



## TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 19, 2012


### Press Clippings


June 12, 2012 through September 12, 2012



Ann Matya (Desert Heights Elementary School)  
2010 Poster Art Contest – Third Place, Grades K-3

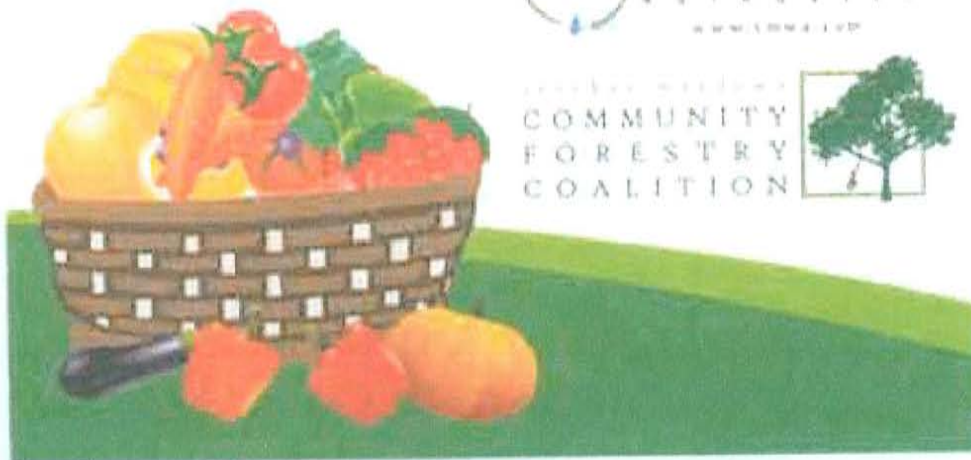
## EFFICIENT WATERING & YOUR EDIBLE GARDEN

 Drip irrigation is the most efficient way to water your edible garden and fruit trees.

 Ensure the roots absorb as much water as possible by watering when it's coolest, early in the morning.

 Use a deep root feeder to water your fruit trees. This will break up compacted soil, allowing water to reach the roots. Visit [www.communityforestry.org](http://www.communityforestry.org) for more fruit tree watering tips.

For more tips, visit TMWA's Water-Efficient Landscape Guide at [www.tmwalandscapguide.com](http://www.tmwalandscapguide.com)



# edible RENO-TAHOE

Celebrating the local food culture - season by season



Volume 10  
Number 1  
Spring 2014



SPECIAL GARDEN ISSUE

Edible Schoolyards • New Breweries • The Pursuit of Fruit

COVER

# Edible Schoolyards

During the last five years, more than 5,000 schools have built gardens beginning with vegetables and fruits growing in the same manner as. Educators have learned that they spend just as much money on food, education and other skills, but they also receive continuous

WRITTEN BY ANN LICHTMAN  
PHOTOS BY JEFF ROSS



**A**s public education funding dwindles and teachers struggle to cover core curriculum standards, is there room to grow? You bet. Perseverant and tireless advocates of school garden programs, which are quickly becoming integral components of K-12 life nationwide,

Emmersed Chef Alice Waters led the charge. In 1995 she commented that a Berkeley, Calif., elementary school that she visited each day "looked like no one cared about it." She teamed up with the school principal, and the Edible Schoolyard Project, which remains a template for schools nationwide, was born.

In 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama directed the national spotlight to the dangers of childhood obesity and the benefits of school and community gardens. Today, school gardens are taking seed across America. California alone has more than 8,000 school gardens, while public schools in Nevada are waiting no time shoring up appropriate resources, volunteer energy, and administrative buy-in to create their own precious patches of green.

Kerry Seymour, nutrition specialist for Educators of Nevada Cooperative Extension, illustrates there are about 34 public school garden sites in Washoe County, Lyon, Esmeralda, and Humboldt counties in Nevada. She spearheaded a school garden program six years ago, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The curriculum, which currently is under peer review, is based on core education standards. She also organizes a variety of parent and committee whose goal is to increase access to healthy foods.

"The focus is on experiential learning," Seymour explains. "Weekly exposure to teach about real vegetables, experiences in basic gardening, building lifelong gardening skills, immersion with the natural world, learning where food comes from, and respect for the environment."

School gardening is a great way to help children explore how food is grown and to learn, motivate them to eat more healthy organic veggies. And in the garden, important

life lessons can be taught such as cooperation, teamwork, and patience.

But who knew that the particulars of picking and planting could infiltrate school curriculum from culinary arts and science to English, math, and business?

The following pages chronicle just a few of the local public schools and support organizations that are making a difference in our children's lives "inch by inch, row by row."

## GARDEN VARIETY

Take a close look at Pine Middle School in Reno and you'll see evidence of big-time garden variety school spirit.

Colorful sunflowers and colorful, landscaped butterfly frames frame the garden with its carefully tended plants flourishing in the rows of raised beds. Science teacher and garden mastermind Mike Inman points to a dozen well-worn shovels that are lined up like old duty soldiers next to the pouring shed.

"You can tell they get used," he notes with a look of pride at his crew.

Indeed the fruits of the students' labors are everywhere. Inman is the kind of teacher who presents an idea, discusses the appropriate tools and skills necessary, and then turns the kids loose.

"We are just now finishing the infrastructure and then it's game on," Inman says of the three-year-old project. "The trick is to get the program integrated into the core standards and we are working on that — not only science but math and English, too. I'd like to see this kind of experiential curriculum in all Northern Nevada schools."

For now, the garden is tended by the kids during a half-hour daily enrichment period and an after-school year-round garden club, which features highly regarded leadership projects.

The produce — kale, chard, spinach, beans, squash, zucchini, carrots, onions, chives, tomatoes, pumpkins (more than 100 this year), watermelons, cucumbers, beets, turnips, rhubarb, and more — is sold at a weekly school farmers' market that runs from July



Scott Inman with his son, Matthew S., holding a frog from the garden.

through the first winter frost. Each year the club sells "apartment gardens," a collection of potted edible plants to community members.

Interestingly, in an area of Reno where graffiti is commonplace there is none to be found on the garden's structures.

"People just seem to have a reverence for growing things," Inman says.

The garden is sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the school parent teacher organization and Server Technology Inc. in Reno. A & H Club framework also encourages students to learn basic skills such as canning, preserving, plumbing, composting, and woodworking.

## SOWING THE SEEDS

Three years ago, Reno High School science teacher Scott Huber wasn't looking to grow an extensive garden program. But like all things gardening related, it began with a seed.

"It all started with a small greenhouse with attention to germinate native seeds and to participate in reseeding some fire-burned areas around Reno," Huber says. "From there it grew into a big local garden project."

Huber found that it wasn't feasible to have a garden on the school site so he got creative and found private landowners and the University of Nevada, Reno who were willing to help out. Now instead of one school garden there are three, roughly about 20,000 square feet total. The sites include two southwest Reno properties and a spot at the UNR Agricultural Experiment Station where the students use greenhouse space in cooperation with the Master Gardener program.

"All locations are donating the needed land, water, power, and equipment needed," Huber says. "One of the southwest Reno sites supports our small greenhouse and hoop house. These make a huge impact on our success."

Managing all three sites can be tricky as time is limited and crisis-torn transportation is necessary.

"I was able to develop a new field lab class so all students enrolled in AP Environmental Science also have another period with me for lab," he explains. "This gives us two class periods and plenty of time to travel to our field locations."

Huber keeps things relatively informal during these lab periods as evidenced by one such session in June. After learning the intricacies of potato planting from Huber at the southwest Reno site, a couple dozen teenagers got to work.

Veteran Reno High gardener Isabelle (Izzie) Holland, a senior, is quick to share her enthusiasm for the program.

"This class really stands out for me," Holland says. "You learn so much more when it's hands-on."

Like other school programs, Huber struggles during harvest times. To that end, kids

volunteer to tend the gardens two evenings a week. Come August, produce (from tomatoes to pumpkins) will be picked Thursday and sold every Friday at a school farmers' market. Huber and his students also hold a yearly plant sale in May during the Moms on the Run event held at Reno High School and at the Great Basin Community Food Co-op annual plant sale in May that helps generate much-needed funds. The program donates produce to local food banks and needy families at the school.

## SENSORY EXPERIENCE

Hog High School culinary arts teacher Wayne Turner doesn't have to look far to find local inspiration. He needs only to step outside his classroom to smell, feel, and taste his next lesson plan. It may be a savory panini muffin, a pasta dish replete in fresh tomatoes and garlic, or sublime elderberry syrup.

"I was hired to teach culinary arts not horticulture, but I think it's important for the students to see the whole cycle of how food is grown within this garden," Turner explains. "Each year that the kids are in the program, they seem to become a little more observant about what's going on out here. By the third year, I can ask a student to go out and bring back enough chard for 25 servings."

The wood garden doesn't seem quite appropriate in the case of Hog High School. Bordering a huge concrete slab that is used for basketball practice, marching band drills, and ROTC maneuvers, the entire project is about 3,000 square feet.

Launched in 2010, the garden is funded by Truckee Meadows Water Authority. Lora Reiss Robb, a resource planner, says TMWA's mission includes not only providing water to the area, but also educating and communicating about water use.

"The garden at Hog High serves as a water conservation demonstration garden and helps educate our customers on the opportunities and challenges of gardening," she explains.

Landscaper Tom Stille of River School Farm was recruited to develop and maintain a garden that was water savvy. Stille has done just that

and more. A whopping 23,000 square feet of water-needy grass were removed and replaced by a drip-irrigated vegetable garden and a whole section was devoted to native species and food forest areas featuring fruit trees.

"Each year the garden is going to take less and less maintenance and the students will be responsible," Stille says.

With TMWA funding, Stille will develop a maintenance plan that will allow the garden to be maintained by the school by next fall (2013). In partnership with Urban Roots Garden Classrooms, TMWA also is funding two school garden coordinators to assist the teachers, students, and parents with various activities and projects in the food-producing areas of the garden.

Meanwhile, the garden has been certified by the Nevada Department of Agriculture, which means the produce it grows can be sold to local restaurants and farmers' markets.

## FOSTERING AN AWAKENING

"How lucky are we to have a garden at our school because not a lot of schools do?" writes Rita Cannan Elementary School in Reno fifth-grader Adriana Caamal. "My favorite part about the garden is when we get to enjoy all the delicious fruits such as strawberries, apples, and (my favorite) watermelon. They are so sweet and juicy — they taste like heaven."

This is the kind of garden love that drives Sheri Boyden, a University of California, Berkeley-educated nutritionist and mother of three who was so caught up in the Alice Waters schoolyard garden movement that she vowed to continue the momentum in Reno.

In 2009 she launched With My Own Two Hands, a nonprofit organization with a mission to "foster an awakening to the pleasure of eating nutritiously and caring for the environment through the creation of school gardens." Today, WMOTH has launched gardens at two Reno public schools.

Boyden says she's observed that this nurturing garden mentality is especially effective with

children with special needs and behavioral issues such as those at Sarah Winnemucca Elementary School in Reno. Additionally, children at at-risk schools such as Rita Cannan also benefit from a schoolyard garden awakening.

"These are places where children may not have their own yard or even have dirt to play in," Boyden explains. "And now when these kids see a tomato they are more apt to try it because they've experienced the joy of eating one straight off the vine with juice running down their chin."

## A BROADER VIEW

The Healthy Communities Coalition of Nevada's Lyon and Storey counties has taken a broader view than most on the potential impact of schoolyard gardens. Thanks to this organization and a slew of volunteers, there are now school gardens and hoop houses in Springs Elementary, Yerington Elementary, South Valley, and all Dayton schools.

The group also has figured out a mentoring program that takes the heavy lifting away from time-strapped adults.

"Our school gardens have trained teen interns who, in turn, teach younger students," says Quest Lakes, Healthy Communities Coalition community task force coordinator. Lakes adds that the school gardens fit into the organization's mission to create a regional food system, or healthy food hub.

## GARDEN LIFE SUPPORT

Dedicated to "changing the way kids eat and learn," leaders of Urban Roots Garden Classrooms in Reno act as ringleaders, mentors, and see-the-big-picture collaborators for a fortunate clutch of Northern Nevada public and private schools.

"Our goal is to help make these gardens sustainable," says Executive Director Jeff Bryant. "The key to success is taking the burden off the teachers and providing support in the administration of the program."

The nonprofit foundation launched the Garden Habitat Program this year as a way to assist area school educators intent on

establishing and ultimately maintaining garden programs. Once accepted, these school leaders are guided by the collective expertise of Urban Roots; school sites are surveyed and plans commence. Two parent school garden coordinators partner with Urban Roots education specialists who are adept at integrating dirt-under-your-nails experiences into core curriculum.

Before ringing the garden school bell, the group's organizers did some important prep work: setting up a farm and class space on West Fourth Street in Reno. This is where teachers and parent volunteers get schooling on everything from vegetable planting to ideas for curriculum and beyond.

This year, Washoe County School District public school participants include Hug High, Mt. Rose Elementary School, Reed High School, Wooster High School, Pleasant Valley Elementary School, and Sierra Vista Elementary School.

According to Bryant, low-income school Sierra Vista established a garden a few years back. An important partner fell by the wayside and the school found itself without support. This is just the kind of scenario that Urban Roots had in mind when it launched its new program, Bryant says.

"(It's an) already established garden, but lacking the community needed to make it thrive," he explains. "We hope to assist Sierra Vista in building the support system it needs, as well as integrating garden education into the classroom at multiple levels."

## SUSTAINING ENTHUSIASM

Schoolyard garden programs are popping up throughout our region. Organizers say the challenges are many, from finding funding to securing garden maintenance after the flame of the great idea dies down. Aligning the programs with core curriculum standards is key to the success of these programs, as is fundraising to replenish supplies.

Weather also is a challenge in Lake Tahoe and Truckee, where public schools struggle with an abbreviated growing season. One South Lake Tahoe educator lamented the issue, but said that school district leaders are concentrating on native species landscaping at this point.

In North Tahoe, the struggles are similar and one grassroots organization is busy engineering four-season green grow domes (see story on page 27) designed to withstand high Sierra weather and also meet stringent public school facility standards.

Organizer Susie Sutphin admits there will be lots of regulatory hoops to jump through but it will be "totally worth it when we get there."

In the end, it seems that wherever the school site may be, the best fertilizer is the living and breathing variety. And, fortunately in our region, positive, creative human energy is abundant.

"We'd like to have a garden in every public school within the Washoe County School District," Sheri Boyden says, "and to achieve this we must create sustained enthusiasm for this movement." 🍌

*Full disclosure: Lake Tahoe-based writer Ann Lindemann received some pretty tasty perks while researching this story. Among them: two sublime golden raspberries plucked from a Hug High School bush and a clutch of crisp carrots pulled straight out of the lovely Pine Mistle School garden soil.*

## RESOURCES

**UNCE Fact Sheet**

**Growing A School Garden**

[www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/hg\(2010/sp10\)4.pdf](http://www.unce.unr.edu/publications/files/hg(2010/sp10)4.pdf)

**Healthy Communities:** [Healthyscomm.org](http://Healthyscomm.org)

**With My Own Two Hands:** 775-232-3615

**Urban Roots Garden Habitat Program:** [Urgc.org/home/for-schools](http://Urgc.org/home/for-schools)

**River School Farm:** [Riverschoolfarm.org](http://Riverschoolfarm.org)

# Reno-Sparks water supply in good shape

By Jeff DeLong  
jdelong@rgj.com

This year's drought has ranchers struggling with dried-out pastures, wildfires ripping through the landscape and wild animals searching for something to eat and drink, but the folks supplying drinking water to the Reno-Sparks area say there's plenty of water — at least for now.

The bountiful winter of 2010-11, which layered the Sierra in deep snow, also filled Lake Tahoe and the other reservoirs along the Truckee River system with water. It provided plenty of storage to maintain flows in the Truckee River, which normally provides 90 percent of the utility's water supplies.

The remarkably dry winter that followed didn't help a bit, but a watery cushion left from the year before remains.

"We're not really concerned at this point. We're basically operating at normal," said Bill Hauck, water supply coordinator for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which serves 93,000 homes and businesses across the greater Reno-Sparks area.

"It takes two, three, sometimes four (dry) years to get to the point we have to operate differently to meet customer demand," Hauck said.

In fact, Hauck said, the water authority — jointly operated by Reno, Sparks and Washoe County — has plans in place and adequate drought reserves to weather a drought nine years in duration. That would be equal to the region's longest drought on record from 1987 to 1994, with an extra year thrown in.

The last time the utility came close to tapping drought re-

## DROUGHT RESERVES

During times of drought, upstream reservoir storage and increased reliance on groundwater wells offer a buffer against water shortages.

» 4,750 acre-feet of backup supplies are stored at Donner Lake.

» 17,500 acre-feet are stored at Independence Lake.

» 14,000 acre-feet are stored under federal contract at Boca and Stampede reservoirs.

» 31 groundwater wells can provide 63 million gallons per day.

*Source: Truckee Meadows Water Authority*

serves was during the fall of a dry 2004.

"We were just on the verge of having to do something," Hauck said.

After the "near-record" water year in 2010-11, Lake Tahoe and Boca Reservoir remained at near 60 percent of capacity in late August, despite the dearth of precipitation over the most recent winter. That fact underscores the importance of reservoirs for storage, Hauck said.

If next winter is even an average one for precipitation, next summer's water supply should be much like the current year, Hauck said. If it's as dry or drier, the summer of 2013 could be one in which changes in water system operations, including tapping of drought reserves, become necessary.

The contrast between the past two years was striking, Hauck said.

"It blows me away," Hauck said. "It's just amazing to think how quickly things can dry up, how you can go from one extreme to the other."

## No quagga mussels, but concerns real to Lake Tahoe watershed

Sep 04

rgj.com

Aquatic invasive species pose a major threat to the Lake Tahoe watershed. from Meiss Meadows and Lake Tahoe itself, all the way down the Truckee River to Pyramid Lake.

While the column "Disaster growing at Tahoe," written by Gary Norris and Jerry Purdy [Voices, Aug. 14], focused on important issues to the region, there were several inaccuracies that rang false alarms from the Reno-Tahoe area to Las Vegas and Sacramento, but are corrected below.

With three years of ongoing monitoring in Lake Tahoe and Truckee River watershed, there are no indications that quagga mussels have established themselves in these water bodies. In 2011, a monitoring sample from Lahontan and Rye Patch reservoirs, both located in Northern Nevada, resulted in a positive detection for quagga mussels, which certainly increases the risk of infection for nearby water bodies, but we are not without protection.

Lake Tahoe boasts one of the country's most thorough watercraft inspection programs, implemented by the TRPA and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, with major funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Details are at

[TahoeBoatInspections.com](http://TahoeBoatInspections.com).

The Tahoe RCD also operates a voluntary inspection program for Donner Lake and Prosser, Boca and Stampede reservoirs in the Truckee area, with funding from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority via the Truckee River Fund. Lake Tahoe inspectors have stopped several boats from launching with quagga mussels in 2012, but all were thoroughly decontaminated prior to launching.

Dreissenid mussels, such as quagga and zebra mussels, pose a major threat to Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River watershed. Fine sediments and nutrients entering Tahoe have decreased the lake's clarity, while invasive species, such as Asian clams and Eurasian watermillfoil, have altered Lake Tahoe's ecosystem and contributed to algae blooms in marinas and some shallow areas of the lake.

In the Tahoe Keys Marina, where invasive plant populations are fully established, mowing is essential to allow for temporary passage of watercraft, but this method also contributes to its spread by allowing plant fragments to float away and establish new populations. Tahoe RCD, TRPA and other agencies are working to control these species in Lake Tahoe with bottom barriers and diver-assisted hand-pulling and have made headway in some areas, such as Emerald Bay and Lakeside Marina.

From the federal government and TMWA to the TRPA, Tahoe RCD and Lahontan Water Board and water suppliers, all sides need to work together to ensure that Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River watershed are protected for future generations.

Pete Brumis is public outreach specialist with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

## TMWA offers water treatment plant and hydroelectric power plant tours throughout September

August 28, 2012

By [ThisIsReno](#)

[Share](#)

### TMWA NEWS RELEASE

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) invites the public to tour two of its facilities this September. Residents of the Truckee Meadows can learn about what it takes to get water from the river to the tap by touring TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant, where expert staff will explain the water treatment and distribution processes, as well as discuss current challenges and answer your questions. Tour dates and times are: Thursday, Sept. 27 at 5:30 p.m. or Friday, Sept. 28 at 9 a.m. or 1 p.m. Tours last approximately two hours.

Every Wednesday in September, residents can also tour our Verdi Hydroelectric Power Plant, which has been producing clean, renewable energy for 100 years. The plant takes advantage of the flow of the Truckee River to generate more than 2.3 megawatts of power. Tours will take place at 1 p.m. on Sept. 5, 12, 19 and 26. Tours last approximately one hour.

Tour participants must be at least 18 years of age. Please email [presentations@tmwa.com](mailto:presentations@tmwa.com) or call 834-8290 to reserve your spot. Each tour is limited to 20 people.

Please note: these are lengthy walking tours and will involve walking on uneven surfaces.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 330,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

[print](#)

## Meeting to limit Western spread of invasive mussels

by [Tribune Staff](#)

08.25.12 - 05:31 pm

CARSON CITY — Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto announced David Newton, Senior Deputy Attorney General, attended a meeting with legal and law enforcement officials and environmental scientists from the 15 Western states, in Phoenix Wednesday through Thursday. The purpose of the meeting was to explore legal and regulatory ways of limiting an invasion of Quagga and Zebra mussels (non-native shellfish from Eurasia).

These mussels clog water systems, impact the environment and can cost billions of dollars in damage and control wherever they spread. The meeting forged a uniform approach to education, inspection and regulations to encourage recreational boat inspections in the West to prevent the spread of invasive zebra or Quagga mussels.

Reports from U.S. Geological Survey state that in January 2007, populations of Quagga mussels were discovered in Lake Mead and in May 2011 evidence of Quagga mussels was found in Lahontan and Rye Patch reservoirs. According to the Tahoe Resource Conservation District there have been no Quagga mussels found in Lake Tahoe. However, they have stopped several boats with Quagga mussels prior to launching in 2012. These boats have been fully decontaminated prior to launching and pose very little threat to Lake Tahoe's waters.

Within the last few years, isolated infestations of both species, which can survive for days to weeks out of water – most likely transported on recreational boats and trailers – have begun to show up in Western recreational and irrigation waters in California and Arizona.

The Phoenix meeting looked at the impacts of invasive mussels on local economies and infrastructure, the challenges to effective control, and a 100-plus-year-old federal law – the Lacey Act – which could give states a tool for approaching the problem.

Sessions included discussion of state authority to stop boats for inspection, quarantine and decontamination, what programs and laws have been successful in Western states, public attitudes about invasive species education and enforcement and how cash-strapped states can fund such programs.

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This article was printed from the Local Stories section of the *Reno News & Review*, originally published August 23, 2012.

This article may be read online at:

<http://www.newsreview.com/reno/content?oid=7270322>

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Printed on 2012-08-29.

## Water fight

### Playing chicken with public policy gets serious

By [Dennis Myers](#)

The Nevada Legislature's vote last year to pull Nevada out of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) shocked many Nevadans and is a campaign issue now.

Last week, the Toiyabe chapter of the Sierra Club cited the vote as key to its endorsement of several candidates in legislative races this year ("Club vote," RN&R, Aug. 16).

Senate Bill 271 was approved by the lawmakers in the a.m. hours of June 7 during the final moments of the 2011 legislature and signed by Gov. Brian Sandoval on June 17. It would withdraw Nevada from TRPA in 2015 unless California and the federal government meet Nevada demands to make development at the lake easier, in part by changing voting procedures on the TRPA board.

The vote was seen by some legislators as a "free" vote, one they could cast that would please big campaign contributors but without doing any immediate policy damage, since the final decision on pulling out of TRPA will fall to a later legislature.

In fact, several legislators who voted for the bill said at the time that Nevada will never pull out of TRPA and that if there had been a straight vote on that issue, the measure would have failed. "The two-step plan was genius," one Las Vegas lawmaker said.

#### At the start

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency was created in 1969 during the governorships of Paul Laxalt of



For half a century, planning and growth at Lake Tahoe have been regulated by a bi-state agency that now faces shutdown at the hands of Nevada lawmakers.

PHOTO BY DENNIS MYERS

Nevada and Ronald Reagan of California. It was prompted by growing degradation of the Tahoe Basin, a setting about which Mark Twain had waxed lyrical, known around the world for its beauty. The bi-state compact was negotiated for Nevada by Washoe County Sen. Coe Swobe. It was a recognition that when a state degraded water or air on one side of the lake, it affected both shores, though in 2012 some candidates assert that “our” jurisdiction is our business.

After it was approved by Congress and signed by President Nixon, Swobe said, “The problem for people who want to protect the lake will be to slow down development until a master plan is developed and help the agency adopt beneficial guidelines. The developers and other special interest groups are going to attempt to water the guidelines down and push like hell for development before they are adopted.”

The problem was that, in the end, the agency just didn’t work. The TRPA board, made up of members from both states, was essentially stymied on substantial issues by the voting arrangements. It was not enough for a motion to be supported by a majority of the board. A dual majority was required—a majority within each state’s delegation. And the Nevada side was far less oriented to protecting the lake.

In less than a decade the agency’s failure was apparent. Degradation of the lake continued. Development did, too. The Nevada Legislature in 1977 and 1979 proposed changes to the bi-state compact that California lawmakers rejected as too soft on development. California Gov. Jerry Brown began talking about a federal solution.

Nevada state legislators Thomas “Spike” Wilson and Joe Dini started negotiating with California legislators for reforms in the bi-state compact in 1979. The two sides reached an agreement that included elimination of the dual majority requirement and the changes were approved by both states—Nevada in a special one-day session of the legislature on Sept. 13, 1980—and passed by Congress. President Carter signed it on Dec. 19.

The agency’s new configuration did exactly what it was supposed to do—slow development—and developers and business interests were not one bit happy. They wanted to undercut the Wilson/Dini changes. Some of those who supported the original compact, including Swobe and Laxalt, did not support the amended one. “But I will also say that TRPA has gotten a bit of control bureaucracy-wise, and we’ve got to reel it in,” Swobe said in July 2007.

But times had changed in Nevada. As the state grew, pro-environment sentiment became stronger and the Nevada Legislature over the years rejected six attempts to pull the state out of TRPA. Between Democratic and Washoe votes, such measures always failed. But that was before the casinos got serious about throwing their weight around.

In 2011, the attack was made through a new avenue—Clark County. With 400 miles between Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, the casinos and other pro-development interests decided southerners had no stake in the lake and could be used to break TRPA.

## **Dems take a dive**

It worked like a dream. The bill was sponsored by conservative Democrat John Lee, but he had plenty of help from non-conservative Democrats. A very powerful casino lobbyist, William “Billy” Vassiliadis, who orchestrates substantial campaign contributions, was in the middle of the battle. More

than a dozen supposedly pro-environment legislators voted to pull out of the bi-state agency unless “Nevada” got its way on issues affecting development at the lake—though it is dubious that the bill represents real Nevada popular sentiment.

“If the agency does not adopt an updated regional plan and the proposed amendments [Nevada’s demands] are not approved by October 1, 2015, Nevada’s withdrawal from the Compact will become effective on that date unless the Governor issues a proclamation extending the deadline for withdrawal until October 1, 2017,” the new law reads.

Lee said Nevada “resorts” had difficulty getting improvements through the TRPA board. He portrayed those kinds of requests as representing the state: “Every time we’d go before the [TRPA board], the votes were always there to destroy what Nevada was doing.” His use of the term “we” suggested he identified closely with interests remote from his legislative district, which is smack in the middle of Las Vegas.

In the votes that followed some raucous public hearings, not one Republican in either house of the legislature opposed 271. But nine Democrats in the 42-member Assembly voted for the bill, giving it an overwhelming majority. They were Elliot Anderson, Kelvin Atkinson, Irene Bustamante, Marcus Conklin, Marilyn Dondero Loop, Jason Frierson, William Horne, Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Harvey Munford, Dina Neal and John Ocegüera. All are from Southern Nevada and Ocegüera is speaker of the Assembly.

In the 21-member Senate, another nine Democrats joined with Republicans. They were Shirley Breeden, Allison Copening, Steven Horsford, Ruben Kihuen, John Lee, Mark Manendo, David Parks, Michael Schneider and Valerie Weiner. Again, all are from Southern Nevada. Horsford was the Democratic floor leader in the Senate. The only Senate Democrats to oppose the bill were Sheila Leslie and Mo Denis.

Most of the Democrats who supported 271 normally portrayed themselves as pro-environment. Some Nevada bloggers had a name for Lee’s legislation: Screw Lake Tahoe.

### **Another legislature heard from**

It was not received well in California. Senate president pro tempore Darrell Steinberg agreed to appoint negotiators, but he also gave Lee a piece of his mind in a letter made public:

“I want to share with you and your colleagues the displeasure many in California ... have with the recent unfortunate and rather provocative actions taken by the state of Nevada following decades of cooperation over matters relating to our mutual interests in the environmental and economic well being of the Tahoe basin. [Nevada’s S.B. 271] is both unnecessarily inflammatory and deeply counterproductive to the collegial relationship our two states have had on these matters. One can only imagine how leaders in Nevada would react if California were to take similar action. It is both surprising and disappointing to see a national treasure as important as Lake Tahoe become a political hostage to the agenda of special interest groups who have little interest in the many values the region provides.”

The kind of rancor, dogmatism and inflexibility that characterize Congress and some legislatures threatened to invade the bi-state relationship.

Since then TRPA has made substantial progress on a master plan, which one northern legislator said will give the lawmakers political cover to stop the withdrawal effort.

Meanwhile, Clark County progressives this year organized to send a message to Democratic Party leaders that they would not be taken for granted. Their target: John Lee. He was swept out of office in the Democratic primary election.

Within the three eastshore county governments, which are more directly affected than the legislature, SB 271 is also a subject of concern. In the contested race for Washoe county commissioner in district 1, Democrat Andrew Diss and Republican Marsha Berkbigler agree that the new law was a mistake.

Berkbigler: "I generally work on the theory that being members of bi-partisan, or in this case bi-state, teams is the best solution. I think it's always best to be on the inside knowing what your opponent is planning than on the outside wondering! That being said, if SB 271 was intended to get the California members of TRPA to move forward on an updated plan with improved economic efforts while retaining the environmental protections then it was successful. ... Lake Tahoe is a very valuable resource to Nevada, most particularly to the continued growth of northern Nevada and I believe we should be active in the caretaker role."

Diss: "Yes, there are a lot of changes that I would like to see made including changing the super majority vote requirement, speeding up the permit review process, and of course updating the regional plan, but threatening a complete pullout of the bi-state compact is not the solution. ... I believe pulling out of the compact will open the door to over-development of the Tahoe basin which could in turn reduce the clarity of the lake and create other harmful environmental impacts."

What follows is a list of legislative offices and their districts and whether the candidate is for or against S.B. 271, according either to the 2011 vote or subsequent statements.

### **Senator 13**

Kathy Martin (R) undeclared

Debbie Smith (D) against

### **Senator 15**

Greg Brower (R) for

Sheila Leslie (D) against

### **Assembly 24**

David Bobzien (D) against

Heidi Waterman (R) undeclared

### **Assembly 26**

Randy Kirner (R) for

Rodney Petzak (D) undeclared

**Assembly 27**

Teresa Benitez-Thompson (D) against

Tom Taber (R) undeclared

**Assembly 30**

Ken Lightfoot (R) see below

Michael Sprinkle (D) against

**Assembly 31**

Richard "Skip" Daly (D) against

David Espinosa (R) for

**Assembly 40**

Rich Dunn (D) against

Pete Livermore (R) for

In his comments, Assembly candidate Ken Lightfoot declined to take a position on the specific provisions of S.B. 271 without studying them more, but did say, "Nevada needs to be part of a bi-state cooperative organization at Lake Tahoe. I just have issues with the current structure of TRPA."

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This article was printed from the Green section of the *Reno News & Review*, originally published August 16, 2012.

This article may be read online at:

<http://www.newsreview.com/reno/content?oid=7177027>

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## Lake clarity

By [Ashley Hemefer](#)

Last week the Tahoe Environmental Research Center at the University of California, Davis released the “Tahoe: State of the Lake Report 2012.” The report is released annually, and highlights factors impacting the lake, including its “clarity, physics, chemistry and biology,” according to the report.

The report discusses the unusual winter of 2010-2011, noting its low temperatures and high precipitation. However, the average water temperature increased by 0.6 F, indicating change in the lake’s infrastructure. Scientists then tested the lake’s stability and found that stratification—separate levels of water with different temperatures—lasted longer than usual, indicating a potential impact of climate change.

In 2010, clarity improved but fluctuated in 2011. The report says that algae *Cyclotella* might be the cause. In 1968, clarity was 102.4 feet. The lowest level in 2011, the second worst recorded, was 51.5 feet.

The report also discusses present and future research projects. Scientists are investigating surrounding areas of the lake, including a study done on the impact of the 2007 Angora fire, which was shown to have no effect on the water. Others are looking at the mortality of trees in the Tahoe forests.



## Learn to landscape with less water

*Aug 21*

rgj.com

Join Truckee Meadows Water Authority and River School Farm for a free water-efficient landscaping workshop in its demonstration garden at Hug High School, 2880 Sutro St., 8 to 10 a.m. Saturday.

The workshop will explore the seven principles of xeriscape, which can be used from start to finish for a new landscape or implemented one at a time into an existing landscape. This workshop is open to TMWA customers interested in beautifying their landscapes while increasing water-efficiency in their yard.

Space is limited and RSVPs are required. Details: [conservation@tmwa.com](mailto:conservation@tmwa.com) or call 834-8005.

## All agencies should use local services

Aug 21

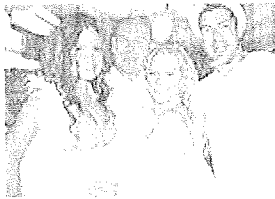
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I note with interest the recent advertisements featuring the mayors of Reno and Sparks and their "buy local" campaign. Then I look at my Truckee Meadows Water Authority bill and note that it is being handled by a company in Texas!

Is this local handling of my account and giving locals jobs? It appears that TMWA is shipping jobs out of the area that could just as well be handled by some local company. The mayors are telling us to buy local while their government agencies are not doing so.

In today's economy, all government entities should be required to use local services as much as possible. To me, TMWA is a government entity, as it is a multicity water agency, and I note that the phone book contact information for it that I found is listed under Reno city agencies and services.

Richard Wood, Reno



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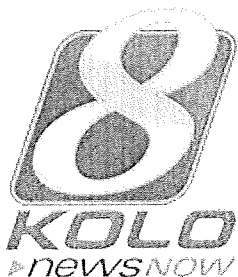
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Updated: 6:48 PM Aug 15, 2012

# What's Up with the Water?

You can blame Mother Nature for something that's catching a lot of people off-guard: how brown and murky the Truckee River is.

Posted: 5:38 PM Aug 15, 2012

Reporter: Denise Wong



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Sparks, NV - Paul and Anita O'Neill come out to Rock Park in Sparks just about every day in the summer to enjoy the Truckee River. But on Wednesday, they refused to get in.  
"I'm in fear of my life to go into the water today because it looks so dirty," said Paul.  
The couple from Sparks said they've never seen the water this brown.  
"It's just horrible-looking," said Anita. "It doesn't look safe."

"It's brown and dirty!" said Jaiden Stewart, an 11-year-old who wasn't afraid to get into the river. She and her friend, Margaret, were not worried.

"Just because the dirt's not going to hurt us," said Margaret Brown, an 11-year-old from Cold Springs. "It's just the water."

According to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the water was safe to swim in. Paul Miller, Manager of Operations and Water Quality at Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the water was brown because of thunderstorm activity Tuesday night in the Gray and Bronco Creek drainages. He said that muddy water got into the Truckee River. He said he wouldn't recommend swallowing the water, but that people should never drink untreated river water anyway.

Some folks, though, weren't shocked when they saw the water. Like Frances Brown, who grew up in North Carolina.

"When it rains there, all the rivers get muddy," said Frances. "So it's pretty common and that was our first thought: 'Oh, it must have rained up in the mountains.'"

TMWA said the water should start to look a lot better by the end of Wednesday night.

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.kolotv.com/home/headlines/Whats-Up-with-the-Water-166346446.html>

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need to restrict water use, he said. And water flowing through taps will be as good as normal.

The Truckee River is their main source of water but with the muddy water they have decreased the amount of water they draw from the river, increased the time they give it to settle, increased the chemicals they use in the water and turned on wells to pull water out of the ground, Miller said.

"High turbidity is something we're used to dealing with," Miller said.

Crayfish harvest  
Aug 07, 2012

PHOTO GALLERIES



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## TCID, Tribe ready to combine water forces

AUGUST, 9 2012

BY STEVE PUTERSKI

SPUTERSKI@LAHONTANVALLEYNEWS.COM

Millions of dollars and vicious fights have separated the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District and Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

The two entities came face-to-face on Tuesday at TCID's regular monthly meeting at the Churchill County Commission chambers.

The Tribe came equipped with a 35-minute presentation on the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) and answered tough questions from the TCID Board of Directors for about an hour.

PLPT Chairman Wayne Burke, who was elected in 2010, opened the Tribe's presentation with a statement about how the two organizations must put their salty past behind them and work together. Joining Burke at the meeting were Vice Chairman Mervin Wright, PLPT Water Director John Mosley, water attorney Chris Mixon and Ali Sharody of Stetson Engineering,

TCID Project Manager Rusty Jardine sent a formal letter to Burke and the Tribe about a year ago in hopes the two sides could become allies for the area's biggest battle – water.

Since then, both sides have met several times, and talks have yet to turn to solutions facing the groups.

"It's amazing what a cheeseburger and some good conversation can do," Burke said. "We've spent so much time on these water wars and we can learn from the past. We spent millions and millions of dollars on litigation and where did it get us."

Burke and Jardine said they are hopeful the two sides can come together to figure out the complex issues that face both TCID and the Tribe. The time for ceremonial public appearances, though, has come to an end, and they added the two groups must meet to discuss and solve the water jigsaw puzzle.

TROA has been the source of ill will between the two sides, which also includes the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) and others. TCID did not sign the agreement, which redistributes water from the Truckee River to TCID, the Tribe and TMWA.

TCID Board of Directors David Stix, Jr., Ernie Schank, Lester de Braga and Bob Oakden all expressed concerns about the new agreement including water transfers, upstream storage capabilities and transparent record keeping.

The records were the source of a federal indictment in 2008 levied against TCID. Jardine said the water and property rights involved were in need of protection, but the district will keep accurate information to avoid what TCID felt were false allegations in the federal indictment.

Charges were dropped against TCID in January 2010 from allegations that TCID, former Project Manager Lyman McConnell and former district employee John Baker had falsified and conspired to falsify certain reports, and committed fraud against the United States Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) in submitting water delivery records to the BOR.

The indictment charged the men with committing fraud to collect incentive credits for "tens of thousands of acre feet of water" by submitting false data to the bureau between 2000 and 2005. The indictment includes one count of conspiracy, three counts each of falsification of records, false claims and false statements.

"One of the concerns expressed historically has been the creation of records associated with water delivery by the district," Jardine said. "I have no desire to be hauled away in handcuffs. I regret the circumstances in the past where in we actually saw people engage in conduct and assert blame on others."

Burke, meanwhile, was pleased with the forthcoming questions and responded to many of the queries, although TCID did not expect him to answer several questions because Burke did not have the information present.

Schank, though, said there have been several occasions where TCID and the Tribe were very close to an agreement, only to be "torpedoed" because upstream interests want more water.

One source of discussion was the fate of the Truckee Canal, which Schank stated plainly it was TCID's aim to keep the canal functional. For years, TCID's concern was other entities and political interests wanted to close the canal permanently.

"It is our intent to keep the canal open," Schank added. "The canal is the lifeblood of the Lyon County community that it passes through."

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# Editorial: Pipeline still has a long way to go

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The Southern Nevada Water Authority's rationale for some day pumping water from valleys in eastern Nevada to Clark County is really quite simple:

The Las Vegas area is the economic engine of the state and water is necessary to keep the engine running smoothly, so, if it has to go 300 miles through the high desert to get that water, it will.

Clark County's thirst will be quenched.

Despite this month's tentative approval of the right-of-way for the SNWA's pipeline from counties along the Nevada-Utah line, however, the project remains a long way from reality.

Four years after the beginning of the recession, Nevadans are still paying a heavy price for the unfettered growth of the past 20 years, most of it in Clark County.

The state remains near the top of foreclosure rankings because rising prices in Southern Nevada encouraged unsustainable speculation. Property values have fallen precipitously, affecting tax revenues as well as the personal wealth of Nevadans, because of the glut of homes built in the boom years.

Just as troubling, the recession has taken a toll on the engine: The sky no longer appears to be the limit for casinos in Las Vegas.

And the SNWA already is mired in controversy over its new pipeline (the "Third Straw") to Lake Mead following the death of a worker in a tunnel collapse earlier this summer. That project is projected to cost \$817 million. The cost of the pipeline to eastern Nevada is pegged at \$16 billion and rising. Users may well rebel if they're asked to foot the bill.

SNWA officials say they're doing what they're required to do: plan for the future.

The BLM's approval is only one of many they need, however. There's still a very long way to go before the first water is pumped



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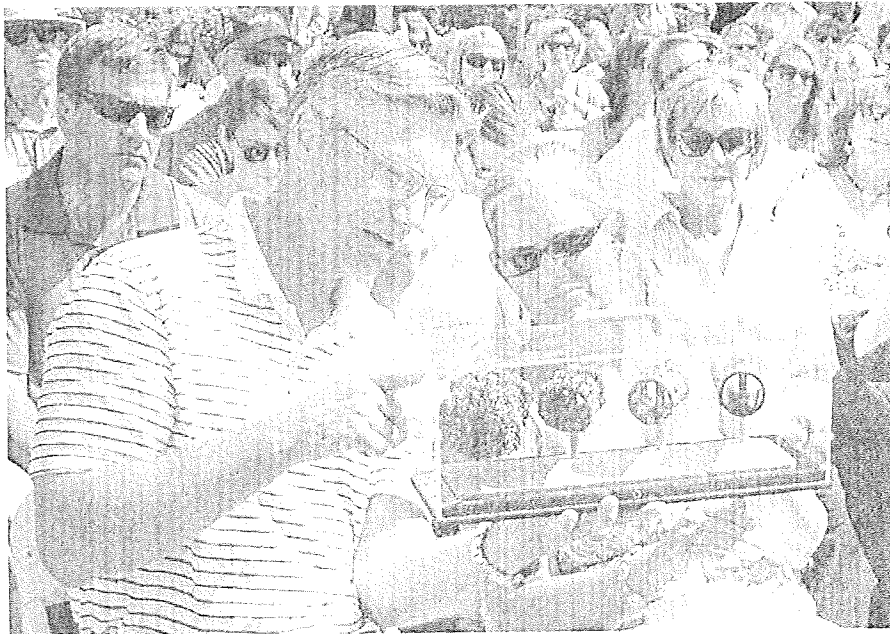
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John and Rachel Falk look at a pipe in various stages of quagga mussel invasion at the Lake Tahoe Summit on Monday. / Marilyn Newton/RGJ

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Lake Tahoe

Some things never seem to change in Northern Nevada.

That's especially true at Lake Tahoe, the deep blue alpine lake that just about everyone agrees is a national treasure. That, regrettably, is where the agreement ends.

That was evident at the 2011 session of the Nevada Legislature, where some lawmakers threatened to pull the state out of a nearly half-century-old agreement with California and the U.S. Congress that oversees development at Lake Tahoe.

It was on full display again this week, as public officials from both states met at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course for the annual Lake Tahoe Summit.

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Lake Tahoe Photo by Marilyn Newton  
Aug 10 2012

OUR VIEW: Despite optimism at the Lake Tahoe Summit, fundamental differences continue to delay solving the lake's very serious problems.

The summit began in 1997 under the aegis of President Bill Clinton as an effort to bring all sides together to develop a long-range plan to protect the lake and stop the decline of its fabled clarity.

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As California Gov. Jerry Brown — who, in a previous political incarnation, used Nevada's casino industry as a whipping boy for everything wrong at the lake — told the summit on Monday, "You really can't get anything done without collaboration."

Instead, what we get is, in the words of Yogi Berra, deja vu all over again.

In 2012, the gaming industry can rest easy. California, which tried but failed to stop the

opening of the last hotel-casino at the South Shore (now known as the MontBleu Resort Casino and Spa) nearly 30 years ago, eventually won the battle by accepting Indian casinos in the Golden State. Even without the Tahoe compact, which bars expansion of casinos, there will be no gaming growth at the lake.

Now, the battleground is a new regional plan, required of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency by law.

Whether that plan, expected to be approved by the end of the year, will be a boon or a disaster for the lake depends on whom you ask.

What's clear is that this argument, like so many of the past arguments, will be fought in the courts.

That's too bad, because there is still plenty of work to do to restore the lake's lost clarity and protect it in the future. The danger is that the arguments over the plan will overshadow the very real problems facing the lake.

While the arguments are old, many of the problems are new. The few buildings that may be built under the new plan won't be the worst of them.

There is, for instance, the growing concern about the possibility of a wildfire in the basin.

Then there are the invasive species that could easily undo much of the progress made, at considerable cost, during the past 15 years at the lake.

And the fight probably will have to go on without the federal money that has fueled many of the projects that have been done since the first Lake Tahoe Summit.

A simple program such as inspecting boats that come to Tahoe from lakes infested with quagga mussels remains underfunded, while the development arguments go on.

As Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval said on Monday, "When the public

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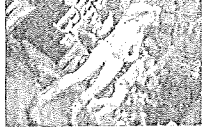
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and private sectors work together, anything is possible." The question is, "When will they work together?"

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By Gary Norris

and Jerry Purdy

About 10 years ago, Asian milfoil (floating weeds), quagga mussels and Asian clams first appeared in Lake Tahoe. They were attached to boats and trailers brought in from Lake Mead for summer boating on Lake Tahoe. It was not a significant environmental issue then because the number of contaminated boats was small.

Today, sheltered areas like the Tahoe Keys Marina have become so clogged with milfoil, mowing is required so boats can exit to the lake. Large beds of milfoil can now be seen in sheltered areas all around the lake.

Milfoil eventually went over the dam at Tahoe City, entering the Truckee River. Huge milfoil beds now exist in sheltered areas of the Truckee River, all the way downstream past Reno-Sparks to Pyramid Lake. A large milfoil bed can be seen in the river near the Peterbilt truck yard in Sparks.

Fortunately, a proven simple, economical method of killing milfoil has been developed and tested at Lake Tahoe. It involves placing a black plastic blanket over milfoil beds for about a month. Denied sunlight necessary for plant survival, milfoil beds die and disappear.

Asian clams, quagga mussels and milfoil are now the primary cause of Lake Tahoe environmental degradation. Over the years, the number of contaminated boats entering Lake Tahoe from Lake Mead and elsewhere has risen dramatically, adding to the lake's degradation.

Aquatic species control requires an in-depth, comprehensive, area-wide mandatory boat inspection program. Unfortunately, several lakes and the reservoirs popular with boaters flow into the Truckee River near the small town of Truckee. Alone, the town of Truckee would have great difficulty financing a mandatory boat inspection program of this size and scope.

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We believe the Truckee Meadows Water Authority should become a lead agency in Truckee River aquatic species mitigation. This would require TMWA to work closely with California agencies to help finance a bi-state milfoil eradication program and a mandatory in-depth boat inspection program for all boats using lakes that flow into the Truckee

River.

Both milfoil eradication and a mandatory boat inspection program are critical to our area because the Truckee River is essentially our only source of drinking water. If allowed to enter, Asian clams and milfoil would quickly clog up filtration beds, pipes, main water distribution lines, etc. of water treatment and sewer facilities.

Area ratepayers will be affected if TMWA has to significantly increase water rates to fund unending expensive cleanup costs. The cost of milfoil eradication and a boat inspection program would be far less.

Elected officials are urged to promptly address the funding issue and draft legislation allowing TMWA to work directly with California agencies as necessary.

Gary Norris is a professor emeritus at the University of Nevada, Reno. Jerry Purdy is a retired Federal Highway Administration engineer.

Aug 14, 2012

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## TCID fights through drought

Lack of good winter snowfall plagues West

AUGUST, 7 2012

BY [STEVE PUTERSKI](#)

[SPUTERSKI@LAHONTANVALLEYNEWS.COM](mailto:SPUTERSKI@LAHONTANVALLEYNEWS.COM)

The dry winter has come full circle as drought conditions are taking its toll on area farmers and ranchers.

Rusty Jardine, Truckee-Carson Irrigation District project manager, pleaded with the gods to send rain at Tuesday's Board of Directors regular monthly meeting at the Churchill County Commissioners chambers.

Lahontan Reservoir is down, as of Tuesday, to 88,270 acre-feet and is losing about 1,450 acre-feet of water per day through releases into the Truckee Canal. The lack of snowfall in the winter has left water users in the Lahontan Valley with minimal runoff, which has affected water diversions from the Truckee River into the canal.

According to Walt Winder, TCID deputy project manager, flows below Derby Dam are at about 142 cubic-feet per second. Flows drop to 138 cfs at Wadsworth and are down to 19 cfs at the Bangor check.

Winder, though, said a July forecast predicted Lahontan Reservoir to be at 90,000 acre-feet, but the actual recording was 3,500 acre-feet more than the forecast. He said the district is on target with its predictions of flows and storage at Lahontan.

Although flows are down in the Truckee Division, Carson Division releases are at 760 cfs.

While Lahontan Reservoir is suffering from the lack of water coming in, Mark Solinski said the output of electricity at the dam and at 26-foot Drop are steady. He said about 760 cfs is being released into the old plant, which is generating 1,100 kilowatts of power, the new plant is producing 2,700 kW and 26-foot Drop is at 650 kW.

In other TCID news --

- Members of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe attended the meeting, and also gave a 35-minute presentation about the Truckee River Operation Agreement (TROA).

TCID and the Tribe have been discussing options about TROA and mending a fractured relationship for about a year, according to both Tribe Chairman Wayne Burke and Jardine.

- Mike Adams, TCID's Systems and Technologies manager, said the district is upgrading security measures at Diversion and Derby dams. TCID will install numerous security cameras around the dams.

In addition, Adams said more automated gates will be installed through levees in Fernley and the district. TCID has received several complaints of individuals using the roadways, which are on private land and easements, for personal and recreational use.

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<http://www.lahontanvalleynews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120807/NEWS/120809934&parentprofile=search&template=printart>

## Nevada Ranchers & Farmers Dealing With Drought

Posted: Aug 13, 2012 1:55 PM PDT

Updated: Aug 13, 2012 2:32 PM PDT

In the nation's breadbasket, it's the worst drought in half a century, killing U.S. crops, especially corn and soybeans. The shriveled stalks in the fields are sending corn prices to a record high. In Nevada, close-to-dry riverbeds are hurting farmers in the Carson Valley. As the senior hydrologist for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority observed, "The Carson River being dry, which is the case right now, I think there's just 2 or 3 cubic feet going through Ft. Churchill right now."



But Bill Hauck says comparatively, the Truckee Meadows is still an oasis...our water supply surprisingly healthy, thanks to the extensive network of upstream reservoirs like Boca and Stampede, and of course the biggest one he monitors from his desk: Lake Tahoe. There, he told us, "We have almost 4 feet of storage right now, maximum 6.1. feet."

But we are getting into some very dry territory. For Reno, precipitation is down a sizeable 2 inches from average this year. Down a full 4 inches from last October. But even after a dry winter, spring and now summer, hydrologist Hauck says we're years from worry. "We're confident that we can withstand a 9-year drought. This is only the first year of what could be considered drought."

Hauck says the dark years were 1987 to 1994, the 7-year drought that ranks as the worst on record. But today, even after a dry winter, the Truckee River's reservoirs are holding strong, still riding on the coattails of a very wet winter from 2010-2011. Ever since then we've been dry side, but not dry enough to show up here. As of today, reservoirs are at a healthy 64% of capacity.

According to Hauck, "As far as this year's concerned, it's business as usual for us...really not a lot different than last year. On a scale of 1 to 10, our water supply is about a 6 or 7."

But sadly, we are not isolated from the real drought trouble out east. Prices for corn, eggs and beef will be higher here too.

*-written by John Potter*

There is an easy, interactive map for you to see the real-time readings of water levels from Lake



# Private sector key to raising needed funds for Lake Tahoe

With public funding drying up, it will be increasingly up to the private sector to fund costly environmental restoration projects at Lake Tahoe.

Such was the primary message issued Monday during the 16th annual Lake Tahoe Summit as federal, state and local officials, scientists, conservationists and business interests gathered to take stock of ongoing efforts to save the lake.

"In this new era, partnerships are more important than ever for the future of Lake Tahoe," said Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., who hosted this year's event at Edgewood Tahoe on the lake's south shore. "We have made progress but we still have more to do."

Since then-President Bill Clinton came to the first Tahoe summit in 1997, more than \$1.6 billion in federal, state and local funding has been spent to address Tahoe's many ecological woes, including continuing clouding of the lake's famously clear waters. In 1968, a person could see more than 100 feet into Tahoe's depths from the surface, with average clarity in 2011 estimated at just less than 69 feet.

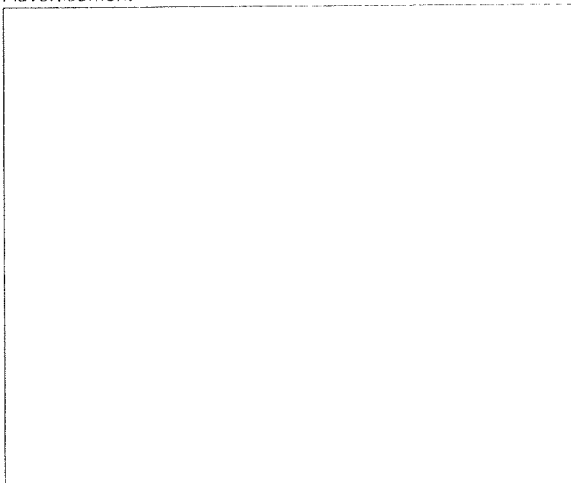
Money raised to address the problem financed erosion control, wetlands restoration, treatment of ailing, wildfire-prone forests and efforts to prevent the spread of invading plants and animals that could forever alter the lake.

But with key pieces of federal legislation raising that money now expired and the country in a different political and fiscal landscape, new ways of thinking and funding are needed for the ongoing mission to protect the lake to continue, summit participants said.

"The rules of the game here at Tahoe are changing and we're going to need to change our approach," said Allen Biaggi, former director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and currently vice chair of the Tahoe Fund, a nonprofit organization established to raise private money to help the lake.

Some \$150,000 was pledged during a fund-raiser held by the group Sunday night, said Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.

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"We must keep this effort going," Feinstein said. "Without the people who love this lake, we will fail."

Also speaking during Monday's summit was Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval, a Republican, and California's Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown. Both governors spoke of an increasing spirit of cooperation among the two states, which have battled over Tahoe policy in the past, and the need for continued bipartisanship when it comes to charting Tahoe's future.

"We've got our challenges and we're not going to get there with just a Democratic plan or a Republican plan," Brown said, pointing to today's polarized political climate.

"You really can't get anything done without collaboration," Brown said.

Sandoval emphasized the importance of the public-private partnerships needed for long-term plans to redevelop blighted urban areas around the lake, producing both environmental and economic benefits.

"Environmental improvement will be dependent on the economic health of the community," Sandoval said. "When the public and private sectors work together, anything is possible."

If the spirit of Monday's summit revolved around cooperation and bipartisanship, there were still signs of the tension that is never far below the surface when it comes to Tahoe land-use policy.

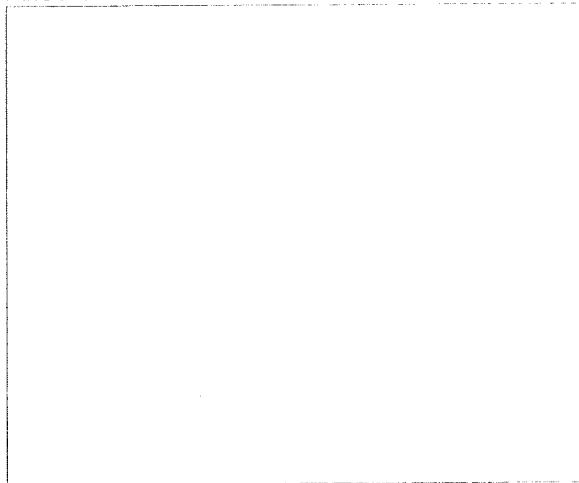
Republican Rep. Tom McClintock, who represents Tahoe's California side, lashed out at some members of the board that governs the two-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and California water quality officials for maintaining an overly bureaucratic regulatory environment he said is stifling Tahoe's economy and driving residents to move elsewhere.


"The middle class is fleeing the Tahoe Basin in droves," McClintock said. "They feel like they have lost control of their own community."

But members of several conservationist organizations issued a statement attacking the TRPA for preparing a new regional plan they say would be "devastating" to the environment.

"'Greenwashing' its activities with the term 'smart growth,' it now promotes the intensification of development, complete with taller and more densely packed buildings," said the statement, jointly released by the Tahoe Area Sierra Club,

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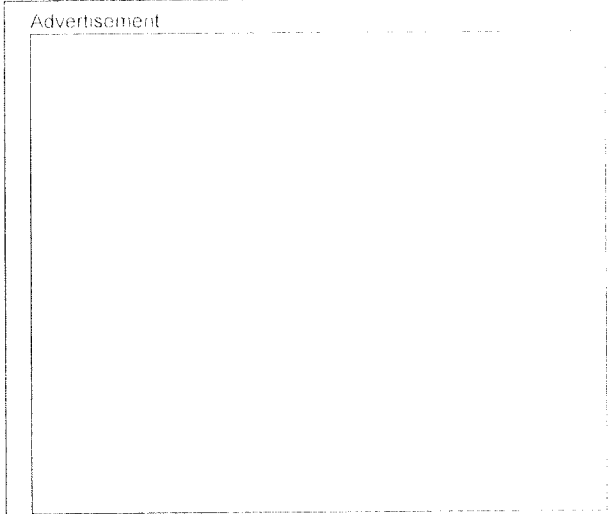
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North Tahoe Citizen Action Alliance, Friends of Lake Tahoe, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance and the Friends of the West Shore.

The new regional plan, expected to be approved by the TRPA by the end of this year, is a "short-term bonanza for resort developers" and "a disaster for the lake and the long-term economic health of the region," the statement said.



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## Lake Tahoe at key juncture 15 years after first Tahoe Summit

Fifteen years after then-President Bill Clinton came to the first Lake Tahoe Summit, political leaders gather again today to assess successes and challenges when it comes to preserving a national treasure.

And the 2012 Lake Tahoe Summit comes at a particularly pivotal period amid mounting economic challenges, finalization of a planning blueprint for Tahoe's future and a nearing deadline for Nevada's threatened pullout from a two-state compact established to protect the lake.

"This is an exceptionally important moment in time, largely because we're in transition," said Joanne Marchetta, executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, established by Congress in 1969 to preserve a threatened Tahoe Basin.

When Clinton spoke during the first summit in 1997, he told participants he was "convinced we can succeed" in an accelerated mission to protect the lake from a host of ecological ills. This included continued loss of the lake's famed clarity, declining forest health and roads choked with pollution-belching traffic.

The federal government, Nevada, California, local governments and the private sector have made big-bucks contributions to addressing Tahoe's problems ever since, with more than \$1.6 billion invested over the last 15 years.

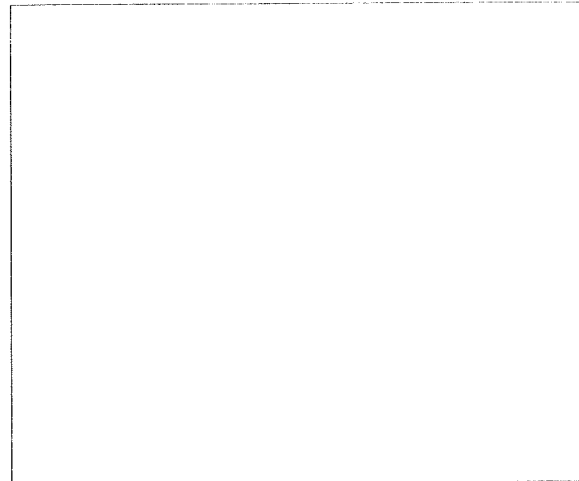
Much progress has been made, Marchetta said, pointing to last year's comprehensive assessment of TRPA's "environmental thresholds," which serve as a checklist for key environmental goals in the basin.


Status determinations were made for 92 of 151 environmental standards tracked by the agency and, of those, 63 percent had been attained or implemented.

One key finding was that the long-term trend in the decline of Tahoe's clarity is slowing, likely due to costly projects to prevent sediment from flowing into the lake and clouding its azure waters.

"We've made tremendous strides over 15 years. Across the board on the environment, we are making progress."

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Marchetta said. "On clarity, in particular, we have stopped the decline."

Last year, one could see 68.9 feet into Tahoe's depths from the surface based on average measurements, an improvement of 4.5 feet over the previous year.

But scientists worry over summertime drops in clarity in recent years, a change possibly linked to the proliferation of cyclotella, a single-cell, free-floating algae that decrease water clarity by scattering light.

The impacts of climate change, including generally warming waters and lessening of mixing of lake waters, appear conducive to high populations of algae, said Geoffrey Schladow, director of the University of California, Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

Changing ecological trends are not the only challenge ahead. Another is diminishing funding in the face of the country's economic troubles.

At last year's summit, U.S. Sen. Dean Heller — host of this year's event — spoke of a "new reality" as government funding to pay for costly restoration projects at the lake dries up.

"Quite simply, we need to learn to do more with less," the Republican lawmaker said at the time.

While Nevada's secretary of state, Heller served on TRPA's governing board from

1995 to 2006, acting as chairman in 2001 and 2002.

The theme of this year's Tahoe Summit is public-private partnerships, arrangements Heller said will be "so critical" if needed private-sector money is going to be funneled into future efforts to protect the lake.

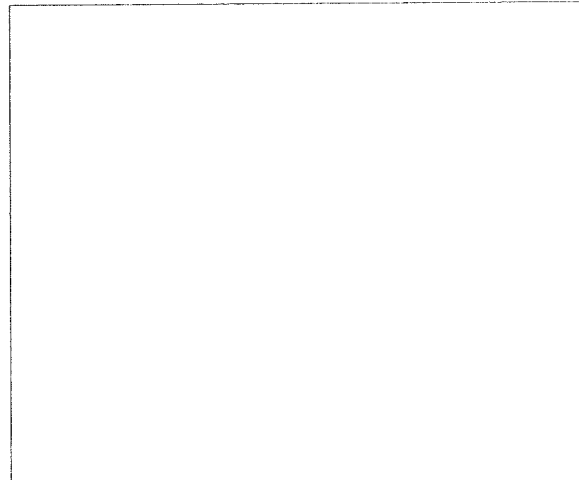
"The health of the environment and the health of the economy of Tahoe are linked," agreed Derek Kauneckis, a researcher and political science professor at University of Nevada, Reno.

Public-private partnerships are already effectively established at Tahoe and they set the stage for more efforts in which businesses can help reach environmental targets while making a buck. Kauneckis said.

"It's a way to find incentives for businesses to attain the goals of environmental policy," Kauneckis said.

Like last year, this summit occurs in the

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backdrop of action taken by the 2011 Nevada Legislature. That is when lawmakers passed a bill that could pull Nevada out of the bi-state compact that established TRPA in 2015 if a new regional plan guiding land use in the Tahoe Basin is not approved.

Marchetta said the agency remains on track to have the plan approved by the end of this year.

The pullout threat, Marchetta said, "did catalyze a set of diverse parties to come together and talk and find common ground."

The emerging plan is steered toward an emphasis in redevelopment of Tahoe's aging urban areas, funding environmental upgrades while stimulating an ailing economy at the same time.

It's a direction needed at a time Tahoe faces far different problems than it did when TRPA was formed 43 years ago — when rampant, uncontrolled growth was the primary issue, Marchetta said. The private sector will prove key to meeting the new challenge emphasizing redevelopment, she said.

"Today, we need to update what we have," Marchetta said. "Without a healthy economy, we really can't pay for all the environmental improvements we need to deliver."

Like its predecessors, the 16th Annual Lake Tahoe Summit means much more

than essentially offering a venue for a political photo op, Marchetta said. Rather, it underscores achievements of a multifaceted partnership that must continue if long-term goals can be achieved.

It also highlights Tahoe as an environmental priority at the same level as the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes and Columbia River Gorge, she said.

"It's reaffirming the importance of Tahoe as a national restoration priority," Marchetta said.

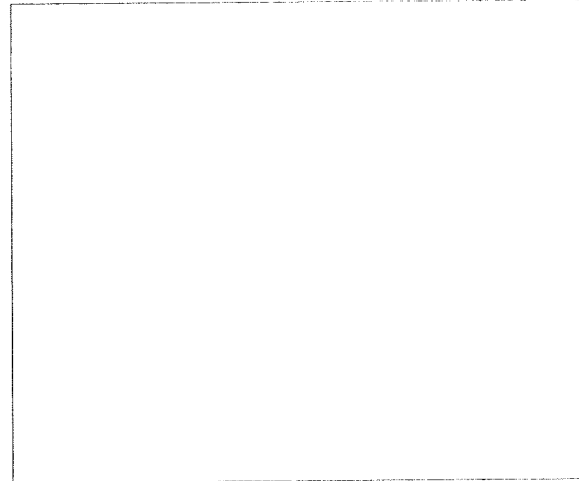
Expenditures

Since the 1997 Lake Tahoe Summit

- More than \$1.62 billion invested in the Environmental Improvement Program.
- \$521.1 million by the federal government.
- \$636.2 million by California.
- \$101.4 million by Nevada.
- \$68.2 million by local governments
- \$299.6 million by the private sector

Source: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

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Key projects

- More than 395 projects completed, 212 more in progress.
- Erosion control measures installed on 577 miles of roadways.
- 51,288 acres of hazardous fuels treated.
- 15,850 acres of wildlife habitat restored, including 1,509 acres of stream environmental zones.
- 2,579 linear feet of shoreline added for public access.
- 134 miles of bike and pedestrian routes created.

Source: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Forest fuels, fire danger, invasive species

- In 2011, 4,276 acres of forest fuels were reduced, 388 acres of habitat were restored or enhanced, and 76 miles of roads were treated for storm-water.
- In 2011, 4,129 homes were inspected for defensible space and 1,330 residents and businesses retrofitted their properties to improve storm-water runoff.
- In 2011, the Lake Tahoe Aquatic Invasive Species Program conducted more than 7,660 watercraft inspections for invasive species and decontaminated 4,800.

Source: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

More

2012 Lake Tahoe Summit

When: 10 a.m. today.

Where: Edgewood Tahoe, Stateline

Who: Host is U.S. Sen. Dean Heller,

R-Nev

U.S. Rep. Shelley Berkley, D-Las Vegas

California Gov. Jerry Brown, Democrat

U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif

Nevada Lt. Gov. Brian Krolicki,

Republican

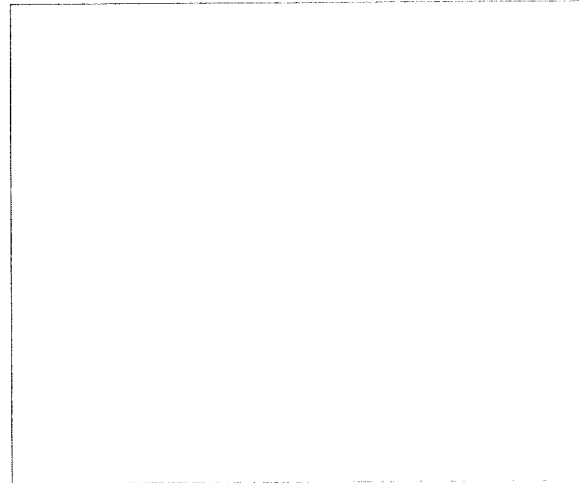
U.S. Rep. Tom McClintock, R-Calif.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval,

Republican

Source: Heller's office

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# Quagga mussels still being found on boats trying to enter Lake Tahoe

Two motorboats – one of which had been previously cleaned and declared free of danger – were recently intercepted at Lake Tahoe with quagga mussels attached to the vessels, officials said today.

The mussels were found by inspectors and boats prevented from launching into Lake Tahoe, said Pete Brumis, spokesman for the Tahoe Resource Conservation District.

“We’re still seeing quite a few (contaminated) boats,” Brumis said. “This tells us the inspection program is working and is necessary.”

The first vessel was examined Aug. 2 at the inspection station the district runs at Spooner Summit. It had been recently operated in Southern Nevada’s Lake Mead, which is heavily infested with mussels.

Its owners had the boat cleaned and decontaminated after pulling it out of Lake Mead but Tahoe inspectors still found more than 50 quagga mussels attached to its hull in the stern and engine areas, Brumis said.

“This was actually a boat that had been quote, unquote professionally cleaned and decontaminated,” Brumis said.

“Unfortunately some of these boats are just so encrusted they just don’t get all of them.”

Another boat was found with a single quagga mussel attached to its anchor line the following day at the inspection station in Meyers. That vessel had previously been used at Lake Havasu, which like the entire lower Colorado River system is infested with quagga mussels.

So far this summer five boats have been found with mussels and one with another aquatic invader, New Zealand mudsnails, attached, Brumis said. Several hundred vessels deemed to pose a potential threat have been decontaminated at the five Tahoe boat stations.

The conservation district and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency have been inspecting boats since 2008, the year after quaggas were first discovered in Lake Mead.

While Tahoe’s waters are not as conducive

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to mussels as Mead's, studies have shown adult mussels can live in the lake. Should they become established, a Tahoe infestation would come at crippling environmental and economic cost.

One study suggested an infestation could cost Tahoe's tourism economy \$22 million per year.

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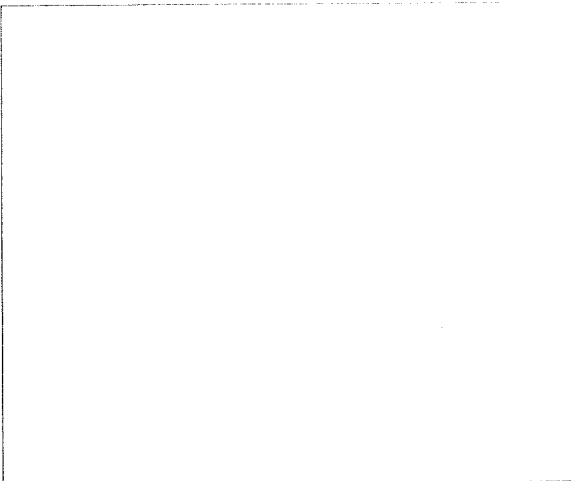


## Kudos for new look at Methodist Church

As I come to and from worship at the Methodist Church, I am delighted to see the new look and plantings on West Street. Kudos to Roberta Ross, the River School, Truckee Meadows Water Authority and anyone else who helped with this effort.

Phyllis Mattingly, Reno

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Also, give your sprinklers a rest on Mondays, as it is TMWA's day to replenish and maintain our water system.

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8/2/12

This message is brought to you by the water lovers at

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# Boat screening at three Northern Nevada reservoirs won't start in earnest until 2013

A boat inspection and decontamination program will not start in earnest this summer at three Northern Nevada reservoirs as originally hoped, Nevada wildlife officials said.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife is still awaiting a needed grant approval and equipment it needs to implement the \$808,000 effort at Lahontan, Rye Patch and Wild Horse reservoirs, said Karen Vargas, the department's aquatic invasive species coordinator.

Vargas had hoped to have at least limited operations under way by now but at this point only some public education efforts could be taking place at the reservoirs late in the summer.

"If it does get under way it's going to be very limited this summer," Vargas said. "We are set up to go full-bore next year."

Inspections and decontamination are needed to prevent the spread of aquatic invaders — in particular the quagga mussel, which has overrun Southern Nevada's Lake Mead.

Tests conducted in April 2011 indicated the presence of juvenile quaggas at Lahontan and Rye Patch, an alarming find for officials determined to prevent spread of the damaging mollusks to Northern Nevada water bodies, particularly Lake Tahoe.

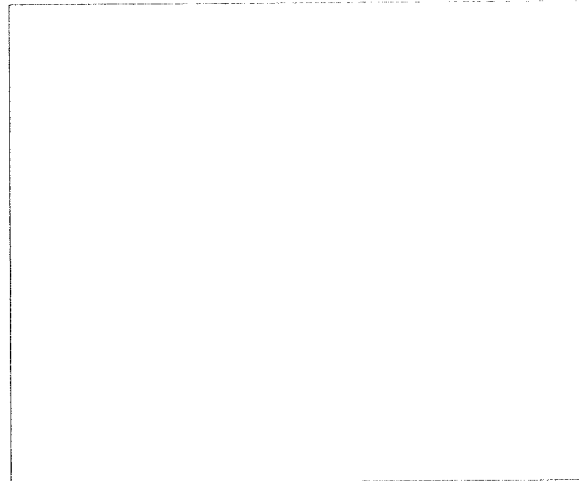
Wild Horse Reservoir, located near the Idaho line, drains into the Columbia River Basin where a mussel infestation would come with dire economic consequences.

Additional tests at Lahontan and Rye Patch conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation a couple of months ago came back negative for quaggas, Vargas said.

Wildlife officials this week announced details of a watercraft sticker program that takes effect in January 2013. Revenue collected is designed to fund the battle against such aquatic invaders as quagga or zebra mussels, Asian clams and the water weed Eurasian watermilfoil.

The stickers, costing \$10 for Nevada-

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registered motorboats, must be purchased and affixed to vessels before launching.

Boaters who fail to comply with the regulation, adopted into law by the 2011 Legislature, could be cited though early efforts will focus on education, said Chief Game Warden Rob Buonamici.

"Boats are most often the route for new infestations," Buonamici said of the danger posed by aquatic hitchhikers.

Mandatory boat inspections and decontamination has occurred at Lake Tahoe since 2008, the year after quaggas were first discovered in Lake Mead.

In 2011, 7,600 vessels were inspected at Tahoe, with 4,800 considered to be at risk decontaminated. A number of vessels encrusted with quagga mussels have been intercepted.

Watercraft decal program

- \$10 to buy stickers for Nevada motorboats.
- \$5 for Nevada paddle craft.
- \$20 for out-of-state motorboats.
- \$10 for out-of-state paddle craft.
- Small watercraft that can't hold water, including paddle boards and float tubes, are exempt.

Source: Nevada Department of Wildlife.

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## BLM releases final study on Las Vegas water pipeline

The Bureau of Land Management issued its environmental study and recommended approval Friday of a massive pipeline to carry water from rural counties along the Nevada-Utah line to Las Vegas.

The 5,000-page report is now up for a 60-day review before the federal agency issues a final record of decision on Southern Nevada Water Authority's right of way application, the BLM said.

"Our record of decision will mainly address the pipeline, the way that the pipeline should be placed and the resources that are impacted by that," said Penny Woods, BLM project manager.

Also still pending is a biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the consequences the water project would have on wildlife.

State Engineer Jason King in March granted SNWA permission to pump up to 84,000 acre-feet of groundwater a year from four rural valleys in Lincoln and White Pine counties. His approval has since been challenged in court by environmental groups, local governments, Indian tribes, ranchers and others who claim the project will ensure economic and environmental doom to the rural areas.

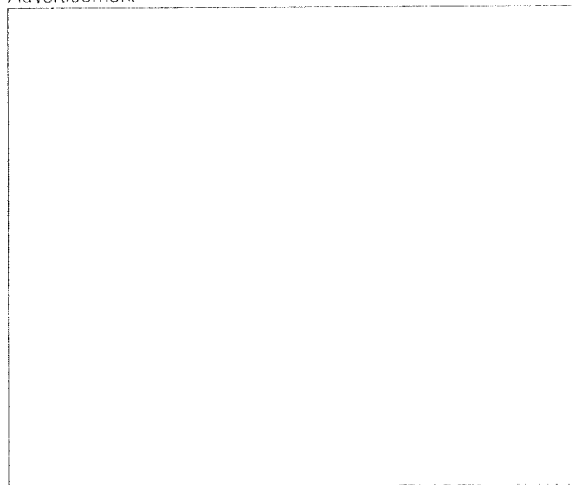
On Friday, critics took aim at the BLM.

"What BLM has refused to study is a real alternative for the 300 mile pipeline project, including increasing water supplies for Southern Nevada through significant water efficiency opportunities and desalination," Abby Johnson of Great Basin Water Network, a coalition of groups opposed to the water project, said in a statement.

Work on the BLM's environmental impact statement began in 2005, and a SNWA official said Friday's report and recommendation represents another big hurdle in the project that is still years, if not decades, from being built.

"This is one of the most thorough and comprehensive analyses ever conducted for a municipal water supply project," said Zane Marshall, SNWA director of environmental resources. "Although the construction timeline will be dictated by the Colorado River conditions and other factors, getting this project shovel ready gives southern Nevadans a safety net against potential shortages."

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The Las Vegas area is home to 2 million people and attracts 40 million visitors annually. Most of the region's water comes from the overtapped Colorado River, a source shared by seven western states and Mexico. Water authority officials say the rural water is needed to protect the state's population center and economic engine from severe water shortage.

Critics also said the BLM relied on outdated or faulty data, and argued that the project's cost once estimated around \$3 billion more likely would approach \$16 billion and should have been addressed in the agency's report to determine if it was financially feasible.

Additionally, they said the BLM study showed the overall water import project was unsustainable.

"Unless it denies SNWA's request for a pipeline ROW, we do not see how the BLM will be able to adequately protect the 12 million acres of public lands in eastern Nevada from massive water depletion and land subsidence," said Susan Lynn, Great Basin Water Network coordinator.

Friday's environmental report addressed the 263 miles of buried pipeline, 280 miles of overhead power lines, six electrical substations, as well as pumping stations, regulating tanks, a 40 million gallon-per-day buried storage reservoir and a 165 million gallon-per-day water treatment plant.

Woods said each of those components would trigger other environmental studies specific to SNWA's plans before they could be built.

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7/26/12

Posted: July 13, 2012

### Members ratify pact with TMWA

Local 1245 members at Truckee Meadows Water Authority ratified a new agreement on a vote of 57-8. The TMWA Board of Directors also approved the pact.

The agreement provides wage increases of 2.5% in the first year, 2% in the second year and 42 hours of PLT which the employee may cash out, defer, or use.

Other provisions include:

- Employee may now cash out up to 40 hours of vacation per year.
- Employee may cash out sick leave of up to 48 hours per year above 700 hours of accrued sick leave.
- Replaced fixed shift differential with percentage of hourly rate.
- Employee who works in the "rest period" window but less than 2 hours will receive 7 hours of rest, while employee who works over 2 hours will retain 9 hours rest. In previous agreement, employee who did not physically work 2 hours did not get rest period at all.
- Increase to \$75 for phone allowance for employees who use smart phone technology.
- Created new "Senior" position in facilities/grounds.
- Tightened language limiting TMWA ability to cross classification employees.
- Employees hired after July 1, 2012 will share in change of costs (up or down) 50/50 of NV PERS (for term of agreement).
- Minor changes to meal tickets: Employees now get \$28/meal with CPI escalator and a set 45 minutes for meals.

Representing the union on the negotiating committee, along with Business Rep. Pat Waite, were Greg Bates, Jackson Bergland, Steve Enos, Mark Patterson, and Bryce Twitchell. Serving on the ad hoc committee were Travis Bunkowski, Mike Milligan and Jeff Westwood.

Whether it's raining in June or dry in December, Truckee Meadows Water Authority always values responsible water use. That's why we encourage

## Weather-Wise Watering.



Assigned-Day Watering only applies to your sprinklers. Run your sprinklers when it's cool and not windy, usually early in the morning. Turn them off when it's raining.

Water Weather-Wisely on your assigned days.



# Assigned-Day Watering



Also, give your sprinklers a rest on Mondays, as it is TMWA's day to replenish and maintain our water system.

For more on your assigned days and other conservation tools, visit

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

7/12/12



## Water line work in Sparks will be finished soon

Navigating Richards Way between Pyramid Highway and Probasco Way in Sparks could be easier Monday as road crews working for the Truckee Meadow Water Authority finish paving the street after work rerouting water lines.

While the streets were being excavated to access the water lines, passage to homes on the street, the Sparks Senior Citizens Center, the City Recreation Center and the adjacent main recreation office was frequently hampered.

Spanish Springs Construction crews began to grade the areas to be paved Wednesday and are scheduled to finish paving Monday, said Jon Ericson, city of Sparks transportation manager.

"With the high temperatures, it's really difficult to pave," Ericson said.

Temperatures soared to 100 degrees and higher from Monday through Thursday, making the prospect of paving uncertain, Ericson said.

A cool-down is expected through the weekend, prompting the decision to move forward.

It's been a challenge to traverse the street

for nearby residents and senior center visitors.

"We'll be glad when this is done," said Tanja Ramociotti, site supervisor for the senior center.

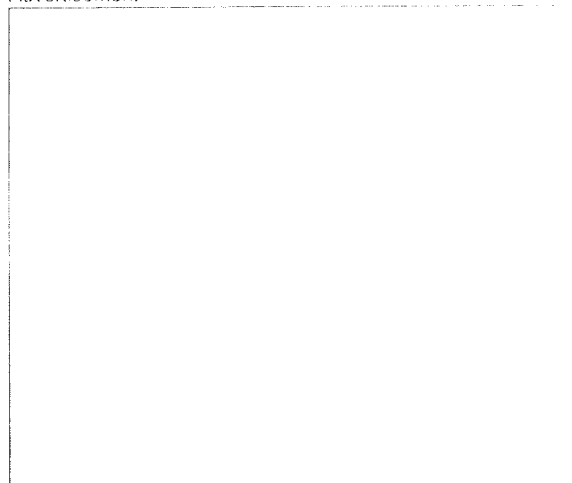
She said the center had permission to use the Reno Korean Presbyterian Church parking lot on First Street, which made access to activities a little easier for seniors.

Ramociotti said city officials were diligent about informing the facilities and residents about changes to access on the street, knocking on doors and placing information fliers at residences.

The center is closed today because of the paving schedule.

Work on the street began July 2. The project included relocating and replacing water service to buildings on First Street and to date has cost about \$10,000, according to TMWA.

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Ericson said the work on the street, which improved access to utility lines underground, should wrap up in two weeks.

### Other Sparks Road Projects

Sparks has several road projects underway, including:

- Pedestrian enhancements on Prater Way
- A bikeway project on Nichols Avenue
- Rehabilitation on Greenbrae Drive
- Rehabilitation work by NV energy on the east end of Prater Way between Pyramid Way and McCarran Boulevard.

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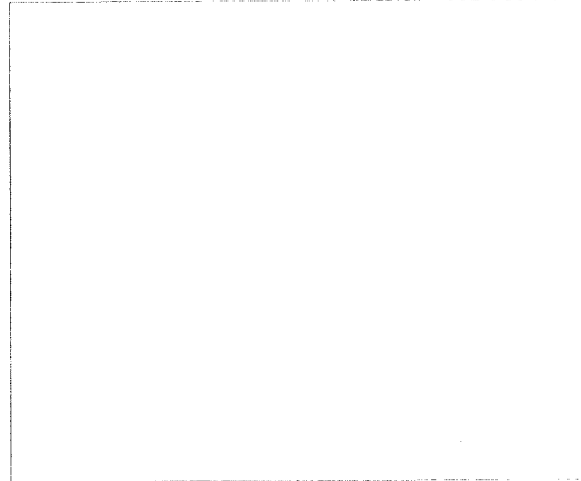
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Updated: 8:15 AM Jul 13, 2012

## Your Yard Suffers in This Heat, Too: A Survival Guide

Your yard is suffering through this hot summer just like you, but there are things you can do to help it survive.

Posted: 4:59 PM Jul 12, 2012

Reporter: Ed Pearce

Email Address: [ed.pearce@kolotv.com](mailto:ed.pearce@kolotv.com)



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f

RENO, NV - You know what these three digit temperatures are doing to you. It turns out your lawn, your shrubs and trees are feeling the same pain.

"When the temperature rises above 90 degrees plants actually stop growing," says Pawl Hottis of Rail City Garden Center. "They're in a defensive mode. They're trying to suck water up through their roots as fast as they can to go through their leaves to cool themselves off."

"Just like us we have to hydrate. Your lawn has to hydrate too," says Andy Gebhardt of the

## Truckee Meadows Water Authority

So, your yard needs more water. After a long day in the sun, the water you put on it early in the morning is gone.

One adjustment you could make is another round of watering later in the day or, if your automatic sprinkler clock has a seasonal adjustment. Hollis advises cranking it up to 125 or 130% while the heat lasts.

"You don't want over runoff, but you still want additional water."

If not, add another cycle. Just make sure it's not in the heat of the day.

"It's against the rules and with good reason," says Gebhardt. "It doesn't do your lawn any good. Most of it is evaporating.

How you water can also be important. "Don't overheard spray on your shrubs," says Hollis. "Don't let that water get on the surface of the leaves and fry them."

Fortunately Gebhardt says thanks to the winter before last we've got the water to get you and your yard through this summer.

Hand watering is still allowed and, if you've got a new lawn, you've got a 6 week grace period before you have to follow the three day schedule.

How do you tell if you're doing things right? Your plants will tell you.

"The first sign is when it starts wilting," says Hollis. "You want to keep them rigid. You want to keep them hydrated."

Another way is to take a six-inch screwdriver and stick it into your lawn. "If it can go all the way to the hilt, your lawn is getting ample nutrients and water," says Gebhardt.

There are things you can do to your soil, additives and mulch that will help as well, but the key is just more water as long as this heat lasts.

TMWA, your local nursery shop or the folks at Cooperative Extension all have plenty of more information on water wise gardening.

### Find this article at:

[http://www.kolotv.com/home/headlines/Your\\_Yard\\_Suffers\\_in\\_This\\_Heat\\_Too\\_A\\_Survival\\_Guide\\_162288436.html](http://www.kolotv.com/home/headlines/Your_Yard_Suffers_in_This_Heat_Too_A_Survival_Guide_162288436.html)

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# Critics say Lake Mead efforts inadequate to protect against mussel invasion

Lake Tahoe and other pristine water bodies in the West are threatened by an alarming number of pleasure boats leaving Southern Nevada's Lake Mead without being adequately inspected for the possible presence of invading mussels, critics say.

Conservationists, environmental regulators, politicians and power providers from at least six western states are asking members of Congress and federal agencies to require a much stronger boat inspection program be established at the Las Vegas-area reservoir now overrun by more than 1 trillion quagga mussels.

The concern is the mussels could spread from Lake Mead and contaminate other vulnerable places, including Tahoe and the Columbia River system, at potentially staggering environmental and economic cost.

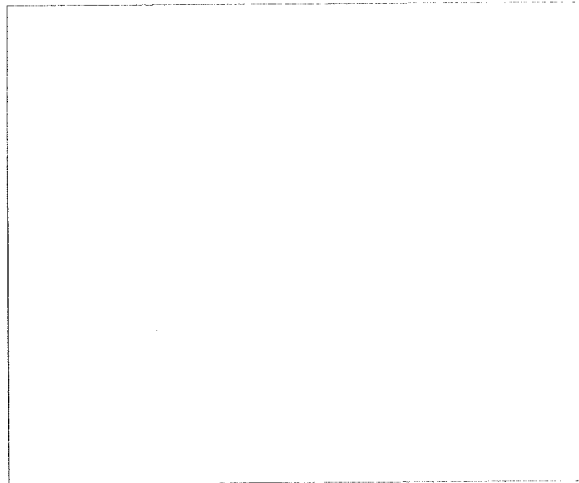
"It's unimaginable how much chaos could result," said Republican Idaho state Rep. Eric Anderson, who joined others in criticizing the National Park Service for what he described as a lackluster approach to addressing the danger.

William Dickinson, superintendent of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, and Bryan Moore, the park service biologist who heads the quagga mussel program at Lake Mead, could not be reached for comment.

But Randy Lavasseur, assistant chief ranger at the recreation district, said the vastness of the 248-square-mile reservoir, visited by more than 8 million people per year, presents a serious challenge when it comes to ensuring departing vessels are free of the thumb-sized mollusks.

In a June 18 letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and copied to more than 30 governors and members of Congress, Anderson wrote that Idaho officials are "seriously disappointed" over how the federal government plans to spend a \$1 million appropriation pushed by U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, designed to support mandatory boat inspection and decontamination stations at Lake Mead. Much of the money is designated for other purposes, such as public outreach, Anderson said.

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"Lake Mead is truly the primary source of our concern," Anderson said, adding that 28 of 50 boats found to be contaminated with mussels at Idaho inspection stations this year had arrived at that state after boating in Lake Mead.

"We all agree that's what they need to do, to clean the boats coming out of that system," Anderson said. "Until they do, everything is at risk."

Similar sentiments are expressed by officials at Lake Tahoe, where a potential mussel invasion is seen as one of the most dire threats to the landmark alpine lake. According to a study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tahoe's tourism-dependent economy could suffer a \$22 million hit per year if quagga or zebra mussels become established there.

No mussels have yet been found at Tahoe but juvenile mussels were detected last year at two Northern Nevada reservoirs — Lahontan and Rye Patch — not far away. Quaggas were first found in Lake Mead in 2007 and are now estimated to number about 1.5 trillion in Mead and along the Colorado reservoir system.

Mandatory boat inspections have been required at Lake Tahoe since 2008 with 7,600 vessels inspected last year.

"Many boats" coming from Lake Mead have been intercepted contaminated with mussels, including two this summer, said Ted Thayer, aquatic invasive species manager for the Tahoe Regional Planning

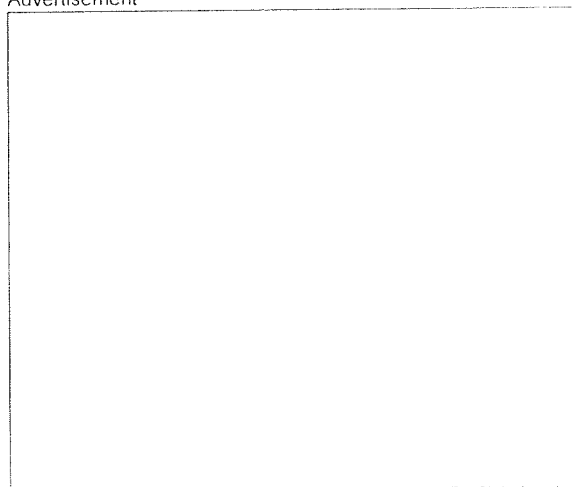
Agency. One of those had been at Mead only a couple of days prior.

"We are concerned funds are being allocated without necessarily keeping mussel-fouled boats from coming out of Lake Mead," Thayer said. "They're saying they're doing the best they can. We're saying more could be done, particularly on the part of the park service."

The danger is particularly serious with regard to boats that are moored for some time at Lake Mead, allowing mussels time to grow on the vessels, Thayer said.

Joining the chorus of concern is the Nature Conservancy. In a June 29 letter to Dickinson of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area and the assistant regional director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the group tells of "irreversible impacts" should the mussel invasion spread. The letter is signed by the conservancy's state directors from Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming — where no mussels have been

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found — and Arizona, where they have.

“Inspection and decontamination stations are needed at Lake Mead as a first priority,” the conservancy’s letter said. “All other proposed expenditures are of lesser value and priority.”

Meeting this week in Boise, the Northwest Power and Conservation Council it is seeking \$2 million in federal aid to beef up inspection efforts to prevent mussels from becoming established in the Pacific Northwest. The council guides power and environmental policy in Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. All express frustration over quality of boat inspections at Lake Mead.

“A second line of defense is not as good perhaps as stopping them at Lake Mead, but it’s something we have to do when we can’t depend on interdiction efforts,” said Phil Rockefeller, Washington’s appointee to the group.

#### By the numbers

7,600: Lake Tahoe boats inspected in 2011.

4,800: Lake Tahoe boats decontaminated in 2011.

\$22 million: Estimated annual cost to Lake Tahoe’s economy if mussels are established.


1.5 trillion: Number of mussels believed to be in Lake Mead and nearby water bodies.

#### At a glance

Critics say the National Park Service is not giving proper priority to the need to inspect boats departing Lake Mead for the presence of quagga mussels, which could contaminate other valuable water bodies across the West

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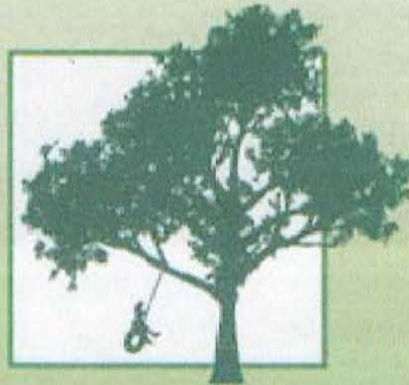
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[www.communityforestry.org](http://www.communityforestry.org)

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# Marie Fong: Ditches brought important changes to region

*This column is part of a series by local stakeholders. Have a column idea? Email editor Lauren Gustus at lgustus@rgj.com.*

Veins of silver ore may have attracted emigrants to Nevada, but it was the irrigation ditches, filled with water shining like silver under the western sun, that created a land in which they could settle down.

The history of our irrigation system is closely tied to the story of Washoe County. From Spanish Springs to Washoe Valley, a network of irrigation ditches brought water to a thirsty land. With that water came opportunity and change.

Water gave people a reason to stay after the Comstock Lode stopped producing. Ditches made sure the water got to those who continued to carve a life out of the Nevada wilderness through ranching and agriculture.

Before irrigation ditches, people relied strictly on seasonal runoff for their water supplies. Imagine how devastating that might be after a winter such as the one we just experienced, with little or no snowfall.

We felt that it was important to include a look at our local ditch system as part of the

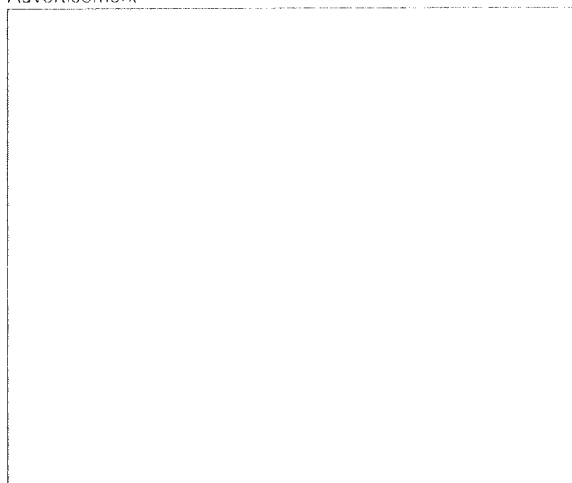
"If Parks Could Talk" series because these ditches have played such an important role in the development and maintenance of many of our Washoe County Parks.

All six regional parks highlighted in this year's program are home to some of the area's most important ditches. Each ditch, like the parks themselves, have a story to tell.

The longest ditch in Washoe County is the Orr Ditch, which provides a lush, riparian corridor through the center of Lazy 5 Regional Park. Construction began on the 34-mile ditch in the 1870s, and the water it carried was vital to the settlement of the Spanish Springs Valley.

Once completed, the Orr Ditch ran from Spanish Springs all the way to the University of Nevada, Reno, where remnants of the ditch can still be seen just south of the university's Manzanita Lake. The Highland Ditch, originally built to support Hermann Rafael's sprawling ranchland north of the Truckee River, now helps to keep the

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popular park that bears his name lush and green for the million and a half visitors who use Rancho San Rafael Regional Park each year.

Bartley Ranch Regional Park is home to both the Last Chance and Lake Ditches. These ditches were originally constructed, along with the popular Steamboat Ditch, to support ranching and farming start-ups south of Reno. Now, water from both ditches is helping with recovery efforts at the park following last year's Caughlin Fire.

The Lake Ditch also feeds water to Washoe Golf Course, Reno's oldest.

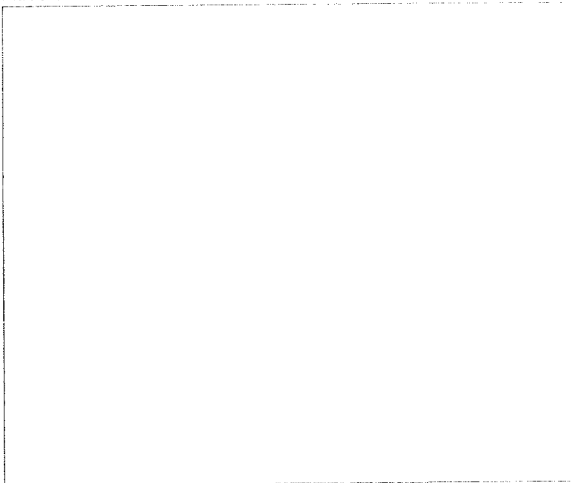
Further south, the Ophir Creek Diversion feeds water to Davis Pond, a popular fishing spot adjacent to the Davis Creek Campground. If you're looking for a place to observe local wildlife, just hang around our ditches for a while. As our region develops, the irrigation ditches become less and less visible to the casual observer. My hope is that we never lose sight of the important changes they brought to this region.

*Ranger Marie Fong has been with the Washoe County Department of Regional Parks and Open Space for 17 years.*

#### If you go

- Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space will host a walk and talk about the county's ditch system at 7 p.m. July 12. Meet outside the Western Heritage Interpretive Center at Bartley Ranch Regional Park.
- The "If Parks Could Talk" exhibit will be on display in the Western Heritage Interpretive Center at Bartley Ranch Regional Park through Aug. 1. Special programs include Northern Nevada Bluegrass at 7 p.m. today and cowboy poet Tony Argento on July 19.
- A complete listing of the Thursday evening ranger talks is at [www.washoecountyparks.com](http://www.washoecountyparks.com)

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## Sierra's hidden gem: Independence Lake is relatively untouched, unknown

There could have been ski lifts carved out of the mountainside, and crisscrossing trails leading the way down to a European-style village nestled on the edge of a clear blue mountain lake.

A picture of ski resort perfection.

Instead, reality is a different kind of perfection. Crisp, cold water laps against a rocky shore. And on a recent weekend hike, there is not a soul in sight.

Only 10 miles from Truckee, Calif, Independence Lake feels as if it is worlds away. The alpine lake has remained relatively untouched and unknown.

A partnership between NV Energy and The Nature Conservancy was formed to make sure it stays that way.

"When you see it from the air, it is hard to believe that it is only 10 miles from Truckee and Interstate 80. It is so close but relatively unknown," said Jeff Ceccarelli, senior vice president of energy supply at NV Energy.

### Through the years

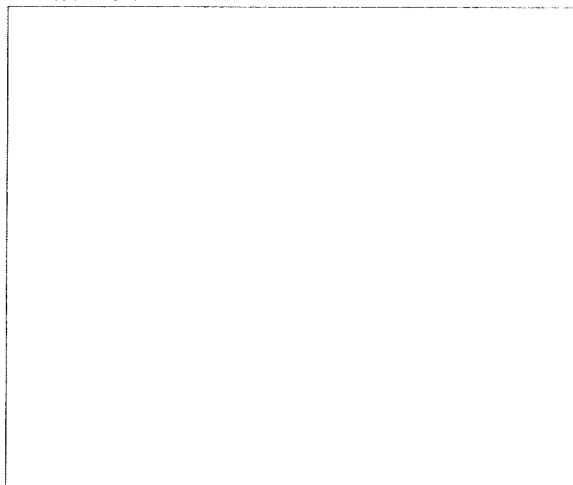
Over the years, Independence Lake, which is 2.4 miles long and about 1/2 mile wide, has attracted a variety of visitors.

It was named Independence Day in 1858 by Lola Montez, an Irish-born actress who would later become known as the Belle of the California Gold Rush. The tallest mountain on the west end of the lake, Mt. Lola, is named for her.

The lake served as a resort for recreational enthusiasts in the early 1900s. Later, it was used for logging operations by Hobart Mills. In 1937, NV Energy (which was then Sierra Pacific Power Company) purchased acreage surrounding the lake from the Hobart Estate.

At that time Sierra Pacific was in the water business, and Independence Lake was part of its upstream water storage facilities. When Sierra Pacific sold its water business, the water rights in the lake went to the

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Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

Because of its elevation at 7,000 feet, today Independence Lake is a valuable supply of drought storage water for Reno-Sparks and the Truckee Meadows.

Sierra Pacific has been approached by parties interested in developing the land around Independence Lake a number of times, including the Disney Corporation in the 1970s.

### Perfect partnership

"The Nature Conservancy did an assessment of the entire Sierra Nevada ecoregion in the mid-1990s, and Independence Lake is one of those sites that popped up as being very important, mainly because of the Lahontan cutthroat trout," said Chris Fichtel, Independence Lake project director for the Nevada chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

In May 2010, the conservancy purchased 2,325 acres of land around the lake owned by NV Energy for \$15 million.

The lake bed remains the property of California; Truckee Meadows Water Authority owns up to 17,000 acre-feet of the lake's waters (for drought storage).

The sale was anything but an overnight process.

"When the economy crashed in 2008, we were a little unsure if we were going to be able to pull all the funding together," Fichtel

said.

"It was very important from our perspective to put it in the hands of somebody who would maintain the proper stewardship. We wanted to ensure that there was consideration of the endangered species but also that the property would be made available to the public in a way that made sense," Ceccarelli said. "And The Nature Conservancy was the perfect fit for that."

The nonprofit officially acquired the property in April 2010. NV Energy continues to be involved in the lake today, with a commitment of \$1.4 for investments into the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Recovery program after the completion of the sale back to The Nature Conservancy.

### Protecting the environment

The rustic beauty of the land surrounding Independence Lake is matched by the lake's untouched ecosystem.

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“We have done some surveys on the lake, and there are no nonnative plant species. Everything in there is native,” Fichtel said.

Independence Lake is home to one of the world’s last two wild populations of Lahontan cutthroat trout, which has disappeared from 99 percent of its historic range.

To maintain the integrity of the ecosystem, the Nature Conservancy is working hard to protect Independence Lake from invasive species such as Quagga and Zebra mussels that have taken root in other Sierra waters, including Lake Tahoe and Donner Lake.

To protect Independence Lake from the threat of invasive species, no personal watercraft are allowed on the lake.

To allow visitors access to the lake, the Nature Conservancy provides an in-basin fleet of watercraft, including kayaks and pontoon float boats, that are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Fishing is allowed on the lake, but the Lahontan cutthroat trout are catch and release only.

“It is an unbelievable jewel in the Sierra,” Ceccarelli said.

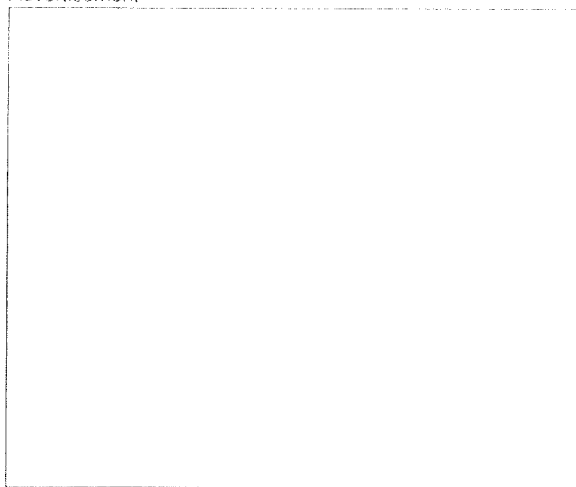
Added Fichtel: “A lot of times for people who visit, it really is just about this is a beautiful place, a fantastic, gorgeous place, but also for them to realize why the lake itself is important beyond its beauty. What it supports in terms of native species. There is so much there, and as people visit the property, they begin to notice these things for themselves.”

#### IF YOU GO

• **DIRECTIONS:** From I-80, take Highway 89 North toward Sierraville. Travel 15 miles, then turn left off Highway 89 to Jackson Meadow Reservoir. After 1.5 miles, turn left at the sign for Independence Lake onto a rough dirt road. Take a right at the fork 2 miles in, at the sign for Independence Lake. After another half-mile there is another fork in the road, go left and cross a stream. If you do not drive across a stream soon after taking this left fork, you have made a wrong turn. Continue until you reach Independence Lake.

• **ONLINE:** For more information on Independence Lake, visit

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## Photo Gallery: Historic Gold Hill

10:15 AM

Over 60 photos by RGJ photographer Marilyn Newton.

Historic Nevada: See more photos and stories

Guy Rocha: Nevada's first newspapers were hand-written in the mid-1800s

The headstrong, turbulent Nevada town of Gold Hill  
Vintage Reno



## Move to the Mountain West: Even without Boise, Nevada says MWC is a good fit

11:12 AM

Move to the Mountain West: Nevada officially joins its fourth conference today



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Water Weather-Wisely on your assigned days.



# Assigned-Day Watering



Also, give your sprinklers a rest on Mondays, as it is TMWA's day to replenish and maintain our water system.

6/28/12

For more on your assigned days and other conservation tools, visit

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# ROBERT STILES

## Invasive weed spreads from Tahoe to Truckee River to Pyramid Lake

Posted by admin in [Grab Bag](#), [Lifestyle](#) on June 13th, 2012 | [View Comments](#)

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A troublesome water weed that has spread through Lake Tahoe for decades is now established along the length of the Truckee River, posing possible problems of unknown scope and scale.

From the outlet of the Tahoe City Dam to where the river flows into Pyramid Lake 116 miles downstream in the desert, anywhere the river's waters flow slowly enough Eurasian watermilfoil can be found, experts said.

"It goes all the way to the end of the river," said John Mosely, environmental director of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. "In every irrigation diversion, in every backwater, we can find it.

"It's a huge concern," Mosely said.

An exotic and aggressive invader, Eurasian watermilfoil is trouble. The weed crowds out native plants and takes away oxygen needed by fish. It can ruin boating and clog irrigation ditches, water intakes and pipes.

No one knows for sure when it first showed up in Lake Tahoe.

A good guess is that watermilfoil appeared in South Lake Tahoe's Tahoe Keys Marina - a place now thoroughly infested - sometime in the mid- to-late-1980s, said Lars Anderson, a scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture who has tracked the weed's spread since 1994.

Spread by boats or as weed fragments carried by currents took root on the lake bottom. Eurasian watermilfoil can now be found in most of Tahoe's marinas and some other near-shore areas.

Established near the Tahoe City Dam, the weed may have escaped into an overflowing Truckee River during the flood of January 1997.

It was found growing in a quiet part of the river near Verdi a few years later and is now firmly established in the lower river near Pyramid Lake.

The weed has not yet posed any serious problems for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which draws the bulk of its drinking water supplies from the river.

The utility's hydroelectric plants are located in parts of the river that flow too fast for the weed to grow.

Recent multimillion-dollar upgrades to the Highland Canal, which serves the area's primary drinking water treatment plant, substantially increased water velocity and diminished any threat, said Bill Hauck, water supply coordinator for the authority. A troublesome water weed that has spread through Lake Tahoe for decades is now established along the length of the Truckee River, posing possible problems of unknown scope and scale.

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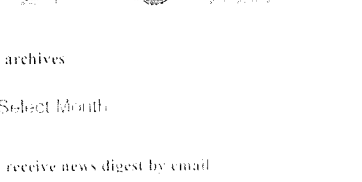
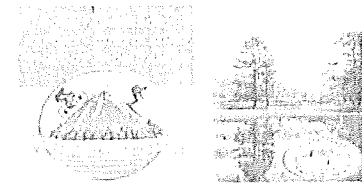
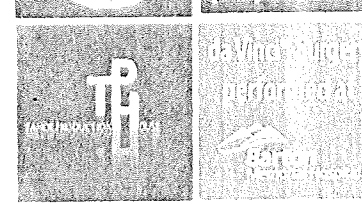
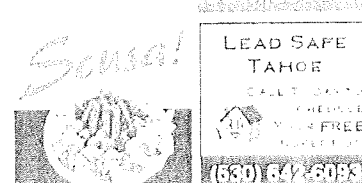
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Spread by boats or as weed fragments carried by currents took root on the lake bottom. Eurasian watermilfoil can now be found in most of Tahoe’s marinas and some other near-shore areas.

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It was found growing in a quiet part of the river near Verdi a few years later and is now firmly established in the lower river near Pyramid Lake.

The weed has not yet posed any serious problems for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which draws the bulk of its drinking water supplies from the river.

The utility’s hydroelectric plants are located in parts of the river that flow too fast for the weed to grow.

Recent multimillion-dollar upgrades to the Highland Canal, which serves the area’s primary drinking water treatment plant, substantially increased water velocity and diminished any threat, said Bill Hauk, water supply coordinator for the authority.



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2 Responses to “Invasive weed spreads from Tahoe to Truckee River to Pyramid Lake”

## 2 Responses to “Invasive weed spreads from Tahoe to Truckee River to Pyramid Lake”

thru the pipe into the lake

thru the pipe into the lake

omg!

thing fish

thru the pipe into the lake

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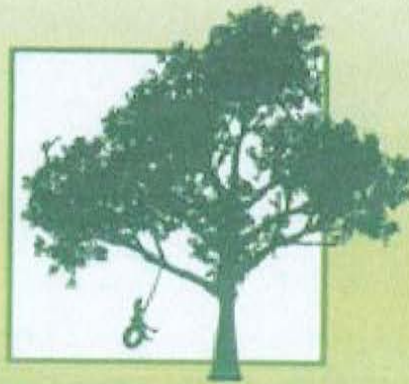
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This message is brought to you by the water lovers at TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY



6/14/12

# Weed infesting waters from Tahoe to Pyramid

BY JEFF DELONG  
RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

Posted: Jun. 18, 2012 | 2:01 a.m.

RENO - A troublesome water weed that has spread through Lake Tahoe for decades is now established along the length of the Truckee River, posing possible problems of unknown scope and scale.

From the outlet of the Tahoe City Dam to where the river flows into Pyramid Lake 116 miles downstream in the desert, anywhere the river's waters flow slowly enough, Eurasian watermilfoil can be found, experts said.

"It goes all the way to the end of the river," said John Mosely, environmental director of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe. "In every irrigation diversion, in every backwater, we can find it.

"It's a huge concern."

An exotic and aggressive invader, Eurasian watermilfoil crowds out native plants and takes away oxygen needed by fish. It can ruin boating and clog irrigation ditches, water intakes and pipes.

No one knows for sure when it first showed up in Lake Tahoe.

A good guess is that watermilfoil appeared in Tahoe Keys Marina - a place in South Lake Tahoe that's now thoroughly infested - sometime in the mid- to late 1980s, said Lars Anderson, a scientist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture who has tracked the weed's spread since 1994.

Spread by boats or as weed fragments carried by currents, Eurasian watermilfoil can now be found in most of Tahoe's marinas and some other near-shore areas.

Established near the Tahoe City Dam, the weed may have escaped into an overflowing Truckee River during the flood of January 1997.

It was found growing in a quiet part of the river near Verdi a few years later and is now firmly established in the lower river near Pyramid Lake.

The weed has not yet posed any serious problems for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which draws the bulk of its drinking water supplies from the river.

The utility's hydroelectric plants are in parts of the river that flow too fast for the weed to grow.

Recent multimillion-dollar upgrades to the Highland Canal, which serves the area's primary drinking water treatment plant, substantially increased water velocity and diminished any threat, said Bill Hauck, water supply coordinator for the authority.

"We haven't had any problems yet. There's always that potential down the road," Hauck said.

The authority isn't waiting for problems to occur.

In 2010, it spent \$20,000 to help fund a project to study the potential of killing the weed in Truckee's Martis Creek Reservoir by covering it with fabric barriers and blocking sunlight.

Previous attempts to control the weed at the reservoir by mowing were unsuccessful and may have actually helped its spread, officials said. Eurasian watermilfoil now covers roughly 80 percent of the reservoir's bottom.

So far, the experiment appears successful, said John Prettyman, spokesman for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is heading up the project.

"It's been slow but it's been successful," Prettyman said. "Without sunlight, it starts dying right away."

If bottom barriers offer some potential to control the weed in lakes and reservoirs, their use in flowing river water could prove problematic.

"It's much more difficult in a river. It's not as easy to put down a barrier," Mosley said.

The tribe is concerned the weed will have an increasing impact on slow-moving backwater habitat so important for fish, reptiles and amphibians - potentially affecting efforts to recover the endangered cui-ui fish and threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Experts agree there's reason for concern.

"It does alter the habitat pretty dramatically," Anderson said. "It can change habitat conditions by directing flow differently and causing (water) to heat up more quickly."

Because the weed has some saline tolerance, there's no reason to believe the salt-rich waters of Pyramid Lake are immune from danger, Anderson said.

"There's no reason that plant wouldn't make it and do well there," Anderson said.

If the weed poses environmental problems, it also could pose problems for the region's tourism economy.

The slow-moving stretch of river just downstream of the Tahoe City Dam - popular for summertime rafting - is the location of thickly growing mats of Eurasian watermilfoil.

"Certainly up in the first part of the river it's affecting recreational users whether they know it or not," said Sue Donaldson, a water quality and weed expert with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

"We have a lot of people trying to use the river now," Donaldson said. "If we start getting a lot of milfoil, it will be less attractive for people. It could impact our ability to sell Reno."

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.lvrj.com/news/weed-infesting-waters-from-tahoe-to-pyramid-159395765.html?ref=765>

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Truckee Meadows Water Authority in compliance with the NRS 354.0015 & MAC 354.501 hereby advertises the following public information. The complete June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2011 Comprehensive Annual Financial reports can be found in the Financial Section of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's Web site at [www.tmh2o.com](http://www.tmh2o.com), if you have any questions, please feel free to call (775) 834-8880.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority  
 Published Annual Fiscal Report  
 Published Pursuant to NRS 354.0015 and MAC 354.501

|   | ACTUAL PRIOR<br>YEAR ENDING<br>6/30/09 | DETAILED<br>CURRENT<br>YEAR ENDING<br>6/30/10 | FINAL APPROVED<br>BUDGET<br>YEAR ENDING<br>6/30/10 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Total Operating Revenues                    | 270,246,433                            | 270,462,731                                   | 270,774,358  |
| Total Operating Expenses                    | 248,272,274                            | 270,857,014                                   | 268,125,961  |
| Operating Income (Loss)                     | 21,974,159                             | (3,394,283)                                   | 2,648,397  |
| Total Non-Operating Revenues                | 4,072,847                              | 2,574,390                                     | 2,038,542  |
| Total Non-Operating Expenses                | 24,343,845                             | 23,020,482                                    | 23,104,118   |
| Net Income (Loss) Before Transfers          | 21,703,161                             | (3,839,875)                                   | (2,417,179)  |
| Transfers-in (Outs)                         |  |   |  |
| Net Income (Loss)                           | \$21,703,161                           | \$-3,839,875                                  | \$-2,417,179                                       |
| Plus Year Beginning Cash & Cash Equivalents | \$123,285,415                          | \$121,106,281                                 | \$121,320,592                                      |
| Fiscal Year Ending Cash & Cash Equivalents  | \$121,893,037                          | \$177,276,406                                 | \$118,903,413                                      |