



TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, November 19, 2014

Press Clippings

October 9, 2014 through November 10, 2014



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

A Good Bet

Cured-in-Place Pipe Delivers Winning Solution for Reno Rehab Project

BY JIM KALISHMAN

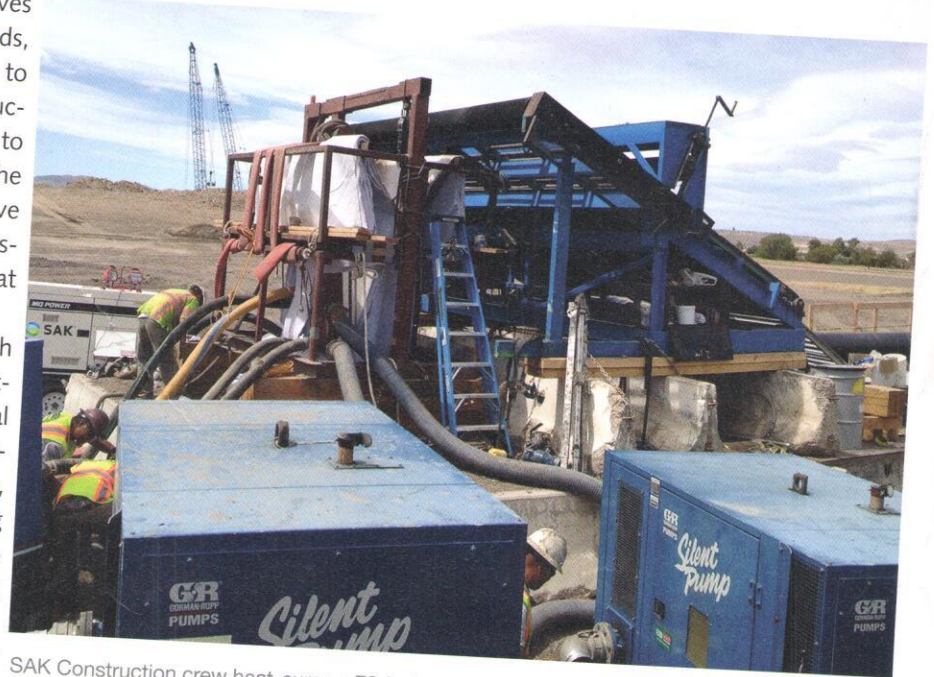
The City of Reno, Nev., thrives on people playing the odds, but officials had no desire to gamble when the city's water infrastructure was at stake. So when it came time to rehabilitate the siphons that run under the Truckee River and the pipelines that serve the main water treatment plant, the desert community wanted to make sure great care was taken to keep its water clean.

The Truckee River, the source of which is the outlet of Lake Tahoe, is a major attraction and is heavily used for recreational pursuits such as pleasure boating, white-water rafting and fly-fishing. In addition, the waters of the Truckee supply drinking water to the 225,000-plus people who call Reno home, and they terminate about 40 miles away at Pyramid Lake.

Years ago, siphons were built under the river to channel sewage from collector lines to an interceptor trunk, installed in 1976, that ends on the East side of the river. In 2013, after 37 years of service, it was expected to last another 13 years. However, inspections revealed the pipe to be heavily corroded and missing much of its interior coating. The city had to act to ensure that all efforts were taken to protect the river waters flowing above from a major subterranean pollution event.

With a project occurring so close to a significant venue like the river, a major objective was to not disturb the premises either operationally or environmentally. While the primary goal was to properly rehabilitate the pipelines to achieve a long, functional life, it was important to the customer to minimize the term of any bypass, limit local traffic blockage and generally operate with minimal disruption. Therefore, the city of Reno made sure to consider repair options for the siphons and pipelines that resulted in minimal interruption. Cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), a proven industry solution that satisfied both structural and operational requirements, was the rehabilitation method ultimately selected for the project.

Adding to the previously-listed requirements and challenges was the variety of lengths, diameters, locations, and types of pipelines that a contractor needed to address. The specs



SAK Construction crew heat-cures a 72-inch liner and breaks down over-the-hole installation equipment in Reno, Nev.



A 60-inch pipeline, with coated inlet structure, entering the Reno water treatment plant.

included 45,000 linear feet of diameters ranging from 8 to 72 inches. In addition, another 3,500 linear feet of 60 inch-

es and 3,500 linear feet of 72 inches that fed directly into the treatment plant would need relining. The longest was over 2,000 linear feet of 60 inches — a major test for anyone delivering a solution. Finally, the contractor would need to address the two 48-inch siphons and another 24-inch siphon under the Truckee River.

"This was likely the most environmentally and logistically challenging CIPP project put out to bid by the city of Reno in the last 15 years," said Thayne Loendorf, project manager at Brown and Caldwell, the largest environmental engineering consulting specialist in the U.S. "It was complicated by lining siphons under the Truckee River, proximity to a wastewater

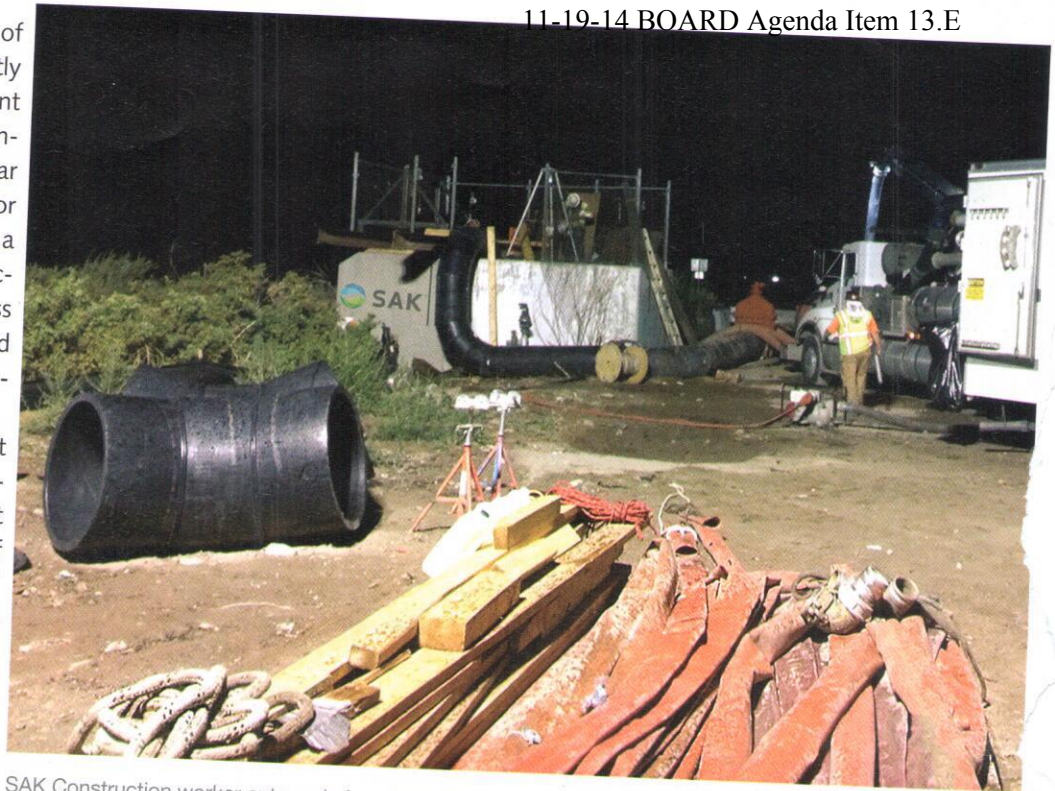
treatment plant, high ground water levels, and the need to coordinate activities with an adjacent highway project and to bypass high-volume sanitary sewer flows."

SAK Construction of O'Fallon, Mo., took on the multifaceted project, successfully using CIPP to repair the various-sized pipes and three siphons without disruption to the river or to the community. In evaluating the project, SAK recognized that the location of the pipelines under the river posed a large complication for bypassing. It was determined that it would be impossible to bypass over the river, so an alternate solution was needed to address the flow of the operating lines. A subcontractor for SAK, Munson Pump Services of Anderson, Calif., came to the rescue.

Munson's experience handling large-volume bypass situations proved invaluable as it detoured around the 60-million-gallons-per-day (MGD) line under the Truckee, and at times, past the entire treatment plant, for almost six months.

When bypassing wasn't an option in other areas of the project, SAK's skill in handling complex CIPP jobs was a key to success. At times, the only viable option was for the company to perform CIPP relining in live flow conditions in the junction structures next to the line. The maneuver was one that only a handful of the nation's most experienced CIPP contractors could successfully complete.

Prior to relining, SAK relied on another subcontractor, Pro Pipe, to televise and clean the lines. In addition to the CIPP work, the job included rehab of all the manholes. National



SAK Construction worker cuts ends for a bypass line (top center), while in the foreground the junction structure for the three siphon lines under the Truckee River awaits deployment.

Coating, another subcontractor, teamed with SAK to address the manhole repairs. They also coated all the headworks, grit chambers and siphon structure while the plant was bypassed.

"We knew going into it that this was a difficult project with many potential pitfalls, but that's exactly the kind of work we thrive on, and that makes the end result even more satisfying," said Ryan Broyles, SAK operations manager. "I'm very proud of our team and partners and how we worked together to find solutions that best served the client."

Today, the city of Reno is delighted to have a newly-rehabilitated pipeline system that no longer has it playing the odds with the priceless water that serves the daily needs of its growing population.

"The experience, professionalism, communication skills, and aptitude of SAK's personnel helped promote a culture of teamwork with the city, the construction manager and subcontractors to complete this project on time and on budget," said Loendorf.

Overall, the project was one that left everyone holding a winning hand. **WW**

About the Author: Jim Kalishman is chief information officer of SAK Construction, LLC. Based in O'Fallon, Mo., and with regional offices in Baltimore, Md., Sacramento, Calif., and Tampa, Fla., SAK solves the challenge of maintaining and restoring aging water, sanitary and oil and gas pipeline infrastructure for the municipal, energy and industrial markets across the U.S. For more information, visit www.sakon.com.

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Can California Make It Rain With Drones? +

Faced with extreme drought, California continues its experiment with weather modification.

BY BRIAN RESNICK

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October 7, 2014 Billowy and filled with life-sustaining water vapor, the cloud passes overhead without emitting a drop of rain. In times of severe drought, that cloud is a frustrating, lumbering tease. That cloud is tantalizing. Delicious even.

What that cloud needs is a kick start, a catalyst to squeeze the water out of it. It's not science fiction; it's called cloud-seeding. And in beyond-parched California, it may become a viable option to combat long-term water shortages.

Cloud-seeders can't make rain appear out of clear blue sky. Rather, they create snow (and sometimes rain) where it's most likely to occur—in clouds. Yes, that cloud is full of water vapor, but sometimes, water needs to be coaxed into forming the ice crystals needed for snow (you can [see this happening in this video](#)). The seeding devices, which are mainly on the ground, burn silver iodide into a fine mist that gets tossed up into the air. Silver iodide is an inert chemical (meaning, it won't react chemically with much in the environment), but its structural shape is perfect for seeding ice crystals. Water vapor will collect around the silver iodide and freeze into crystals, then those crystals will precipitate as snow. The snow fills mountainsides, and, come spring, the snow melts and increases the fresh water supply.

The Desert Research Institute operates [several such cloud-seeders](#) in California and has found that the process increases the precipitation output of a cloud [by around 10 percent](#)—though there is a lot of variability, cloud to cloud, and the [effectiveness of the process is debated](#). In 2003, a National Research Council [study](#) found little evidence in favor of cloud-seeding, but because there weren't enough good data on its effectiveness. "This does not challenge the scientific basis of cloud-seeding concepts," the National Research Council assured in its conclusion, calling for more research. "The scientific community now has the opportunity, challenge, and responsibility to assess the potential efficacy and value of intentional weather-modification technologies," the council wrote. A study out of Wyoming [is expected to be published in December](#) to more precisely determine the benefit of cloud-seeding.

The California cloud-seeders are strategically placed in its northern mountainous region, where snowpack is an essential component of the yearly water supply. In the past year, the snowpack [was depleted to one of its lowest recorded levels](#). As can be seen in the chart below, much of California's water comes from the snow-laden areas in the northern part of the state.

The majority of water storage exists in the North Geographic Zone.
The Central and South Zones are net water importers.



(U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation)

Not only has the state's snowpack diminished, the ongoing drought in California has gotten so bad that the state is [losing mass](#), as NASA has observed from space. That has wide-reaching implications for a state with a massive agricultural economy. "The water shortage could result in direct and indirect agricultural losses of at least \$2.2 billion and lead to the loss of more than 17,000 seasonal and part-time jobs in 2014 alone," [reports](#) the National Science Foundation. By 2030, California is projected to have a water supply-to-demand deficit of [1.6 trillion gallons a year](#), the U.S. Interior Department has predicted.

"Even currently, the supply and demand are somewhat out of balance," Shawn Blosser, an economic consultant with [the Blue Sky Group](#), a public policy consultancy, tells me. "There really is no single silver bullet that is going to solve the problem."

Part of the solution is combating the rising demand for water (Blosser, working with the California think tank Next 10 has

developed a menu of policy ideas to reduce demand—the answers aren't easy, or cheap.) But part of the solution is also to increase supply, by cloud-seeding or perhaps a more scalable measure such as waste-water recycling. In all, Blosser and Next 10 project that an increased effort to seed clouds could reduce the looming water gap by 26 billion gallons in 2030, at a cost of \$22 per acre-foot of water (325,851 gallons). That's markedly cheaper than other technologies to increase water supply. Water desalination, for instance, would cost \$1,890 per acre-foot of water produced.

But seeders aren't a definitive answer to California's water problems. Because they're ground based, if clouds aren't over the seeders to begin with, we're out of luck. Plane-based seeders exist, but pilots can't always fly safely into cloud areas with the highest seeding potential.

Enter the cloud-seeding drone. The DRI is currently testing plans for a cloud-seeding drone program, with the goal of delivering the most effective dose of silver iodide to the clouds with the greatest precipitation potential, wherever they may be.

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It may sound like a stretch, but it's important to keep innovating in water resource management. Even if California's drought eases in the next year, Blosser explained, the long-term trend of water demand outpacing supply will continue.

"There has to be a coordinated effort on a lot of fronts to both lessen demand and increase supply, to get the demand and supply back into balance," Blosser said

TRCD working to remove milfoil from river

PUBLISHED: OCTOBER 8, 2014 BY: ADMIN, IN: OUTDOOR & SPORTS, 1 COMMENT

The Tahoe Resource Conservation District is pioneering a project on the Truckee River to control the aquatic invasive plant, Eurasian watermilfoil, which has been growing prolifically since the late 1990s.

Eurasian watermilfoil is a nonnative aquatic plant that can spread easily between water bodies by plant fragments adhering to boats, trailers and other recreational and angling equipment. Eurasian watermilfoil likely entered the Truckee River following the overflow of the dam in 1997 and has been more prolific in the last five to seven years.

For this project only diver assisted hand removal will be used. Permitting constraints and river flows are contributing factors to this decision.

Funding for this project has been provided by the Community Foundation of Western Nevada/Truckee River Fund, California Department of Parks and Recreation and the Tahoe Fund.

For more info, contact Nicole Cartwright at ncartwright@tahoercd.org.



Crews pulling noxious water weed from Truckee River

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 4:03 p.m. PDT October 8, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file)

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Crews are wading the shallows of the Truckee River in an attempt to rid it of an invading water weed spreading steadily downstream from Lake Tahoe to Reno and beyond.

The current effort is focusing on a stretch of river immediately downstream of the Lake Tahoe Dam in Tahoe City, where feathery Eurasian watermilfoil is flourishing in particularly thick concentrations, covering up to 85 percent of the river bed in places.

"It's very thick," said Nicole Cartwright, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the Tahoe Resource Conservation District, which is heading up the project to physically remove the weed by pulling it out of the drought-diminished river.

"The problem is only getting worse," Cartwright said. "This is really a great step toward getting rid of the problem."

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

Spread by boats and trailers or as weed fragments carried by currents, the weed is now found in most of Tahoe's marinas and along some shoreline areas, including iconic Emerald Bay, where scuba divers have been used in attempts to remove the stuff.

Watermilfoil is believed to 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 is now found in slow-moving stretches of the river as far downstream as Pyramid Lake.

The water weed poses a number of problems. It crowds out native plants, can ruin boating and clog irrigation ditches, water intakes and pipes. In Tahoe, it provides cover for largemouth bass and other non-native warmwater fish now invading the lake.

Watermilfoil has yet to cause major problems for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, the major water supplier for the Reno-Sparks area. But it is an emerging issue.

"We're increasingly having to deal with milfoil," said Paul Miller, manager of operations and water quality for the water authority, which last March approved a \$60,000 expenditure to fund the project now underway to remove the weeds from the Truckee River.

It will take at least several years to remove Eurasian watermilfoil from the 3-mile-long stretch of the Truckee River between the dam and the Alpine Meadows area, Cartwright said.

“The Truckee River is an integral part of the Tahoe watershed,” said Dan Shaw, an environmental scientist with the California Department of Parks and Recreation. “With a comprehensive multiyear removal project, there is hope to restore its historic beauty.”

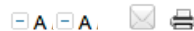


Study details the 'rigidity penalty' in watering regulations

Article

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When the Truckee Meadows Water Authority was thinking about allowing people to water their lawns three days a week, rather than two, some engineers worried about the utility's ability to meet sharply increased demand.

After all, they said, wouldn't people boost their water consumption by 50 percent if they could water on three days, rather than the two-day watering schedule that had been in place for years?

Shawn Stoddard, a senior resource economist with TMWA, thought that the worries were misplaced when TMWA made the change in 2010. He was mostly right, and now Stoddard has joined with other researchers to explain the economics behind the reasons that increased options actually have helped TMWA meet demand more efficiently.

"Free to Choose: Promoting Conservation by Relaxing Outdoor Watering Restrictions" was co-authored by Stoddard, Anita Castledine of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada; Klaus Moeltner of Virginia Tech and Michael Price of Georgia State University. (All have ties to the University of Nevada, Reno, and TMWA.) The study is published in the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization.

As an economist who has taught at UNR alongside his work at TMWA, Stoddard strongly doubted that residents would take advantage of the additional day of watering to run their sprinklers even longer each week. After all, he asked, who's going to spend money on water if they don't have to?

"But it wasn't enough to know it," he says. "We proved it."

The researchers' big finding: One of the unintended consequences of the two-day-a-week schedule established in 1992 was what they call "a rigidity penalty." Given that they had only two days in which they could keep their lawns green, TMWA customers almost always watered on those days — especially right before the four-day stretch each week in which they weren't allowed to water at all.

That led to big inefficiencies. Folks would water on windy days, for instance, when much of the water wouldn't reach their lawn. They felt they had no choice. The rigidity penalties may have driven as much as 25 percent of weekly consumption, the researchers found.

Once TMWA customers were given an additional day on which they could water, they watered more efficiently — skipping windy days, for instance.

More critically for TMWA's finances, the addition of a third watering day reduced the peak demand on the water utility's system. And that's no small thing, because the capital investment of TMWA — or any utility, for that matter — is based on the need to meet peak demands.

"Everything is built for the peak day," says Stoddard. "Anything we can do to reduce peak demand reduces capital costs."

In the Reno area, the researchers found that the "rigidity penalty" associated with a two-day schedule may have contributed as much as 40 percent to weekly peak demands.

The research using TMWA data is likely to be useful as other utilities throughout the West look for ways to reduce water consumption in the face of longstanding drought conditions.

The additional choice provided by the third day also created a cheerier clientele — not that cheeriness matters to economists who practice the dismal science, but still

“People became happier because they had more choices,” says Stoddard. “And nobody had to give up anything.”

UN experts: Detroit should restore water to poor

Posted: Oct 20, 2014 3:36 PM PDT
 Updated: Oct 20, 2014 3:36 PM PDT

By JEFF KAROUB
 Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) - United Nations human rights experts described Detroit's mass water shut-offs as "a man-made perfect storm" Monday and called on city officials to restore water to those unable to pay, including those with disabilities or chronic illnesses.

Meanwhile, Detroit's officials said the two lawyers' actions and conclusions were agenda-driven and not based on "facts" about the city's progress in helping residents keep or regain service.

Leilani Farha and Catarina de Albuquerque, who were in town to observe the effect of water service shut-offs, said they affect the poorest and most vulnerable - and particularly discriminate against Detroit's majority black population.

The representatives of the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner made the trip after activists appealed to the U.N. for assistance. They visited residents who have lost water service or have struggled to keep it, and they met with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and water department officials for about two hours Monday morning.

The city, the nation's largest municipality to file for bankruptcy, said it made about 27,000 shut-offs between Jan. 1 and Sept. 30. Most shut-offs were halted for several weeks during the summer to give residents a chance to enter payment plans but they resumed and topped 5,100 in September.

The U.N. officials cited falling population, rising unemployment and a utility passing on higher costs associated with an aging system. De Albuquerque said she has seen shut-offs in other U.S. cities and developed nations, but nothing like Detroit.

"Our conclusion is that you have here in Detroit a man-made perfect storm," de Albuquerque said. "The scale of the disconnections in the city is unprecedented."

The mayor's top aide, Alexis Wiley, said the city is "very disappointed" with the U.N. visit. She said Detroit is helping residents by beefing up customer service, getting 33,000 people in payment plans - up 15,000 since August - and logging a more than 50 percent drop in residential calls for water assistance.

"They weren't interested in the facts," Wiley said. "They took a position and never once (before Monday) reached out to the city for data."

De Albuquerque and Farha called their conversation with Detroit officials "constructive." They said they can't enforce recommendations but want to help the city and residents resolve the situation.

"If the city does not have enough money then other levels of government have to step in to support," de Albuquerque said.

Some advocates took the issue to federal court, but the judge overseeing Detroit's municipal bankruptcy trial ruled last month he lacked authority to force the utility to stop the shut-offs.

About 21,500 shut-offs were made in 2012. That number rose to 24,000 last year.

The tactic appears to be effective in getting people to pay. The water department said it collected about \$2.5 million in water and sewage bills for all of 2012 and again last year. About \$3.7 million was collected through the first nine months of this year.

De Albuquerque said residents have told her and Farha that they want to pay their share as long as it's just and fair.

"No one asked for a free ride," she said.

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(AP Photo/Paul Sancya). United Nations human rights experts Leilani Farha and Catarina de Albuquerque listen to questions during a news conference in Detroit, Monday, Oct. 20, 2014.



(AP Photo/Paul Sancya). Human rights experts and United Nations representatives Catarina de Albuquerque, right, and Leilani Farha speak during a news conference in Detroit Monday, Oct. 20, 2014.



(AP Photo/Detroit News, Jose Juarez). Valerie Jean of Detroit addresses a panel during a United Nations Fact-Finding Detroit Town Hall Meeting, Sunday, Oct. 19, 2014, at Wayne County Community College in Detroit.



(AP Photo/Detroit News, Jose Juarez). Detroit residents address a panel, which includes members from the United Nations, during a UN Fact-Finding Detroit Town Hall Meeting, Sunday, Oct. 19, 2014, at Wayne County Community College in Detroit.

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Los Angeles mayor urges conservation in drought

Posted: Oct 14, 2014 12:59 PM PDT
Updated: Oct 14, 2014 12:59 PM PDT

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has issued a warning in the midst of a severe drought - conserve water now or face mandatory restrictions in the future.

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Garcetti on Tuesday urged LA's 4 million residents to voluntarily reduce outdoor watering to two days a week, install low water-use plumbing fixtures and cover pools to prevent evaporation.

Garcetti's also ordered city agencies to reduce landscape watering and to replace lawns.

He says Los Angeles just completed its seventh driest rainy season on record and the city was forced to rely on expensive imported water.

The mayor has signed a directive calling for a 20-percent reduction in LA's per-person use of fresh water by 2017 and a 50-percent cut in the use of imported water over a decade.

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10/13/14 Tahoe Drops Below Rim

KOLO TV (Bill Did an interview yesterday regarding speculation that Tahoe would drop below its rim. Bill reassured that we have known about this and planned for it. And from a water supply perspective, we are in good shape. He also added that river flows through town will not be impacted, in fact the river is picking up a bit because trees are starting to go dormant.) This was not posted on KOLO's website, but did air at 5:30 and 6:30.)

Another Shoe Falls in Our Drought

Posted: Oct 14, 2014 2:23 PM PDT

Updated: Oct 14, 2014 2:27 PM PDT

By John Potter CONNECT

The summer of 2014 ended up just like it started: dry, leaving the Truckee River parched. Looking over the dry riverbed in downtown Reno, Nevada Department of Wildlife Fisheries Biologist Travis Hawks doesn't hide his concern: "We are concerned...I personally am very concerned over the river."

Hawks is not alone. Of the last the 3 dry winters in a row, the last one was the worst. The snowpack measured only 34% in April when it's typically at its peak. What made things worse is the heat: the first 8 months of this year were the warmest on record in western Nevada, speeding up the loss of water through evaporation. As a result, the seasonal flows today are at the lowest they've been since 1994. Hawks says, "They're probably going to get a little lower before this hot season ends."

And just today, the worst became official. According to U.S. Water Master Chad Blanchard, the water in Lake Tahoe is now officially right at the natural rim...and with the dry days ahead, it's about to make its slow descent below it.

For now, the river, or what's left of it, has slowed to a trickle. You can easily walk on where the river has typically flowed for years...it's now a dry riverbed. The snowmelt has passed its peak and a lot of it never made it into the river, much of it absorbed by the very dry ground upstream. Now with Tahoe heading below its rim, that will soon cut off the supply of water to the Truckee River.

But the river won't go completely dry. Hawks told us, "We're not expecting it to dry up this year. There's enough inflow from tributaries and streams that we expect some river flow for the rest of the year."

The last time a drought caused the lake to drop below its rim was 20 years ago. Up the road at the Reno Fly Shop, it has owner Jim Litchfield concerned too. As he told us, "I'm worried for the community, I'm worried for our water supply, but I'm also worried for the habitat that relies upon the Truckee River."

Jim and Travis both say the fish are surviving well after a stressful summer...they know to go deeper. But a scarier proposition is ahead: what if this coming winter, becomes the fourth dry one in a row? Hawks has no doubt: "Things are going to get worse. We may experience some die-offs."

Jim Litchfield says he'll still be at his shop, ready to "deal with the hand that's dealt."



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When the River Stops Flowing

Friday, October 10, 2014

By:

[Melissa Siig](#), Moonshine Ink Staff

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Low Flow: Barely any water is flowing through the Tahoe City Dam since the lake started approaching its natural rim of 6,223 feet at the end of July. On Oct. 6, Lake Tahoe was .08 inches about the natural rim with the water flowing out of the lake at a measly 5.2 cubic feet per second.

Photo by Jeremy Jensen/Moonshine Ink

<>



The shores of Lake Tahoe and the banks of the Truckee River are a sad sight these days. As the waters of both have receded due to the drought, beaches have grown bigger — at Commons Beach, the water is so shallow that swimmers can walk to the buoy field before reaching waters deep enough to swim in — and boulders that were normally submerged now glisten in the sun. In some parts of the Truckee River, the water barely reaches ankle height while in others, the river has run dry for stretches, revealing its rocky bottom.

Aside from aesthetics, the drought, now in its third year, presents very real problems for the multitude of agencies and municipalities that rely on the Truckee River for water. Flowing 121 miles from Lake Tahoe to Nevada's Pyramid Lake, the Truckee River — along with its six reservoirs — acts as a water delivery and storage system for Reno, Sparks, Fernley, and Churchill County. With only a trickle of water coming out of Lake Tahoe since the end of July, downstream water agencies are leaning on drought reserves and groundwater to meet demand, while some have been cut off entirely from water supplies. Although no water officials expect the Truckee River to run dry, they are cautiously watching the skies and praying that this winter delivers what the area so badly needs — precious H₂O to fall down on the Sierra in the form of snow.

At the end of September, Lake Tahoe was only a few tenths of a foot away from its natural rim of 6,223 feet. This meant that barely any water — 8 cubic feet per second compared to an average for this time of year of 180 cfs — was flowing out of Lake Tahoe to the Truckee River. Dave Wathen, the deputy federal watermaster in Reno, predicted that by early October the lake would be at or below its natural rim.

"There is no more water coming out," Wathen said. "From the Tahoe City Dam to the first stream coming in, the river will not be flowing; maybe just some pools."

The Truckee River system first felt the impacts of the drought at the end of July, when Lake Tahoe was under rim control. On July 31, the lake was .87 feet above the natural rim, and the river, flowing at 172 cfs, was no longer able to meet its minimum target flow of 500 cfs. This rate, known as the Floriston Rate, means there is enough water stored in Lake Tahoe and Boca Reservoir to meet the demands of the many signatories to the Truckee River Operating Agreement. As a result, at the end of July all the signing parties except the top two priorities, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, were cut off from water from the Truckee River.

"We ran out of storage," said Wathen. "Those with water rights were not allowed to divert water anymore ... We have been out of water since the end of July, early August."

Although Wathen said 2014 is one of the top five driest years on record, it's not the first time Lake Tahoe has fallen below the natural rim. Since the federal government began keeping records in 1900, the lake has dropped below the natural rim 20 times (not including this year), including during the drought of 1992 when the lake was at 6,220.26 feet, the lowest year on record. Just like the winter of 1995 ended a seven-year drought, Wathen hopes this winter will pull the area out of its current three-year drought cycle.

"If this were to continue, if we had another dry year, it would be much worse," he said. "This year at least we made it through July. If there is not a decent winter this year, we might not make it to June."

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority serves 94,000 customers in Reno and Sparks, and during peak times in the summer uses around 125 million gallons of water a day. With hardly any natural flow currently coming out of Lake Tahoe, and none from Boca, the TMWA is relying equally on its 31 groundwater wells and drought reserves in Donner Lake to meet demand. (The TMWA has owned water rights to Donner Lake since the 1940s and Independence Lake since 1937.) Since mid-August, the TMWA has been drawing 100 acre feet of water per day from Donner Lake, which is the main cause of the lake's drop of 1 foot per week over the past month and a half. According to Bill Hauck, TMWA senior hydrologist, this is the first time in 20 years that the water authority has had to make releases from its drought reservoirs.

"We haven't run it this hard in a long time," Hauck said of the TMWA's reserves. "We plan for a nine year drought, and this is only the third year, but it's been exceptionally dry ... This is the worst the community has seen in 20 years."

With 27,500 acre feet of upstream drought reserves, Hauck said that the TMWA is in fairly decent shape for next year. But its fate still depends on a body of water 60 miles away.

“Our water supply goes as Lake Tahoe goes,” he said. “The reason the reservoirs were built was to capture snow runoff and carry-over, but they finally ran out after three years.”

The reservoirs include Tahoe, Donner, Prosser Creek, Independence, Stampede, and Boca. Martis Creek Reservoir is for flood control, not water storage.

Despite the severity of the drought, the TMWA has not imposed any mandatory water restrictions. Instead, it requested that customers reduce outdoor water usage by 10 percent, which they did by 8 percent during the last two months of summer.

Reno/Sparks residents and businesses may not be feeling the pinch of the drought, but that doesn't mean farmers aren't. The Truckee River also feeds the Truckee Carson Irrigation District, which depends on both the Truckee and Carson River to serve its 2,500 water users, including about 55,000 acres of cropland in Fallon and Fernley. At the start of the water season in April, the TCID only had 45 percent of the 225,000 acre feet of water it needed to meet demand. By mid-summer, that water was gone.

“At the end of July, we shut all orders off,” said Rusty Jardine, TCID project manager. “We basically ran out of water midway through the water season.”

According to Jardine, most of the farmers foresaw the coming water shortage and adjusted their crops to less water-intensive ones, like grass and hay, while reducing thirstier crops like corn.

“It's not their first go-round,” Jardine said. “This was not the worst year. We had a 28 percent [water allocation] year in the 1980s.”

Like farmers, the animals that live in the Truckee River have been through drought before and are able to adjust. Lisa Wallace, the Truckee River Watershed Council executive director, cites the example of fish and reptiles that have adapted to lay eggs in mud rather than water. The eggs can last two to three years until the water returns.

“Drought in the Truckee River system is not devastating,” Wallace said. “There are many years when the Truckee River does run very low and the ecosystem is adapted to short drought cycles.”

David Lass, the California field director for Trout Unlimited, also stresses that drought is not a rare occurrence in the area and fish find ways to live through it.

“Lake Tahoe went below the natural rim much more often than it does now,” he said. “Fish find shelter in the lake and downstream in pools.”

Lake Tahoe is also not the only source that feeds the Truckee River. Natural springs, other lakes, and 63 streams flow into the river, making it unlikely that the river would dry up entirely. However, sections of the river where there are no tributaries, like the 4-mile stretch between Lake Tahoe and Alpine Meadows, could see extremely low flows.

“It is likely that certain reaches of the Truckee River or tributaries will run dry for periods, but there are many sources of water,” Wallace said. “There is still water in the lakes, and the springs are still running. They are still giving us water supply in the Truckee River.”

The big concern is not so much short-term drought (one to three years) but long-term drought (three to 10 years). According to Wallace, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is in the midst of a long-range climate model forecasting what the Truckee River will look like over the next century.

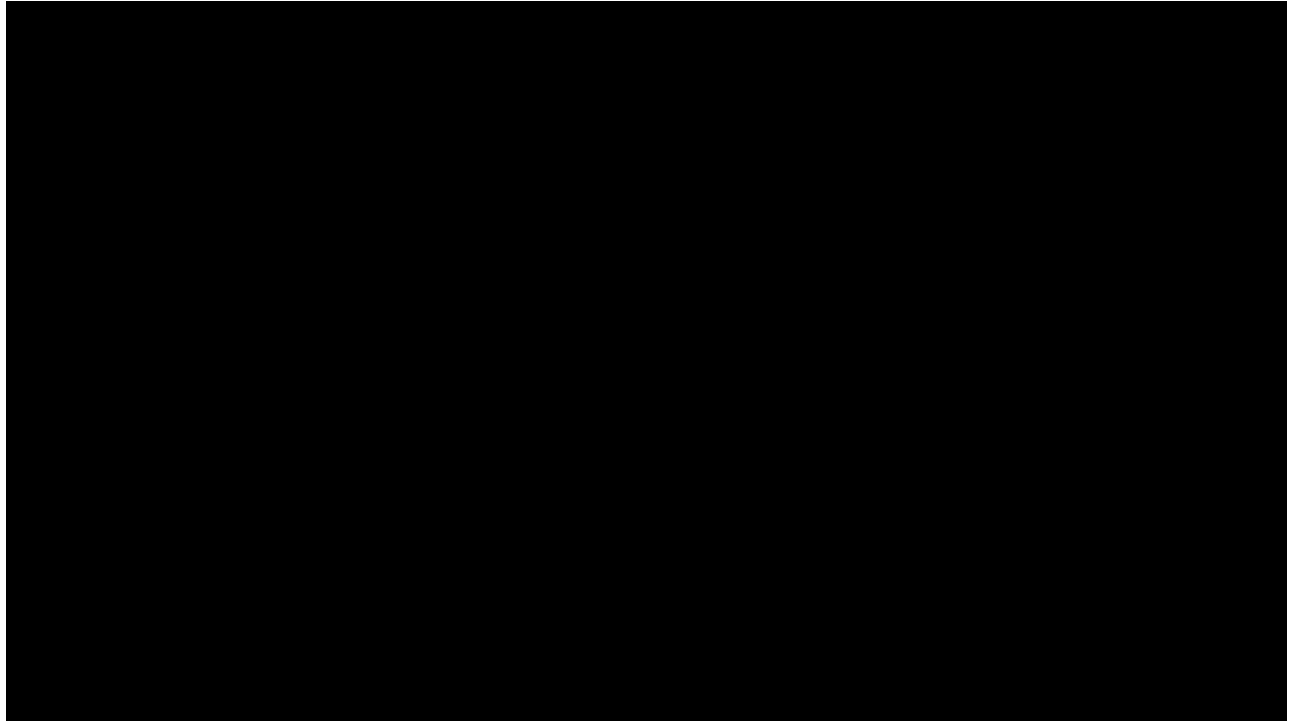
“Preliminary results show that it's very likely that we will see prolonged periods of drought,” she said. “I'm watchful, but not concerned.”

Lake Tahoe Reaches Natural Rim


Updated: Wed 8:20 AM, Oct 15, 2014

By: [Colin Lygren](#) - [Email](#)

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TAHOE CITY, CA - For the first time since 2009, Lake Tahoe will stop flowing into the Truckee River. Whenever it happens, it means we're in a dire water situation. Lake Tahoe Tuesday reached its natural rim, something that hasn't happened since 2009. From now, until we get a lot of rain, the Truckee River in Tahoe City will essentially stop flowing.

There is six feet of water [storage](#)  on top of the natural rim of Lake Tahoe. It is water that took us years to save up, but now it is all gone. Water from Lake Tahoe is still flowing into the Truckee River, but it's next to nothing. What is usually a thriving waterway is now just a creek.

"The river will be losing it's flow, become mostly standing pools and things of that nature," said Mark McLaughlin, a Tahoe weather historian.

The lake has reached its natural rim, which means it has dropped below a point where it can feed the river.



"We really rely on 12-15 big storms and if a few miss us, it's hard to catch up," said McLaughlin.

Those storms did miss us this year and they missed us for the last three years. Our drought is concerning, but nothing new. The conditions on Tahoe have been far worse.

"In the mid '70s we were at the rim and the late '20s the early '30s," said McLaughlin.

The most extreme case was in the early '90s, when a several-year drought let evaporation take the lake 3 feet below the natural rim. More recently, the lake dropped below the rim in 2009.

"As far as we're concerned from a water supply perspective, there is no impact for us," said Bill Hauck, hydrologist with TMWA.

The lake hitting the rim is not a big concern for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority. Essentially, Tahoe been providing next to nothing for months now. This latest change has little effect.

"Over the last month, the flows have been just declining gradually; it has not been a major contributor to Truckee River flows for quite some time," said Hauck.

The Truckee Meadows has been getting its water from TMWA's drought reserves; we've used about 17 percent. There is plenty left for later years, but we don't want to use it. Instead, there is growing hope the lake replenishes itself this winter.

Hitting the rim is having little to no effect in Reno, but it is triggering an obvious change in Tahoe City. We could see parts of the Truckee dry up in Tahoe City, but as always it could change as quickly as the weather

Water fight

Council candidates bring different approaches

By [Dennis Myers](#)
dennism@newsreview.com

This article was published on [10.16.14](#).

Elisa Cafferata and Naomi Duerr may clash in their race for Reno City Council, but they still have very similar interests—particularly water.

Duerr ran the Flood Project Coordinating Committee (now the Flood Management Authority) for six years, after serving as state water planner.

Cafferata was a management analyst for seven years at the Regional Planning Agency and director of Truckee Meadows Tomorrow, a private organization that focuses on quality of life.

"Water planning work, and really the local governments and the way they plan our communities, has a lot of impact on our quality of life," Cafferata said.

Cafferata also has a considerable history in community organizing. In 1994 Oregon activist Lon Mabon, who succeeded in passing an anti-gay initiative petition in his state, then tried the same thing in adjoining states, including Nevada. The climate of opinion was very different in that year than it is now—hostile to gays. Cafferata put together a campaign to block the Mabon effort, recruiting both Democrats and Republicans—including her grandmother, U.S. Rep. Barbara Vucanovich, and her mother, former GOP nominee for governor Patty Cafferata. Casinos concerned about a gay boycott of Nevada joined the effort. Mabon failed to get enough signatures to qualify for the ballot.

"I also grew up around a family that lived public service, and I saw the good work that my mother and my grandmother were able to do," she said. "The thing about local government is that it is where people live. It's the place where you can make the most difference."

As for water, "There are a couple of things I'm really interested in," she said. "Making sure that we plan for the best sustainable approach to water. And I work downtown at the Reno Collective—a technology workspace business—and tech jobs are what drive economic growth in cities. And it's not just technology jobs but all of the support industries and people that come with that."

She does, in fact, mention terms like *technology* and *innovation* at every opportunity. She also said one part of city government needs change.

"Redevelopment is going to have to be redesigned because the redevelopment agency doesn't have any funds to do new work," she said. "They just need to pay off the debts they've incurred. So we need a new approach to redevelopment."

She said quality of life is key to the city's success.

"I think my campaign theme is really about smart government, looking at the long term to make communities that people want to live in and raise their families in."

Consensus

The Reno News & Review reported in 2006, "Naomi Duerr is one of two local officials who carry the area's institutional knowledge of Truckee River flood control around in their heads" ("Flood money," Feb. 23, 2006). So Cafferata, in emphasizing water, is facing a heavyweight.

Cafferata's family heritage gave her a comfort level with politics. Duerr, though involved in public service, is less at home with the hail-fellow-well-met aspect of campaigning. For her, issues are everything. But she says her experience with the water agency gave her the kind of experience she will need to work with six other councilmembers. Here's why: On the flood agency board, a single "no" vote could stop any initiative. The board was made up of two Reno members, two Sparks members, and two Washoe County members, whose governments could not normally agree on lunch. All actions required unanimous votes, and "I was able to accomplish 500 unanimous votes," Duerr said.

In addition, because the flood agency had to set up all its actions and contracts through a local government—the county—she had to know how to work well with a competing entity, she said.

"I build consensus, and then I go get things done," she said.

While the race has been relatively polite, one clash that irritated Duerr was an attack over the flood agency. "If you have such a sharp pencil, how is it that the flood project budget grew to \$1.6 billion [when Duerr was director]?" Cafferata asked during a debate with Duerr.

While Cafferata's question attracted attention and won her points for debating skills, Duerr said no one



Naomi Duerr and Elisa Cafferata hustled for votes last month at a luncheon meeting of the Nevada Women's Lobby.

PHOTO/DENNIS MYERS

Advertisement

provided background on where the figures came from.

The Army Corps of Engineers regularly updates cost estimates on flood plans it participates in to keep figures current with inflation. In this case, Duerr said, the Corps re-costed essentially the same project three times in six years. Estimates went from \$350 million to \$800 million to \$1.6 billion. Duerr's role was informing the Coordinating Committee and the public of the changes.

"My opponent actually participated in developing that plan," she said. "She knows what happened. They [the Corps] re-costed everybody's plan in America, and everyone doubled."

When she handled a project on her own—restoring several areas of the river—she said she was able to bring it in at about \$20 million locally even though the Corps had estimated the project at \$90 million. "I was able to get the Reno Sparks Indian Colony and the state of Nevada to give land," she said. "And \$2.2 million came from Walmart," which was building a store in one of the affected areas.

The two candidates both argue in favor of the town/gown initiative currently being advocated by local powerbrokers to promote Reno as a "university town."

"The communities that are invested in education are doing better in the economic recovery," Cafferata said. "We need to invest in education and innovation—and not just in the university but in tech startups and local companies."

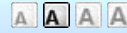
"I think we all could benefit from that," Duerr said. "The community could benefit. The students could benefit."

Ward 2 runs from West Plumb Lane on its north end to the area around the Mt. Rose/Virginia City intersection in the south, including a lot of industrial and shopping areas and relatively affluent residential neighborhoods that are fairly compact and thus easy to campaign in door-to-door.



Reported by: Joe Hart

Email: jhart@mynews4.com



Print Story

Published: 10/17 6:49 pm



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Updated: 10/17 6:54 pm



Recommend

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Question:

From the Ask Joe file, storm season is coming, and one of our viewers has a question about the upcoming winter months.

Ken in Sparks wrote in asking if DRI plans to cloud seed this winter in order to wring every possible drop of water out of the clouds?

Answer:

Ken, there is good news on this front. The cloud seeding operation does have the green light for this winter. Cloud seeding works by shooting silver iodide crystals into the sky during storms to create more snow.

Joe checked with Justin Broglio at DRI. He said they have five generators on the ground throughout the Tahoe area ready and waiting to be fired up. It has to be cold enough before they can cloud seed, but hopefully that will happen soon.

There is no state funding for the program. Instead, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the Western Regional Water Commission are funding the program, which costs \$300,000 a year to run.

Broglio said in a good year, cloud seeding can add about 10-percent to our seasonal snowpack. Two years ago, the program created an additional six billion gallons of water for our area. So it really adds up when the conditions are right.

Lingering drought drops Lake Tahoe to lowest level in 5 years; no flows to Truckee River

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

First Posted: October 17, 2014 - 7:22 pm

Last Updated: October 17, 2014 - 7:25 pm

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RENO, Nevada — Lingering drought has helped push Lake Tahoe's water level below its natural rim for the first time in five years, cutting off flows into the Truckee River, which has been reduced to a shallow stream as it meanders down the Sierra through Reno.

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority is confident it has more than enough reserves in a string of reservoirs downstream from Tahoe to meet water demand 30 miles away in the Reno-Sparks area into next summer.

But depending on winter conditions, agricultural users in the high desert east of Reno could face cutbacks on irrigation supplies for crops and livestock in the year to come.

"There's not a lot of water in the system," said John Erwin, the water authority's director of natural resources planning and management.

"It's typical this time of year you see water flows decline. But in a dry year like this, it's declining more than we like," he said Friday.

Chris Smallcomb, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Reno, said most of the Sierra has been struggling through below-normal precipitation since the "generous winter" of 2010-11. Since October 2011, Tahoe City, California, has received only 66 inches of precipitation compared with the normal 102 inches over three years, he said.

That's why federal water master Chad Blanchard predicted earlier this year that by fall, Tahoe would drop below its natural rim of 6,223 feet above sea level. It did this week — the first time since October 2009. On Friday, it was at 6,222.9 feet.

The lowest level on record was 6,220.2 feet on Nov. 30, 1992. It also dropped below rim level multiple times in the late 1920s, early 1930s and 1970s.

Relatively small changes in water level can have big impacts because Tahoe is so large.

With a depth of 1,654 feet — second in the U.S. only to Oregon's to Crater Lake — Tahoe has enough water to cover the entire state of California 14 inches deep. Normal evaporation alone drains 219 million gallons a day. That's 80 billion gallons a year — enough water to supply more than 500,000 households.

Truckee River outfitters who normally run their rafts in the rapids through October shut down at the end of July.

Last month, Truckee flows near the state line just west of Reno were their lowest in two decades for this time of year, running at

140 cubic feet per second compared with the normal 400 cfs. On Friday, the flows fell to 70 cfs as they entered Reno. ¹¹

"We're heading into our big snow months, so hopefully there will be a turnaround for our water supply," Erwin said. He said a century of snowpack data show it's "very unusual to see these dry periods go beyond two or three years."

"We are heading into that fourth year, so it could be a new record," Erwin said. "But we plan for the worst case."

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration expects above-average temperatures and precipitation in December through February across most of the West.

But warmer temperatures typically reduce the chance of big storms, said Zach Tolby, weather service meteorologist. As a result, the Sierra has an equal chance of above- or below-average precipitation, he said.

"I'm hoping for at least an average winter, if not more," Tolby said. "Average winters in the Sierra are great, and we haven't seen one in a while."

LAKE TAHOE WATER LEVEL LOWEST IN FIVE YEARS, INCREASES FARMERS PLIGHT

f26 8+0 74



by [ROBERT WILDE](#) | 19 Oct 2014 | 4 | [POST A COMMENT](#)



KTNV - Las Vegas, NV



Water levels at Lake Tahoe have dipped below its natural rim for the first time in five years as a result of the ongoing drought.

Local water authorities are now looking to alternative reservoirs to meet water demands in the Reno-Sparks area. According to [ABC 13 News](#), the diminished water levels are cutting off flows to the Truckee River, reducing it to a shallow stream as it makes its way down the Sierra through Reno.

Although the Truckee Meadows Water Authority contends that it has plenty of reserves in its other reservoirs, continued drought conditions this winter could spell rough times ahead for farmers in the high desert east of Reno. They may face irrigation curtailments as the drought lingers.

Record low levels were recorded in 1992 when Lake Tahoe fell nearly 3 feet below the rim. [Breitbart News](#) [reported](#) in July that ten of California's 12 major reservoirs are now less than 50% full, with some declining to levels as low as 20% of capacity.

No ruling on damages yet in pipe manufacturing suit

Robert Perea 9:02 p.m. PDT October 12, 2014

Logo. (Photo: Mason Valley News)

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Nearly a year after a ruling in U.S. District Court found a manufacturer sold defective water and sewer pipes to several municipalities in Nevada, the state is still waiting for a ruling on damages.

The verdict issued last November in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles came against JM Eagle, under its former name JM Manufacturing. It capped a seven-year legal case brought by Nevada, New Mexico, Virginia and 42 cities and water districts.

More than 600 miles of JM PVC pipe was installed for water and sewer systems across Nevada, but the precise amount installed in Northern Nevada is unknown. Most of the pipe was placed by developers and never tracked by municipalities. Among places the pipe was installed were Fernley, Reno, Sparks, Washoe County, Carson City, Douglas County, Fallon and Lyon County.

The Nevada AG's investigation uncovered 16 failures of JM pipe, including High Desert Prison in Southern Nevada and projects of the city of Reno, Las Vegas Valley Water District and Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

One of the municipalities that purchased pipe from JM Eagle was Fernley.

Fernley city attorney Brandi Jensen referred questions about the case to the office of Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto and said the city does not know how much of the defective pipe was used in Fernley.

Attorney general spokesperson Jennifer Lopez said there will be a second trial with a new jury to determine damages. She said the federal court is setting briefing schedules on various issues related to the details of phase II of the trial.

San Diego adopts mandatory water limits

Posted: Oct 21, 2014 9:43 AM PDT

Updated: Oct 21, 2014 9:43 AM PDT

SAN DIEGO (AP) - San Diego officials have instituted mandatory water restrictions amid California's historic drought.

The City Council voted unanimously Monday to shift from Stage 1 "drought watch" conditions to Stage 2 "drought alert" restrictions.

U-T San Diego reports (<http://bit.ly/1CQvitK>) the heightened measures are designed to reduce city water use by 20 percent and forestall deeper cuts in the future.

Under the new restrictions San Diegans must limit outdoor watering to three days a week, based on a schedule set by the city. Sprinklers will be limited to 10 minutes per day in warm months and just seven minutes per day in cool months.

Ornamental fountains will be shut off entirely, except for maintenance purposes.

Other restrictions limit car washing, construction-related water use and non-emergency access to fire hydrants.

Information from: U-T San Diego, <http://www.utsandiego.com>

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Letter: HOA policy encourages wasting needed water

9:03 p.m. PDT October 21, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file)

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I read how surprised Somerset owner, councilwoman and director of Truckee Meadows Water Authority Neoma Jardon was after discovering a leaking toilet in her home was the cause of an enormous amount of water being wasted.

One can only wonder how surprised she would be to learn that some 2,000 fellow members in her homeowners association are being forced to waste a colossal amount of water because they must choose grass (lot of water required) or fire-hazard juniper (less water required) for their curbside mow strips. Many would like to install only decorative rock with maybe a boulder or two instead (no water required). Yes, mandated mow strip trees would remain (on drip).

Three seats on the Somerset board are up for election. It is hoped the new directors will review the disastrous water-wasting policy and set a good example for all homeowners in Northern Nevada. Las Vegas Water District already has a program for homeowners to upgrade existing grass to water-smart landscaping and receive a rebate of up to \$1.50 per square foot of grass converted to xeriscape.

Ms. Jardon is in an unique position to inspire both her homeowners association and TMWA to have water-cutting policies and programs.

Joe Bower

Reno

Face the State: How Tesla Could Change Reno

Posted: Oct 24, 2014 4:46 PM PDT

Updated: Oct 24, 2014 4:46 PM PDT

By Arianna Bennett CONNECT

For Face the State this week, I spoke to the head of the Economic Development Authority of Western Nevada - and an expert in the construction industry - to hear about some big shifts in our economy and workforce. While they agree Tesla is going to be a huge step forward, it's not without some growing pains.

"The phone is ringing off the hook. We've got prospects visiting, people that kind of were waiting to see what would happen with Tesla are now calling, are now visiting, so it's been pretty exciting."

Mike Kazmierski is the head of EDAWN, the organization tasked with seeking out new business development in our area. His job wasn't so easy just a few years ago. Now, he says Northern Nevada is the belle of the ball.

"Now we are with the big boys. We are competing against the Phoenixes and Salt Lake City, other very large communities, and winning most of those projects."

And we largely have Tesla to thank-- the electric car maker bringing its massive battery factory here gave a major stamp of approval to our area. But all this growth doesn't come without complications.

"We absolutely will see growing pains."

To start: we'll need a massive construction effort to get all these projects off the ground.

And after the recession gutted the construction industry workers moved out of town or moved on to other jobs.

"Everyone is scrambling to secure their resources before other people come in to try to start recruiting for that large project," says Cary Richardson, Miles Construction Vice President.

The competition for workers will drive up wages - good news for employees, but potentially painful for businesses.

And a growing population will also mean more traffic, more demand for public services, housing, schools and water.

It's going to be a challenge but Kazmierski says it's definitely better than the alternative.

"Most people don't realize what a great place the Reno/Sparks area is and now they're starting to realize, so hang onto your hats. Great things are happening," says Kazmierski.

If you'd like to see the full episode, tune in or set your DVR for Face the State this weekend. It's airing tomorrow at 4:30 am and 4:30 pm and on Sunday at 2:30 and 6:30 am and 4:30 pm.



ADVERTISEMENT

Truckee Meadows Residents are Getting Their Homes Ready for Winter

Posted: Oct 24, 2014 6:31 PM PDT

Updated: Oct 24, 2014 6:31 PM PDT

By Chloe Beardsley

The time to start turning off your irrigation varies every year depending on the summer. But when nighttime temperatures start dropping consistently under 35 degrees, that's when you'll want to consider turning your irrigation off.

Crews with Signature Landscapes started turning off irrigation for sprinklers around town Wednesday. Over the next three weeks they plan to shut off sprinklers for more than 900 homes and 450 commercial structures. "Your irrigation system goes all throughout your property. So by not paying attention to the weather and allowing those pipes to break. You're possibly going to incur some pretty expensive fees to get that back up and running again this spring," Steven Fine.

How much money are we talking? "It can reach into the thousands of dollars," Andy Debhardt of TMWA.

Draining your pipes, turning off your back flow device and detaching the hoses is something you can also do yourself. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority has classes to teach you how. "We do provide winterization workshops. They've been extremely popular. We used to only have 2, now we have 3," said Gebhardt. "It's not hard but we have a lot of people who move in from different areas. Maybe they're not familiar with pipes freezing."

Experts today told us it's not only important to get the water turned off... But store away or secure some of the parts. Over the past 4 years there's been a rise in back flow thefts for scrap metal.

"From a commercial side.. You also want to make sure when you turn off your water. Ask your landscaper to actually remove the back flow and just store it for the year and you'll save minimum \$2,000 a pop," said Fine.

For information on Truckee Meadows Water Authority meetings click here:
<http://tmwa.com/conservation/winterize>

To contact Signature Landscapes, go here: <http://www.signaturelandscapes.net/grow/>

State to release per-capita water use numbers

*Posted: Nov 04, 2014 12:25 AM PST
Updated: Nov 04, 2014 12:25 AM PST*

By FENIT NIRAPPIL
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) - State officials will release data showing how much water Californians are using as they face calls to conserve in the third year of a drought.

The State Water Resources Control Board is requiring agencies to report per-person residential water use numbers for the first time. The per-capita data will be released at the board's Tuesday meeting.

Cities and water agencies have already been reporting total monthly water use compared to 2013. It's easier for cities that have lacked meters and guzzled water to show conservation gains using that measure.

Per-capita data shows which communities have more and less room to conserve. Board officials say water use ranges widely from 50 to 500 gallons per-person, per-day.

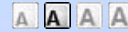
The board may impose additional restrictions if Californians don't cut back on their water use.

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Ask Joe: Why is county pumping water into empty field?

Video

[Ask Joe: Why is county pumping water into empty field?](#)



Reported by: Joe Hart
Email: jhart@mynews4.com

[Print Story](#) Published: 11/06 5:50 pm
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Question:

From the Ask Joe file, we are all being encouraged to conserve water these days, so a viewer was surprised by something she noticed really.

Donna in Lemmon Valley wrote in to say she saw a Washoe County well pump on Lemmon Drive pumping thousands of gallons of water into a dry lake bed. Her question is if we are in a drought, why is the county pumping all that water out into a field?

Answer:

Donna even sent in a video which shows quite a bit of water shooting out. According to David Solaro with Washoe County Community Services, the water is being pumped into the north end of Swan Lake along Lemmon Valley Boulevard. The water was being flushed out of a newly-constructed water system pipeline.

With the upcoming consolidation of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and the Washoe County Water Utility, they had to build an inter-tie to connect the two systems. That inter-tie is what they have been flushing out in Lemmon Valley. Now that they have it flushed out, the inter-tie is on line and in use.

So it is just part of the process, much like when you have a sprinkler system you are working on and you have to flush out the dirt. It is definitely an unusual site though, and we appreciate our viewer bringing to our attention so we could look into it.

Remember if you have questions you would like to ask, send Joe an email at jhart@mynews4.com, and just put "Ask Joe" in the subject line. He will do his best to track down the answers for you.

Mayor Geno Martini talks about the future of Sparks

Updated: Thursday, November 6 2014, 12:31 AM PST

Like



Like

SPARKS, Nev. -- Mayor Geno Martini will be leading the City of Sparks for four more years. Martini will begin his third full term next week after bringing in more than 78-percent of the vote in the General Election.

"It's not just about me," Martini said. "It's about a whole group and a whole team that does a wonderful job every day for this city, and I think the citizens of Sparks realize that."

Martini said he is looking forward to four more years in the mayor's office. "There's some tough times. There's some tough things to deal with, but there's a lot of good things too. You take care of things for people and

they call you and email you and thank you, and those are the things that you remember."

Now that the election is over, it is back to business as usual, and Martini said there is a lot to be excited about. "We've got some interest now in downtown Sparks. We've got a gentleman that's looking maybe to put some multi-family homes down there, maybe a little bit of commercial and that kind of thing, restaurants and stores."

Sparks has to get ready for growth, because like the city motto says: 'It's happening here.' So many of Martini's priorities involve infrastructure.

"We're looking forward to getting the Southeast Connector finished," Martini said. "That's critical for us

moving people to the south of Reno. The widening of the Pyramid-McCarran intersection there is critical. [The] flood project is another one that's a very critical project and we need to keep rolling on that."

Martini said Tesla's move to northern Nevada will also have a big impact and local leaders need to work together. "I'm hoping all the new people in Reno and on the county [commission] and us here can get together and do this thing right and work regionally. We've got to remember if something's good for Reno it's good for Sparks too and vice versa. We're all in it together, you know, and we all need to share in things."

Mayor Martini said Sparks officials will meet with Reno and Washoe County leaders on December 8 to talk about Tesla, specifically water and sewer capacity for the thousands of potential new residents.

RENO, Nev. (MyNews4.com & KRNV) -- At its peak every summer, 100 million gallons of water are treated and filtered through Washoe County every day.

The water looks normal, but a chemical flowing down south is absent.

Dr. Erin Anderson of Brosy Family Dentistry says in the past five years, cavities in the US are going down as fluoridated water goes up. "Having our fluoride in our water system is all about prevention. "It's getting to areas with no access to dental care, not access to really a tooth brush or getting your teeth cleaned."

Across state water systems, the chemical is only in Clark County. Anderson said in rural Nevada, between a lack of dentists and a lack of the water additive, children may not get enough to sustain healthy teeth.

Inside Brosy Family Dentistry, most children receive a fluoride treatment with each appointment. "Your teeth naturally get holes in them as they are developing and fluoride just provides an extra mineral."

Dr. Michael Gerber of the Gerber Medical Clinic in Reno has fought fluoride use among dentists and families for almost 35 years. "Fluoride is toxic. It's a neurological toxin, it's a gut toxin."

He said you can argue fluoride breaks down bacteria, but poses a larger health risk than alternative medicines. Also, the chemical can cause pre-term births and lower IQ's in children along with dental fluorosis which causes brown spots on your teeth.

Anderson agrees there is such thing as too much of the product. "You'll see it, it's staining on the front of their teeth. There are products that have too much fluoride that naturally have too much fluoride in their systems."

But she said the benefits of fluoride outweigh what she calls the minimal dangers.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority Manager of Operations Paul Miller said it will cost \$4-6 million to install a fluoridation system. It would also increase user bills by up to \$1.50 per month.

Voters rejected plans to fluoridate the Washoe County Water supply in 2002. It was also struck down by lawmakers in 2009. "We're already getting too much, you can't avoid it in the food supply," said Gerber. "Adding additional is not a rational thing to do to the rest of the body."



DROUGHT: RGJ stories lead to surge in 'water audits'



2



Jeff DeLong, RGJ 12:45 p.m. PST November 6, 2014



(Photo: RGJ file)

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Use of a program to identify water-wasting problems at homes across the Truckee Meadows increased by more than 50 percent following several Reno Gazette-Journal articles published in late summer examining water issues during a third summer of drought, officials from the area's primary water

provider report.

Between the publication date of Sept. 28 and Oct. 30, there were 195 requests made to the Truckee Meadows Water Authority to conduct so-called "water audits" in homes across the utility's service area, up from 129 over the same period in 2013 for an increase of 51.1 percent.

"We had a lot more people call for an audit than normal," said Andy Gebhardt, manager of customer services for the water authority. "They responded tremendously. Obviously, this kind of heightened awareness with people about high water bills."



RGJ
Leaky toilet puts Reno Councilwoman on list of biggest water users



RGJ
Water authority board may force flat rate users to meters

As part of the "Cusp of a Crisis" package examining drought-related water supply challenges in Reno-Sparks, the RGJ profiled Reno City Councilwoman Neoma Jardon, who requested a water audit after learning she was on the list of the top 100 metered residential water users served by the utility. Jardon's water use status was revealed through a public records request filed with the water authority by the RGJ.

During 2013, some 885,000 gallons of water was used at the Jardon residence in Somerset, earning it the place of No. 91 on the list of top 100 water users.

Surprised at the amount of water used at her home, Jardon asked the utility to conduct a water audit. The process, conducted free of charge, involves a thorough examination of a home's water system to determine if there are leaks wasting water.

The Jardon audit revealed the presence of a leaky faucet and a couple of breaks in the outdoor irrigation system. But the biggest culprit was determined to be a toilet that was silently leaking some 5 gallons of water every 10 minutes.

The first-term councilwoman, initially upset over the RGJ's expected disclosure of her

water use, later agreed to an interview in hope more water audits might be pursued by residents who learned of her story.

With that now appearing to be the case, Jardon said she is encouraged by the public's response.

"I was very pleasantly surprised," Jardon said. "It's important we all understand the severity of this drought situation we're in and could be in for years. We all need to do our part to conserve our water for our future and our quality of life."

Now is the time of year when water audits can be particularly effective, utility officials said. That's because as the winter season arrives and folks turn off their sprinkler systems, any existing leaks – be they outdoors or indoors – become particularly easy to recognize. Between 20 and 25 percent of audits typically reveal some kind of problem and that has been the case with the recent run of audits, Gebhardt said.

A typical family of four uses about 6,000 gallons of water per month indoors and wintertime water bills should be about \$30. If significantly more water is being used or if bills are much higher, there's a good chance a leak may exist that a water audit could identify.

An audit, Jardon said, can easily pinpoint a problem folks had no idea existed. Her leaky toilet is a case in point.

"The sad thing was it was a toilet that silently leaked and appeared to be leaking for a long time," Jardon said. "It's as easy as picking up the phone and calling TMWA and requesting a free audit."

Want a water audit?

Call the Truckee Meadows Water Authority's conservation hotline at 775-834-8005

We were asked to cut 10% of our water use — we didn't

Jeff DeLong, RGJ 1:09 p.m. PST November 6, 2014



(Photo: Marilyn Newton/RGJ file)

the region withered through a third year of drought.

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Water customers across the Truckee Meadows fell short of a requested reduction in water use last summer but still cut back enough to ensure the Reno-Sparks area will be well positioned in the event the coming winter is another dry one.

That's the conclusion by officials of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, who in July asked owners of 93,000 homes and businesses to reduce outdoor water consumption by 10 percent as the



The actual reduction achieved, utility officials said, amounted to only 7.5 percent as hot temperatures extended from late August through most of September. The resulting uptick in water use had the area fall short of reaching the 10 percent goal.

Water saved through a 7.5 percent reduction still amounted to 1,061 acre-feet, or

some 350 million gallons. That's enough water to serve about 2,800 homes for a year.



RGJ

DROUGHT: RGJ stories lead to surge in 'water audits'

The savings was sufficient for the water authority to achieve its two fundamental goals for the drought-impacted summer.

- One was to avoid having to use its largest drought reserve reservoir, the Sierra's Independence Lake, at all.
- The other was to limit the amount of drought reserves tapped to no more than 20 percent of the 27,500 acre-feet of storage available overall. Ultimately, about 18 percent was used, an amount small enough to ensure snow and rain will completely replenish drought reserves during the coming winter even if it does turn out to be another under-performer for precipitation, utility officials said.

"Our main goal was to preserve that as much as we could," said Mark Foree, general manager of the water authority. "We were able to accomplish that."

"I do really feel our customers responded well. It really did make a difference," Foree said.



Had the 10 percent reduction request not been made, officials said, hot temperatures late in the summer would have likely resulted in an increase in the amount of water used instead of a 7.5 percent reduction.

"Given as warm as it was we could have had 5 to 8 percent more but we had a 7.5 percent decrease," said Andy Gebhardt, the utility's manager of customer services. "A lot of it is just drought awareness. People heard about it and responded positively."

As temperatures cool and people stop outdoor irrigation, water demand is falling fast. 11-19-14 BOARD Agenda Item 13.E
It's now about 60 million gallons per day compared to a July 3 high of nearly 120 million gallons.

As the winter progresses, utility officials will keep a close eye on the snowpack to determine what further steps may be necessary should the drought continue.

"It will snow. We just don't know when and how much," Foree said. "We don't know at this point whether we will need to use drought reserves next summer, whether we will need to use them earlier or later or not at all."

By the numbers

10: Percentage of water use reduction requested.

7.5: Percentage of reduction actually achieved.

350 million: Gallons of water saved.

2,800: Homes that could use water saved over a year.

Source: Truckee Meadows Water Authority

TMWA Happy With Water Savings During Drought

Posted: Nov 07, 2014 4:12 PM PST
Updated: Nov 07, 2014 4:12 PM PST

By Arianna Bennett CONNECT

In this ongoing drought, hydrologists are taking stock of how much water the community saved during the voluntary cutbacks this summer.

TMWA was going for 10% savings during August and September and they didn't quite get there.

Residents ended up cutting back about 7.5%, but experts say, they're still pretty happy with that.

"That 7.5% equates to about 1,060 acre-feet of water, or 350 million gallons, and 350 million gallons is about enough water to serve 2,800 homes for a year," says Bill Hauck, TMWA Senior Hydrologist.

Hauck says September this year was hotter than the year before so any savings are a win.

And now with the weather cooling off as we head into winter, water usage in the Truckee Meadows will drop off.

The goal for the summer was to keep the use of our drought reserves under 20% and they actually ended up at 18%.

They say that puts us in a good spot regardless of what Mother Nature sends our way. "That 20% or about 5,500 acre-feet is the amount of water we know is going to be replenished this spring from the snowpack runoff into the reservoirs next year."

That means that even if we have another dry winter, we'll still go into next summer with full drought reserves



ADVERTISEMENT

-----Original Message-----

From: Gebhardt, Andy

Sent: Monday, October 20, 2014 10:08 AM

To: Folsom, Sonia

Cc: Mazeris, Kim; Foree, Mark; Olsen, Marlene; Charpentier, Robert

Subject: FW: [Comment To Commissioner #3237] Comments for the Washoe County Commission

Hello Sonia-

Please read the e-mail submission below. This customer wants his concern passed on to the TMWA Board of Directors. We have been dealing with this customer for some time now, and he is not satisfied with anything that we have done for him. A brief history of our dealings with him is below.

On 9/10/2014, we created an order to have the meter read checked because the usage was high.

On 9/11/2014, we re-read the meter and everything was in order. We left a note on the customers' door, stating that we were there and there wasn't anything wrong with our equipment. We indicated that he should check his system for problems, and to contact us if he needed assistance.

On 9/11/2014, customer called us to please come out and help him with the high usage. His bill was \$341.89, and his previous bill was \$94.48.

On 9/12/2014, we went to customers' property to see if we could help him figure out where the water went. We tested his meter for accuracy, and it showed accurate. Customer explained that he had a couple of issues with his irrigation system, but he fixed them. He also indicated that the issues were too small to explain the high usage. At the end of the day, there was not much we could do for him as he believed that the water didn't go through the system.

On 9/17/2014, customer called about his account. We offered a leak adjustment of \$114.75 to his account, as the high usage was an obvious anomaly due to some sort of leak. He was mad at that offer because he really feels that he didn't use the water.

On 9/19/2014, customer called back to discuss the situation. After spending quite some time on the phone with the customer, our rep indicated that they would have me call him back to discuss it further.

On 9/19/2014, I called customer. I explained how meters work, and my thoughts on where the usage went. Customer was fairly adamant that he didn't use the water. I explained that the meters are factory calibrated and accurate. I also offered to have the meter sent to an independent lab for testing. He wasn't sure that was needed. I offered him dispute resolution, and he said he'd think about it. He still didn't think he used the water. We ended the call with him indicating he would think about his next steps.

On 10/1/2014, customer called asking for a meeting with a Manager, as he still thinks we are overcharging him and he didn't use the water.

On 10/2/2014, I called customer back, and he indicated that he wasn't happy with the adjustment because he didn't use the water. He didn't care what we believed, and he wanted to pursue it. I told

him his option at this time was to go through Dispute Resolution, and I directed him to our website, where I told him where to find that process in our rules. I also indicated that I would have his meter pulled for testing and send it off to the lab. In addition, I removed his adjustment. When he questioned why I would remove his adjustment, I explained that he has just adamantly denied using the water, and insists that there is something wrong with the meter. If that is the case, then it really doesn't make any sense to give him an adjustment based on a meter read that he feels is wrong.

On 10/20/2014, I called customer to ask if he wanted his concerns that he sent to the Washoe County Commissioners sent to the TMWA Board of Directors as well. He said that he did because he needs someone to believe him when he says he didn't use the water. I said that I would pass along his concerns.

At this point, we have not received the results back from the meter test. I will pass along that information when it is available.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks!

Andy Gebhardt
Manager Customer Services
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
1355 Capital Blvd. | Reno, NV 89502
O: (775) 834-8007, M: (775) 230-3699
agebhardt@tmwa.com | www.tmwa.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Mazeres, Kim
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2014 8:53 AM
To: Gebhardt, Andy
Cc: Olsen, Marlene; Charpentier, Robert
Subject: FW: [Comment To Commissioner #3237] Comments for the Washoe County Commission

Andy --

See below, and let us know if you want to respond or if you want to have Marlene respond.

Thanks,

Kim

-----Original Message-----

From: Tavener, Andrea via RT [mailto:commissioner@crm.washoecounty.us]
Sent: Monday, October 20, 2014 8:50 AM
Cc: tmwaboard

Subject: [Comment To Commissioner #3237] Comments for the Washoe County Commission

Thank you for emailing Washoe County. Your email has been forwarded however, to the TMWA Board of Directors. Additionally below is a link for your reference to the contact page for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

<http://tmwa.com/contact>

On Wed Oct 15 13:52:32 2014, rtrcm wrote:

- > Hello, My name is Kerry W. Shacklett. I live at 12585 Overbrook DR,
- > Reno, Nv. Home: 775 853 8848, Cell: 775 750 4155
- >
- > This is my second attempt to discuss a matter of the Truckee Meadows
- > Water Authority claiming that my water usage nearly quadrupled for one
- > month at my residence and then went back to normal. I got no response
- > to my first attempt. I\'m not sure my email went through to the
- > county.
- >
- > After closely examining my property inside and out, and under the
- > house, I found absolutely no evidence, nor do I have the slightest
- > suspicion of anything that would account for that extra water usage. I
- > teach music in my home, and I was home every day of the billing
- > period. My roommate also has stated that he has no suspicion of any
- > kind of extra water usage.
- >
- > On three occasions, my half inch water line to the back of my property
- > broke and flooded my backyard. The difference on my bill those months
- > was a small fraction of the extra water usage shown on the bill in
- > question.
- >
- > Was it a coincidence that my next door neighbor, whose water meter is
- > in the same box as mine, had a broken main water line in the same
- > billing period?
- >
- > The TMWA gave me a leak adjustment on my bill, but since I\'m 99.9%
- > sure that the extra water never came past my meter, I am not satisfied
- > with an adjustment. I want to get to the bottom of this.
- > Because of this, TMWA has punished me by cancelling the adjustment.
- > They stated their intention to have my water meter removed and tested.
- > I\'m all but certain that they will claim that there is nothing wrong
- > with the meter and not investigate further. BUT THERE IS SOMETHING
- > WRONG WITH THEIR WATER METERING SYSTEM.
- >
- > If I am correct, this is not the first time this has happened, nor
- > will it be the last. Without a government authority getting involved,
- > it\'s a near certainty this situation will not be adequately
- > addressed, as individual victims will have neither the power nor

> incentive to pursue a resolution in court.
>
> I vigorously recommend and ask that the county investigate my claim.
>
> Sincerely,
>
> Kerry W. Shacklett

Ticket Details:

Ticket Number: 3237
Request Type: Comments for the Washoe County Commission
Email Address: kshacklett@hotmail.com

District1: checked
District2: checked
District3: checked
District4: checked
District5: checked
Full Name: Kerry Shacklett
Phone Number: 7757504155
Address: 12585 Overbrook DR
County Department:

Thank you,

Washoe County