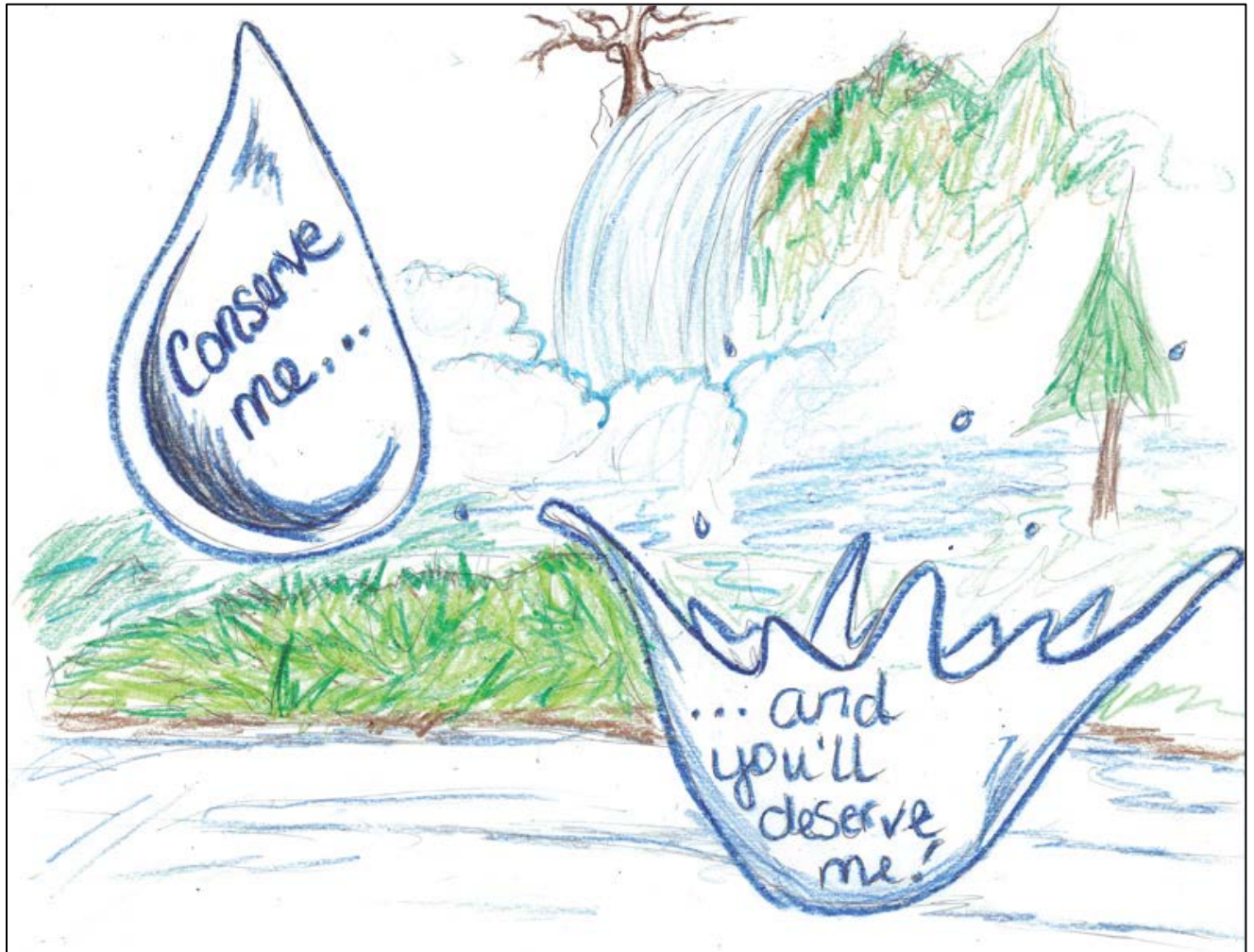


TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

Press Clippings

December 14, 2011 - January 11, 2012



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

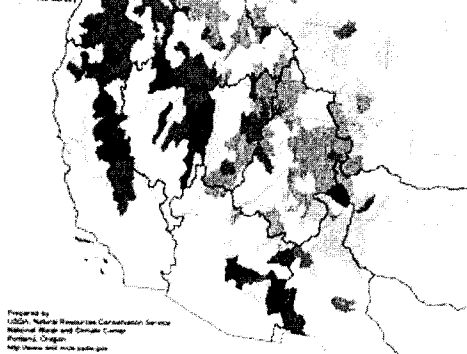
[print](#)

Truckee Meadows 'winter drought'

by [Jill Lufrano](#)

01.08.12 - 12:00 am

Mountain Snowpack as of January 1, 2012



Prepared by
USGS, National Resources Conservation Service
National Water and Climate Center
Portland, Oregon
http://www.nrcw.usgs.gov

SPARKS — With no precipitation in the Truckee Meadows in December, local water experts and homeowners are in a quandary. The grass, trees and shrubs have started to turn, prompting several plant specialists — and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) — to remind residents to consider watering their greenery.

Should the water be turned back on?

Many in the community are doing just that.

With water levels near record lows, TMWA officials said they were responding to the increase in water

usage by reminding homeowners of the dangers posed by freezing overnight temperatures.

“We’ve seen plant experts encouraging people to water, since Mother Nature isn’t,” said TMWA’s Lora Rose Richards, the authority’s conservation administrator. “As a water company, we typically get involved. Since overnight temperatures are freezing and if people are turning irrigation systems on, we want to remind them to shut them off and drain them to avoid the problems that come with overnight (freezing temperatures).”

A press release last week addressed the issue of watering and caring for irrigation systems within TMWA’s district.

“(TMWA) reminds residents that trees, shrubs, lawns and other plants need supplemental water to stay healthy during extended winter dry spells like the one we are in now,” the Jan. 5 release stated.

TMWA officials also suggested that customers water in the late morning and soak trees for two hours at a time with a soaker hose before disconnecting irrigation systems the same day and draining them completely to prevent leaks and broken pipes.

Homeowners are in a bit of a bind right now as they watch their lawns and trees suffer through the driest winter in possibly 23 years.

However, state water experts said this year's lack of precipitation might not affect the overall water supply, as reservoirs are still filled from last winter's better-than-average snowfall.

Many area horticulturists do agree that it is time for residents to begin watering again, at least to keep trees and perennials from dying.

Heidi Kratsch, area horticulture specialist with the University of Nevada, Reno's cooperative extension, said trees and grasses will fail if not watered now, but it may take a year for that to happen.

"They will slowly decline," Kratsch said. "This winter is particularly bad. We've had nothing significant since July."

Kratsch suggested deep watering of trees, shrubs and grasses. Moreover, grasses can go six to eight weeks without water, she said, when conditions are not freezing.

"People are telling me their grass is still trying to get green," Kratsch said.

To avoid killing the roots and the crown, Kratsch suggested watering once a month or every three weeks. For trees, she said, water slowly about once a month to reach deep into the ground, about two feet to the roots.

"It takes gallons of water on a single tree to keep it alive during winters like this," Kratsch said. "This is a drought condition."

When the area gets to a point where it is consistently below freezing temperatures during the day, or the ground is covered in snow, people need to keep watering their plants, she added.

"We're not even getting that," Kratsch said. "That's where the danger is."

Dan Greenlee, hydrologist and Nevada snow survey program manager with the U.S.D.A., said this year's conditions remind him of 1987.

"While it is still early in the winter, the current snow numbers are at and just barely above record minimums for our automated SNOTEL sites, many of which have been around for 30 years," Greenlee reported earlier this month. "Low- to mid-elevation snow is completely gone and the higher sites have lost some of the meager snowpack that was up there just a couple of weeks ago."

Maps indicate the Truckee Meadows contain only 25 percent of the snowpack it regularly sees this winter.

However, Greenlee reported, this is an early look at the season and anything can happen. Greenlee said all it would take would be a couple of typical Sierra-type storms to completely turn the picture around.

State Water Engineer Jason King said the Reno-Sparks area is still sitting well with water supplies, as last year's snowfall filled reservoirs.

"We're not doing well," King said. "The good thing is, our reservoirs are full with last year's water. We have a long way to go. I'm optimistic."

TMWA's advice extends to protecting homes from pipe breakage. To learn more about this issue, visit www.tmwa.com/winterize.

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Watering 101: This winter, trees, shrubs desperately need a drink

Arborists, landscapers and other plant experts are concerned that, without additional water applied now, trees, shrubs, lawns and other outdoor plants will suffer this spring and summer when the growing season begins.

"It's very scary," said Dale Carlon, a local certified arborist. "We're looking at the possibility of losing a large part of our urban forest this year, and that will have ramifications for generations.

"Not only your trees need to drink," he said, "but your entire landscape."

It's time to start watering outdoor plants and lawns, the arborists said. Get water to any plant in your yard that you don't want to risk losing this summer. Watering by hose or by sprinkler should become a regular chore for residents until significant precipitation falls.

"We're in an extraordinary situation now," Carlon said. "Our plants are having a horrible time."

Without water, "with trees such as giant sequoias, we'll start seeing winter burn," Carlon said. "With long dry spells, trees

heat up during the day, then there's wind .. and an extended period of dry cold air sucks the life out. Watering the foliage is also helpful."

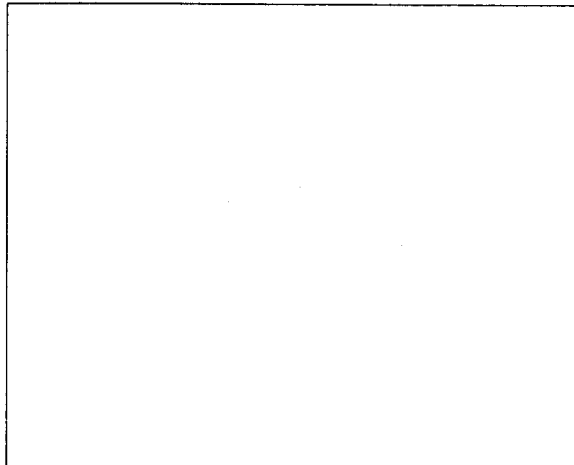
While all plants and trees are susceptible to damage from this winter's lack of water, evergreens are especially at risk because they don't go to sleep during the winter like deciduous trees, Carlon said.

"If anybody needs water now, evergreens need it more than anybody," he said.

If you haven't started supplementing the watering needs of your trees and plants outdoors, here are some suggestions:

» You can water with a hose, sprinkler or automatic sprinkler system, but take some precautions, said Steve Churchillo, city of Reno urban forester. Water late in the morning so you can then drain hoses and disconnect them from the outdoor faucet before nighttime temperatures reach freezing. If you turn on your automatic sprinklers, make sure you turn them off

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again in time for the pipes to drain so they don't freeze at night. Churchillo said he uses a garden hose for his outside watering in winter.

» A rule of thumb for trees, Churchillo said, is that root zones can go down about 12 inches, so try to water to that depth a couple of weeks during dry periods, or at least every month. He suggested a product called a root feeder, which is a feeding needle that attaches to a hose and can be pushed into the ground to water trees deeply.

The holes left behind by a root feeder also can help collect and distribute water when rain or snow finally fall, Carlon said. Let water run through it into each hole for 30 seconds to one minute, he said.

» Suggested watering is 10 gallons for every inch of diameter of the tree trunk, Churchillo said. A new small tree with a 2-inch diameter trunk should get a 20-gallon drink each time. Also apply mulch, such as organic wood chips, about 4 inches deep around trees and plants, but leave about 6 inches of space between the base of a tree's trunk and the mulch to prevent trunk rot, he said.

» When watering trees, don't water right at the base of the trunk, he said. Start about a third of the way out from the trunk to the tree's drip zone -- the farthest outer edge of tree's branch canopy. Soak that whole area well out to the drip zone.

If you run a hose, set it to a slow drip and

leave it, Carlon said. Or consider using a root feeder; a soaker hose can run all day to seep along the drip zones of trees. After you use it, disconnect it from the faucet so it won't cause frozen pipes because of cold nighttime temperatures.

The maximum to water any spot is about 10 minutes at a time, Carlon said. Run the water again in that spot after the water has sufficiently soaked in.

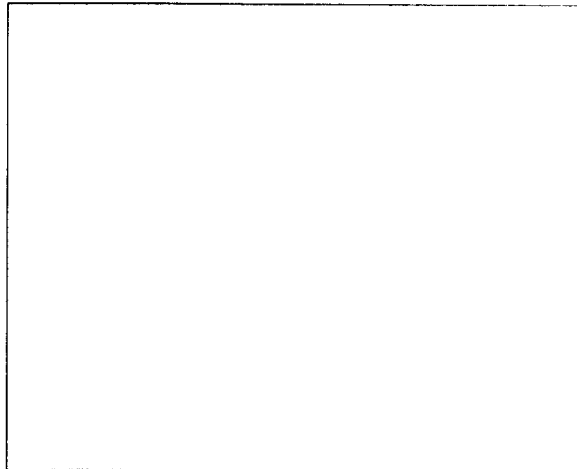
If no rain or snow falls, be prepared to keep up a watering regimen, particularly with evergreens. And remember that deciduous trees can send out buds during winter warming trends.

"They will use all the stored energy in winter, and it will deplete a tree's reserve," Churchillo said.

Most trees will recover from an early budding and put out leaves later in spring, he said.

"So, it's more important this year to make

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sure that trees at least have moisture in the root system," Churchillo said. "Once they become drought stressed, they become predisposed to problems such as insects and disease."

TREE 411

If you have a tree condition of concern, use the Ask An Arborist forum at www.communityforestry.org for assistance. [The Community Forestry Coalition's website](#) provides information on tree care.

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Tribe responds to City's action on water rights purchases

FERNLEY--The Chairman of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT) has responded to Fernley City Council's action at its Dec. 7 meeting to direct staff to send a letter to the Bureau of Reclamation opposing the use of Desert Terminal Lakes funds to purchase water rights in the Truckee Division and to monitor future legislation authorizing such purchases.

A letter from the Tribe was issued to media outlets and was prepared by the Tribe's water team, and various local and federal partners.

In that letter, the PLPT contends that such purchases from willing sellers are perfectly legal.

The Fernley City Council, at its meeting today (Wednesday, Jan. 4) at 5 p.m., will discuss, and possibly take action regarding the letter to the BOR concerning the tribe using Desert Terminal Lakes funds.

At the Council's Dec. 7 meeting, Special Attorney Paul Taggart told the council that he had reviewed the Desert Terminal Lakes legislation and determined those funds are not supposed to be used for water right purchases.

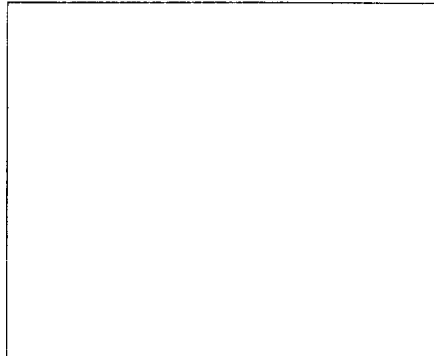
Additionally, City Engineer Shari Whalen reported the water right purchases out of the Truckee Division will diminish the city's water supply, which could hinder growth.

Whalen wrote in her Dec. 7 staff report, "The city's belief is that a letter should be sent to the Bureau of Reclamation asserting that such purchases are unlawful in order to prevent the tribe from using the Desert Terminal Lakes Fund to remove water rights from the Truckee Division."

Whalen then indicated that the BOR may correct the problem within the agency, or may alter the legislation to allow water rights purchases.

In a letter to Fernley Mayor LeRoy Goodman, PLPT Chairman Wayne Burke wrote, "After years of good-faith negotiations between Fernley and the Tribe to ensure the long-term viability of Fernley while restoring water to Pyramid Lake, we are deeply disappointed that the Fernley City Council has reversed course and adopted a provocative, ill-informed

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resolution maligning the integrity of the Pyramid Lake Tribe and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Federal agency that has been working to further our mutual interests as neighbors."

Burke further stated, "We can only conclude that the Fernley City Council must have been misinformed by its staff as to the real facts: For over 15 years, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe has been acquiring Truckee River water rights from willing sellers at market value to help improve water quality in the Truckee River and Pyramid Lake. These acquisitions were the direct result of the settlement of litigation between the Tribe, the State, Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, and a number of Federal agencies known as the Water Quality Settlement Agreement (WQSA)."

The letter continued, "All of the parties to the WQSA, including the Tribe, have acquired less than 150 acres of these water rights in the Fernley area.

"Frankly, we are shocked that the City Council is now opposing this successful program without even bothering to consult the Tribe before taking its offensive and reckless action.

"This reckless action is particularly ill-advised when the City of Fernley is a direct beneficiary of the improved water quality resulting from the WQSA and the purchases to implement it: without the WQSA, Fernley's surface water rights in dry years would be served largely by treated sewage water in the River from the Truckee Meadows sewer treatment plant. Would the

citizens of Fernley enjoy drinking that water?"

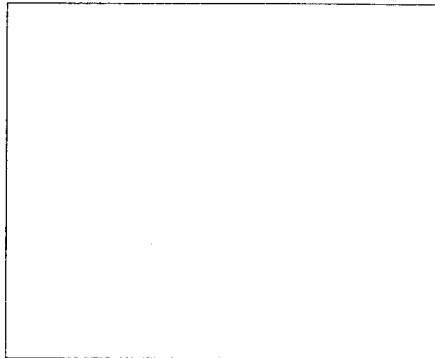
Burke then called on the City Council to reconsider its past actions and to "restore the integrity and respect between the Tribe and Fernley, the City Council should rescind its resolution of December 7, 2011, and publicly acknowledge that their accusations were false. With these actions, we may once again work together in good faith to resolve our complex water issues as responsible neighbors and friends."

The tribe received Desert Terminal Lakes funds in the amount of \$17.2 million to purchase water rights for Pyramid Lake. The funds are administered through the BOR to provide water for at-risk desert lakes.

The Desert Terminal Lakes fund of \$17.2 million is also being used for a water lease program between the city and the tribe, which was executed in June 16, 2010.

For the lease program, the city could

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Proper winter watering needed during dry spells



Published: 1/05 6:13 pm

Updated: 1/05 6:17 pm

RENO, Nev. (KRNV & MyNews4.com) - Truckee Meadows Water Authority reminds residents that trees, shrubs, lawns and other plants need supplemental water to stay healthy during extended winter dry spells like the one we are in now.

TMWA's Conservation Department offers these tips to help your yard get through a dry winter, while still protecting your home:

- Water in the late morning, when the water has plenty of time to reach the root zones without freezing.
- For trees and shrubs, a soaker hose is a great way to gradually water the roots. It slowly seeps water out, so you can leave it on for an hour or two at a time.
- For smaller plants or small turf areas, a hose with a nozzle is

recommended.

•For larger turf areas, you may want to turn on your irrigation system. Leave the sprinklers on during the day for only 10 minutes at a time to prevent runoff.

Whatever the tool, be sure your hose or irrigation system is disconnected and properly drained the same day to prevent leaks and broken pipes due to freezing overnight temperatures.

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Southern Nevada water rates may go up

BY HENRY BREAN
LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

Posted: Jan. 5, 2012 | 1:59 a.m.
Updated: Jan. 5, 2012 | 7:47 a.m.

If your New Year's resolution was to pay more for water -- and whose wasn't? -- you may be in luck.

The Southern Nevada Water Authority is considering a rate hike to help cover pricey construction projects that were once paid for with the spoils of growth.

Five different options for raising rates will be presented to water authority board members at their Jan. 19 meeting. If approved, the proposed increases would show up on local water bills starting in May and remain in effect for the next three years.

The options range from a new fixed fee of \$5 a month for most single-family homes to a consumption-based rate hike that would add nearly \$10 a month to the average residential bill but could be trimmed by cutting water use.

Authority spokesman Scott Huntley acknowledged that the proposed rate hike comes at a bad time for residents, but he said the projects it will pay for are crucial for keeping local taps flowing.

"The valley's not going to exist without a water supply," Huntley said.

The bulk of the money is needed to pay down debt associated with the "third straw," a roughly \$700 million intake pipe under construction at Lake Mead.

Roughly 90 percent of the valley's drinking water supply comes from the Colorado River by way of the lake.

The new intake will allow water to be pulled from the reservoir even if it shrinks to the level of the two existing straws. But the massive tunneling project is more than a year behind schedule, and most of the contingency funds built into its budget have been spent.

The proposed rate increase also will fund improvements to the valley's water treatment and transmission infrastructure, including work already completed but not yet paid off.

The additional revenue is not being sought for the authority's controversial, multibillion-dollar plan to tap groundwater across rural eastern Nevada and pipe it to Las Vegas.

Huntley said the authority has put off a rate hike as long as it could by trimming 226 employees and more than \$56 million in operational costs, restructuring existing debt and deferring more than \$395 million in new construction, most of it growth-related.

More than 60 percent of the authority's annual budget goes to construction and debt-service payments.

The authority hopes to raise almost \$260 million in additional revenue over the next three years to halt the depletion of cash reserves it uses to maintain a favorable bond rating.

The region's wholesale water supplier has been siphoning off its reserve fund since it topped out at \$620 million in April 2007, mostly thanks to revenue from new homes and businesses connecting to the water system.

The flow of connection charge revenue all but dried up when the economy tanked and the housing market collapsed.

In 2007, the authority collected more than \$121 million in connection charges. By 2010, that figure fell to about \$3 million.

To protect its bond rating, the authority needs to maintain \$280 million in cash reserves, enough to cover one year's worth of principal and interest payments on its existing debt, chief financial officer William Fox said.

Here are the five options up for consideration later this month:

- Option 1 would increase the monthly commodity charge from 30 cents to \$1.06 per 1,000 gallons of water used. That would mean an average monthly increase of \$9.88 for the typical single-family home with a ¾-inch meter. A small retail store would see an average increase of \$34.20, while a large resort would see its monthly bill jump by more than \$31,800.
- Option 2a would create a new infrastructure surcharge based on meter size. That would mean \$5 more a month for the average home, \$36 more a month for a small retail store and \$2,200 a month for a large resort.
- Option 2b is the same as 2a but would phase in the monthly fee for most single-family homes, starting at \$4 the first year, \$5 the second year and \$6 the third year.
- Option 3a blends a commodity charge increase with the flat infrastructure surcharge, resulting an average monthly increase of \$5.65 for most homes, \$31.04 for small stores and \$3,855 for large resorts in the first year.
- Option 3b is the same as 3a but would phase in the infrastructure surcharge for most single-family homes the same way it would be done under Option 2a.

The consulting firm Hobbs, Ong & Associates developed the five options with the

authority's finance department and its member utilities, which include the Las Vegas Valley Water District and the cities of North Las Vegas, Henderson and Boulder City.

The firm's managing partner, Guy Hobbs, said the options were culled from a list of 50 to 70 different variations.

Huntley said the authority's management team won't be recommending one rate hike over the others.

It's unclear when -- or if -- the board might vote on the proposals, but Hobbs warned that some sort of action must be taken soon.

"If you didn't do any of this ... by the end of the third year, you would be out of cash," he said.

Contact reporter Henry Brean at hbrean@reviewjournal.com or 702-383-0350.

Find this article at:

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/water-rates-may-go-up-136722823.html>

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

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Be on lookout for water main breaks

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority wants community members to be on the lookout for leaks and main breaks this season.

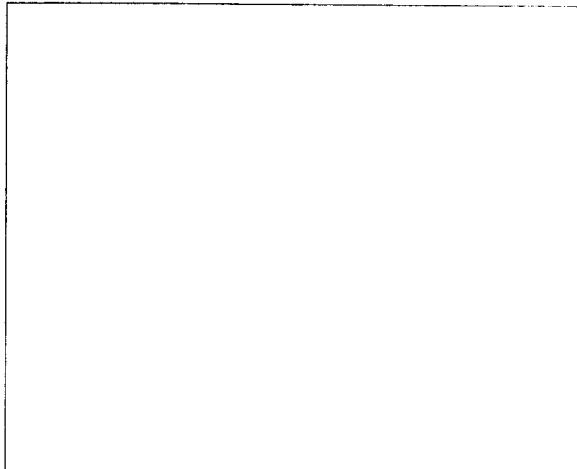
Call the TMWA's 24-hour emergency line at 775-834-8090 to report water-related emergencies such as water running down a street.

"Our crews are available 24 hours a day to fix leaks in our distribution system, and the sooner we know about a leak the less water waste and damage occur," said Pat Nielson, TMWA manager of distribution maintenance and generation. "Just recently, an observant citizen noticed water leaking on Lewis Street in Reno. Our crews were dispatched quickly and fixed the main break in a few short hours, while keeping water service on to all nearby residents and businesses."

TMWA also reminds residents not to drive through standing water from a main leak or break.

To learn more about winterization precautions, visit TMWA's website at www.tmwa.com/winterize.

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TWMA Receives Over 300 Weather Related Calls in One Week

Posted: Dec 29, 2011 10:07 PM PST

Updated: Dec 30, 2011 2:31 PM PST

Adam Rasmussen
Channel 2 News

Even though those warm temperatures continue rolling through northern Nevada, water officials are still warning you about potential home dangers when colder weather does hit.

Our first big cold spell is officially in the books, so if you haven't done it already, now is the time to get your water pipes ready for the freezing temperatures.

"From last Friday until today, we've had over 320 weather related calls," says Andy Gebhardt with Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

That includes everything from flooding, leaks and repairs and calls about not having water at all.

Those aren't record numbers, but it certainly kept TMWA employees busy. Gebhardt says even though the first cold spell of the season is over, that doesn't mean you should stop taking precaution.

"If it starts getting into the teens again at night and staying cold, I would make sure that I have my house protected," he says.

So here are some tips on how you can do just that.

TMWA says to keep pipes from freezing, you must shut off and drain your irrigation system outside your home. And don't forget to disconnect and drain your hoses. You should also close any foundation or exterior vents, and insulate your water meter box. There's an insulating blanket inside the box on the top of the meter.



And inside your home, you should insulate pipes and faucets in unheated areas, and seal access doors and air vents.

TMWA also says it's important to know where your master shutoff valve is, and you can open kitchen and bathroom cabinets to keep pipes warmer.

And finally, keep your house at the same temperature day and night so your pipes don't have to adjust back and forth. For some homeowners though, it's a little too late.

"They think they're exposed, or they're ready for the winter time and their pipes are ok, but then they find out that they're not ok and they do freeze," says Jim Steelman with Home Depot.

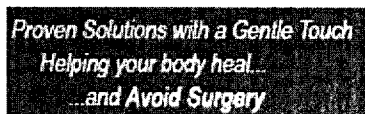
Home Depot continues to see people pour in, looking for ways to repair their broken pipes. They say the biggest mistake people make is not wrapping those pipes up or adding any heat tape.

To do that, you're looking at anywhere from \$50 to \$60, which is much cheaper than the alternative.

"It could be thousands of dollars by that time, if you had to replace the piping and fix the floors that were damaged by the moisture," says Steelman.

And don't forget with this dry spell we're seeing, you still need to water those trees and plants.

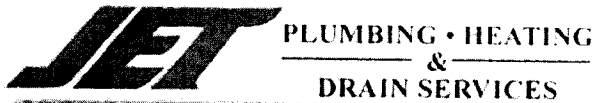
Do it every couple weeks and make sure the outside temperature is above 40 degrees, and of course, disconnect the hoses when you're done.



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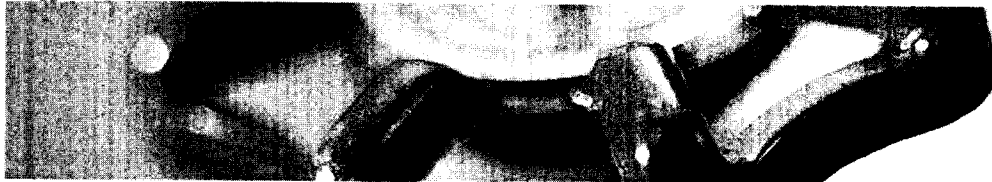
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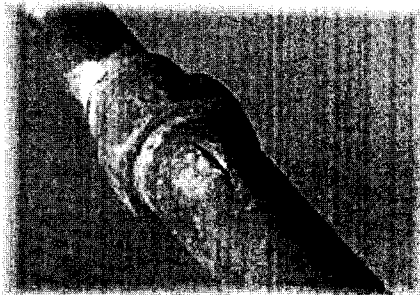


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Prepare For Freezing Pipes

Prepare For Freezing Pipes



We can't say enough about the need to make sure your home is ready for the freezing weather. This picture shows what happens when a pipe freezes and splits a copper pipe. But as you can imagine, the repair to the split can be minimal compared to the damage caused by the leak that will occur after the pipe thaws.

If you find that any of your home's pipes become frozen, we urge you to take the necessary precautions to make sure that there is ample time to shut off the water before and additional damage is done.

And please ask a professional like [Jet Plumbing](#) what they would do to thaw a pipe. Using an open flame, hair dryer or other source of heat may not be the correct solution to restore flow. Specialized equipment like an [electric pipe thawing machine](#) may be the way to go.

We would like to offer these tips from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority on what you can do to minimize the chances of having to deal with the cold weather in your home or business.

Winter in the Truckee Meadows means freezing temperatures, which can lead to the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes. However, [Truckee Meadows Water Authority \(TMWA\)](#) has provided some helpful instructions so customers can cross one more thing off their winter "To Do" list.

- Shut off and drain the irrigation system. It only takes a few minutes and can save hundreds of dollars in repair costs and water bills.
- Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses. Detaching the hose allows water to drain from the pipe. Otherwise, the ice formed from a single hard overnight freeze can burst either the pipe or its faucet.

- Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas. If pipelines reside in an unheated garage or crawl space under the house, wrap the water pipes before temperatures plummet. Hardware or building supply stores will have appropriate pipe wrapping materials available.
- Seal off access doors, air vents and cracks. Repair broken basement windows. Winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes. Be careful not to plug air vents that the furnace or water heater need for safe operation.
- Know the location of your master water shutoff valve. In many homes it's where the water line enters the house from the street. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house, this valve turns off all water and will prevent damage inside the home. So, find it now and paint it a bright color or hang a tag on it. Be sure everyone in the family knows where it is and what it does.
- Always have a plumber's telephone number handy just in case you discover a broken or frozen pipe.

In the event of a broken pipe, TMWA's emergency answering service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (775) 834-8090. While there is a cost of \$25 during business hours and \$50 after-hours, they can dispatch a serviceman to perform an emergency shut off of your water service. For more information about [winterizing your home](#), visit www.tmh2o.com.



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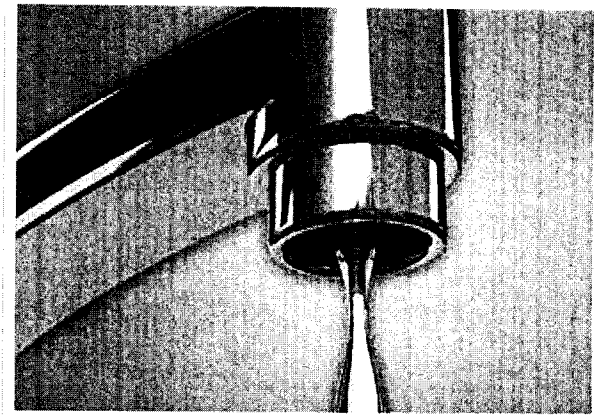
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Water Authority Helps You Spot Leaks in Your Water System



Published: 12/22/2011 1:15 pm

Updated: 12/22/2011 1:22 pm

RENO, Nev. (KRNV & MyNews4.com) - Winter in northern Nevada has its extremes, which can cause havoc for our community. Citizens can be on the lookout for leaks and main breaks both on their property and in Truckee Meadows Water Authority's distribution system. Freezing temperatures cause water to freeze and expand, which can cause pipes to break. With leaks and main breaks, sometimes it is hard to tell where the leak starts from, a customer's pipes or TMWA's distribution system.

However, TMWA staff is always available to investigate. If you see water running down the street, please call TMWA's 24-hour emergency line at 834-8090 to ensure it has been reported, potentially speeding up the process of getting it fixed.

"Our crews are available 24 hours a day to fix leaks in our distribution system and the sooner we know about a leak the less water waste and damage occur," said Pat Nielson, Manager of Distribution Maintenance and Generation. "Just recently an observant citizen noticed water leaking on Lewis Street in Reno. Our crews were dispatched quickly and fixed the main break in a few short hours, while keeping water service on to all nearby residents and businesses."

Main breaks can cause traffic delays, damage property and could cause water outages. Crews work diligently to minimize any delays or outages during repairs. TMWA also reminds residents not to drive through standing water from a main leak or break. You can protect your home from the effects of freezing temperatures on pipes by winterizing your home and irrigation system.

To learn more, visit TMWA's website, www.tmwa.com/winterize. And remember, if you observe water running down streets or sidewalks, please call TMWA's emergency line anytime at 834-8090.

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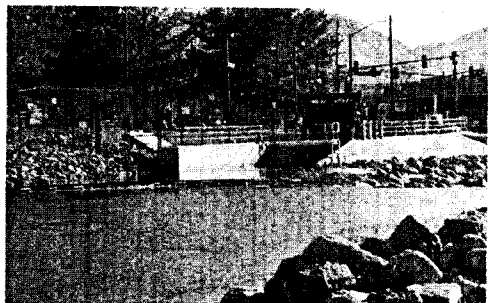
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Woman's body found in river near park

by Tribune Staff

12.20.11 - 03:04 pm



SPARKS — The body of a 69-year-old woman from Reno was found floating in the Truckee River early Monday near Fisherman's Park at 555 Galletti Way, according to Sparks police.

The unidentified woman was found by workers from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority in a fenced off area between the park and the river. The fenced off area belongs to TMWA, and there is a flume where diverted water from the river goes to a water treatment plant.

At the entrance to the flume, there is a large mechanical screen that picks debris out of the water and puts it on a concrete pad on the east side of the river. The woman's body was found on that concrete pad behind the screen.

Police believe the body traveled undetermined distance down the river, and got diverted into the flume where the screen plucked it out of the water and onto land.

The woman's name has not been released pending notification of next of kin. How or where she got into the river is unknown at this time. It appears that she was in the water less than 12 hours, police said.

Anyone who knows anything about this incident or saw anything is asked to call the Sparks Police Department at 353-2225.

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More than \$370,000 approved for emergency Caughlin Fire restoration

With dry weather continuing to provide a welcome window of time, officials Wednesday agreed to fund emergency restoration efforts across a vulnerable landscape burned by the Caughlin Fire.

Directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority agreed to fund a \$219,856 grant for emergency restoration projects. Reno and Washoe County will add to that with \$150,850 in labor costs.

"It is urgent," said Lynda Nelson, Washoe County's chief parks planner. "The rains will come eventually, and we want to have things in place."

The Caughlin Fire, which destroyed 30 southwest Reno homes Nov. 18 and damaged dozens of others, burned across nearly 2,000 acres of steep terrain with ferocious intensity, leaving areas subject to potentially serious erosion problems when winter rain and snow arrives.

The grant approved Wednesday comes from the water authority's Truckee River Fund -- established to finance projects protecting the river's water quality. Sediment-laden runoff from the fire area could flow into the river with the potential

to impact the utility's water treatment plants.

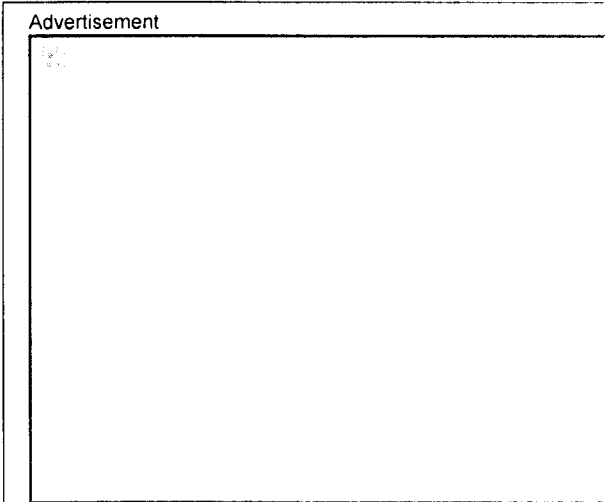
The Truckee River Fund also financed reseeded and other restoration efforts after the Hawken Fire, which burned 2,700 acres just west of the Caughlin Fire area in July 2007.

"Our support of that restoration effort did a lot for the health of the watershed," said Ron Penrose, TMWA project manager.

Needed restoration work was identified by a "burn area emergency response" team composed of experts from Reno and Washoe County, the Nevada Division of Forestry, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

Burned areas in need of work include parts of Manzanita Canyon, the Evans Creek drainage and Windy Hill.

Some work is already under way, including construction of debris basins and dams in



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Manzanita Canyon.

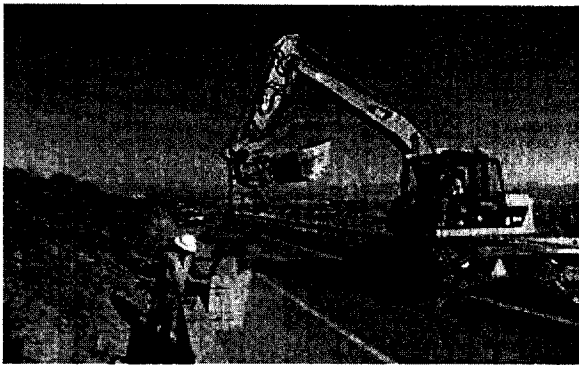
This week, Washoe County crews installed a wall of cement construction barriers borrowed from the Nevada Department of Transportation to prevent rocks from rolling onto Lakeside Drive in the Windy Hill area.

Restoration will likely gear up to "full bore" after the holidays, Nelson said.

The Caughlin Fire poses particular erosion hazards because it burned so late in the year. Most fires burn in the summer months, giving officials plenty of time to have erosion-control measures in place before winter precipitation.

"We've been very fortunate with the weather," said Kyle West, an engineer for the city of Reno involved in restoration.

No significant storms are forecast for the region over the next week, though there is a slight chance of showers late Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service.



Workers install barriers along Lakeside Drive in the Bartley Ranch-Windy Hill area to guard against falling rock on the steep land burned by the

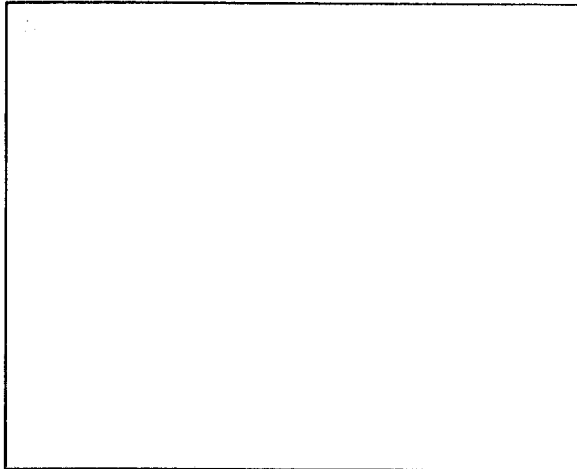
Caughlin Fire. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority on Wednesday will consider approval of a \$219,000 grant for erosion control and seeding of the area burned by the Caughlin Fire. / Andy Barron/RGJ

Caughlin Fire restoration

- » \$219,856 restoration grant from Truckee Meadows Water Authority to the Nevada Land Conservancy approved Wednesday.
- » Matching funds of \$150,850 to come from Reno and Washoe County.
- » Emergency effort to control erosion with debris basins, dams, channel clearing and straw barriers
- » Hydroseeding of native plants planned
- » Some aerial seeding might occur once snow falls
- » Grant money from Truckee River Fund to protect water quality.
- » 76 projects worth \$7.3 million financed by Truckee River Fund.

Source: Truckee Meadows Water Authority

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TMWA funds \$219K restoration project for Caughlin Fire burn areas

18. It destroyed 30 homes in southwest Reno and damaged dozens of others.

Directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority today approved a \$219,856 grant to fund emergency restoration projects on land burned by the Caughlin Fire.

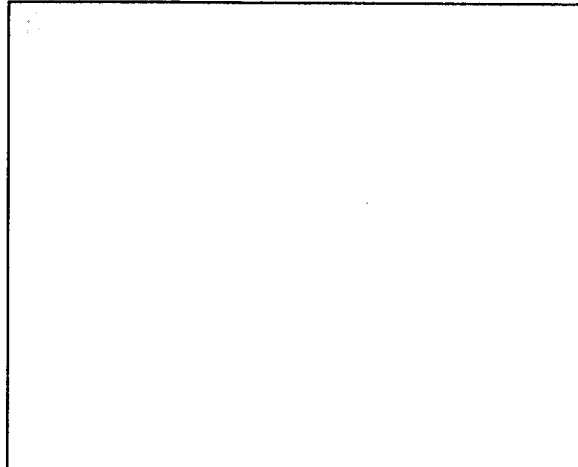
The money will be matched by \$150,850 in labor costs by Reno and Washoe County as officials try to prepare the fire area for coming rains. Work has already commenced in Manzanita Canyon with installation of dams designed to capture storm debris and installation of cement barriers along Lakeside Drive at Windy Hill to prevent rocks from rolling onto the road.

Other work will involve installation of straw barriers to block sediment flow, construction of debris basins, clearing of channels and re-seeding of the fire area.

The money comes from the Truckee River Fund, which raises money from water bills to fund projects to protect the river's water quality. Sediment-laden runoff from the fire area could significantly degrade water quality, officials said.

The Caughlin Fire, which officials said was likely started by power line arcing in high wind, burned nearly 2,000 acres on Nov.

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Dynamics

John Breternitz guest column: Why I supported the Bond Bank

DECEMBER, 19 2011
BY JOHN BRETERNITZ
SPECIAL TO THE BONANZA

RENO, Nev. — On December 13, 2011, the Washoe County Commission approved an ordinance creating a County Bond Bank in order to support a merger between the Department of Water Resources and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). This merger will benefit 350,000 residents and most businesses in the Truckee Meadows by creating an integrated water system that will allow more efficient decisions to be made concerning future water infrastructure investments and eliminate the duplication inherent in operating two water systems side by side.

The sole purpose of the Bond Bank is to restructure \$26.1 million in debt that the County currently owns and transfer that debt to TMWA. I supported this ordinance because of its benefits to a majority of the residents of Washoe County. The Bond Bank will save \$4 million of financing cost and place the primary responsibility for paying off the debt directly on the agency (TMWA) that will be receiving the debt service revenues. The County's full faith and credit CURRENTLY stands behind this debt and, that commitment will continue, although now TMWA will become first in line for repayment.

The key transaction necessary to facilitate the merger is the defeasance of \$26.1 million in existing County bonds and reissuance of debt in a similar amount in TMWA's name. This step is necessary both to allow for the transfer of the County's water utility assets, and because the County water-rate payers will be moving to TMWA.

The County Bond Bank is the most cost-effective mechanism to facilitate this transaction. Using the Bond Bank to refinance this debt in TMWA's name does not result in increasing the County's total exposure because the County is already responsible for the \$26.1 million of debt that was issued in December 2005 for DWR projects. Under the County ordinance, only TMWA can utilize the Bond Bank and only to refinance the existing County debt. The facility will include credit security features such as a requirement that TMWA maintain water rates sufficient to pay the debt.

The Commission approval included a request to staff to bring back an amendment to the Bond Bank ordinance to further reduce the total amount that could ever be financed using this tool and to possibly impose some form of supermajority requirement to approve certain changes to the ordinance. Previous amendments included in the recently approved ordinance narrowed the scope of the ordinance so that TMWA became the only entity that can utilize the Bond Bank.

Our economy has suffered its worst downturn since the Great Depression. This means lower tax revenues to fund critical government services. It also means that our citizens have reduced ability to pay for those services. By creating the bond bank, Washoe County will lower costs to thousands of water customers by reducing the interest rate on the debt TMWA is assuming from DWR. I joined a majority of the commissioners who felt that we had the obligation to do everything we could to keep the cost of water service to a minimum. I am comfortable that the controls are in place to ensure that Washoe County is protected from ever having to assume the responsibility of paying off this debt.

— John Breternitz is chair of the Washoe County Commission. He represents District 1, which includes Incline Village/Crystal Bay.

<http://www.tahoebonanza.com/apps.pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20111219/NEWS/111219938/1061&parentprofile=1050262&template=printart>



Limits to new Washoe County bond bank proposed immediately

Proposed limits to curtail borrowings through a newly established Washoe County bond bank were proposed immediately after the County Commission approved the enabling ordinance this week.

Commissioners were assured the bond bank is needed only for a \$26 million financing to ease the planned merger of the county's water utility division with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and not for a planned \$370 million refinancing by TMWA.

Under the bond bank concept, the county would use its AA credit rating to sell general obligation bonds at a low interest rate to retire \$26 million in debt owed by utility customers. Then, TMWA would pay the county to cover the debt service on the new bonds from revenues from 19,000 new county water customers.

The estimated \$4 million

in interest costs and other savings, Commissioner Robert Larkin said, is "real money" to the water customers who are paying the bill.

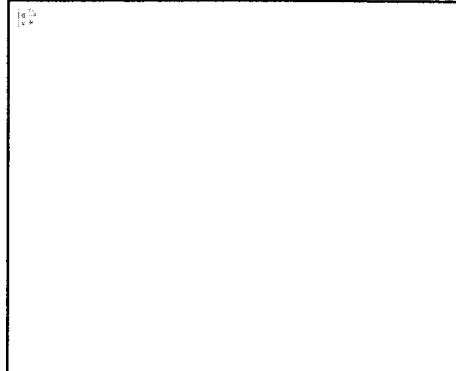
But after hearing from financial experts that creating the bond bank is a bad idea, the commission asked for amendments to lower the \$2 billion ceiling for issuing bonds and to require a supermajority for approval of future borrowings.

Jim Galloway, a former county commissioner who organized several experts to testify against the bill, said the amendments will make a bad ordinance a little better. But he said a simple majority can still change the ordinance and open up lending to others.

"It will never be a good ordinance because it is bad policy and sets a dangerous precedent," Galloway said. "It opens commissioners up to relentless backroom pressure from other would-be-borrowers."

Robert Barone, an economist and investment manager, said the risk is not worth the estimated savings to a customer of 2 cents a day. If the bonds defaulted, he said the county's credit rating could be reduced.

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But the biggest risk, he said, is that Reno could ask for the ordinance to be amended to refinance its \$188 million debt on its "infamous" railroad trench project or by local officials to finance \$525 million for the Truckee River flood control project.

Mark Pingle, an economics professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, said good government links responsibility and control, but the bond bank breaks that connection.

"We all know a 16-year-old who buys his own car takes better care of it," he said.

Tom Cargill, another UNR economics professor, said the bond bank will be a rich target for funding politically motivated projects. He compared the initial request for use of the bank to "bait-and-switch" tactics that helped create the housing collapse.

"It's poor public policy -- a Trojan's horse," Cargill said.

County finance director John Sherman, however, said the revenue stream from utility customers makes issuing the bonds a "rock-solid" investment, presenting very little risk.

Commissioners Kitty Jung and Bonnie Weber were the nay votes in the

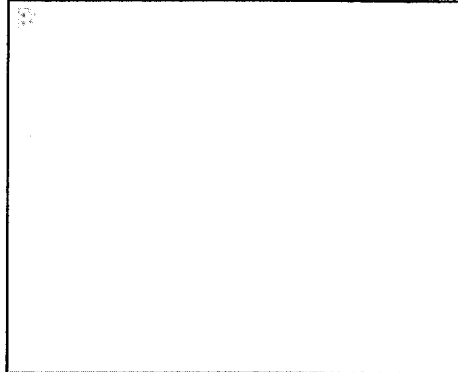
3-2 decision.


"It's too risky right now," an emotional Weber said.

Jung said she opposed the county being a

banker while it asked employees to cut their wages. She also said the Southern Nevada Water Authority uses a Clark County bond bank and is "up to its eyeballs" in debt.

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Proposed Water Provider Merger Discussed

Posted: Dec 13, 2011 6:40 PM PST
Updated: Dec 13, 2011 6:40 PM PST

Jennifer Burton
Channel 2 News



The county commission is studying a proposal that would eventually facilitate the merger of local water providers.

Washoe County wants to set up a "bond bank" to refinance debt.

The goal is to lower costs to customers. "We're working on merging the county's water business with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to gain operation efficiency with the larger entity," says finance director John Sherman.

The proposal would have TMWA take over that debt, and use the Washoe County credit rating to save on interest.

It's a complicated issue.

Not everyone agrees with this strategy and tonight the commission will hear all sides.

"There are some individuals who are worried that this funding mechanism could be used by other local governments-- in this case the City of Reno which is not the case. The county ordinance in front of the commission in fact state laws don't allow that to happen."

The commission is scheduled to hear public comment during its Tuesday night meeting at 1001 East Ninth Street in Reno.

If you want to find out more, the county experts will also explain the plan to commissioners.



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Washoe Co. Commission Votes to Set Up Bond Bank for Water Merger

Posted: Dec 14, 2011 12:01 AM PST

Updated: Dec 14, 2011 12:25 AM PST

Jennifer Burton
Channel 2 News



A plan is on the table that would consolidate the Washoe County Department of Water Resources and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. Tuesday night the County Commission held a meeting to discuss the plan and heard from a number of citizens who are concerned about the method to pay for such a merger. There are many aspects to this issue, but it boils down to whether the County should use its good credit rating to lower borrowing costs for the merger.

Most of the two dozen people who got up to speak during the public comment part of the meeting were against the County creating what's called a "bond bank" to finance the merger. County Commissioners got an earful from concerned citizens.

"No one here is against the water merger, just the way you're about to finance it," said one man.

"I'm going to ask you to defeat this or just not pass it. This is foolishness and I hope you take that into consideration," said another resident.

Only one person who spoke was in favor of the ordinance that would allow Washoe County to use its credit rating to lower borrowing costs for other entities; in this case the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

"The current commission needs to move forward with the only logical step to secure future access to our most precious natural resource: water," said one woman.

After the public comments ended, Washoe County Commissioners asked questions about details included in the plan, such as why the cap on the money in the fund was higher than the amount needed to secure the merger. The County Finance Director said the cap was set by state law, but could be lowered to fit the merger amount.

Washoe County Finance Director John Sherman says the ultimate goal of the merger and the plan to finance it, is to save taxpayers money.

"We're working on merging the county's water business with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to gain operating efficiency with the larger entity," said Sherman.

Setting up a "bond bank" is a first for Washoe County. A bond bank isn't really a bank, in the traditional sense. It's a mechanism to refinance Washoe County debt from years past.

"We issued debt to build treatment facilities and pumps and pipelines and water tanks," said Sherman. "We need to reduce the county debt that we issued for our business and have the TMWA take over that debt. This will allow us to do that."

Commissioners had questions about the amount of money needed to facilitate the merger, and whether the plan was necessary. Then they took a vote. The ordinance to set up a bond bank passed three to one. Commissioners do want to see some changes to the terms.

We talked to some who say the plan could put the County's credit rating at risk. Former County Commissioner Jim Galloway was one who spoke out against the plan.

"I'm disappointed. I think there was a rush to judgment to enact an ordinance that we know isn't strictly necessary for a water merger," he said.

The Commission will look at changing some of the wording of the ordinance. Channel Two will be covering the story and bring you more on those changes as they occur.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING/SECOND READING

Rules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 and Water Rate Adjustment
Notice is hereby given that a Public Hearing will be conducted on adoption of amendments to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority Rules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 and Water Rate Adjustments during the Truckee Meadows Water Authority Board meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday, January 18, 2012 at the Sparks Council Chambers, 745 Fourth St., Sparks, Nevada. The proposed amendments will be heard on a second reading and may be adopted at the meeting.

Proposed revisions to Rules 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 seek to clarify the language of the rules, to make content relevant to today's operating environment, and to implement applicable cost recovery mechanisms and other matters as set forth in the proposed amendments.

Despite overall reduction in operating costs of over \$7.3 million (18%) in the past 2 years, TMWA will experience escalating costs of operations, particularly electrical pumping costs, declining investment income due to declining cash balances and lower rates of return on maturing investments stemming from the recession, local downward trends in customer usage patterns, and minimal-to-no expected growth in new services in the near future. The rate adjustments are needed to reduce the difference between TMWA's operating and maintenance expenses and declining revenues. Proposed adjustment in rates is planned for implementation the first billing cycle in February 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 (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 834-8080, option 2.

Mark Foree
General Manager

No. 769385 Dec 15, 2011



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Mark Force
General Manager