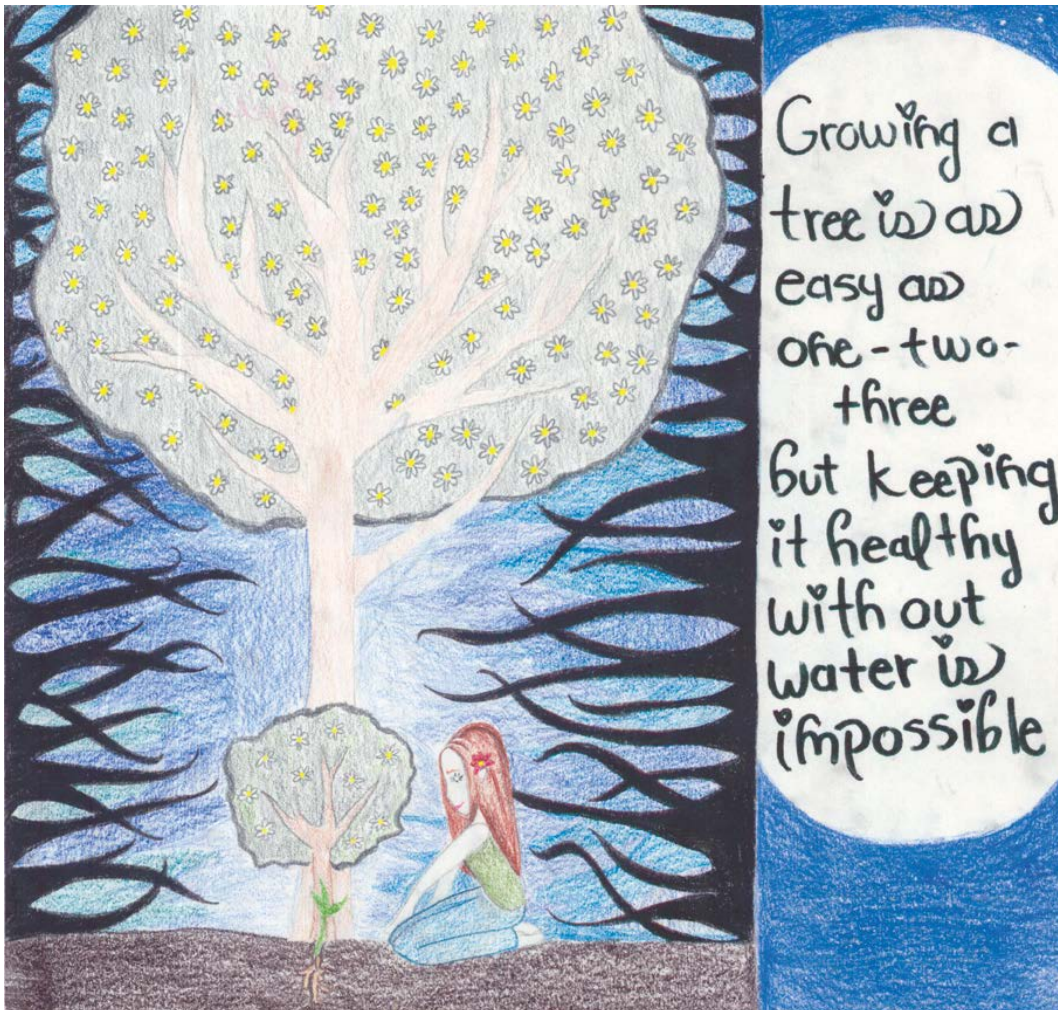


**TMWA Board Meeting**

**Wednesday, April 16, 2014**

**Press Clippings**

**March 8, 2014-April 8, 2014**



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

# Merced Sun-Star

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## Lawsuit resolved on Tahoe 4th of July fireworks

By SCOTT SONNER

Associated Press April 1, 2014

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RENO, Nev. — The biggest Fourth of July fireworks show at Lake Tahoe will go on as scheduled after tourism officials settled a lawsuit alleging the event polluted the lake in violation of the Clean Water Act.

The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority reached the agreement on Monday with a Zephyr Cove couple, agency executive director Carol Chaplin said. It also covers a Labor Day show.

The plaintiffs claimed the agency had violated the federal act more than 1,000 times during the past five years by discharging spent fireworks into the alpine lake.

Under the settlement, the authority will step up oversight of the post-fireworks cleanup and establish a hotline for residents to report any debris, Chaplin said.

"We would like to thank everyone for their efforts to bring this to an amicable conclusion," she said in a statement on Tuesday. "Preserving the 4th of July and Labor Day shows and keeping Lake Tahoe and its beaches clean are of the utmost importance to our community."

Plaintiffs Joseph and Joan Truxler said they filed the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Sacramento in November as a last resort because tourism officials wouldn't respond to their concerns. Since July, they said, they have gathered 8,000 pieces of fireworks pollution from the rockets and flares fired from boats and floating rafts between Zephyr Cove and South Lake Tahoe, Calif.

Joan Truxler said it was never their intention to halt the fireworks and they are "thrilled" the lawsuit has been settled.

Lawyers for both sides met in Sacramento on Monday after the visitors agency voted Thursday night to cancel the July 4 fireworks if a settlement could not be reached by April 4.

The suit said the authority and Pyro Spectaculars North Inc. of Rialto, Calif., should be subject to up to \$75 million in fines under the Clean Water Act. Authority leaders said they were confident they would prevail in court but couldn't afford to take that risk.

Pyro Spectaculars has produced large-scale pyrotechnic displays for Super Bowls, Olympics, Disneyland, the Statue of Liberty and Golden Gate Bridge since it was founded in 1979.

Lawyers for the company said in court papers filed in Sacramento on Thursday that the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection and the California Regional Water Control Board have known about the shows for decades and never required a permit under the Clean Water Act. The federal regulations are enforced by states.

Company officials did not immediately return a telephone call seeking comment on Tuesday.

# NEVADA'S UTILITIES

## Fueling the State's Energy and Water Needs

*by Jeanne Lauf Walpole*

**As** movers and shakers in Nevada's utility industry plan for the future, they share a number of common bonds in the challenges they face. Future strategies are likely to make provisions for such factors as increased regionalization, new regulations, enhanced customer satisfaction, state-of-the-art technologies, alternative energies, drought conditions, greater management efficiencies and economic growth. Decision makers at six of Nevada's major utility entities are optimistic as they approach the eclectic opportunities presented by the future.

## The Drought

To John Entsminger, general manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA), there's no question about what the most compelling challenge is to his company. "The drought on the Colorado River. It represents 90 percent of the water supply for our customer base and we've seen 14 years of drought," he says. "We've asked people to use less water and they are using 30 percent less in spite of a 25 percent increase in population."

Just using less water, however, isn't enough to combat the severity of the drought. In 2005, when the SNWA board of directors realized something prodigious was needed to tackle this situation, they approved the design and construction of a third intake into Lake Mead. This intake will protect against a significant loss to Southern Nevada's water supply should the drought continue and the lake level go down even more.

By almost any standards, the Lake Mead Intake No. 3 project is impressive. The \$817 million undertaking includes construction of a new opening at elevation 860 feet with a three-mile long tunnel that connects to an existing pumping station. "It's an extremely complex mining operation," Entsminger says. "By the end of 2015 we should be able to draw on it."

Entsminger is also concerned about regulations that could negatively impact SNWA's bottom line. "Water quality regulations keep getting stricter, which affects our costs," he says. In addition, federal regulations aimed at decreasing carbon and carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants will change the energy equation when many plants go off line. "What affects electrical energy can impact our costs. It takes a lot of electrical power to pump and move water," he says.

Although he's bullish on the continued use of renewable energy, he says that pending rulings to protect sage grouse could negatively impact the development of wind power in certain locations. The use of photovoltaic energy will continue to grow, however. "We're seeing some solar projects almost break even," he says.

His wishes for the future include the safe and successful completion of the third intake and a return to steady growth. "We want to see a more mature growth pattern of two or three percent," he says.



Mark Foree

Truckee Meadows Water Authority

## Water Up North

The ongoing dry cycle that has impacted many parts of the West is also a concern in Northern Nevada. Managing

water resources during drought years is a continuing challenge for companies like Reno-based Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), according to Mark Foree,

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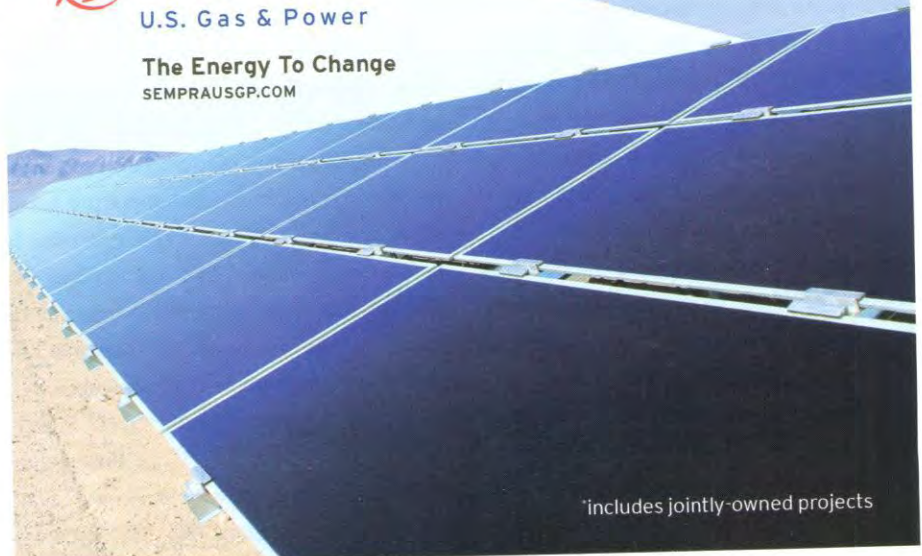
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TMWA general manager. "What we plan for is a nine-year dry water cycle. The longest dry water cycle on record is eight years between 1987 and 1994, which was the worst in the past 100 years. We add one year to that," he says.

With upstream water storage at Independence Lake, Donner Lake and Stampede Reservoir banked for future use, Foree says TMWA water users are in pretty good shape to ride out some lean water years. "We only draw on it if we need it. The last time was in 1993," he says. "We're not sure if we have to draw on reserves this summer. We should have river flows into September with normal precipitation."

The amount of electrical generation obtained from plants along the Truckee River is carefully monitored, especially in drought times, to help TMWA control their electrical costs. "We have hydroelectric plants on the Truckee River and we try to maximize the generation of those plants. Water systems use a lot of power and that offsets our cost of power," Foree says. "We're always looking for ways to save on power, such as putting in solar panels." Through efficient management the company has been able to reduce its power costs from \$7.2 million in 2008 to \$4.8 million in 2013.

The company is eagerly looking forward to its long-anticipated merger with the Washoe County Department of Water Resources (DWR) which will be finalized at the end of the year. "We started work on it in 2008. There's a lot of due diligence to be done. It's a good thing to do so no customer group is negatively impacted," Foree says. The merger is expected to enable TMWA to maximize the use of surface water, improve resource management, utilize long-term economies of scale and introduce consistent rules that apply equally to all water users. "We're always improving the system and trying to work with other utilities," Foree says.



Paul Caudill  
NV Energy

### Power Shift

Since its acquisition by MidAmerican Energy Holdings Company for \$5.6 billion last year, NV Energy has welcomed Paul Caudill as president to work with CEO Michael Yachira on transitioning the company in the coming months. Caudill, who was previously president of MidAmerican Solar, emphasizes that NV Energy will continue to be a local company. "We bring a very large company to Nevada, but we'll remain a local company. We'll manage and lead locally and be involved in local communities," he says.

Immediate priorities are safety and customer service, according to Caudill. "The number one goal is to improve our personal safety performance. It's my top operational priority," he says. A close second is improving customer service, which is a requirement of the merger. "A lot of customers are in a fact-finding mode. Everybody is interested in how this will affect them," he says. "We are focused on communicating totally and often."

Caudill points to smart meters as one of the more useful ways to enhance the experience of the end user. "We want to improve how customers can manage their own usage," he says.

With impressive credentials in the solar industry, Caudill is zealous about the future of alternative energies. "The potential is here for renewables. The challenge is to find a buyer. It's a very competitive market," he explains. "We're focused on economic development opportunities for renewables."

A recent game changer for NV Energy was the passage of SB 123 by the Nevada State Legislature last year which will cause the company to close the 557-megawatt

Reid Gardner coal-fired power plant by 2017. The 522-watt plant near Valmy is scheduled for closure by 2025. As a result NV Energy will be looking for other sources to make up for this lost energy. "I see both challenges and opportunities," Caudill says.



Tom Husted  
Valley Electric Association

### The Other Power Company

As one of 900 electrical cooperatives in the country, Valley Electric Association (VEA) is a member-owned nonprofit that supplies electricity to more than 45,000 people living over a 6,800-square-mile area along the California-Nevada border. The company has experienced steady growth since its founding in 1965, despite economic ups and downs. "We have a great business model. We're a cooperative that allows us to move forward," explains CEO Tom Husted. "Our main concerns are reliability and affordability. We're part of a solution and not part of a problem."

Over the years, the company has strived to be in the forefront of new technologies and business practices that allow customers to manage their own accounts. "Through specific apps members can look at what's happening at their location," Husted says. "We also have a pre-payment program where you can actually manage your electricity to fit your revenue. It eliminates the need for a big deposit."

In planning for increased load demand and member growth down the road, the company has joined the California Independent System Operator Corporation (CAISO), a wholesale power system that brings new economic opportunities and efficiencies to VEA. "We joined CAISO because we've had a lot of alternative energy companies apply to connect to us," Husted says. "We believe in regionalization."

The company also believes in casting a wide net when looking for new customer bas-

es. Recent acquisitions include the Nevada National Security Site and Creech Air Force Base. "We've been very proactive in promoting our brand outside our traditional business plan. We'll continue to look for more opportunities," Husted says. "We're going to have to be creative."



John  
**Hester**

Southwest Gas Corporation

## A Cleaner Fuel

With so many coal-fired energy plants facing obsolescence, the future for natural gas appears incredibly bright, according to John Hester, executive vice president of Southwest Gas Corporation. Executives at the company continue to diligently follow regulations that will impact the natural gas industry. "We're always mindful of legislation at the federal level, such as for carbon emissions," Hester says. As coal falls out of favor, the spotlight is being turned on natural gas as a cleaner fuel. "Natural gas is a carbon-friendly fuel," he says. "A natural gas company is relatively well-situated to thrive in this environment."

The interest in natural gas is also being fueled by increased exploration and development of shale gas. "There's dramatic expansion in the shale gas revolution. It's an exciting time to be a natural gas distributor. We have lots of supply," Hester says. "A lot more is coming from on land rather than in the gulf. They will be reliable resources. It's an important game changer. There's a lot of regulations for it and the record indicates that it's very safe."

Hester doesn't seem worried about the environmentalists who are opposed to shale gas extraction because fracking is used. "This creates energy independence and creates jobs. I don't see turning this back. It's an incredible economic engine," he says.

Another plus in the natural gas column is the increased interest that's being shown in the natural gas vehicle market, particularly from transportation fleets and long-haul truckers. "We're in a first inning in the natural gas vehicle market. There's interest from fleets that are diesel fueled," Hester says. "There are number of engine manufacturers that have products to replace the diesel engine."

Like many other energy companies, Southwest Gas strives to embrace technologies that can enhance the customer experience and bring greater efficiencies to management and product delivery. "The technology for pipes changes over time. We're developing a system where we can use cameras to inspect the inside of our piping systems," Hester says. Because of the nature and type of delivery of natural gas, employing smart meters, which are useful for monitoring electrical usage, isn't practical. "We don't have smart meter technology in gas companies because natural gas does not change price during the day like electricity," he says. Southwest Gas does use advanced technology to read its meters, however. "We have electronic meter reading which uses a device on the meter. A truck can drive by and collect the reads." Eliminating meter readers who walk through neighborhoods increases safety and speeds the process up.



Alaina  
**Burtenshaw**

Public Utilities Commission

## Powering Nevada

One of the most critical areas of neglect in the overall energy picture is the aging energy delivery system that has served the country for decades, according to Alaina Burtenshaw, chairman of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). "The biggest challenge across the country is the need to replace in-

frastructure. A lot of it is 50-100 years old," she says. "Transmission is always a challenge since there are lots of stakeholders and the transmission lines are capital intensive."

Burtenshaw is pleased, however, with the recent dedication of the One Nevada Transmission Line (ON Line) which runs 231 miles from the Harry Allen Substation north of Las Vegas to the Robinson Summit Substation 20 miles west of Ely. With a capacity of 600-800 megawatts, it is destined to bring new efficiencies to the transmission of electricity as well as enable the development of a number of renewable energy projects.

Nevada remains positioned to be an energy leader in the coming years, according to Burtenshaw. "We have a business climate where people can try new technologies," she says. Although solar may not continue to enjoy the same incentives in the future as it has in the past, it will claim a growing share of the energy mix. "The big decision is going to be how to create a regional marketplace. This conversation will get more traction," she adds.

Burtenshaw also says that new regulations that will affect coal-fired electric plants will change the mix of energy in the future. "The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is putting out guidelines for greenhouse gas emissions. It will be set at a level that many coal plants can't meet. Many plants could close which could cause us to use more natural gas," she explains.

As the economy in Nevada appears to be in slow recovery, utility companies are enthusiastic about the challenges and opportunities they will face in the next few years. In the spirit of a positive business climate, company executives continue to embrace new processes and technologies that will help them improve management efficiencies, protect the environment and increase customer satisfaction. Nevada's utility companies have a major role to play in the economic recovery of the state and appear to be ready, willing and able to fulfill it.



# Beer, liquor makers grow in Nevada

**RENO REBIRTH** Mark Robison, RGJ 3:03 p.m. PDT April 5, 2014

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Spirits are high in Northern Nevada, and it's not just because the economy is getting stronger.

New distilleries and breweries are booming.

"We're growing, growing, growing," said Tom Adams, president of Seven Troughs Distilling Co., which makes whiskey in Reno.

He's not the only one.

Churchill Vineyards south of Fallon released its own brandy in November and is working on gin, vodka, bourbon, other whiskeys and maybe absinthe as part of its new Frey Ranch Estates Distillery. It hopes to sell its first bottle of distilled spirits in June.

Mark William Erwin has launched a crowdfunding campaign to start Cold Springs Distillery.

And Ryan Quinlan of Silver State Stainless, which manufactures tanks for distilleries and breweries across the country at its Mound House facility, reports a "big increase in demand in this local area."

Much of the activity can be traced to the craft distillation bill, AB153, passed in the Nevada Legislature with no opposition last year.

"Before AB153, we had no state laws to allow for the sale of distilled spirits," said Ashley Frey of Churchill Vineyards and Frey Ranch Estates. "If someone came to our place and said, 'We want to taste your brandy,' we could not offer samples or sell to them."

She called the law "huge" for distilleries.

"But," she added, "I also think (activity is increasing) because people are more into supporting small businesses. They want to go back to roots and shop local, and that encompasses the whole rise in craft spirits, craft beer and farmers markets."

One of the defining features of craft distilleries and breweries is they prioritize local ingredients.

This means that if they are successful, so are area farmers, printers, designers and manufacturers.

In other words, if you want to help Northern Nevada's economy, drink up.

What is craft?

A "craft" distillery or brewery means that the companies make the alcoholic drinks themselves from raw agricultural ingredients and they don't make a lot of it.

The new Nevada law says that anyone who operates a craft distillery can't sell and transport more than 10,000 cases of spirits a year in the state or export more than 20,000. (A case is 12 750-milliliter bottles.)

By contrast, Smirnoff sells about 68,500 cases of vodka a day, according to Liquor.com.

Cameron Kelly, head brewer at Great Basin Brewing Co.'s Reno location, thinks the rise in craft beer and spirits is tied to the food movement, with people caring more about what goes in their food -- and now, their alcoholic beverages, too.

"People are getting to the point where they'd rather spend a little more money for a significantly better product," he said.

Great Basin Brewing just celebrated 20 years in November at its Sparks location and is coming up on four years at its Reno one. It makes around 65 to 70 different styles of beer each year, with six year-round styles on tap and 10 to 14 different seasonals throughout the year.

Craft breweries may be especially popular in the Reno area because they fit with Northern Nevada's great outdoor activities.

"For whatever reason, it seems active people really enjoy craft beers," Kelly said. "They tend to go hand in hand."

Local boost

Companies can import cheap booze from overseas by the pallet, repackage it and slap on their own label.

That wouldn't qualify as "craft."

"In the craft industry," Quinlan said, "it's about the community and sourcing ingredients from the community and supplying the community back with your product."

At Seven Troughs, Adams gets the bulk of his grain -- corn and wheat -- from Winnemucca Farms.

"We're looking at getting barley grown locally but haven't found a source yet, but we're working with local growers and hope to have that remedied in about a year or so," he said.

This year, Adams expects to buy and consume 36 tons of locally grown grain, and he has two employees he didn't have a year ago.

"We're going to keep that money locally and help support our agricultural program," he said.

To generate revenue until his whiskey ages long enough to sell, Adams is selling unaged bourbon whiskey as moonshine.

"We're finding success not just because it's a novelty product -- we're proud of what we're putting in the bottle -- but because it's made in Nevada with Nevada grain."

Erwin got his idea to start Cold Springs Distillery after taste-testing South Shore-based Tahoe Blue vodka at Whole Foods.

"I thought, 'Jeez, if they could do it, I could do it, too,' " he said. "There's not a lot of distilling in Nevada so I could create extra jobs around here.

"I love this area. My whole family came west during the Gold Rush. I want to share my happiness living here. It's family friendly and a good place for industry and just a good place to be."

Frey loves it here, too. The Frey family has been growing grain in Nevada for 150 years. On its 1,200 acres, Frey Ranch grows grains and alfalfa for the many dairy operations in the Fallon area.

She also sees the job benefits from distilling. It can give steadier employment to farm workers who may not be able to do their jobs when it's snowy or windy because they can instead work inside the distillery facility.

"That's our way of saving jobs, by keeping them busy and not laying them off in the winter," she said.

The Frey distillery has been in the works since it got a federal license for distilled spirits in 2006, but it couldn't offer samples or sell out of its cases until AB153 passed.

"We hold the state's first state distillery license and Nevada's first federal license since prohibition," Frey said.

At Frey Ranch Estates Distillery, the "estates" part of the name signifies not just local ingredients but that every part of the process is done on site.

There are quite a few estate wineries, but not many estate distilleries.

"Our spirits are going to consist of corn, wheat, barley and rye," Frey said. "All will be grown on our farm, so it's kind of neat because from our distillery, you can see our fields where the raw commodity is grown and the silo where it's stored -- and we will take the distillery grain (after the alcohol has been distilled out) next door to the (neighbor's) dairy, so we will have zero percent loss."

Beer boost, too

Pigeon Head Brewery on Fifth Street under the Wells Avenue overpass is brewing its first batch this week and hopes to have beers to offer the public in May.

Owner Eddie Silveira has local connections, too.

"What helps my process is I grow my own grain -- I have a ranch out in Yerington," he said.

"We grow our own barley, so we will have a couple of our seasonal ales where we'll exclusively be using our own grain we grew in Nevada. For that reason, it's a little different than most breweries," Silveira said.

"And we're able to malt it right here in Reno, too, from our brewer. Our brewer owns a malting facility," where the grains are allowed to germinate so they will start to convert certain sugars that will eventually become alcohol. After being malted, the grains will be toasted to get different flavors and colors out of them.

Silveira is helping with a local need.

"I think Reno's got a thirsty mouth, and we want to be able to fill it for them," he said.

Great Basin Brewing also thinks local is important.

"We support locals as much as we can," Kelly said. "Our labels are printed locally. We use local honeys. We like to celebrate the local. We even give our leftover grain to a local farmer to feed his cattle.

"I think our presence here helps people all over Northern Nevada, and I think those are things that would be lost if places like us didn't exist."

Icky in cans

Like other alcohol makers, Great Basin Brewing Co. is expanding.

Kelly said Great Basin recently expanded production at its Taps & Tanks facility on Rock Boulevard with a new bottling line and more fermenting tanks. (Silver State Stainless built the tanks as well as Great Basin's entire Reno brewery.)

In May, it'll fire up the canning line to start making its popular Ichthyosaur beer -- "it's not yucky, it's Icky" -- for the first time in cans.

"It's kind of a trend in the craft beer world," Kelly said. "There are some breweries that solely can. They like to say it's better for the environment because you can take it to the beach and not have to worry about the glass."

Before then, it will compete in the biennial World Beer Cup this week in Denver, defending its silver medal win for its Outlaw Oatmeal Stout in the "Sweet Stout" category.

(Its Bitchin' Berry beer took silver in the "Fruit Wheat" category at last year's Great American Beer Festival.)

The Legislature didn't help Great Basin.

"It put a production cap on us of 15,000 barrels, which works out to 30,000 kegs," Kelly said.

The craft legislation solidifies distinctions between places that make craft beer or spirits and places that sell alcohol to the public. Only small amounts of samples are allowed at craft distilleries and breweries. This means that Great Basin Brewing can no longer sell beer to the public out of its Taps & Tanks location.

"We had to close down our tasting room and fire two bartenders and not give people in that community a place to go because we want to produce as much beer as we possibly can," Kelly said.

"We pay excise tax on every keg of beer, so it's strange they would want to limit us and limit economic growth."

Frey said her operation can sell unlimited amounts of wine to consumers but, unlike in California, they cannot sell directly to restaurants, retail shops or grocery stores. Instead, they sell to a distributor.

Her distributor has been great, she said, and there are pluses and minuses to the system.

"If somebody in Elko or Las Vegas calls -- instead of saying I'll hop in my car and drive there -- I can say 'Contact my distributor, who will be there this week,' " she said.

The craft distillation law, however, caps samples of distilled spirits to two ounces per person per day and sales to two bottles per person per month.

"It is limiting our growth," Frey said. "As a consumer, you can go to your liquor store

and buy 10 bottles of Jack Daniels 24 hours a day, but you can buy only two bottles of your local spirits made with local grain at your local distillery. So that's frustrating; it kind of hurts the local guy."

More revenue

In Nevada, manufacturers -- brewers, distillers and wineries -- pay an excise tax every month on the alcoholic beverages they produce.

For malt beverages such as beer, makers pay 16 cents a gallon.

For distilled spirits, makers pay from 70 cents to \$3.60 a gallon depending on the percent of alcohol in the product.

Adams from Seven Troughs said, "The tax base on alcohol is phenomenal, so we're contributing more to the local tax base than if you were importing it.

"Before (the passage of AB153), we did not have an excise tax base here. Now we're making (products) here and being taxed here. Bottles of liquor are taxed at a much higher level than beer and wine. If we weren't here making whiskey, the state would not be getting that money."

Nevada style

A case can be made for the positive effects that craft distilleries and breweries bring to Northern Nevada: local products, jobs, tax revenue.

But a case can also be made for what Northern Nevada brings to craft distilleries and breweries.

Kelly said, "We really love our brewing water here. A lot of other breweries treat their water chemically to make it perfect in their mind for the brewing process. We take it straight from the city water -- we like that."

Adams likes the high desert climate.

"The weather is fantastic here for making aged products," he said. "Above 4,000 feet, you get a lot of cold and hot cycles and that's important when aging whiskey -- you want fluctuations. Other states can't compete with us on that.

"Our water is not like that used for Kentucky whiskey, so it won't be anything like Kentucky whiskey. We have good water; it's just different. And our grains are different than those from Kentucky, which is the biggest whiskey producer. That doesn't mean the whiskey will be bad; it means it's a Nevada product. To expect it's a Kentucky whiskey is not appropriate. We're shooting for something different."

BY THE NUMBERS

3: Licensed craft distilleries in Nevada -- 1 in Washoe County, 1 in Churchill County, 1 in Clark County

23: Licensed brew pubs in Nevada: 10 in Washoe County, 1 in Carson City, 2 in Elko County, 10 in Clark County

2: Licensed wineries in Nevada: 1 in Churchill, 1 in Carson City

Source: Nevada Department of Taxation

LIQUOR EXCISE TAXES COLLECTED

\* \$14,000: Excise taxes paid by Nevada's three licensed craft distilleries since the

distillery license came into existence on July 1, 2013.

\* \$372,000: Excise taxes paid by the state's 23 licensed brew pubs since January 2011.

\* \$25,000: Excise taxes paid by the state's 2 licensed wineries since January 2011.

Source: Nevada Department of Taxation

# Crews will pull water weed from Truckee

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 8:19 a.m. PDT April 5, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file )

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A feathery water weed migrating down the Truckee River will be the target of a new removal effort late this summer as experts work to contain its spread.

Sometime after Labor Day, workers will wade into the river's shallows and begin pulling out handfuls of Eurasian watermilfoil, which has been spreading through Lake Tahoe for more than 30 years and is now found growing in slow-moving patches of the Truckee River all the way to Pyramid Lake.

"This is the first time we're taking removal into the river," said Kim Boyd, manager of the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, the group overseeing the project. Last month, directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority approved nearly \$60,000 to finance the job to help protect the primary water supply for the Reno-Sparks area.

The project will target a stretch of the river where the weed is growing thickly between the Lake Tahoe outlet dam at Tahoe City and the River Ranch area 3 miles downstream.

An exotic and aggressive invader, Eurasian watermilfoil is trouble. The water weed crowds out native plants and can ruin boating and clog irrigation ditches, water intakes and pipes. At Tahoe, it also provides cover for largemouth bass and other warmwater fish invading the lake.

No one is exactly sure when the weed first showed up in Lake Tahoe, but it's suspected it arrived sometime in the mid- to-late-1980s in the Tahoe Keys area of South Lake Tahoe, an area heavily infested.

Spread by boats or as weed fragments carried by currents, Eurasian watermilfoil can now be found in most of Tahoe's marinas and along some other shoreline areas. It may have escaped into the Truckee River during the flood of 1997 and was noticed growing in a quiet part of the river near Verdi a few years later.

It has yet to cause major problems for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, which serves about 94,000 homes and businesses across the greater Reno-Sparks area. But it is an issue, with utility workers spending an hour or two daily cleaning Eurasian watermilfoil and other water weeds from its river intake system.

"We're increasingly having to deal with milfoil," said Paul Miller, the utility's manager of operations and water quality. "It's definitely a worthwhile endeavor to combat this aquatic invasive species, to reduce the impact of this weed on the river."

Often using scuba divers, the Tahoe Resource Conservation District has conducted removal projects at several locations around Lake Tahoe in recent years, including at Tahoe Keys, at iconic Emerald Bay, a couple of marinas and beach areas in South Lake Tahoe and at Nevada's Elks Point.

"It's worked really well, though we've had mixed results in the marinas," Boyd said, adding that when patches of Eurasian watermilfoil are removed from places near where other thick patches remain, it tends to grow back.

Boyd said the \$60,000 project should allow her district to remove the weed from about half of that 3-mile stretch of river downstream from the Tahoe City dam, with followup removal work planned.

Working with University of Nevada, Reno, the district also soon hopes to conduct a survey of the 116 miles of river between Tahoe and Pyramid Lake to identify the extent of infestation and hot spots of growth.

"I think it's very important to know where it is and then to get on it," said Steve Chilton, an aquatic invasive species expert with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Anytime you can get it upstream you keep it from going further down the river."

# Editorial: Regionalization possible in Washoe

The Opinion of the RGJ's Editorial Board 1:29 p.m. PDT April 6, 2014



(Photo: Tim Dunn/RGJ file)

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The collapse of the combined Reno Fire Department and Truckee Meadows Fire Protection District two years ago raised an important question for elected officials in the city and county:

With the deterioration in relations among jurisdictions in the Truckee Meadows, does

regionalization have a future?

It was only a few years ago, after all, that regionalization seemed to be the wave of the future. Just about every candidate for public office was talking about the money that could be saved by combining fire departments, law enforcement agencies, parks and recreation — there even was talk about folding the cities into a single regional government, much like Carson City.

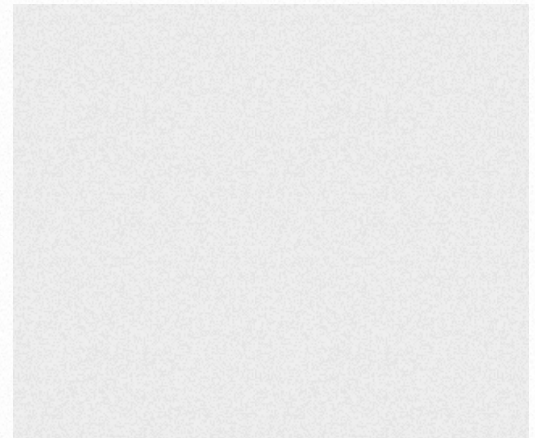
Little of that has come to fruition. The fire department "divorce" is one example of how financial issues, union contracts and politics can make any effort to create a regional service more difficult than anyone anticipated. Another is Animal Control, which has been kicked around like a political football for several years, despite its having a dedicated source of tax revenue, or maybe because of it.

Yet, the history of regionalization in Reno, Sparks and Washoe County isn't all bleak, and there are examples of regional agencies that have succeeded beyond expectations.

Financial independence

The Reno-Tahoe Airport Authority, created by the Legislature to end bickering over the Reno-owned airport in 1977, is one. It's governed by a nine-member board of trustees that's appointed by the city councils of Reno and Sparks, the Washoe County Commission and the Reno-Sparks Convention & Visitors Authority; none of the trustees are currently elected officials. Important to its success: It's financially self-sufficient, operating on fees and rental income from its tenants (including slot machine revenue).

Although there are occasional controversies, as might be expected for the issues it must deal with, the Regional Transportation Commission also can be considered one of the area's most successful regionalization efforts. It, too, has its own sources of revenue. Unlike the airport authority, however, its five-member board includes elected officials; two members are appointed by the Reno City Council, one by the Sparks City Council and two by the Washoe County Commission.



## MORE NEWS STORIES



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But perhaps the most successful regionalization effort has been the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. TMWA was created in 2000 by Washoe County, Reno and Sparks to make a bid for Westpac Utilities, the private water company owned by what was then Sierra Pacific Power Co. (now NV Energy). The quickly formed joint powers authority outbid a French firm for the water system that primarily served the urban areas of Sparks and Reno. (There were allegations that it overbid.)

Since then, it has refurbished a water system that had been badly neglected by its previous owner. It has installed meters on homes that didn't already have them. It has secured storage to protect customers in drought years. And, in the coming months, it will complete a merger with Washoe County's water utility, which will give the region a single water purveyor able to put the diverse sources of water to the best use and better plan for the future.

It has been able to do all that while maintaining its financial stability at a time when many government agencies have struggled with falling tax revenue and debt.

The TMWA board has seven members, three representing Reno, two each representing Sparks and Washoe County. It's a mix of elected and nonelected officials.

#### Overcoming tensions

None of these organizations has been completely free of the kinds of tensions that you'd expect in the Truckee Meadows' political climate, especially given the sometimes emotional issues they deal with, such as roads and water, but all have been able to work through those difficulties by concentrating on their missions.

So there are good models for city and county officials to look to if they are serious about restarting the conversation about consolidating fire departments — as they should be.

Among the lessons that they can learn from their past successes is that the new organization must be fully independent, with its own sources of revenue and a board dedicated to working collaboratively.

Equally important, the new organization must be able to start with a blank slate. That includes being able to negotiate new contracts with the unions that represent fire department employees. Without that authority, a chief won't have the flexibility he or she needs to staff the department appropriately, and the organization's finances would start in a deep hole.

It can be done. Reno, Sparks and Washoe County already have shown they can put politics aside to create organizations that work for the good of all residents. It's time to put that knowledge to work on fire protection.

#### SNAPSHOT

##### ISSUE:

Regionalizing fire protection

##### OUR VIEW:

There are good models available to help the cities and county create a fully independent organization free of politics.

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**REGIONAL**

**Truckee Meadows Water Authority and Southern Nevada Water Authority promotes EPA's "Fix a Leak Week" March 17-23**

Author: U.S. EPA

Published on Mar 17, 2014 - 10:57:26 AM

SAN FRANCISCO March 17, 2014 - As part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense program, the 2014 Fix a Leak Week campaign encourages Americans to help put a stop to the more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted from household leaks each year.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the Southern Nevada Water Authority are supporting finding and fixing residential leaks by providing customers with informational DVDs, emails and dye tabs to check for leaks in their homes.

"Conserving Nevada's water resources is everyone's responsibility," said Jared Blumenfeld, EPA's Regional Administrator for the Pacific Southwest. "Household leaks in Nevada account for nearly 10 billion gallons of water wasted each year, enough to fill the Bellagio lake 330 times."

To help save water for future generations, we are asking consumers to check, twist, and replace:

- Check for leaks. Look for dripping faucets, showerheads, sprinklers, and other fixtures. Also check for toilets with silent leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring into the tank, waiting 10 minutes; if color appears in the bowl before you flush, there is a leak. Don't forget to check irrigation systems and spigots too.
- Twist and tighten hose and pipe connections.
- Replace the fixture if necessary. Look for WaterSense labeled models, which are independently certified to use 20 percent less water and perform as well as or better than standard models and, to save water without a noticeable difference in flow in your bathroom, install WaterSense labeled faucet aerator.

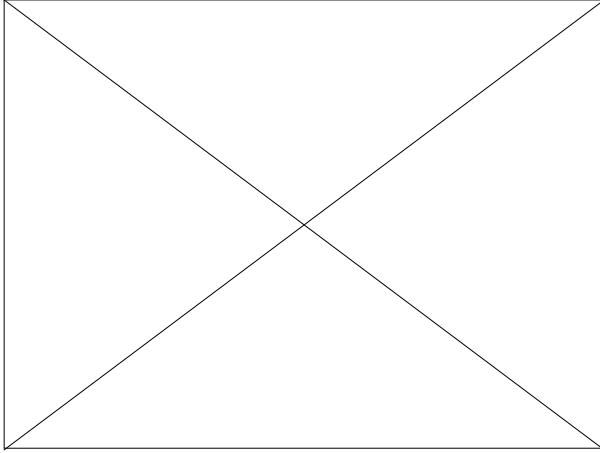
In many cases, high efficiency fixtures pay for themselves quickly and can be installed by handy do-it-yourselfers or local plumbing professionals. Irrigation professionals certified through a WaterSense labeled program can also check your systems for leaks. Visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense) to find WaterSense labeled products or an auditor in your area.

For more information on Fix a Leak Week, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

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# Water supply projected to be enough for summer

- [Video](#)



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[Water supply projected to be ok](#)



[Print Story](#)

Published: 3/19 9:50 pm

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Updated: 3/19 10:10 pm

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- As low as our current snowpack is, it is still enough to give us a good water supply this summer.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority says a series of storms in February really boosted our area's water supply. Earlier this year, they were preparing for possibly having river flows dip below projected levels sometime in June.

But the latest projected river flows show there will be just enough water to make it through peak summer demand months. "The latest hydrology and the latest model runs are showing that we're going to have normal river flows through Labor Day and into early September, which means we won't be taking any additional conservation measures this year," said TMWA Senior Hydrologist Bill Hauck.

If those projections are not accurate and river flows to fall out or dip below projected levels prior to Labor Day, water officials say they are prepared.



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## Truckee River flows expected to remain healthy through summer

*By Jeff DeLong*  
*jdelong@rgj.com*

Despite continued dry conditions, flows of the Truckee River are expected to remain sufficient to make any extra water conservation measures in Reno-Sparks unnecessary over the coming summer.

Directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority received that news Wednesday as the region winds up what will all but certainly be its third dry winter in a row, with the region remaining entrenched in drought.

“There will be no problem meeting customer demand this summer,” said Bill Hauck, the utility’s water supply coordinator. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority serves roughly 93,000 homes and businesses across the greater Reno-Sparks area.

“We really got lucky,” Hauck said.

That luck came in the form of a powerful set of storms that slammed into the Sierra the second weekend of February, dropping up to 7 feet of snow in some areas and 4.41 inches of rain and melted snow at Tahoe City, the most ever for a storm that did not cause a flood.

Lake Tahoe rose nearly 5 1/2 inches over the course of the two-day storm – an increase of 53,000 acre-feet, or 17.2 billion gallons, of water.

A few smaller storms since have continued to help, with Tahoe rising about three-quarters of a foot from levels seen at the end of January.

Before the February storms, experts expected flows of the Truckee River to substantially diminish sometime in June – creating a situation that would likely require some level of expanded water conservation measures over the summer.

Now, Hauck said, it appears river flows will remain at healthy levels through Labor Day and beyond the period of highest water demand. Peak demand, usually reached sometime in July or August, is about 130 million gallons per day.

The improved situation means the utility will enforce its three-day watering system as normal and possible steps such as shortening the hours when watering lawns and gardens is allowed will not be necessary.

It does not appear – at least for the time being – that the utility will need to tap extra drought reserves stored in the Truckee River reservoir system.

“Conditions are quite a bit better than they were,” Hauck said.

After Labor Day, river flows are projected to drop significantly. While water demand is expected to

drop concurrently, the utility might for a time need to increase use of its groundwater wells to provide needed water.

"If river flows do drop down then, we will probably be running the wells a little harder," Hauck said. "We'll have to get the water from somewhere else."

During the fall, river flows will drop to levels that will force the water authority to shut down its hydroelectric power plants on the river, Hauck said.

After the 2012 and 2013 water years were some of the driest on record and with this year poised to end worse, water suppliers are still looking for some help with late-season storms.

On the short-term and as spring's official arrival comes Thursday , conditions are expected to remain dry.

The next possibility for rain and mountain snow comes next Tuesday or Wednesday but that storm doesn't look particularly strong, according to forecasters at the National Weather Service.

A potentially stronger one could come the following weekend but at this point, confidence is low, forecasters said.

## Additional Facts

Mountain snowpack as of March 19

2014

Truckee River Basin: 30 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 39 percent of average.

2013

Truckee River Basin: 67 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 57 percent of average.

2012

Truckee River Basin: 60 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 54 percent of average.

2011

Truckee River Basin: 149 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 168 percent of average.

Source: U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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March 17, 2014  
Contact: Marlene Olsen  
marlene@goodstandingoutreach.com  
(775) 772-0020

***Fix a Leak Week is March 17-23:***  
**Save Water and Save on Your Bill**

(RENO, Nev.) Americans are fortunate to have easy access to some of the safest water in the world—just by turning on their tap. But, more than one trillion gallons of that precious water leaks from homes nationwide each year. That's why EPA WaterSense reminds Americans to check their plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems during **Fix a Leak Week, March 17-23**.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) encourages responsible water use at all times, and Fix a Leak Week is a great time to track down and eliminate water leaks in your home. How would you know if you have a leak? A good method is to examine your water usage before you start outdoor watering.

“It's likely that a family of four may have a leak problem if their indoor water use significantly exceeds 6,000 gallons per month,” said Andy Gebhardt, TMWA’s Customer Services Manager. “It’s just a rule of thumb, but the average water bill from November through March should be about thirty dollars,” he added. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, many household water leaks are easily correctable and can save homeowners about 10 percent on their water bills. Common types of leaks found in the home are faucets and worn toilet flappers.

TMWA provides help with detecting and fixing leaks. Visit TMWA’s YouTube channel at [www.youtube.com/truckeemeadowswater](http://www.youtube.com/truckeemeadowswater) to view How-To Videos on: how to tell if your toilet has a leak, fixing a leaky toilet flapper and more, or use the Conservation section of [www.tmwa.com/conservation/leaks](http://www.tmwa.com/conservation/leaks) to help find and fix leaks that might be wasting water in your home.

-###-

*Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment,*



*delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 330,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.*

# New technology could prevent invasive species from getting into Lake Tahoe



Reported by: Alyx Sacks

Email: [asacks@mynews4.com](mailto:asacks@mynews4.com)

Published: 8:15 am

Updated: 8:38 am

LAKE TAHOE, NV/CA (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- New technology in invasive species protection was recently unveiled at the Water Sports Industry Association's 2014 Summit that could help keep Lake Tahoe safe from invasive species. According to the Tahoe Regional Planning Commission it is estimated that an invasive species introduction to Lake Tahoe could have a financial impact of \$20 million dollars per year and this new filter system could help prevent that from happening.

The filter system is called the Mussel Mast'R Aquatic Invasive Species Filter System. The manufacturer is a Florida based company called Wake WorkX. Essentially, the TRPA says new pump system "effectively filters out aquatic invasive species and their larvae before allowing

them to be pumped into special ballast tanks or bladders commonly installed in boats designed for wakeboarding and other wake sports to temporarily increase the size of their wake."

The TRPA says the new pump system will also save boats that have the system installed time at Lake Tahoe inspection stations and boaters could pay a smaller fee for inspection services.

TRPA says Wake WorkX developed the system in partnership with TRPA, the Water Sports Industry Association, the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Colorado Parks & Wildlife.

The TRPA says the plan is to have the new system available through boat dealers sometime this year.

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## Mayor Watch



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## Michael Bertrand



Elevator pitch: "Grass roots. Accountability to the community. Absolute transparency."

Age: 48

Persona: Eccentric son of long-time Reno family

Residence: \$425,000 Southwest Reno home owned by his family's trust

Family: Divorced. Five children.

Education: Some college

Occupation: Cattle-rancher; property manager

Pets: Six horses

Interesting tidbit: His grandfather opened the Rancho Sierra Motel on Fourth Street in 1949

- [Bio](#)
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## Tony Perri



Elevator pitch: "First of all, get registered to vote, because most likely you're not the person who's voting, but without people like you, people like me can't support the arts and entertainment."

Age: 48. "I was just informed of this a couple days ago. I had been telling people I was 50."

Persona: Erratic backstage pass designer who wants to support the arts

Residence: Rents a room on Lake Street.

Family: Divorced. Four children.

Education: Some college.

Occupation: Entertainment industry executive. Designs backstage passes.

Pets: None. "I tried fish, but they died."

Interesting tidbit: Referred to himself in the third person during interview with reporter.

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## DeLores Aiazzi



Elevator pitch: "I've lived here my whole life. I understand the history of where we've been and where we are now. I'm very good at bringing people together. And I think Reno has this amazing potential to be anything it wants to be."

Age: 57

Persona: Soft-spoken advocate for the arts community and Reno.

Residence: \$255,000 home in the Old Northwest

Family: Married 40 years. Two children. Three grandchildren.

Education: Bachelor's degree in clinical laboratory science.

Occupation: Clinical microbiologist.

Pets: Cat named Charger.

Interesting tidbit: Learned how to fix clocks from her father, who owned a clock shop in Parklane Mall in the 1970s.

[Bio](#)
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## Robert Avery



Elevator pitch: "My vision is to establish a highly skilled workforce in the heart of Reno."

Age: 42

Persona: Earnest political novice with business chops.

Residence: \$410,000 house in the Old Southwest.

Family: Married for 15 years, three children.

Education: Bachelor's degree in finance.

Occupation: Technology entrepreneur.

Pets: Mini Australian shepherd named Blu.

Interesting tidbit: Likes to pretend he's a tiger while playing with his 8-year-old daughter.

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## Marsha Berkbigler

Elevator pitch: "Of all the candidates on the list, I am the only one with big-business experience, small-business experience, experience owning my own business, hiring people, creating jobs, working inside and outside of government, knowledge of the community and public relations experience."

Age: 63



Persona: Fiscally conservative businesswoman focused on growth and economic development.

Residence: \$275,000 house in the Old Southwest.

Family: Married 36 years, 7 children, 14 grandchildren.

Education: Bachelor's degree in business administration.

Occupation: Businesswoman; former lobbyist.

Pets: Jack Russell terrier named Duke Wayne.

Interesting tidbit: Lobbied for nonsmoking areas in restaurants and smoke-free day cares, hospitals and public buildings in the 1980s.

[Bio](#)
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## Brian Lee Fleming



Elevator pitch: "Truth, honesty, family, the closest of all relationships, friends, friends of friends, and the enemies too, we all must come together to work and play, take care of the debt and make Reno that shining city on the mountain."

Age: 57

Persona: Self-described recovered alcoholic, former wrecking yard operator who wants to clean up Reno.

Residence: \$214,000 home in the Old Northwest.

Family: Divorced, four children in the Philippines.

Education: Some college.

Occupation: Retired wrecking yard owner. "I shut the gates of hell in 2007."

Pets: Cat named CJ

Interesting tidbit: Once prompted neighbors to call police because he was vacuuming the street in front of his house at night.

[Bio](#)
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## Ian Pasalich



Elevator pitch: "I'm an international business person who has been around and knows a lot of places and people. I really want to promote Reno to get motivated people who can come and work here. I want to open the economy up and elevate it.

Age: 58

Persona: Bubbly New Zealander with international experience.

Residence: \$387,000 home in the Old Southwest

Family: Married, three children

Education: Two bachelor's degrees in engineering and business.

Occupation: International businessman/small appliance inventor

Pets: A peekapoo named Onyx

Interesting tidbit: Gave up a promising corporate career with Sunbeam New Zealand to stay in Reno with his wife, Robin.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Tom Fitzgerald



Elevator pitch: "Of the 20 candidates, I am the most qualified. If they read my entire background, they'll see I'm most qualified to be mayor."

Age: 70

Persona: Articulate, kindly gentleman with intuitive ability to see Reno's future

Residence: \$461,000 home in Caughlin Ranch.

Family: Married, two sons, six grandchildren

Education: Bachelor's in political science

Occupation: Retired business-owner/psychic

Pets: German shepherd

Interesting tidbit: He's a psychic.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Erik Holland



Elevator pitch: "I stand for growth toward the urban cores. I want a bus system that's not like a pair of flood pants. There are a lot of things the city can do better. And I want to talk about some of the civil liberties issues we've had the last few years."

Age: 55

Persona: Liberal crusader against urban sprawl and the National Defense Authorization Act.

Residence: Rents at the Riverside Artist Lofts

Family: Divorced, one daughter

Education: Bachelor's in history.

Occupation: Artist and teacher at Rainshadow Charter School

Pets: None.

Interesting tidbit: Plein-air painter who can be found painting near the Virginia Street bridge.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Sean Burke



Elevator pitch: "I'm a 37-year-old native Nevadan, born and raised in Reno, who loves the community and wants to make it better for all people who live here."

Age: 37

Persona: Chipper, earnest political novice

Residence: Rents a house in the VA Hospital neighborhood

Family: Only child with large extended family.

Education: Some college

Occupation: Retail manager/property manager

Pets: Two rabbits, Clarice and Ricardo.

Interesting tidbit: He'd own all sorts of animals if money and space weren't an issue.

[Bio](#)
[Vision and Experience](#)
[Politics](#)

## Chuck Reno



Elevator pitch: "I have the most city experience among all of the 20 candidates. I was on the Neighborhood Advisory Board, the Historical Resources Commission and now the Planning Commission. I have expertise being a civil engineer. I am well-educated. I have a vision for Reno."

Age: 36

Persona: Earnest glad-hander with a drive for political office.

Residence: \$266,000 home in Northwest Reno.

Family: Married, three children

Education: Bachelor's degrees in civil engineering and general studies.

Occupation: Civil engineer

Pets: No pets.

Interesting tidbit: He has three middle names. So do each of his 10 siblings. And he knows them all. Also, he's a distant relative of Gen. Jesse Reno, the city's namesake.

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## Idora Silver



Elevator pitch: "The success of Reno depends heavily on how well the next council works together to help big businesses, small businesses, senior citizens, veterans, everybody. Bringing people together has been my business for 30 years. That's what I'm good at."

Age: 65

Persona: Engaging collaborator taking a management consultant approach to city government.

Residence: \$288,000 home in the Skyline neighborhood.

Family: Divorced, one son, two grandchildren

Education: Master's in speech communication, bachelor's in German and psychology

Occupation: Business management consultant

Pets: Four basset hounds.

Interesting tidbit: She's a ballroom dance instructor and crossword puzzle aficionado.

[Bio](#)
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## Ken Stark

Elevator pitch: "In 1992, IBM sent me here to manage operations. I met my wife and we decided to raise our family here. I started a very successful commercial real estate company. I understand what it is to recruit businesses here and manage a business."



Age: 55

Persona: Driven businessman with a background in finance.

Residence: \$521,000 home in Southwest Reno.

Family: Married, one child.

Education: Bachelor's degree in finance

Occupation: Commercial real estate broker

Pets: Jack Russell terrier named Precious.

Interesting tidbit: Known as the guy who's first to work and last to leave.

[Bio](#)
[Vision and Experience](#)
[Politics](#)

## Ray "Pez" Pezonella



Elevator pitch: "What voters really want is somebody who has stability and integrity. That is what I bring to the table. I've been here 44 years. I have a good base and a good knowledge of the area."

Age: 65

Persona: Paternal community booster with a well-established civil engineering firm

Residence: \$326,000 home in the Lakeridge area.

Family: Married, four children, eight grandchildren

Education: Bachelor's in civil engineering

Occupation: Geotechnical engineer

Pets: Vizsla-Labrador mix named Winnie.

Interesting tidbit: He's been a pilot since 1974 and owns a Beechcraft Baron that he bought from one of his opponent's family.

[Bio](#)
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[Politics](#)

## Larry Pizorno



Elevator pitch: "If you elect me, I will be the finest mayor you have ever seen. I will make sure everyone knows Reno is the finest Biggest Little City in the World."

Age: 75

Persona: Wacky, longtime Reno character who's a fixture at the Air Races, Hot August Nights and spaghetti feeds.

Residence: \$185,000 home in Donner Springs.

Family: Divorced. Six children.

Education: Some college

Occupation: Retired chimney sweeper

Pets: Scottish terrier named Chimney. He's a therapy dog who gives great puppy hugs

Interesting tidbit: He's a skydiver, scuba diver, catamaran sailor, motorcyclist and collector of sharp weapons. But he won't bungee jump.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Eddie Lorton



Elevator pitch: "I will promote fiscal responsibility. I also want to get rid of the business license moratoriums so we can supply more jobs and revenue streams for the city."

Age: 52

Persona: Fighter of city hall, champion of term limits, self-described self-made man of riches.

Residence: Renting apartment in downtown Reno. Owns a \$280,000 home just outside the city limits in South Reno.

Family: Engaged.

Education: High school diploma.

Occupation: Business owner.

Pets: Three dogs, a hamster, snake and turtle

Interesting tidbit: Decided against going to college after his girlfriend crashed his car.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Hillary Schieve



Elevator pitch: "As an original founder of the Midtown District, creator of the Technology and Innovation Council and partner in the Biggest Little City movement, I have a proven track record of getting things done."

Age: 43

Persona: Perky progressive seeking to establish Reno as a mecca for start-ups.

Residence: \$414,000 home in Caughlin Ranch.

Family: Engaged. Two sisters and a brother.

Education: High school diploma.

Occupation: Small business owner, Reno city councilwoman

Pets: A Pomchi named Hailey and an Australian shepherd named Sadie.

Interesting tidbit: She was a competitive figure skater whose career was cut short by kidney failure. Her sister donated a kidney to her 19 years ago.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Mark Markel



Elevator pitch: "My main thing is to help the community. To talk about not getting into a car with a drunk driver."

Age: 49

Persona: Victim of a drunk driving crash that left him with a traumatic brain injury.

Residence: In a home for the disabled.

Family: Widowed. Two adult children.

Education: Some college.

Occupation: Disabled.

Pets: None

Interesting tidbit: Appears at City Council meetings to talk about the dangers of drunk driving.

[Bio](#)[Vision and Experience](#)[Politics](#)

## Chad Dehne



Elevator pitch: "I am a Marine Corps veteran. I'm a great voice for working people and families. I'm honest, have integrity and I'm not a yes-man. When the Aces make my bobble-head, it will bounce sideways sometimes."

Age: 49

Persona: Gruff perennial candidate for mayor and champion of the "working man."

Residence: \$200,000 home in Southeast Reno.

Family: Married 28 years, three sons.

Education: High school diploma.

Occupation: Truck driver.

Pets: Two dogs and two cats

Interesting tidbit: This is his fifth run for mayor. In 2010, he won 21,180 votes to Bob Cashell's 41,117 votes.



TheXdu|#59/#5347

## California committees approve \$687 million in drought relief

By FENIT NIRAPPIL, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A \$687 million drought relief plan is headed for floor votes in the Legislature after winning quick approval Wednesday in legislative committees.

Assembly and Senate budget committees passed the bills, a week after the package was announced by Gov. Jerry Brown and the Democratic legislative leaders. California is facing its driest year on record, putting 17 communities at risk of running out of drinking water while forcing farmers in the nation's agricultural heartland to fallow fields and uproot orchards.

The legislation calls for immediate action on the drought, including \$15 million to address emergency water shortages and an additional \$1 million for a public awareness campaign. Most of the money comes from bonds previously approved by voters and will accelerate existing or planned water conservation and recycling projects.

Both houses of the Legislature are expected to vote on the drought legislation Thursday. If Brown signs the bills, as expected, they would take effect immediately.

AB 79 makes changes to the state's 2013-14 budget, creating grant programs for agencies and local governments to bid for project funding. Some specific projects received more funding, such as an additional \$25 million in bond money for Folsom Dam modifications.

"I imagine we'd walk right into a veto if we added any earmarks," said State Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco.

Republican lawmakers have raised concerns about how quickly the legislation is moving and pointed to language in AB 80 they say could affect existing water rights.

"In the rush to do it, and to do it now, I think we need to be careful not to do it recklessly," said Assemblyman Jim Patterson, R-Fresno, at a committee hearing.

Assemblyman Richard Bloom, D-Santa Monica, countered that the package was thoughtfully put together.

"This is an emergency," Bloom said. "We do need to move forward quickly to address this very, very real crisis."

Under the legislation, the State Water Resources Control Board would have new powers to issue fines for illegal diversions of water. The bill was amended in the Senate to stave off fines for unintentional diversions, calming some Republicans concerns.

Representatives of the governor's administration say existing water rights laws will not change, and that the new powers are only in effect during the state of emergency.

Republicans also questioned the Democrats' plan to tap \$40 million from a fund created for projects

that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Under a landmark program, California businesses pay for emissions and the state is supposed to use the money to fight climate change.

“This is beginning to look more and more like an executive slush fund,” said Patterson, who proposed drawing the money from the general fund, the state’s main checkbook.

The governor’s office says water efficiency and energy efficiency go hand-in-hand. For example, the State Water Project, which supplies 25 million Californians and 750,000 acres of agricultural land, is the state’s largest energy user.

The legislative package also will draw \$47 million from the state’s general fund to provide food and housing assistance for Californians hit hardest by the drought, primarily in regions heavily dependent on agriculture. Some Democratic lawmakers raised concerns about whether that would be enough.

“It’s a pittance,” said Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose.

The independent Legislative Analyst’s Office released a report Friday laying out options for lawmakers to immediately address the drought. Several are included in the relief package, including expanding groundwater management and conservation programs.

But lawmakers would also reduce water consumption by requiring rate hikes, the report says. Legislators can update the state’s water rights system by allocating water based on assumptions including that farmers are using water-efficient technology and that homeowners are using low-flow shower heads. These approaches, likely to be controversial, are not included in the relief package.

To meet Californians’ long-term water needs, lawmakers are negotiating changes to an \$11.1 billion water bond scheduled to go before voters in November. Republicans are emphasizing dams and reservoirs to increase water storage, while Democrats focus on making more use of existing water and restoring watersheds and ecosystems.

Legislative leaders expect a negotiated bill to come together by early summer.

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## **Fitch Affirms Truckee Meadows Water Authority, NV's Revs at 'AA-'; Outlook Stable**

March 28, 2014 12:46 PM Eastern Daylight Time

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Fitch Ratings affirms the following Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Nevada ratings:

--\$418.7 million outstanding water revenue bonds at 'AA-';

--\$160 million of bank notes corresponding to water revenue commercial paper notes, series 2006A and 2006B, at 'A+'.

The Rating Outlook is Stable.

### **SECURITY**

The bonds are secured by a first lien on net revenues of the authority's water system (the system). The bank notes are secured by a subordinate lien on net system revenues after payment of the bonds as well as from any proceeds of obligations issued to refund any advances made under the restated reimbursement agreement; there currently are no bank notes outstanding.

### **KEY RATING DRIVERS**

**SOLID FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE:** Debt service coverage (DSC) has stabilized at an adequate level following a period of weakness during the recent economic downturn, and unrestricted reserves remain very strong, providing significant operating flexibility.

**MERGER CREDIT NEUTRAL:** The utility expects to complete a merger with two Washoe County water enterprises by the end of the year. Combined financial performance is likely to be in-line with historical performance of the authority, given similar financial margins at the merging agencies. The merger will broaden Truckee Meadows' service area, increasing customer counts by about a quarter.

**HIGH LEVERAGE:** The authority's debt burden is significantly above average. The authority will assume and refinance about \$36.1 million during the upcoming merger. Per customer debt ratios will decline significantly with the merger due to lower debt ratios at the merged entities, but debt will remain above average.

**GOOD RATE FLEXIBILITY:** Rates are low relative to median household income, suggesting the authority has adequate rate flexibility to implement planned inflation-like rate increases over the next five years. Rate increases have been approved through 2016.

**SUFFICIENT WATER SUPPLIES:** Water supplies are adequate to meet customer demand for the foreseeable future, despite current drought conditions, alleviating pressure to procure additional resources.

**RECOVERING ECONOMY:** The service area is large and diverse, but the economy is recovering very slowly from a deep economic downturn.

## RATING SENSITIVITIES

**DECLINE IN COVERAGE:** The rating is sensitive to shifts in fundamental credit factors, including financial performance, the debt profile and rate setting behavior. The Stable Outlook means that Fitch does not expect such deterioration.

## CREDIT PROFILE

The authority is a joint powers authority formed in 2000 between the cities of Reno and Sparks as well as Washoe County (the county). The authority purchased the water assets of Sierra Pacific Power Company and undertook water utility operations beginning June 2001, primarily in the Reno and Sparks areas. It serves about 94,700 accounts and is currently merging with two county water agencies, which will expand the service area to include most of the county's urbanized areas and increase the customer base by about 25%.

## ADEQUATE COVERAGE, STRONG LIQUIDITY

All-in debt service coverage has recovered from its recessionary lows due to modest rate increases and increased water usage. Coverage averaged 1.6x over the three fiscal years ended June 30, 2013, up from a low of 1.3x in fiscal 2009. Results were boosted by a

cumulative 7.5% increase in rates over the period and a 9% jump in water sales volumes as a result of both economic recovery and weather. Senior DSC was healthy at 1.8x in 2013 and has averaged 1.9x over the past three years.

Free cash to depreciation was solid at 86% and has improved sharply from recessionary lows of less than half that level. Connection fee revenues remain subdued and well below prior peak levels. Little downside risk remains with connection fees providing just 2.3% of total system revenues in 2013, down from more than a fifth of revenues during the housing boom. With rates set to adequately provide needed coverage and capital investment without connection fees, the authority is well positioned to outperform if development resumes at even a fraction of its prior pace.

The authority maintains significant financial flexibility with a robust reserve position. The authority had \$60 million of unrestricted cash and investments and \$16.8 million of indenture-required restricted reserves at the end of fiscal 2013. The combined balance equaled a very high 715 days cash, well above the median for any rating category.

#### MERGER CREDIT NEUTRAL

The authority's financial forecast shows coverage improving slightly over the next five years, as it absorbs the Washoe County Community Services Department's water utility and the South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District. The authority's forecast appears reasonable, assuming a decline in water use to more typical levels, modest rate increases and connection fee revenues near recessionary lows.

The authority's financial plans and forecast include the merged districts with a target for completing the merger late in the current calendar year. The utility has spent several years analyzing the impact on its financial performance. However, the merger creates greater-than-normal uncertainty around the forecast. The rating could come under downward pressure if financial performance, particularly debt service coverage, slips due to the combination.

#### HIGH DEBT DECLINING SLOWLY

Leverage is expected to remain high for at least the next decade, driven by the 2001 purchase of the water utility from the Sierra Pacific Power Company. The authority's \$500 million of outstanding debt equals \$5,262 per customer, almost three times the median for 'AA' category water and sewer agencies. Debt-to-net plant assets are also elevated at 74%, compared to an

'AA' category median of 49%. Amortization is somewhat slow in the early years of repayment with 31% of debt repaid in 10 years, but accelerates thereafter with a very typical 79% repaid in 20 years.

The upcoming merger will result in a 7.2% increase in direct debt but lower debt ratios with the expanded customer base. The utility will assume \$26.1 million of revenue bonds and a \$10 million state loan. It plans to refinance the revenue bonds with commercial paper. Debt is projected to decline to about \$3,850 per customer in five years, a little less than twice the median projected debt for rated utilities.

The utility's 2015 - 2019 capital improvement program (CIP) totals a manageable \$105.9 million and will require no additional borrowing. The authority has scaled back purchases of additional water rights with growth no longer occurring at the rapid pace of the housing boom years. Based on its current portfolio of ground water and significant surface water rights, the authority believes it has sufficient water supplies to serve existing customers as well as any growth that may occur over the next several years.

The authority's water supply position is solid, albeit vulnerable to periodic droughts. The utility gets the bulk of its supplies from surface water fed by snow melt in the Sierra Nevada Mountains via the Truckee River, which flows out of Lake Tahoe. Total available supplies (119,000 acre feet per year) are about 160% of 2013 usage (74,000 acre feet). The authority does not expect current drought conditions to significantly reduce customer deliveries in the upcoming year due to excess capacity, ample stored water supplies and the availability of ground water to offset reductions in surface water deliveries. The authority's drought planning is thorough and built around a nine-year dry period that matches its drought of record. A continuation of the current drought beyond this year could require mandatory conservation measures, but a temporary decline in water sales is unlikely to put downward pressure on the rating if the authority adjusts rates to maintain adequate financial performance as it has in the past.

## ECONOMIC CONDITIONS REMAIN WEAK IN SERVICE AREA

The authority's service area is weaker than the average rated system with a concentrated economy and high joblessness. The county's economy, which historically was fueled by legalized casino gambling and construction activity, was hard hit by the housing bust and is recovering only very gradually. The Washoe County unemployment rate has been falling for four years, but remained significantly above the national average 9.1% in January 2014 with

job growth continuing to lag the nation. The gaming industry continues to dominate the economy, but the utility's direct exposure is limited with the top 10 customers - mostly casinos and hotels - providing a moderate 10% of revenues.

Additional information is available at '[www.fitchratings.com](http://www.fitchratings.com)'

In addition to the sources of information identified in the Revenue-Supported Rating Criteria, this action was informed by information from CreditScope and IHS Global Insights.

Applicable Criteria and Related Research:

--'Revenue-Supported Rating Criteria' (June 3, 2013);

--'U.S. Water and Sewer Revenue Bond Rating Criteria' (July 31, 2013);

--'2014 Water and Sewer Medians' (Dec. 12, 2013);

--'2014 Outlook: Water and Sewer Sector' (Dec. 12, 2013).

Applicable Criteria and Related Research:

Revenue-Supported Rating Criteria

[http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report\\_frame.cfm?rpt\\_id=709499](http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report_frame.cfm?rpt_id=709499)

U.S. Water and Sewer Revenue Bond Rating Criteria

[http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report\\_frame.cfm?rpt\\_id=715275](http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report_frame.cfm?rpt_id=715275)

2014 Water and Sewer Medians

[http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report\\_frame.cfm?rpt\\_id=724358](http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report_frame.cfm?rpt_id=724358)

2014 Outlook: Water and Sewer Sector

[http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report\\_frame.cfm?rpt\\_id=724357](http://www.fitchratings.com/creditdesk/reports/report_frame.cfm?rpt_id=724357)

Additional Disclosure

## Solicitation Status

[http://www.fitchratings.com/gws/en/disclosure/solicitation?pr\\_id=825495](http://www.fitchratings.com/gws/en/disclosure/solicitation?pr_id=825495)

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## Skip the Home Wash: Car Washes Better During Drought

By: **Rebecca Kitchen** - Email

Updated: Wed 8:17 AM, Mar 12, 2014



RENO, NV - At the Metro Car Wash on Longley Lane, owner Ernie Ionno looks up at the cloudy sky, concerned how the weather will affect business that day.

But the clouds and wind didn't keep everyone away. By lunchtime Tuesday, a steady stream of drivers filtered through on their breaks to wash the dirt off their cars. And with the way our weather is going, it's possible Ionno could soon see a boost in business.

As the water pours down on each car, it's a reminder that Washoe County is in the middle of a drought, and we should be looking for ways to conserve.

One way several counties in states affected by drought will try and save water is by restricting home car washing. That is currently the case in some areas of California where the severe drought has prompted Governor Jerry Brown to ask residents to reduce their water use by 20%.

But why restrict people from washing their cars at home? Experts say that's because people who wash their cars at home tend to use, and waste, more water.

"Research has shown people who wash their cars at home use about 200 gallons of water," Ionno said.

But that doesn't mean you have to drive around in a dirty car. Instead of rinsing it off at home,

county officials will encourage drivers to head to their local car wash.

With each wash costing just a few bucks, it's in a professional car wash's best interest to use as little water as possible.

Lonno says his car wash uses between 40 to 50 gallons of water per wash.

There are other benefits as well. If you wash your car at home, the water you use may just run off the driveway into the street. Professional car washes have recycling measures in place.

"Some water can be reused multiple times," Lonno said. "Otherwise, it all goes back to the treatment plant and essentially recycled."

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority says there are no current plans to follow in California's step and restrict home car washing, but with no future storms in the forecast, they are asking you to be aware of any wasteful use. Especially since our snow pack level is about 32% of where it should be at this point.

"We're in a different situation than California is thankfully," TMWA representative Will Raymond said, "We definitely have adequate water supplies. But naturally we're in a conservation mode as well."

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## Tahoe City Sees Drought Effects; Encourages Water Cutbacks

Posted: Mar 10, 2014 1:43 PM PDT  
Updated: Mar 10, 2014 4:38 PM PDT

The boats in the Tahoe City Marina still float many feet above Lake Tahoe's lakeside floor in water clear enough to see the bottom below them. And officials there say while more water would be nice, they are nowhere near concerned about the levels or even about dredging due to the drought. After all there have been a lot of Miracle Marches that have turned drought concerns around in past years.

Those with the Public Utilities District in Tahoe City are also optimistic that things will turn around. But, just in case they are taking some conservation precautions already.

"Because Governor Jerry Brown's request for 20% cutbacks, we are encouraging our residents to do that. And that means all kinds of watering from water use inside homes to lawn watering," says Tony Lalotias, Director of Utilities from the Tahoe City Public Utilities District.

"And we have to be sure to protect the water quality of this lake when the levels fall this low," says Tahoe City PUD Manager Cindy Gustafson. "We pride ourselves on the quality and the clarity of this water and we don't take the idea of dredging and missing up sediment lightly. If it is going to be done it has to be done under tight conditions. And it's expensive. If we were to consider it for the boat ramps or the beaches it wouldn't be until next September, after the recreation system."

For now the rocks and sand at Commons Beach in Tahoe City are dry many yards out into what is usually covered at the Lake.

"It presents some problems for kayakers and for launching small boats, but we're warning folks as they get here of the situation and we really think there's a lot of room for more water here in March."

**Written by Erin Breen**

# \$1M restoration project in the works for Truckee Wetlands

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Expand PhotoMargaret Moran / mmoran@sierrasun.com | Sierra Sun

From left, Truckee River Watershed Council program manager Jeanette Halderman; Truckee Town Manager Tony Lashbrook, Steven Poncelet, public information and conservation manager for the Truckee Donner Public Utility District; and Hardy Bullock, director of aviation and community services for the Truckee Tahoe Airport District, show the partnership among agencies on the Truckee Wetlands restoration project.

Expand PhotoMargaret Moran / mmoran@sierrasun.com | Sierra Sun

A berm behind the Truckee rodeo grounds channels water last Wednesday through that portion of the Truckee Wetlands. An effort to restore the wetlands — which officials say are fragmented and not fully functioning — is in the beginning stages.

- [⏪](#)
- 2 of 2 images
- [⏩](#)

## LEARN MORE

The Truckee River Watershed Council was founded to protect the water quality and habitat of local rivers, streams and lakes. Learn more about the organization and other projects — including those at Perazzo Meadows, Coldstream Canyon and Martis Valley — at [www.truckeeriverwc.org](http://www.truckeeriverwc.org).

TRUCKEE, Calif. — Looking around the property behind the Truckee rodeo grounds last week, Jeannette Halderman commented on how disturbed the land is.

The Truckee River Watershed Council's program manager pointed to fencing around a large pond on the site and a berm that channels water through a portion of the Truckee Wetlands.

“Wetlands are often lost to a lot of recreational activities, golf courses, open space recreation,” Halderman explained. “We need to try to preserve what we have left.”

An effort to restore the Truckee Wetlands — which start at the Hilltop area near Cottonwood Restaurant and are interrupted by Old Brockway Road and Estates Drive before continuing near the Martis Valley Estates neighborhood and connecting to Truckee River — is in the beginning stages.

“We’re looking at what’s feasible with what we already have in place that can’t be removed, and you balance it with cost, function and land use,” Halderman said.

The approximately 28-acre project includes five focus areas, with remedies ranging from installing rock structures across a ditch to slow water flow and deposit silts, to adding native wetland plants to catch sediment.

“We’re making it a more functional wetland,” Halderman said. “... It’s fragmented, and it’s going to continue to be fragmented, but at least it will be more functional — that’s from a hydrological standpoint.”

Benefits include cleaner water going into the Truckee River, less peak flows and a longer period of runoff, explained Tony Lashbrook, Truckee town manager.

“The environment is the economy of Truckee,” he said. “The quality of the water in the Truckee River is important to everyone, and to the extent that we can work on a project that makes the area more aesthetically pleasing, enhances wildlife (and) vegetation diversity, and improves water quality with a cooperation of a handful of local Truckee agencies, is a pretty cool thing.”

The town, Truckee Donner Public Utility District, Truckee Sanitation District, Truckee Tahoe Airport District and Truckee Donner Land Trust all own property within the project, and are partnering with the Truckee River Watershed Council on the restoration.

The project will be phased over the next five to eight years, with a goal to have planning and design done this year and implementation in fall 2015, Halderman said. Implementation will depend on securing permits and funding.

It’s estimated to cost more than \$1 million; it recently received preliminary funding approval from the Truckee Meadows Water Authority for \$50,000 toward design for three of the five focus areas. Additional funding has yet to be secured.

“The environment is the economy of Truckee.”

Tony Lashbrook  
Truckee Town Manager



# Nevada Policy Research Institute

For Immediate Release, March 12, 2014  
Contact Chantal Lovell, 702-222-0642

## **February PERS payouts now available on TransparentNevada**

*99% of amounts the same or higher than January payouts*

LAS VEGAS — The second month of pension payout data released by Nevada PERS is now online and searchable at [TransparentNevada.com/NVPERS](http://TransparentNevada.com/NVPERS), the Nevada Policy Research Institute announced today. Retiree payouts for February 2014 have been combined with January amounts and provide an even more complete picture of what retirees are making.

Eighty-nine percent of Nevada's nearly 50,000 PERS retirees received the exact same amount in February as they did in January.

Of the 11 percent of retirees who received different amounts in January and February, 10 percent received more in February. The remaining 1 percent was broken between 0.7 percent who received less, and 0.3 percent who left or entered the system between the two months. Pensioners who received the same amount in January and February are identified by a check mark next to their payout amounts.

Responding to the new information, Andy Matthews, president of the Nevada Policy Research Institute, issued the following remarks:

Adding February payouts to TransparentNevada shows, yet again, why it's imperative for PERS to fully comply with the Nevada Supreme Court's order, rather than fight it, and release previous years and types of data. These PERS payouts show a system where payouts have spiraled out of control.

Combining January and February payouts reveals that over 1,000 retirees are poised to make more than \$100,000 this year. More than 20 percent — 10,775 — are projected to receive more than Nevada's median household income of \$54,083 this year in retirement payments. Notably, some PERS retirees begin collecting "retirement" benefits in their 40s.

Even the information on TransparentNevada understates the benefits received in many cases, because these payouts do not include disability payouts or the cost of health benefits.

PERS is taxpayer-backed and terribly underfunded — according to normal accounting standards, its unfunded liability is over \$40 billion. This is something that should not only concern taxpayers, but public retirees. As we are seeing in Detroit, in the face of bankruptcy, not even public pensions are safe.

Numerous retired public employees with high PERS payouts had the exact same gross payouts in January and February. These include:

- Michael K. McClary, an assistant sheriff with Las Vegas Metro, whose \$181,563.20 base pay in 2010 has turned into a projected 2014 pension of \$208,797.72.
- Gregory McCurdy, another assistant sheriff with Las Vegas Metro, who turned \$174,267.60 in base pay in 2012 into a projected 2014 pension of \$186,354.48.
- Barbara Ginoulas, director of comprehensive planning for Clark County, who received \$156,219.20 in base pay in 2008 and is on pace to receive \$171,608.76 in 2014 pension payouts.

“Making more in retirement than your highest base salary shows either that employees are spiking their pensions or a pension system that is completely broken,” said Matthews. “It’s probably both, but we can’t confirm this until PERS releases more information. We urge Nevada courts to enforce the full spirit of the Supreme Court’s ruling and force PERS to fully comply with Nevada’s public-records law.”

Most of the projections of high-paying pensions highlighted by NPRI and the media when TransparentNevada published January payouts remain the same or have increased when accounting for the second month of data. For example:

- Donald C. O’Shaughnessy, a former Clark County fire battalion chief, made \$109,113.72 in base pay in 2009 but is projected to pocket pension payouts in 2014 of \$238,772.16.
- Randall Walker, former aviation director for Clark County, made \$229,091.20 in base pay in 2012 and is on pace to collect \$222,949.56 in pension payouts.
- Current State Sen. Joyce Woodhouse is projected to receive \$101,716.44 this year in retirement payouts.
- Former Assembly speaker John Ocegüera is projected to receive \$120,137.40 in yearly payouts.
- Las Vegas City Councilman Stavros Anthony is projected to receive \$146,984.52.

PERS has pledged to provide NPRI with monthly payout data going forward. TransparentNevada and retirees’ projected yearly payouts will be updated to reflect the new data, when available.

Since 2008, NPRI has operated TransparentNevada as a public service. Last year, it received over 1.98 million page views.

**More information:**

- Nevada PERS January and February payment register combined:  
<http://transparentnevada.com/nvpers/>

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## Scientists: Tahoe clarity diminished in 2013, but long-term prognosis is good

*Jeff DeLong*

Wide fluctuations in weather affected Lake Tahoe's famed clarity in 2013, with early winter storms first clouding waters before drought conditions helped clear them later in the year.

Average lake clarity last year was 70.1 feet, a 5-foot decrease from 2012, according to the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center's annual clarity report, released Thursday.

Despite the year-to-year drop, the overall clarity trend remains encouraging, with the steady loss in clarity recorded since the late 1960s showing signs of stabilizing and hope for continued improvement on the horizon, scientists said.

"I think the degradation phase for the lake has ceased," said Geoffrey Schladow, director of the research center. "Basically, I think we're seeing that the trend of not returning to year after year of degradation seems to be holding."

The clarity level was the average of 25 readings taken over the year which ranged from a high of 90 feet to a low of 49 feet. Last year's average winter clarity — affected by heavy stream inflow from early winter storms — was measured at about 78 feet, 10 feet less than 2012. Summer clarity was measured at about 64 feet, roughly the same as last year.

"Clarity in Lake Tahoe largely reflected what we saw in the weather in 2013," Schladow said. "At the beginning of the year, clarity was lowered by large stream inflows. At end of the year, the low inflows resulting from drought conditions helped to improve clarity."

Clarity is significantly better when compared to the worst average reading of only about 64 feet recorded in 1997, when major floods hit the Reno-Tahoe area. The trend is one of general improvement since then, scientists said.

Tahoe's clarity is measured by lowering a 10-inch white disk into the water and recording the depth as it remains visible from the surface. Measurements have been taken continuously since 1968, when a "Secchi Disk" could be seen down to more than 102 feet.

Experts cite human-caused changes over the last 45 years as responsible for Tahoe's clarity troubles, chief among them tiny, suspended particles carried in runoff draining into the lake from roads and urban areas. Algae growth in the water is also responsible for some clarity loss.

While readings have improved in the last decades compared to earlier ones, Tahoe's clarity remains below a restoration target of more than 97 feet.

Since 1997, more than \$1.7 billion has been spent on costly environmental restoration projects designed to control erosion and stormwater runoff, restore wetlands that act as natural filters and otherwise improve the health of Tahoe's environment.

Those investments appear to be paying off, experts said.

“Through the seasonal and annual fluctuations, the long-term clarity trend is good news and it tells us that the investments being made on roadways and properties to infiltrate stormwater are working,” said Joanne Marchetta, executive director of Tahoe’s primary land-use regulator, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

“After years of public and private restoration projects, we have succeeded in halting the decline,” Marchetta said. “We recognize that more is needed to restore the lake to its historic clarity level, and science is showing us that it can be done.”

## Additional Facts

Lake Tahoe clarity

2013: 70.1 feet.

2012: 75.3 feet.

2011: 68.9 feet.

2010: 64.4 feet.

2009: 68.1 feet.

2008: 69.6 feet.

2007: 70.1 feet.

2006: 67.7 feet.

2005: 72.3 feet.

2004: 73.6 feet.

2003: 70.9 feet.

2002: 78.0 feet.

2001: 73.6 feet.

2000: 67.4 feet.

1999: 69.0 feet.

1998: 66.1 feet.

1997: 64.1 feet.

Source: UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center.

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## Allocations set, but 'no guarantee anybody gets' Walker River water this year

Written by Robert Perea

Mar. 15, 2014 |

rgj.com

After a debate among several ranchers about whether it was even worth it, the Walker River Irrigation District Board of Directors recently set its annual storage water allocation at 9.5 percent on the East Walker River and 1.33 percent on the West Walker River.

However, district General Manager Bert Bryan said there is no guarantee with those allocations that ranchers will get their water. He said that water will evaporate if it's left in the reservoirs, and urged water rights holders to take their water as soon as possible, rather than wait until later in the irrigation season like many ranchers prefer.

"There's no guarantee anybody gets water, so I recommend water users take it sooner to try to get something out of it," Bryan said.

Federal watermaster Jim Shaw said as of the day of the meeting, March 7, there was 10,290 acre-feet of water at Bridgeport Reservoir and 7,720 acre-feet at Topaz Reservoir. Those figures are about 12 percent of capacity, according the Natural Resources Conservation Service Nevada Water Supply Outlook Report for March.

According to the report, the Walker River basin snowpack was at 44 percent of normal as of March 1, compared to 80 percent last year. February precipitation was 104 percent, near average for the month. "But the last couple of storms, we've gotten rain instead of snow," Shaw said.

Add it all up, and Shaw said it's the worst conditions to start an irrigation season he's seen.

"That's something I've been trying to say since last year before we finished, it just doesn't look good, and it just doesn't look like it's going to get any better," he said. "I've been in this area 25 years, and I've never seen it this bad."

Making matters worse, temperatures in the Sierra have been warm, leading Shaw to fear the runoff will come down early.

"The average 24-hour temperature was 40 degrees at Leavitt Lake, and if we get three days of average 42 degrees, it starts to run," he said. "The best thing happen to storage is it rains to beat hell at 10,000 feet and we store everything that comes down.

Some farmers expressed concern that the amount of water they would get at an allocation of 1.33 percent wouldn't be enough to justify diverting it. Some said their share would be lost to evaporation and seepage before it reaches them.

"I can't get it down the Saroni (canal) to the farm," Smith Valley rancher Pete Fenili said. "Set it at zero and revisit it a month from now."

However, Bryan said the water will evaporate in the lake if it isn't used soon, and said the farmers would get nothing.

David Peri of Peri & Sons Farms suggested water right holders who wouldn't get any use of their water at such a meager allocation might be able to sell it, allowing a buyer to accumulate a greater quantity that would make delivery worthwhile.

Bryan said another issue farmers will have to deal with is that when Topaz Reservoir gets down to about 3,500 acre-feet, the water doesn't flow out of the lake. That happened in 2002, he said.



March 15, 2014

## Get out the hoses, your drought-plagued trees are parched

*Susan Skorupa*

During the current drought, property owners who have ignored their trees all winter, should be dragging out the hoses.

Trees have received little water this winter, unless people have hand-watered them to lessen the effects of drought.

This weekend, with temperatures expected to reach 70 degrees around the Truckee Meadows, residents who have depended on scanty natural precipitation to nurture their trees this winter — and even those who have watered regularly — should irrigate their trees, said Steve Churchillo, urban forester for the city of Reno.

“Now if you have not watered all winter, definitely water this week,” he said. “Then water every couple of weeks until you turn on your irrigation system. I’ve watered three times this winter.”

Give big trees about 50 gallons of water per watering, Churchillo said. Set the hose or a sprinkler and move it every couple of hours. For younger trees, thoroughly soak the whole area under each tree.

“Most people do not want to drag a hose around in the cold,” he said. “But if you water heavily before shutting down your irrigation system in the fall, you can go through November and December, then in January water everything,” he said.

Lots of trees in the area have died over the past several years because they are not being watered properly or at all, Churchillo said. Dead trees can become a public safety concern for people and vehicles on public streets.

When a tree poses such a hazard, the owner is required to remove it, which can cost thousands of dollars — more than it costs to keep a tree alive by regular watering, he said.

Once a tree is stressed from drought, and dying, it’s difficult to revive it, Churchillo said, but regular watering can reduce the rate of decline.

“If 50 percent of branches are gone it’s unlikely you can do anything by that point,” he said.

Most trees are just starting to put forth leaves and blossoms, despite a relatively mild winter, Churchillo said, so it’s difficult to tell if they have drought damage.

But some are showing stress from the past several dry years.

Many of the trees planted in the Reno area are native to the East or the Midwest — areas that might get 40 inches of precipitation a year, Churchillo said. They’re not acclimated to the Great Basin with 7 inches of water a year.

Trees in city parks get at 32 inches of irrigation water a year to keep them healthy, Churchillo has calculated.

One area of city-owned property where the city does not water trees is on the public rights-of-way, the strip of land between sidewalks and streets in many older neighborhoods, he said. Those areas depend on residents for water although the city does not require them to take on that task.

A quick drive through several downtown neighborhoods show the importance of regular tree care, whether on private or public land.

In the neighborhood of Ninth and Washington streets, one homeowner had the city remove the dead elm trees from the city right of way, then planted sycamores. The homeowner set up a new irrigation system for the new trees, which are doing well, Churchillo said.

There are still some old elms along the right of way that are in slow decline, he said, but the homeowner is watering them, as well.

"It's pretty rare that we see a homeowner take the initiative and plant in the right of way," Churchillo said. "The new (trees)s are doing well."

Churchillo pointed out two other properties where good irrigation or the lack of it shows up on the trees.

Around Second and Ralston streets, a few American elms, probably 40 years old, appear stunted and brushy. The dirt in the right of way at some point was covered with asphalt, leaving just a few inches of exposed earth around the trunk of each for water to penetrate.

"Eventually, we will have to take them out," Churchillo said.

A few blocks away, along Bell Street, stately lines of elms on both sides of the street appear healthy and huge thanks to the residents who care for their own landscaping, and that on the right of way.

"These trees are more than 60 years old, American elms, and they're still beautiful," Churchillo said.

## Additional Facts

Marilyn Newton/RGJ

### **These tips can help trees survive drought:**

If there is no snow or rain for three weeks or so, trees need watering.

If temperatures are low, the ground may freeze and any water added will not get to the roots. Wait for a day when the surface unfreezes before watering.

In clay soil, water is not needed as frequently; sandy soil requires more water.

In winter, water trees slowly for about an hour, but do not let water stand around a tree. Too much water may water log the soil and deprive the roots of oxygen, suffocating the tree.

Water trees after the leaves have fallen and before new leaves come out in early spring because trees are growing during this time.

Before shutting down an irrigation system in late fall, give trees extra water by increasing cycles and/or run times. Even better, give trees a slow, deep soaking with a hose several times for a week or two.

Water large trees beneath beneath the entire "drip zone," the area the branches spread to. Use a garden hose, or turn on the irrigation system at least twice during the winter. Remember to turn off the irrigation system.

Water young trees twice a week in summer using five to 10 gallons of water, depending on the exposure

and nearby trees, which may provide shade. Water mature trees once a week to the equivalent of about 50 gallons of water. If trees are growing in a turf area, provide occasional additional water using a garden hose as described above.

Regularly check drip irrigation systems for leaks, clogged lines and emitters. Add extra emitters as trees grow, and make sure that they are spread out beneath the entire drip line and spaced every few feet apart so that all soil areas beneath the canopy are wet.

Add wood chip mulch two to four inches deep over root systems to keep the soil cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Do not pile mulch against tree trunks.

Follow the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's assigned watering days. Drip irrigation and garden hoses can be used any day. When watering lawns, set timers so that spray heads do not allow excess water to run into the street and down storm drains. Check for leaks and make necessary repairs.

Source: Reno Urban Forestry Commission



PDF# 9/5347

## Cooperative extension offers drought workshops

### Workshops to assist agricultural producers commence Thursday

*University of Nevada  
Cooperative Extension*

With the 2014 summer drought looming, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension is offering workshops across the state this month and next to give Nevada agricultural producers, particularly alfalfa and grass hay producers, information to help them prepare for the drought.

Topics will include water availability, recommended irrigation practices, insurance options and an outlook on prices. The first workshop will be Thursday.

“There are things producers can do in terms of irrigation methods and scheduling to maximize their crops under these conditions,” said Cooperative Extension’s Jay Davison, an alternative crops specialist who conducts research related to irrigation efficiency, as well as alternative crops that use less water.

Davison will discuss soil texture, water-holding capacity, irrigation scheduling, the relationship between evapotranspiration and crop yield, how to determine evapotranspiration in the field, plant response to drought, and irrigation strategies that result in maximum yields under conditions of limited irrigation water.

In addition, Cooperative Extension’s Staci Emm, Mineral County Extension educator, will provide an overview of risk management crop insurance programs for agriculture producers. Agriculture Economist Mike Helmar, from the university’s Center for Economic Development at the College of Business, will provide an outlook on alfalfa and grass hay prices. Finally, local irrigation district officials and others will provide information on water availability, including irrigation updates.

The workshops will be held:

- 6 p.m. March 20 in Fallon, at the Churchill County Cooperative Extension Office, 111 Sheckler Road; and in Caliente, via video conference at the Lincoln County Cooperative Extension Office, 360 Lincoln St. This session can be made available to other communities via videoconference. Call 775-945-3444, ext.12.
- 1 p.m., April 1 in Eureka, in the Commissioners’ Chambers at the Eureka County Courthouse, 10 S. Main St.
- 1 p.m. April 14 in Schurz, in the Walker River Paiute Tribe Learning Center, Hospital Road, off of Nevada 95.
- 6 p.m. April 14 in Yerington, at the Lyon County Cooperative Extension Office, 504 S. Main St.
- 6 p.m. April 29 in Minden, at the CVIC Hall, 1604 Esmeralda Ave. Note: This session will discuss irrigation practices only and is part of the Agriculture Innovation Series Forum, where small-acreage equipment and services will also be discussed.

Those attending are encouraged to preregister by calling 775-945-3444, ext. 12 or emailing [kintzj@unce.unr.edu](mailto:kintzj@unce.unr.edu) to ensure ample space and educational materials are available. Persons in need of special accommodations or assistance should call at least three days prior to the scheduled workshop they will be attending.

The workshops are part of Cooperative Extension's Herds and Harvest Program that helps farmers and ranchers develop agricultural entrepreneurship, implement sustainable agricultural marketing strategies and improve profitability. Since 2011, the program has reached several hundred farmers and ranchers across the state. Two-thirds of the participants reported they would make changes in business practices because of what they learned in the program. The program is supported by the USDA's Risk Management Agency and the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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## Nevada Water Districts Push Fix-a-Leak Week

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By: Associated Press Email

Updated: Tue 8:03 AM, Mar 18, 2014



LAS VEGAS (AP) - Officials in northern and southern Nevada are urging residents to help their dry state by checking for leaks around their [house](#) [↗](#) this week.

The push is part of the U.S. Environmental [Protection](#) [↗](#) Agency's Fix a Leak Week campaign, which aims to stop more than 1 trillion gallons of water from dripping away.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the Southern [Nevada](#) [↗](#) Water Authority are supporting the campaign with information DVDs, emails and tablets of dye that can help highlight hidden leaks.

They're urging residents to look for dripping faucets, sprinklers and toilets, and replace leaky fixtures if necessary.

EPA regional administrator Jared Blumenfeld says household leaks [account](#) [↗](#) for nearly 10 billion gallons of wasted water each year, which is enough to fill the Bellagio lake 330 times.

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## Late Sierra storms ease Reno-Sparks' water worries

Bill Hauck: 'We really got lucky'

Published 2:43 PM PDT Mar 20, 2014



RENO, Nev. -

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority doesn't expect any extra water conservation measures in the Reno-Sparks area this summer thanks to a series of late-winter Sierra storms that helped take the bite out of the region's lingering drought.

Bill Hauck, the utility's water supply coordinator, said the authority won't have any trouble meeting the water demands of its 93,000 homes and businesses this summer.

Before the February storms, experts expected flows of the Truckee River to substantially diminish sometime in June. That likely would have triggered additional restrictions on such things as watering of lawns and gardens.

Now, Hauck says it appears river flows will remain at healthy levels through Labor Day and beyond the period of highest water demand. Peak demand, usually reached sometime in July or August, is about 130 million gallons per day.

"We really got lucky," he told the Reno-Gazette Journal.

Lucky to the tune of a total of 7 feet of snow that fell on much of the Sierra the second weekend of

February. Tahoe City recorded 4.41 inches of rain and melted snow, the most ever for a storm there that did not cause a flood, the National Weather Service said.

Lake Tahoe rose nearly 5.5 inches over the course of the two-day storm - an increase of 53,000 acre-feet, or 17.2 billion gallons of water. A few smaller storms since have continued to help, with Tahoe rising about 9 inches from levels seen at the end of January.

It was welcome relief in a region that suffered through its third consecutive dry winter. Some rural communities in California have been forced to ration water.

The federal government's annual spring weather outlook issued Thursday predicts that the parched conditions will continue with little relief from California throughout the Southwest.

"Drought is expected to persist or intensify in California, Nevada, most of interior Oregon and Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, southeast Colorado, western Oklahoma, and most of west Texas because of below-average rain or snow this winter and the onset of the dry season in April," the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's report said.

Despite the dry trend, Hauck said Wednesday that the improved situation in the Truckee River flows from Tahoe means the utility will enforce its normal watering schedule through the summer, allowing three days a week. The original outlook had anticipated the possibility of shortening watering hours.

It doesn't currently appear the utility will need to tap extra drought reserves stored in the Truckee River reservoir system between Reno and Lake Tahoe," he said. "Conditions are quite a bit better than they were."

latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-americans-underestimate-personal-water-usage-study-says-20140227,0,3836890.story

**latimes.com**

## **Americans use twice as much water as they think they do, study says**

By Monte Morin

12:30 PM PST, March 3, 2014

Americans use twice the amount of water they think they do, and appear to be particularly oblivious about how much H<sub>2</sub>O they flush down the toilet on a daily basis, according to new research. advertisement

In a [paper](#) published online Monday in the journal PNAS, a researcher concluded that Americans underestimated their water use by a factor of 2, and were only slightly aware of how much water goes into growing the food they eat.

"In general, people tend to underestimate water by a very large magnitude," said study author Shahzeen Attari, an assistant professor in the Department of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University.

The study's conclusions were based on an Internet survey of 1,020 people, and comes amid a [national drought](#) that extends from the Pacific Coast to portions of the Mississippi Valley, with the most severe conditions in California.

"Most Americans assume that water supply is both reliable and plentiful," Attari wrote. "However, research has shown that with climate change water supply will become more variable due to salinization of ground water and increased variability in precipitation."

[Prior research](#) has shown that well over a quarter, or 28%, of water used within the average household is the result of toilet flushing. While the Environmental Protection Agency says that installing low-flow or water-conserving toilets will result in the greatest savings in household water use, fewer than 2% of the surveyed adults realized this, according to the study.

"That to me was really surprising," Attari said. "We may be underestimating how much water toilets use, because we use them frequently throughout the day."

A standard toilet uses about 3.5 gallons of water per flush, while a low-flow toilet uses 1.6 gallons or less, Attarai noted.

"Reducing the number of times you flush -- if it's yellow, let it mellow -- would also decrease the amount of water you use in the home," she said.

Experts say that after installing a water efficient toilet, the next greatest water saver is a high-efficiency clothes washer. While a standard top-loading washer will use about 34 gallons per load, a high-efficiency front-loading clothes washer will use less than 15 gallons.

Yet when asked to name the single best thing Americans could do to conserve water, roughly 43% of the survey participants said that taking fewer, or shorter showers would save the most water.

The next most popular response -- roughly 17% of those surveyed -- said they would turn off the water while doing other activities, including brushing their teeth.

Attari said that taking shorter showers would help to save water, and shouldn't be discounted. However, the savings was less than many people perceived.

"The average length of a shower is 8.2 to 8 minutes," Attari said. "So if you were to decrease the length of the shower from 8 minutes to 5 minutes, that would save roughly 8% of your total water use in the home."

Water resources expert Peter Gleick, of the Pacific Institute in Oakland, [has estimated](#) that humans require 13.2 gallons of clean water each day to meet basic needs. In 2005, the average American was estimated to use about 98 gallons per day.

However, it wasn't only personal use of water that people had a loose grasp on in the survey. They also tended to underestimate how much water was "embodied," or used to cultivate, different food staples.

Asked to estimate how much water was used to produce a pound each of sugar, rice, cheese and coffee, the survey respondents said they were all about the same.

In reality, the staples require vastly different amounts of water: 157 gallons were required to make a pound of sugar; 299 gallons for a pound of rice; 606 gallons for a pound of cheese and a whopping 2,264 gallons for a pound of coffee.

"People don't realize how much embodied water is in the different foods that we eat," Attari said.

The author said that Americans had a somewhat better sense of water usage than they did of power usage. She said this was understandable as energy was transformed into many different things -- light, heat, motion, sound, etc. Water was much more familiar, although rarely considered.

"Water is a really essential but neglected resource," Attari said. "We need to start paying more attention to water just in general."

#### **ALSO:**

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# TCID explains water outlook

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The low level of Lahongan Reservoir may curtail the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District's ability to generate electricity this year.

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Lahontan Reservoir depends on water for several sources including the Truckee Canal.

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At least it's not 1992.

That was about the only bright spot for the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District's Board of Directors on Monday at their annual water users meeting at the Churchill County Commissioner Chambers.

The board will convene Thursday in Fernley at City Hall for members of the Truckee Division.

In 1992, project users were allocated 28 percent, which was referenced on several occasions as the district explained to water right holders the situation facing the Newlands Project this season. TCID set a 40-percent allocation at its March 7 meeting and told the more than 50 people in attendance a watchful eye will be kept on current water conditions.

As a result of the drought, the board also scheduled a cut-off date to the season on July 31 or when Lahontan Reservoir reaches 8,000 acre-feet, whichever comes first. Monday was also the first day the district allowed orders, which totaled 260 acre-feet, according to Deputy Project Manager Walt Winder.

"We have a challenging year ahead of us," TCID Project Manager Rusty Jardine said. "We will review the allocation for the season at each meeting. We will also review the Floristan rates."

The drought causing concern throughout the Lahontan Valley will also affect TCID's ability to generate revenue through hydroelectric power. The district owns three generators — two at Lahontan Reservoir and one at 26-foot Drop.

Treasurer Lester de Braga said the district receives about \$1.5 million from hydroelectric power in an average year. This year, however, the district expects about \$750,000.

“We are going to be hurt a bit,” Jardine added. “We will have about half that.”

With the added stress of a short season, the district laid out plans to increase efficiency throughout the project.

TCID Scheduler Kelly Herwick will assume control over deliveries and manage a team assigned to ensure each water user receives orders in a timely manner.

He said depending on the crops, many users can be set on the same schedule. Herwick also urged users to order water to create better timing to coordinate the first irrigation.

“My main concern is efficiency and water conservation,” Herwick said. “I ask for as much notice as possible, a week or longer.”

Another hot topic was the issue of temporary transfers this season. Users may apply to the Nevada Division of Water Resources for a transfer, which allows a user to increase their allocation.

The catch, however, is the district cannot guarantee a user will receive extra water.

The filing fee is \$180, \$300 for permit fees plus \$3 per acre-foot with a cap of \$750. In addition, Mike Randall of the Nevada Division of Resources said the applications will be fast tracked and advised users to attach a note to an application informing his office of the transfer to avoid any delays in the application process.

In other TCID news —

No opposition filed to run for the board of directors. As a result, Ernie Schank, de Braga, Eric Olsen and Wade Workman will be duly elected during the April 7 meeting.

Mike Adams, TCID's system's and technology manager, reported the district was awarded a \$103,506 grant last year for automated structures throughout the project.

He said it will save TCID about 3,445 acre-feet of water per year. Two structures — the VC-3 and VC-6, are near completion and four more — the VC-4, 5, 7 and 8 — are slated for completion in the fall.

Adams also reported the district's database will improve the efficiency, accuracy and reporting of water levels and deliveries and will be deployed this season. In addition, water users can

submit orders online on the district's website ([www.tcid.org](http://www.tcid.org)) and view the near real-time status of the schedule and delivery.

For information about the water season, contact TCID at 775-423-2141 or visit their website. For information about water transfers, call the Nevada Division of Water Resources at 775-684-2800 or visit the website at <http://water.nv.gov/>.

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## Truckee Meadows Water Outlook Positive

Posted: Mar 26, 2014 3:28 PM PDT  
Updated: Mar 26, 2014 3:43 PM PDT

By Mike Rogers - [email](#)

It's no secret these past few years have been dry and communities all around us are having to take extra steps to make sure everyone has enough water.

However, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority says that will not have to happen in the Truckee Meadows.

*"We're not going to ask our customers do anything differently than they normally do, which is water responsibly"* says Senior Hydrologist Bill Hauck.

Hauck says we are in a unique situation in the Truckee Meadows because we have Lake Tahoe and other reservoirs that feed directly to us.

Hauck says thanks to those snow storms we had in February we will have enough water running through the Truckee River to get us through Labor Day, which is the end of the high demand season.

Hauck says T.M.W.A also takes proactive measures to make sure everyone gets the water they need, which includes moving water from the Truckee River to other areas of town.

*"During the winter months we take Truckee River water, run it through our water treatment plant and actually inject that water back into ground water wells throughout the Truckee Meadows."* Hauck says.

Hauck also points out that while no new conservation measures will need to be taken this year in the Truckee Meadows it is still important to water wisely.

T.M.W.A encourages everyone to stick to their assigned watering days. If your address ends in an even number you can water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. If your address ends in an odd number you can water on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. No watering is permitted on Mondays.

For more information on conserving water visit [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com) or [www.tmwastorage.com](http://www.tmwastorage.com)



## Water woes: Poll finds Californians anxious over drought, cutting water use

Posted: Mar 26, 2014 9:04 PM PDT  
Updated: Mar 26, 2014 9:04 PM PDT

LOS ANGELES (AP) - California's severe drought is making residents anxious about dwindling water supplies, and they're making an effort not to waste a drop.

That's the conclusion of a poll Wednesday that also found residents would support spending billions of dollars to upgrade aging water distribution systems.

The Public Policy Institute of California survey found a majority of adults across every region of the state considers water supplies a "big problem."

California is suffering through a string of unusually dry winters, and Gov. Jerry Brown declared a drought emergency in January.

Fifty percent of likely voters say they would vote in favor of a proposal that calls for \$11 billion in long-term loans to develop water projects.

About one in three said they would oppose a water bond on the ballot.

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## Ask Joe: Cloud seeding and mudslides



Published: 3/27 6:51 pm

Updated: 3/27 7:35 pm

### Question:

From the Ask Joe file, a question on the ongoing tragedy with that landslide in Washington state. Sandra wrote in asking if there is any chance that cloud seeding impacted or contributed to the mudslide in Washington, and she asks if anyone would admit to it, if it did?

### Answer:

Tragically, all we know is that that hillside gave way after extensive periods of wet weather, covering an entire town in thick mud. As we've heard, the death toll continues to rise. Joe checked with the Desert Research Institute about this, since they do conduct cloud seeding in Reno and around the Tahoe Basin.

Those cloud seeding operations do not spread out very far. The maximum distance is about 40 miles and more often, it is about 5 to 10 miles.

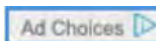
DRI said the state of Idaho does cloud seeding, and Joe put a

call in to their Natural Resources Department, but did not hear back on Thursday.

Typically, cloud seeding can boost a storm's output by about 8 percent, so it is significant. But DRI scientists also say they monitor the conditions very carefully to make sure they only seed the clouds when the conditions call for it.

There may be more to explore on this issue, so Joe will keep looking into it and follow up when he does get some more answers.

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## Water gates

More efficient irrigation in the works

By [Sage Leehey](#)

This article was published on [03.27.14](#).

**Water—or rather the lack of it—is an oft-discussed issue in the region right now**, and appropriately, a new Northern Nevada business called Irrigo is working to bring more efficient water use for flood-irrigated agriculture.

“It’s an automated system,” Irrigo team leader Brian Blair said. “It works over the internet, the computer, and we monitor the field to figure out the most efficient way to do it. By watering the field more efficiently, the farmer can get more crop out of his field or during droughts like this, you can actually irrigate more land than normally it would allow.”

The team’s business plan recently won first place in the Sontag Entrepreneurship Competition, which gave them \$50,000 as capital to get the business started. Blair said they expect about 20 percent less water use in their irrigation systems, based on previous research.

“We send commands to the gates over cellular data networks to actually open and close the gates to only give the field exactly the water it needs to get the best crop growth,” Blair said. “The way it’s done now is all manually. Guys will actually go out to a field and actually manually open and close. It’s really time-consuming, and it’s really inefficient because they’re not timing everything exactly the way it needs to be.”

Blair is a graduate student in the Master of Business Administration program at the University of Nevada, Reno, which allowed his team to participate in the competition. The team also includes a researcher from the Desert Research Institute Jenn Frederick, network engineer in Vermont Kevin Thorley, control system engineer in Fallon Nick Pinson and test engineer Don Frederick. Colby Frey from Frey Ranch and Churchill Vineyards is not an official member of the team but provides work space and agricultural expertise to the group.

Frey has helped the project along, allowing the team to hear what will and won’t work for farmers and getting them the gates to work with.

“We actually have the farmer perspective as opposed to just a bunch of nerds getting together,” Blair said.

The process is slow-going because each team member has a “real job” and works on this project in their free time, but it’s doing well, according to Blair. They’re currently working on software and hardware development and will probably begin manufacturing this winter. Next year, the team will focus on implementing and testing their product on farms. After that, they’ll begin selling it.

“About two years from now, we expect our first commercial sales, everything in-state initially,” Blair said. “Essentially, three or four years from now we’re looking to sell out of state, and then really get into commercialization in about five years—try to make it into a bigger company.”

Blair said the team’s goal is to make Irrigo successful and make it a viable business that can grow larger over time. Blair himself is an officer in the Navy and has been in Fallon for six years. He likes the area and hopes this project might help plant roots here.

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74 online

# Nevadans can deal with drought on new website

Lenita Powers, RGJ 9 p.m. PDT March 27, 2014

(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ )

## Story Highlights

- Washoe County and much of Nevada are in extreme or exceptional drought conditions
- Learn about how to live with drought by clicking here

SHARECONNECTTWEETCOMMENTEMAILMORE

Things are really dry across the Silver State, and as summer approaches, that will affect Nevadans who water livestock, grow crops or just splash in a lake.

For the first time, Nevadans from all walks of life can find ways to cope with drought at [a new website that was launched today by the University of Nevada's Cooperative Extension](#).

The website, "Living with Drought," is designed to provide information for Nevadans that goes beyond weather forecasts and snowpack accumulations, Mark Walker, dean of the Cooperative Extension, said.

"Our idea was to set up a kind of portal to provide a place for one-stop shopping, so instead of having to hunt all over the Internet for information, people could find what they would be interested in," Walker said.

"For example, if someone wants to know if they can launch their boat somewhere around Lake Tahoe, that is definitely a drought-related question," he said. "So we have a link to state parks that allows people to look and see which reservoirs have boat landings that are still in the water."

To develop and keep the website up-to-date with current information, the Cooperative Extension has created a partnership with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the Southern Nevada Water Authority, the State Engineer's Office and other agencies and organizations in and outside of the state.

"Drought cuts across just about every area in our lives. It affects health and nutrition, children and families, and definitely horticulture, agriculture and natural resources," Walker said.

The website has links to information on low-water landscaping and gardening, community planning, recreation, livestock and crops and, through TMWA's Water Academy program, teaching resources for K-12.

Douglas Boyle, Nevada's state climatologist, said the "Living With Drought" website is a good central source that will help everyone from city dwellers to ranchers and farmers understand ways they can minimize the amount of water they use.

The Great Basin Weather and Climate Dashboard, run by Nevada's Desert Research Institute, is another good drought planning resource, Boyle said.

"But what the Cooperative Extension Web page has done is really expanded on what you, as an individual, can do for drought planning in much more detail," he said.

Walker said "Living With Drought" is the counterpart to the Cooperative Extension's award-winning and highly successful "Living with Fire" program, which outlines how homeowners and communities can mitigate the danger from wildfires.

In addition to water-saving measures, "Living with Drought" has a link to the latest news regarding drought conditions and a link to events, including April seminars on the best way to irrigate alfalfa and grass hay during a drought.

Walker said the Cooperative Extension's "Grow Your Own, Nevada!" series of workshops that focus on home gardens will include several that focus on low-water use for gardeners and water-efficient landscaping.

"We are creating this partnership to make all this information available to people in a way we hope will be useful in real time," Walker said.

John Erwin, TMWA's director of natural resources planning and management, said the need to conserve water is part of living in the Great Basin's high desert climate.

"This website's approach reminds people of the climate we live in and how extreme it can be, with floods one year, and now a weak snowpack this year," Erwin said. "The drought reminds us that water can be a scarce commodity."

Living with Drought Visit the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension's new website at <http://bit.ly/1rH0DMA>

# Modesto Bee

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## Storms give boost to dismal Sierra snowpack

The Associated Press March 30, 2014 Updated 15 hours ago

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RENO, Nev. — A string of storms is giving a much-needed boost to a dismal Sierra snowpack just before the traditional peak of the snow season.

The Squaw Valley ski resort just north of Lake Tahoe reported 20 inches of new snow over a 24-hour period ending Sunday morning and 3.5 feet of new snow over the last week.

According to the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the storms have boosted the water content of the Tahoe basin's snowpack to 43 percent of average for the date.

Elsewhere, the snowpack water content stands at 32 percent of average in the Truckee River watershed, 59 percent in the Carson River basin and 45 percent in the Walker River watershed.

Another storm is expected to drop up to a foot of snow to higher elevations around Lake Tahoe primarily on Monday night.

The April 1 snow survey used by water resource managers traditionally shows the peak of the seasonal snowpack. Surveyors will return to the mountains on Tuesday for new measurements.

The snowfall is coming at a time when many Sierra ski resorts usually prepare to close for the season.

The latest storm caused weekend delays for motorists on Interstate 80 over Donner Summit and other mountain highways.

## Drought prompts suggestion that people water trees in Reno

Written by The Associated Press

Mar. 9, 2014 |

rgj.com

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With the start of spring only a couple of weeks away, experts are urging Reno-area residents and businesses to water trees to help them survive the drought.

The Reno Urban Forestry Commission says trees are under duress after another unusually dry winter.

Commission spokesman Steve Churchillo says the region has seen a significant increase in tree deaths over the past several years because they are not being watered properly or not being watered at all.

When a tree dies and poses a threat to public safety, the owner is required to remove it, which can cost up to thousands of dollars. Experts say it's far less expensive to keep the tree alive by watering it on a regular basis.

Mature trees should be watered once a week with the equivalent of about 50 gallons of water in the summer.

# Snowpack could prove to be Sierra's worst on record

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 4:41 p.m. PDT March 31, 2014



(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ)

## Story Highlights

- Monday's snowpack was still significantly below 50 percent of normal for the date
- 2014 could produce a snowpack and resulting runoff below levels recorded during the prior driest water year on record in 1976-77

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Today's traditional peak of the snow season arrives with the mountain snowpack far below normal levels and possibly the worst on record.

"If it's not the worst it's certainly not much better," said Beau Uriona, a Utah-based snow surveyor with the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service.

April 1 is the date at which the Sierra snowpack is typically considered to be at its highest level for the year and it is measurements taken on this date upon which experts like Uriona calculate runoff for summer water supplies.

Spring snow continued overnight and while numbers were expected to adjust slightly upward today, Monday's snowpack was still significantly below 50 percent of normal for

the date — significantly less than spring snowpack readings last year and in 2012, both dry years.

"This is basically the time we expect to have the most water on the mountain and this is the time we hang our hat on our forecast," Uriona said. "It's not very promising."

Numbers are still being crunched but it appears 2014 could produce a snowpack and resulting runoff below levels recorded during the prior driest water year on record in 1976-77, Uriona said. Records date back to 1896.

Spring runoff for the region's rivers and streams looks to range between 30 percent and 50 percent of normal, Uriona said.

December and January were both dismally dry and by early February, the Truckee River Basin's snowpack had dropped to as low as 14 percent of normal. A big storm that hit the second weekend of February helped a lot, doubling the snowpack in places, but later storms were simply not enough to pull the region out of deep deficit. March, a month that sometimes makes up for a dry winter, failed to measure up in any meaningful way.

"We were never able to make up any ground after that pathetic start to the winter," Uriona said. "There's now basically zero chance we will rebound."

Thanks to that big February storm that dumped more than 17 billion gallons of water into Lake Tahoe, flows of the Truckee River are expected to remain adequate through Labor Day, meaning the Reno-Sparks area can continue to rely on river water for supplies through the period of peak summer demand and no additional conservation measures will be necessary.

"That's great. That gets us through our summer watering period," said John Erwin, director of natural resources planning and management for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. "Supplies will be adequate from the river throughout the summertime." Still, water conservation during this third dry year will be a top priority, Erwin said.

"Naturally, our message to our customers is to conserve our water wisely," he said. With storms forecast to still be dropping mountain snow through the week, is there a chance April could make much of a difference? Maybe, experts said, but don't count on it.

"There's still a chance we could see a reasonable gain," Uriona said. "That being said, you really don't historically see a lot of snow accumulation in April. There's still a chance we could end up in a lot better situation but it's not looking good."

### **Monday snowpack**

Truckee River Basin: 32 percent of average.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 43 percent.

### **Snowpack, April 1, 2013**

Truckee River Basin: 60 percent.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 52 percent.

### **Snowpack, April 1, 2012**

Truckee River Basin: 69 percent.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 63 percent.

### **Snowpack, April 1, 2011**

Truckee River Basin: 178 percent.

Lake Tahoe Basin: 213 percent.

### **Snowpack, April 1, 2010**

Truckee River Basin: 101 percent.  
Lake Tahoe Basin: 105 percent.  
Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service



## Expect Drought Conditions This Summer

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By: **Colin Lygren** - *Email*

Updated: Mon 8:26 PM, Mar 31, 2014


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RENO, NN - Recent storms are still not making a big difference in our drought situation. So what is the outlook for summer? Will we have enough water in our river, and our homes?

We have said time and time again that, in terms of water, we are not in a good situation, but we will still have water in the river this summer.

It's been an exceptionally dry year and as April 1st rolls around, the chance to catch up has dried up.

"We're going to see less of a chance to see those larger storms that would really help to mitigate the lack of precipitation that we are getting," said Edan Lindaman with the National Weather [Service](#) .

We'll still get a few more storms, but we're so far behind average on our water year, we're not going to come close to normal.

"No we are not anywhere near normal throughout most of Nevada," said Beau Uriona with the Natural [Resource](#)  Conservation Service.


Northern Nevadans rely heavily on snow for water, and there is just not much snowpack this year.

"In the neighborhood of 40 percent of normal with some of the main reservoirs such as Lake Tahoe rising very little," said Uriona

The situation is not a good one, but despite that, TMWA says there is plenty of water for homes and rationing won't be necessary.

By law, the Federal Water Master has to keep the river flowing at 500 cubic feet per second. It's enough for most parties involved.

"On any given day, the utility will probably use anywhere from 20 up to 40 percent of that flow," said John Erwin with TMWA.

Erwin explains, there will be plenty of water in your home but it's still a [good idea](#)  to conserve.

"Yes conservation is going to come in to play because everything we don't use in the fall is water we don't have to release from an upstream reservoir," said Erwin.

The issues will still however affect farmers who will all be fighting over a smaller amount of water.

This year is not the worst on record, but definitely the worst we have seen in a while.

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