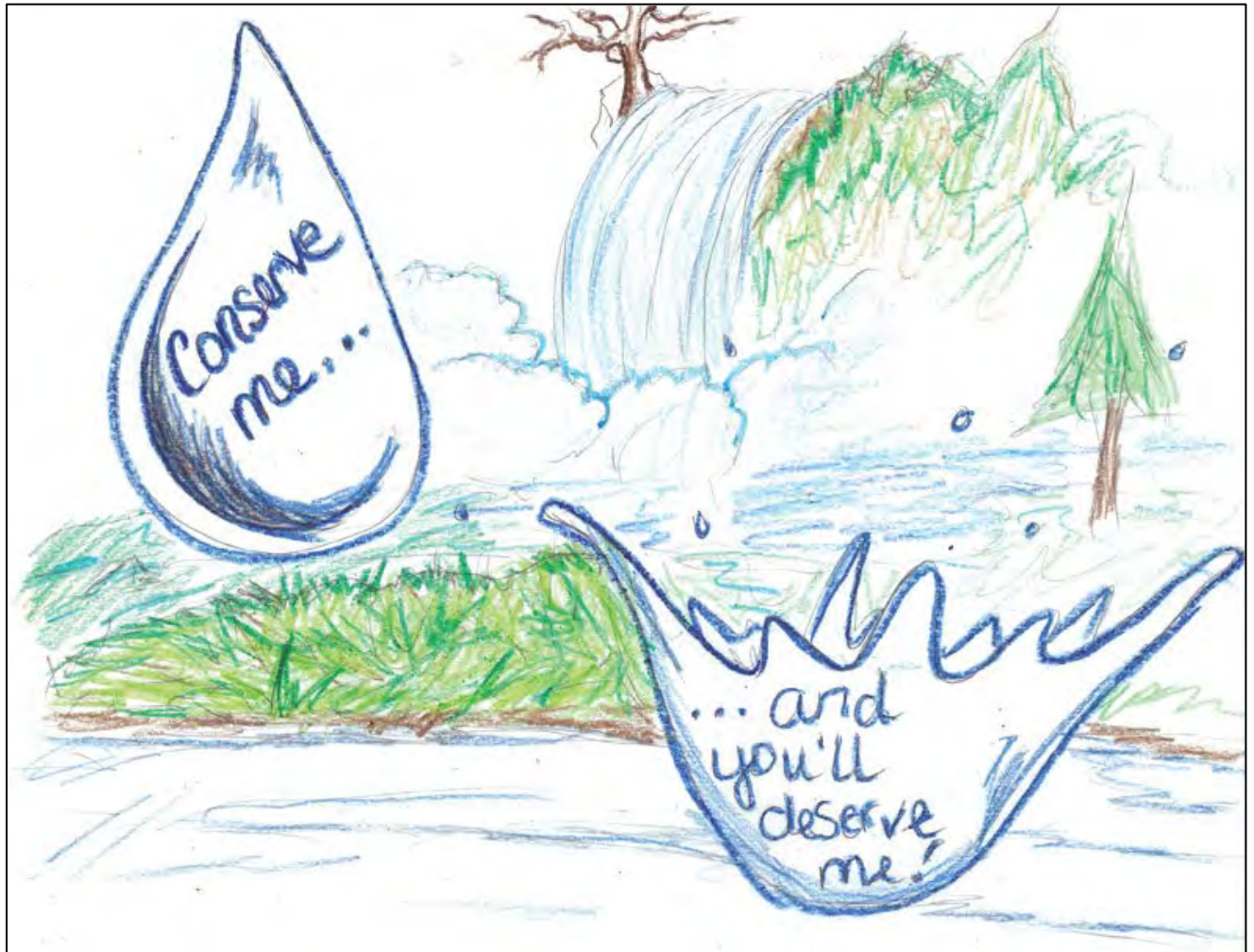


TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 21, 2011

Press Clippings

November 8, 2011 – December 13, 2011



*Desiree Villareal (Lincoln Park Elementary School)
2010 Poster Art Contest - Second Place, Grades 4-6*



Commissioners take final vote on proposed 'bond bank' for TMWA

Washoe County Commissioners are scheduled to take the final vote Tuesday on an ordinance creating a "bond bank" for the region's main water utility, a proposal critics say sets a dangerous precedent for adding other borrowers to the list.

Jim Galloway, a former county commissioner speaking for a small group of opponents, says the ordinance could be amended later to allow "the troubled city of Reno and the cost-spiraling flood project" to also benefit from the bank.

John Sherman, county finance director, said Galloway is partially correct. A state law as well as an ordinance change would be required for the county bond bank to refinance the city's existing debts, he said.

As for the flood control project, Sherman said, state law was changed to allow that to be financed through the county, but it is not included in the proposed ordinance.

Under the bond bank proposal, the county could borrow funds only for the main water purveyor in the county, which is the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. Using the county's AA bond rating, the bonds would be issued at a lower interest rate.

TMWA would pledge revenues to the county to make the bond payments and cover the issuance costs. But the county general obligation bonds also would carry the good faith and credit of county property taxpayers.

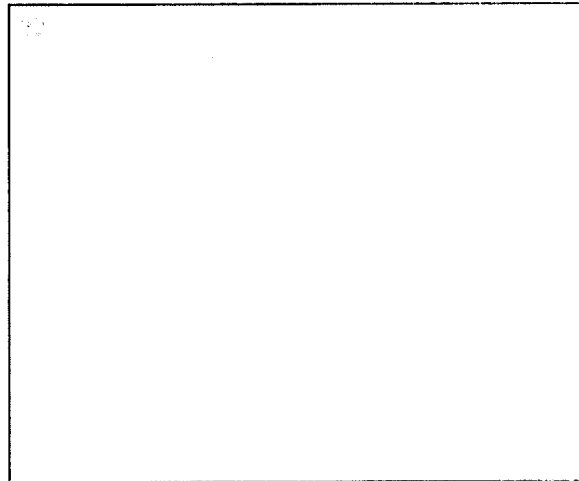
TMWA officials propose to use the bond bank only to reduce the refinancing costs in its planned merger with the county's water utility division. The county would seek \$26 million in new bonds that would be used to pay off the county utility bonds.

Then TMWA would pay the county debt service on the new bonds each year from revenues from 19,000 new water customers.

Sherman has said the bond bank would save \$1.6 million over the life of bonds and another \$2.3 million in not having to create a bond reserve, for a total savings of \$3.9 million.

While Galloway remains opposed to the county getting into the banking business,

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he said the ordinance still has loopholes that could be exploited if used only for TMWA.

Galloway said the ordinance potentially would allow all of TMWA's outstanding bonds to be refinanced. The utility intends to refinance \$370 million in bonds between 2015-17.

While current officials say that's not the intention, Galloway said new officers for TMWA and county could decide otherwise. Under the ordinance, the upper limit on how much can be borrowed is 15 percent of all the county's assessed, taxable property value or \$2 billion.

Sherman said no discussions have occurred on refinancing TMWA's existing debt. But if that were to occur, he said, multiple public hearings would have to be held before the commission would vote on that. And if that were to happen, he said the beneficiaries would be the 350,000 residents in the county who use that water.

Galloway contends the Truckee River flood control project could be squeezed into the definition of a water purveyor as the flood project could be defined as a storm water district. That project could require up to \$525 million in new financing.

The flood project as well as the water merger were on the original list for potential funding when ordinance was first proposed and abandoned last May.

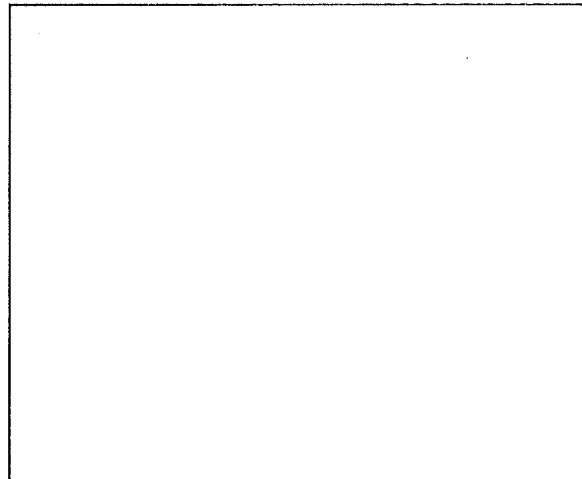
Sherman said the ordinance is only to benefit the county's main water purveyor

and state laws make very clear distinctions between a water purveyor, a water authority and storm water flood district.

Bond bank:

Using its good credit rating, the county essentially would obtain bonds at a lower interest for Truckee Meadows Water Authority. The county would use the proceeds to pay off bonds owed by its water utility to allow a merger with TMWA to proceed. TMWA would pay debt service on the newly issued general obligation bonds with pledged revenues from its new county water customers and the good faith and credit of county property taxpayers also would be pledged.

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December 13, 2011

John Sherman and Jeff Tissier: Creation of bond bank will benefit the entire community

*By John Sherman
and Jeff Tissier*

In response to the debate about creating a bond bank by Washoe County, here are some additional factual clarifications:

State law authorizes Washoe County to assist other local governments to get access to debt financing at lower cost through the creation of a bond bank with appropriate safeguards as required by law. It makes use of the county's higher credit rating and payment guarantee to reduce the interest rate and cost.

Under the proposed county bond bank ordinance, only the Truckee Meadows Water Authority could borrow money from the county bond bank in order to refinance existing county debt, not TMWA debt. This arrangement is a key element to facilitate the merger of TMWA with the county's water utility.

This merger would create an integrated water resources system, achieving long-term savings through more efficient use of our water resources, water delivery facilities and facility planning, and extend drought protection to more customers. These benefits would be shared by more than 110,000 hookups served by the combined utilities (representing approximately 350,000 residents and most businesses).

Clarifying recent questions concerning the proposed bond bank:

First, can the bond bank ordinance be changed by only a few words, allowing almost any municipality to use the bond bank? The changes from the original bond bank ordinance, allowing wider use, and the current proposed ordinance (limiting use to only TMWA) include the deletion of more than 1,000 words and the deletion or change in eight definitions. Changing the ordinance to allow any use is not a simple matter of changing the definition of "municipality."

Next, could the bond bank refinance the Reno ReTRAC and Reno's redevelopment debt? State law does not allow any existing debt to be refinanced by a bond bank, except for TMWA, nor does it allow a bond bank to have issued the original Reno debt.

Finally, can TMWA use the bond bank without County Commission approval? State law is clear that multiple hearings by the County Commission are necessary to finance or refinance any debt.

Our economy has suffered its worst downturn since the Great Depression. This means lower tax revenues to fund critical government services and that our citizens have reduced ability to pay for those services. Washoe County must continue to reduce the cost of providing services.

By creating the bond bank, Washoe County can lower costs by reducing the interest rate on existing debt. In this case, it could save citizens about \$4 million, with essentially no additional risk due to the controls that are in place.

This is not a case of an individual gaining some benefit from the debt obligation passed onto another individual; nor is it an opportunity for a financially healthy entity to be saddled with bad debt. This is a case of using a financing tool to benefit the entire community. The purpose of governments is to serve all the citizens of the community, and if there are ways to lower the cost of those services they should be explored and implemented where appropriate.

John Sherman is Washoe County's finance director. Jeff Tissier is the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's chief financial officer.

<< Back



Dry December Days Taking Their Toll

Posted: Dec 12, 2011 1:58 PM PST
Updated: Dec 12, 2011 1:58 PM PST

John Potter

Channel 2 News

Along with the cold temperatures, we haven't seen much wet weather so far this fall. It's becoming another climate curio: we've already burned through almost half of December, with not much to show but cold mornings and hazy afternoons...not a drop this month. Reno, once flush with above-average precipitation just a few months ago, is now a precious 2 inches below average. It's the kind of tense situation that brings Desert Research Institute scientist Arlen Huggins, above-average attention. As he told us, "People get excited, or tense as you say when things start drying out."



When Mother Nature gets stingy, Arlen cranks up the cloud-seeding generators up in the Sierra. And he can control them, right from his desk..."That unit in the field is actually turning itself on..."

Today, 5 cloud seeding generators up in the mountains cover 175 miles. They have a good record, adding 64,000 acre-feet of snow water over the last 15 years. Kelly frank at D.R.I. says they "Help the ice crystals form so that we can get more out of a storm."

Last winter, the generators spread silver iodine 23 times to goose some snow out of the skies. This winter, it's hard to tell. The catch is, you need clouds for it to work. Arlen Huggins told us, "We need the storm to come through, clouds to cover the mountains before we can do any seeding. The silver iodine will change the cloud water that hasn't been changed to precipitation into ice, which can then fall as snow."

Eventually our developing drought should be lessened by seeding. But the cloud seeding, and the research behind it, costs about a million dollars a year. That leaves D.R.I. with a money crunch: the state legislature stopped their funding 2 years ago. After TMWA granted \$154,815 this October, D.R.I. is also asking for \$100,000 from the Western Regional Water Commission. Once they get that, this winter is covered. Kelley told us, "When you look at snowpack in acre-feet that cloud seeding puts in to the water supply, it's worth it."

Getting that last \$100,000 for this season looks promising. Last week, a panel of water experts formed by the Western Regional Water Commission voted in support of the funding.



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TCID to hold special meeting on Wednesday

DECEMBER, 12 2011
STAFF REPORT

The Truckee-Carson Irrigation District Board of Directors will hold a special meeting at 9 a.m. on Wednesday at 2666 Harrigan Road.

The meeting is open to the public.

The board will take action on approving construction efforts of the Truckee Canal.

Rehabilitation was delayed in November because TCID could not sustain funding for a \$5 million bond issue passed in August.

The bidding process opened in November with six companies submitting bids for the construction project. Fallon-based A&K Earth Movers was selected with a bid of \$2.5 million. No contracts approving construction, though, have been signed.

For more about the canal, read Wednesday's Lahontan Valley News.

<http://www.lahontanvalleynews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20111212/NEWS/111219992/1001&parentprofile=1045&template=printart>



RENO MEMO

City politics and government with reporter Brian Duggan



Reno looking to increase its water toll to 5 percent

8:10 pm, Dec 12, 2011 | Written by bduggan | [Comments](#)

The city of Reno is considering an increase to its water toll on Truckee Meadows Water Authority customers who live in Reno.

Under a proposal expected to go before the Reno City Council Wednesday, city staff is asking to increase the toll from 3 percent to 5 percent of a water customer's bill, the limit Reno, Sparks and Washoe County are allowed to charge residents.

The right-of-way toll was created in 2001 after the three local governments took over water services and created the TMWA. Reno originally charged 2 percent and increased the toll to 3 percent in July 2009, generating about \$1.6 million a year, said Reno Public Works Director John Flansberg. All that money goes into Reno's street fund.

While Washoe County does not charge TMWA customers a toll, Sparks already charges 5 percent and sends 2 cents for every dollar into its general fund – a financial option Reno is eyeing. If Reno were to increase its toll to 5 percent, it would generate another \$1 million per year.

"We know we're going to see a reduction in property taxes," Flansberg said. "This is just an opportunity if the council wants us to pursue this further."

If the City Council agrees to move forward with the plan this week, city staff would need to conduct a business impact study. The earliest the toll could increase would be about six months from now.

Posted in: [City Staff](#), [Reno City Council](#)

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GANNETT

Panel pushes to seed clouds

Water commission weighs DRI's request for \$100,000

By Jeff DeLong
jdelong@gji.com

Cloud-seeding operations to squeeze a little extra snow out of storms are expected to continue this winter, thanks again to at least one regional water provider.

After the Truckee Meadows Water Authority agreed in October to provide \$154,815 for the Desert Research Institute's cloud seeding at Tahoe-Truckee, the institute is now seeking \$100,000 from the Western Regional Water Commission.

On Wednesday, a panel of water experts, formed to advise the water commission, unanimously voted in support of the \$100,000 expenditure.

"I'm 100 percent behind this project," said Darrin Price, a member of the advisory panel.

Funding for DRI's 25-year-old cloud-seeding operation has been an issue since the Legislature stripped state funding in 2009.

The two water entities agreed to fund the program the past two winters.

Five cloud-seeding generators installed in the mountains west of Lake Tahoe release silver iodide particles into storm

CLOUD SEEDING BY THE NUMBERS

» 23 seeding events occurred during the winter of 2010-11.

» 640 hours of cloud-seeding operations conducted.

» Snow-water amount increased by 11,120 acre-feet.

» Seeding is conducted by five ground-based generators in the Lake Tahoe-Truckee area.

» Each generator impacts a 35-square-mile area.

» Estimated cost of cloud seeding this winter is \$254,815.

Source: Desert
Research Institute

Cloud/ Seeding adds water to supply

From 1A

clouds, enhancing ice particle formation and boosting snowfall.

"It just adds that extra safety margin to get that little bit of extra water," said Arlen Huggins, the DRI scientist who manages cloud-seeding activities.

Seeding operations last winter produced an extra 11,120 acre-feet of water. That's less than the 20,000 acre-feet, or 6.6 billion gallons, produced the previous winter — but that was because of good news.

Natural snowfall last winter was bountiful enough that the threshold at which cloud seeding is halted was reached on numerous occasions, Huggins said.

On average, cloud seeding during the past decade produced about 18,000 acre-feet of extra water in the Sierra snowpack each winter, officials said.

"The beneficiaries are basically all of the water users along the Truckee River system," Huggins said.

Ski resorts can also benefit. A request for \$37,000 to Vail Resorts — owner of both Heavenly Mountain Resort and Northstar-at-Tahoe Resort — to help fund cloud seeding was rejected because the expenditure had not been budgeted, Huggins said. He said Vail might be receptive to help fund the program in the future.

"We may do a broader approach to the other ski areas in the Tahoe Basin," Huggins said.

Price urged DRI to explore funding opportunities wherever possible.

"I strongly encourage you to pursue those that are benefitting directly," he said. "There are other opportunities out there."

It's impossible to say how much snow will fall this winter, but it's off to a slow start, with December — normally one of the most important winter months for snow — dry so far. If that trend continues, seeding those storms that do come could prove particularly important, Huggins said.

"It's a year where they have fairly good reservoir storage," Huggins said. "It would be easier to add a little bit to that than try to play catch-up later."

Las Vegas Sun
Jon Ralston:

City of Las Vegas gives raises during a recession

By [Jon Ralston \(contact\)](#)

Friday, Dec. 9, 2011 | 2 a.m.

Unlike many of my Fourth Estate pals, I try to give government the benefit of the doubt.

Sure, I have a certain cynicism imbued after a quarter-century of covering politics. But I don't default to the position that all politicians are inherently corrupt or all public employees are overpaid sloths or all government spending is obviously wasteful.

That's just so facile, so bereft of nuance or contemplation. So, I try to give politicians, staffers and, yes, government a chance.

But when I learn that a cultural affairs manager at Las Vegas City Hall quietly received a nearly 20 percent raise during this recession to a new salary of \$107,000, I fear my goodwill is misplaced. When I learn that four dozen other employees also received pay increases as the city demanded concessions and cut services — a total cost of \$265,000 — I wonder if these people have any sense at all. And when I learn that the average salary of those who received raises was — please put down any sharp objects — \$77,557 — and that the average salary of those employees is now \$82,458, I am almost speechless.

Almost.

City Manager Betsy Fretwell [defended the raises on "Face to Face"](#) on Wednesday by saying that those staffers were making less than those they supervise and/or were being paid less than those similarly situated in other governments, according to a comprehensive compensation study.

I won't even posit the heretical thought that if so, then maybe the underlings should have taken pay cuts during the worst economic downturn in Las Vegas history. But what possible good reason could there be for not holding off on these increases — if indeed they are even merited — until the economy improves? I can only imagine how anyone unemployed or underemployed in the private sector would react to this news. (I have a feeling we will find out.)

If you are wondering what other kinds of employees received these raises, they ran the gamut from secretaries to management analysts to engineers (one received a more than 25 percent increase to \$121,000) to jail personnel to executive assistants. (I bet you didn't know there are nine "special assistants to the council.")

Benefit of the doubt, where have you gone?

I have posted the full list of employees affected by the study [on my blog](#).

The catalyst for this coming to light was a full-page ad in the weekend newspaper by the Las Vegas Peace Officers Association, whose leaders claimed they only recently learned of these pay increases after they gave concessions that kicked in this July. The group wondered why the city was "crying poverty" as these raises were being awarded.

It must be said that the peace officers haven't exactly been forced into indentured servitude. City records show members have received three 5.5 percent step increases since 2008.

Nevertheless, the decision to give raises during an economic downturn is a guaranteed public relations nightmare and illuminates why some people think government is tone-deaf. When I asked Geoff Lawrence of the Nevada Policy Research Institute about this Thursday on "Face to Face," he suggested that supervisors might have an incentive to make sure their subordinates get regular raises, so under the theory of the comp study, they will get higher salaries, too.

Maybe. But it's clear the city realizes this looks horrific. How do I know? Two ways.

First, a city spokesman tried to spin the raises — he called them "adjustments" made "in the interests of equity." Really? I would say in the interest of equity, perhaps those salaries should be lowered to equivalent private-sector jobs, which don't have nearly the same level of benefits (PERS, longevity pay) that those government employees receive.

Benefit of the doubt, I can't find you.

Second, it took much longer than it should have to get this information — all of it public record and all readily accessible — from the city. Perhaps a special assistant to the council was doing something special at the time.

It was obvious the government knew how the information would look, so it delayed getting us the data for more than 24 hours. More than a day to retrieve simple salary information? I don't think so.

I understand how difficult it can be to get quality folks for government work, and I don't begrudge a good living to the mostly talented public employees I know. But it is impossible to justify raises to government employees, especially those with titles such as "Cultural Leader II" and "Senior Graphic Equipment Operator," during these bleak times.


Benefit of the doubt? After looking at this, I think I want the benefit of a government job.

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Updated: 5:52 PM Dec 11, 2011

Plan to Allow Pesticides in Lake Tahoe Criticized

Lake Tahoe's leading conservation organization is criticizing a regional board's vote to allow the use of pesticides to combat non-native aquatic species at the Sierra Nevada lake.

Posted: 4:20 PM Dec 11, 2011

Reporter: Associated Press

Email Address: news@kolotv.com



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RENO, Nev. (AP) - Lake Tahoe's leading conservation organization is criticizing a regional board's vote to allow the use of pesticides to combat non-native aquatic species at the Sierra Nevada lake.

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board's unanimous vote Wednesday to lift a ban on the use of pesticides at Tahoe and other lakes under its jurisdiction now goes to the California State Water Resources Control Board for action.

Carl Young, interim executive director of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, said the plan poses a threat to the lake's water quality and the public's health, and he's concerned visitors and residents could be exposed to pesticides through Tahoe's fish and drinking water.

The league is urging regulators to fight invasive species such as Asian clams and the underwater weed Eurasian watermilfoil with non-chemical methods, including "bottom barriers" that involve the use of large mats to starve the species of sunlight and oxygen.

"I think honestly this is coming down to human health issues," Young told The Associated Press. "They can say all they want that it won't harm people, but it's poison and it can kill things."

Dan Sussman, an environmental scientist with the Lahontan water board, said pesticides are "one more tool in the toolbox" to fight non-native species, and they would only be used under strict controls.

Asian clams are blamed for contributing to algae growth at Tahoe and diminishing its famed clarity, while officials are trying to snuff out watermilfoil before it clogs water intakes for the region's primary water supply system.

The use of pesticides to fight such invasive species was identified as an option in a plan signed by the governors of California and Nevada, and was endorsed by the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. Sussman added

"There are circumstances where they (Lahontan board) believe pesticides could be justified to promote the ecological integrity of a lake, and the public health and safety," he said. "It's really not a promotion of pesticide use, but allowing more information to come forward and allowing our board to have discretion to decide."

Greg Reed, chairman of the Tahoe Water Suppliers Association board, told the Lahontan board that he's concerned about the effect aquatic pesticides could have on drinking water at the lake, the Tahoe Daily Tribune reported.

Many providers draw drinking water from Tahoe and would be unable to filter out any pesticides that reach their intake pipes, he said.

Reed called for a five-year moratorium on the use of pesticides, saying the issue should receive further study at less pristine lakes before being allowed at Tahoe.

The Lahontan board rejected his recommendation, but added language that would require notification of affected water providers and users as well as California and Nevada health officials.

"We really tried to cover our bases, and our board felt comfortable that the protection of drinking water could be maintained," Sussman said.

But water purveyors and conservationists remained skeptical.

"The best thing for the environment and human health is to treat it with non-chemical methods," Young said, adding his group only supports the use of pesticides to control mosquitoes and to fight quagga or zebra mussels in the event they spread to Tahoe and their eradication is probable.

The proposal also must be approved by the California Office of Administrative Law and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency before taking effect. The process could take until July, Sussman said.

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Find this article at:

http://www.kolotv.com/home/headlines/Plan_to_Allow_Pesticides_in_Lake_Tahoe_Criticized_135413603.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



City to request a portion of retroactive credits from State Engineer's Office

FERNLEY--City of Fernley Engineer Shari Whalen recently reported of the retroactive credit the City of Fernley could receive for existing will serve commitments from the State Engineer's Office, "This is very exciting and big deal to the community."

After explaining to the Fernley City Council the process that was used to determine the amount of credits the city could receive, the council voted unanimously "to request to the State Engineer for retroactive application of the ERC reduction in the amount of one-third of the total potential retroactive credit as calculated by the State Engineer's approved method for the City of Fernley."

One-third of the potential credits requested would be 1,173.61 acre feet.

Whalen told the council at a previous meeting that the State Engineer's Office tracks groundwater will serve commitments in the city; and to obtain that credit, the city had to review and update its Division of Water Resources Equivalent Residential Connections (ERC) list to determine the total possible credit the city could receive.

Once the list was updated, the city could request a portion of the total possible credits based on "our expected needs in the next three to five years," she stated.

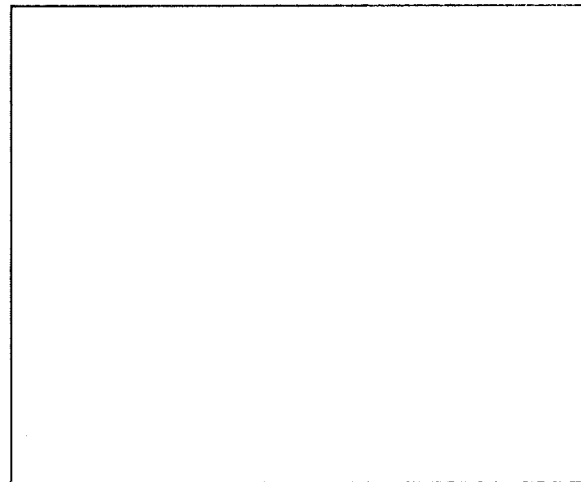
The city hired Stanka Consulting Ltd. to review the subdivision commitments by amending a Bureau of Reclamation joint grant in the amount of \$37,000.

Whalen called the process "exhaustive," adding that Michael Stanka reviewed 179 subdivision maps in the city and analyzed each individual parcel.

She noted in her staff report, "The Truckee Meadows Water Authority Rule 7 multiplied by a factor of 1.4 was used for the calculations of the total retroactive credit, in accordance with the State Engineer's ERC reduction approval for groundwater in Fernley."

As a result, Whalen announced the total potential retroactive credit the city could receive for existing will serve commitments is 3,521.61 acre feet.

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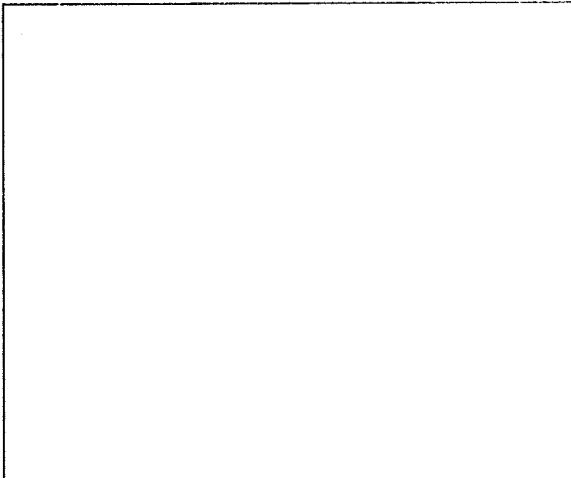
However, the State Engineer has not decided to grant the entire retroactive credit, she reported, but will grant a portion of the credit to accommodate future development over the next 3-5 years.


"This is a major accomplishment for the city," Whalen said, adding that with the help of Stanka, the city has come a long way with water rights and water resources.

According to Whalen, the dedication rate in Fernley is 1.12 acre feet per single family residence, and for the past 18 months, the city has worked to collect and analyze data to support the reduction in the ERC for groundwater commitment.

Mayor LeRoy Goodman said, "A lot of work has gone into this. Everyone did a good job--excellent work."

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Caughlin Fire Restoration Plans in Place

Posted: Dec 07, 2011 9:33 PM PST

Updated: Dec 08, 2011 2:18 AM PST

Adam Rasmussen
Channel 2 News

The Caughlin Fire destroyed more than 30 homes. For many of the homeowners directly affected by the fire, the question is "what's next?"



On Wednesday night, Washoe County officials held a presentation ready to answer that question.

A lot of restoration plans are in the works, and officials say it will take a lot of money, time and effort. But, they want to prevent anything like this from happening again.

"We need to know how to make our development fire-proof," says Ronnie Bialik, whose home was damaged in the fire.

That's exactly what city and county officials are hoping to accomplish. Wednesday night's presentation gave the public an idea of "what's next."

Lynda Nelson with Washoe County Department of Parks and Recreation says restoring the burned areas of Manzanita Canyon, Evans creek and Windy Hill are top priorities.

She says restoring 2,000 acres will take a community effort.

"The cooperation from private property owners that we desperately need," says Nelson. "Of the 2,000 acres, only 100 of those acres were public land."

Reno Fire Department Fire Marshal Joan Presley says that's why keeping homeowners

educated on these issues is important.

"Provide them some information about the vegetation around their properties, so that they can tell what can be saved, and what can't be saved," she says.

If all goes as planned, work on the Windy Hill and Bartley Ranch area would begin next week.

This restoration won't come cheap. Re-seeding one acre of land costs \$1,500. That means this project would cost over \$1 million. So, this Friday, officials are proposing a \$125,000 dollar grant from the Truckee River Fund. From there, the fundraising will continue.

"We're talking about a sustained effort," says Presley. "We'll be working together over the Winter and into the Spring."

While restoration work on burned land should begin soon, so should work on damaged homes. Starting Friday, homeowners and businesses affected by the fire can get federal disaster assistance loans.

The U.S. Small Business Administration declared the fire a disaster, making low-interest loans available. You can apply at the Washoe County Disaster Outreach Center at 450 Sinclair St.

Starting Friday, they'll be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 23 when they'll close at 1 p.m.



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December 9, 2011

County department is a viable public utility

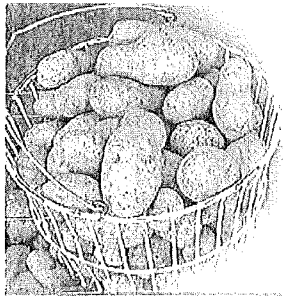
I must take issue with Jim Clark's description of the Washoe County Department of Water Resources [One View, Dec. 1].

In fact, Washoe County DWR is a strong and economically viable public utility providing high quality and reliable service to 18,700 customer accounts at an average cost of \$1.58 per day. DWR's water utility also has a very low debt-to-equity ratio of 16.6 percent.

The county's work to merge its water utility with TMWA is based on our community's need to better coordinate and do a more cost-effective job of planning for and managing our public water systems. Having one water utility (rather than two) serving the Truckee Meadows eliminates a long-standing situation that unfortunately produces excess water infrastructure and the resulting cost that comes with such excess capacity.

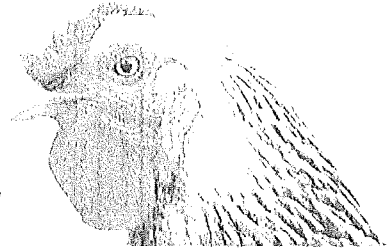
DWR's plan to build a water treatment plant in the South Truckee Meadows was canceled before construction began and, thus, didn't produce "unused pipes." Bond funds were expended on legitimate project planning tasks and acquiring a site for the facility. When the economy crashed, the decision to cancel the project was made to protect the interests of all current and future water ratepayers.

Rosemary Menard, Director Washoe County Department of Water Resources



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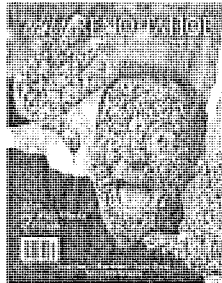
Celebrating the Local Food Culture, Season by Season



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Winter 2011



SENSE OF PLACE

Tom Stille carves out a local food niche at the river's edge

WRITTEN BY ANN LINDEMANN
PHOTOS BY CANDICE NYANDO

"Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there." — Poet Gary Snyder

Tom Stille, like his bioregional movement mentor Gary Snyder, has a keen sense of place.

"I'm not from Nevada and I'm not from Reno," the vital 71-year-old farmer/landscaper/activist says. "I'm from the Great Basin or the Truckee Meadows, the Truckee River watershed or where Hunter Creek enters the Truckee River. What we are doing is getting away from political subdivision in favor of bioregional areas."

It is at this exact juncture of creek and river — where rushing water melodies mingle with the flutter of golden cottonwood leaves dancing in the autumn breeze — that Stille found his place on the planet, dug in, and started taking responsibility back in 1992.

Just two miles from the intersection of McCarran Boulevard and West Fourth Street, off Woodland Avenue on White Fir Street on Reno's western tip is Stille's bioregional heartbeat: River School Farm. An urban oasis of sorts, the two-acre riverside parcel is wedged into a mixed-use industrial area with unlikely neighbors that include Patagonia's warehouse and outlet, a PVC pipe factory, and right next door the imposing office for West Coast Contractors



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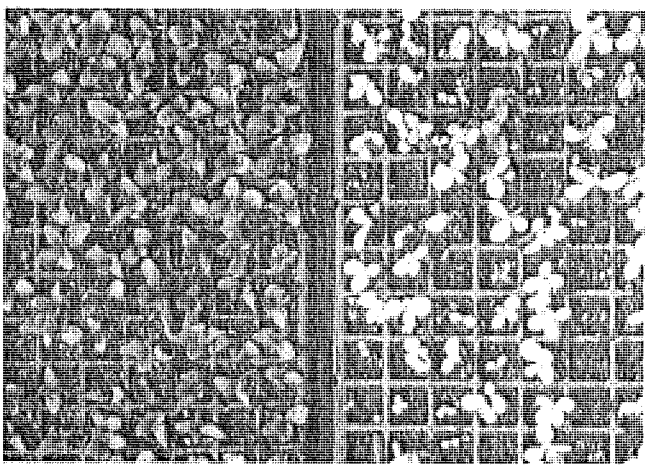


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Back of the House at River School Farm

Barbara Conne Paul

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Westward Ho

Stille grew up in Northern Iowa where he later earned a degree in horticulture. In 1967, Stille moved to Reno and served as Washoe County superintendent of parks.

"I said I was going to stay in that position for three years and then I wanted to travel, and that's exactly what I did," he says.

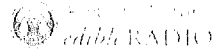
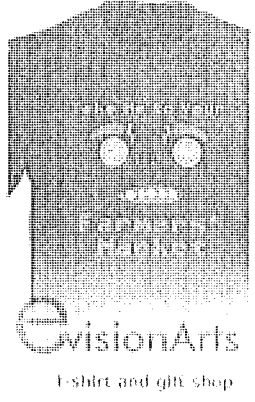
It was on the streets of India that Stille reexamined his definition of wealth and happiness, and began developing an urban organic farming ethos that informs his life to this day. He returned to Reno in 1981 and launched Interpretive Gardens, a landscaping business that now is headquartered on the second floor of a straw bale-constructed building at River School Farm.

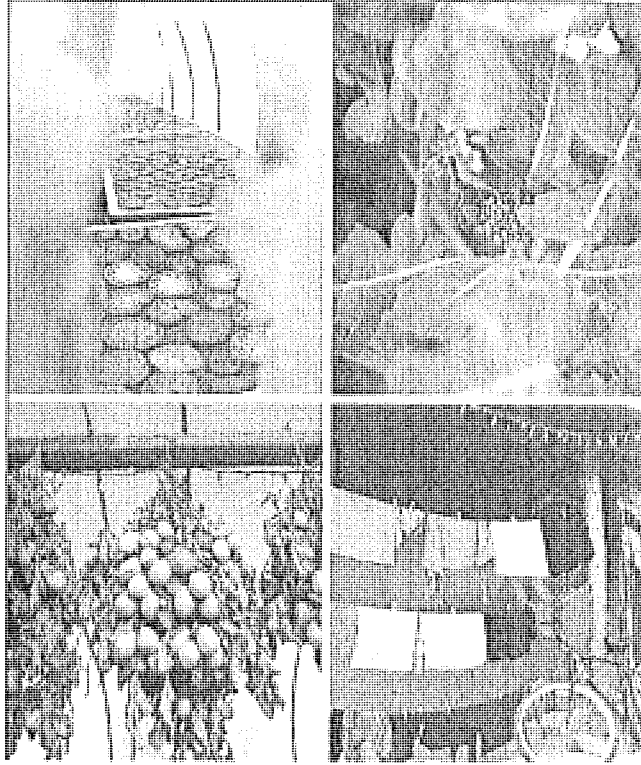
Progressive Hub

For Tom Stille work, play, community activism, and creative brainstorming swirl around beautifully in the vortex of his operation. In turn, the spokes of the River School Farm wheel are many. The landscaping architecture spoke reaches out to the community and beyond. Stille has spearheaded a variety of local projects that focus on sustainable landscape development, working with native plants and integrating food crops into the landscape. Of particular note is Hug High School in Reno's bioregional garden project that was funded by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's landscape retrofit program. The garden is rich in edibles that are put to good use in the school's active culinary arts program.

Back at the farm, Stille and his crew practice what they preach by growing a variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs, honey, and poultry. The farm specializes in greens and root crops that are grown year-round in hoop houses, low tunnels, and row covers. River School Farm sells through the Patagonia ESA (employee-supported agriculture) program, the Great Basin Community Food Co-op, and restaurants.

"Our goal is to have 20 percent of our food grown in the Truckee Meadows by 2020," says Stille, who speaks of the importance of food security. He uses Havana, Cuba during the Iron Curtain era as a model. He says people were cut off from the rest of the world during this period and had to learn how to feed themselves locally.





Enchanted Learning

The final spoke of the River School Farm is the on-site education and event venue. Classes range from African drum, dance, and yoga to food preserving, beekeeping, composting, and animal husbandry.

Frequent community dinners are a popular draw, but riverside nuptials serve as the farm's real cash cow. During summer and fall months, the weekends are booked with weddings. There's a wedding altar, bandstand/dance floor, amphitheater, cave-like room for pre-event preparations, and an outdoor kitchen. The elegant venue is punctuated with whimsical found-object sculptures depicting dancers and birds. It's no surprise that this lush sanctuary — where Hunter Creek joins the Truckee River — resonates with couples who are looking to form a unique union of their own.

For details about River School Farm, visit www.Riverschool.info.

Writer Ann Lindemann lives on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe where she writes for a variety of regional and national publications.

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\$125K grant proposal planned to fund Caughlin Fire restoration

Officials plan Friday to submit a \$125,000 grant proposal to the region's primary water provider to fund emergency restoration efforts in the Caughlin Fire area.

The request to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority would finance the construction of straw barriers, dams to block debris flow and hydroseeding, all designed to prevent erosion problems when the first heavy rain hits the near-2,000-acre burn area in southwest Reno.

"We want to beat the weather," said Lynda Nelson, a parks planning manager for Washoe County and a member of the team exploring emergency restoration needs.

The \$125,000 would come from the water authority's Truckee River Fund, established to finance projects benefitting the river's water quality.

"We need to get this going, but we also need to get the funding," Nelson said.

Officials are also exploring funding through the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's Emergency Watershed Program, to fund restoration work on private land. The bulk of property burned by the Nov.

18 blaze, which destroyed 30 homes and damaged dozens more, is private.

Crews have surveyed burned areas and concern centers on Manzanita Canyon, where fire ripped down a drainage with very steep slopes in places, Nelson said.

"The biggest thing is Manzanita Canyon. It's a very hazardous situation there," Nelson said.

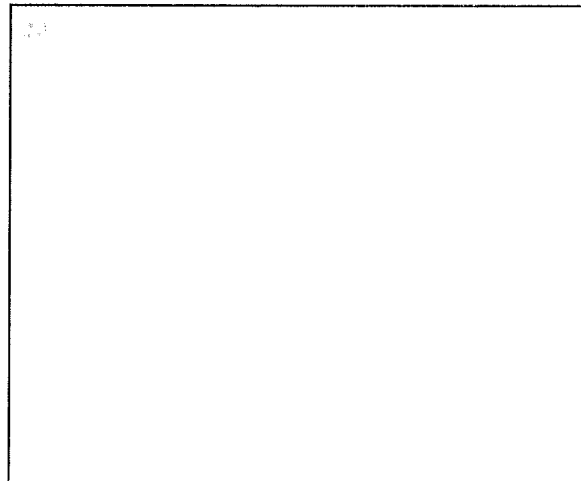
Other concern is focused along Evans Creek and in the Windy Hill-Bartley Ranch area, where falling rocks could pose a safety hazard. Officials are considering installing temporary concrete barriers on hillsides there.

Some residents in the fire area acknowledge concern.

"I'm very worried about erosion," said Bill Povolmy, whose Alpine Creek Road home lies beside a scorched Evans Creek.

Povolmy is likewise worried about the

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possibility of cheatgrass taking over the fire area, an invasion that could increase future fire danger.

Pioneer Drive resident John Harker, who lives next door to two homes destroyed by the fire, said he would favor shoring up some of the steepest slopes.

"If we get a real wet season, I would say it could be an issue," Harker said.

The full cost of emergency erosion control projects and longer-term restoration efforts has yet to be determined, but Nelson said it will likely be "hundreds of thousands of dollars we really don't have."

If you go

University of Nevada's Cooperative Extension hosts a "Post-Caughlin Fire Update and Presentation" in collaboration with Washoe County, Reno and the Nevada Land Conservancy. The event will provide information on restoration efforts, right of entry to burned property and managing landscapes after the fire.
Where: Caughlin Ranch Elementary School, 4881 Village Green Parkway, Reno.
When: Today, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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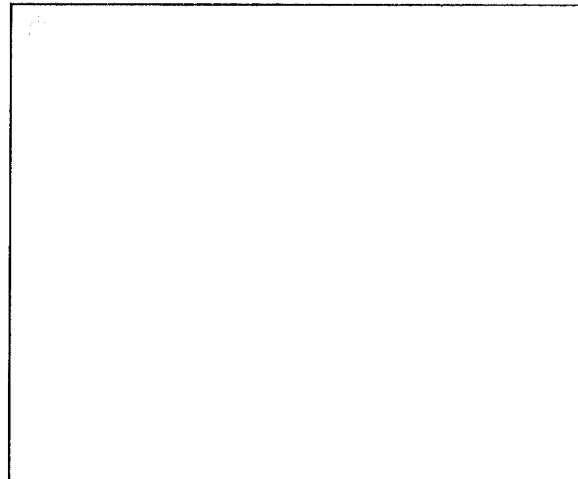
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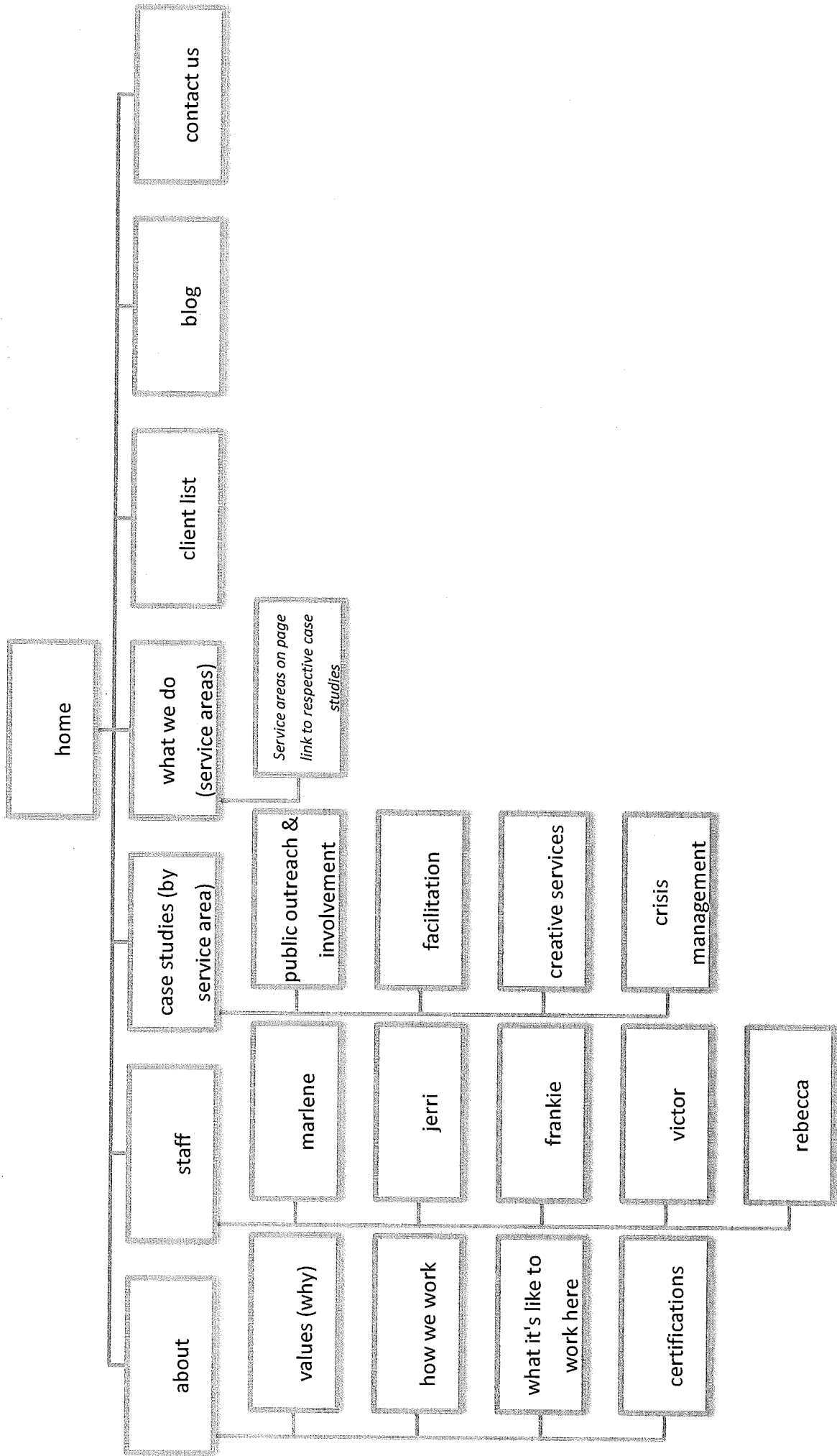
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To prevent water pipes from freezing:

- Shut off and drain your irrigation system
- Disconnect and drain all outdoor hoses
- Be sure your water meter has a specially designed insulation blanket
- Insulate all pipes or faucets in unheated areas, like a garage or crawl space under your home
- During periods of hard freezes, or when you're away from home for an extended period of time, keep your home at 55-58 degrees

Truckee Meadows Water Authority is hosting free workshops to assist you in winterizing your home, inside and out. Please join us on one of the following dates at our main office: **1355 Capital Blvd., Reno.**

Two workshops to choose from:
Wednesday, October 19 at 5:30 p.m.
Tuesday, October 25 at 5:30 p.m.

Please RSVP by emailing conservation@tmwa.net or calling **834-8005**. For more information, visit www.tmwa.com/winterize.

This message is brought to you by the water lovers at 

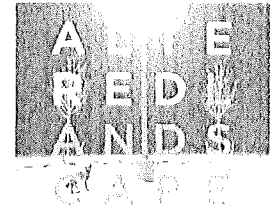


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Editorial: Many individuals and groups came to rescue of fire victims

All of the individuals, organizations and businesses -- far too many to list here -- that responded to those in need when the Caughlin Fire swept through the western foothills of the Truckee Meadows.

Among the winners are everyone who raced from home to home, warning their neighbors of impending danger and helping with the evacuation; firefighters, law enforcement officers and others who helped fight the fast-moving fire, protected properties during and after the fire and assisted those evacuating; organizations and individuals, including volunteers and school district employees, who helped out at the evacuation centers; all the businesses that offered food and drink to the responders and evacuees; the hotel-casinos and other lodging facilities that offered rooms at reduced prices for those who had to leave their homes because of the fire; the various animal rescue groups and others who offered a safe place for residents to leave their pets and other animals away from the fire; insurance company employees who were quick on the scene to aid those who lost their homes and had properties damaged in the blaze; and the many, many others who, through

deeds both small and large, selflessly helped out their neighbors in a time of great need and will continue to help in the coming weeks and months as the community works to recover from this event. Their efforts may receive little public recognition, but those who were the recipients of their kind deeds will never forget them.

Reno Arch Lions lend hands

in cleanup of Whitaker Park

Reno Arch Lions, for cleaning and taking care of the upkeep for Whitaker Park in northwest Reno. All six Lions clubs in Reno sponsor at least one park in Washoe County as a part of "improving the community we live in."

Cub Scout Pack helps Lions

plant trees at Sparks park

Cub Scout Pack 46, for helping the Greenbrae Lions (pack sponsor) and Reno

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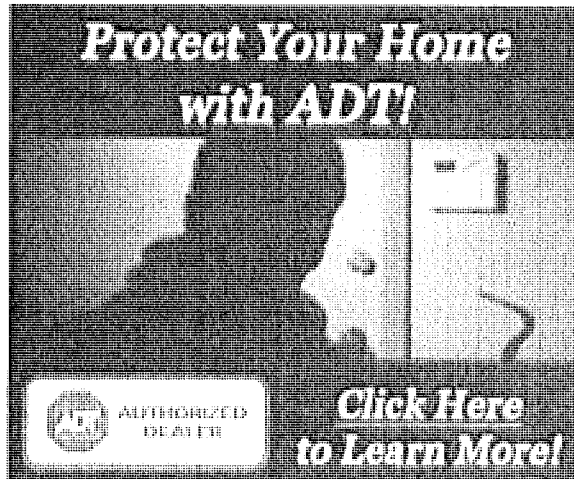
Arch Lions in planting 33 trees at the Golden Eagle Park in Sparks. The project was in conjunction with the Lions International project to plant one tree per member worldwide. More than five million trees already have been planted around the world (154,663 in the United States).

Landscaping companies aid Dandini Gardens cleanup

Area landscaping firms that took part in the Dandini Gardens cleanup, including: Reno Green Landscaping, Sierra Nevada Landscapes and Signature Landscapes.

Also, winners are the supporters of the landscape industry certified-technician test program, including: All Seasons Lawn and Landscaping, America Rents, Bobcat West, Crop Production Services, Moana Nursery, Reno Green Landscaping, Reno Lawn and Landscapes, Sierra Repair and Sharpening, Signature Landscapes, Truckee Meadows Community College, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Western Nevada Supply and Western Turf.

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THE BOND BUYER

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Bond Bank Bid Raises Eyebrows

Friday, December 2, 2011

By Keeley Webster

LOS ANGELES — A proposal to create a bond bank in Washoe County, Nev., has critics worried that the county would needlessly put its double-A credit ratings at risk.

The creation of a bond bank would enable Nevada's second most populous county to sell bonds on behalf of local municipalities, attaining a lower interest rate for the entity, which would then pay the county for the annual debt service.

The County Commission approved the ordinance on first reading, with a final vote still to come.

Standard & Poor's rates Washoe's general obligation bonds AA. Moody's Investors Service downgraded the county's rating to Aa2 from Aa1 in September.

"My issue is that we have a fiduciary responsibility to the citizens of Washoe County," said County Commissioner Kitty Jung. "To me, there are a lot of downsides to creating a bond bank and not a lot of upsides."

Jung and Commissioner Bonnie Weber voted against the ordinance during its first reading on Nov. 8. It passed in a 3-2 vote and comes up for its second and final vote on Dec. 13.

"The issue is whether the county is willing to put up its bond rating to issue paper to give to other projects," said Robert Barone, a partner, economist and portfolio manager at investment advisory firm Universal Value Advisors, which is based in Reno, the Washoe County seat. "How is issuing paper on projects for another municipality advantageous to the county? There is only the disadvantage of what happens if other people don't pay."

Barone posed the question this way: If your neighbor had a lousy credit rating, and you have a great credit rating, would you borrow money from your bank to lend to your neighbor at the same interest rate you received from the bank?

The ordinance originally proposed in May was crafted to facilitate a merger between the county's Department of Water Resources and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority by refinancing some of the DWR's debt, said John Sherman, the county's finance director.

The TMWA's water revenue bonds carry ratings of AA-minus from both Fitch Ratings and Standard & Poor's, and Aa2 from Moody's Investors Service.

Jung said she successfully worked to have the ordinance narrowed so that it only applies to the water authority, and not to any other municipalities in the county, but she still considers it too risky.

"As far as I'm concerned, it puts taxpayers at risk with no reward involved," Jung said. "The bottom line is I think it is unnecessary in uncertain times."

The county's plan is to issue new bonds so that \$26.1 million of outstanding DWR bonds can be retired, Sherman said. The bonds were part of a \$65 million issuance used for a variety of projects, including a water treatment facility to service expected growth for development that failed to materialize when the economy crumbled, he said. The treatment facility was never completed.

The county has to retire the bonds before the merger goes through because DWR revenues are used to back the bonds, according to Sherman. The TMWA would repay the new bonds.

—

The agency, a joint-powers authority formed by Washoe County and the cities of Reno and Sparks, is the largest water provider in the county. The DWR has 19,000 customers in unincorporated areas and on the fringes while the TMWA has 90,000 customers, according to Sherman.

"We are trying to merge those two together to get efficiencies," he said. "That is the primary reason for bringing the ordinance forward."

When the county issues bonds they are issued through the state in a revolving fund, Sherman said. The bonds would be negotiated with the state substituting the TMWA as the payer of the debt, he said.

Clark County is the only county in Nevada that has created a bond bank, and that was years ago.

Clark officials created their bond bank to finance debt for the Southern Nevada Water Authority, Sherman noted.

The county's double-A level ratings would result in a net savings of \$1.6 million in interest costs over the life of the bonds, Sherman said. The TMWA also would not have to borrow an additional \$2.3 million to create a bond reserve if it had to issue revenue bonds. The total savings would be \$3.9 million.

According to Barone, the authority could also use the Washoe County bond bank to refinance \$370 million of existing TMWA debt without returning to the County Commission for approval. He said the \$3.9 million in interest savings only saves water customers about 20 cents a year on their bill over 20 years.

If the county refinanced the \$370 million of the water authority's debt, it would double the \$355 million in outstanding debt the county is currently responsible for. According to its 2010 financial statements, the agency has total outstanding bond debt of \$456 million plus \$78 million in outstanding commercial paper.

Jeff Tessier, the TMWA's chief financial officer, said the authority has no intention of refinancing any of its outstanding revenue bond debt through the county bond bank. He did not know if the agency would be able to refinance the debt through the bond bank without seeking county approval at some point.

"The advantage is to refinance the existing Washoe County debt related to their water resources division," Tessier said. "It's more effective to refinance through the bond bank – and that's the sole purpose of the bond bank."

Barone still contends that passing the ordinance opens a door that should stay shut. He added that the ordinance could be broadened later and political pressures could be used to sway commissioners to take on other municipalities' debt, like that of Reno or the Reno Redevelopment Agency, both of which have been struggling from high debt loads in the face of reduced revenue.

Under Nevada law, Washoe could lend up to \$2 billion or 15% of the county's assessed property value through the bond bank. The RDA, in danger of defaulting on \$35.7 million of debt, contends that Washoe County owes it \$2.9 million under a 1987 statute. The county is currently negotiating with the RDA on the issue.

"The county commissioners don't know how to be a bank – and they shouldn't try when experienced bankers can't even manage to do it well in the current economic environment," Barone said.

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Jim Clark: Bond bank could leave county taxpayers on the hook for debt

Mark Twain once pondered: "Men fight over water but drink whiskey." If Twain were alive today, he would be at the Territorial Enterprise newspaper writing about the great Washoe County water fight of 2011.

Last May, the County Commission considered creating a "bond bank" to borrow money from the public to purchase bonds issued by municipalities within Washoe County. The county would sell general obligation bonds to the public and turn around and buy revenue bonds from local agencies and charge the same interest rate the county is paying. If there's a default, all county taxpayers are on the hook for repayment.

In addition to the proposal's irrational legal structure, former Washoe County Commissioner Jim Galloway and other members of the public pointed out at the May public hearing that Reno might pressure the county to buy its junk-rated bonds. Accordingly, the proposal was rewritten to define "municipality" to mean "water authority."

You see the whole drill is to facilitate the disposition and merger of the county's

Department of Water Resources into the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. DWR is a basket case. It once issued \$65 million in bonds to build a water treatment facility which never got built. Nevertheless \$26.1 million of the bonds are still outstanding; the proceeds having been used to lay pipe which, of course, is unused because there is no treatment plant. In any case, DWR is a dysfunctional unit that the county wants to get rid of.

The problem is that someone has to pay off the bonds which paid for the "pipes to nowhere," and TMWA is currently running at an annual loss of \$9 million, so its bonds would not be particularly marketable in today's economy. On Nov. 8, the ordinance, with its new definition, was trotted out for a first reading. Over the objections of Commissioners Weber and Jung, the proposal passed and is scheduled for a second and final reading Dec. 13.

At the Nov. 8 meeting, Galloway and others pointed out a number of flaws. First, the

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ordinance authorizes borrowing up to \$2 billion to refinance just \$26.1 million. TMWA finance officer Jeff Tessier told the Reno Gazette-Journal that TMWA could also use the county "bond bank" to refinance \$370 million in existing TMWA debt and "wouldn't need to return to the County Commission for approval." Moreover, the term "water authority" could include a yet-to-be-formed agency for the proposed Truckee River flood control project, which is estimated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to cost \$1.6 billion. The proposal is in danger of losing Corps of Engineers financial support because its cost-benefit ratio is marginal; that could saddle Washoe County taxpayers with the entire tab.

Mark Twain once said: "A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way." What do you think the county will learn if it goes ahead with this "bond bank" ordinance?

Jim Clark lives in Incline Village.

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WASHOE COUNTY BOND BOONDGGLE LEADING TO WATER WARS

Posted by [Jim Clark](#) on Nov 28th, 2011 and filed under [Headline](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#). Both comments and pings are currently closed.

(Jim Clark) – Mark Twain once pondered: “Men fight over water but drink whiskey.” If Twain were alive today, he would be at the *Territorial Enterprise Newspaper* writing about the great Washoe County water fight of 2011.

Last May, the county commission considered a staff proposal to create a “bond bank,” the purpose of which was to borrow money from the public to purchase bonds issued by municipalities within Washoe County.

Yep, that’s right. The county would sell general obligation bonds to the public and turn around and buy revenue bonds from local agencies and charge the same interest rate the county is paying. If there’s a default, all county taxpayers are on the hook for repayment.

As Mark Twain might say: “This is like your dead beat uncle asking you to refinance your house, loan him the money at the same rate you’re paying, and rely on repayment from sales of apples from the orchard in his back yard.”

In addition to the proposal’s irrational legal structure, former Washoe County Commissioner Jim Galloway and other members of the public pointed out at the May public hearing that Reno might pressure the county to buy its junk-rated bonds. Accordingly, the proposal was rewritten to define “municipality” to mean “water authority.”

You see the whole drill is to facilitate the disposition and merger of the county’s Department of Water Resources (DWR) into the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA).

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At the November 8 meeting, Galloway and others pointed out a number of flaws. First, the ordinance authorizes borrowing up to \$2 billion to refinance just \$26.1 million. TMWA finance officer Jeff Tessier told the *Reno Gazette Journal* that TMWA could also use the county “bond bank” to refinance \$370 million in existing TMWA debt and “wouldn’t need to return to the county commission for approval.”

Moreover, the term “water authority” could include a yet-to-be-formed agency for the proposed Truckee River flood control project, which is estimated by the US Army Corps of Engineers to cost \$1.6 billion. The proposal is in danger of losing Corps of Engineers financial support because its cost benefit ratio is marginal; and that could saddle Washoe County taxpayers with the entire tab.

In summary, this could end up a \$2 billion dollar line of credit backed by helpless county taxpayers. Who are the winners? County administrators, if they succeed in using this sweetheart financing scheme to facilitate offloading the cash sucking DWR; and TMWA since this line of credit allows them to borrow at will; and finally property owners in the Truckee Meadows flood plain who, if this line of credit is ever accessed to pay for the ever more costly proposed flood control boondoggle, could then develop without having to buy flood insurance

Mark Twain once said: “A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way.” What do you think the county will learn if it goes ahead with this “bond bank” ordinance?

(Jim Clark is President of Republican Advocates and a member of the Washoe County & Nevada State GOP Central Committees.)

Take today’s poll: [Who would win the presidential debates next year, Barack Obama or Newt Gingrich?](#)



Rec projects gain ground

Three projects key to providing more hiking, fishing and biking along the Truckee River in the Verdi area are gaining traction: the first leg of a bikeway in the Truckee Canyon, more parkland along the river and a new pond for fishing at Crystal Peak.

All of the projects involve obtaining grants or using voter-approved funds for park projects and should be ready for use by next summer. None of the projects involve funding that support local government services such as fire and police, officials said.

In the Truckee Canyon west of Verdi, a three-mile stretch of the Tahoe-Pyramid Bikeway is expected to open next summer after work is completed to strengthen the Fleish footbridge west of Verdi in California.

Renovating the 200-foot-long suspension bridge over the Truckee River is prerequisite for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to open its maintenance road to hikers and bikers at the start of the Truckee Canyon.

"Getting this bridge in is a big deal for us," said Janet Phillips, leader of the Pyramid-Tahoe Bikeway project. "We have a deal with TMWA. We help fix up their bridge and they will allow it to be used by the public.

"By late next summer, we will be able to

ride mountain bikes from Verdi up into California," she said.

The bikeway project is concentrating on filling in missing links so someday people can ride a bike along the Truckee River from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake.

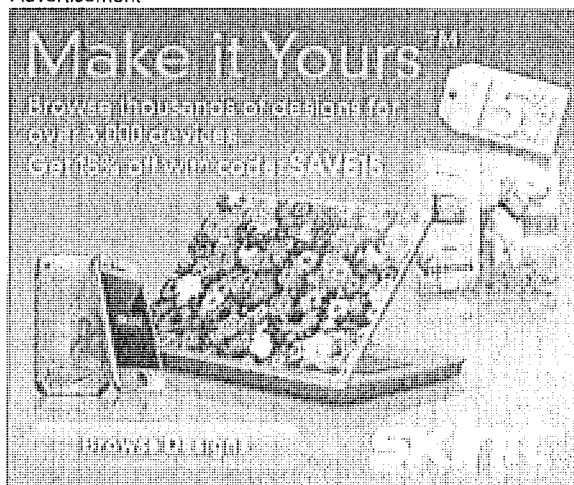
Of the 116-mile bikeway, about 55 percent is now open, Phillips said. With a new footbridge installed this week at the McCarran Ranch, that raises the mileage to 58 percent completed when it opens to the public this spring. The new section to Fleish will raises the percentage to 64 percent.

"The paradox is the easy sections were done first, meaning the remaining sections are harder," Phillips said.

A new anchor for the Fleish bridge was poured a few weeks ago. Next year, a thicker cable will be installed to hold up the bridge and safer side railings and other features will be added, she said.

With all that, she said, the bridge won't

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sway as much.

Once the bridge is renovated, she said, TMWA has signed an agreement to open its maintenance road from Verdi to the bridge. The private road starts at the end of Quilici Ranch Road.

The road is steep and rocky. "It's pretty difficult riding," even on a mountain bike, Phillips said. "Some people may find it more suitable for hiking than biking."

The nonprofit bikeway group obtained a \$200,000 federal recreation grant through the Nevada Division of State Parks for the bridge work.

"That's probably the last of it," she said, of the federal grants because of budget cuts. "That has been the source of money for everything we have built so far. Having that program go away is a big dent in the likelihood of getting more sections built."

In all, the bridge is expected to cost \$275,000 to build. Engineering and other soft costs raises the total to \$360,000.

HRD Inc., a Reno engineering firm, and Black Eagle Consulting, a local technical inspection service, have donated their services for the project, she said.

Private donations and an expected contribution from TMWA will help with the costs. If that doesn't cover it, "we will do a fundraiser in the spring," Phillips said.

TMWA has committed \$144,000 toward

labor, engineering and inspection for the Fleish bridge repair and upgrade, said Kim Mazeris, TMWA customer relations director.

New park land in east Verdi

The Washoe County Commission earlier this month approved the purchase of 13.32 acres for \$840,000 on the east end of Verdi. Located between the Truckee River and Highway 40, the land is east of a trailer park that sits next to the big bend in the river where people sometimes rub elbow to elbow in the summer time.

Lynda Nelson, county parks planning manager, said the new land will provide another access point to the river for fishing, kayaking or otherwise playing in the river. It also will be another link in a long-term project to extend a trail system along the river from Reno.

As part of the deal, the county will be required to remove piles of debris soon.

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The land was purchased with \$420,000 in a state bond for outdoor recreation approved by voters in 2002 as well as \$420,000 from a county approved bond issue for parks and libraries in 2000. The land was appraised for \$3 million in 2009.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife also contributed \$200,000 toward the purchase and development of the site. An agreement for a joint master plan, county and wildlife roles and responsibilities for the property will be prepared, Nelson said.

Nelson said she suspects the property will be used for a trailhead with parking. But it will remain fenced until that is developed.

Once the land is opened, fishermen will have another access point to go up and down the river as long as they stay within the high-water mark, said Chris Healy, Nevada Department of Wildlife spokesman.

Fishing through the Verdi area and on the Truckee River has been great, Healy said. "We've had lots of good, clean water the last several years."

Pond at Crystal Peak

F&P Construction has been issued a notice to proceed with a \$394,968 project to install a liner for this historic mill pond at Crystal Peak Park on the west side of Verdi. Before construction can start, a discharge permit from the state is required to empty the pond and the liner material is expected to arrive in about month.

After that, Nelson said, the start of the

project depends on the weather.

The liner under the four-acre pond probably will take two weeks from start to finish. Warmer weather is required to weld the seams together. Then the liner will be covered with screened dirt from the site as the liner goes down to avoid any tears or leaks.

Rock all the way around the pond will have to be removed to put the liner in and then put back in place to anchor the material.

Nelson said the liner will be buried so it won't deteriorate in the sun. It's the same heavy-duty plastic material used to line commercial fish farms, she said.

The new liner essentially is a gift of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nevada Department of Wildlife. "They contributed \$150,000 each for this project," Nelson said. "We couldn't do it without them."

Much of the work to develop the north side

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of the park began in 2008 and was done by F&P under an original \$596,000 contract. Then state officials determined the pond was leaking and a lining would be required.

"It's a pretty big investment," Healy said. He said wildlife officials were involved in the initial design, so the pond has a deep area for fishing. Wildlife officials also required an island to be submerged so cormorants won't roost there and eat the stocked fish.

Fish to be stocked will be in the nine to 10-inch range, Healy said. Sterile rainbow trout will be initially planted next spring.

Lahontan cutthroat trout will be stocked in the pond in the spring of 2013, the first time the natives will be planted in an urban pond, Healy said. Wildlife employees couldn't retrieve any fingerlings from Marlette Lake this year because of the late spring thaw, he said.

The ponds are expected to be open this spring.

Water from the Truckee River will flow into the pond and out through a channel at the north end. Fertilized eggs for cutthroat trout will be put boxes in the channel and hopefully produce fingerlings that will survive and eventually return to spawn, Healy said.

The pond was part of the Verdi Lumber Co.'s mill that operated from 1900 to 1929.

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Amodei agrees to assist City of Fernley with water issues related to the Truckee Canal

FERNLEY--U.S. Congressman Mark Amodei agreed to assist the City of Fernley and Truckee-Carson Irrigation District with issues related to the Truckee Canal concerning the rehabilitating the structure and getting water back in the canal.

Additionally, the congressman noted federal lands sought by the City of Fernley should be turned over the municipality.

After responding to questions regarding national issues, locals began asking Amodei questions specifically related to Fernley.

Resident Rod Windell of the Friends of the Historic Truckee Canal told Amodei that during the last irrigation season (summer 2011), the Bureau of Reclamation would not allow water in the canal, which impacted local farmers' fields. Additionally, if there is no water in the canal, that impacts the city's municipal wells and domestic wells.

Windell pointed out a DRI (Desert Research Institute) study indicated Fernley obtained 75% of its recharge from the canal seepage; and it was noted that eventually,

the BOR did allow water to flow through the canal, but only at 350 cubic feet per second.

Windell noted the Newlands Project is the oldest reclamation project in the nation and the canal structure needs rehabilitation. He added there are no funds to restore the canal and the structure owned by the federal government (BOR) and operated by the TCID, and there are no federal loans available to the irrigation district to modernize the canal.

Councilman Roy Edgington also told Amodei that the city is planning a meeting on Dec. 13 at 3 p.m. at City Hall with Lyon County officials and representatives from Churchill County, the City of Fallon and TCID to discuss the water issues.

Edgington noted that he believes the BOR needs to rethink its philosophy that municipal use of the water is just as important as agriculture. Additionally, Edgington noted the BOR should be able to disperse a loan to the irrigation district to

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rehabilitate the canal.

Amodei said he would meet with the BOR prior to the Dec. 13 meeting, but the city needs to work with his staff on the various issues.

He added that he would like to know from the BOR what potential grants are available to repair the irrigation canal.

Edgington added that the irrigation district received approval from voters to allow TCID to seek a \$5 million bond to fund the repair project, but the irrigation district cannot get a loan.

Windell added that BOR won't allow water in the canal because the takeouts in the canal need to be repaired or replaced.

"We were down to the wire, our fields were drying up," said Windell of the lack of water in the canal, adding that the structure is 100 years old.

He acknowledged the 2008 canal breach has made the various federal agencies "gun shy about putting water in the canal."

Amodei said, "So we need to ask BOR what legal authority they have to not put water in the canal."

Concerning the Fernley Lands Bill, Amodei noted the federal government, which includes the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the BOR, owns 85% of the land in Nevada. He said the BOR is the third largest land own in the state.

"The federal government needs to get out of the real estate business and allow you to control our own destiny," he said.

He said work on that particular bill would not get underway until after January, 2012.

The city is seeking BOR lands within the city limits to turn into city parks.

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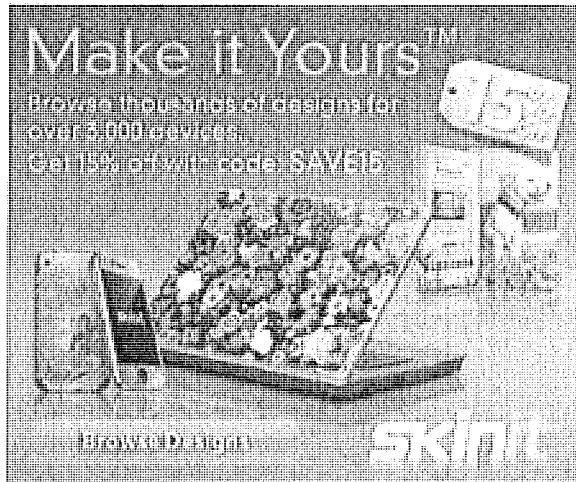
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Washoe County faces brain drain, and more cuts may come

Top administrators who run Washoe County government are on their way out the door, creating a brain drain in running services from animal control, parks to finances.

And more staff cuts could come in January when the county deals with an estimated \$6.8 million gap that was to be filled by making more personnel cost reductions.

County Manager Katy Simon said she expects the county to be down by 145 positions in December from the start of its fiscal year in July. Included are 86 long-time employees who accepted buyouts to retire early. Their positions will be eliminated.

By the end of December, another 19 employees will be laid off, and at least 40 vacant positions will not be filled.

"It's always a challenge to lose talented people. We will absolutely miss them," Simon said. "In several cases, we have people to step up. In some cases, hiring people from outside will bring a fresh perspective."

In all, the county is losing hundreds of years of institutional knowledge. If the 86

who are retiring with a bonus each worked 15 years, that experience would total nearly 1,300 years.

That's experience in knowing how to get things done, making realistic projections to picking up the phone and calling the right person for help.

A look at the numbers

The buyouts will cost the county an estimated \$5.6 million, primarily by buying years of service to boost pension plans. The cost averages \$65,116 per employee.

The annual savings in eliminating those 86 positions totals \$11.2 million.

In January, the county commission will take another look at its revenues and attrition to determine how big the \$6.8 million gap is, Simon said.

"We have a lot of vacant positions budgeted. We are not filling them for this very reason," she said, saying there'd be



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no point in hiring employees and then laying them off.

The buyouts do not include any employees in the sheriff's office, the county's largest department, or the health department. Once these positions are gone, they are not to be replaced.

"I couldn't figure out a fair and equitable plan for who gets to go and who doesn't," Sheriff Mike Haley said.

The \$6.8 million has been portrayed as the last big cut needed to put the county on a sustainable path to weather several more years of a rocky economic recovery. County officials were counting on county employees to agree to more wage and benefit cuts to fill the gap.

The Washoe County Employees Association, the largest union, has not agreed on a contract for this year that includes any more salary and benefit cuts. And associations representing sheriff deputies and sheriff supervisors are at an impasse.

The county has about 2,660 employees, down by 27 percent since 2007. Almost all of those were lost through attrition.

County leaders

At the helm of the operation, John Breternitz, county commission chairman, and Commissioner Robert Larkin, who has served three terms as chairman, said they will announce in January whether they will run for office again in 2012.

The two have been primary backers of the sustainability move calling for scaled-back county salaries and benefits, combining departments, and creating a new fire department on July 1 to save costs by ending fire service with Reno.

County commissioners recently reaffirmed Simon's contract through June 2013 and promised Simon a boost for her pension contributions when it ends.

Simon is paid \$184,938 a year. She hasn't taken a raise since 2007 and has declined cellphone and car allowances and deferred compensation benefits.

Who's leaving

Among the key employees leaving is Finance Director John Sherman, who is retiring in December after 12 years and was the first among local finance officials to plan for the recession. He is to be replaced by Comptroller Sheri Mendez.

A new budget manager is being sought to

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replace Darin Conforti who left last summer. Katey Fox has left as personnel director. The next director will also do double duty as labor relations manager.

Rosemary Menard, water resources director, is overseeing the creation of a new neighborhood services department including public works, parks, water resources, community development and building and safety. The move will result in one department director, saving \$900,000 in four department director positions.

Dan St. John already has left as public works director. Adrian Freund left as community development director early in the year and was not replaced. And Kim Robinson, a planning manager who took over some of his duties, is leaving the county to become regional planning director.

Doug Doolittle is retiring as parks director. Lynda Nelson, a longtime parks planning manager who helped bring in millions in grants for park expansion and reseeding projects, also is leaving.

Mitch Schneider, who oversees animal control services, is retiring in December. Kathy Carter, community relations director, left for Renown. Even Rita Lenicioni, assistant to the county manager for more than three decades, has retired.

Dr. Joseph Iser, the county's top health officer, meanwhile, has been on the job only since early summer. And the county expects to hire a new fire chief in January who will run the Truckee Meadows well as

Sierra fire departments.

Insights offered

After hearing the long list of retirees, "I'm not saying it's a good thing, but you are going to get some new voices, and some new eyes on this problem," said Eric Herzik, Political Science Department chairman at the University of Nevada, Reno.

"The bigger problem is the county is not done cutting," Herzik said of the \$6.8 million gap. "They are using every possible option to try to maintain services while dealing with ever-decreasing revenues. Katy Simon does a great job with a very bad hand."

Bret Simmons, a managerial sciences professor for UNR's College of Business, said just reducing staff won't cut it.

"Just because you get smaller, it doesn't mean you become more efficient," he said. "They need to go back to the drawing

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board and examine all the processes, to make sure employees are working smarter, not harder."

That also is under way. A county steering committee, including business leaders, worked with Management Partners consultants to prioritize a list of more than 100 proposals over the summer to make the county more efficient.

The county commission approved a plan this fall to work on 20 of those proposals. They include a new neighborhood services department, rebidding contacts to gain reduced prices, consolidating office space, using county vehicles longer, hiring correctional officers rather than deputies to work in the jail and creating local market-driven, entry salaries.

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Jim Clark: The great Washoe County water fight of 2011

NOVEMBER, 22 2011
BY JIM CLARK
SPECIAL TO THE BONANZA

INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. – Mark Twain once pondered: “Men fight over water but drink whiskey.” If Twain were alive today he would be at the Territorial Enterprise Newspaper writing about the great Washoe County water fight of 2011.

Last May the county commission considered a staff proposal to create a “bond bank,” the purpose of which was to borrow money from the public to purchase bonds issued by municipalities within Washoe County. Yep, that’s right. The county would sell general obligation bonds to the public and turn around and buy revenue bonds from local agencies and charge the same interest rate the county is paying. If there’s a default, all county taxpayers are on the hook for repayment. As Mark Twain might say: “This is like your dead beat uncle asking you to refinance your house and loan him the money at the same rate you’re paying, and rely on repayment from sales of apples from the orchard in his back yard.”

In addition to the proposal’s irrational legal structure, former Washoe County Commissioner Jim Galloway and other members of the public pointed out at the May public hearing that Reno might pressure the county to buy its junk-rated bonds. Accordingly the proposal was rewritten to define “municipality” to mean “water authority.”

You see the whole drill is to facilitate the disposition and merger of the county’s Department of Water Resources into the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. DWR is a basket case. It once issued \$65 million in bonds to build a water treatment facility which never got built. Nevertheless, \$26.1 million of the bonds are still outstanding, the proceeds having been used to lay pipe which, of course, is unused because there is no treatment plant. In any case DWR is a dysfunctional unit that the county wants to get rid of.

The problem is that someone has to pay off the bonds which paid for the “pipes to nowhere” and TMWA is currently running at an annual loss of \$9 million so its bonds would not be particularly marketable in today’s economy. On November 8 the ordinance, with its new definition, was trotted out for a first reading. Over the objections of Commissioners Weber and Jung, the proposal passed and is scheduled for a second and final reading December 13.

At the Nov. 8 meeting Galloway and others pointed out a number of flaws. First, the ordinance authorizes borrowing up to \$2 billion to refinance just \$26.1 million. TMWA finance officer Jeff Tessier told the Reno Gazette Journal that TMWA could also use the county “bond bank” to refinance \$370 million in existing TMWA debt and “wouldn’t need to return to the county commission for approval.” Moreover the term “water authority” could include a yet to be formed agency for the proposed Truckee River flood control project which is estimated by the US Army Corps of Engineers to cost \$1.6 billion. The proposal is in danger of losing Corps of Engineers financial support because its cost benefit ratio is marginal; that could saddle Washoe County taxpayers with the entire tab.

In summary, this could end up a \$2 billion line of credit backed by helpless county taxpayers. Who are the winners? County administrators, if they succeed in using this sweetheart financing scheme to facilitate offloading the cash sucking DWR; and TMWA since this line of credit allows them to borrow at will; and finally property owners in the Truckee Meadows flood plane who, if this line of credit is ever accessed to pay for the ever more costly proposed flood control boondoggle, could then develop without having to buy flood insurance.

Mark Twain once said: “A man who carries a cat by the tail learns something he can learn in no other way. ”

What do you think the county will learn if it goes ahead with this “bond bank” ordinance?

– Jim Clark is president of Republican Advocates and a member of the Washoe County & Nevada State GOP Central Committees. He can be reached at tahoebjc@aol.com.



Robert Barone: Proposed Bond Bank is bad news for Reno

Bond bank. Reno ReTRAC. Flood of 1997. Goldman Sachs. Harrisburg, Penn. Jefferson County, Ala. \$525 million.

How are all of these related?

In the late 1990s, Reno's City Council pushed through the ReTRAC project (the railroad trench), financing it with an original bond issuance of \$191 million. As of June 30, 2011, the latest data available from the city, the debt on that project stood at \$187.5 million, of which \$140.1 million is senior debt and \$47.4 million is subordinated debt.

The debt is serviced by a one-eighth percent sales tax in Washoe County.

Payments on the subordinated portion of the debt have been deferred by Goldman Sachs through December 2013, as the sales tax dedicated to pay this debt is only producing enough revenue to service the senior portion of the debt.

The debt was issued based on projections that the sales tax would grow at more than 8 percent per year, and during the original debate in the late 1990s, it was pointed out by critics, myself included, that should

Reno suffer a recession, the sales tax could be insufficient to pay the debt. That now appears to be the case.

It could very well be that we citizens will be asked to increase the sales tax rate in the near future. For now, Reno is unlikely to have access to the capital markets. Already, the city's credit rating is on "watch" at S&P, and the bonds of its Redevelopment Agency (\$31.4 million) were downgraded to "CC" on Nov. 15 (from "BB").

In May, a bond bank ordinance came before the Washoe County Commissioners. The legislation would have allowed Washoe County to use its AA+ credit rating to borrow in the capital markets and then lend the proceeds, at the same low interest rate, to another municipal entity. Because of the broad language in the proposed legislation regarding who could borrow from the County, the Commissioners tabled it. Some members of the public feared the flood control project, spawned by the 1997 flash flood in Reno, would quickly

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line up for bond bank funding.

As far as I can tell, this "flood control" project has grown from somewhere around \$300 million in 2005 (and from an estimated \$50-\$100 million immediately after the '97 flood itself) to more than \$1.1 billion today (I have seen estimates as high as \$1.5 billion). It now includes 10 soccer fields, picnic tables, a regional park complete with amphitheater, etc. The local contribution to this (via the bond bank) could be as much as \$525 million, which would be added to the general obligation of Washoe County (which now has only \$335 million of outstanding general fund debt). County loans of this size to any troubled entity, or to any entity at all, will most likely severely impact the county's credit rating.

On Nov. 8, the bond bank proposal suddenly reappeared before the county commissioners with revised language supposedly limiting who could borrow. It passed the first reading by a 3-2 vote, and will return for the final vote on Dec. 13. The stated objective was to finance a noncontroversial merger between the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the county's water system, with TMWA as the survivor.

Once again, on Nov. 8, there were objections from the public, mainly concerning having the county become a lender. It would only take the changing of a few words in the ordinance to allow almost any municipal entity to borrow (read that as Reno and/or the flood project).

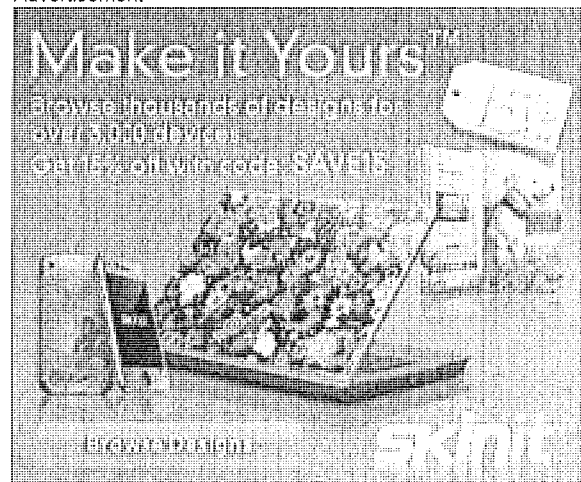
In addition, the bond bank is not even necessary to accomplish the noncontroversial water authority merger. A TMWA spokesman said the use of the bond bank will save the merged water systems roughly \$3.9 million over a 20-plus years, or less than 2 cents per day per customer. That's about \$7 per year per hook-up, less than 1 percent of the average \$750 annual water bill.

In addition, under this ordinance TMWA would be able to refinance all of its \$370 million of indebtedness on county paper, making it a general obligation of the county rather than revenue bonds as they are now.

In my view, the use of the bond bank to finance the merger is ill-advised. There doesn't appear to be any upside for Washoe County to do this.

First, financing already exists for the water merger at a very small premium to what the county's credit rating would provide.

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Second, the danger exists that other projects, like the flood control project (\$525 million) or the city of Reno, unable to access the capital markets, will eventually muster enough political muscle to access the bond bank.

Would you use your own credit capacity to borrow money in your own name and make a loan to your neighbor who has a lower credit rating than you at the same rate that you get? Of course not. Why? Because you only have downside -- no upside.

But, that's what this bond bank does. Harrisburg, Penn., recently defaulted due to a single project -- its incinerator. And Jefferson County, Ala., defaulted because of a single project -- its sewer plant. Don't think such a fiasco can't happen here. Look at ReTRAC!

The safest route is to prevent the possibility. Call your Washoe County Commissioner and demand this ordinance, with its flawed language and concepts, be voted down Dec. 13.

If they then so choose, the commissioners could more fully consider the views and desires of the public in a fair and open forum. Consider yourself forewarned.

Robert Barone is a principal and an investment advisor representative of Universal Value Advisors in Reno and a SEC registered investment adviser.

Bond Bank Ordinance

» What: Legislation would have allowed Washoe County to use its AA+ credit rating to borrow in the capital markets and lend the proceeds, at the same low interest rate, to a limited group of municipal entities.

» Why: The stated objective was to finance a merger between the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) and the county's water system, with TMWA as the survivor.

» Key date: Washoe County Commissioners passed the first reading by a 3-2 vote, and will return for the final vote on Dec. 13.

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Winter is a good time to prune, trim most trees

Most of us don't think about it, but fall and winter are good times to trim and prune many of our trees.

While pruning and trimming can take place all year long for most trees, it's easier to see the shapes of trees and the direction of branches after they shed their summer canopies of leaves. Colder weather also discourages diseases and pests in trees.

"After the leaves drop is a good time to prune," said Steve Churchillo, city of Reno urban forester.

Churchillo and other arborists have a couple of cautions for budding tree trimmers: first, while large dead limbs are easy to identify after a tree has dropped its leaves, smaller weak or dead limbs might be harder to see with no foliage. Also, once you have to get off the ground to reach tree limbs, it's probably better to call a professional than risk life and limb on a ladder.

The first rule of successful trimming, arborists say, is usually less is better.

Just a trim

"You want to take as little as possible off a tree -- not more than 15 percent at most

in terms of the volume of the tree's limb structure. Probably less is better," Churchillo said. "Be sure not to top trees, and do not do what we call lion's tailing, which is stripping the smaller limbs off scaffold limbs -- the limbs that attach to the main trunk. That makes suckers (extraneous growth) come out and it can also cause sun scald to the interior by opening it to new light where the bark is thinner. That can dispose trees to other diseases."

When trees go dormant each year, carbohydrates, sugars and starches are assimilated into the tree, like energy stored for spring, Churchillo said. Then in spring, photosynthesis resumes and trees produce new growth.

"If you prune too early in fall, they're just starting to store these things," he said. "Or, if you cut off too much, you're actually cutting out the storage areas for energy."

For spring pruning, he said, wait to see how a tree weathered the winter before

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pruning to see what's damaged or weakened that might need removing.

Prune flowering trees after they bloom, Churchillo said, to keep their energy reserves high. Fruit trees, however, need special care at certain times of the year.

Never remove more than one-third of a tree's leaf surface at one pruning, said Dale Carlon, a certified arborist and owner of Dale Carlon Consulting. Removing too much at a time can lead to decay and rapid-growing water sprouts -- shoots that come off a main branch.

"Be patient," Carlon said.

With a young tree, prune it early to make it structurally sound and less in need of pruning as it grows, he said.

What to prune?

"We prune dead branches, crossing branches and water sprouts and suckers," Carlon said. "Crossing is where two branches rub against each other and open a wound that allows for entry of disease and decay. Keep the one with the least amount of damage and that is heading in the right direction.

"Water sprouts are the same as suckers, but they appear in the crown of the tree," Carlon said. "Usually, they're slick looking and rapid growing and come diagonally off the main branch."

A key point in good pruning, Carlon said, is

the one-half to one-third rule.

"When you're removing a branch, remove it back to another branch that is one-half to one-third" its diameter, he said. "So, if you're removing a branch, follow it back ... rather than leaving just a stub, or the stub will decay and that will travel back to the main branch."

Trees grow out of their tops, like a fountain, said arborist Darin Bue, of Los Verdes Arborists. As the growth on top becomes denser, growth on the bottom has to reach higher for light, he said.

In a forest, that lower growth would die and fall off, Bue said, but in an urban setting with fewer trees to hem it in, the lower growth reaches for the light.

"Look for keeping up with the lower stuff that should be taken all the way off," Bue said. "People tend to be shy about ... altering the structure of a tree in a good way by taking off those lower branches that are out of scale with the rest of the tree."

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Be sure to trim outside the branch collar or ridge where the bark is folded, or the distinct line where a branch attaches to a limb or the tree trunk, Churchillo said. Improper cuts or cutting too close to the main trunk can damage tree tissues so cuts cannot "compartmentalize" or seal properly with callus tissue to limit decay.

Avoid making topping cuts and cutting inside the collar, Bue said. Those actions leave wounds that take a long time to heal and lead to decay.

The biggest issue with pruning and trimming big trees, Churchillo said, is safety -- specifically the use of ladders and the danger of power lines.

"People are killed throughout the U.S. every year pruning trees," he said. "They get electrocuted or fall from ladders or get struck by large limbs. Those are the three biggest fatality causes."

When you need to get off the ground and onto a ladder or tree limb to prune, it's time to hire a professional, the professionals say.

"We do not like to see people on ladders," Carlon said. "There are pole trimmers that go up to about 10 feet, but anything beyond that, you should hire a professional."

Things to remember about pruning trees

- » Pruning encourages a tree's root system to supply more water and nutrients to fewer branches, making a tree healthier.
- » Some branches on most tree species die over time and will need to be removed through pruning to prevent property damage and personal injury and to keep decay and disease from entering a tree.
- » Do not to leave stubs behind as if trimming a hedge, but leave a bud for future tree growth.
- » Pruning in the proper place will allow the tree to heal with the least amount of vulnerability
- » Small trees can often be pruned with hand pruners and loppers, but mature trees usually require at least a hand saw.
- » No sprays or sealers are recommended to heal proper pruning cuts.
- » Trees can be pruned anytime, but it may be easiest to prune deciduous trees when the leaves are off. Pruning also can be done in late spring or early summer when the leaves are on so the desired look can be achieved.
- » To achieve maximum growth, prune a tree in early spring just before the rapid part of the growing season starts. To slow the tree's growth, prune after the spring growth. Flowering and fruiting of trees can be influenced by the timing of pruning. Consult a certified arborist for species-specific recommendations.

Source: Truckee Meadows Community Forestry Coalition at www.communityforestry.org

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Water fee increase moves forward to final approval in Reno-Sparks

Bills for most Truckee Meadows residents will go up in 2012 under a plan advanced by the area's primary water provider.

Directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority agreed Wednesday to proceed with a 3.5 percent hike in a monthly service fee billed to customers, with a final decision on the increase expected Jan. 18.

It's an effort to "slowly close the gap" between water revenues and the cost of providing water to 93,000 homes and businesses in the Reno-Sparks area, said John Erwin, the utility's director of natural resources, planning

and management.

The fee increase will raise the average monthly water bill for metered water customers by \$1.42, from \$40.22 to \$41.64. Similar increases are proposed in 2013 and 2014.

The adjustment will raise up to \$6.5 million annually, taking a sizable chunk out of a near \$9 million deficit faced by the utility. Officials hope to make up the rest with yet-to-be-determined cuts in expenditures.

A sour economy largely is to blame for the water authority's fiscal challenges, including a drop in water sales because of flat growth and a housing vacancy rate at more than twice-normal levels, officials said.

A two-prong increase in water rates approved for 2009 and 2010 was expected to raise nearly

\$78 million, but only about \$71 million is expected to be collected.

"We wouldn't be here today if our previous increases had provided what they were supposed to," said Mark Foree, the authority's general manager.

Cooler springs during the past couple of years also have reduced demand for water as residents held off with irrigation.

"April has now become a winter month," Erwin said. "That's all well and good with managing the (water) resource, but we still have to cover costs."

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Jim Clark: Washoe County commissioners up to unfortunate tricks

NOVEMBER, 14 2011
BY JIM CLARK
SPECIAL TO THE BONANZA

INCLINE VILLAGE, Nev. — Long ago and far away there was a principality governed by a wise and benevolent prince. And the streams gave plenteous water and the carriages traversed good roads and there was much happiness in the land. So after twelve long years of governing, the wise and benevolent prince decided to retire and leave the job of governing to two wise and benevolent princesses and three evil princes.

And there came to the land a great famine and pestilence and the evil princes began to lay off knights and soldiers loyal to the crown and many peasants lost their farms. Then the wise judges of the assizes told the principality that it had collected too much in taxes in the mountainous region and must return these unlawful gains to the poor peasants who had paid them. And tax collectors would go empty handed because too many peasants had lost their farms so the treasury got lower and lower.

One day as the evil princes were planning budget cuts and layoffs of more knights and soldiers one of the evil princes said: "I've got an idea. Let's borrow a bunch of money from the Dutch bankers and use it to buy bonds issued by agencies of the principality."

When the wise and benevolent former prince heard of this he came out of retirement and went to the council of the three evil princes and the two wise and benevolent princesses and said: "Are you guys bleepin' nuts? The first rule of ruling is when you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."

Then the two wise and benevolent princesses said: "Oh save the principality wise and benevolent former prince. Keep our evil brothers from doing this." But the evil princes said: "Shaddup, princesses! Get lost, former prince, we got the votes to do this."

Well, dear readers, this wasn't long ago and far away, it's now; the "principality" is Washoe County; the wise and benevolent former prince is retired County Commissioner Jim Galloway; there really is a \$6.8 million budget hole (plus the refunds due Incline property owners) and the evil princes really have proposed to create a "bond bank" to borrow money and purchase the bonds of an agency to be formed from the merger of the Truckee Meadows Water Agency and the county's Department of Water Resources.

The proposed ordinance first came up last May, and after public testimony in opposition from county employees and representatives of both Sparks and Incline the matter was tabled. But, like a bad penny, it came back as a proposed ordinance. Its first hearing was November 8. It would allow the county to borrow over \$2 billion to purchase bonds to be issued by water authorities existing or created within Washoe County. Why? "To provide the (water authority) access to credit at a lower interest rate ... due to the county's higher credit rating and general obligation pledge" according to the staff report.

Presumably the "lower interest" rate would permit the water authority to pass the savings along to ratepayers served by the agency, although there is nothing in the proposed ordinance that would require this. Galloway told the commission that a rate increase of just 1.9 cents per day would cover the additional interest cost of the agency issuing its own bonds to the public. Under the proposal Sparks, North Valleys and Incline taxpayers would bear any risk of this scheme but receive nothing for in return. It is this feature that bothers Commissioners Weber and Jung.

A second and final reading of this ordinance is scheduled for December 13. Hopefully additional citizens will join Galloway in disabusing county commissioners of this cockamamie scheme.

— Jim Clark is president of Republican Advocates and a member of the Washoe County and Nevada State GOP Central

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And there came to the land a great famine and pestilence and the evil princes began to lay off knights and soldiers loyal to the crown and many peasants lost their farms. Then the wise judges of the assizes told the principality that it had collected too much in taxes in the mountainous region and must return these unlawful gains to the poor peasants who had paid them. And tax collectors would go empty handed because too many peasants had lost their farms so the treasury got lower and lower.

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Scrap plan and build pedestrian/bike bridge

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Regarding "Bridge design is next step" [RGJ, Nov. 7], I wish to offer a different design for the Virginia Street bridge.

Let's scrap the enormous cost of "\$17 million to \$50 million" and design a pedestrian/bicycle bridge instead. Is there really need for a third bridge between the two that exist on Center and Sierra streets?

A pedestrian bridge would be a great entry onto downtown Virginia Street, which could be converted to a park-like corridor. With so many special events closing Virginia Street throughout the year, it is not a great leap to consider permanent closure.

Other cities have constructed pedestrian bridges over rivers: Omaha, Nashville, Providence and Little Rock. A pedestrian/bicycle bridge could be built at a fraction of the cost of a vehicular bridge. The architectural design competition would be an artistic boost to the city. The construction time would be shortened considerably, thus causing less disruption to businesses, which should profit from increased foot traffic after completion of the bridge.

Given the woeful financial state of the city, isn't it time to consider a less expensive alternative that contributes to the river's ambience and easily avoids flooding problems?

David VonSeggern, Reno

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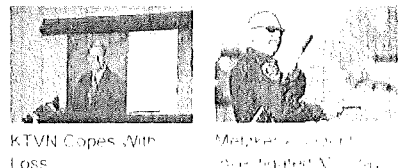
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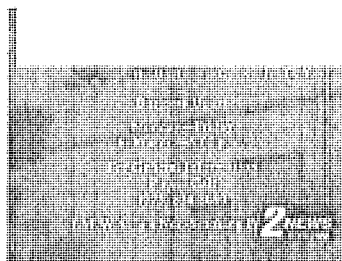
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TMWA Considers Rate Adjustment, Seeks Input

Posted: Nov 09, 2011 1:23 PM PST
Updated: Nov 09, 2011 1:25 PM PST

Kellene Stockwell
Channel 2 News



The Truckee Meadows Water Authority is considering a rate adjustment for customers but first they want your input.

TMWA will hold a public workshop Tuesday at 5:30pm at its office at 1355 Capital Boulevard in Reno.

A representative will be on hand to explain how water rates are set - and to get feedback.

For more details about the proposed rate adjustment, visit www.tmwa.com or call 834-8080, option 2. Those unable to attend this workshop can submit their public comment online by visiting the meeting center section of their website.



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Washoe poised for vote on bond bank

Washoe County Commissioners plan to vote in December on whether to create a county bond bank for the exclusive use of water authorities, specifically to save several million in costs in the planned merger of the county's water utility division with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

The ordinance, sought and introduced Tuesday by County Commissioner Robert Larkin, would allow only a water authority to take advantage of the county's top-of-the-line bond rating through the bond bank to save on interest costs.

County Commissioners Bonnie Weber and Kitty Jung failed to win support to block the ordinance from moving ahead until an evening meeting can be scheduled for the public to hear more about it. Then any substantive changes could be made before a final vote on Dec. 13.

"It just seems pretty risky business at this particular time in this economic environment," Weber said.

Several residents, including former county commissioner Jim Galloway, said the ordinance could be amended later. The flood control agency, for instance, has talked about raising \$525 million in new financing for projects and then charging property owners to pay for the debt.

"It's all about precedent," Galloway said.

For the bond bank, the county would sell bonds that carry "the good faith and credit" of county taxpayers on behalf of a local entity, gaining a lower interest rate. Then the entity would pay the county for the annual debt service.

In May, the commission abandoned a proposed ordinance that would have created a bond bank for use of some government entities, including the new flood control agency and TMWA.

That bill created a major outcry, Galloway said. "Taxpayers clearly don't want our county to borrow on Wall Street so it can be make loans to other entities," he said.

"You've cut the sheriff's office, snow plows and now staff wants you to become a bank?" asked Bob Parker, a Galena Forest resident.

Under state law, the county could lend up to \$2 billion or 15 percent of the county's

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assessed property value in the bond bank.

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For the proposed merger with TMWA to occur, the county needs to retire \$26 million in county utility bonds, said John Sherman, county finance director.

Under the ordinance, TMWA would borrow money from the county's "bond bank" to pay off those bonds. Then it would pay the county debt service with revenues from 19,000 new water customers from the county utility.

The county's AA+ rating would result in a net savings of \$1.6 million in interest costs over the life of the bonds, according to Sherman's report. In addition, TMWA would not have to borrow an additional \$2.3 million to create a bond reserve if it had to issue revenue bonds. That's a \$3.9 million savings.

"This is just a one-shot thing," said Jeff Tessier, TMWA finance officer after the meeting.

Tessier said TMWA has no plans to use the county bond bank for \$370 million in bonds to be refinanced between 2015-17. "We will stand on our own credit," he said.

But if TMWA did want use the bond bank for that refinancing, he said the water utility wouldn't need to return to the county commission for approval.©

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News Talk 780 KOH's Profile



News Talk 780 KOH

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority will hold a public hearing tomorrow afternoon on its proposed rate increase at its offices on Capital Boulevard, starting at 5:30. The utility's put forth a 3.5 percent hike over the next three years, saying it's lost numerous customers from foreclosed homes. --Paul

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11/9/2011

KRNV (NBC) - Reno, NV
News 4---Today

+ Local Market Viewership: 12,791
 Local Publicity Value: \$461.76 per 30s

KRNV 11/9/2011 6:24:58 AM: ...commissioners want to create a bond bank to help save millions during a planned merger between the county's water utility and **TMWA**. according to the reno gazette journal.. commissioners are expected to vote on the plan in december... if approved.. the water authority could take advantage of the county's high bond rating through the bond bank... to save on interest costs.the county finance director says,for the proposed merger with **TMWA** to occur, the county needs to retire 26- million doallars in county utility bonds, under the ordinance, **TMWA** would borrow money from the county's "bond bank" to pay off those bonds. then it would pay the county debt service with revenues from nineteen thousand new water customers from the county utility. wednesday: mostly sunny, with a high near 52. southeast wind around 5 mph. wednesday night: mostly clear, with a low around 24. south wind around 5 mph. thursday: mostly sunny, with a high near 55. southeast wind around 5 mph. thursday night: mostly cloudy, with a low around 24. east wind around 5 mph becoming south. veterans day: mostly cloudy, with a high near 53. friday night: a 20 percent chance of rain. mostly cloudy, with a low around 32. saturday: a slight chance of rain. mostly cloudy, with a high near 51. saturday night: a chance of rain. cloudy, with a low around 29. sunday: a chance of rain. cloudy, with a high near 48. sunday night: a chance of rain. mostly cloudy, with a low around 25. ...

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KTVN (CBS) - Reno, NV
Channel 2 News 5:30PM

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KTVN 11/8/2011 5:33:45 PM: ...potter, channel 2 news. n-v energy says since those 2 generators went into service 3 years ago, it has made tracy 33-percent more efficient than other gas-fired power plants. and tomorrow you can weigh in on a proposed rate adjustment by the **Truckee Meadows** water authority. tmwa is holding a public meeting at 5-30 at the their office on capital boulevard in reno. under the proposed rate adjustment -- tmwa says the average customer would pay about a dollar and forty cents more per month. to learn more about this proposed increase -- and how tmwa sets its **Water** rates... just head to our website k-t-v-n dot com. in money watch tonight... if you're fighting foreclosure -- you may want to mark your calendar for some upcoming classes to help. the classes through nevada legal services will focus on the different steps of the foreclosure process... as well as government programs to help lessen your losses. the first class is next monday at 5-30 at the carson city library on roop street. and then there's one a week from thursday on the 17th -- at nevada legal services on tahoe street in reno. that one is at 4 p-m. and as our local and national economy continue toward recovery... we'll bring you all the latest. so please stay with channel 2 news... on the air... online... and on facebook and twitter for money watch continuing coverage. the economy will be one of the hot topics discussed at the republican presidential debate coming up this weekend. it's happening in south carolina sautrday... and you can watch the 90-minute debate live right here on channel 2 news -- starting at five p-m. tomorrow night the republican presidential candidates will debate in michigan. sorry, closed captioning is not available for mike's forecast. thanks mike. the government is running the ...

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11/8/2011 5:34:13 PM

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING REVISIONS TO TMWA RULES

Truckee Meadows Water Authority
Wednesday, November 16, 2011 -- 10:00 a.m.
Sparks City Council Chambers, Legislative Building
745 Fourth Street, Sparks

TMWA's Board of Directors will hold the first reading on revisions to TMWA Rules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 on November 16, 2011. Customers are encouraged to provide comments in advance of the meeting or by attending the meeting and submitting comments. The public hearing for the second reading to adopt the proposed revisions is tentatively scheduled to be held January 18, 2012 with revisions, if adopted, to become effective on February 1, 2012.

This Notice of Public Hearing is 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 (830 Greenbrae Dr., Sparks), Washoe County Clerk's Office/Courthouse (75 Court St., Reno), Washoe County Central Library (301 South Center St., Reno), Washoe County Administration (1001 East Ninth St., Reno) and at www.tmwa.com. Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations should contact TMWA at 834-8002 at least 24 hours in advance.

Copies of the proposed rule revisions are available for inspection at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority offices (1355 Capital Blvd.) or online under Latest News at www.tmwa.com. Public comments can also be submitted online. If you have additional questions, contact TMWA at 834-8080, option 2.



**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING
TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL WATER RATE ADJUSTMENT**

**Truckee Meadows Water Authority
Wednesday, November 16, 2011 - 10:00 a.m.
Sparks City Council Chambers
745 Fourth Street, Sparks**

Truckee Meadows Water Authority's (TMWA) Board of Directors will hold the first public hearing on a potential water rate adjustment on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 10:00 a.m. TMWA is asking for your input concerning the proposed adjustment, anticipated for implementation in the first billing cycle in February, 2012. Customers are encouraged to attend this meeting and provide comments. Members of the public who are disabled and require special accommodations should contact TMWA at 834-8002 at least 24 hours in advance.

This Notice of Public Hearing is 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 (630 Greenbrae Dr., Sparks), Washoe County Clerk's Office/Courthouse (75 Court St., Reno), Washoe County Central Library (301 South Center St., Reno), Washoe County Administration (1001 East Ninth St., Reno) and at www.tmwa.com.

Copies of the proposed rate adjustments and information related to the proposed rate adjustments are available for inspection at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority office (1355 Capital Blvd.) or online under Latest News at www.tmwa.com. Public comments can also be submitted online. If you have additional questions, contact us at 834-8000, option 2.

**Mark Foree
General Manager**



TMWA plans public workshop on planned rate adjustment Wednesday

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority will be holding a public workshop on water rates at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday at its headquarters, 1355 Capital Blvd., in Reno.

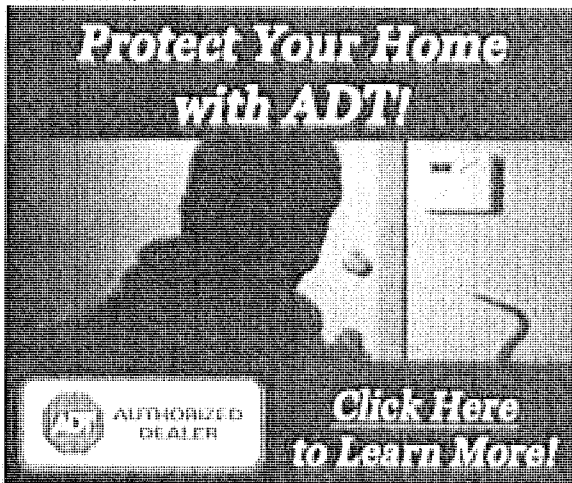
Customers are invited to submit comments regarding a proposed rate adjustment at a public workshop.

Participants will learn how TMWA sets water rates including the costs associated with delivering water to 330,000 residents in the Truckee Meadows.

For more details about the proposed rate adjustment, visit www.tmwa.com, or call 834-8080, option 2.

Those unable to attend this workshop can submit their public comment online by visiting the "Meeting Center" section of www.tmwa.com.

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Updated: 7:40 PM Nov 7, 2011

Free Tree Doctor Diagnosis

Reno

With the weather changing many are worried about their trees and shrubs. But thanks to a little known program available through Truckee Meadows Water Authority, you can get answers from an expert free.

Posted: 5:14 PM Nov 7, 2011

Reporter: Terri Russell

Email Address: terri.russell@kolotv.com

 Tree Planting

 Like

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RENO, NV - Up high on Windy Hill you can get a nearly 360-degree view of the Truckee Meadows.

From just about every angle you see trees that appear to have no problem thriving. But at street level it's a different story. That's when Dale Carlon is called in.

A Certified Arborist with Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Carlon helps local homeowners with their trees.

"I think the biggest thing is we find people are putting too large a tree in a too small a spot, and then it causes problems down the road," says Carlon.

Carlon says he spends a minimum of an hour with homeowners assessing their trees.

"In this case you can see the roots are doing damage, normally the utilities are on this side of the house so it's probably doing damage to the utilities, and the fence." Carlon says as he points to a tree that years ago started as a seedling growing in the backyard.

He uses a Ross Root Feeder--with a water hose attachment, he shoves the feeder in the ground,

where water creates space for winter snow and spring melt to eventually feed the root system.

Trees can also be fertilized this way

Carlton says with his advise and guidance, homeowners can make their own improvements for a minimal cost, which Carlton says will more than pay for themselves, with shade, windbreak, and less water usage.

If you think you don't have to call Dale until spring---Dale says think again, winter he says is the best time to plant trees because they are dormant.

If you are interested in Carlton's tree services email dalecarlon@yahoo.com or call (775) 287-1732.

Find this article at:

http://www.kolotv.com/home/headlines/Free_Tree_Doctor_Diagnosis_133402033.html

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

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