Over the past two years, extremely dry conditions across the watershed have shrunk the amount of water flowing into Lake Powell, which has dropped to just 34% of full capacity.

The rapid declines have created similar challenges for boating access at Powell. Officials this month shut down the Stateline launch ramp in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, citing new projections that showed the lake's levels falling faster than expected.

The dropping water levels of Lake Powell are also driving the worsening outlook downstream at Lake Mead.

In wetter years, runoff from melting snow and releases from Lake Powell can give a significant boost to Mead's levels. But the government's latest projections show that's not expected the rest of this year or next year. Into 2023, the forecast calls for Mead's levels to continue plunging.

Together, the two reservoirs make up the heart of a water supply that flows to subdivisions and golf courses in Las Vegas and Phoenix, fields of alfalfa and vegetables in the Imperial and Mexicali valleys and backyard gardens in Los Angeles and much of Southern California.

The river has long been overallocated, with so much water diverted that most of the Colorado's delta in Mexico dried up decades ago, leaving only remnants of its once-vast wetlands.

Since 2000, the flow of the Colorado River has shrunk during one of the watershed's driest periods in centuries. And research has shown that global warming is having a major effect in contributing to drier conditions, reducing the river's flow.

Many scientists describe the past two decades as a megadrought worsened by climate change, saying the Colorado River Basin is undergoing "aridification" that will complicate water management for generations to come.

Margaret Garcia, an assistant professor at Arizona State University who focuses on water infrastructure and management, said in the images of Lake Mead's falling water levels, she

sees “a clear signal of a warming world and how it is intrinsically linked to water.”

“An aridifying West exacerbates the long-term imbalance between supply and demand on the Colorado River,” Garcia said.

Garcia said she also thinks about how some of the water in the reservoir is reserved for specific water users based on prior conservation, something that has been encouraged under agreements including the Drought Contingency Plan.

That's a concern, Garcia said, because it means that some water in Mead is already spoken for beyond established allocations, and this stored water can still be withdrawn unless the reservoir hits critical lows.

And while there are some restrictions limiting the levels at which reserves can be withdrawn, she said, the use of this stored water would likely slow any recovery of lake levels if conditions turn wetter during the next five years.

"It's a messy situation, but it also potentially incentivizes the players to cooperate, and hopefully that's the direction it goes in," Garcia said. "They have come together to come up with solutions in the past, and that's just going to need to continue."

The rapidly declining levels of Lake Mead and Lake Powell have brought urgency to the growing calls for action by researchers, policymakers and others, who say it's time to readjust the system of managing the Colorado River to fix the overallocation problems and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Researchers John Fleck and Brad Udall wrote this week in the journal *Science* that managing the Colorado River's crisis will require taking seriously what the science shows about how climate change is reducing the river's flow, and that this will be crucial as representatives of the seven states renegotiate water allocation agreements over the next four years.

The river's flow is down by about 20% as compared to the 20th century, they wrote, and Powell and Mead are projected to be only 29% full by 2023.

“As the basin's water management community prepares for a new round of negotiations over the water allocation rules, how bad of a 'worst case scenario' should be considered and who will get less water as a result?” Fleck and Udall wrote. “It is tempting to use today's 20% flow decline as the new baseline — that is, modeling future reductions on the basis of what has already been observed. But only by planning for even greater declines can we manage the

real economic, social, and environmental risks of running low on a critical resource upon which 40 million North Americans depend.”

For boaters and fishers who have been coming to Lake Mead for years, the dramatic decline is starkly visible all around, in the islands that have emerged and the “bathtub ring” of whitish minerals that coats the rocky slopes, forming a sharply defined strip 150 feet high above the water.

On the shore one morning, as D’Agostino and his friend stood casting their lines beside a rocky point, they talked about how the fishing was better when the water was higher.

In previous years, D’Agostino said, he and others would use throw-nets to catch shad for bait.

“There’s no shad running this year,” D’Agostino said. “I think it has something to do with how low the lake is compared to last year.”

Zack Jackson, who was fishing nearby, joined the conversation and agreed, saying he guesses with the lake going down, “that changes where those fish hang out, and they’re stressed and pressured from having to move around.”

Jackson said he had been fishing a week earlier and the shore was quite a bit higher.

“The water used to come up to the bush line. This was all underwater,” Jackson said, sweeping an arm toward a thicket of willows. “It’s crazy. I’ve never seen it drop this fast.”

D’Agostino has been buying frozen anchovies to use for bait. He took one out of the cooler, put it on his hook and cast his line.

Even with the water going down, D’Agostino said he plans to keep coming back to fish.

“We’ll be here as long as there’s water,” he said.

Ian James covers water, climate change and the environment for The Arizona Republic. Send him story tips, comments and questions at ian.james@arizonarepublic.com and follow him on Twitter at @ByIanJames.

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GREGORY BARBER BUSINESS 06.01.2021 08:00 AM

The Mayor of Reno Is Betting Big on the Blockchain

Hillary Schieve invests in cryptocurrencies herself, and she sees the technology as a way to improve government services.



The mayor of Reno, Nevada, has proposed offering an NFT of the *Space Whale* sculpture near City Hall. PHOTOGRAPH: GEORGE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES

HILLARY SCHIEVE, THE mayor of Reno, Nevada, takes my arm before we jaywalk across the street from City Hall. She continues clutching it as we traverse the gritty public plaza on the other side, and does not let go until we reach the foot, or rather fin, of our destination: a hulking steel and stained-glass sculpture of a humpback whale nuzzling its calf. Its name is the *Space Whale*. In 2016 a team led by artist Matt Schultz created it for Burning Man, the annual festival held a

few hours north of the city, as a means of drawing awareness to “our hypocrisy toward protecting the oceans,” he tells me later. After the festival, the city leased the sculpture for \$64,000.

Up close, the whales are looking a little wan. Most of the reachable panes have been shattered, and the metal skeleton is losing its sheen. Schieve, bundled tightly in a coat, her blond hair whipping in a chilly April wind, reaches toward a shard of glass and sighs. “I’m on the save-the-whale campaign,” she says. This was a controversial statement. The lease on the whale had expired in August 2019. The artists had tried to sell it to the city, which had little interest in the \$500,000 price tag, and when the price later came down, the city insisted the artists pay for repairs. Schultz’s group then tried to sell it on Facebook Marketplace for \$1 million. No takers. All the while, no one was giving the sculpture any TLC. In Schieve’s office, mention of “the whale” elicits an eye roll. A white whale, beached on the banks of the Truckee River.

But this spring, Schieve (pronounced SHE-vee) devised a potential solution: a non-fungible token, or NFT, offered for sale on a blockchain called Tezos. The new owner would receive a .CAD file and a video from the artist, but the actual, physical sculpture would stay in that downtown Reno plaza. The proceeds would raise funds for the city to clean up the whale and preserve it for the public to enjoy. Schieve realized this type of semi-symbolic sale might require some sweetening. So she was contemplating offering benefits, like tagging along on her annual trip to Burning Man with fellow elected officials. (They don’t stay overnight, Schieve adds; she did not intend to jeopardize any future electoral campaigns with drugs and orgies.)



Reno mayor Hillary Schieve PHOTOGRAPH: PATRICK T. FALLON/BLOOMBERG/GETTY IMAGES

The issuance of an NFT is not, at this point, such a radical thing, even for a government. Cities and states all over have sought at times to forge links to the blockchain. In 2018, Cleveland declared itself Blockland, though the label seems to have waned. Wyoming has set itself up as the premier regulatory haven for cryptocurrency, a label that other states, including Nevada, now seek to challenge. All it takes is a few interested businesspeople and elected officials receptive to “new ideas,” especially those with a cypherpunk ring. That’s not quite what’s happening in Reno. For Schieve, the NFT was a gateway to something else.

An early sign emerged in January, when Mayor Francis Suarez of Miami, a person on a recent tear of throwing out tech-friendly ideas and seeing what sticks, tweeted about turning his city into a “hub for crypto innovation” centered around Bitcoin. Schieve was unsatisfied. “When are you going to become a \$LINK marine?” she teased in reply, cryptically to most readers. She was referring to a blockchain platform called Chainlink, perhaps best known for its cult following of “marines” who swarm toward any mention of the technology on social media. Their loyalty is expressed through ranks earned by #HODLing (that is, holding) the platform’s cryptocurrency, called Link. Apparently, the mayor of Reno was a member of the battalion—“link pillied,” in the community’s parlance. “It was really sweet,” Schieve says of the meme invasion her tweet inspired.

Why had she tweeted about Chainlink, of all things? For one thing, she is an investor. In 2016 she attended a hackathon where an attendee convinced her to start dabbling in Bitcoin. She did, but found the speculation dull; it wasn’t exciting to watch the value of her bitcoin go up and down. So she began researching other blockchains and the problems they sought to solve. One day, she was reading about forms of digital identity—think blockchain-enabled driver’s licenses or vaccine cards—and came across some interesting cryptography that Chainlink was using to keep them secure. The project appeared well respected and had a number of high-profile scientists involved. So she started buying Link, among other so-called altcoins. “I like to invest in things that I believe in,” she says. “I’d never buy Dogecoin.”

Schieve has done well for herself with this approach, though she declines to share how well. Her earnings were enough that her brother-in-law, a longtime cryptocurrency enthusiast, “freaked out” when he saw her quip on Twitter, fearing the attention of thieves and hackers. “My sister saw it and said, ‘Bruce wants to kill you,’” she says. Since then, Schieve’s Twitter account has bounced between the ordinary affairs of running a small city—mental health initiatives, historic preservation, teacher appreciation—and, on occasion, promoting Link.

“I like to invest in things that I believe in.”

– HILLARY SCHIEVE, MAYOR, RENO, NEVADA

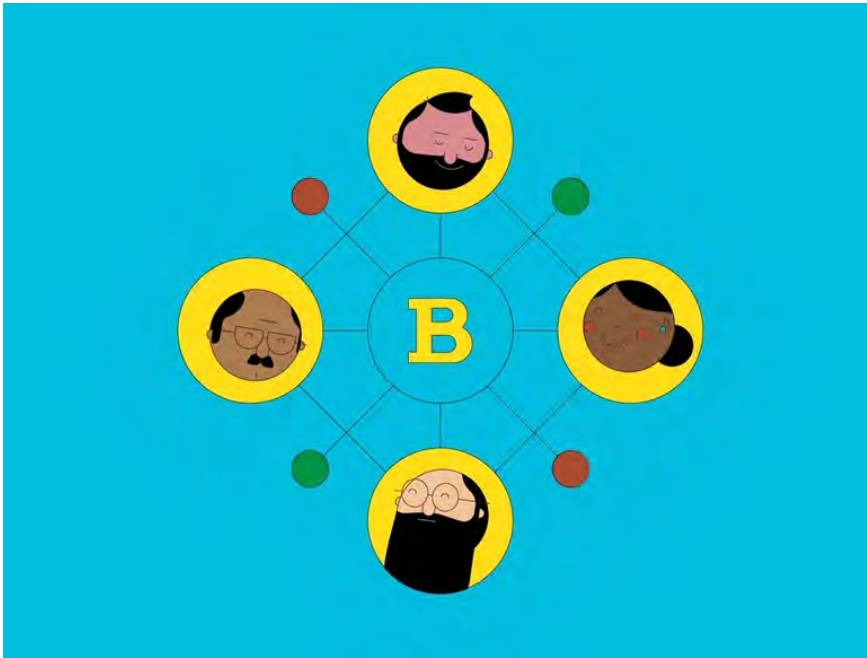
Schieve’s first question when we sit down in her office is whether I bought into Coinbase’s public debut. I hadn’t. She had, at perhaps too high a price, she admits. Schieve, who is 50 years old, had just arrived from a regional meeting about vaccine distribution and was soon heading out to convince a casino to beautify a sidewalk. The office is buzzing with post-vaccination energy. She comforts a worker who had recently lost his wife to cancer. (Had he read *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*? She hopes it’s not politically incorrect to suggest a book by a rabbi to a Mormon.) Her assistant is watching her dogs and cats over the weekend. (Had he gotten her Venmo?) The city manager drops by. (He thinks the NFT idea is a little “out there.”)

We sit in plush, studded white chairs on the 15th floor with a corner view of the snow-capped Sierra Nevada. One wall is a chalkboard covered with a to-do list in perfect, looping handwriting that includes items ranging from “Sleepover at City Hall” to “Clean up blighted downtown (paint, etc.)” (The list was written pre-Covid, she clarifies; she was meaning to commission an artist to do something new.) The other wall is covered with a black tapestry bearing a white “R” for Reno in an antique font. It was the product of an effort early in her tenure as mayor, when Schieve had convened a number of “young and cool and hip” local marketing firms to design a city rebrand. When the city council firmly rejected the design proposal, she adopted it as her “mayor’s mark.” The competing brand identity for the city of Reno can now often be seen in the background when she appears as a guest in online cryptocurrency shows.

Headaches of that sort with the council are fairly routine. Schieve had come to lead Reno’s government by an unusual path. She was born and raised in the city, and left to train as an elite figure skater until kidney disease ended her career early. She returned home and opened an online boutique and a line of physical thrift stores, which are today staffed by 27 teenagers. She delights in telling the origin story of her political ambitions, which began with a fight over a \$5,000 fee to move a sign at one of the shops. In 2012 she decided to run for city council with a pro-business, nonpartisan stance (all city positions technically are, but candidates usually rely on some form of party backing). Two years later, the theme of her mayoral platform was “reopening the doors of City Hall.” The previous mayor owned casinos, but she wanted to transition Reno away from its gambling dependency. To her, that largely meant attracting tech.

Schieve knew that Reno had the right ingredients: near Lake Tahoe and Silicon Valley but affordable for home buyers, and with lower taxes than California. In recent years the region has had some success in luring startups, as well as more industrial forms of tech like the Tesla Gigafactory and data centers for Google and Apple. During the pandemic, Reno became a destination for remote workers who didn’t want to stray too far from headquarters. Critics have raised concerns about the downsides: rising housing costs and homelessness and the overall Burning Man-ification of a city known for its Old West vibe and gambler grit. But Schieve believed she could tackle those things while packaging the city as more youthful and vibrant.

Is blockchain a ribbon on this packaging? Perhaps. “I’m on the marketing and branding side of things,” Schieve says. That day in April happened to be the final day of a Chainlink-sponsored hackathon, which she had been invited to judge. She gives me a preview of the winning entries: a system for farmers to use carbon credits, and another for demand-based pricing of public transit. They were “cool,” she thought, but clearly in beta. Schieve was familiar by now with this dynamic. She had hoped to use blockchain technology to certify the provenance of the designer handbags she sold, helping to weed out counterfeits, but the options didn’t look viable yet. She considered accepting cryptocurrency for clothes, but her customers didn’t seem all that interested. “It’s all so new,” she says. “Saying it and doing it are two different things.”



The WIRED Guide to the Blockchain

It's super secure and slightly hard to understand, but the idea of creating tamper-proof databases has captured the attention of everyone from anarchist techies to staid bankers.

BY KLINT FINLEY **AND** GREGORY BARBER

The whale NFT, Schieve hoped, would be different. Public art, and especially Burning Man art, was important to her vision for how the city should look and feel. She liked Tezos for the job, rather than Ethereum, because it uses less energy; she was working with Tezos developers to build a platform for raising funds for municipal art, which she hopes other mayors will adopt. Schieve was feeling optimistic, though the whale sale was uncertain. The precise ownership model—who would have rights to do what with the whale, and who would receive what allocation of the proceeds—was still being worked out. And of course, there was the matter of crashing cryptocurrency prices. Who would want this whale in downtown Reno? “It’s absurdist bragging rights,” says Schultz, the artist, who finds NFTs dismally late-capitalist, but was willing to go along with it.

The project attracted more favorable notice from some, including a 21-year-old undergraduate from the University of Nevada–Reno named Theodore Clapp. He was thrilled, and surprised, to see his mayor “interested in this obscure altcoin that I loved,” he says. He emailed her after seeing a tweet about Tezos, and she responded immediately. He was soon installed as the head of Reno’s Blockchain Board on Innovation (a board of one, for now; he is seeking other members to join him).

Clapp’s current job is to work on a white paper for something called a decentralized autonomous organization, or DAO. He and Schieve envision that city residents will receive cryptocurrency that corresponds to the value of certain city-owned parcels. People could buy and sell their stakes, and if the land were leased or sold, they would all share in the proceeds. This would happen automatically, through smart contracts—blockchain-based programs—that could be altered only by consensus among the shareholders. It was exciting, Schieve thought, because it could help prove out all sorts of

applications. Could an unemployment system run by smart contracts be more transparent and fraud-resistant? What about the security of death certificates issued by blockchain?

All of this, including the DAO, is a long way off. When Clapp meets with city officials other than the mayor, the reaction ranges from “cautious and skeptical to very against,” he says. Schieve casts it differently: They’re in the education phase. Yes, crypto is mostly at this point about speculation, and perhaps there is a certain degree of posturing involved. But she remains a believer and hopes she can create more believers. Eventually, she thinks, the technology could help this place she holds dear. “Politicians don’t like to be the first out of the gate,” she says. “I’m not afraid of that. Anything that could make your community better is worth trying.”

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[Gregory Barber](#) is a staff writer at WIRED who writes about blockchain, AI, and tech policy. He graduated from Columbia University with a bachelor’s degree in computer science and English literature and now lives in San Francisco.

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Douglas County Commissioners declare drought conditions, encourage water conservation

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Submitted by [Jeff Munson](#) on Thu, 05/27/2021 - 9:22am

Carson River Water Subconservancy photo

Douglas County news release

MINDEN — The Douglas County Board of County Commissioners adopted resolution 2021R-050 declaring drought conditions in Douglas County and encouraging conservation actions by the public due to a severe drought affecting the entire southwestern United States, including the State of Nevada.

The Carson River Water Subconservancy has recognized the severity of this drought and has encouraged its members to participate in an educational awareness campaign.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a drought emergency in Alpine and El Dorado Counties. Douglas County shares water resources with Alpine and El Dorado Counties; and the Carson River Basin extends approximately 150 miles from eastern California through Douglas County and encompasses about 3,900 square miles. The Carson River is the main source of water recharge for the Carson Valley and is currently experiencing an exceptionally low water flow for this time of the year.

The U.S. Geological Survey ("USGS") has notified Douglas County that the "average" well depth in the Carson Valley is now 260 feet and that nitrate plums caused by inadequately maintained septic tanks in the Carson Valley are increasing and pose a threat to the quality of our water.

Every citizen has a stake in the health of our water resources and to conserve water. Douglas County is encouraging all residents to actively help in water conservation efforts. A voluntary water conservation notice was inserted in each Douglas County water bill. County residents who are not water customers of Douglas County are also encouraged to take steps to conserve water and to follow water conservation efforts initiated by their purveyors.

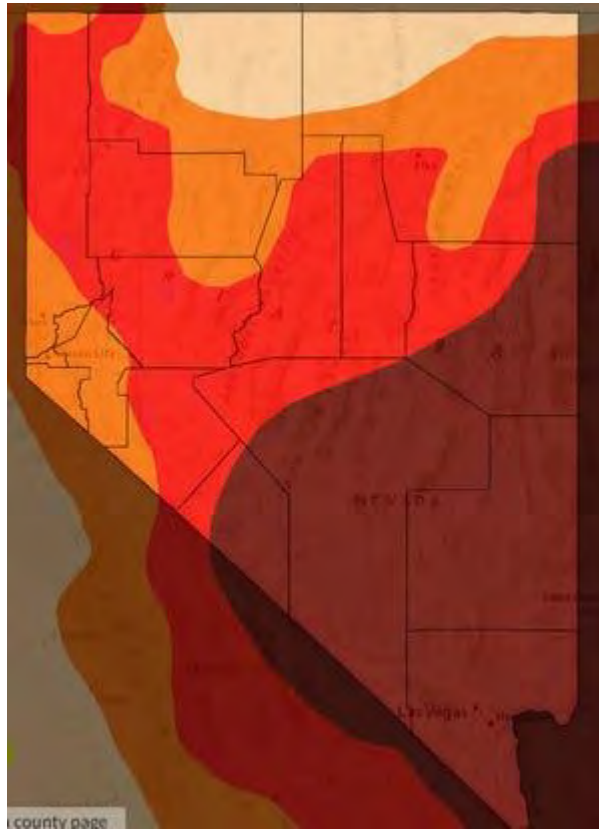
To reduce the impact on your water supply during the expected high heat of summer, we respectfully request your cooperation in conserving water by observing the following voluntary watering schedule for the irrigation of lawns, gardens, trees, grass, shrubbery or other vegetation, effective May 1, 2021 through October 31, 2021:

- Premises with an odd-numbered address shall be limited to watering on Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday.
- Premises with an even-numbered address shall be limited to watering on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.
- We also request that customers do not plant new lawns between July 1st and September 30th.

Your cooperation in practicing good water conservation measures has a significant impact on the operation of your water system. Also, please remember that it is a violation of Douglas County Code, Title 20.F.30 to waste water by allowing water to pool, pond or runoff your property from over-watering.

When will Reno City Council take climate change seriously? | Tom Wicker

Tom Wicker



This opinion column was submitted by Reno resident Tom Wicker.

I have lived in the Reno area for about 25 years, and it seems that every time we have had dry conditions by historical standards, **TMWA** has assured citizens that Reno has plenty of water, and that water is not alimit to growth in the area. Yet repeatedly through those years more and more water conservation measures have been put in place as the population grows. Each drier period TMWA and elected representatives act as if it is an anomaly, just a bad year, nothing more despite repeated warnings by climatologists over at least the past 20 years that the western U.S. will become significantly more arid and hotter in the future.

What does it take? Does the Truckee River have to remain dry for several years for Reno City Council to take climate change seriously? They hired a sustainability manager and gave her too small a budget to do much other than be a symbol they could point to and claim they take sustainability seriously. Other than Devon Reese, they have not endorsed bill HR 2307, the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act of 2021, in the U.S. House of Representatives.

More:TMWA to order water conservation measures for Reno-Sparks area following dry winter

I started monitoring our well depth in the late 1990s after we attended a meeting organized by Washoe County and DRI regarding wells going dry in the area around Mt. Rose Highway/Callahan Ranch due to drought. Around 2000 our well level was approaching our pump depth, so I rototilled the front and back lawns and planted native wildflower seeds from Comstock. Several neighbors have had wells drilled deeper. We also curtailed water usage in other ways such as limiting toilet flushes, and of course using a low-flow shower head. We have used drip irrigation on trees and shrubs and the garden since we moved here.

Our well level has remained low, recovering a bit in years after a wetter year, dropping in drier ones such as 2016 when I hiked from Galena to the top of Mt. Rose on Jan. 27 without walking in any snow. Many of the mountain springs where I usually get water while hiking went dry that year by August. That same year there was little irrigation ditch water which the "south suburban" area relies heavily on for groundwater replenishment for wells, but the traffic islands in the Reno business parks were verdant, with water running down the streets.

For the first about 10 years we lived here we always had 1 1/2 to 2 feet of snow on the ground a couple times during the winter. That has gradually decreased over the years to where now we usually have less than 6 inches, and many times the ground is bare a good part of the winter.

We also used to be able to count on a killing frost or snow occurring during the first two weeks of June and during the first two weeks of September, the latter killing everything in the garden (we live at 4,800 ft, outside the Reno heat island). That hasn't happened for several years now, with the first fall killing frost now often occurring in late October. Old photos of the Truckee Meadows in winter indicate it used to have much deeper snow levels.

We have been more or less in drought for a long time, and climatologists have warned us of the West becoming drier and hotter for at least 20 years, yet the City Council and county commissioners continue to ignore the growing problem.

Tom Wicker is a Reno resident.

Nation

The Seattle Times

Drought-stricken Nevada enacts ban on ‘non-functional’ grass

June 7, 2021 at 11:20 am | Updated June 8, 2021 at 6:02 am

📷 **1 of 2** | FILE – In this April 9, 2021, file photo, sprinklers water grass near a street corner in the Summerlin neighborhood of northwest Las... (AP Photo/Ken Ritter, File) **More** ✓

By **SAM METZ**

The Associated Press



CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) — In Sin City, one thing that will soon become unforgivable is useless grass.

A new Nevada law will outlaw about 31% of the grass in the Las Vegas area in an effort to conserve water amid a drought that’s drying up the region’s primary water source: the Colorado River.

Other cities and states around the U.S. have enacted temporary bans on lawns that must be watered, but legislation signed Friday by Gov. Steve Sisolak makes Nevada the first in the nation to enact a permanent ban on certain categories of grass.

Sisolak said last week that anyone flying into Las Vegas viewing the “bathtub rings” that delineate how high Lake Mead’s water levels used to be can see that conservation is needed.

“It’s incumbent upon us for the next generation to be more conscious of conservation and our natural resources — water being particularly important,” he said.

The ban targets what the Southern Nevada Water Authority calls “non-functional turf.” It applies to grass that virtually no one uses at office parks, in street medians and at entrances to housing developments. It excludes single-family homes, parks and golf courses.

Nevada Assemblyman Howard Watts III, the bill’s sponsor, said he hopes other western states consider similar action leading up to 2026, when they renegotiate the Colorado River’s Drought Contingency Plan. He applauded Sisolak for taking concrete action on conservation after Utah Gov. Spencer Cox asked people to pray for rain last week.

“There’s broad acceptance in southern Nevada that if we can take some grass out to preserve the water supply for our communities, then that’s something that we need to do,” he said. “This sends a clear message about what other states need to be looking at in order to preserve water.”

The measure will require the replacement of about 6 square miles (16 square kilometers) of grass in the metro Las Vegas area. By ripping it out, water officials estimate the region can conserve 10% of its total available Colorado River water supply and save about 11 gallons (41 liters) per person per day in a region with a population of about 2.3 million.

“Replacing non-functional turf from Southern Nevada will allow for more sustainable and efficient use of resources, build resiliency to climate change, and help ensure the community’s current and future water needs continue to be met,” said Southern Nevada Water Authority General Manager John Entsminger.

The ban was passed by state lawmakers with bipartisan support and backing from groups like Great Basin Water Network conservation group and the Southern Nevada Homebuilders’ Association, which wants to free up water to allow for projected growth and future construction.

When the ban takes effect in 2027, it will apply only to Southern Nevada Water Authority jurisdiction, which encompasses Las Vegas and its surrounding areas and relies on the Colorado River for 90% of its water supply.

As the region has grown, the agency has prohibited developers from planting grass front lawns in new subdivisions and has spent years offering some of the region's most generous rebates to owners of older properties — up to \$3 per square foot (0.1 square meters) — to tear out grass and replace it with drought-tolerant landscaping.

Water officials have said waning demand for those rebates has made bolder measures necessary. The legislation also mandates the formation of an advisory committee to carve out exceptions to the ban.

Other cities and states have enacted temporary grass bans during short-term droughts, but Nevada is the first place in the country to put in place a regional ban on certain uses of grass.

The ban came as the seven states that rely on the over-tapped Colorado River for water — Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming — reckon with the prospect of a drier future.

Lake Mead and Lake Powell, the two reservoirs where Colorado River water is stored, are projected to shrink this year to levels that would trigger the region's first-ever official shortage declaration and cut the amount allocated to Nevada and Arizona.

Water officials in both states have said that even with the cuts, they'll still have enough water to accommodate projected population growth, but are working to limit certain kinds of consumption.

In Arizona, farmers in Pinal County south of Phoenix have had to stop irrigating their fields because of the cuts. Nevada stands to lose about 4% of its allocation, although the state has historically not used its entire share.

This version corrects that the ban on “non-functional turf” will require the replacement of 6 square miles (16 square kilometers) of grass, or about 31% of turf in the Las Vegas metro, not 8 square miles (21 square kilometers) and 40%.

Sam Metz is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

SAM METZ

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