

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT WATER AND GROWTH

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

The answer is no. Some people mistakenly believe that when our residential customers use less water through conservation, the water saved is used for growth. That is not what happens. The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) requires that TMWA use conserved water to increase drought storage availability and enhance in-stream flows in the Truckee River for wildlife purposes. Reselling of conserved water to serve new houses does not occur.

### WHERE DOES THE WATER COME FROM FOR NEW GROWTH?

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

The amount of Truckee River water available for use in the Truckee Meadows was determined by a 1944 court decree and has not changed. When people who own irrigation water rights decide not to use them any longer, they can sell them like any other real property. If they are sold to a developer, the developer must then legally change the use to municipal purposes and transfer them to TMWA so they can serve new customers. There is no increase in the amount of water that can be diverted from the river. The only thing that changes is how the water is used.

### DOES GROWTH PAY FOR GROWTH AT TMWA?

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

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



## QUICK FACTS

**Remaining water rights:**  
40,000 acre-feet of Truckee River water rights and more than 19,000 acre-feet of creek rights remain for future conversion.

**Total converted irrigation and groundwater water rights available for TMWA to use for the Truckee Meadows:** 81,300 acre-feet

**Potential drought storage:**  
22,000 to 32,000 acre-feet in upstream reservoirs

### Use of Truckee River:

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

### Number of new Truckee River water rights:

None since 1944

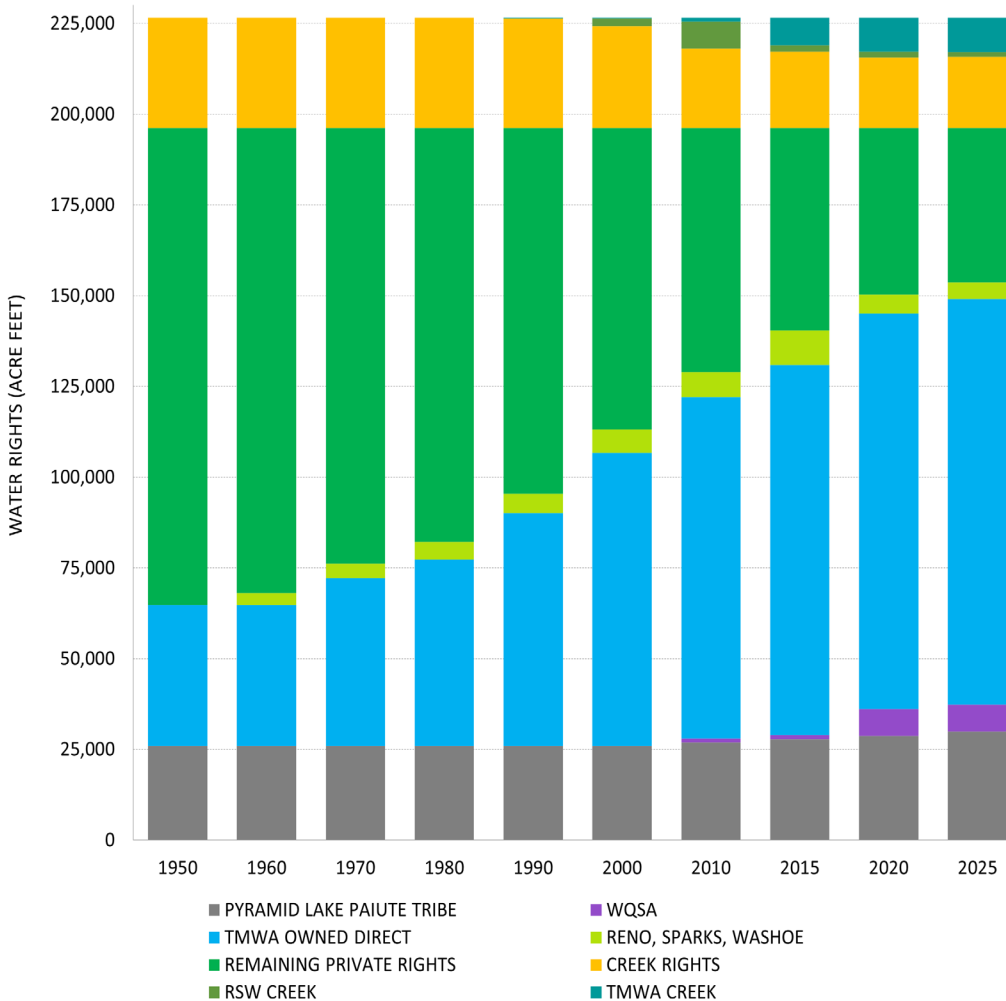
### Investment in new water facilities:

\$100 million since 2002 paid by developer fees.

**WHAT IS TMWA’S ROLE IN GROWTH IN OUR COMMUNITY?**

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

**TRUCKEE RIVER WATER RIGHTS  
SAME WATER, DIFFERENT USE**



**About TMWA:**

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 475,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

**About this series:**

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

To access all of the papers, go to [www.tmwa.com/topics](http://www.tmwa.com/topics).

**About TMWA’s Board of Directors:**

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

[www.tmwa.com/meetings](http://www.tmwa.com/meetings).

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

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

**Questions or feedback?**

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

**(775) 834-8005.**