



## TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 18, 2014

### Press Clippings

May 7, 2014- June 5, 2014



*Nahin Chowdhury (Mamie Towles Elementary School)  
2010 Poster Art Contest – Honorable Mention, Grades 4-6*

## **TAHOE FUND SEEKS CORPORATE SPONSORS FOR WATERCRAFT INSPECTION STATIONS**

### **The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe Signs on to Support the Northstar Station**

**LAKE TAHOE, Calif. and Nev. – May 5th, 2014** – The [Tahoe Fund](#) is seeking corporate sponsors for the four aquatic invasive species [watercraft inspection stations](#) located around the Basin that inspect approximately 8,000 boats a summer. The stations are a critical component of a nationally recognized basin-wide effort to prevent the spread and introduction of aquatic invasive species (AIS) into Lake Tahoe that have wreaked havoc on other clear lakes around the nation.

Sponsorships offer brands the opportunity to connect with the boat owners who visit the inspection stations while helping to close a funding gap in the current inspection program. The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe has agreed to sponsor the inspection station at Northstar, with three station sponsorships still available.

“This is one of those win-win situations we love to see,” said Amy Berry, CEO of the Tahoe Fund. “This is an opportunity for businesses to get wonderful exposure to a highly desirable demographic and for the Lake to get the help it needs to prevent the introduction of AIS that will forever change the Tahoe we all know and love.”

“In order to maintain the clean, clear waters of Lake Tahoe that both local residents and visitors enjoy year-round, watercraft inspection stations are critical,” said Joseph Mattioli, general manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe. “As stewards of the environment, we have to do what we can as a community to assist in supporting the continuation of these inspection stations. Currently, this is the only way to ensure the lake remains free of invasive species that could dramatically alter the way so many people experience Lake Tahoe.”

The Lake Tahoe Region Aquatic Invasive Species Program (AIS Program) is implemented by more than 40 federal, state, and local partners that are committed to preventing the introduction or spread of aquatic invasive species in Lake Tahoe. Recreational activities involving watercraft (i.e. motorized vessels, personal watercraft, kayaks, canoes, inflatables) and/or fishing are the most likely sources of the introduction of AIS into Lake Tahoe. The Watercraft Inspection Program is led by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and myriad other public and private partners.

The combined economic impacts from invasive species to recreation value, tourism spending, property values, and increased boat/pier maintenance,

when evaluated over a 50-year period, is estimated at \$417.5 million (present value), with an average annual equivalent value of \$22.4 million per year, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The largest estimated impacts would be to property values and lost tourism spending. Investments in prevention and early eradication produce a higher benefit-to-cost ratio than post-infestation control programs such that maximum benefits are realized through early and preemptive action.

The inspection stations are located in Meyers, Spooner Summit, Northstar and Alpine Meadows. Sponsorships, ranging from \$11,000 to \$34,000 based on traffic estimates at each station, include signage, literature distribution, sampling opportunities, and custom promotions.

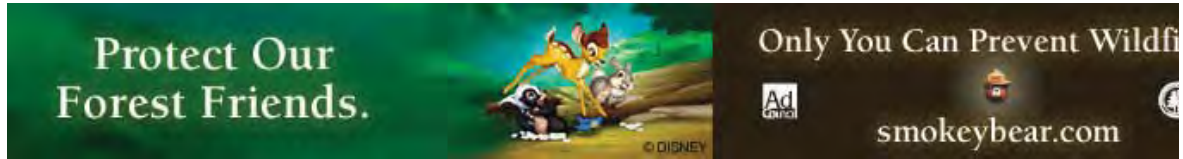
For more information on the AIS Watercraft Inspection Stations Corporate Sponsorship program, please visit the [Tahoe Fund site](#) or contact Amy Berry at [aberry@tahoefund.org](mailto:aberry@tahoefund.org).



#### **About the Tahoe Fund**

The mission of Tahoe Fund is to restore and enhance the extraordinary natural environment of the Lake Tahoe Basin by building broad support and funding for projects and programs that increase the enjoyment of the region for current and future generations. The Fund focuses grants on the core areas of conservation, recreation and education/stewardship.

*Together Creating a Legacy*



## TMWA to Hold Tahoe to Tap Workshop on Wednesday

Posted: May 05, 2014 10:49 AM PDT  
Updated: May 05, 2014 10:49 AM PDT

From TMWA:

Join Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) for "From Tahoe To Tap—Understanding Your Drinking Water." The plant tour and workshop is scheduled for Wednesday, May 7th at 5:30 p.m.

TMWA's water quality experts will present the rigorous regulations and treatment procedures your water goes through prior to reaching your tap. This workshop includes a tour of the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant where staff will explain the water treatment and distribution process, as well as answer your questions. TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant has been recognized by the Partnership for Safe Water as being among the highest performing water treatment plants in the country.

TMWA's event recognizes, and coincides with, National Drinking Water Week, May 4 through May 10, which celebrates the value of water by highlighting the critical role it plays in the quality of our daily lives. The workshop will take place at Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant at 9605 McCarran Blvd. in Reno. It is free and open to TMWA customers. Space is limited, so please RSVP by emailing [rsvp@tmwa.com](mailto:rsvp@tmwa.com) or call 834-8290. For more information about TMWA's workshop series please visit [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com).

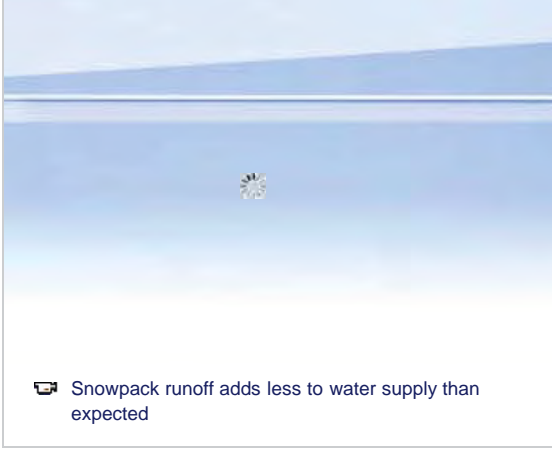
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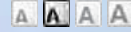
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# Snowpack runoff adds less to water supply than expected

Video



Reported by: Ashley Cullins  
Email: [acullins@mynews4.com](mailto:acullins@mynews4.com)



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RENO, Nev. (KRNV & MyNews4.com) -- The runoff numbers are in and hydrologists say Lake Tahoe probably won't rise any more this spring or summer.

"Here in The Sierra you basically live and die by the snowpack," Truckee Meadows Water Authority Senior Hydrologist Bill Hauck said.

For the third straight year, we haven't had much snow.

"When you have very little snow and very dry soils, you lose a lot of that early melt-off directly into the soil, which doesn't make it into the rivers and conversly doesn't make it into the reservoirs," said Natural Resources Conservation Service Hydrologist Beau Uriona.

NRCS measures the snowpack each month, and Uriona said the runoff added even less to the water supply than

## Related Links

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- ◆ [NRCS Nevada](#)
- ◆ [General Drought Information](#)

they expected.

"These kind of things tend to be cumulative," he said. "If we see more years that are low like this, we'll see more and more problems arise from it."

Hauck said there's no reason for residents to worry.

"The last two years were exceptionally dry, but we're kind of living off the carry over storage from 2011," he said. "2011 was a banner snowpack year and most of the reservoirs upstream either filled or spilled."

While Lake Tahoe is pretty low, that doesn't mean we don't have enough water.

"We've got ample supplies upstream and in the ground between our 31 production wells," Hauck said. "We're fully prepared to meet customer demand this year."

So we have emergency reserves to use. They're just not being restocked.

"Mother nature's not putting water back into the reservoirs where we need it," Uriona said.

But Hauck said TMWA is fully prepared - even if the drought doesn't end anytime soon.

"We plan for a nine year drought, which is one year longer than the longest drought on record, and right now we're not asking our customers to do anything different," he said.



## Truckee Meadows Water Outlook

Posted: May 08, 2014 4:20 PM PDT

Updated: May 09, 2014 3:48 AM PDT

Because of another relatively dry winter, experts say water levels in the Truckee River are lower, once again.

"We saw poor stream flows throughout April, which is leading us to believe the runoff is very inefficient, thus overall, leading to lower spring runoff," says Beau Uriona, Hydrologist with The Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service has 75 stations throughout the mountain areas measuring the snowpack, and they found the conditions were similar to last year, if not, worse.

"We're looking to be in an even bigger drought than we initially expected," Uriona said.

We asked him about the water levels in the Lake Tahoe reservoirs.

"Yes, we do have storage in reservoirs, but this year, the reservoirs are very, very low," he said. "We don't expect them to fill much at all this year."

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority serves the Reno area and says they won't ask their customers to do anything at this time, but they encourage being responsible about conserving water, and Uriona agrees.

"We'll likely not see any rationing of water, but we will see agricultural water being reduced and we're already starting to see that now."

Tough news for some local farmers.

"What we're seeing is, a reduced amount of crops are going to be planted," said Bob Conrad, Public Information Officer for the Nevada Department of Agriculture. "The availability of water is going to basically hinder all agricultural operations in the state, as far as we can tell at this point."

Mewaldt Organics grows things like basil and parsley for the Great Basin Community Food Co-op along with different restaurants around the area. The owner, William Mewaldt, has owned the farm in Fallon since 1984. He's seen others struggle in the area because of the lack of moisture.

"We're dependent on the canal system that brings us water," he said. "Fallon doesn't get much rain, and so we depend on the snowpack from the Sierras. ...This year, (other farmers are) only getting about 50 percent of the water that they normally get. So, the farmers here plan for that. Some of them are only planning for 50 percent of their crops."

Mewaldt says his farm, in particular, will be okay for now because he uses water from his private stock.

"So, we're okay this year," he said. "But, if the drought continues by next year, we will all be in trouble because then the water table will start to drop, and I'll be in trouble."

Off of Mill Street in Reno, Avanzino Farms uses water from the Truckee River to irrigate crops, but the lower levels are causing them to change their planting schedule.

"Here, we're going to have our water turned off about a month earlier than we usually do," said Doug Avanzino, owner of the farm. "So, I'm going to have to plant my crops earlier, and there's some stuff I'm not going to plant, or I'll move to where I have wells, but here, I get the water from the Truckee. ...I plant a lot of summer squash, and I plant different rotations of it. This year, I'm going to have, like, two rotations. I usually have four rotations. So, I'm probably going to lose three weeks to a month of harvest."

He says he expects to take a financial hit from his Mill Street location.

"My main crops I don't plant here," Avanzino said. "I plant where I have wells, but here, where I grow my summer squash, I'm going to lose about half my profit because I'll have half the yield I usually have."

In turn, the Nevada Department of Agriculture it's been causing prices to go up on not just vegetables, but things like milk and beef because of the drought affecting crops for cow feed.

"There will be product availability, but the prices are going to see an increase in prices in the supermarket," Conrad said.

He says if there is a positive to the drought, it's that it makes people more conscious about water conservation.

"People will become more water-wise, and farmers as well," he said. "So, what we are seeing is in the last 10 to 20 years is that farmers in Nevada are becoming more conscious of water and planting low-water-use crops and things like that. They're taking advantage of the drought by being more conservative with their water use. Therefore, when there is more water availability, they can actually increase profits in some instances."

Conrad says there are federal programs available to many farmers who are affected by the drought.

# Odds strengthen for El Niño and a wet Sierra winter

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 6:22 p.m. PDT May 8, 2014



(Photo11: Getty Images)

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What the heck is the difference between El Niño and La Niña? Watch this video and find out what they are and what they mean for Reno and Lake Tahoe. Liz Margerum/RGJ

By all appearances, El Niño is near.

Federal climate experts Thursday released the latest outlook regarding the potential formation of the climate phenomenon that, under proper circumstances, can bring big winters to the Reno-Tahoe area.

The prognosis is its arrival appears ever more likely.

"We're getting pretty confident now," said Mike Halpert, acting director of the U.S. Climate Prediction Center.

The government's new forecast says chances of an El Niño forming during this summer now exceed 65 percent, rising to near 80 percent October through February when the potential arrives to influence winter precipitation. With the region now struggling through its third drought year, that potential is particularly important.

El Niño is characterized by warmer-than-average surface water temperatures in the east Pacific near South America. When one is established, El Niños tend to bring stronger winter storms into Southern and Central California. If the event is strong

enough, that can translate to extra rain and snow for the Sierra.

El Niños have brought blockbuster winters to the region in the past, including in 1982-83 and 1997-98. The last El Niño occurred in 2009-10, a moderate event that produced an average mountain snowpack. In 2012, an El Niño started to brew but then shut down.

When the climate center issued an El Niño Watch due to warming ocean waters in March, Kelly Redmond of the Western Regional Climate Center in Reno responded with lukewarm enthusiasm. Redmond said at the time it was too early to realistically predict 2014 will really produce an El Niño.

These days, he's more of a believer.

"My own confidence is going up," Redmond said. "It's getting to be a higher level of likelihood of this happening. The odds continue to increase."

As always, formation of an El Niño doesn't necessarily mean a big winter for Reno-Tahoe. If it's strong enough, those El Niño-influenced Pacific storms drenching the Los Angeles area in rain may push far enough north to bring heavy snow to Lake Tahoe. If it's weak, the area could be in for another dry or an average winter.

When El Niño's opposite, La Niña, is in place, things can go either way as well. La Niña's typically bring wet weather to the Pacific Northwest and if they are sufficiently strong, can push storms far enough south to hammer Reno-Tahoe. The last La Niña, characterized by cooler-than-average ocean temperatures in the east Pacific, occurred in 2010-11, a big winter for Reno-Tahoe.

And if the Climate Prediction Center is saying an El Niño appears likely this year, it's so far holding off on predicting whether it will be strong, moderate or weak, Redmond said.

"It could be a strong one but it's still quite a ways off before we could say that," Halpert agreed, saying it will likely be mid-summer before experts have a clear idea.

"I expect at that point we will have a better handle as to how this event is evolving and how strong it potentially could become," Halpert said. "It could be the strongest event since 97-98 but it certainly wouldn't shock me if it wasn't."

### **Big El Nino winters**

1982-83: Mountain snowpack 249 percent of normal.

1997-98: Mountain snowpack 159 percent of normal.

Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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## Drought Prompts Irrigation Water Cuts in Fallon

Posted: May 09, 2014 8:23 AM PDT  
Updated: May 09, 2014 5:05 PM PDT

The drought is prompting the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District to cut water allotments to Fallon-area farmers.

The district board plans to vote at a special meeting Tuesday on a plan to drop the water allotment to 45%, with a cut-off date of July 15.

The Lahontan Valley News reports (<http://bit.ly/1kXDe3g>) the district plans to pull back its allotment from 50% to 45% to stay within its ability to fill late-season water orders for wildlife and fish at Lahontan Reservoir and Fallon-area wetlands.

District President Ernie Schank says both the Carson and Truckee divisions will share responsibility for securing water for wildlife.

He says water users who have already used their 45% allotment will not be allowed to order water.

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Information from: Lahontan Valley News,  
<http://www.lahontanvalleynews.com> (AP)



ADVERTISEMENT

## Water, water, nowhere

This article was published on [05.15.14](#).

**The news story this week (see page 8) raises a question** we've been hearing a lot about from our neighbor to the west, but it's like it's within a cone of silence on this side of the Sierra. We're seeing the beginnings of a drought, and judging from the dropping water tables, it's got the potential to be a severe one.

True, maybe we don't hear as much in the media because we live in a desert, and we're accustomed to always being a little short of the wet stuff, but this dry spell seems a little more than the usual thing.

Nine Nevada counties have been declared federal disaster areas. We're past the time we can expect the reservoirs to refill this year. The surface level of Lake Tahoe is already down. And with the levels of the aquifers also falling, we need to look a bit downstream about things that can be done before water restrictions start.

First, we've asked this question before, and we've yet to see any sign that the University of Nevada, Reno is concerned: Why does every area that isn't covered with blacktop or concrete have grass on it? UNR could become a jewel of xeriscaping, and yet, except for the lovely horizon, it looks like any small California university. The university should begin carving out sections and replacing the plants that require a lot of water with drought-tolerant foliage. It doesn't have to be saguaro cacti, but there are many better options than grass. The Manzanita Bowl and the quad should be the rare exceptions to this plan.

A few years ago, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority increased the days available for watering, under the assumption that people won't overwater when they're paying by the gallon. Now, before the restrictions are reinstated, is the time for homeowners to begin putting in decomposed granite, drought-tolerant plants, and increasing the size of eaves and awnings. While grass naturally decreases the absorption of heat, there are other plants that can both cool ground temperatures and survive conditions that will turn a lawn to dirt. And for those who simply can't live without a green carpet, there are new varieties of grass that require less than half what the typical red fescue or bluegrass lawn requires.

There are other things homeowners can do to decrease water use. Many homes got low-flow toilets during the remodel boom of the last housing bubble, but this is still an option for many others. Also, remember that slogan "If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down" from one of the many droughts of years past? It rarely makes good ecologic sense to flush when there's only urine in the toilet bowl. And not to be indelicate, but there are lots of good reasons to pee in the backyard, and not just because you're toasted: <http://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/8-reasons-why-you-should-pee-your-garden.html>.

Some cities in the West have ways to get water that hasn't been treated to drinking standards. This saves energy and personnel hours. Perhaps there's a way to take advantage of a program like this in Northern Nevada.

All these ideas are likely to be projectiles as we quiver at a future of draconian water-saving measures. If we get started now, we might not have browner days ahead.

# Congress poised to act on Truckee River flood project

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 1:22 p.m. PDT May 19, 2014



(Photo: Tim Dunn/RGJ)



The long-delayed Truckee River flood control project is nearing a new and important milestone, with Congress poised to approve a bill authorizing the multimillion-dollar effort.

A congressional conference committee last Thursday approved a new Water Resources Reform and Development Act, with Congress expected to give its final approval to the legislation as soon as this week. The Truckee River flood project was one of the last to be included in the bill by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Ours really was the last project to go in," said Jay Aldean, executive director of the Truckee River Flood Management Authority. "We're there now."

Passage of the legislation will not guarantee any money for the flood project but would set the stage for subsequent fiscal appropriations by Congress. Directors of the flood authority — jointly comprised of the cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County — say they remain on track to pay for the entire project with locally raised funds should that prove necessary. Construction could begin in 2017.

For a project that not long ago was stalled in the federal bureaucracy and a topic of political gridlock at the local level, recent developments and expected action by Congress represent substantial progress, said Ron Smith, the Sparks councilman who chairs the flood authority.

"This is a big step for us, a huge step," Smith said. "This is what had to be done before we could go further."

Among those awaiting developments with some skepticism is Rosewood Lakes resident Helene Sasser, whose elderly mother's home was submerged in 2 feet of water in the big flood of January 1997, an event that galvanized efforts to control flooding on the river. Sasser's nearby home also suffered flood damage.

Sasser's glad to hear progress is being made but is concerned that even if a flood project is ever built, and she has her doubts, it won't be sufficient to protect her community.

"We've been told these things before and it just doesn't happen," Sasser said. "The proof is in the pudding."

The project included in the water resources act is smaller than the one sought by local officials. At a cost of \$280.8 million, it is designed to protect the Reno-Sparks area from a so-called 50-year flood, or one that has a 2 percent chance of occurring in any given year.

But language included in separate versions of the act by Nevada lawmakers,

Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and Republican Rep. Mark Amodei, would require construction of a larger project designed to protect the community against a bigger 100-year flood so long as the project complies with Army Corps standards and would not increase federal costs beyond what would be spent for the smaller project. The 100-year flood project would cost an estimated \$446 million.

Flood control improvements are sought to help protect the region from major floods such as the one that inundated much of the Truckee Meadows in muddy water in 1997, causing upwards of \$700 million in damage. Other major winter floods occurred in 1986, 1963, 1955 and 1950. The last event was a lesser flood that hit the area Dec. 31, 2005.

The latest plan pursued by the flood authority replaces one approved in 2006. That much more ambitious project soared in expected cost to as much as \$1.6 billion, a goal officials ultimately acknowledged was likely impossible amid changing political and economic conditions. The scaled-down, 100-year flood project was approved by the flood authority as a more realistic goal last December.

The authority hopes to secure some federal funding to cover a portion of about \$334 million in flood control improvements downstream of U.S. 395, including construction of floodwalls and levees at a cost of nearly \$60 million and riverbank terracing at a cost of about \$52 million.

Other key elements included are the planned replacement of downtown Reno bridges spanning the river at Virginia, Sierra, Center, Lake and Booth streets at an estimated cost of about \$63 million. In Sparks, a \$43 million project to relocate a major drainage channel, the North Truckee Drain, is already underway.

If hope remains to secure some federal dollars, it's no sure thing. According to Smith, the last Water Resources Development Act passed in 2007 authorized some 49 different flood control projects but only one has been partially funded since.

For that reason, project proponents have to be prepared to raise the entire \$446 million through an as-yet finalized fee program designed to collect money from properties benefiting from flood control improvements.

"That's the worst-case scenario but we need to plan for that," Smith said.

The project has advanced significantly since 2012 when flood authority directors couldn't even agree over hiring a director and the project was officially placed "on pause" by the Army Corps of Engineers.

"Two years ago we were dead in the water. A year ago we were dead in the water," Smith said. "They kept moving the goal posts on us. We kicked a field goal and we're on our way."

# Draining ground water is making the Sierra grow

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 12:09 p.m. PDT May 19, 2014



(Photo: Jean Dixon/UNR file)

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Modeling now suggests that over the last 150 years, the Sierra have risen by 6 inches or more
- As heavy groundwater is removed from the ground and the crust shifts upward in response
- It is possible that groundwater pumping could help precipitate more quakes along the San Andreas

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It was a couple of years back when Geoff Blewitt and colleagues, studying geologic changes in the Sierra and across the Great Basin, came across a puzzling surprise.

Rugged mountain peaks all along the 400-mile-long Sierra Nevada range were on the rise and pushing up at a surprising rate — by some 1 to 3 millimeters per year or by roughly an inch over the previous decade. That might not seem like much but by geologic standards, it's pedal-to-the-metal.

"We were seeing them moving up quite fast," said Blewitt, a research professor at University of Nevada, Reno's Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology.

"It was a surprise but we really didn't know what was causing it," Blewitt said.

Now, he thinks they do.

A study featured last week in the science journal

Nature links the Sierra's rapid reach toward the sky to humans, concluding that decades of pumping groundwater for agricultural irrigation in California's Central Valley is likely responsible.

"This massive withdrawal of water has relieved pressure on the Earth's crust, which is now rebounding upwards in response," Blewitt said.

The phenomenon of the rising Sierra was documented by Blewitt and colleagues using detailed data collected between 2007 and 2010 from Global Positioning Systems on the ground and from satellites orbiting the Earth.

Modeling now suggests that over the last 150 years, the Sierra — from the 14,000-foot peaks in the south to the 10,000-foot peaks near Lake Tahoe — have risen by 6 inches or more, Blewitt said. Over that same period, about 40 trillion gallons of groundwater in the agriculturally rich Central Valley has been pumped from the ground and lost to irrigation, evaporation and by being sucked up by crops and then expelled as gas into the atmosphere.

That's roughly enough water to empty Lake Tahoe.

One result has been a substantial subsidence, up to 30 feet in places, of the earthen surface of the Central Valley. But another examined in the new study is the surprising elevation boost of the Sierra to the east as well as along California's Central Coast Range to the west as the heavy weight of groundwater is removed from atop the Earth's crust. The hard-rock crust beneath the Central Valley's sediment surface is

also on the rise even as the surface sags, scientists said.

“The crust is responding like a spring,” Blewitt said.

#### Effects on the San Andreas

The theory presented by scientists at UNR, the University of Western Washington, University of California, Berkeley and the University of Ottawa also could explain seasonal earthquake activity recorded in Central California and along the dangerous San Andreas Fault.

As heavy groundwater is removed from the ground and the crust shifts upward in response, the number of small earthquakes increases, peaking in fall after the most water has been pumped from the ground to irrigate thirsty crops over the summer.

“That’s when these earthquakes tend to occur, in the fall, and then they slow down again as the water comes back into the valley,” Blewitt said.

Researchers are quick to say groundwater pumping will not be the cause of the next Big One to hit along the San Andreas. Major earthquakes along the fault will occur due to the collision of crustal plates and will come regardless of groundwater pumping associated with humans, Blewitt said. Impacts to earthquake faults in Nevada are expected to be minimal.

It is possible, however, that groundwater pumping could help precipitate more quakes along the San Andreas as the weight of groundwater is removed and the Earth responds.

“We found that the San Andreas Fault is slowly unclamping which makes it more likely to lead to failure which would cause an earthquake,” Blewitt said. “It turns out the amount of unclamping that has occurred is quite significant.”

Perhaps the most significant conclusion of the study is the degree to which human activity can influence nature, even when it comes to moving mountains.

“The real importance of this research is that we are demonstrating a potential link between human activity and deformation of the solid Earth, which explains current mountain uplift and the yearly variation in seismicity,” said Colin Amos, an assistant professor of geology from Western Washington University and lead author of the Nature article.

“These are questions that lots of geologists have been puzzling over, and it’s a real eye-opener to think that humans are the ultimate cause.”

At a glance:

Modeling now suggests that over the last 150 years, the Sierra have risen by 6 inches or more

As heavy groundwater is removed from the ground and the crust shifts upward in response

It is possible that groundwater pumping could help precipitate more quakes along the San Andreas

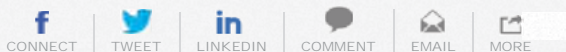
Source: University of Nevada, Reno's Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology

# Kazmierski: Water is one of our competitive advantages

Mike Kazmierski 9:02 p.m. PDT May 17, 2014



(Photo: Handout)



As we work to promote our region to companies looking to relocate or expand here, we usually highlight our many strengths: our strategic location, business-friendly climate, lower cost of doing business (including lower taxes) and our exceptional quality of life.

However, one of our greatest competitive advantages is often an afterthought — our availability of water.

A week doesn't go by without a story in the news that highlights the great drought that most of the West is experiencing. More than 60 percent of the West is in some form of drought.

The threat of shrinking reservoirs also is on the minds of water managers in Arizona, California and Nevada, the three lower basin states that rely on Lake Mead. If the surface elevation of Mead, the nation's largest reservoir, drops below 1,075 feet, water restrictions for Arizona and Nevada kick in.

As of May 11, it is at 1,093 feet, down 10 feet in just the last six weeks. Yet, that is better than several of the reservoirs in California, like Almaden Reservoir and Folsom Lake, which have, essentially, gone dry.

The message is simply that in the Southwest there is more demand for water than what is available; that is, except here in Reno-Sparks. While most of the West is developing increasingly strenuous water restrictions in an effort to preserve their shrinking supplies of water, we are blessed with a supply of water that exceeds our demand.

Even in these severe drought conditions all customer water demands in Reno-Sparks will be met this summer, according to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

Thanks to the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River, we have plenty of water to meet our current and future needs.

We are now several years into the current drought, where snowpack is significantly below average; yet, our two primary drought storage reservoirs (Independence and Donner Lakes) are full and available to make sure our water supply needs are being met.

What this means for economic development is that a company that is a low or moderate water user does not have to worry about access to water or unreasonable price increases in the future like they would in most other places in the Southwest.

This dependability of an important resource such as water is critical to some

companies and important to most. Yet, we often allow the media hype and dire reports of drought to overshadow the reality that "we are special" when it comes to communities in the Southwest because we have plenty of water now and for the future to meet the needs of our community — water that will help to fuel the growth of our region for many years to come.

That does not mean we can be careless or irresponsible with this valuable resource. We encourage high water users to look at other locations while water conservation is critical to sustaining our resources in the years ahead.

It is just nice to know that as the drought lingers on, our community is postured for success thanks to years of planning, responsible management and the proximity of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Mike Kazmierski is president/CEO of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada.



**Subject:**

RE: TMWA News Clips

finally found the whole transcript. News station websites and changing it up daily!

A **STORM SYSTEM** THAT IS BRINGING **WET WEATHER** TO PARTS OF NORTHERN NEVADA IS STICKING AROUND... HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL SEE RAIN IN OUR AREA AS STORM WATCH TOPS CHANNEL 2 NEWS AT FIVE. WE'RE SEEING SOME RAIN AND EVEN THUNDERSTORMS MOVING ACROSS THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS TONIGHT. GOOD EVENING I'M WENDY DAMONTE. AND I'M KRISTEN REMINGTON, THANKS FOR JOINING US TONIGHT. WE BEGIN WITH STORM WATCH TEAM COVERAGE... **CHIEF METEOROLOGIST** MIKE ALGER IS IN THE WEATHER CENTER WITH A LOOK AT IF THINGS WILL CLEAR OUT ANY TIME SOON... AND **PAUL NELSON** IS LIVE IN ROCK PARK IN SPARKS AFTER SPEAKING WITH OFFICIALS ABOUT HOW THE RECENT RAIN IS IMPACTING OUR **WATER SUPPLY**. LET'S START WITH MIKE The chance of more rainfall is starting to move out of the region as the low pressure center responsible sags farther to the south. Tonight scattered showers and thunderstorms will stay in the area, decreasing as we move toward the morning hours. For Thursday, there is still a slight chance of some isolated showers in the mountains, mainly south of **Lake Tahoe**. As we head to the **Memorial Day** Weekend, the temperatures rebound so that for the first time in a while, the unofficial start to the summer season will actually turn out summery. High temperatures will rise well into the 80 through Monday . MIKE TOSSES TO PAUL MIKE -- AS YOU KNOW, ANY RAIN OR SNOW IS GOOD IN OUR NECK OF THE WOODS. UNFORTUNATELY, FOR OUR **WATER SUPPLY** -- THIS LATEST STORM HASN'T CHANGED MUCH. RAINY WEATHER RAIN IS SOMETHING NORTHERN NEVADA HASN'T SEEN MUCH OF LATELY -- COMING OFF ANOTHER SUB- PAR YEAR OF PRECIPITATION. BILL "A rain storm event like we've seen the last couple days is something to talk about. And certainly, in a dry year like this, everybody's buzzing." THE **TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY** HAS BEEN PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS STORM. AT THIS POINT -- ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING. BILL "It certainly doesn't hurt us. Sidewater tributaries and storm runoff have picked up. And the river flows, particularly on the east side of town, have picked up notably." BUT THE STORM DOESN'T REALLY CHANGE THE AMOUNT OF WATER IN STORAGE. **LAKE TAHOE'S** ELEVATION DID RISE FROM THIS STORM -- BUT LESS THAN AN INCH. AND WHILE SOME FEDERAL RESERVOIRS ARE GETTING LOW -- TMWA'S ARE DOING WELL. BILL "We've got tens of thousands of acre feet of water in storage, right now, drought reserves that we're ready to use at a given time to meet customer demand." WHILE THE RAIN HASN'T DONE MUCH TO FILL THE RESERVOIRS -- TMWA HAS SEEN A DECLINE IN WATER USAGE DURING THE STORM. WITH CUSTOMERS TURNING OFF THEIR SPRINKLERS. BILL "They'll definitely go out there and turn their systems down and probably won't turn them on again until this weekend." SNOW PACK LEVELS PEAKED AT LESS THAN 17 INCHES THIS YEAR AT THE MOUNT ROSE SURVEY POINT. AND WHILE THIS STORM BROUGHT A FEW MORE INCHES OF SNOW TO THE MOUNTAINS -- THAT LIKELY WON'T CHANGE THE **WATER SUPPLY** MUCH, EITHER. BILL "We've seen the water runoff. The peak of the runoff has come and gone. Third exceptionally dry year in a row." HAUCK SAYS FOR THE TIME BEING -- EVERYONE CAN USE THEIR TYPICAL AMOUNT OF WATER. JUST BE RESPONSIBLE AND WATER ON YOUR DESIGNATED DAYS. COVERING STORM WATCH LIVE, **PAUL NELSON**, CHANNEL TWO NEWS

**Marlene Olsen**

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## Feds throw new curve to states with marijuana



Reported by: Terri Hendry

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

Published: 5/21 6:01 pm

Updated: 5/21 10:36 pm

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- The U.S. Interior Department said this week it doesn't want federal irrigation water being used to grow marijuana. This policy will impact 17 states, mostly western states.

The practical effects of the policy remain unclear. The Bureau of Reclamation is the agency that provides water to irrigation districts. Pete Lucerno, spokesman for the agency in Washington D.C. said, "Our federal agency is obligated to let the water district that services that city know that providing water for that purpose is illegal under federal law." He added, "If we become aware that federal water is being used for those purposes then we have an obligation to report that to the appropriate people and in this case, that is the Department of Justice."

Nevada's new medical marijuana law allows for businesses to grow marijuana. Obviously, those businesses will need water.

In northern Nevada, sorting out the impact of this policy isn't clear cut because of the complexity of the Truckee Meadows Operating Water Agreement. Simply put, the federal government controls both dams and reservoirs upstream from the Truckee Meadows. However, that water doesn't fall into the same category as "federal irrigation water."

Still, federal sources weren't willing to say there would be no impact in Northern Nevada. Louis Moore, a spokesperson for the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento said, "I think it's in stages of development and this is in the very early stage of the discussion." He said, "As we go forward, there will be new questions and approaches to receiving and using water. I think the discussion will require more interpretation as we move forward."

Lucerno notes this issue is new territory for states and the federal government. He speculates this issue will gain some further discussion on Capitol Hill. He said, "I suspect that Congress is probably looking at this very closely as it effects their states."

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A STORM SYSTEM THAT IS BRINGING WET WEATHER TO PARTS OF NORTHERN NEVADA IS STICKING AROUND... HOW MUCH LONGER WE'LL SEE RAIN IN OUR AREA AS STORM WATCH TOPS CHANNEL 2 NEWS AT FIVE. WE'RE SEEING SOME RAIN AND EVEN THUNDERSTORMS MOVING ACROSS THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS TONIGHT. GOOD EVENING I'M WENDY DAMONTE. AND I'M KRISTEN REMINGTON, THANKS FOR JOINING US TONIGHT. WE BEGIN WITH STORM WATCH TEAM COVERAGE... CHIEF METEOROLOGIST MIKE ALGER IS IN THE WEATHER CENTER WITH A LOOK AT IF THINGS WILL CLEAR OUT ANY TIME SOON... AND PAUL NELSON IS LIVE IN ROCK PARK IN SPARKS AFTER SPEAKING WITH OFFICIALS ABOUT HOW THE RECENT RAIN IS IMPACTING OUR WATER SUPPLY. LET'S START WITH MIKE The chance of more rainfall is starting to move out of the region as the low pressure center responsible sags farther to the south. Tonight scattered showers and thunderstorms will stay in the area, decreasing as we move toward the morning hours. For Thursday, there is still a slight chance of some isolated showers in the mountains, mainly south of Lake Tahoe. As we head to the Memorial Day Weekend, the temperatures rebound so that for the first time in a while, the unofficial start to the summer season will actually turn out summery. High temperatures will rise well into the 80 through Monday . MIKE TOSSES TO PAUL MIKE -- AS YOU KNOW, ANY RAIN OR SNOW IS GOOD IN OUR NECK OF THE WOODS. UNFORTUNATELY, FOR OUR WATER SUPPLY -- THIS LATEST STORM HASN'T CHANGED MUCH. RAINY WEATHER RAIN IS SOMETHING NORTHERN NEVADA HASN'T SEEN MUCH OF LATELY -- COMING OFF ANOTHER SUB- PAR YEAR OF PRECIPITATION. BILL "A rain storm event like we've seen the last couple days is something to talk about. And certainly, in a dry year like this, everybody's buzzing." THE TRUCKEE MEADOWS WATER AUTHORITY HAS BEEN PAYING CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS STORM. AT THIS POINT -- ANYTHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING. BILL "It certainly doesn't hurt us. Sidewater tributaries and storm runoff have picked up. And the river flows, particularly on the east side of town, have picked up notably." BUT THE STORM DOESN'T REALLY CHANGE THE AMOUNT OF WATER IN STORAGE. LAKE TAHOE'S ELEVATION DID

## Well, it's cheap

Re "Buy a candidate" (Editorial, May 8):

How can you buy a candidate when they have already been bought? The power of the vote has been lost to the power of the dollar. We the people need to realize that our vote no longer counts. It serves no other purpose than to make us think that we have a say in the political outcome. As for the media, can they be trusted? Or has their trust gone to money, corporations and politics? The government and media are both broken and no longer serve the people. When we the people realize this is when we the people can start to make a change. The power of the vote belongs to the people, not the corporations and their money.

Rick Carter  
via email

## Only in government

Can you mandate how much your boss will pay you?

At the April 30 Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) board meeting, the three governor-appointed commissioners unanimously voted themselves 19-21 percent pay increases. No checks and balances by an oversight body were necessary.

One of the justifications offered was to compare themselves with Gaming Control Board members, an agency with four times the budget and staff and that generates almost \$900 million of annual revenue. Except for a few fines and fees, the PUCN generates no revenue for the state. It is a cost center.

Money to operate this agency comes from an unidentified tax buried in each of our monthly utility bills.

Eleven other job functions were also given pay raises up to 24 percent. The executive director claims it is a national job market, but salary surveys of comparable jobs were limited to Nevada alone.

Are these enormous percentage increases appropriate when so many Nevadans are still struggling and nationwide unemployment, even among highly-trained and experienced professionals, is still widespread?

Noreen Cerino  
Reno

An even bigger question: Should any state board members or commissioners have the ability to raise their own salaries without oversight and approval by some other body?

Fred Voltz  
Carson City

## Black Tower rising

The Black Tower strikes again. This time "stealing" from the poor and giving to the police. By the wizardry of NRS 268.780-785, called Special Assessment District (S.A.D.), the homeowners of downtown Reno—whether they can afford it or not—are, by the wisdom of our city fathers/mothers, now going to bear an additional tax exaction, besides property and sewer taxes, to pay for more police presence. No Guardian Angels need apply when it's a matter of employing 14 men and women in blue who all have been highly trained and educated in constitutional, common law rights, I'm sure, to respect the people's rights—you know, rights protection officers.

Unfortunately for the less fortunate among us, there is no provision for hardship determination or exemption for SADs as there is, interestingly, for local improvement (districts) as described in NRS 271.357. Such is the sad news from the spokesperson of Stephen L. Hardesty, management analyst and assessment district coordinator for the city of Reno. No matter that Reno and most of the country are still struggling in the throes of the Great Recession. No matter that there are unemployed, elderly, disabled, retired folks approaching or living on the edge. Downtown Reno just has to have more police and their programs, above and beyond the general revenues already coming in. Nobody rational wants a "crime state;" but neither should anyone want a "police state" at the cost of one's financial survival. Good people are being leaned on harder than ever by the Reno City Council and their agencies.

Stanley Waugh  
Reno

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# Thunderstorm muddies the Truckee River

A Thursday night thunderstorm washed dirt into the river upstream of Reno, temporarily clouding the water May 23, 2014. Jeff DeLong/RGJ

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 5:19 p.m. PDT May 23, 2014



(Photo: Jeff DeLong/RGJ)



The Truckee River flowed a muddy brown on Friday, courtesy of a thunderstorm that hammered the mountains upstream of Reno the night before.

No problems were associated with the river's increased turbidity, caused by a thunderstorm that dropped heavy rain into the drainages of Gray and Bronco creeks, tributaries of the Truckee.

Those drainages in the Truckee River Canyon are steep and when they are hit by thunderstorms, increased turbidity in the Truckee River often occurs.

"The water is muddier than normal. It's not difficult for us to deal with," said Paul Miller, manager of operations and water quality for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the primary water provider for Reno-Sparks.

Muddy conditions were noticed Friday morning by operators at the utility's water treatment plants at Chalk Bluff and Glendale. As a rule, the utility lets the muddy

water flow past without diverting it into its plants, though it has the capability to treat and use it if necessary, Miller said.

The river's turbidity Friday was about five to 10 times normal levels, Miller said.

With healthy water flows fueled by spring runoff, the suspended sediment was expected to wash downstream and the river clear to normal conditions by sometime Friday night.

"Typically, it clears pretty quickly," Miller said.



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# Congress Passes Water Projects Bill; Truckee Flood Plan Included

Updated: Thu 2:24 PM, May 22, 2014

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WASHINGTON (AP) - Congress is sending the White House a \$12 billion-plus bill authorizing new flood control projects in Iowa, North Dakota and California and harbor expansions in Boston and Savannah, Georgia.

The Senate passed the bill on a 91-7 vote Thursday after the House approved it Tuesday.

The measure is half the size of the last water projects bill passed by Congress seven years ago, before the economy sank into a deep recession, helping swell the government's debt. The bill also is death knell for \$18 billion in dormant projects Congress had approved before 2007.



The bill includes \$280.82 million for Truckee Meadows flood control project, designed to protect homes and businesses from flooding in the Reno-Sparks area.

Senator Harry Reid (D-NV):

"The Truckee River is one of Nevada's most important assets." "It provides drinking water; it irrigates fields; and it is used for recreation and commerce to many. So when the river floods, it has devastating effects to communities in Reno-Sparks. I have been working on this flood control project for quite some time and I was determined to get it done. That's why I insisted the Water Resources Bill include a \$280 million authorization for it. Water is a precious resource in Nevada and I remain committed to investing in its critical infrastructure to improve its safety, environment and quality of life throughout the state."

Senator Dean Heller (R-NV):

"Finally, after over a decade of work, Congress was able to come together and craft a water bill that is not only fiscally responsible but also helps to jumpstart important projects in Nevada and across the country. I am pleased that the bill included the Truckee Meadows Flood Risk Management Project so that the Reno/Sparks region can continue to compete at a time when economic development is desperately needed. As Nevada continues towards recovery, this project will help alleviate concerns about flooding in the region as businesses look for areas in which to invest and grow."

The bill funds 34 projects the Army Corps of Engineers had made priorities. Supporters hailed it as jobs-producing,

commerce-enhancing infrastructure bill benefiting a wide variety of interests, including environmentalists, and homeowners and businesses ravaged by repeated floods.

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# Mike Alger: Reno among nation's driest cities

Mike Alger, special to the RGJ 8:34 a.m. PDT May 25, 2014



(Photo: Cathleen Allison)



On Saturday, I provided a list of the top 10 wettest cities in the continental U.S. Besides the fact that it doesn't include any cities that are publicly perceived as being rainy places, the interesting thing is most of the precipitation that occurs in these areas doesn't fall in the winter months, but during the summer. That's because most of their precipitation comes from thunderstorms. If you have ever been caught in a Deep South thundershower, you know that the inches of rain can pile up in a real hurry.

But we live in a desert. How about the driest cities in the country? How does Reno stack up on that scale? Well, Reno doesn't do too badly. The Biggest Little City slides in safely as the fourth-driest city in the nation, with an average of about 7.5 inches of precipitation per year. Topping the dry list is our neighbor to the south, Las Vegas, with only 4.5 inches of rain annually. Vegas is followed by Bakersfield, Calif.; Winslow, Ariz.; Reno; Phoenix; Winnemucca; Yakima, Wash.; Grand Junction, Colo.; Albuquerque, N.M.; and El Paso, Texas.

# Utility set to meet water needs

Mark Foree 11:40 p.m. PDT May 27, 2014



(Photo: RGJ)



Everyone is talking about the drought. So, understandably, we've been getting a lot of questions at Truckee Meadows Water Authority about the status of our water supply. Are we prepared for a drought? What will happen to Truckee River flows? What can I do to help? Why not ask for more conservation now?

As everyone in the Truckee Meadows knows, this year's meager snowpack has been disappointing.

But, despite this third consecutive dry year, TMWA is prepared to meet the water needs of our customers.

We've been through these challenges before. Drought is a natural occurrence in the high desert and our community is well-prepared. We are fortunate to have a robust supply system of upstream reservoirs and local production wells that store drought reserves that are available for use when our community needs them. TMWA also has a long-established aquifer-recharge program through which groundwater supplies are enhanced and protected each winter by recharging them with approximately 5 million gallons of treated surface water per day.

As a desert-based water utility, TMWA plans for dry years. Our staff continually monitors weather and snowpack conditions and we plan for a nine-year dry weather cycle, which is one year longer than the worst drought on record. In addition, our community values our precious water resources and has done an excellent job of conserving water, not only in dry years, but in plentiful years. In fact, the average household has reduced water use by 15 percent over the past 10 years. Because of all these factors, no additional conservation measures will be asked of TMWA customers at this time; we simply ask that you continue your diligence in using water responsibly — both indoors and outside.

We know that river flows will be a concern later this summer. When reservoir storage levels in Lake Tahoe and Boca Reservoir become depleted, river flows will naturally decrease. Fortunately, TMWA has planned for this and will utilize upstream drought reserves and groundwater supplies to augment reduced river flows to meet customer demands. That is the time when conservation and your help can really make a difference, because the water that the community saves then will stay in upstream reservoirs and keep our drought reserves healthy.

As a community-owned water utility with a staff that lives and works here, we share a strong sense of commitment to the quality and availability of our water resources. Our community has always been diligent about conservation, and we encourage everyone to keep up the good work. When mandated river flows cannot be sustained, and drought reserves are needed, we will ask for extra water-saving measures. This is when conservation counts and we can store saved water for future use. When will that be? The weather will determine the exact date, but we anticipate that drought

reserves will need to be used later this summer.

In the meantime, TMWA will continue its three-day-a-week watering schedule. Use the water you need, but don't waste it. If you see water being wasted, please let us know at 775-834-8005, or go to [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com) and search "Report waste."

Mark Foree is general manager of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

## see bears hunt trout at Independence Lake

Tom Stienstra

Updated 10:46 pm, Wednesday, May 28, 2014

1 of 3

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Free kayaks and other watercraft are available to explore Independence Lake, which has strict regulations for protecting fish. Photo: Simon Williams/The Nature Conser



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If you hit it right at Independence Lake, high in the [Sierra Nevada](#), the scene can be like a wildlife movie filmed in Yellowstone.

Along a stream that feeds into Independence Lake, bears sometimes emerge from the forest to feed on spawning cutthroat trout, just as occurs in the Yellowstone River above

Yellowstone Lake. Some of the females have two cubs with them.

They all hope to snatch a big fish. Bald eagles and osprey wait nearby, then soar, hover and dive for the leftovers. Independence Lake Preserve is also the location of verified wolverine sightings (by preserve manager [David Mandrella](#) in 2012 and 2013).

The lake is full and beautiful. Despite the drought which has left many reservoirs half empty, Independence is filled to the brim. It is nestled in a forested basin north of Truckee at 6,949 feet. As spring arrives in the high country, the wildlife spectacle is expected to last just another week or so.

Independence and its watershed are best known for trout, with one of only two wild, self-sustaining lake populations of the Lahontan subspecies of cutthroat trout (the other is Summit Lake/Quinn River in Nevada). The lake also has schools of smaller kokanee salmon and a sprinkling of huge but elusive brown trout.

It can cost thousands of dollars, plus a week of vacation time, to see nature like this in Alaska or Yellowstone. At Independence Lake, parking, access and the use of watercraft is

free. There is no other destination in California where you can get use of a motorboat, kayak or float tube for free. The Nature Conservancy, which owns Independence Lake Preserve, is in the fifth year of showcasing its crown jewel.

Just a few years ago, the idea of getting past the gate at the little boat ramp at Independence seemed a fantasy. For 50 years, [Sierra Pacific Power Company](#) (now NV Energy) out of Reno owned a portion of the water rights and surrounding property. Like many, I often found the road to the lake gated. The Nature Conservancy bought the 2,325-acre property for \$15 million and then opened it to year-round day use for the public.

In many years, the road to the lake is blocked by snow until late June, and by then the chance is long past to see the phenomenon of bears trying to catch trout in a stream. One year, there was 20 feet of snow there on July 4. This year, with the drought, you may get a glimpse of a black bear, with the bonus of an early spring and an extra month of summer in the high country.

The region is remote and raw, and you have to work your way through miles of forested roads to reach the lake. It's a place of beauty and legends, of giant fish lost, a plane crash and a ghost who wears a plaid shirt.

Back in the day, there were two small lakes in the basin here called Loon Lakes. In the 1940s, a large fire burned the surrounding forest. The slopes were then logged and a new dam built to create a single, 2-mile long lake.

The lake started growing huge fish, cutthroat trout sometimes ranging 10 to 15 pounds and brown trout in the 20-pound class. Strong winds, common on summer afternoons, are often an issue for anglers. And then on calm days, crystal-clear water clarity is another. Few anglers hook the big trout. It's a must to use light, low-visibility fishing line, but then you can find the fish too big to handle. When hooked, the giant trout can charge off and wrap the line around submerged logging booms (left behind before the lake was enlarged) and break off.

The stories of the giant trout occasionally hooked and so often lost, and their size confirmed by the [Department of Fish and Wildlife](#) with a netting survey, have added to the legend.

The lore includes a story about a ghost who is said to wear a plaid shirt. Near the lake, at a boarded-up building that was a resort 150 years ago, the ghost is said to glare out a window at you. When you return with a friend to show them what you saw, he's gone.

Some says it's the spirit of a pilot who crashed into the canyon in 1950, or perhaps that of a photographer who drowned in the 1940s. Neither body was ever found. Over the years, caretakers told me there were enough sightings by people they trusted to take the apparition seriously.

For the Nature Conservancy, a primary goal is to protect and preserve the watershed, lake and streams for the rare Lahontan cutthroat trout, and in the process, provide clean drinking water for the residents of northern Nevada. The conservancy removed a weir on Upper Independence Creek, for instance, that had blocked fish from a spawning area. "The work of many partners has brought the Lahontan cutthroat trout back from the brink of extinction in Independence Lake," said [Chris Fichtel](#) of the Nature Conservancy.

To reduce the chance of future mega-fires and improve forest health, foresters are supervising a thinning operation, a project that is about halfway complete across 600 acres identified as most vulnerable to a catastrophic fire. In addition, when the rains and

cold weather arrive in the fall, burns will be prescribed to take out brush and small trees that could act as an incinerate, and in some places, as a ladder fuel into the trees.

"We're trying to reintroduce frequent, low-intensity fires back into the landscape safely," said [Ed Smith](#), a forest ecologist with the Nature Conservancy. "Two-thirds of our Sierra Nevada forests are overly dense."

For this week, it's all about a chance to see bears trying to pick off spawning trout. The best time for that has been from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Once the trout stop spawning, the bears will leave in their search for food. Preserve staff are on site to facilitate visitors who want the chance to see the bears, hike, fish, or take out a boat or kayak.

Where else in California can you do this? And for free? Nowhere else.

If you want to go

**Location:** Independence Lake, elevation 6,949 feet, 20 miles north of Truckee.

**Open:** Open all year for walk-in day use. From parking, short walk required to lake.

**Trout spawning:** Lahontan cutthroat trout spawn in Upper Independence Creek, from end of May to mid-June.

**On-site staff:** Nature Conservancy staff on site through October.

**Camping:** No camping at Independence Lake. [Forest Service](#) campgrounds located in vicinity at Little Truckee River, Wild Plum Creek, Cold Creek, Sagehen Creek and the nearest lakes - Jackson Meadows Reservoir (located roughly to the west) and Stampede Reservoir (located roughly to the east). See [Moon California Camping](#).

**Lodging:** Nearest lodging is in Truckee. Info: [www.gotahoenorth.com](http://www.gotahoenorth.com) - click on Truckee.

**Boats available:** Three 14-foot aluminum boats with 10-horsepower outboards; eight kayaks, including two tandems; three pontoon float tubes. Free. First-come, first-served. Motorboats available every other week (this week is an "on" week).

**No private craft:** No boats, kayaks, float tubes from outside the preserve are permitted.

**Fishing:** Use of artificial lures with single, barbless hooks required; no bait, no treble hooks, no barbs; all cutthroat trout must be released immediately; limit 5 kokanee salmon or brook trout. No fishing in feeder streams to lake, lake within 300 feet of the mouths of all tributaries.

**Dogs:** OK on trails, must be leashed.

**Preserve rules:** No littering or smoking. No hunting or firing guns. No fires, firewood cutting, felt-soled waders, live bait, removal of fauna, artifacts or rocks.

**Seasons:** First snow is often on Labor Day weekend. First snow that lasts usually arrives just before Halloween. In winter most years, snow blocks the access road from mid-November well into June.

**Member tours:** Guided trips available for Conservancy members, \$50 for membership, [www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org).

**How to get there:** From Truckee, take Highway 89 north for 15 miles to turnoff signed for "Independence Lake, Webber Lake, Jackson Meadow Reservoir." Turn left and go 1.5 miles (on paved road) to junction (signed "Independence Lake - 5 miles"). Turn left and drive 2 miles (becomes dirt, rough for some vehicles) to a fork (signed "Independence Lake - 3 miles"). Take right fork and go 0.5 mile to another fork. Bear left and drive

across a stream (if you do not drive across a stream just after taking this fork, you have taken the wrong fork) and continue to signed entrance road for Independence Lake Preserve. Continue to parking area (well signed). High-clearance vehicles required.

**Contact:** The Nature Conservancy, Nevada Field Office, (775) 322-4990,  
[Nevada@tnc.org](mailto:Nevada@tnc.org); [www.nature.org/independencelake](http://www.nature.org/independencelake).

# Cutthroats spawn at Pyramid Lake



Threatened fish reproduce for the first time since 1938. Jeff DeLong/RGJ

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 5:01 p.m. PDT June 3, 2014



(Photo: Tim Dunn/RGJ)

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For the first time in 76 years, Lahontan cutthroat trout have spawned up the Truckee River at Pyramid Lake, an event described as a key accomplishment in efforts to restore the native fish to its former home.

DNA tests Tuesday confirmed newly hatched fish collected by biologists to be of the hefty Pilot Peak strain of Lahontan cutthroats first reintroduced into Pyramid Lake in 2006 and which anglers have lately been pulling from the water at up to 25 pounds in size.

"What we do have is documented reproduction of the cutthroat trout," said Lisa Heki, fisheries complex manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "This is important. It's a really significant milestone. It hasn't happened since 1938."

An official with the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe first noticed evidence that cutthroats were digging spawning nests in the river just downstream of Marble Bluff Dam in April. Since then, at least 89 cutthroats — ranging in size from 17 to 25 pounds —

have dug spawning nests in more than 180 locations along a roughly 2-mile stretch of the lower river downstream of the dam.

It's one more exciting development for a fish that last year gained national publicity over its successful recovery, with the spotlight put on Pyramid Lake as a premier destination to hook some really big trout.

"It's a very exciting success story for the tribe," said Terence James, vice chairman for the Pyramid Lake Paiutes. "We haven't seen this happen for a very long time."

Nevada's state fish, Lahontan cutthroats once thrived in all the major rivers and lakes on the eastern side of the Sierra, including Pyramid Lake, Lake Tahoe and the Truckee River. Cutthroats — famous for their size and taste — were fished extensively from Pyramid and Tahoe and shipped by rail to 1800s mining camps and to San Francisco. In 1925, Paiute Johnny Skimmerhorn set a world record by landing a 41-pound cutthroat.

Overfishing, destruction of spawning habitat and introduction of non-native game fish — particularly the Mackinaw — combined to decimate the cutthroat population at Lake Tahoe, with the fish disappearing from its waters by 1939. Pyramid's last spawn of cutthroat was recorded in 1938 and by 1944, they were gone from there as well. That event was largely due to the 1905 construction of the Truckee River's Derby Dam about 30 miles upstream, which sharply diminished flows to the lake and ruined spawning habitat.

Lahontan cutthroats were listed as an endangered species in 1970 and reclassified to threatened five years later. In 1974, the tribe established a new cutthroat fishery with fish raised at a hatchery at Sutcliffe, but those fish originated from outside the Truckee River Basin. While anglers have been landing them for many years, there have been no documented spawning runs or natural reproduction of that strain of cutthroat, Heki said.

The strain that spawned near Marble Bluff this spring was originally collected in the 1970s from a small stream in the Pilot Mountains on the Nevada-Utah border, with researchers at the time suspecting the fish were part of the original Pyramid Lake population. That was later confirmed through DNA testing.

The Fish and Wildlife Service began raising the Pilot Peak strain of cutthroat at a hatchery in Gardnerville in 1995, with the first of those fish released into Pyramid Lake eight years ago. This spring's spawn indicates the cutthroats are on the road to healthy self-reproduction, Heki said.

Spawning that occurred this year is not expected to be particularly successful, in part due to drought conditions that limited water flow and make survival of many newly hatched fish unlikely. But those same conditions make it surprising that the fish attempted to spawn at all, Heki said.

"They decided to take advantage of pretty diminished flow," Heki said. "This was completely unexpected, particularly during a drought year."

During a better water year, it's likely the cutthroats would spawn with more success, Heki said.

"It's important in terms of showing this population still retains its intent to reproduce naturally," Heki said. "It's a new era."

#### BY THE NUMBERS

89: Number of adult cutthroats confirmed in spawning area.

182: Number of spawning nests dug in river bed.

9: Number of newly hatched fish collected for analysis.

25 pounds: Largest Pilot Peak cutthroat caught in Pyramid Lake this year.

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

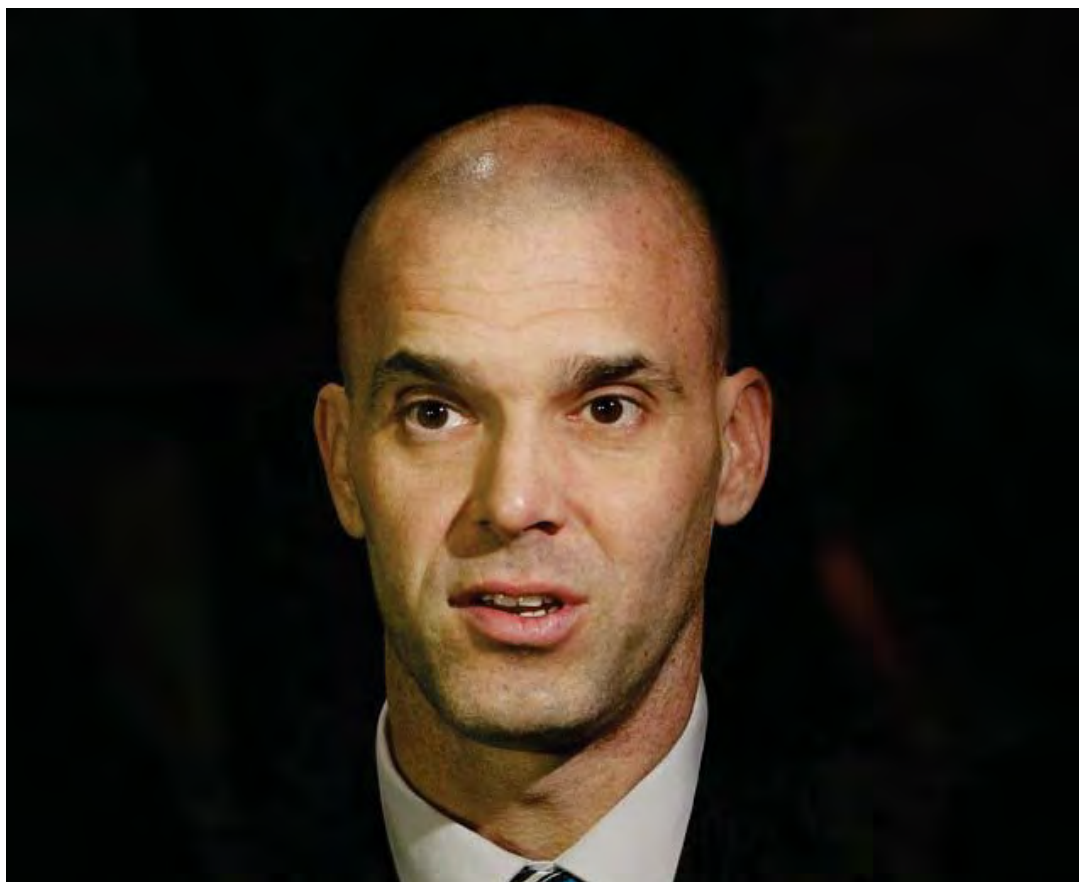
# Water-line insurance endorsement raises questions in North Las Vegas

By JAMES DEHAVEN LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL

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North Las Vegas Interim City Manager Jeff Buchanan. (Jason Bean/Las Vegas Review-Journal)



David Dyreng isn't alone in wondering why the city of North Las Vegas wants to sell him waterline insurance.

Over the past few weeks, he and thousands of other city residents have opened a letter warning against the financial perils of repairing underground waterlines damaged by "root invasion, ground shifting, fluctuating temperatures and age."

The May 6 letter offers a ready-made solution: Service Line Warranties of America, a Pennsylvania-based for-profit corporation hawking waterline warranties that have "helped more than 60,000 homeowners across the country save over \$45 million in service line repair costs," all for around \$6 a month.

All of which would be fine by Dyreng, if the pitch weren't printed on city letterhead, carrying a signature from the city manager.

"It is not the role of government to be sanctioning one private business over another," Dyreng said. "The fact that you get the letter from the city almost makes it look like it's a mandatory thing.

"It puts you in a situation that looks like Obamacare, where government is competing with private industry."

Deputy Utilities Director Randy DeVaul has fielded a handful of similar complaints in the eight months since the city signed on to a partnership with a private water and sewer line insurance provider.

DeVaul, an enthusiastic supporter of the move, said the city's October agreement with warranty underwriters at SLWA is a near carbon-copy of a sewer line deal inked between the company and the city of Las Vegas in 2013.

The company is endorsed by the National League of Cities and accredited by the Better Business Bureau.

A disclaimer issued on the company's website says its services are offered "at no cost to the cities" and no expense to the public.

The sewer line endorsement deal with North Las Vegas has netted the city some \$30,000 to date, thanks to a 10 percent revenue sharing agreement that will apply to waterline insurance policies sold through a public-private sales drive launched in early May.

DeVaul wasn't sure how many city homeowners have signed on to the fledgling waterline insurance program, but said there was no limit on how much the city could profit from such efforts in the future.

"There's no sunset on this program, so there's no cap on how much we could make from this going forward," he said. "The most important thing for people to understand is that it's not a scam; the company was vetted through the National League of Cities.

"This is a real program, an optimal program, offered with the city's help."

DeVaul said no city funds were used to print or distribute program endorsements.

Interim City Manager Jeff Buchanan, who is quoted in the waterline insurance letters offering his support for "the only (warranty) program endorsed by the North Las Vegas City Council," declined through a spokesman to comment.

Contact James DeHaven at [jdehaven@reviewjournal.com](mailto:jdehaven@reviewjournal.com) or 702-477-3839. Find him on Twitter: @JamesDeHaven.

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May 29, 2014  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Truckee Meadows Water Authority Encourages Responsible Water Use *Sprinkler and Drip System Maintenance Workshops Coming Up***

(RENO, Nev.) As summer approaches and we are in the midst of another dry year, please keep in mind that proper watering of your lawn and landscape is even more important. For this spring and summer—and always—TMWA encourages you to use water responsibly. Fortunately, the Truckee Meadows is a community with a strong water conservation record, not only in dry years, but in plentiful years, too. This is demonstrated by a 15 percent drop in average household water use over the last 10 years.

“We are certainly grateful at TMWA for customers who have consistently shown they value conservation of our precious water resources, and a willingness to pitch in on the rare occasions when additional conservation measures are needed,” said Kim Mazeres, TMWA’s Director of Customer Service.

What may surprise some people to learn is that water used for landscaping increases the average residential customer’s water use by four times compared to indoor use in the winter months. That’s why it is important to only give your yard the water it needs to stay healthy, while still avoiding waste. Here are a few weather-wise watering practices to consider as you plan your summer watering schedule:

- Keep your sprinklers off during the heat of the day, noon-6 p.m., and water your plants when it’s cooler. This avoids evaporation and saves water.
- Turn your sprinklers off when it’s raining or windy.
- Water deeper and less often, as it builds stronger roots and a healthier lawn.
- Use the water-and-wait method. On one of your watering days, water until it puddles, then stop and wait for the water to soak in, about 1-2 hours. Repeat until



water soaks in 6-8 inches deep. You can determine the depth, as it should be easy to push a screwdriver into the soil.

- Assigned-Day Watering only applies to your sprinklers and lawn. You can hand water or use your drip system any time and any day of the week.
- As always, Assigned-Day Watering will be in effect giving you three days to water your lawn. If the last number of your home or business address is even (0, 2, 4, 6, 8), please water on Tuesday, Thursdays and/or Saturdays. If the last number of your home or business address is odd (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), water only on Sundays, Wednesdays and/or Fridays. Please don't water on Mondays, as it is a day of rest for the water system, giving it a chance to recharge.

TMWA's conservation staff also conducts a series of free workshops to help you understand your landscape's watering needs. In June, the following workshops are scheduled: Sprinkler Maintenance Made Easy--Tuesday, June 10 at 5:30 p.m. and Drip System Maintenance Made Easy--Tuesday, June 17 at 5:30 p.m. Both workshops will be held at TMWA's office at 1355 Capital Blvd. in Reno. The workshops are free, but do require an RSVP. Please reply to [conservation@tmwa.com](mailto:conservation@tmwa.com) or 834-8005.

For more information about water-efficient landscaping, conservation, and TMWA's workshop series, please visit [www.tmwa.com](http://www.tmwa.com) and [www.tmwandscapeguide.com](http://www.tmwandscapeguide.com).

*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.*

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