



STAFF REPORT

TO: Chairman and Board Members
THRU: Mark Foree, General Manager
FROM: John Enloe, TMWA Operational Strategies Manager and River Fund Facilitator
Janet Phillips, Chairperson, Truckee River Fund Advisory Committee
Sylvia Harrison, Legal Counsel
DATE: January 8, 2016
SUBJECT: **Presentation of Truckee River Fund Activities for Calendar Year 2015**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the TMWA Board of Directors a summary of Truckee River Fund program (TRF) activities from its 2005 inception, including a detailed summary of 2015 activities. This report will also be helpful to new Board members in getting familiar with the purpose and workings of the Truckee River Fund.

TMWA and the Board should be proud of this program and the outstanding contributions the Fund has made for the community, region, and the Truckee River watershed. Over the years, the Truckee River Fund Advisory Committee has developed a prudent and rigorous approach to the evaluation of proposals, to ensure that those recommended for approval by the TMWA Board have tangible and measurable outcomes and meet the objectives of the Fund. Through the able assistance of the Community Foundation of Western Nevada, all project proponents are required to account for funds dispersed and to provide reports on project status and completion.

Program Background

As the Board may recall, the Fund was conceived and established in 2005 with the intent of supporting water quality and watershed protection projects that TMWA could not pursue on its own. Since inception, the program has evolved into an important component of TMWA's overall water quality protection program, funding projects which have directly or indirectly improved water quality or the watershed of the Truckee River.

Financially, the TRF provides significant financial leverage for source water protection projects that TMWA could not ordinarily implement or afford. To date, the Fund has collaborated with other non-profit groups and governmental agencies to support 126 projects, with a \$10.8 million contribution from the Fund (via TMWA) being matched by \$18.8 million from its TRF partners.

The TRF, and thus TMWA, has also stepped to the forefront by proactively supporting fire restoration projects in the local Truckee River watershed, these being the Hawken Fire (2007), the Caughlin Fire (December 2011), and the Washoe Drive Fire (February 2012). In each instance the TRF provided immediate support and helped expedite recovery and restoration efforts, important in mitigating environmental damage and reducing erosion and sediment loading to the Truckee River. On a macro basis, the Fund has supported important water quality and watershed improvement projects in the following areas of concern:

- **Invasive Species:** The introduction and proliferation of invasive species, both land-based (terrestrial) and aquatic, is a major concern for TMWA. As such, TMWA has supported projects to mitigate terrestrial and aquatic invasive plants and has funded the development and implementation of watercraft inspection programs at Lake Tahoe and nearby reservoirs to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species, including the quagga and zebra mussel into the waters of Lake Tahoe and nearby reservoirs.
- **Urbanization of the Local Watershed:** Development in the foothill areas has led to degradation of local tributaries to the Truckee River via irrigation run-off and storm water discharges. Local tributaries upstream of TMWA's primary water treatment plants have been adversely impacted causing increased sediment, total dissolved solids (TDS) and turbidity loading. Because of this concern, the Fund has supported projects and programs that have helped to mitigate these problems.
- **Wildfires and Forest Thinning:** As discussed above, recent wildfires have taken their toll on the Truckee River watershed, thereby increasing the likelihood of additional sediment and turbidity loading to the river. In response to the fires and watershed damage, TMWA has provided grants towards recovery and rehabilitation efforts. TMWA, through the Fund, has supported forest thinning efforts designed to reduce potential of forest fires that, as a result of sediment run-off, impact pristine water storage resources.
- **Erosion due to Past Logging Operations:** Some areas of the bi-state Truckee River watershed have been impacted by past logging practices that neglected reforestation and erosion control. As a result, some of these areas have experienced incising of tributary creeks which have impacted the River with increased sediment, suspended solids, and TDS loading. TMWA, through the Fund, has supported projects designed and constructed to restore the watershed forest to its natural state.
- **Impaired Sections of the Truckee River and its Tributaries:** In conformance with the requirements of the Clean Water Act, both the State of Nevada and State of California have developed water quality standards for the River taking into account an analysis of beneficial uses. As an outgrowth of these standards, both States have identified impaired sections of the River through establishment of 303d lists. TMWA, again through the Fund, has supported improvement projects targeting impaired sections of the River.

2015 Grants

In 2015 the Fund, with Board approval, provided grants to nine projects or programs. A few of these notable projects worth highlighting are listed below:

- A grant of \$90,000 to the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful (in Partnership with Nevada Land Trust) for the purpose of developing sustainable mechanisms in order to maintain a clean, safe, aesthetic river environment as well the protection of water quality for the community drinking water supply. The grant was matched with \$22,000 of cash and \$1,500 of in-kind services.
- A grant of \$104,235 to the City of Reno and its Truckee River Cleanup Crew for its focus on the removal of trash and debris from the banks of the Truckee River within Reno's city limits. Work activities include focusing on public property along the Truckee River Path, including City, County and State property. The grant was matched with \$38,094 of in-kind services.
- A grant of \$28,484 to the Sierra Nevada Journeys organization for the Watershed Education Initiative (WEI) for their continued enhancement of watershed protection curriculum which has been implemented in Washoe County schools. The grants were matched with \$6,250 of cash and \$7,200 of in-kind services.
- A grant of \$ 25,000 to the Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC) to continue restoration actions and project concepts to address erosion issues and improve riparian and instream habitat based on the assessment conducted in 2014. TRWC will continue on Fact-Checking Assessment, Design, Permitting and Pre-Project Monitoring activities. The grant was matched with \$79,000 in cash and \$6,000 of in-kind services.
- A grant of \$100,000 to City of Reno for a new primary outlet structure for Virginia Lake to improve circulation in the lake thereby improving water quality. The grant was matched with \$150,000 of cash and \$47,420 of in-kind services.

Other Activities

In 2015 TMWA staff continued to pursue and implement initiatives to protect the Truckee River. TMWA continues to be a member of the *Adopt the Truckee River Program*, spearheaded by the Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful organization. The program requires participating organizations to adopt a section of river and conduct periodic clean-ups. TMWA selected two sections of river upstream of the Glendale Water Treatment Plant and have conducted 4 cleanups thus far. These events are extremely successful from a teamwork standpoint and also provide TMWA employees a better understanding of the challenges of maintaining a clean river corridor through an urban area.

Additionally, the *One Truckee River Initiative*, made possible by the grants awarded by the TRF to Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful and City of Reno's Truckee River Cleanup Crew. Part of the grant funding was to ensure continued collaboration between key stakeholder groups to guarantee consistency in the implementation, monitoring and accountability of improving and maintaining water quality along the Truckee River,

TRF advisors and TMWA staff are also updating the *TRF Guidance Document*. This document is used by TRF Advisors, TMWA staff and Board members when evaluating and approving TRF grant requests. The updated TRF Guidance Document will be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

Quick 2015 Summary

- Since Fund inception, 126 Projects Approved by TMWA Board for Funding (By Resolution) -- Total Resolution Amount to Date: \$10.8 million
- Total Match from Grantees: \$18.8 million
- Project Status and Tracking: *See attached TRF Project Spreadsheet*
- Public Outreach: Anchor Member of the "Adopt the River" program and TMWA employees conducted a river clean-up in November
- *TRF Request for Proposal Criteria: See attached*