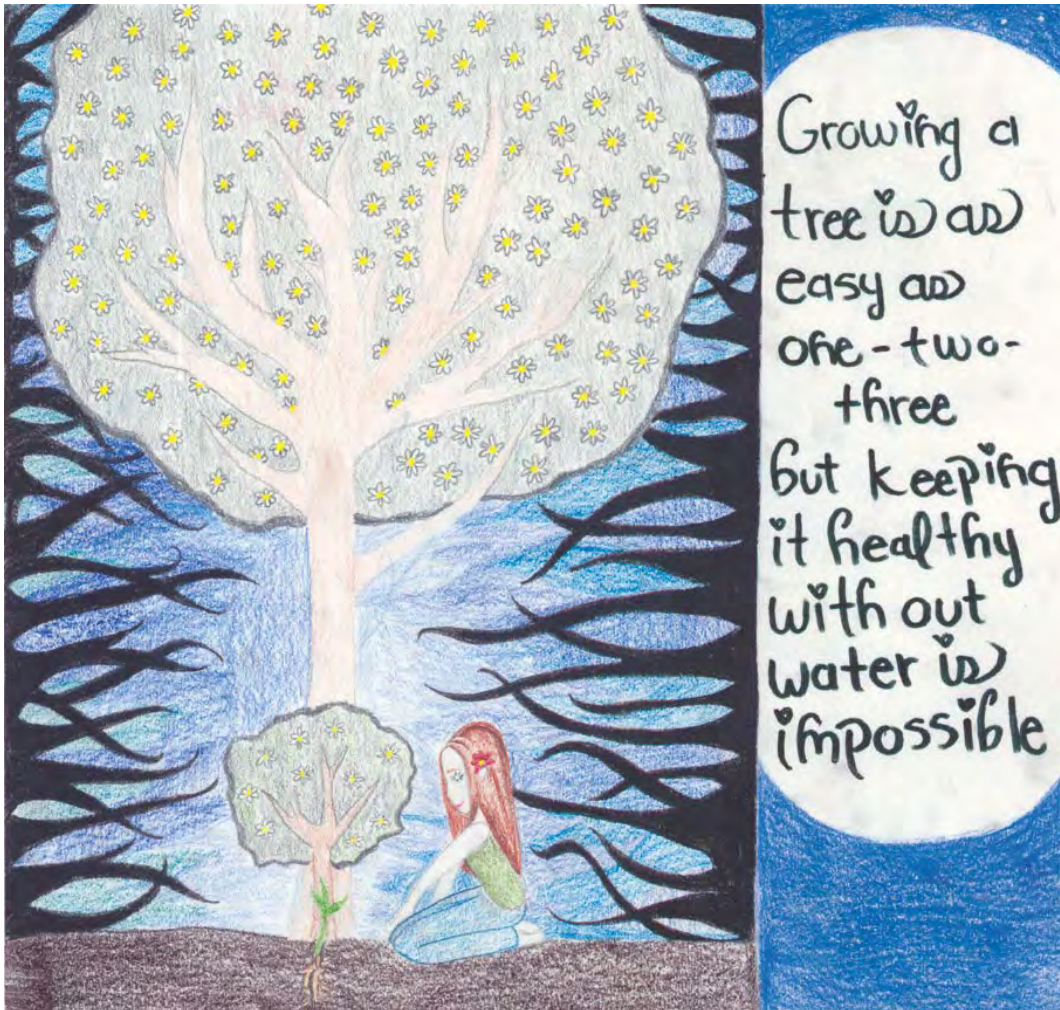


TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 20, 2012

Press Clippings

May 11, 2012 – June 11, 2012



*Ryeli Pferschy (Mendive Middle School)
2010 Poster Art Contest - Second Place, Grades 7-8*

Agencies eye Truckee resolution

Written by Keith Trout
May 01

rgj.com

The Fernley City Council and Truckee-Carson Irrigation District discussed a joint resolution last Wednesday following a successful tour of water-related facilities and sites within the lower Truckee River system.

The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe was expected to participate in the meeting but a conflict arose, so members of the Tribal Council were unable to attend. Representing the TCID were its president, Ernest Schank, vice-president David Stix of Fernley and secretary Bob Oakden.

Fernley City Engineer Shari Whalen said the hope for the effort was to gather the input from the river system partners, and then schedule another joint meeting where final action on the resolution might be taken.

During last Wednesday's meeting, Whalen explained the resolution was drafted by city staff, including its legal counsel on water issues, Paul Taggart. Whalen stressed the draft resolution simply includes "general language for consideration" staff it would be changed, and Stix and Schank spoke about the resolution, with some suggested additions.

Stix, who said the TCID board had an upcoming meeting where the resolution could be discussed, asked what was meant by a reference to use of "riparian ecosystem," with Whalen saying that was supposed to set a common ground for the parties involved. Stix said he hoped language from the federal law that established the Newlands Project and spells out allowed uses could be added. He also said he felt the importance of recharge and municipal and industrial uses should be mentioned.

Fernley Mayor Pro-Tem Cal Eilrich also supported incorporating the federal law establishing the Newlands Project, as did Schank, adding he also felt all uses should be stated and noting TCID is involved in agriculture, but also wildlife at the Stillwater reserve.

City Councilwoman Susan Seidl said she felt the draft resolution was a good starting point and should be given to the Pyramid Lake Tribe, and then all the comments should be taken together.

Councilman Roy Edgington stressed the document is just a first draft and said he would be willing to go talk with tribal officials. Stix later added he would be willing to do that also.

Daphne Hooper, City of Fernley Administrative Services Manager, said she had spoken with the Pyramid Lake Tribal Council vice chairman and would provide a copy of the draft resolution and then gather the tribe's input.

The draft joint resolution recognizes "the importance of the Truckee River to the environmental and economic health of the region" and how the three parties rely on the river "for continued existence." It continued, "It is in the best interest of the Parties to work cooperatively to share the water of the Lower Truckee River... (and) to address and resolve regional water quality and availability issues."

Among those attending the tour were representatives of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, staff from the offices of Senators Harry Reid and Dean Heller and Representative Mark Amodei; manager Kenneth Parr and other staff of the Bureau of Reclamation's Lahontan Basin Area Office; and representatives of the City of Fernley; TCID; the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the City of Reno; and the Friends of the Truckee Canal.

Truckee River's chill can still be dangerous

Written by Zachary F. Volkert
May 05

rgj.com



[Purchase Image Zoom](#)

A kayaker paddles along the Truckee River on Friday. The Reno Fire Department's Water Entry Team warns that cases of hypothermia and other injuries are still possible in the river despite rising air temperatures. / Marilyn Newton/RGJ

Safety tips

Tips to avoid injuries in the Truckee River this summer:

- Avoid lengthy exposure to the cold water.
- Don't let children enter the water alone and keep them away from the riverbank, which easily erodes. Make sure they wear a floatation device.
- Be aware that colder temperatures affect children more quickly.
- Boaters, rafters and kayakers should wear a flotation device, helmets and adequate thermal protection.
- Pedestrians should stay on paths and away from the edge of the riverbank.
- Don't enter the river if you see someone in distress. Call 911 and try to throw a rope or object that floats to them.

Source: Reno Fire Department Water Entry Team

Kayakers, fishers and inner-tube floaters begin traversing the Truckee River as soon as spring takes the bite out of winter. And once summer is in full tilt, they and other users fill the river from Idlewild Park to the casinos and eatery verandas in downtown Reno.

But the Reno Fire Department's Water Entry Team warns that cases of hypothermia and other injuries are still possible. Although the snowpack has been lighter this year, melting snow is still keeping temperatures in the river low.

According to the water data aggregator site Dreamflows, Truckee River at the Lake Tahoe Dam, the closest point with temperature information, was 54 degrees at 1 p.m. Friday afternoon.

"Any temperature below 70 is considered cold water," Reno Fire Department Battalion Chief Bob Knoll said. "Room temperature is still 20 degrees below body temperature, but your body can't maintain (proper body temperature) in water that cold."

The city of Reno's website said the river is generally between 50 and 70 degrees at the downtown whitewater park.

Many hypothermia cases, Knoll said, are either homeless people or intoxicated rivergoers who are oblivious to dropping body temperatures, especially at events like next weekend's Reno River Festival. Children are especially at risk because of low surface area on their skin, causing them to lose heat much faster.

Although the fire department does not track specific numbers on hypothermia cases or river injuries, Knoll said that they are not uncommon. Renown Regional Medical Center also does not track river-related injuries specifically, but a media representative did say that river-hypothermia cases are not rampant there.

About 31 emergency calls were placed for river deployment last year, Reno spokeswoman Michele Anderson said.

Increased water flow also poses a threat to people using the river. On Friday, the Truckee's flow in Reno was reported at 623 cubic feet per second by Dreamflows, up about 100 cubic feet from last week, according to Knoll.

"Which is actually amazingly slow," Knoll said.

The river's gauge level is currently hovering just above 5 feet, which is significantly below the flood level of 14 feet. Still, the danger of currents should not be underestimated, according to Knoll.

"There's a few places in the river that still have obstructed flow," Knoll said. "There's rapids in parts. There's lots of rocks, tree branches — the power of stream will capture you, and you will not be able to extricate yourself."

Injuries can be avoided by wearing adequate thermal protection, helmets and flotation devices. But even with these precautions, the fire department still advises anyone using the river to watch for debris and obstructions and to always have someone on shore aware of your location. If people see someone in distress on the river, the fire department urges them to call 911 and not attempt to enter the Truckee themselves.

Mike Gulley, a local chef who has lived in Reno for 10 years, said this year was much warmer than the last and that hypothermia is only a real threat if several risk factors are present.

"It all depends on the runoff," said Gulley, who was playing with his dog in the river Friday. "Two years ago, when it was very happy, I wasn't out here until the summer. Now it's May, and I can already wade in. If you include those caveats (intoxication, inadequate thermal coverage), of course, it's going to be more dangerous."



Midtown Block Party



Bruno's for sale



Mug shots



Reno's worst murder

Runoff peaks early in another sign of drought in Washoe County

Written by Jeff DeLong
May 05

rgj.com

Water supply: Reservoir storage

- Lake Tahoe: 50 percent of capacity.
- Boca: 63 percent of capacity.
- Stampede: 72 percent of capacity.
- Prosser: 37 percent of capacity.
- Donner Lake: 78 percent of capacity.
- Independence Lake: 90 percent of capacity.

Source: Federal Water Master

The water trickling from a melting mountain snowpack and into the area's rivers and streams has apparently reached its peak, with that peak coming early and looking nothing too impressive.

In fact, this will be the third lowest peak for runoff since detailed records were kept starting about 40 years ago, said Federal Water Master Chad Blanchard. It's only occurred at lower levels in 1988 and 1977.

"It's pretty ugly," Blanchard said.

Kayakers and anglers need not be overly alarmed. Releases from Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River system's other reservoirs should allow normal summer river flows to be maintained, though those lower flows will likely arrive earlier in the season than normal.

That same reservoir storage will guarantee normal water deliveries across the Reno-Sparks area through the summer — but the season could prove far more challenging for folks depending on water from rivers without reservoir storage, including the Carson River.

The situation comes thanks to a decidedly disappointing winter that produced a snowpack only a little more than half of what it should have been on April 1. It was the second dry winter in a row.

To make matters worse, unlike the winter of 2011-12 — when much of the snow and rain fell late in the season — the opposite occurred this past winter.

Then, all the snow and rain came early in the winter, shutting off in January. January through March was the driest on record for the three-month period dating back more than a century in Tahoe City.

All those months of dryness produced poor conditions for runoff. Much of the moisture present in the snowpack is going directly from the snow into the atmosphere, a process similar to evaporation known as sublimation, Blanchard said. And much of the water melting from the snowpack is soaking into a dry ground rather than making it to rivers and streams.

"It's caused a very inefficient runoff," Blanchard said. "The snow is not responding very well right now. It shows how much a dry spring will affect the runoff from an existing snowpack."

Projections that melting snow might help Lake Tahoe to rise a half-foot by June might not prove true, Blanchard said. He said a rise of only about three-tenths of a foot now looks more likely. Tahoe could dip to near its natural rim by next fall, cutting off the flow of water into the Truckee River.

Any spring or summer rainfall could help out and according to the National Weather Service, some could be on the horizon. Forecasters are calling for the possibility of showers and thunderstorms early next week.

Reports differ on Nevada's renewables

Written by Jason Hidalgo
May 05

rgj.com

On the Web

The Clean Energy Project report: <http://bit.ly/10xCduT>

The Nevada Policy Research Institute report: <http://bit.ly/12IY7JC>

BY THE NUMBERS

Some key findings from the two contrasting reports released this week about the economic impact of Nevada's renewable portfolio standard, or RPS:

Clean Energy Project report:

If Nevada makes changes such as eliminating the multiplier for new photovoltaic facilities and expanding the RPS to 35 percent, it will lead to the following benefits by 2040:

- 45,256 additional jobs
- \$3.2 billion in additional income for a total of \$4.6 billion
- \$8 billion in additional economic output for a total of \$12.3 billion

Nevada Policy Research Institute report

If the RPS is allowed to continue, it will result in:

- Raising the cost of electricity by 6 percent to \$174 million by 2025. The average household electric bill will rise by \$70 annually.
- Loss of 1,930 jobs and reduce disposable income by \$233 million due to higher rates
- Decreased investment by \$29 million due to higher rates

Sources: Clean Energy Project, Nevada Policy Research Institute

Like contrasting sides of a coin, two reports released this week are painting completely different pictures regarding the impact of the state's renewable portfolio standard.

The Las Vegas-based Clean Energy Project kicked things off by [releasing a report Monday](#) detailing the employment and economic impact of Nevada's renewable portfolio standard — also known as RPS. The report, which was done by Applied Analysis, found a positive boost to employment and economic output from the renewables standard.

The boost largely comes from a reduction in annual fossil fuel costs, which lowers the cost of deploying additional renewable energy sources, the report said.

It also found that the state could see an additional 45,256 jobs and \$8 billion in economic impact through 2040 if changes are made to parts of the RPS, combined with its expansion to 35 percent. Established in 1997, the Nevada's RPS mandates that the state receive 25 percent of the energy it uses from renewable sources by 2025.

In contrast, a report released [today by the Nevada Policy Research Institute](#) claims that the standard will cost Nevadans nearly \$2.3 billion over 12 years.

The nonprofit's report, which was conducted by the Boston-based Beacon Hill Institute, bases its findings on a projected 6 percent increase in Nevada electricity prices by 2025, which it says will reduce disposable income and lower employment.

“What (the RPS) is really doing is a massive transfer of income from energy consumers — both households and businesses — to renewable energy producers,” said Paul Bachman, the Beacon Hill Institute's director of research.

Costs and benefits

Some in the renewables sector, however, found issue with the methodology used in the Nevada Policy Research Institute.

Paul Thomsen, business and policy development director of Northern Nevada-based geothermal developer Ormat Technologies, Inc., says that unlike the Applied Analysis report, the Institute report does not subtract the displacement of conventional energy costs by renewables in their analysis.

Thomsen called it a big omission for a report whose whole premise is based on rising electricity prices.

“Every time we’re buying those fossil fuels, we are shipping hard-earned Nevada money out of state,” Thomsen said. “With the increase in renewables, you now have that money going into the development of an in-state product that Nevada controls and regulates.”

In addition to having more control over its own energy mix, investing in homegrown renewables creates jobs and opportunities outside the facilities themselves, including suppliers and other support industries, Thomsen said.

Bachman, however, claims that such benefits are hard to prove.

Although talk about support industries sound nice, Bachman says suppliers of renewable projects such as wind and solar also could actually be based in such places as China. Bachman also downplayed the employment benefits being touted for renewable projects.

“If you dug the Panama Canal with spoons, then you would have created many more jobs, but that does not increase the value added to the project,” Bachman said. “The construction impacts of renewable projects really should be wiped out because they’re a given when you create new generating capacity. So all that employment is either going to happen, anyway, or are an unnecessary cost for generating electricity.”

Looking at renewable energy development within the lens of today’s costs, however, is nearsighted, according to Thomsen. Although natural gas is cheap now, the same thing was true about a decade ago before the resource saw several swings up and down.

In contrast, renewable energy has more stable pricing over a longer period of time.

“If you look at natural gas prices since 2002, they have bounced all over the place, so there’s certainly validity in diversifying our portfolio,” Thomsen said.

Projections

As renewable energy becomes more widespread, costs will be more competitive with fossil fuels, Thomsen said. Then there are the environmental benefits from renewables not having the same issues regarding emissions, which also future-proofs them against policies such as a potential carbon tax.

With the exception of geothermal, however, solar and wind power will still need backup generation to provide baseload power, Bachman said. The environmental impact is also overplayed — at least for Nevada, he said.

“I don’t see a carbon tax coming anytime soon,” Bachman said. “Nevada emissions are not even a rounding error in global emissions. But if you continue to ramp up the RPS and it starts to impact heavy users of electricity who decided to move their business elsewhere, then the emission impact is zero.”

Thomsen, however, says scaling back the state’s efforts with renewables is tantamount to wasting a key Nevada resource, particularly when it comes to geothermal and solar.

Thomsen pointed to a power purchase agreement being finalized with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for California to receive 14 megawatts of geothermal-based power generated by Ormat in Nevada — enough to power 19,000 homes and eliminate 64,100 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year.

For a state that essentially had to sit on the sidelines in a fossil fuel-based economy, the ability to not only reduce its energy imports but also export homegrown energy out of state is huge, Thomsen said.

Truckee Meadows' Stressed Out Elms Respond With Tons Of Seed

May 7, 2013



Reno isn't known as the "City of Trembling Leaves" for nothing.

For a community in the high desert we leaf out pretty good every spring and a good portion of the green you see out there are elm trees.

The annual elm seed fall is one reason why.

Every spring the little paper-like seeds waft away in the slightest breeze and gather on the ground, but usually not in this number.

"We were sweeping the front porch and sweeping the back porch," says Reno resident Debby Allee, "and yesterday we actually thought of shoveling the back porch."

She's not alone. All over the city you'll see the seeds piling up in the gutter, covering sidewalks, streets and cars, getting tracked into homes.

As you might have guessed there's a natural reason.

"This is a response to stress," says Dale Carlon of the Truckee Meadows Community Forestry Coalition. Local elms along with trees of any sort have good reason to be stressed. The past two winters have been dry and the most recent was also relatively warm, lacking the cold that triggers trees to harden, shut down.

It's enough to stress the hardiest tree.

And when trees are stressed they respond by trying to make little trees. Hence the heavy seed drop this year.

It's a chore to clean up, but the real nuisance is just around the corner.

"What will happen in this yard in the next couple of weeks," says Carlon gesturing toward Allee's home in Reno's Old Southwest, "she'll start getting little elm trees sprouting up all over the place."

But rather than curse the elms, which, of course, aren't going away in any case, Carlon says we might accept some of the blame ourselves.

Like a lot of things in Nevada it all comes down to water. A lot of us make the mistake of not watering our trees during the winter.

"Don't think just because it's a big, mature tree that it has access to the water table. It doesn't we need to supplement the water and it could be as easy as running a drip line or a soaker hose."

And now we're paying the price, in sheer tonnage of seeds and in a few weeks a new crop of little volunteer elms in our flower beds.

The lesson: take care of our elm trees and we'll both be a little less stressed.

Region declared to be in moderate to severe drought for second year

Reno, NV (MyNews4.com) --According to the National Weather Service (NWS) in Reno a majority of the state of Nevada especially Northern Nevada has been declared to be in a state of moderate to severe drought.

Gary Barbato, a hydrologist with NWS tells News 4 this is the second year in a row drought conditions will prevail in the region. Barbato says though the recent wet weather has helped slow down snow pack melt and has added moisture to the area, but he says "it's a drop in the bucket."

Some of the areas expected to be most impacted by drought include Churchill, Lyon, and Pershing counties. Barbato says farmers, wild horses, and wild life in those areas will be compromised.

He says farmers below Lake Lahontan are expected to get a 25% reduction in water supply. On the Walker Basin, Barbato says they'll see between 9% and 20% of their normal allotment.

Then, around the Humboldt farmers are expected to only see about 10% of their normal allotment.

However, there is some good news. Barbato says, because the recent moisture has slowed down snow pack melt and cooled down temperatures hopefully it will be a slow down to the start to fire season.

"Up until just a few days ago it was looking really scary as far as starting fire season, but over the weekend it cooled off and "wetted" off," Barbato says. "That's really helped."

http://www.goodstandingoutreach.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/05-07-13_krnv_second_dry_year.pdf