

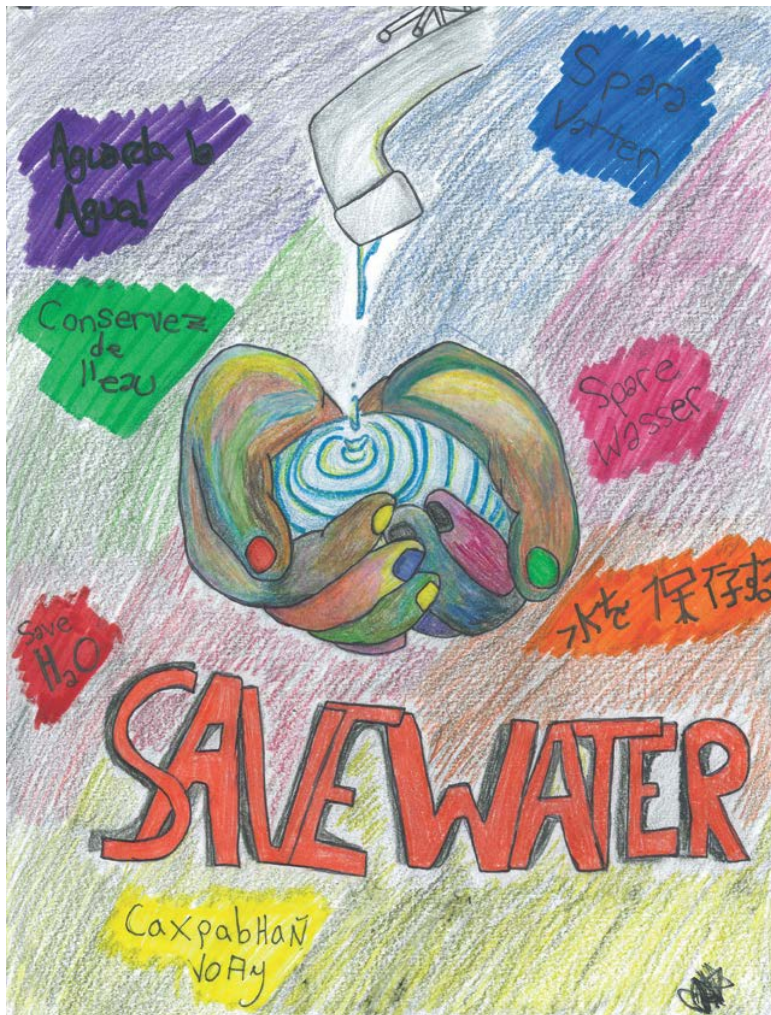


TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 11, 2013

Press Clippings

October 8, 2013 – December 1, 2013



Katherine Horton (Archie Clayton Middle School)
2010 Poster Art Contest – Honorable Mention, Grades 7-8



R fwrehu#; /#5346

People on the Move: Tissier receives award for TMWA work

Jeff Tissier, chief financial officer for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, received the Award of Financial Reporting Achievement from the Government Finance Officers Association for his work on the agency's comprehensive annual financial report. The award recognizes high standards and full disclosure in financial reporting. It is the tenth straight year that the water authority was awarded the recognition. The authority's comprehensive annual financial report also received the association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. To view the annual report, visit http://tmwa.com/about_us/financial_information/.



Rfwrehu#16/#5346

Reno Rebirth: A serious look at blue-sky ideas to improve Reno-Tahoe

Mark Robison

The more you brainstorm, the more it loosens up your thinking so other ideas can filter in.

The more you brainstorm, the more it loosens up your thinking so other ideas can filter in.

With that in mind, we take a look at four outside-the-box ideas by readers for improving Northern Nevada. We talk to experts about them, render verdicts on their probability and note other ideas they sparked.

The ideas are:

- Hydroelectric plants along the Truckee River.
- A monorail system from Reno around Lake Tahoe.
- A toll system charging trains that go through the downtown Reno trench.
- A Christian-themed Burning Man event at Lake Tahoe.

Read more below the poll.

<http://blogs.rgj.com/renorebirth/2013/10/12/outside-the-box-a-serious-look-at-blue-sky-ideas-to-improve-reno-tahoe/>">**Read the complete story, vote on your favorite idea and send us your own ideas in this week's Reno Rebirth article from Mark Robison.**

producer of industrial minerals, said last week it's raising prices on key products by 5 to 7 percent at the start of November.

The company says it's feeling pressure from rising costs in mining, regulatory compliance, labor and hauling, and it expects cost pressures will continue for the next year.

SNC wins defense work

Sierra Nevada Corp. of Sparks won a \$22.6 million contract from the U.S. Special Operations Command for a pilot-age system to be used in degraded visual environments.

Monarch changes casino name

Monarch Casino and Resort Inc. of Reno said last week it's changing the name of its Riviera Black Hawk property in Colorado to "Monarch Casino Black Hawk."

Hotel PR contract

WordenGroup Strategic Public Relations

of Denver has been signed to provide PR services to The Landing Resort and Spa, an 88-room hotel in South Lake Tahoe scheduled to open next month.

ElectraTherm commissions unit

ElectraTherm Inc., a Reno company with technology that generates electricity through recovery of waste heat, said last week it commissioned an installation in Louisiana.

The installation at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Cleco Alternative Energy Center uses solar collectors to heat water that's fed directly into ElectraTherm's machine.

Silver Legacy recognition

Silver Legacy Resort Casino earned the Quality Assurance Award from MLT Vacations, an Atlanta-based vacation packager, for the second year in a row.

TMWA wins accounting award

Truckee Meadows Water Authority and its chief financial officer, Jeff Tissier, received the Award of Financial Reporting Achievement as well as a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

MFG releases guide

MFG Benefits, a health benefits broker in Reno, released a free eGuide, "What you need to know about the Nevada Health Exchange." at www.NevadaHealthLinkInfo.com,

BAWN's new members

New members of the Builders Association of Western Nevada include Colodny Fields LLP, Creative Gardens, Jordan River Construction Inc., MD Barns Northern Nevada, MRB Construction LLC and Tobey-Wade Consulting Ltd,

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Sponsor



The Buffalo Wild Wings in Sparks will continue to host fundraisers for the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows as well as other local organizations. For more information about fundraisers at Buffalo Wild Wings email events@screaminhot.com to contact the franchise fundraising and special events coordinator.

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Debbie Leonard Elected Chair of Appellate Litigation Section of State Bar of Nevada

Debbie Leonard, a partner in the Reno office of McDonald Carano Wilson LLP, has been elected by her peers as the new chair of the Appellate Litigation Section of the State Bar of Nevada, the firm announced today.

The purpose of the Appellate Litigation Section is to enhance the skills of lawyers who handle appeals in state and federal courts, particularly before the Nevada Supreme Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

As chair, Leonard will collaborate with the Nevada Supreme Court justices and staff on efforts to improve the law and the practice of law statewide, including the development of programming and resources for appellate practitioners.

"This is an important time for appellate lawyers and for the State, particularly with the upcoming vote in 2014 on whether to create a court of appeals in Nevada," Leonard said. "I'm honored that my colleagues have selected me to lead the Section during this critical time."

Leonard's term as chair runs through September 2014.

Founded in 1949, McDonald Carano Wilson LLP is a full-service law firm with offices in Las Vegas and Reno. To learn more, visit www.mcdonaldcarano.com.

Dealing With Another Dry Year

Posted: Oct 16, 2013 2:42 PM PDT

Updated: Oct 16, 2013 2:58 PM PDT

The National Weather Service reports severe to exceptional drought right now in most of Nevada and eastern California. It's another climate curiosity. In Reno, we've already burned through most of October with not much to show but chilly mornings and sunny afternoons. Hardly any rain this month, or last month either. For the year, we're coming up short again. It's the kind of thing that brings above-average concern.

At the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, senior hydrologist Bill Hauck told us, "What concerns me is we've had two exceptionally dry years, and assuming normal hydrologic conditions from here on out, our upstream storage is going to be quite depleted by the end of the year."

The National Weather Service says the Truckee Meadows is now in severe drought...that's just a step below extreme drought. When Mother Nature gets this stingy, it's the farmers and ranchers who are affected the most. Basically it affects anything that grows.

Standing next to a parched tree in Caughlin Ranch, arborist Dale Carlon told us the trees he sees there "are not getting the ambient water that they normally get." He worries about non-native trees without irrigation. They're showing stress, like the pine tree not far from McCarran. He told us it's "dead and dying needles on the inside. There's a lot of dead in the top of this, so this tree is under stress!"

The yellowing and sap seeping alongside are evidence that bugs are taking advantage of a parched tree. Carlon showed us how dry it is: "If I take my soil probe, and I check out here at the drip line of the tree where the tree's supposed to be getting water...it's completely dry." For farmers, water was restricted. Storage at Lahontan Reservoir is now at a measly 4% of capacity. TMWA's Bill Hauck says, "That reservoir, for two years now has been exceptionally dry."

But for TMWA customers, the wet winter of 2010 just keeps giving. Reservoir storage here is more than adequate. As he told us, "We're so fortunate compared to the folks at the Carson River where there's no upstream storage. It's enabling us to weather two exceptionally dry years."

But back in Caughlin Ranch, Dale is surrounded by brown. He says we, you and I, have to pick up the slack and at least water our trees. You can find much more information on doing just that, by clicking this link:

www.communityforestry.org

-written by John Potter



October 17, 2013

High court wants answers on Reno mayor's race

By Brian Duggan
bduggan@rgj.com

The Nevada Supreme Court said Wednesday it wants answers to George "Eddie" Lorton's lawsuit that seeks to prevent two term-limited members of the Reno City Council from running for mayor.

"It appears that petition has set forth issues of arguable merit and that an answer to the petition is warranted," wrote Chief Justice Kristina Pickering in the order issued Wednesday.

Pickering gave all the parties involved 30 days to file an answer to Lorton's lawsuit, filed earlier this week, that argues a term-limited member of the Reno City Council cannot run for mayor.

Those termed-out members of the Reno City Council include Dwight Dortch, who's still serving, and Jessica Sferrazza. Both are already fundraising for the race.

So far, there are three conflicting legal opinions on the matter.

The most recent opinion was issued in December 2011 by the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

The official legal counsel for the state Legislature argued termed-out members of the Reno City Council cannot run for mayor because "under the term-limit provision, a person who has served 12 years or more in office as a Council Member on the Reno City Council is not eligible to be elected as the Mayor because the Mayor is a member of Reno's local governing body."

In 2008, the Nevada Attorney General's Office issued an opinion for the city of Reno, which concluded "the offices of the Mayor and City Councilmen are separate offices, and time in office served by an incumbent in one does not count towards term limitations for the other."

And in August 1996, the Nevada Attorney General's Office issued another opinion while Nevada voters were considering a ballot measure to impose term limits on elected officials in the Silver State.

That opinion said "if, on the other hand, the mayor functions as a member of the city council, a governing body, then term limits would apply to that position as well as to the other members of the city council."

The 2011 opinion

State Sen. Ben Kieckhefer, R-Reno, who originally requested the opinion, said he decided make it public on Tuesday amid the debate over who can run for mayor. For the last two years, the opinion was considered private under attorney-client privileges.

Kieckhefer said he originally asked for the opinion two years ago on behalf of an unnamed constituent who was considering a bid for Reno's at-large City Council seat. He said he included the question about how term limits would affect the mayor's race "out of pure curiosity. "

"I got a response back from LCB that was the exact opposite of what I was expecting," Kieckhefer said.

He added, "The only opinion that matters is a judge that will rule on the lawsuit."

Lorton said Wednesday the opinion clearly states who can and can't run.

"I also hope the state supreme court will also take this up because they may not if it does not meet their parameters so we can get early clarification because that's what the citizens deserve of this great city of Reno," Lorton said.

Sferrazza and Dortch have said they are confident they will be able to run for mayor.

If the Nevada Supreme Court takes up the case, Dortch said he feels confident the justices will rule in favor of allowing termed out members of the Reno City Council run for mayor.

"I think it's important that we get this resolved sooner rather than later," Dortch said Wednesday. "I think it's important for the community."

Sferrazza did not return a phone call for comment on Wednesday.

Volunteering for the Truckee (watch video)

Written by Emerson Marcus

Oct. 20, 2013 |

rgj.com



Abby Thomas and her sons Dezi, left, and Josie release Lahontan Cutthroat Trout into the Truckee River as part of the 18th annual Truckee River Day.

Zoom

Abby Thomas and her sons Dezi, left, and Josie release Lahontan Cutthroat Trout into the Truckee River as part of the 18th annual Truckee River Day.

At a glance:• More than 300 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout were released at the Granite Flat Campground south of Truckee.• The release culminated Truckee River Day, which included about 500 volunteers working 10 projects Sunday around the Tahoe watershed.• Lahontan Cutthroat Trout is native to the Truckee River, but basically went extinct in the 1940s after a century of overfishing and dam construction along the river.• The fish released Sunday were from the Pilot Peak strain of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout first found along the Nevada-Utah line in the 1970s and eventually deemed relatives of the ancient Truckee River fish through DNA testing.• The release Sunday, performed primarily for and by children, is a small effort in a long-term project to reintroduce the trout to the Truckee River and Pyramid Lake, officials said.Details: For more information, visit www.truckeeriverwc.org.Source: Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex, Truckee River Watershed Council

A culture of conservation and promoting ecology thrives in Truckee.

Sunday was proof.

About 500 volunteers attended the 18th annual Truckee River Day on Sunday on variety of projects from planting local vegetation to releasing 300 Lahontan Cutthroat Trout fingerlings a mile south of Truckee.

Locals attributed that culture to a growing population in Truckee over the last 30 years — incorporated in 1993 — and the creation of local groups like the Truckee River Watershed Council and Truckee River Day, both founded in 1996.

“A group of people here often talked about the need for small-scale stream and meadow restoration projects,” said Lisa Wallace, the executive director of the Truckee River Watershed Council, which helps fund and lead the annual river day projects every October. “In 1996, what was different is we decided to do something about it.”

The goal: improve ecology and revamp aesthetics.

Almost every project is on public land and the watershed council works closely with the Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and state parks, Wallace said.

The Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, which once inhabited the Truckee River, is basically extinct on the river’s

range after years of overfishing and dam construction. 12-11-13 BOARD Agenda Item 17.pressclips

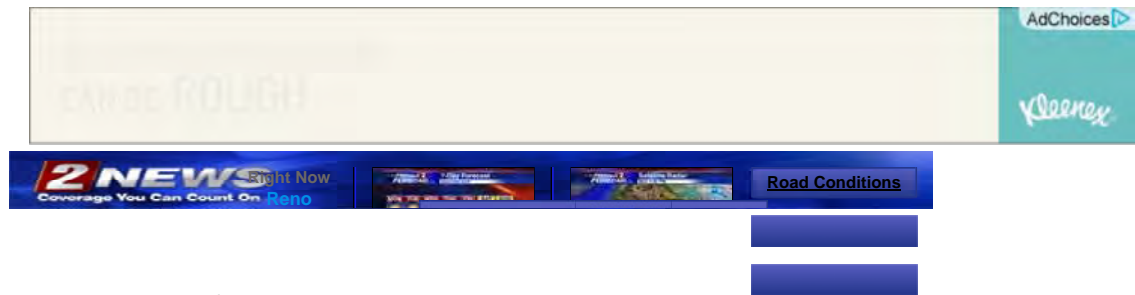
It is making a comeback at Pyramid Lake years after cutthroat found along the Nevada-Utah line were raised on local fish farms and repopulated there in 2006.

Three-hundred of the small fingerlings raised on the Lahontan National Fish Hatchery Complex in Gardnerville were released Sunday.

“Periodically we plant them to see how they may recover or react in a given stream...some may live through life cycle,” Wallace said. “(The release during Truckee River Day is) a small effort to help. It introduces kids and gives them a beneficial experience, and it lets them know about the native trout.”

Truckee River Day’s projects culminate with the release, which serves more as outreach for children, officials said.

Another project Sunday worked to improve vegetation along Coldstream Canyon in west Truckee as part of a California State Parks effort funded by the watershed council and recent state legislation.



House passes \$8.2 billion water projects bill

Posted: Oct 23, 2013 2:15 PM PDT
Updated: Oct 23, 2013 3:46 PM PDT

By HENRY C. JACKSON
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - Bucking some of the same conservative groups that encouraged the government shutdown, Republicans and Democrats united Wednesday to overwhelmingly pass an \$8.2 billion House bill mapping out plans for dams, harbor, river navigation and other water projects for the coming decade.

Members of both parties praised the measure just a week after Congress voted to end a bitterly partisan standoff that shuttered much of the federal government for 16 days and threatened a first-ever default on its debt. It passed the House 417-3.

"It's another example of the people's house focusing on way to strengthen our economy," House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said after the vote. "I'm proud that it passed with a strong bipartisan vote."

Conservative Republicans defied conservative groups like FreedomWorks, Taxpayers for Common Sense and Heritage Action for America that opposed the water projects bill after whipping up sentiment for the government shutdown as a tactic for rolling back President Barack Obama's health care law.

That strategy ultimately failed despite the Obama administration's troubled rollout this month of computerized exchanges for people to buy medical insurance.

The water bill's sponsors attracted support from members of both parties by including projects from coast to coast and labeling the measure an engine for job creation. To attract conservatives, sponsors emphasized the measure's lack of earmarks, or projects for lawmakers' home districts, and changes including an accelerating of required environmental reviews that have dragged out many projects for years.

"Transportation is one of the few things Congress should actually spend money on," said Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., a conservative elected in the tea party wave of 2010.

"Make no mistake, this is a jobs bill," said Rep. Steve Southerland, R-Fla., who like Massie voted last week against the measure that ended the shutdown and averted a potential federal default.

Although the legislation labeled the Water Resources Reform and Development Act "contains reform in the title, it fails to deliver on the promise," 10 conservative groups wrote in a letter to lawmakers. The groups said the bill did not do enough to cut spending or block unneeded projects.

Congress last enacted a bill approving water projects in 2007, a lapse that created pent-up demand among lawmakers for such work.

"This bill is about strengthening our infrastructure so we can remain competitive. It's about economic growth, it's about trade, it's about jobs," said Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pa., chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which wrote the measure.

Added Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Fla., "Repairing our nation's aging infrastructure, including our water infrastructure, is the best jobs creator out there."

Shuster's committee had no firm estimate on how many jobs would be created nationally by the legislation.

Wednesday's debate underscored lawmakers' sensitivity to public opinion polls showing voters' disdain for Congress rising to new heights.

"We have today the opportunity to demonstrate that Congress can work toward the best interest of our country," said Rep. Ted Yoho, R-Fla., a conservative who opposed last week's bill reopening the government and averting default.

Business groups led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers strongly backed the bill. The chamber distributed state-by-state fact sheets and said it would consider the measure a "key vote" when it determines which lawmakers to support in next year's election.

The legislation would allow work to proceed on 23 shipping channel, flood management and other water projects that the Corps of Engineers has started studying. Actual money for the work would have to be provided in future legislation.

The bill gives the go-ahead to a slew of projects, including a more than \$800 million flood protection project in Fargo, N.D., and Moorhead, Minn.; a \$461 million on expansion of the Savannah, Ga., port; and up to \$43 million for the San Clemente, Calif., shoreline. The measure increases the share of federal dollars for the Olmsted Lock and Dam project on the border between Illinois and Kentucky.

It also would shelve at least \$12 billion of old, inactive projects approved in the last water resources bill while accelerating environmental reviews, which Republicans said had slowed many projects almost to a halt.

12-11-13 BOARD Agenda Item 17.pressclips

Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, said the bill would allow the deepening of Texas' Sabine-Neches Waterway, which he said he and his predecessors in Congress have been working on for 16 years.

"Since that time, all four of my kids have finished high school, graduated from college, gotten married and given me 10 grandkids. The United States has fought two major wars. ... Something wrong with this picture," Poe said.

Some Democrats and environmental groups objected to the speedier reviews, saying they would weaken environmental protections. Many Democrats said they would back the bill anyway and try to change the language when House and Senate bargainers try to put a compromise version together later. The Senate passed its version of the water bill in May with a broad, bipartisan vote.

"The real problem is lack of money, not environmental reviews," said Rep. Rush Holt, D-N.J.

Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Follow reporter Henry C. Jackson: www.twitter.com/hjacksonap

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R fwrehu#56/#5346

Fluoridation covertly disposes of toxins

Advertising campaigns by the federal Department of Health and Human Services promoting water fluoridation are an easy line item for elimination by congressional budget cutters. TV spots and billboards stating that fluoride is good for us have left the public with serious misinformation about this toxic heavy metal.

Begun in the 1930s by Nazi Germany for pacifying the population, water fluoridation was promoted by food processors and the American Dental Association as a convenient means of preventing tooth decay caused by an overly sweet postwar American diet. Mass medication via municipal water supplies was also a covert means for disposing of a toxic industrial waste byproduct.

The basic premise that to kill bacteria on the surface of the teeth by exposure to a toxin in tap water, but that same chemical will have absolutely no harmful effects on any other bodily tissues as it is ingested and absorbed into the bloodstream, is fraudulent. Fluoride is a proven neurotoxin, damages vital organs, and has been shown to inhibit proper skeletal growth and brain development.

Nevadans living outside of Clark County where fluoridation is mandated have the clarity of thought to recognize the deceit of industry propaganda. Leave our water alone!

Bill Stremmel, Sparks



R fwrehu#59/#5346

Colorado River faces critical snow season

By *HENRY BREAN*
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Pray for snow.

That's about all Southwestern water users can do as the drought-stricken Colorado River enters what figures to be its most important snow season in recent memory.

After 14 years of record drought, it will take an unusually wet year — one like the basin saw in 2011 — to stave off the first-ever water shortages on the overdrawn river and slow the decline of its two main reservoirs.

Lake Mead, the source for 90 percent of the Las Vegas Valley's water supply, has seen its surface fall by more than 100 feet since the drought began. Current projections call for it to lose another 25 vertical feet of water and sink to a record low by November 2014.

Should the lake keep falling from there, it could force the shutdown of one of two intake pipes used to deliver water to the valley. The Southern Nevada Water Authority is rushing to complete a new \$817 million intake that will draw from the deepest part of the reservoir, but the complicated project is unlikely to be finished until late next year or early 2015.

"This is an alarming trend, and one that we would really like to see come to an end," water authority spokesman J.C. Davis <http://bit.ly/15PQXWa> alt="" title="" target="_blank">told the Las Vegas Review-Journal. "Even if we have an 'average' year on the Colorado this year, Lake Mead is projected to continue falling. In order to make a significant dent, we would need at a minimum something on the order of 150 percent of normal."

Almost all of the river's flow starts as snow that collects in the mountains of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming from November to late May. Lake Powell, on the Utah-Arizona border, fills with that water in early summer, rising sometimes by a foot or more a day as the snow starts to melt and water flows downstream.

The federal water regulators mark time on a similar schedule with a water year that runs from Oct. 1, when the first snow begins to collect in the mountains that feed the river, to Sept. 30, when the last of the runoff hits Lake Powell.

"We're just into the 2014 water year now," said Angus Goodbody, water supply forecaster for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Portland. "Usually by the end of October is when the seasonal snowpack is starting to build. It will be interesting to see what happens."

At least one commercial weather service is predicting a white winter where it will matter most.

Pennsylvania-based AccuWeather, which supplies data for the Las Vegas Review-Journal's daily weather page, is forecasting a wet, snowy season in the Northwest, the Rockies and in California, where heavy precipitation in December and January could help fill reservoirs drained by dry

conditions in that state.

"I think this can definitely alleviate some drought issues," said Paul Pastelok, a long-range forecaster for AccuWeather.com.

Just don't get your hopes up quite yet, Goodbody said.

"I'd be reluctant to put a whole lot of stock in forecasts like that," he said. "They're fairly low-skill."

Long-range forecasts for the Rockies are tricky because the mountains rest between two areas generally influenced by the El Niño and La Niña weather phenomena. It's even more complicated right now, Goodbody said, because the climate is in what he called a "neutral phase" between El Niño and La Niña.

But the stage is set for a good winter on the Colorado.

The heavy downpours that triggered devastating floods in eastern Colorado last month also soaked the headwaters for the river, moistening soil left parched by the long dry spell. Goodbody said that could allow more snowmelt to flow down into the river system rather than be absorbed by the dry ground.

The flow of water into Lake Powell was more than twice what it normally is in September, which is the driest month of most water years but ranked as the third wettest of water year 2013.

That's almost unheard of, Goodbody said, and it serves to illustrate just how unusually wet September was and how unusually dry it was during the rest of last year.

The stakes are high this snow season, and not just for Southern Nevada. The Colorado supplies water to more than 30 million people across a region that produces roughly a quarter of the nation's gross domestic product.

Under normal conditions, Lake Powell releases at least 8.23 million acre-feet of water a year downstream to Lake Mead for use by Nevada, Arizona, California and Mexico. This year's release was cut to 7.48 million acre-feet, the lowest amount ever, to slow the decline of the upstream reservoir.

Each lake is now more than half empty, and the combined amount of water left in them is nearing its lowest point since Powell was filled for the first time.

Even in an average year, the Colorado does not carry enough water to fill the allocations parceled out decades ago to seven Western states and Mexico.

Nevada's annual share is 300,000 acre-feet, or about 2 percent of the total. If the Las Vegas Valley went one year without using any water from Lake Mead, the impact on the reservoir would be a rise of about 3 feet.

One acre-foot of water is more than enough to serve two average valley homes for a year.

"Under the most likely scenario," Davis said, the release from Lake Powell to Lake Mead will be cut to 7.48 million acre-feet again next year, pushing Mead even lower.

The only thing that can change that now is snow.

KOLO TV

Winterizing Irrigation Systems for the Year



Reno, NV -- Considering we were in the 70's over the weekend, it does seem like it's freezing outside, but thankfully it's still not cold enough to freeze your sprinkler lines. If you haven't drained your pipes, you're in luck!

Frozen pipes can lead to expensive repairs that can cost you hundreds of dollars, that is if you don't properly turn them off for the winter. The good news is it only takes a couple minutes to get it done and now is the perfect time to winterize before the big chill begins.

"In the springtime when we turn the water on, there's always like a break in the PVC pipings, so maybe we're doing something wrong," a Reno resident said.

'Lived in the Bay Area where in the wintertime where we didn't have to worry about freezing, so that's a new concern for me," a man who recently moved to Reno said.

"It's very easy to be away from the house for a few hours and have something broke; you could have water problems before you even knew it," a Reno man said.

It's important to turn off your lawn sprinkler system for the season, but it's more than just turning a dial.

"It can get a little tricky here and there and it's just little things that need to be done a certain way to get done properly," Nazario Marin, field supervisor for Signature Landscape, said.

Marin has been in the business for more than 20 years, and says he works on 800 to 900 winterizations each year, but there are those who need a friendly reminder.

"Every year, we get those last-minute calls where water is just running down the street because people don't turn their water off," he said.

To avoid those headaches this year, winterizing your sprinkling system in the next couple of weeks can save you up to a thousand dollars in repairs.

"If the water comes out of the ground, you know something is wrong, but if it's on the ground, it can go under your house and do other damage."

The first step is making sure you shut off and drain the irrigation system, turn valves right to close and left to open. In just about 20 minutes, your sprinkler system and home can be protected against old man winter.

"It's got to be done and it's better to do it sooner than later."

It costs about \$60 to hire an expert to winterize your sprinkler system, which is a small amount when you compare it to the cost of repairs. In case you want to do it yourself, there is a step-by-step tutorial posted on the link below.

- **Related Links**
- [Winterization To-Do List](#)

Winterizing Irrigation Systems for the Year



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- **Related Links**
- [Winterization To-Do List](#)

Flouride in water has great benefits

Nov 06

rgj.com

Bob Gold wrote condemning the fluoridation of water ["Most fluoride would go down the drain," Letters, Oct. 8].

My daughter, at 40-plus years of age, has never had a cavity. She was born in Atlanta and raised in Columbia, S.C. Both cities recognized the benefits of fluoridated water, which diminishes or eliminates cavities.

Gold states "we the people" voted against this beneficial procedure but the hype then was uneducated negative reaction. Most absurd was the claim dentists support fluoridation to get more business. The opposite is the fact. restorative dentists would lose business if there were no cavities to fill. You may not benefit from the fluoride but parents of young children would be spared the expense of dental care.

Moreover, as adults, those children will be spared the discomfort of drilling and filling. Please think more broadly.

Arthur F. Di Salvo, Reno

River restoration near Tracy plant nears completion

Written by Jeff DeLong
Nov 07

rgj.com



Ground water indicates the path the new river channel will take when completed along I-80 east Tuesday Nov. 5, 2013. Marilyn Newton/RGJ

BY THE NUMBERS

1: Mile of river to be restored. **10:** Total miles of river restored when project is completed. **\$6 million:** Cost of project. **400,000:** Cubic yards of earth to be moved. **100,000:** Tons of rock to be used. • **3,000:** Bare root shrubs to be planted soon. **1,000 to 1,500:** Mature cottonwood trees to be planted soon. **7,000 to 10,000:** Willows to be planted soon. Source: The Nature Conservancy.

A stretch of the lower Truckee River will soon take a new turn as crews wrap up work on the river's latest major restoration effort.

In a couple of weeks, work on a new and meandering river channel near where the Truckee flows past the Tracy power plant will be complete. After that, water will be diverted from the river's existing channel to flow along its new course and all that will remain for the \$6 million project is wrap-up work and the planting of trees and other vegetation that should flourish there for years to come.

"It's becoming what it should be, what it used to be," Mickey Hazelwood, Truckee River project manager for the Nature Conservancy, said of changes at Tracy and other restored sections of the lower Truckee.

When finished, improvements at the Tracy site will bring restoration efforts to a milestone of sorts, with 10 miles of the river between Lockwood and USA Parkway then restored to a state much closer to nature's intent.

All along the lower river, the government and private landowners over the years altered what was a natural, sinuous river system to a straight-shot channel. Many of the changes were made decades ago by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in a well-intentioned effort to reduce flooding in Reno-Sparks.

The result was a human-caused alteration of the river ecosystem that proved detrimental to the landscape, fish and wildlife. Projects like the one now wrapping up at Tracy are designed to restore natural channel meanders to the river, allow its waters to spread naturally over the floodplain during floods and return the area to a state beneficial to natural vegetation and the critters that make the river home.

The Tracy project is the fifth major restoration project conducted by the Conservancy downstream of the Truckee Meadows. The first, completed in 2006, rehabilitated the river at the historic McCarran Ranch where U.S. Sen. Patrick McCarran, D-Nev., was raised. Other restoration projects were completed at Lockwood, at the Mustang Ranch — site of the Nevada's first legalized bordello — and at the 102 Ranch near USA Parkway.

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Most of the projects were substantially funded by the Truckee River flood project, which contributed \$1.5 million toward the Tracy restoration. Tracy will likely be the last funded with flood project dollars, as other restoration projects planned for the future have been removed to cut back project costs.

Hazelwood said future restoration of the lower Truckee will continue with funds from other sources.

Once the river is flowing in its new channel and other work is wrapped up, efforts will focus on planting trees, shrubs and other natural vegetation. Among the coming changes will be replanting of more than 1,000 17- to 20-foot cottonwood trees that will be moved from where they are now growing at the restored McCarran Ranch.

“Now it’s the McCarran nursery,” Hazelwood said.

[print](#)

City of Sparks, Reno collaborate in repairs to TMWRF

by [Garrett E. Valenzuela](#)

11.12.13 - 05:17 pm

The Sparks City Council convened Tuesday following the Veteran's Day holiday and was right back to business as it approved additional reimbursement to the City of Reno for an amended contract for Phase 2 electrical improvements at the Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility (TMWRF).

The City of Sparks will give the City of Reno a little more than \$86,000 covering its share of the additional \$274,190 for the amended contract between Reno and CDM-Smith, bringing the total cost to \$729,670 for CDM-Smith's consulting and design services. The City of Sparks owns about 31 percent of TMWRF in a shared ownership with the City of Reno.

Deputy City Manager for Community Services Neil Krutz said Phase 2 electrical upgrades are still in the works, but Phase 1 replaced transformers, and the switch gears and low voltage distribution centers associated with them, at TMWRF in order to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency permit and to benefit the "health and safety of plant personnel."

"During the course of design for the Phase II electrical, several needed improvements were identified that were not included in the original scope of work," Krutz said in his report. "The additional scope of work will include addressing key electrical issues in the nitrification facility, filter building and the design of quick connects for generators to supply emergency power to facility buildings in the event of an electrical failure."

Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger said in a staff report that one major improvement as part of the amended contract will be installation of standby power quick connect facilities throughout the plant to help provide a quick access to mobile standby power facilities during a localized power failure. Design engineers discovered a near failure of the medium voltage switch gear during plant evaluation which, if failed, "would have left TMWRF unable to treat waste water for an extended period of time."

The Sparks City Council also received a presentation on the Sparks Middle School Compassion Fund by Chris Askin, president of the Community Foundation of Western Nevada. The fund was started the day after the fatal shooting at Sparks Middle School in October and Askin said gifts began filtering in immediately through online, phone and mail contributions.

The Community Foundation said Tuesday more than 100 gifts were received totaling more than \$16,000. Contributions were either sent in or were organized fundraisers through various outside groups who promised the donations to the fund.

Tracy Turner, chief philanthropy officer at the Community Foundation, cited the

Swing for Sparks event Saturday at the Reno Aces Ballpark which raised nearly \$3,700 for the SMS Compassion Fund. Turner said totals are tallied every Thursday, which means the fund will be close to \$20,000 by the week's end.

“Because we had the fund set up so quickly, many of the telephone calls coming in about planning fundraisers were very emotional,” Turner said. “We were able to refer them to sources where they could find help and relief as well.”

Turner held up a bucket bearing the Sparks Middle School logo and said it was placed at the University of Nevada, Reno's Mackay Stadium entry gate during the Cannon Game against the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She said a thick layer of change was collected along with bills ranging from \$1 to \$100, collecting more than \$5,200 in one afternoon.

“Three checks were delivered to the victim's families and two more will go out this week,” Turner said. “It was important that we get the money out as soon as possible. The families had an opportunity to ask questions about how the fund works so they could have a high degree of confidence the fund was doing what it was supposed to do.”

Councilwoman Julia Ratti was the chair of the SMS Compassion Fund committee and she expressed her gratitude toward the Community Foundation and the Sparks community for supporting the affected families.

“Unfortunately, in situations like this, there is a lot of opportunity for fraud,” Ratti said. “I am so proud of the relationship with the Community Foundation and I knew they were the absolute right people to go to. I think it was important for the people at Sparks Middle School, and everyone affected, to hear the message being sent from the community and that they were there to support them in an unintrusive way.”

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Nevada attorney general: state wins whistleblower lawsuit

By David Jacobs

A federal jury unanimously agreed that J-M Manufacturing knowingly manufactured and sold to the state of Nevada and other state municipalities and local water districts substandard plus polyvinyl chloride pipe (PVC) used in water and sewer systems, Nevada Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto announced today in a news release.

"We have been fighting this case for seven years," Masto said in the release.

In a statement Thursday night, the company said that it would immediately appeal the verdict.

"While we respect and thank the jury members for their service, we disagree strongly with the verdict," said Neal Gordon, JM Eagle's vice president of marketing and waterworks sales, in a statement. "We believe we have valid grounds for an appeal, which we will file as immediately as possible, and we look forward to having this verdict reviewed and set aside."

Masto said that as a result of the jury's decision, J-M, now known as JM Eagle, will have to pay an as yet-undetermined amount of damages, according to the release.

The money would be paid to three states – Nevada, New Mexico and Virginia — and 42 cities and water districts that joined a whistleblower lawsuit, as well as dozens of other states, city water districts that did not join the lawsuit, she said.

The Nevada AG's investigation, the news release said, uncovered 16 failures of JM pipe at various locations with several entities experiencing numerous failures, including the Nevada State Public Works' project at the High Desert Prison, city of Reno, Las Vegas Valley Water District, and Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

JM Eagle pipe exploded twice on two Truckee Meadows Water Authority installation workers, the news release said.

The city of Reno also experienced multiple failures during the installation of JM pipe in 2002, according to the release.

In the statement, JM Eagle's Gordon said: "During a seven-week trial with over 20 witnesses, JM Eagle presented irrefutable evidence that our products meet and even exceed national standards based on hundreds of independent tests and audits by outside certifying agencies."

Those represented by the Nevada AG's Office includes: Boulder City, Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County Reclamation District, Douglas County, Elko County, Eureka County, Fall Fernley, Henderson, Las Vegas Valley Water District, Lyon County, Mesquite, Moapa Valley Water District, North Las Vegas, Reno, Sparks, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Virgin Valley Water District, and Washoe County.

The seven-week civil trial took place in federal district court in Los Angeles, Masto said.

[http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2013/Miscellaneous/Attorney General Masto State Wins Whistleblower Lawsuit Regarding Inferior PVC Pipe Used in Nevada Water and Sewer Sys](http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2013/Miscellaneous/Attorney_General_Masto_State_Wins_Whistleblower_Lawsuit_Regarding_Inferior_PVC_Pipe_Used_in_Nevada_Water_and_Sewer_Systems)
> Click here to read the attorney general's statement

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/jm-eagle-will-appeal-jury-verdict-in-false-claims-act-case-because-jury-was-not-permitted-to-see-all-of-the-evidence-231997671.html> > Click here to read the company's response

Sierra forecast dry for now, winter a question mark (watch video)

Written by Jeff DeLong

Nov. 14, 2013 |

rgj.com

Such “neutral” years as this have been dry in the past. Others have been wet, including some that produced significant flooding, Barbato said.

“Don’t rule anything out. I think that’s the key message for our winter,” Smallcomb said.

Reservoirs along the Truckee River system await replenishment.

The biggest, Lake Tahoe, was at 17 percent of capacity for reservoir storage Thursday. When full, the top 6 feet of Tahoe above the lake’s natural rim stored by the Tahoe City dam is available for Reno-Sparks and other downstream users. The other most important reservoir for municipal water use, Boca, was at 24 percent of capacity.

“It’s not off to a good start, unfortunately,” said Chad Blanchard, federal water master. “I sure would like to see some storms coming in. The longer it stays dry, the less likely it is to turn around.”

That said, the season is early and the most important time for snow and rain is ahead, Blanchard said.

“We’ve had years where it started out slow and we just got pounded,” Blanchard said. “Anything could happen.”



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Utility Spotlight

Truckee Meadows Water Authority



Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) has received the "Directors Award of Recognition" from the Partnership for Safe Water. With this award, TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant ranks among the highest performing water treatment plants in the country, producing high quality water for more than 330,000 residents in the Reno-Sparks area. TMWA received the award for successfully completing a rigorous Self-Assessment and Peer Review process that was developed by national

experts and includes thorough review of factors that may limit treatment plant



Regional partnership launches "Water to Go"

On Oct. 24, the Santa Clara Valley Water District participated in the launch of "Water to Go," a regional partnership with the Santa Clara County Public Health Department and FIRST 5 Santa Clara County. The installation of 100 refillable water bottle stations will occur over the next three years; 50 of these stations will be funded by the water district to increase access to clean drinking water in local schools. Partial funding was made possible through the Safe, Clean Water and Natural Flood Protection Program (Measure B), which was approved by Santa Clara County voters in 2012. These stations will help reinforce the message that local tap water is safe and healthy and help local schools comply with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Senate Bill 1413), which requires access to free

drinking water during meal times in school food service areas.

For more information, please visit: valleywater.org/SCW-A2.aspx or click [here](#) to see the event video.



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Many miles of disputed pipe in region

Officials: Amount is uncertain, but it's significant

By Jeff DeLong
jdelong@rgj.com

It's unclear exactly how much potentially flawed plastic water and sewer pipes that are the subject of a whistle-blower lawsuit are buried underground in Reno-Sparks and other Northern Nevada communities but the amount is significant, officials said the day after a federal jury decided against the pipe manufacturer.

A jury in Los Angeles found Thursday that J-M Manufacturing, now called JM Eagle, knowingly manufactured and sold substandard plastic polyvinyl chloride pipe, or PVC, to Nevada and many of its local jurisdictions, including Reno and Sparks. In a statement, company representatives defended their product and said they would immediately appeal the verdict.

More than 600 miles of JM PVC pipe have been installed for water and sewer systems across Nevada but the precise amount installed in Northern Nevada could not be disclosed Friday, said Susan K. Stewart, a deputy attorney general for Nevada. Among places the pipe was installed were Reno and Sparks, Washoe County, Carson City, Douglas County, Fallon and Lyon County, among others, Stewart said.

"I cannot quantify exactly how much pipe the Northern Nevada entities have purchased," Stewart said. "Some entities do track exactly where that piece of pipe comes from; others do not."

The Nevada AG uncovered 16 failures of JM pipe at various locations around the state, including at Southern Nevada's High Desert Prison, where hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent to replace failed pipes, Stewart said. Failures were also documented in systems operated by the city of Reno and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the primary water provider for Reno-Sparks.

The water authority has documented several failures linked to water pipes manufactured by JM, said Scott Estes, the utility's engineering director. In one case, the pipe exploded twice during installation, injuring one utility worker who was thrown from his feet.

"We've had a couple of issues, isolated, but nothing really has come up as far as a trend," Estes said.

Between 1990 and 2010, 2.5 million feet — about 473 miles — of PVC pipe was installed for the utility and its private predecessor, Sierra Pacific, Estes said. Because records identifying pipe manufacturers were not kept until the utility became aware of the lawsuit, it's not clear how much of the pipe — used for smaller water mains serving residential and light commercial projects and installed by builders — was made by JM, Estes said.

"We don't know exactly how much of that (2.5 million feet) was from JM but that's the most it could be," Estes said.

At the city of Reno, some JM 24-inch pipe being installed to transport treated wastewater at UNR Farms exploded during pressure testing in 2002 as well as two other times during subsequent testing,

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said Terri Svetich, city engineering manager. Svetich testified as a witness during the trial. JM pipe was also installed elsewhere in Reno, including 5 miles of sewer line in Stead, Svetich said.

The original complaint was filed in 2006 on behalf of John Hendrix, a former engineer for JM who claimed he lost his job after complaining to superiors over quality of the company's product. Later joining the suit were Nevada, reportedly one of the largest purchasers of JM pipe, Virginia and New Mexico. Attorneys argued that the firm deliberately cut costs through the manufacture of weaker but more profitable PVC.

As a result of Thursday's jury decision, JM faces an as-yet determined amount of damages to be paid to the three states and 42 cities and water districts would joined in the lawsuit. Damages would cover the cost of replacing pipe.

Neal Gordon, a JM vice president, said Thursday that over the course of a seven-week trial the company "presented irrefutable evidence that our products meet and even exceed national standards."

"We feel it is of utmost importance to defend the reputation of the company in the face of meritless allegations and to honor the integrity, skill and dedication of our employees," Gordon said.

The company has 22 manufacturing facilities throughout the United States.



This is a file photograph of a cloud-seeding generator. / Tom Swafford/DRI

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California to begin cloud seeding program after drought

Nov. 11, 2013

SACRAMENTO — With California experiencing a second straight dry year, water agencies are turning to cloud seeding to help pad the state's snowpack.

The practice has been around for decades, but cloud seeding has gone mainstream as a result of new technology and research showing its reliable, the Sacramento Bee reported Monday.

In a report this year, the California Department of Water Resources estimated cloud seeding projects generate 400,000 acre-feet of additional water supply annually in the state. That's about half the volume of Folsom Reservoir. An acre-foot is enough water to supply a typical household for a year.

"The message is starting to sink in that this is a cost-effective tool," said Jeff Tilley, director of weather modification at the Desert Research Institute in Reno, which practices cloud seeding in the Lake Tahoe Basin

and Eastern Sierra Nevada. "The technology is better; we understand how to do cloud seeding much better. And because we know how to do it more effectively, it's definitely taken more seriously."

Cloud seeding involves spraying fine particles of silver iodide into a cloud system. Under the right conditions, the silver iodide causes water droplets in the clouds to form ice crystals that grow larger and turn into snowflakes. The goal is to increase the amount of precipitation that would otherwise fall.

Proponents say cloud seeding is cheaper than desalination, new dams and even conservation projects. Additionally, they say concerns about its environmental effects are unfounded.

More than a dozen California watersheds have cloud-seeding projects, many of which began running last week, the Bee reported.

The cloud-seeding push comes as the state goes through a dry spell. San Francisco's 3.95-inch rainfall total so far this year is the lowest precipitation total in the city between Jan. 1 and Nov. 7 since record keeping started 164 years ago, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Other parts of the state also have seen relatively little precipitation

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TMWA Urges Residents to Winterize Pipes

Posted: Nov 20, 2013 4:04 PM PST

Updated: Nov 21, 2013 8:42 AM PST

The colder the weather gets, the higher your chances are of having your pipes freeze. That's why experts say now is the time to winterize your house, if you haven't already.

Andy Gebhardt is the Manager of Customer Services for the **Truckee Meadows Water Authority**. He says there are some easy things you can do to avoid problems around the house, or face the consequences. "It's time, it's money, and you're going to have to call a plumber," Gebhardt said. "It's going to cost you hundreds and maybe thousands of dollars."

One of the most common mistakes people make is waiting too long to turn off sprinkler systems. "They don't winterize their irrigation system, we get a couple of good freezes, and then boom," Gebhardt said. "The pipes are breaking and they're frantic."

TMWA is hoping people can avoid these problems, simply by turning the sprinkler valve off and draining the system.

Broken pipes don't just cost time and money. They can also waste a lot of water. "Thousands of gallons," Gebhardt said. "We've had leaks and breaks that have doubled somebody's bill, sent 30,000 gallons until they are finally able to figure it out."

All hoses should also be disconnected from exterior water faucets, so remaining water in the faucet drains out completely.

"Someone figures 'Well, I've turned off the water. I should be fine. The faucet's off.' Well, that line is charged," Gebhardt said.

It's also a good idea to insulate water heater pipes, especially if they're in an unheated garage. Pipes often break, leaving driveways under a couple inches of water, and plumbers working around the clock.

You can also protect pipes in your crawl space by keeping cold air out. That's why you should close all exterior vents. "If you have a couple of open holes and that north wind starts howling through there, that will freeze those pipes and they'll break underneath your house," Gebhardt said. "Which causes a lot of heartache and discontent."

If you're not going to be home for awhile, it's a good idea to keep your thermostat set at 55-degrees to keep pipes warm.

It's also important to know where your water shutoff valve is, and have a good plumber just in case.

Written by Paul Nelson

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Lake Tahoe's degraded near-shore environment new priority for research

Written by Jeff DeLong
Nov 03

rgj.com



Lake Tahoe at Sand Harbor, taken March 19, 2013. / Tim Dunn/RGJ

Tahoe's near-shore problems

Source: Lake Tahoe near-shore evaluation report

- Algae attached to rocks: Slimy green periphyton is coating shoreline rocks in increasing amounts.
- Murky summer waters: Unlike average clarity in the mid-lake, shoreline waters turn cloudy at times.
- Fertilizers and other concentrated pollutants: Close to shore, contaminants are temporarily concentrated before being diluted in open water.
- Disappearing native fish: Minnows native to Lake Tahoe are plummeting in population, in some

locations disappearing entirely.

- Invading weeds, clams and bass: Non-native Eurasian watermilfoil, Asian clams and warm-water fish are spreading across the shallow lake bottom.
- Vulnerability to rising temperatures: Water could grow particularly warm close to shore, amplifying the impacts of a warming climate.

What they're saying

'This represents the initial collaborative step between the science community and the resource management agencies to develop a comprehensive approach for assessing and managing the near-shore ecology and aesthetics of Lake Tahoe.'-- Alan Heyvaert, Desert Research Institute. 'The near-shore environment is inherently complex since it is immediately adjacent to stormwater flow and runoff from the developed and undeveloped portions of the surrounding watershed. Therefore, it is recommended that a finer scale of evaluation and monitoring is necessary in this zone, especially for the nuisance blooms of attached algae found on rocks and other hard surfaces in the near-shore.'-- John Reuter, UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center. 'The introduction of aquatic invasive species has already produced some profound changes in the near-shore. Further establishment of aquatic invasive species in the near-shore has the potential to unravel the tremendous progress made toward protecting Lake Tahoe's clarity.'-- Sudeep Chandra, University of Nevada, Reno.

For more than 40 years, scientists have carefully scrutinized the cobalt waters in the middle of Lake Tahoe, documenting a steady and disturbing decline in the lake's famed clarity.

Discoveries made through those detailed studies led to multimillion-dollar efforts to, among other things, control the discharge of fine sediments from Tahoe's roads and urban centers into the lake — changes that have now apparently arrested the decline in water clarity in what many are cautiously calling a success story.

Now, researchers insist, it's time to focus the scientific spotlight on parts of the lake closest to shore. It's

that part of Tahoe, the place most commonly experienced by visitors and residents, that now appears to be in the most trouble.

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A new report focuses on the “apparent deterioration” of Tahoe’s so-called near-shore environment, a band of water ringing the lake’s shoreline extending about 350 feet out and to depths of about 69 feet in mid-summer.

It is here where water grows murky in the summer, where slippery green algae is increasingly found attached to submerged rocks. It is here where invading aquatic weeds are spreading, as are non-native clams that threaten to alter a sensitive ecology. Bass and other warmwater fish are spreading as well, while populations of native minnows are crashing.

Tahoe’s near-shore is the place where pollutants flowing from land are most concentrated. It is also the place that stands to be most affected by warming temperatures from a changing climate.

“Things are changing quickly,” said Alan Heyvaert, a scientist from Reno’s Desert Research Institute and principal investigator for a study that also involved researchers from the University of Nevada, Reno and University of California, Davis, among others.

“This is the area of the lake that has become a focus,” Heyvaert recently told governors of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. “We know what’s been happening in the deep part of the lake. That’s what has driven a lot of the action here over the last several decades. As conditions improved, focus has shifted to the near shore.”



G h f h p e h u # 1 / # 5 3 4 6

Nevada's superstorm scenario: Scientists say it's only a matter of time (see simulation)

Scientists say deluge that would dwarf 1997 flood is only a matter of time

By Jeff DeLong
jdelong@rgj.com

Trouble comes via a vast aerial plume stretching across the Pacific — an atmospheric river — that hoses the West Coast with moisture for weeks.

The first big storm blasts the Sierra with snow and hurricane-force wind, dropping 25 feet of snow around Lake Tahoe and twice as much in the mountains to the west. There's a lull. A warmer storm, still steered by that churning river of moisture over the ocean, hits next, dropping more than a foot of rain in the mountains. Reno gets a year's worth of precipitation in a matter of days.

Weeks after what may have been the strongest typhoon on record decimated the Philippines, a few months after record flooding inundated parts of Colorado and a year after Superstorm Sandy savaged the East Coast, scientists and emergency responders are now taking a look at a stormy scenario that could produce similar devastation in Northern Nevada and throughout California.

If it happens, and researchers say it will some day, it would far surpass the last big flood that hit Reno-Sparks in January 1997. Experts say flooding could be two to three times worse than what was experienced then.

<http://www.rgj.com/images/flood/arkstorm.mp4> type="video/mp4">
<http://acorn.rgj.com/media/arkstorm.ogg> type="video/ogg"> Your browser does not support the video tag.

The projected flood waters from an ARkStorm would dwarf the flood waters that filled the Truckee Meadows in 1997 and 2005.

“Think about 1997 on steroids,” said Maureen McCarthy, executive director of the Tahoe Science Consortium and lead researcher in an ongoing effort to gauge potential effects of an epic storm on Reno-Sparks, Carson City and Lake Tahoe.

It's called an ARkStorm, a term coined by the U.S. Geological Survey, with “AR” standing for atmospheric river. USGS started considering the consequences of such an event in 2008 after the agency completed a similar exercise exploring the scenario of a massive earthquake striking Southern California.

The issue is not just one of meteorological speculation, said Dale Cox, project manager for the USGS. These storms have hit the West before, the last time during a stormy siege that lasted from mid-December 1861 into January 1862 — an event of such magnitude that it bankrupted a flooded California. Researchers examining buried debris offshore of Santa Barbara and in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River delta have concluded similar events occurred earlier in time and say climate change could make them more frequent in the future.

"These megastorms have occurred about every 300 years," Cox said. "This is not a worst-case scenario. This is a plausible, scientifically based superstorm."

With initial efforts focusing on how such an event might affect California today, scientists based modeling on records from two storms that occurred in modern history, one that hit the West in January 1969 and another in February 1986.

If those same storms occurred again back to back, researchers concluded the result would be on par with what was experienced during the 1861-62 event.

The results? According to USGS, California's Central Valley would be inundated by floodwaters stretching 300 miles north to south and 20 or more miles east to west. Parts of the San Francisco Bay Area would also be flooded, as would areas of Los Angeles and San Diego. Hundreds of landslides would take out roads and homes. Property damage — primarily from flooding — would exceed \$300 billion with an overall economic hit of some \$725 billion.

Possible effects on Reno-Tahoe

With that information in hand, Cox asked McCarthy to continue the research, looking into how an ARkStorm would affect Lake Tahoe, a landmark of national importance where more than \$1.5 billion has been spent over the last 15 years to restore an ailing environment.

"I said what we need to focus on is not just Tahoe itself but also where the water flows to the east," McCarthy said.

That means places like Carson City, where emergency managers met Nov. 12 to discuss the ARkStorm scenario, and Reno, where a similar meeting is planned Thursday. In March, an exercise is planned at the Washoe County Emergency Operations Center to simulate an ARkStorm hitting the area.

How would western Nevada be affected? During the last big event in 1861-62, there wasn't much of anyone around to recount events. Mark Twain wrote of being trapped by the raging floodwaters of the Carson River during a journey by horseback at the time. A 1973 report by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service told of a set of storms between Dec. 20, 1861 and Jan. 2, 1862 that first dropped snow, then a melting rain, and "turned the valley into a lake."

One thing is for sure: the devastation would be huge. The flooding experienced in downtown Reno, Rosewood Lakes and the Sparks industrial area during January 1997 would be nothing by comparison. Stampede and Boca reservoirs could fail, while downstream, Derby Dam would likely be overwhelmed. Raw sewage and industrial pollutants would contaminate the Truckee River and environmental damage to a sensitive Lake Tahoe would likely be monumental.

"Downtown Carson is going to be underwater," McCarthy said. So would much of Minden-Gardnerville and other Northern Nevada communities, with valuable agricultural land submerged.

"It's something that is really beyond the scale of what people are used to thinking about," said Kelly Redmond of the Western Regional Climate Center. The scientist, based at Reno's Desert Research Institute, helped review models of the ARkStorm scenario.

"This is kind of the Western version of a Katrina or a Sandy, but it's much more drawn out," Redmond said. "It could be beyond anything we've seen here before."

But happened it has — back in the 1860s and before that, in 1532 and 1269, according to evidence unearthed by scientists and cited by USGS. Like that tsunami that someday will slam into the Pacific Northwest coast and like that big earthquake that could hit California or Northern Nevada any day, it

will happen again, Redmond said. And warmer oceans associated with a warming climate could bring these storms more frequently than they have occurred in the past, experts said.

"It's not like it's a flash-in-the-pan, one-time thing," Redmond said. "It reoccurs. One day we'll see one."

Planning for catastrophe

Jay Aldean spends his days planning to help the Truckee Meadows prepare for its next so-called 100-year flood, or a flood that has about a 1 percent chance of happening during any given year. Such a flood is similar to the one of 1997, which came with estimated damages to the Reno-Sparks area of \$700 million or more.

An ARkStorm, Aldean acknowledges, is far less likely — a fraction of a percentage point during any given year — but potential consequences would be more far-reaching.

"It's not going to be like what we had in '97," Aldean said. "It's the perfect storm scenario where you get Noah-style flooding."

Plans to build measures to protect against a 100-year flood have taken decades to prepare, and most components still have yet to be built. When that happens, their estimated cost is expected to exceed \$400 million.

With that being the case, is there really much point in trying to plan for something as extreme as an ARkStorm? Aldean believes there is. Even if there's little chance the region could ever build protection measures capable of withstanding such an event, there's merit in planning how the community might react to what could amount to a full-fledged catastrophe, Aldean said.

"It's good that we look at it and have a scenario, because in my mind it will happen," Aldean said. "Will anybody on the Earth today experience it? I don't know."

Folks should proceed under the assumption they might, said Aaron Kenneston, Washoe County's emergency manager. Kenneston's offices will host a shake-table exercise simulating an ARkStorm hitting the Reno-Tahoe area on March 14.

"It's even difficult for me to fathom, and I think about these things almost every day," Kenneston said of the potential magnitude of an ARkStorm.

Still, steps can be taken to prepare. Perhaps chief among them is planning how to evacuate people living in areas put underwater. Kenneston already has maps of areas likely inundated by a flood of such magnitude.

Plans can be laid by police, firefighters and other first responders. Experts with the National Weather Service are already attempting to determine how early they might be able to forecast that an ARkStorm is taking shape and how detailed those forecasts might be.

How will power and water service be restored when many utility workers might be cut off from problem areas? How will hospitals operate in flooded areas, and will patients need to be evacuated? How will cleanup of spilled sewage and industrial toxins be conducted? All are legitimate questions that deserve exploration, Kenneston and others agreed.

Another potential issue lies with the fact that California emergency responders — typically first to come to Nevada's aid in times of trouble — will be occupied at home. Conversely, many Nevada responders may have already rushed to California, where the storm hits first, to help and then be isolated and unable to return to address troubles here. That issue could make necessary new mutual-

aid pacts with other nearby states such as Utah and Idaho, McCarthy said.

What's clear, Kenneston said, is that planning today will likely pay off if and when that next epic storm does hit.

"We can't be blind to the fact it is possible we would have to deal with this level of flood," Kenneston said. "Every year, nature rolls the dice. We don't have control over that. All we can do is be as prepared as possible."

Additional Facts

300

Average number of years between western ARkStorms.

1862

Date of last

storm event.

\$725 billion

Estimated cost of storm

in California alone.

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Nevada Supreme Court upholds conflict law

Case stems from councilman's 2006 vote for casino

By Anjeanette Damon
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The Nevada Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld the state's conflict of interest law, rejecting a Sparks councilman's claim that it is too vague and a violation of a politician's First Amendment right of association.

In the 5-2 decision, the court decided the public's interest in having elected officials free from conflicts of interest outweighs a perceived infringement of an official's right to associate with those who may have a financial interest in decisions before an elected body. Sparks Councilman Mike Carrigan was censured by the state's Ethics Commission in 2006 for voting on the Lazy 8 casino project in which his campaign manager, Carlos Vasquez, had a substantial financial interest.

The commission found Carrigan should have abstained from the vote. Carrigan appealed that decision, sparking a six-year legal battle that reached as high as the U.S. Supreme Court.

Even accepting the argument "the recusal provision somehow burdens Carrigan's associational rights, the burden is scant when compared to the state's important interest in avoiding conflicts of interest and self-dealing by public officials entrusted with making decisions affecting our citizens," Nevada Chief Justice Kris Pickering wrote in Wednesday's opinion.

The Nevada Supreme Court also rejected Carrigan's argument that the law is too vague in describing what types of relationships constitute a conflict, holding that any official can obtain an advance opinion from the Ethics Commission before voting.

The court also said the commission needs the flexibility to determine a violation based on the facts surrounding the case.

"They said basically that they are not going to invalidate the conflict of interest law as vague just because it is applied on a case-by-case basis," said Caren Jenkins, executive director of the Ethics Commission. "Of course we are going to apply it on a case-by-case basis. Every fact is unique. That does not make the statute vague."

The court upheld both the law and the Ethics Commission's 2006 censure of Carrigan.

Carrigan expressed disappointment in the opinion.

"I'm not an attorney, and not a Supreme Court justice, but I thought it was pretty vague," he said. "If I have to ask my attorney for an opinion, and he gives me an opinion that some people agree with and some don't, that's the definition of vague."

The decision could bring a close to the ethics fight that has stretched seven years. Carrigan had appealed the Ethics Commission's 2006 decision to the Nevada Supreme Court.

In 2010, the court found the commission's action violated Carrigan's right of free speech by barring him from voting on an issue. The commission then appealed that decision the U.S. Supreme Court, which rejected the Nevada's court's decision that Carrigan's First Amendment rights were violated.

But the U.S. Supreme Court did not address the question of whether the law was too vague in its description of relationships that pose a conflict, remanding that question back to Nevada's highest court.



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Tahoe-Truckee cloud seeding' efforts helped squeeze 6.6 billion gallons of water in 2012

By Jeff DeLong
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For a pretty lame winter, things went pretty well.

During the winter of 2012-13, the Desert Research Institute's cloud-seeding program produced an estimated 20,500 acre-feet of extra water in the Tahoe-Truckee watershed.

That's more than 6.6 billion gallons of wet — water that helped fill area lakes and reservoirs. Water to drink and to water your lawn. Frozen, it's extra stuff to ski on.

"We believe that played a significant role" in boosting water supplies during a mostly dry winter, said Jeff Tilley, an associate research professor and director of DRI's weather modification program.

Actually, it's more than the average of 17,500 acre-feet produced in the Tahoe-Truckee watershed over the past 15 years. An acre-foot of water is 325,851 gallons, or enough to serve the water needs of two average homes for more than a year with a little left over.

Two things combined for a successful cloud-seeding season last winter, Tilley said.

One was an extremely stormy December. Storms that hammered the Sierra that month provided a roughly 200 percent of average snowpack before the tap shut off and the remainder of the winter turned dry.

December also made for perfect cloud-seeding conditions, with mountaintop generators that seed storms with silver iodide particles to juice things up operating for 470 hours, or more than 40 percent of hours the generators were operated over the entire season. Conditions were so good, in fact, that DRI halted seeding operations for a time to ensure they would not contribute to any potential flooding issues.

Late in the season and in a deviation from normal practice, DRI also seeded some convective elements of some winter storm clouds, further driving up the amount of water generated.

Five generators are ready to go for the coming winter, and DRI is awaiting nature to provide the opportunity to turn them on. Seeding operations will be funded with \$185,000 from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority — the primary water provider for Reno-Sparks — with an expected \$100,000 match by the Western Regional Water Commission.

This marks the fifth straight winter the two water providers have financed DRI's cloud-seeding operations. The 2009 Legislature cut off state funding.



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Editorial: Ethics decision should end question

The opinion of the RGJ Editorial Board

The Nevada Supreme Court's decision to uphold the censure of Sparks City Councilman Mike Carrigan for a violation of the state's ethics law should be the last word on the subject.

Carrigan has been fighting the Nevada Ethics Commission's ruling that he had a conflict of interest when he voted to approve the proposed Lazy 8 casino in Spanish Springs since 2005.

The court rejected Carrigan's arguments that the ethics law is vague and violates his right to free association.

But the conflict of interest actually was straightforward and clear: The councilman's campaign manager acted as a lobbyist for the project, proposed by owners of the nearby Wingfield Springs development (in the person of now-disgraced power broker Harvey Whittemore) and opposed by residents of Spanish Springs.

Writing for the majority, Chief Justice Kris Pickering said: "If Carrigan's wife were a lawyer whom the Lazy 8 hired for \$10,000 per month to advocate for it before the Sparks City Council, Carrigan would have had to recuse. From a right-of-association perspective, Carrigan's disqualification based on (campaign manager Carlos) Vasquez's retention is no different."

The case was a reminder of the dangerous waters that public officials can find themselves in in what is still a relatively small community where those in politics change hats often.

The lesson should be: If there's a possibility that a relationship poses a conflict of interest, it probably *is* a conflict. Carrigan knew it was possible; he asked the city attorney for advice. The court suggested he should have asked the experts, the Ethics Commission. That would have saved everyone, especially Carrigan, a lot of time and trouble.
