



TMWA Board Meeting

Wednesday, September 21, 2016

Press Clippings

August 10, 2016 – September 14, 2016



Why Local Utility Bills Are Sent Out of State

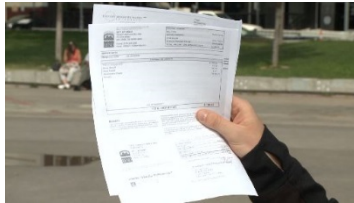
Posted: Aug 23, 2016 12:34 PM PDT <em class="wnDate">Tuesday, August 23, 2016 3:34 PM EDT Updated: Aug 23, 2016 12:40 PM PDT <em class="wnDate">Tuesday, August 23, 2016 3:40 PM EDT

By Ky Sisson

[Email](#)

[Connect](#)

ksisson@ktvn.com



Many Reno residents are getting their quarterly sewer bills in the mail and a Channel 2 viewer noticed something interesting when they went to mail it. They asked we look into why the payment is sent hundreds of miles away to San Jose, California.

"Last time we looked we saved about \$200,000 a year by using a lock box operation," said Robert Chisel, Finance Director for the City of Reno.

The City of Reno says the cost of having to hire personnel and buy the necessary equipment for payment processing would be passed on to customers. TMWA agrees and also outsources their payment processing and has done so since 2002. Their payments are sent to Prescott, Arizona. They estimate their savings to be \$350,000 a year and that the savings helps keep rates lower and ensure efficiency.

"We have high customer satisfaction stats and a lot of that is due to our billing," said Andy Gebhardt, Director of Customer Relations for TMWA.

If keeping the payment processing in-house is the more expensive option, using a local payment processing center isn't even possible.

"Unfortunately there are no lock box operations in the state of Nevada," said Chisel.

According to the Nevada Department of Employment, there are no payment processing companies in the entire state to compete with those out of state.

Does this outsourcing of jobs have any negative effect on the economy?

"Well, it would have been five years ago, but this is a lower paying job. We are more focused on the higher paying jobs," said Mike Kazmierski, President of EDAWN.

Kazmierski adds that outsourcing these types of jobs have little impact because of Nevada's booming tech industry.

"It's not like were outsourcing the technology department for Reno."

Customers can still drop off payments at their respective buildings, but the majority of customers for TMWA, and the city use online payments, which is what they recommend customers do.

[Pecan Marketing Order Increases Interest](#) »

Multi-Party Water Exchange Will Benefit Donner Lake

Published August 10, 2016

Donner Lake Will Benefit from First Multi-Party Water Exchange under Truckee River Operating Agreement



The Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) implemented in December 2015 provides new mechanisms for federal, states (California and Nevada), tribal and local agencies to address unique and challenging water management issues. This week, parties to TROA exhibited flexibility and cooperation by agreeing to a series of water exchange transactions, allowed under TROA, to maintain higher water levels at Donner Lake through August.

The upper 12 feet of Donner Lake is reservoir storage that is wholly owned and operated by the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA). TMWA is obligated by a 1943 Indenture Agreement to operate the reservoir within a specified range during the months of June, July and August. However, the minimum elevation permitted during that period often results in undesirable impacts to recreational opportunities and aesthetics at the lake during the peak vacation period leading up to Labor Day.

Due to quickly diminishing runoff in the Truckee River Basin watershed this summer, local reservoirs, including Donner Lake, are being drawn down faster than normal. As a result, TMWA's drought management and operations plan required releases from Donner Lake to be increased beginning in late July. These releases would have resulted in lowering the level of Donner Lake during the popular summer season to the minimum allowed by the Indenture Agreement.

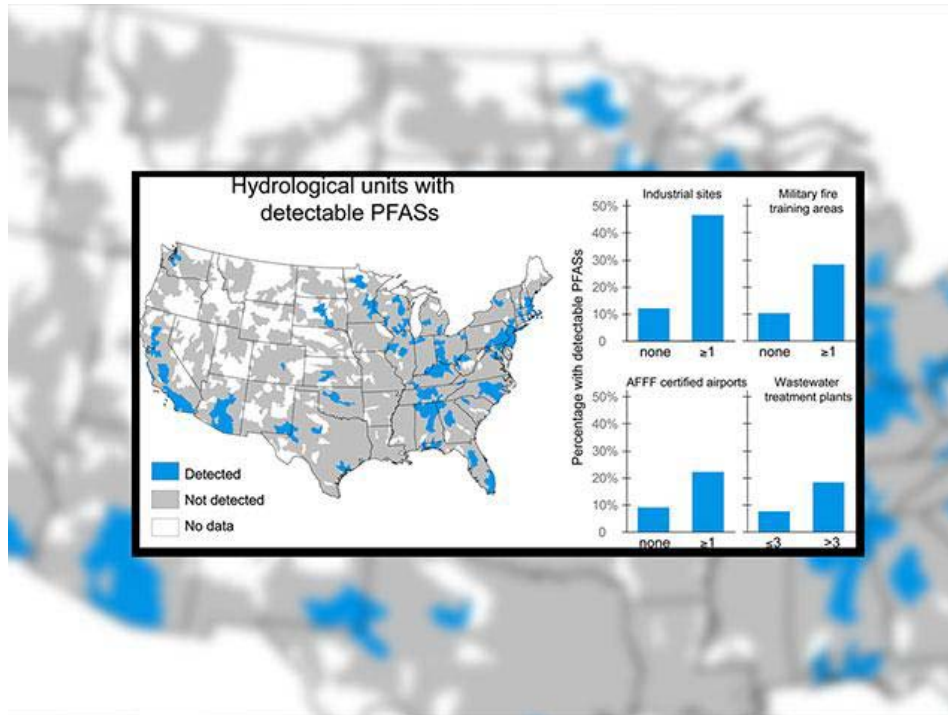
To maintain Donner Lake levels as high as feasible through August, the California Department of Water Resources (DWR) proposed a series of complex water exchanges between TMWA and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in Nevada that was accepted by the parties on August 3, 2016. As a result, the releases from Donner Lake were reduced to a flow rate of 15 cubic feet per second, as negotiated. This reduced flow will be maintained through August and is expected to limit the minimum Donner Lake water level to approximately 1.5 feet above the minimum level permitted at the end of August by the Indenture Agreement. This is above the maximum level the lake experienced during the entire 2015 drought-impacted summer season.

The multi-party voluntary exchange is the first significant transaction under TROA benefitting California interests since the historic agreement between the U.S. Department of Interior, the states of California and Nevada, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and TMWA took effect. TROA replaced an inflexible river management system that was more than a century old.

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

New Report Indicates Some US Drinking Water May Not Be Safe

08-11-2016
Lorie Johnson



More than 6 million Americans may be drinking water with unsafe levels of PFAs, a class of chemical linked to a number of health problems such as cancer, infertility, obesity, hormone imbalance and autoimmune disease. However, that number could be much higher.

According to a new [study](#) conducted by Harvard researchers, who analyzed 36,000 water samples, 75 percent of the contaminated water they found was detected in 13 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The study doesn't identify specific areas contaminated, only sections of certain affected states. Those areas were near manufacturing sites, military sites, and wastewater treatment plants.

The scientists analyzed data from the Environmental Protection Agency in water samples collected between 2013-2015. But the EPA didn't have data on a full one-third of the country, roughly 100 million people, so those areas are unaccounted for.

That leaves researchers speculating that the number of water supplies with high levels of PFAs is much greater than they detected.

PFAs are chemicals that are resistant to heat, water and oil. They are used in products to protect fabrics, carpets and footwear from water and stains. They are used to insulate pipes and are in the chemicals used to fight fires.

PFAs are also used to prevent leaking or sticking in common household goods like pizza boxes, microwave popcorn bags, canned foods and teflon pans. Factory emissions sometimes contain PFAs.

"I think this study has important public health implications because drinking water affects so many people and we need to be careful about what chemicals we use and how we dispose of them in the environment," study author Xindi Hu told [CBS News](#).

Currently the PFA levels in drinking water supplies are unregulated. However, this study could trigger the government to begin such regulation.

Right now, the EPA merely recommends levels they deem to be safe. In May, the EPA lowered the recommended safety levels of PFAs in the water than what they previously stated was acceptable.

On their website, the EPA describes PFAs as "persistent in the environment, bioaccumulative in wildlife and humans and are toxic to laboratory animals and wildlife, producing reproductive, developmental and systemic effects in laboratory tests."

Unsafe levels of toxic chemicals found in drinking water for six million Americans



Drinking water samples near industrial sites, military fire training areas, wastewater treatment plants have highest levels of fluorinated compounds

For immediate release: August 9, 2016

Boston, MA – Levels of a widely used class of industrial chemicals linked with [cancer](#) and other health problems—polyfluoroalkyl and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)—exceed federally recommended safety levels in public drinking [water](#) supplies for six million people in the U.S., according to a new study led by researchers from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the [Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences \(SEAS\)](#).

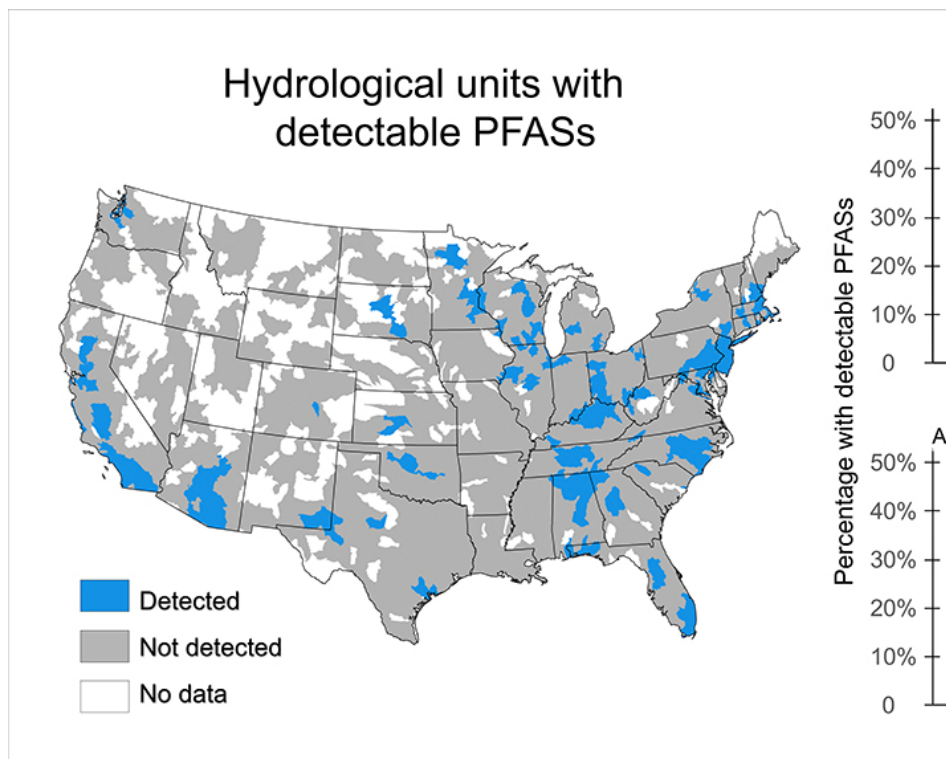
The [study](#) will be published August 9, 2016 in *Environmental Science & Technology Letters*.

“For many years, chemicals with unknown toxicities, such as PFASs, were allowed to be used and released to the [environment](#), and we now have to face the severe consequences,” said lead author [Xindi Hu](#), a doctoral student in the [Department of Environmental Health](#) at Harvard Chan School and Environmental Science and Engineering at SEAS. “In addition, the actual number of people exposed may be even higher than our study found, because government data for levels of these compounds in drinking water is lacking for almost a third of the U.S. population—about 100 million people.”

PFASs have been used over the past 60 years in industrial and commercial products ranging from food wrappers to clothing to pots and pans. They have been linked with cancer,

hormone disruption, high cholesterol, and [obesity](#). Although several major manufacturers have discontinued the use of some PFASs, the chemicals continue to persist in people and wildlife. Drinking water is one of the main routes through which people can be exposed.

The researchers looked at concentrations of six types of PFASs in drinking water supplies, using data from more than 36,000 water samples collected nationwide by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from 2013–2015. They also looked at industrial sites that manufacture or use PFASs; at military fire training sites and civilian airports where fire-fighting foam containing PFASs is used; and at wastewater treatment plants. Discharges from these plants—which are unable to remove PFASs from wastewater by standard treatment methods—could contaminate groundwater. So could the sludge that the plants generate and which is frequently used as fertilizer.



This map is based on publicly available data provided by the U.S. EPA (<https://www.epa.gov/dwucmr/occurrence-data-unregulated-contaminant-monitoring-rule>). Areas highlighted in blue indicate zip codes where PFASs were detected in one or more water samples from 2013-15 that were at or above the minimum reporting levels required by the U.S. EPA. Zip codes that are elevated in PFASs do not represent all drinking water sources in that region. Individuals concerned about their drinking water should consult with their local water suppliers. More detailed maps based on the U.S. EPA data are available from the Environmental Working Group (<http://www.ewg.org/enviroblog/2015/08/your-drinking-water-contaminated-toxic-non-stick-chemicals>).

Credit: Hu et al, Environmental Science & Technology Letters
<http://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/acs.estlett.6b00260>

The study found that PFASs were detectable at the minimum reporting levels required by the EPA in 194 out of 4,864 water supplies in 33 states across the U.S. Drinking water from 13 states accounted for 75% of the detections, including, in order of frequency of detection, California, New Jersey, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Georgia, Minnesota, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Illinois.

Sixty-six of the public water supplies examined, serving six million people, had at least one water sample that measured at or above the EPA safety limit of 70 parts per trillion (ng/L) for two types of PFASs, perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). Concentrations in some locations ranged as high as 349 ng/L for PFOA and 1,800 ng/L for PFOS.

The highest levels of PFASs were detected in watersheds near industrial sites, military bases, and wastewater treatment plants—all places where these chemicals may be used or found.

“These compounds are potent immunotoxicants in children and recent work suggests drinking water safety levels should be much lower than the provisional guidelines established by EPA,” said [Elsie Sunderland](#), senior author of the study and associate professor in both the Harvard Chan School and SEAS.

Other Harvard Chan authors of the study included [Philippe Grandjean](#) and [Courtney Carignan](#).

Funding for the study came from the [Smith Family Foundation](#) and a private donor.

“Detection of Poly- and Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs) in U.S. Drinking Water Linked to Industrial Sites, Military Fire Training Areas, and Wastewater Treatment Plants,” Xindi C. Hu, David Q. Andrews, Andrew B. Lindstrom, Thomas A. Bruton, Laurel A. Schaidler, Philippe Grandjean, Rainer Lohmann, Courtney C. Carignan, Arlene Blum, Simona A. Balan, Christopher P. Higgins, and Elsie M. Sunderland, *Environmental Science & Technology Letters*, online August 9, 2016, doi: 10.1021/acs.estlett.6b00260

PFASs and reduced immune response

Another Harvard Chan School study, led by Grandjean, adjunct professor of environmental health, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, also suggested negative health impacts of PFAS exposure. That study looked at a group of about 600 adolescents from the Faroe Islands, an island country off the coast of Denmark. Those exposed to PFASs at a young age had lower-than-expected levels of antibodies against diphtheria and tetanus, for which they had been immunized. The findings suggested that PFASs, which are known to interfere with [immune function](#), may be involved in reducing the effectiveness of [vaccines in children](#).

Funding for this study came from the [National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences](#), NIH (ES012199); the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#) (R830758); the [Danish Council for Strategic Research](#) (09-063094); and the as part of the environmental support program DANCEA ([Danish Cooperation for Environment in the Arctic](#)).

“Serum Vaccine Antibody Concentrations in Adolescents Exposed to Perfluorinated Compounds,” Philippe Grandjean, Carsten Heilmann, Pal Weihe, Flemming Nielsen, Ulla B. Mogensen, and Esben Budtz-Jørgensen, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, online August 9, 2016, doi: 10.1289/EHP275

Visit the Harvard Chan School website for the [latest news](#), [press releases](#), and [multimedia offerings](#).

For more information:

Marge Dwyer
617.432.8416
mhdwyer@hsph.harvard.edu

Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health brings together dedicated experts from many disciplines to educate new generations of global health leaders and produce powerful ideas that improve the lives and health of people everywhere. As a community of leading scientists, educators, and students, we work together to take innovative ideas from the laboratory to people's lives—not only making scientific breakthroughs, but also working to change individual behaviors, public policies, and health care practices. Each year, more than 400 faculty members at Harvard Chan School teach 1,000-plus full-time students from around the world and train thousands more through online and executive education courses. Founded in 1913 as the Harvard-MIT School of Health Officers, the School is recognized as America's oldest professional training program in public health.

Note: This release was updated on August 10, 2016.

Dry spell continues but Northern Nevada is prepared

By Cassie Wilson Wednesday, August 10th 2016

[Share Video](#)

RENO, Nev. (News 4 & Fox 11) — Dry weather is common in Northern Nevada; we are of course a high desert. But as of Aug. 10, the Reno-Tahoe Airport officially hit a 79-day dry spell.

In the last 10 years, the longest dry pattern we've seen was 92 days in the summer of 2011. And the current dry spell record is 129 days, which was set from July 19 through November 24 in 1995.

The airport hasn't registered rain since May 23, but many other places across Nevada have.

Tony Fuentes, Meteorologist for the National Weather Service, explains the dynamics behind this pattern,

"This summer has been a fairly warm one, characterized by a lot of high pressure, and we also have these troughs just off shore bringing in a dry southwesterly flow, and we haven't been able to tap into that monsoon moisture which we really depend on."

High pressure has been doing three things to Northern Nevada skies: blocking the monsoon to our south, stabilizing the air suppressing thunderstorm development, and allowing that heat to hang around.

Last year by this time, the National Weather Service had issued over 50 flash flood warnings. This year, they've only had to issue three, and they've been for areas to the south in Mono County, California.

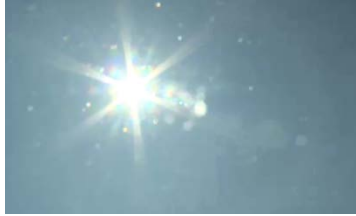
That's one thing we've been missing this year - storms, and their impact on water supply and demand. Bill Hauck, Senior Hydrologist at Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA), explained how thunderstorms impact the system:

"Demand goes way down during a summer thunderstorm and we don't see it as a bad thing. It's something I wish we'd see more this summer."

But luckily this dry weather isn't really impacting our water supply. Hauck explains why:

"While it is dry out there and we will end up having to use some of our drought reserves, it will be a very small amount and costumers can rest assured that TMWA has plenty of drought reserves still in storage"

The Truckee River forecast is for flows to start dropping off around September. But TMWA is more than prepared. Thanks to the Truckee Meadows operating agreement, they have more water in storage than ever before



Eighth Driest Stretch Recorded in Reno

We're pretty thirsty for rain in Reno.

"Last year we issued 53 flash flood warnings for our entire area," said meteorologist Edan Weishahn.

This year only three. Including Wednesday we're at 79 days and counting, it's the eight longest stretch of dry weather we've ever had in Reno. We only need six more days to be in the top six. Even after a moderate winter, we still have a lot of catch up work to do. We'll have to dip into our drought reserves by the beginning of September. Last time we didn't have to was in 2013.

"On a normal year we'd have normal Truckee River flows which would satisfy all the downstream water right holders throughout the year. We're far too dry from that point," said hydrologist Bill Hauck.

Luckily we'll only need about quarter of what we used last year.

"We'll end up using less than 10 percent of what we currently have in storage," said Hauck.

But we still need rain. When you calculate the numbers, the average total precipitation for Reno during the summer is a little bit less than an inch. As a frame of reference we got an inch and half last year, and nothing so far in 2016. The rain would help cool us off too.

"This year it just seems like the track has been a little bit north instead of getting that moisture from the troughs we're just getting wind," said Weishahn.

The chance for rain also lowers the demand.

"People actually respond to clouds in the sky. We've seen when the skies darken and just appears like it's going to rain customers go and adjust sprinklers based on that," said Hauck.

Which means we still need to conserve water and follow the rules set a while ago. On the plus side, our upstream reserves are doing quite well, you can track their progress by going to TMWA's [website](#).

Warming starts to influence Lake Tahoe

Posted on [August 15, 2016](#) by [Allen Best](#)



Lake Tahoe experienced a year like no other in water year 2014-2015, according to the most recent [State of the Lake Report](#) issued by the Tahoe Environmental Environmental Center. From this vantage point near Tahoe City, the ski runs of Heavenly Mountain Resort can be seen across the lake. April 2016 photo/Allen Best

Rapid warming of Lake Tahoe noted in latest report by university researchers

by **Allen Best**

Lake Tahoe is huge and sublime. Mark Twain called it the “fairest picture the whole earth affords” after his visit. Straddling the California-Nevada border, the “vast oval” of

blue described by Twain measures 22 miles long by 12 miles wide. It's also uncommonly deep, a maximum 1,645 feet, making it the 10th deepest lake in the world.

That depth along with the lake's steep sides give it enormous holding capacity, 39 trillion gallons. It's enough capacity that the water slopping over the rim into the Truckee River and flowing past Squaw Creek, Northstar and other ski areas entered the lake some 600 years ago, about the time that a young Joan of Arc was growing up on a French farm.

Geoffrey Schladow uses a different metric for describing the lake's vast quantity. It's enough water, he says, to cover the entire state of California to 15 inches. "It's a very steep-sided lake and its very deep," says Schladow, the director of the Tahoe Environmental Research Center. "I have done that calculation several times to convince myself of it,"

That's a lot of water to warm, and it takes a great deal of energy to warm that much water, Schladow says. But the lake is warming. The latest State of the Lake report issued by the research center in late July concluded that the average water temperature in the lake increased nearly a half degree Fahrenheit in just one year, 2014-2015. It was a drought year and an uncommonly warm year altogether. Still, that's 15 times the long-term rate of warming.

Warming has taken center stage at Lake Tahoe as scientists continue to monitor the ecology of the lake and its surroundings. For many years, clarity was the central focus, and it remains a concern. Warming and lake clarity are bound together in mountain lakes. But Tahoe's original problem had a different origin.

Some think that it was once possible such as when Mark Twain first laid eyes on what he called the "noble sheet of blue water" in 1861 to see to a depth of 120 feet. When measurements began in 1968, scientists could see a white Frisbee-type instrument, called the Secchi disk, to a depth of 100 feet. After that, clarity receded to 68 feet in the late 1990s.

Scientists concluded that the problem was how people were using the land along the shores of the giant lake. It was no one thing, but the complex of roads, streets, and houses resulted in more deposition of nitrogen and phosphorous into the lake. It's called

“cultural eutrophication,” defined by an advocacy group called Keep Tahoe Blue as “excessive algal growth due to excessive nutrient levels.”

More important yet are the fine sediments—tiny, ground-up particles, smaller than the width of a human hair—that have been entering the lake. There, rather than falling to the bottom, they remain suspended, dulling the transparency of the water.



Runoff from a residential development called Tahoe Keys has been blamed for a substantial portion of the sedimentation that has been impairing the clarity of Lake Tahoe since the 1960s. Photo/Allen Best

That transparency has actually been improving. A summit in 1997 drew then-U.S. President Bill Clinton and other high-ranking officials from California and Nevada and produced a \$50 million federal commitment. There has been success. Clarity had been receding a foot a year, but in the last 20 years has started improving. The Secchi disk could be observed to a depth of 77.8 feet in 2014.

On Aug. 31, President Barack Obama will visit the lake to address the annual Lake Tahoe Summit. A White House spokesman said Obama will use the opportunity to underscore a commit to addressing climate change and preserving the country’s natural treasures for future generations.

This year’s State of the Lake report focuses on that changing climate in the Tahoe Basin. There’s a lot to talk about. One of them is the shift from snow to rain. In 1910, snow was responsible for an average 51 percent of total precipitation. In recent decades, that’s dropped to 33 percent. But in the water year of October 2014-September 2015, just 6.5 percent of precipitation fell as snow. Total precipitation that year was about two-thirds of average. Last winter – the stuff for next year’s report – was closer to normal in terms of snowfall.

The larger story is of rising temperatures. The shift is most pronounced in nightly minimums. Since 1911, the average daily minimum temperature has increased by 2.4 degrees C. The average daily maximum temperature has gone up 1.1 degree C.

Water temperatures also increased at Tahoe. The warming water is likely a result of warming air temperatures, Schladow says. Over the last four years, the lake has warmed at a 15 times faster than the long-term warming rate. Last year, was the warmest on record.

Warming water has implications for mixing of water and hence for clarity. Precipitation arriving as rain, instead of snow, is inherently warmer, and as it enters the lake it tends to stay higher in the lake, introducing sediments that deteriorate lake clarity.

Other lakes are also changing as a result of warming temperatures. Schladow was in Italy last week at a conference of scientists devoted to the issues of reduced lake mixing. Many lakes in Europe have much greater reduced mixing than what is being observed at Lake Tahoe. The reduced mixing eliminates oxygen from the lake bottoms, making them uninhabitable by fish. “You’re seeing a lot of undesirable chemical changes. We are long ways from that situation in Lake Tahoe, but if don’t have the usual amount of mixing, we will move to that in the future.”

Schladow sees warming creating new dynamics for Tahoe and other lakes. “What I think is important about climate change is not just that the water is getting warmer, but that it’s starting to change the ways in which lakes work,” he says. “The fact that some of the water on top is warmer in a cold lake makes water move in particular ways. We talk about how oxygen gets to the bottom of the lake. Climate change is altering that. It’s not just changing temperatures, It’s changing how lakes operate.”



Lake Tahoe is prized for its deep blue color, as seen here on the lake’s western shore.
Photo/Allen Best

At Lake Tahoe, he says, broad global impacts playing out locally are starting to have a greater impact than urbanization in the basin. “We are getting to the point that climate change is maybe approaching the magnitude of factors like urbanization around the lake,” he says before citing a litany of the changes.

But as other scientists involved with water have started to point out, Schladow wonders if it's time to reassess standards for action. Many standards were developed in the American West during the 20th century, based on historical records. Climate change is creating new normals—and the normals are constantly changing.

What is happening at Lake Tahoe is also playing out at every lake and every reservoir in the West, Research by a colleague, he says, reveals that the changes occurring at smaller lakes in the Sierra Nevada have been even more brisk.



About Allen Best

Allen Best is a Colorado-based journalist. He publishes a subscription-based e-zine called Mountain Town News, portions of which are published on the website of the same name, and also writes for a variety of newspapers and magazines.

[View all posts by Allen Best →](#)

This entry was posted in [Mountain towns](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

← [Climate change a factor in Vail Resorts swallowing Whistler](#)

One Response to *Warming starts to influence Lake Tahoe*

1.  *paul* says:

[August 15, 2016 at 3:33 pm](#)

Change is normal. Don't forget the Minoan, Roman, and Medieval warm periods. Cultural eutrophication seems to be equally problematic for both lakes and journalism.

[Reply](#)

Warmer Climate, Slower Melting Snowpack

Posted: Aug 12, 2016 6:46 PM PDT <em class="wnDate">Friday, August 12, 2016 9:46 PM EDT Updated: Aug 12, 2016 6:58 PM PDT
<em class="wnDate">Friday, August 12, 2016 9:58 PM EDT

By Zac Mooney

[Email](#)

[Connect](#)

producers@ktvn.com



A new study says a warming climate is causing our snow pack to melt more slowly which could impact our water supply.

According to Adrian Harpold who is an ecohydrologist and assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Reno and co-author of the study, a warmer climate means the snowmelt begins earlier in the year. He says the temperature primes the snow, but sunlight is the key.

"Sunlight is what really drives melt. Much more important than temperature, so the earlier snow melt occurs with lower sun angles and thus the snow melt is slower."

A spring day is shorter than a summer day, but if both are warm enough to melt snow, more snow will turn to water during the summer day. So that means a warmer climate, means snow begins melting during the shorter days, which means it melts at a slower rate throughout the year.

"It is a little counterintuitive," says Harpold. He says the study looked at snowmelt mountains across the west and the impact on nearby streams.

"The Sierra Nevada definitely is an example of this response," says Harpold, "As well as parts of the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades in the Northwest."

Northern Nevada communities rely on snowmelt for drinking water and agriculture. Harpold says slow melts could have a major impact on the water supply. The more water that is flowing at one time, the more of it's absorbed into the earth. Slow melt means less water makes it deep into the ground.

"A faster snow melt pushes the water effectively deep into the subsurface," says Harpold, "Where it's less accessible by vegetation and evaporation."

You can read the report for yourself [here](#).

TMWA To Release Some Drought Reserves Next Month

AUGUST 17, 2016 BY [CARLA O'DAY](#) [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

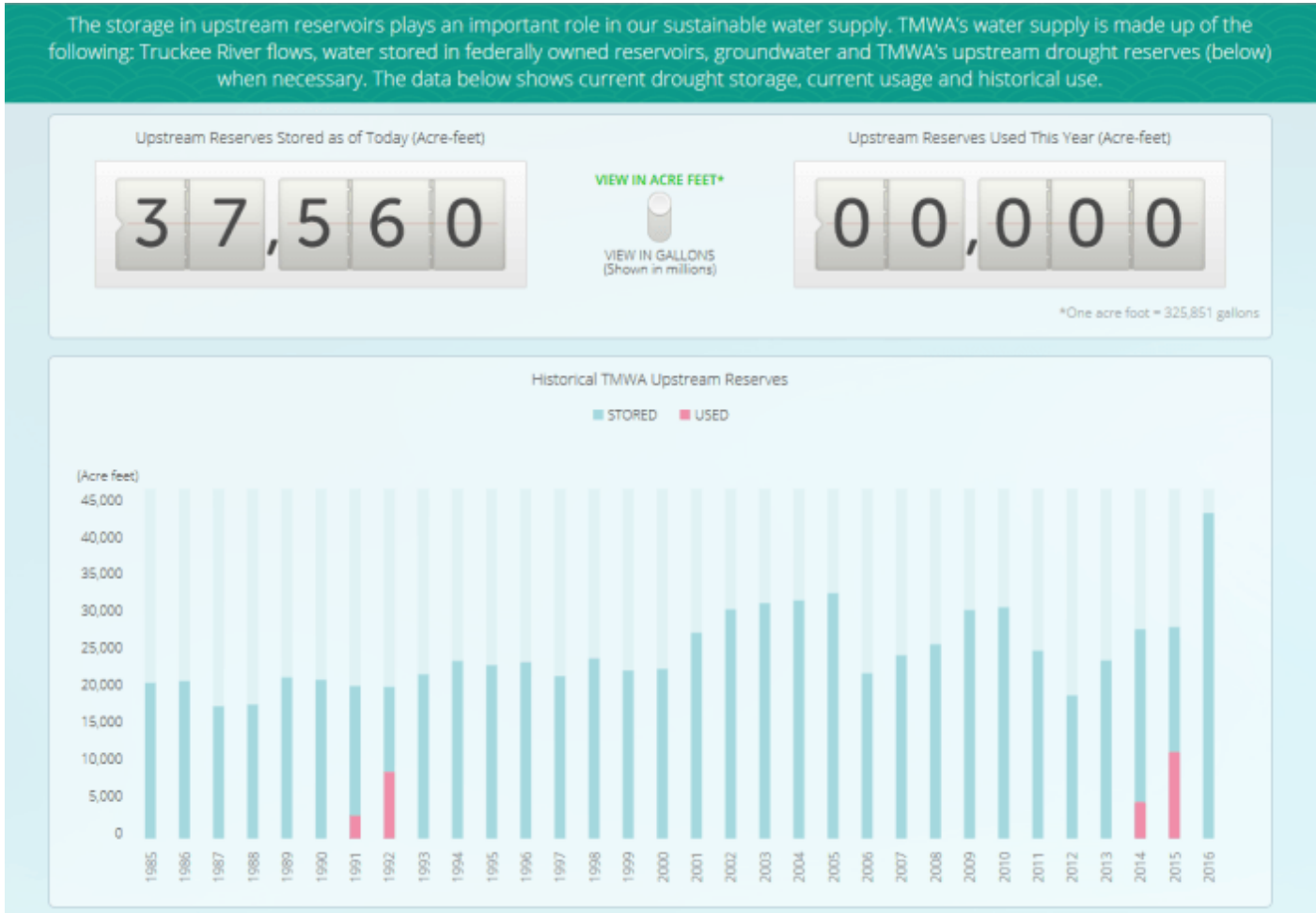


Image: TMWA Drought Reserves from tmwa.com/reserves/

By Carla O'Day

Truckee Meadows Water Authority plans to release drought reserves in September to meet waters demands for the remainder of the season. The agency said that it should roll into 2017 with more backup storage than in previous years.

Bill Hauck, TMWA senior hydrologist, addressed water supply during the utility's board meeting Wednesday at Sparks City Hall. He said last winter's precipitation was at normal levels but the region is still feeling effects of the four previous drier than average winters.

Hauck said Lake Tahoe is currently 4/10 of an inch above its rim, but the water level is expected to be below its rim by early September.



“The streamflow runoff forecast has

unfortunately been downgraded over the last two months,” a report to TMWA board members said. “Recent projections are indicating that flow in the Truckee River will be negatively impacted earlier than previously thought as a result of the downgraded hydrological forecast. Normal river flows will be made at least through the first week of September which gets TMWA past its peak customer demand season.”

IN OTHER ACTION

Paul Miller, TMWA operations and water quality manager, gave a presentation on the area’s water quality. Results showed lead levels in water averaged less than 0.001 milligrams per liter, below the “action level” of 0.015 mg/L. Copper levels averaged 0.148 mg/L, below the action level of 1.3 mg/L.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sets drinking water standards under the Safe Drinking Water Act. Ninety contaminants are regulated and the contaminant list is reviewed every 5 years.

TMWA general manager Mark Foree will be evaluated annually on his interpersonal skills, relationships, leadership, innovation, communication skills and management style. He’ll be evaluated by department heads, direct reports and board members.

Foree suggested using a similar questionnaire that the city of Reno uses to evaluate its chief executives.

“That will not only help the board but it will help me,” he said.

[Dealing with Drought part 1 of 5: How are we prepared?](#) July 7, 2014In "Agriculture"

[TMWA answers questions about drought, water conservation](#) June 29, 2014In "Agriculture"

[Sparks Mayor Disappointed by Reno City Council Comments on TWMA Drought Measures](#) August 14, 2015In "Environment"

Tour TMWA Facilities To Learn About Your Water

AUGUST 21, 2016 BY [THISISRENO](#) [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

147 SHARES



SPONSORED POST

All tours are free

Learn more about your water by touring Truckee Meadows Water Authority's water treatment and hydroelectric plants this August and September. Customers can also take a walking tour of [River School Farms](#) and Gardens. All tours are free and require only a reservation to attend.

Attendees of the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant tour will learn what it takes to get water from the Truckee River to their taps. They will also learn about the many tests that are conducted to ensure that TMWA's water is of the highest possible quality. Chalk Bluff has been recognized with the President's Award from the Partnership for Safe Water.

Meet our team of highly skilled engineers, scientists, and operators and find out how they work to provide you with high-quality drinking water."

With this award, TMWA's Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant joins the ranks of the highest-performing water treatment plants in the country. At the time of the award, only 18 utilities across the U.S. had been so honored.

Sign up for any of the five tours at the Chalk Bluff plant:

- Tues., Sept. 6, at 1 p.m.;
- Tues., Sept. 13, at 3 p.m.;
- Tues., Sept. 20, at 1 p.m.;
- Sat., Sept. 24, at 10 a.m.; and
- Tues., Sept. 27, at 1 p.m.

Meet our team of highly skilled engineers, scientists, and operators and find out how they work to provide you with high-quality drinking water. Please note: these are lengthy walking tours and will involve climbing a significant number of stairs and walking on uneven surfaces.

Customers can also tour TMWA's **Verdi Hydroelectric Power Plant**, which has been producing clean, renewable energy for over 100 years. The plant, which is located upstream of the Chalk Bluff Water Treatment Plant, harnesses the natural flow of the Truckee River to generate more than 2.3 megawatts of power.

The tours will take place on Wednesdays:

- Aug. 31 at 2 p.m.,
- Sept. 7 at 10 a.m.,
- Sept. 21 at 2 p.m., and
- Sept. 28 at 2 p.m.

There is also a Saturday tour on Sept. 17 at 10 a.m.

These one-hour tours are free and open to all TMWA customers. Participants must be at least 18 years of age. Each tour is limited to 20 people, so please be sure to **RSVP to rsvp@tmwa.com or call 834-8290**.

In addition, customers are invited to take a walking tour of the River School Farm and Gardens, which is right on the Truckee River. The tour, on Sat., Sept. 17, at 10 a.m., features methods you can apply to your own landscape to create a beautiful, water-resilient garden. RSVP to 834-8005 or conservation@tmwa.com.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 385,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.

Letter: West Doesn't have enough water for uncontrolled growth

I have been seeing a lot of TMWA commercials telling us to continue conserving water - also in the RGJ. We should conserve water as we are in the fifth year of drought. But why are the cities of Reno, Sparks and Washoe County allowing more housing developments and apartments to be built? Common sense will tell you that you can't have both.

Now comes a documentary about the Colorado River going dry. I have been saying since the early 1970s that this area and now the western states don't have enough water for this uncontrolled growth. This growth has to stop.

Derek Stephans, Reno

On eve of Tahoe environmental summit, problems lurk in lake

By Peter Fimrite

August 31, 2016 Updated: August 31, 2016 7:00am



Photo: Michael Macor, The Chronicle
IMAGE 1 OF 6

The clarity of the emerald and blue waters of Lake Tahoe has diminished since Mark Twain remarked on the subject long ago.

It may be the jewel of the Sierra, but when President Obama visits Lake Tahoe on Wednesday for a lakeside summit, his focus will be on the ways the mountain gem is being tarnished.

The annual Lake Tahoe Summit, attended by scientists, dignitaries and environmental activists, is both a celebration of the spectacular forested slopes surrounding the mesmerizing deep blue lake and a warning about what can happen if humans take such a place for granted.

The president's speech at the outdoor arena at Harveys in Stateline, Nev., will highlight how the area's veneer of natural beauty hides a host of ecological problems — warming water, alien species, pollution, algae — all of which are being exacerbated by global warming.

Tahoe’s problems are important, environmental scientists say, because this once-pristine ecosystem is steadily deteriorating. If a place like Tahoe is threatened, they say, no place where people live in America, no matter how beautiful, is safe.

“The president being here focuses attention on the fact that we still need help,” said Jesse Patterson, deputy director of the League to Save Lake Tahoe, also known as Keep Tahoe Blue. “Lake Tahoe is a national treasure. Once it is lost, you will never get it back.”



Photo: Michael Macor, The Chronicle

Jesse Patterson of the League to Save Lake Tahoe displays an invasive plant known as Eurasian watermilfoil that is clogging the Tahoe Keyes Marina.

Obama will be the first sitting president to attend the summit since Bill Clinton held a presidential forum there in 1997, kicking off the tradition. The summit has since become a yearly gathering of leaders dedicated to the goal of sustaining Lake Tahoe, and this year’s guests will include Gov. Jerry Brown and U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer.

For many years, the biggest problem was lake clarity, which hit an all-time low in 1997. The second-deepest lake in the nation — behind Oregon’s Crater Lake — was so murky at that time that a disk lowered into the water could be seen only 64.1 feet down.

That was compared with 102.4 feet in 1968. Lake Tahoe was once so astonishingly clear that Mark Twain likened boating on it to floating on air.

HOW TO WATCH

To view a live stream of the Lake Tahoe Summit at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, go to bit.ly/2bzhSla

“Every little pebble was distinct, every speckled trout, every hand’s-breadth of sand,” Twain wrote in his semi-autobiographical novel, “*Roughing It*,” describing his view from a boat into Tahoe’s recesses. “Down through the transparency of these great depths, the water was not merely transparent, but dazzlingly, brilliantly so.”

The first summit led to a set of goals to improve conditions on the lake, including state and federal money for research. The Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program was created with the initial aim of restoring visibility to a depth of 100 feet within 65 years.

More than 50 public and private organizations, including the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Tahoe Conservancy, joined forces over the past two decades to address the problem. About \$1.9 billion in public and private money has since been spent on hundreds of restoration projects around the lake, from new roads and drainage to runoff basins and more transit options. Measures have been taken to reduce air pollution and prevent oil and gasoline from washing off roadways into the lake. New construction regulations, which also limit algae-causing runoff and other activities detrimental to the lake, have been put in place.



Photo: Michael Macor, The Chronicle

Jeff and Linda Soares of Santa Cruz relax on the beach of the Upper Truckee Marsh Restoration Project at Lake Tahoe.

As a result, the steady decline in clarity appears to have been halted. The average depth at which a person could see a disk was 73.1 feet last year — a 4.8-foot decrease from the previous year but roughly in line with measurements over the past 15 years.

The clarity improvements serve as “a precedent that this investment does pay off,” said Geoffrey Schladow, director of the UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, which has done the bulk of the studies of the lake ecosystem. But there are other problems, Schladow said. The average surface temperature of the lake hit 53.3 degrees in 2015, the warmest on record. Over the past four years, temperatures in the lake have risen 15 times faster than the long-term rate, according to a UC Davis report.

Meanwhile, more rain than snow fell in the Lake Tahoe basin in 2015. There were only 24 days last year in which average air temperatures were below freezing, the fewest on record.

The warming water hampers natural lake currents, which mix cold water at the bottom with surface water. The lack of mixing leads to algae growth and less oxygen at depth. The soupier water, in turn, seems to have helped 30 or so nonnative species, including Asian clams, trout, bass, crayfish, catfish, goldfish and bluegill, and a host of wetland grasses and weeds.

A recent study documented a dramatic decline over several decades in native fish linked to the emergence of largemouth bass, bluegill and catfish.

The fundamental problem, scientists say, is that every time one problem is addressed, many more crop up, most related to a dramatic climatic shift in the Sierra. While still fighting man-made pollution, conservationists are focusing more and more on the environmental problems caused by global warming.

MORE BY PETER FIMRITE

Fires are a major concern as drought conditions persist in California and bark beetle infestations move higher into the Sierra.

“What is different this year is that we are seeing more aspects of the lake’s internal physics changing, and that is bound to alter the ecology,” Schladow said. “It is a graphic example of how climate change is an equal player with land use practices, which have for the past 50 years had the largest impact on the lake.”

Obama's presence is welcome to those who have fought to protect the famous lake. That's because federal money for Lake Tahoe has dried up over the past five years as congressional Republicans tightened the purse strings on environmental spending.

Without a federal partnership like the one initiated by Clinton almost two decades ago, long-term efforts to cut pollution and soil runoff and restore crucial filtering wetlands and meadow habitat around Lake Tahoe may never get done, Schladow said.

"If I had any hopes for the summit, it would be for similar investments in research and actions on the ground that would be able to mitigate what we believe are the likely impacts of climate change," Schladow said. "I don't think this is just about Tahoe. If, at the end of the day, we say we can't preserve Tahoe, there is little chance that we are going to be able to save thousands of lakes, streams and wetlands in California and around the country."

Peter Fimrite is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer.

Email: pfimrite@sfchronicle.com Twitter: [@pfimrite](https://twitter.com/pfimrite)

Lawson: Where do people get their information?

Charles Lawson, Special to the Mason Valley News 3:14 p.m. PDT August 31, 2016



(Photo: Jason Bean/RGJ file)

I imagine everyone has to be something and dyed in the wool. Democrats are just one faction as are establishment Republicans. For instance, if the release of four or five hostages are released on the condition \$400 million was to be paid at the same time as the hostages' release, very few citizens of America would deny this was a ransom payoff. The only exception would be a lame excuse for a Democrat. You can argue this money was a legitimate debt, but when this payment was not made in dollars, it can also be argued there was an attempt at a coverup to avoid public knowledge of the payoff.

I don't know where some people get their information, but made up seems to be a good source for some. I was sent a picture of Barack Obama with Mrs. Kahn taken before the Democratic convention. I Googled it and there it was, so that was not a misleading e-mail, and apparently she was having a good time and not wearing traditional Muslim garb. Her husband, Khzir Kahn, is a lawyer from Punjab University who studied in Saudia Arabia where he became a dedicated student of Sharia law and advocates it in its entirety with no changes. You should probably read about Sharia law; in fact, you should google Khzir Kahn if you think he is such a good guy. Mr. Khan is no stranger to the leaders of the Democratic Party. I know someone is going to object to me saying the clothing Muslim women wear is a sign of submission, but first look up Dr. Rahan Ismail from the Australian National University who states it is a sign of repression before you do.

The Boss and I went to the Lyon County Fair, but it just isn't what it used to be. We watched livestock judging and looked through the exhibits, all of which were pretty neat, had an Indian taco and headed for home. We don't watch the rodeo much as it is dirty, dusty and there are a lot of flies. Sitting in 100-degree heat in those conditions is just not for us. I visited the political booths, Democrat and Republican, but there were only a couple of Republicans I knew and no Democrats at all. Where is the fun in that? So I bought a Donald Trump hat for spite. I met only one candidate, and that was Dr. Robin Titus and I suggested she visit some local town boards north of the Carson River this time around; after all, she is supposed to be representing us as our assemblywoman and wants to do it again. I was looking forward to see George Dini, but that did not happen.

There is an interesting development I think more people should know about. A group of like-minded citizens formed a 501(c)3, a nonprofit corporation to support buying needed equipment for the Lyon County Sheriff's Department. As you might or might not know, mandated social issues and in some minds misdirected spending eats up a lot of the county's budget, and our sheriff is left to make do with what he gets. I happened to know some of the directors and think they are on the right track because the money collected by the 501(c)3 does not go into the county coffers' general fund where commissioners can redirect it into some of their little projects. If you are interested in making a contribution, do so at the headquarters of the Lyon County Sheriff's Advisory Council (LSAC), P.O. Box 1477 Fernley, Nev. 89408 or the sheriff's office or and substation, but the contribution has to be made out directly to the LSAC, not the sheriff's office. If this works out, I see no reason why this cannot be done for other areas of county government.

I wish people and entities such as Truckee Meadows Water Authority would quit revising history. The TMWA folks are running an TV ad quoting Mark Twain as saying whiskey is for drinking and water is for saving. What Mark Twain wrote was, "Whiskey is for drinking and water is for fighting," which is a given in the arid west everywhere. There is a huge fight shaping up over the state engineer's move to cut the amount of water a person is currently entitled to extract from a private well. Currently, the amount of water a person with a private well is 2.02 acre feet per year, not per day as some think. So, if you have an acre of ground, just envision flooding the entire area by 2 feet. In my area, the amount of water per year you can use and not be charged extra fees is .67 acre feet, per the Stagecoach General Improvement District.

So the state engineer's efforts to cut a private wells output to a half-acre foot per year approximates what a local water district limits their customers to with out extra charges. This is going to dry up a lot of parcels. I guess I would argue the case to stop the water engineer also if I were on a well. But in reality, aquifers are drying up and all that talk about underground rivers has turned out to be pure speculation, if not fabrication. One thing is for sure: Having your own well is not going to be a benefit anymore.

Charles Lawson is a native Nevadan, retired contractor/project manager and a 44-year involved resident of Lyon County. To communicate with Charles, e- mail him at cel@ableweb.ne

he **two-way**
BREAKING NEWS FROM NPR
AMERICA

Obama At Lake Tahoe Praises Conservation Efforts

- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [Google+](#)
- [Email](#)

August 31, 2016 9:11 PM ET



[RICHARD GONZALES](#)



A kayaker paddles along Zephyr Cove, near the site of the 20th Annual Lake Tahoe Summit in south Lake Tahoe, Nev. President Barack Obama said the environmental challenges of conservation and fighting climate change are inseparably linked.

Rich Pedroncelli/AP

Against the backdrop of the picturesque Lake Tahoe, President Barack Obama said environmental conservation is a key part of fighting the impact of global warming.

Obama spoke on the first of a two-day environmental tour at an annual summit designed to keep the health of Lake Tahoe a priority for the federal government and the states it borders, Nevada and California.

"We embrace conservation because healthy and diverse lands and waters help us build resilience to climate change," the president said. "We do it to free more of our communities and plants and animals and species from wildfires, and droughts, and displacement. We do it because when most of the 4.5 million people who come to Lake Tahoe every year are tourists, economies like this one live or die by the health of our natural resources."

The president [then quoted](#) an unnamed former leader of the Washoe Tribe (which has called Lake Tahoe home for thousands of years): "The health of the land and the health of the people are tied together, and what happens to the land also happens to the people."
Lake Tahoe, sometimes called "the Jewel of the Sierra", is 22 miles long and 12 miles wide. It contains so much water that if it were emptied it would cover the entire state of California with one foot of water.

Its stunningly clear, cobalt-blue water is [legendary](#). Mark Twain wrote of the water in his 1872 semi-autobiographical novel, *Roughing It*.
"Down through the transparency of these great depths, the water was not merely transparent, but dazzlingly, brilliantly so," he wrote.

But development, storm water runoff, pollution, warming water and algae, to name but a handful of factors, have all combined to reduce Tahoe's fabled clarity. In 1968, researchers could see a disk lowered into the water at a depth of 102.4 feet. By 1997, they could see only down to 68 feet.

That was the year President Bill Clinton visited to inaugurate the Lake Tahoe Summit, which annually draws national, state, and local leaders, researchers, and residents together to discuss ways to "[Keep Tahoe Blue](#)." The federal government has since spent about \$2 billion on the health of the lake and the surrounding environment.
Obama announced that the Department of Interior [will spend](#) nearly \$30 million on wildfire prevention at Tahoe this year.

Obama burnishes environmental legacy at Lake Tahoe

[Benjamin Spillman](#), bspillman@rgj.com 8:23 p.m. PDT August 31, 2016

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Google+](#) [LinkedIn](#)

Photos: Obama at Tahoe summit

Fullscreen

President Barack Obama walks out of an Air Force One after landing in Reno on Aug. 28, 2016 to speak at the annual Lake Tahoe Summit. *Marcella Corona/RGJ*



Buy Photo

Marcella Corona/RGJ

With his second term winding to a close President Barack Obama took to the shore of Lake Tahoe to defend his legacy on environmental issues.

Obama, making his first trip to the lake, joined Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada and Sens. Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer of California, all Democrats, in highlighting the lake as an example of progress on environmental issues.

“For thousands of years this place has been a special one,” said Obama, citing remarks from Washoe tribal members who were the original inhabitants of the Tahoe Basin. “Just as this space is sacred to native Americans it should be sacred to all Americans.”

Obama attempted to tie the fate of Lake Tahoe to global environmental challenges due to climate change.

“Our healing of Lake Tahoe proves it is within our power to pass on the incredible bounty of this country to the next generation,” he said.



Buy Photo

(Photo: Jason Bean/RGJ)

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

Obama sees Tahoe for first time, makes ‘Godfather’ joke

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

Obama visit coincides with crunch time for Tahoe funding

[RENO GAZETTE JOURNAL](#)

A presidential history of Lake Tahoe

But Obama balanced the celebratory nature of the event with warnings that threatens to undermine progress on clarity others made in the two decades since President Bill Clinton visited the area in 1997 for the first Tahoe Summit.

He cited more frequent and intense wildfires and rising water temperatures in the lake as examples of changes that are happening around the world due to rising levels of carbon in the atmosphere.

“A single wildfire in the dangerously flammable Lake Tahoe basin can cause enough erosion to erase decades of progress on water quality,” Obama said. “Our conservation effort is more critical, more urgent than ever.”

To tackle some of the local challenges Obama referenced an additional \$29.5 million in planned spending on hazardous fuels reduction, mostly in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Assistant Interior Secretary Janice Schneider, who preceded Obama in the program, said the money would come from the Southern Nevada Lands Management Act, a 1998 law that directs money from public land sales near Las Vegas to conservation and public land projects throughout Nevada.

Obama also referenced efforts to seek up to \$10 billion annually from private sources to invest in conservation and efforts to “reverse the deterioration” of California’s Salton Sea, “before it is too late.”

He also chided people, including Republican lawmakers, who deny the existence of human caused climate change.

"You don't have to be a scientist, you have to read and listen to scientists to know that the overwhelming body of scientific evidence shows us climate change is caused by human action," Obama said.

He directed a more pointed barb at Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., who famously brought a snowball to the floor of the Senate and described climate change as a "hoax."

Obama said reversing or slowing of the effect of climate change, "is not going to happen if we pretend a snowball in winter means nothing is wrong."

Prior to Obama's speech, Reid, Feinstein, Boxer and California Gov. Jerry Brown took to the stage to talk about progress at Lake Tahoe since 1997.

Boxer used her time, in part, to hit a hopeful note about the prospects for the long-stalled reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.

The original act, which expired in 2010, provided about \$300 million in federal support for environmental improvement projects around the lake.

Combined with state, local and private spending, the act is credited with leading to nearly \$2 billion in spending at the lake.

A Senate version of reauthorization would approve another \$415 million from the federal government, but the bill has been mired in Congress for seven years.

Recently taken up by Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., it's gained new life. Heller helped bring Republicans on board and the bill was unanimously approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

"You don't get that vote when you pass a resolution on Mother's Day," Boxer said.

The bill was subsequently attached to the renewal of the multi-billion-dollar Water Resources Development Act and proponents are hopeful it will emerge from the Senate as early as next month.

It would then need approval in the House of Representatives.

The event Wednesday marked the final summit for Reid, who plans to retire at the expiration of his current term, and as such was pitched as a celebration, with the Las Vegas-based rock band the Killers brought in for a post-speech concert.

But Reid was in no mood to be sentimental, something even Obama joked about during the event.

Before the event Reid said, "I have never been much for big deals," adding he made most of his accomplishments working behind the scenes or one-on-one.

And he predicted the Tahoe reauthorization would happen before the end of his time in office.

"We need to get that done, sooner would be better than later but it will be done," Reid said.

The event was in the outdoor arena at Harvey's Lake Tahoe in Stateline with about 8,000 people in attendance.

During Obama's remarks, he was heckled by what seemed to be anti-fracking protestors with a banner saying "keep it in the ground"

Water ways

Academic and legislative workfocuses on supply and snowpack

By [Jeri Chadwell-Singley](#)

This article was published on [09.01.16](#).

Last June, the Truckee Meadows Water Authority began using drought reserves from Boca Reservoir. It was the fourth year of drought in the state and the second consecutive year reserves were needed to feed the Truckee River. The region is still in drought, but 2016 has been a better one for water supplies in the Truckee Meadows—thanks in part to a healthier snowpack last winter and the December 2015 implementation of the Truckee River Operating Agreement, which was shortly followed by TMWA's purchase of 50 percent of Donner Lake water rights from the Truckee-Carson Irrigation District. (The water authority already owned the other 50 percent.)

TMWA is expected to begin tapping into a small amount of drought reserves later this month to meet customer demand through October. But that's not cause for alarm, at this point. A staff report by senior hydrologist Bill Hauck, presented during an Aug. 17 TMWA board meeting noted that even with some reserves slated for use, "TMWA should end up carrying over close to 40,000 acre-feet [one acre-foot represents 325,851 gallons] of upstream storage into 2017. This upstream storage will go a long way towards preparing the region for another dry year if that were to occur."

While the present water supply forecast is encouraging, a recent study suggests "another dry year" might not be the region's only concern. In July, the scientific journal

Geophysical Research Letters published a study co-authored by University of Nevada, Reno ecohydrologist Adrian Harpold and researchers from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Their findings suggest a warming climate can lead to earlier, slower snowmelts—and this may reduce both streamflow and the amount of water reaching reservoirs.

"So snow holds a certain amount of coldness, and you have to overwhelm that amount of coldness for the snow to melt," Harpold said.

He explained that when the snowpack is smaller during drought, it takes less to overwhelm its fridity and initiate melting. If this occurs during the winter and early spring months, daylight is shorter and the sun's angle is lower—which leads to slower melting. Larger snowpacks can persist into June or July, allowing hotter temperatures, longer days and the more direct angle of the sun to cause faster melt. A warming climate, however, increases the likelihood that large snowpacks will also be subject to earlier and slower melts.

But why would this reduce the flow of water in streams and rivers?

"So we think the processes responsible for this sensitivity to snowmelt rate have to do with how water is stored and pushed deep into the subsurface under these different melt rates," Harpold said.

He explained that when snow melts slowly, the water is not pushed as deeply into the ground where it can be stored as groundwater or make its way into streams. Instead, more of it evaporates or is taken up by the roots of surrounding vegetation, and subsequently lost to evapotranspiration.

Harpold and his fellow researchers studied changing snowmelt rates in mountain ranges across the Western United States, including the Sierra Nevada. While the trends they observed were consistent, Harpold said determining the actual effect on streamflows is not so cut and dried.



In Nevada, policy debates often center on the use of our known water supply. At Mayberry Park, a woman throws a ball into the river for her dog—a good use.

PHOTO/JERI CHADWELL-SINGLEY

Learn more about the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Study Water by visiting: <http://bit.ly/2c37DkB>.

Advertisement



**A depth gauge on the Truckee near Sutro Street is one of several in the valley that keep water officials informed.
PHOTO/JERI CHADWELL-SINGLEY**

"It's not a unidirectional sort of change," he said. "Places are likely to respond completely different."

Factors that may influence a region's sensitivity to snowmelt rates range from subsurface composition to vegetation root depth and even humidity, and Harpold said more research is needed to determine how different regions may be affected. In the meantime, he hopes for more dialogue between the scientific community, policy makers and the public. He recommends the non-profit environmental organization Protect Our Winters as one avenue for people looking to engage on climate issues. The group—comprised of winter sports athletes, enthusiasts and businesses in the industry—is engaged in numerous climate education initiatives, as well as lobbying activities.

Water bills

In Nevada, the state with the driest climate, the dialogue often centers on the use of our known water supply. The peak season for water demand is drawing to a close. But with fewer than six months before the Nevada Legislature convenes for its 79th session, water issues remain front and center, presenting several matters for the public to keep its eye on in the coming months.

On the regional level, there's the possible dissolution of the Western Regional Water Commission. The commission was created by the legislature in 2007 to bring together several Truckee Meadows government entities for the purpose of water planning and conservation. Among the duties tasked to the WRWC was exploring options for consolidating regional water utilities. In December 2014, Washoe County Water Resources and South Truckee Meadows General Improvement District were consolidated into TMWA. Having met this and several other goals for which it was created, the WRWC board of trustees asked its staff, in March, to look into the procedure and consequences of dissolution or of transferring its powers and duties to TMWA.

While the possibility was discussed again during the commission's Aug. 17 board meeting, WRWC chair and Washoe County Commissioner Vaughn Hartung said he doesn't believe there was much appetite among the trustees to move forward with dissolution, in part because of ongoing projects like an exploration of the potential use of drones for aerial cloud seeding.

It is, however, still possible that the WRWC may seek a legislator to introduce a bill to disband the commission during the upcoming legislative session.

At a statewide level, the Legislative Commission's Subcommittee to Study Water is of interest. The interim subcommittee held its last of six meetings on Aug. 26 and approved five bill draft requests (BDRs) to send to the 2017 legislature, based on recommendations received from government agencies, organizations and citizen groups around the state. One BDR pertains to funding for cloud seeding operations. Another is aimed at establishing accurate accounting of the number of water rights that predate Nevada water statutes established in 1905, 1913 and 1939. A third would give the state engineer more flexibility in managing water use in areas where well withdrawals consistently exceed the perennial yield of groundwater basins.

Before deciding on which recommendations to pursue, the committee members heard more than three hours of public comment—mostly from domestic well owners who believed, thanks in part to the circulation of an error-laden online petition, that the subcommittee was trying to reduce their water use rights by 75 percent and mandate the installation of water meters.

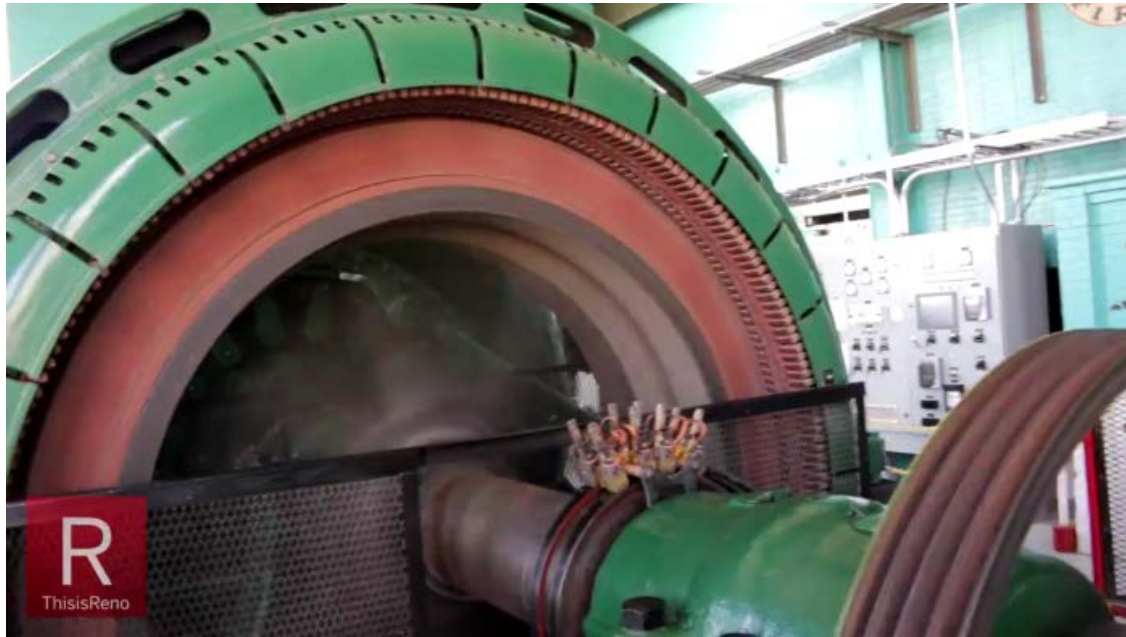
Requiring water meters on "all users in the state" was one of the recommendations, but the subcommittee chose not to create a BDR from it. The proposal to curtail water use rights was aimed specifically at new wells in severely over-appropriated water basins and areas where pumping regularly exceeds basin yield—and a BDR will be created from it. A final BDR proposes to allow the state engineer to limit domestic well pumping to indoor use and the watering of outdoor pets and livestock during times of curtailment.

Subcommittee chair Senator Pete Goicoechea, R-Eureka, tried to explain to angry citizens in attendance—many of whom suggested petitioning for recall of the subcommittee members—that the bills drafted would have to pass in the legislature before taking effect.

"What this committee does, again, would only be a recommendation," he said. "It'll come back to the full legislature next spring. There's nothing we put in place. I don't think a lot of people understand that."

VIDEO: Inside The Verdi Hydroelectric Power Plant

SEPTEMBER 3, 2016 BY [DANA NOLLSCH](#) [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



Verdi Hydroelectric Plant

The Truckee Meadows Water Authority owns and operates three Hydroelectric Power Plants, and **they offer tours** of the Verdi Power Plant every Wednesday in September. TMWA's Hydroelectric Power Plants have been in operation for over a century and provide enough electricity for 3,500 homes. I went last Wednesday and checked it out.

For me, this was very impressive to see this clean, renewable energy source still in use over 100 years after being built. The technology from the start of the industrial age mixed with modern technology was very interesting to see.

As you will see in the video the turbine and mechanical pieces of this power plant are the same as they were when they were built over 100 years ago but now they are paired up with modern digital controls. In some ways, this working power plant looked like a museum celebrating the invention of modern electric power.

The guides for the tour were very helpful and very approachable as well as knowledgeable. There is a rich history to be discovered as you talk to your guides. I found it interesting that there were so many people taking the tour and they were asking so many insightful questions.

Check out the video (I am sorry for the wind in part of the video, but stay with it to the end and you won't be disappointed) and if you have the time I recommend going on the tour yourself. The tours are limited to 20 people and here is the email to make a reservation. presentations@tmwa.com, or call 834-8290 to reserve your spot

Sierra Nevada Conservancy Awards \$2 Million for Forest Health and Watershed Restoration Projects

Last Updated: Friday, 09 September 2016 06:05

September 9, 2016 - (MARKLEEVILLE, Calif.) – Yesterday the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Governing Board approved over \$2 million in grants for projects that will reduce wildfire risk and



restore forest and watershed health in the Nevada region. Funding for these projects comes from Proposition 1, The Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2014. This is the fourth set of awards made under the SNC's **Proposition 1 grant program**.

“Sierra watersheds continue to face many challenges,” says Jim Branham, Executive Officer for the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. “These projects can help protect our watersheds from large, damaging wildfires, insects, and disease, and make them more resilient to a changing climate.”

The projects approved for funding include:

- **Calaveras County - Pumpkin Hollow Restoration Project, \$500,000**

This grant to the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority will complete aspen, forest, and meadow restoration, and the construction of a shaded fuel break on 971 acres. The project area is a part of the Hemlock Landscape Restoration Project and the even larger Cornerstone Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration project. The restoration treatments are designed to improve watershed conditions within the headwaters of the Mokelumne and Stanislaus Rivers.

- **Nevada County - Webber Lake Little Truckee River Headwaters Timber Management Plan, \$70,000**

This grant to the Truckee Donner Land Trust will complete a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) that will guide long-term management of overstocked and diseased forest conditions on 3,000 acres of lake, meadow, and forest habitat in the headwaters of the Little Truckee River.

• **Plumas County - Bucks Lake Project, \$464,025**

This grant to the Plumas County Fire Safe Council will thin overgrown forest conditions on 342.5 acres located in the Plumas National Forest in order to protect the North Fork Feather Watershed from large, damaging wildfires. This project will complete the last phase of the 1,511 acre Bucks Lake Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, and will contribute to a large scale effort by the Plumas National Forest to increase resiliency to high-intensity wildfires.

• **Butte County - Butte Forest Thin – Doe Mill Ridge Watershed Project, \$494,697**

This grant to the Sacramento River Watershed Program will use forest thinning and low intensity prescribed fire to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire, control invasive species, restore habitat, and demonstrate the linkages between management of upstream areas and the impacts on downstream water availability and quality. The project is located on 227.5 acres of public land managed by the BLM between Little Chico Creek and Butte Creek within the Sacramento River watershed.

• **Tuolumne County - Beaver Creek Watershed Improvement Project, \$500,000**

This grant to the Save the Redwoods League will treat 336 acres adjacent to the Calaveras Big Trees State Park (CBTSP) to protect Beaver Creek, which drains to the North Fork Stanislaus River and eventually to New Melones Lake. The treatment includes thinning overgrown forests, and the creation of two fuel breaks that will link open fields and buffer the South Grove of the CBTSP.

In addition to meeting the requirements of Proposition 1, the projects awarded support the goals and objectives of the **Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program**, a large-scale restoration program designed to address ecosystem health in the Sierra Nevada. This program is being coordinated by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the U.S. Forest Service, and seeks to increase the pace and scale of restoration across the Sierra by increasing funding, addressing policy barriers, and increasing infrastructure needed to support restoration.

“The projects awarded today are a great example of the on-the-ground work we are accomplishing through the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program,” says Randy Moore, U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Regional Forester.

To date, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has funded 17 Proposition 1 projects totaling \$4,698,280 that support the restoration goals of the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.

About the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Created in 2004, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a state agency whose mission is to improve the environmental, economic, and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Region. The SNC has awarded over \$50 million in grants for projects to protect and enhance the health of California’s primary watersheds by improving forest health, remediating mercury contamination from abandoned mines, protecting critical natural resources, and reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Funding for these projects came from Proposition 84 passed by voters in 2006 and Proposition 1 passed by voters in 2014.

The Sierra Nevada Region spans 25 million acres, encompasses all or part of 22 counties, and runs from the Oregon border on the north to Kern County on the south. The Region is the origin of more than 60 percent of California’s developed water supply

Source: SNC

Dysfunction, leadership gap preceded complaint against city manager

WHO YOU NEED TO KNOW ON THE RENO CITY COUNCIL

From potholes to parking, from what kind of development may spring up next door to you to how much you pay for sewer, the Reno City Council makes decisions that affect your life. Here's who to call for help, and who to hold accountable for decisions in the city of Reno

[RENO MAYOR](#)

HILLARY SCHIEVE

Ward: Citywide

Term: Up for re-election in 2018.

Party Affiliation: Non-Partisan

Notable: A small business owner who helped cultivate the Midtown District, Schieve wants to establish Reno as a thriving tech hub. She replaced 12-year veteran Mayor Bob Cashell in November 2014 and has vowed to make city hall more accessible and transparent. She has been criticized for appointing friends to key boards.

Major Backers: Public employee unions, medical marijuana companies, developers, casinos.

Phone: 775-334-2001 (office); 775-378-5589 (cell)

Email: Schieveh@reno.gov

• [COUNCILMAN](#)

DAVID BOBZIEN

Ward: At-large

Term: Up for re-election in 2016.

Party: Democrat

Notable: Bobzien left his post as a state assemblyman to be appointed to the council in 2015, earning him some criticism. He's a conservation policy consultant and has taken a strong interest in conservation public policy. He has been a strong backer of fire consolidation, hasn't tried to stand in the way of the Southeast Connector and is a strong supporter of the arts community.

Major backers: Bobzien was supported by traditional Democratic backers in the Legislature. He has not filed a campaign finance report as a city councilman yet.

Phone: 775-334-2014

Email: bobziend@reno.gov

• [COUNCILWOMAN](#)

JENNY BREKHUS

Ward: 1

Term: Up for re-election in 2016

Party: Democrat

Notable: Brekhuss overcame an establishment-backed candidate in her first race through foot work and cultivating a strong grassroots following. She's known as the most detail-oriented council member and can sometimes annoy her colleagues on the board through her lengthy questioning during meetings.

Major backers: Public employee and labor unions, Democratic politicians, individuals.

Phone: 775-334-2011 (office); 775-544-1694 (cell)

Email: Brekhusj@reno.gov

• [COUNCILWOMAN](#)

NAOMI DUERR

Ward: 2

Term: Up for re-election in 2018

Party: Democrat

Notable: A geologist by training, Duerr spent her career running the Truckee Meadows Flood Project and other water systems. So far, her priorities have included blight, buying the city hall parking garage and figuring out a compromise on how to deal with Virginia Lake's water quality problems. She was a swing vote in allowing the Southeast Connector project to move forward earlier this year.

Major backers: Public employee unions, Democratic politicians, casinos, developers.

Phone: 775-334-2017

Email: duern@reno.gov

• [COUNCILMAN](#)

OSCAR DELGADO

Ward: 3

Term: Up for re-election in 2016

Party: Democrat

Notable: Delgado grew up in the central city neighborhoods he now represents and sees himself as an advocate for those communities. He's worked to attack blight in the neighborhoods. He's been a strong backer of the firefighters union and has been a close ally of Schieve's.

Major backers: Firefighters unions, developers, casinos, lobbyists.

Phone: 775-334-2012 (office); 775-338-1002 (cell)

Email: delgadoo@reno.gov

• [COUNCILMAN](#)

PAUL MCKENZIE

Ward: 4

Term: Up for re-election in 2018

Party: Democrat

Notable: McKenzie is best known as a labor union lobbyist at the Nevada Legislature and is a vocal advocate for unions and the working class. He's a proponent of the Southeast Connector and played a strong role in opposing collective bargaining reforms. He's known as an outspoken council member who sometimes verbally tussles with his colleagues on the board.

Major backers: Labor unions, public employee unions.

Phone: 775-334-2015

Email: mckenziep@reno.gov

• COUNCILWOMAN

NEOMA JARDON

Ward: 5

Term: Up for re-election in 2016

Party: Republican

Notable: Jardon is the last of the former alliance led by Mayor Bob Cashell, coming to the council with strong support from developers, casinos and others in the business community. But she has worked to form new alliances and is rarely a lone no-vote on the council. Her recent priorities have included pedestrian safety, homeless services and moving the Southeast Connector along.

Major backers: The Chamber, developers, casinos, lobbyists

Phone: 775-334-2016

Email: jardonn@reno.gov

Anjeanette Damon

[Anjeanette Damon](mailto:adamon@rgj.com), adamon@rgj.com 6:06 a.m. PDT September 4, 2016



(Photo: Jason Bean)

Three months before a sexual harassment complaint was filed against City Manager Andrew Clinger, Reno's chief executive hired a consultant to help improve the working relationship among him, the Reno City Council and executive staff.

The consultant, however, found enough dysfunction while interviewing council members and key staff members that he thought it best to cancel the team-building council retreat scheduled for June 1.

The exercise cost the city nearly \$30,000.

Documents obtained by the Reno Gazette-Journal through a public records request showed the consultant, Anthony Tansimore of Foster City, Calif.-based Olive Grove Consulting, found significant morale issues among key staff, a reactive and fractured council, and a general leadership vacuum at the top of the hierarchy.

Those documents, along with results of Clinger's June performance review and interviews with city staff and council members, offer a glimpse into what appears to be an increasingly tumultuous atmosphere at city hall in the run-up to the misconduct complaint filed by three women on June 29.

On Tuesday, the council will decide whether to hire a new investigator for \$50,000 and double the amount the city will pay the law firm it hired to manage the investigation into Clinger's conduct. That means the cost of the investigation will exceed \$150,000.

Because of the ongoing investigation into claims against Clinger, executive staff and council were reluctant to comment directly on the dysfunction.

But talking with many at city hall over the past month revealed a "Survival Island" mentality of questioned allegiances, paranoia over recorded conversations and exhaustion over chasing changing priorities without strong guidance from the city manager.

Meanwhile, work to improve those conditions is at a standstill as the Clinger investigation stretches into its third month and now involves the Washoe County Sheriff's Office. That agency is looking into a report that documents needed to support the claim against Clinger were stolen from one of the women's offices.

Clinger, who makes \$207,000 a year, is on voluntary paid leave until Sept. 9.

"Unfortunately, personnel issues have delayed the council's ability to review the report and create a plan," Councilman Oscar Delgado said. "My hope is that we will resolve our personnel issues and address the report as soon as possible."

Among the findings from Olive Grove Consulting, according to documents obtained by the Reno Gazette-Journal:

- City staff, wracked by years of layoffs and lack of funding, is suffering from a pervasive lack of morale. Executive staff struggles to prioritize important initiatives because of a leadership gap at the city manager level and a council that's struggling for a unified vision.
- Council members are so mired in "individual agendas" and reactive to social media criticism that some fundamental city services are suffering. Council members also fail to come prepared to City Council meetings and aren't given equal voice.
- The murkiness of the mayor's ceremonial vs. actual leadership duties has resulted in a "leadership gap."
- The "high level of leadership" expected from Clinger to manage the workload, communication and relationship with council needs improvement and council members seek out staff directly in an effort to get things done, creating more chaos.

In such an atmosphere, staff can find themselves continually chasing council's "pet projects" rather than executing sound plans to take care of fundamental city services.

For the city to function well, the consultant said, the council should agree on a common agenda and empower the city manager to execute it. The city manager should be the point person for staff assignments and directly manage the communication.

The consultant's summary of his work, obtained through a public records request, hadn't been shared with all council members at the time the Reno Gazette-Journal obtained it.

Clinger said the consultant believed individual meetings with council members would be more productive than a retreat, which would be subject to the Open Meeting Law. Clinger and Tansimore had planned to go over the report with council members individually, but the process has been put on hold because of Clinger's leave during the investigation.

About the same time the retreat was falling apart, the City Council was preparing for its annual review of Clinger's performance. That process includes an anonymous survey of executive staff members on Clinger's strengths and weaknesses.

While Clinger earned high marks for relating well with others and handling emergency situations, the survey revealed a declining view among staff members on Clinger's trustworthiness, directness and ability to foster a positive work environment.

Most notably, 42 percent of the 14 city directors surveyed marked "forthright and honest in all relationships" as an area for growth.

Last year, only one member of Clinger's executive staff gave him poor marks on his review.

Under state law, the council must give Clinger his review in a public meeting. Only one council member, Jenny Brekhus, chose to give Clinger a written review in addition to her comments at the public meeting. Her comments were not positive.

"Mr. Clinger is not managing the organization in an optimal manner to address the growth and development we are facing," Brekhus wrote.

Before voting unanimously to give Clinger a 3 percent raise in June, other council members expressed concerns on such things as Clinger's ability to follow through on important priorities, a lack of diversity in top staff and outreach to Spanish-speaking communities and problems with the budget process.

But they also picked up on a theme in the comments from executive staff.

Councilwoman Neoma Jardon said she recognized staff felt Clinger should act as more of a buffer between them and council. Too often staff members would be berated during public meetings without Clinger stepping in.



(Photo: RGJ file)

But Jardon said that is on the council to fix.

“Let me apologize from our perspective for putting you in a position of having to apologize to your staff for our (council’s) behavior,” Jardon said, her voice thick with emotion. “That’s not OK. Fear and beratement is never a motivation.”

Councilwoman Naomi Duerr focused in on “female managers,” making vague comments about fear.

“There is a sense of fear I’ve sensed in some of these comments,” she said, referring to the employee survey. “I’m an intuitive person so I feel stuff. I’ll even say this in the area of female managers, I’ll just put this out there. Maybe I shouldn’t say that. I don’t have data about that. Maybe it’s just a feeling, maybe because I’m a female manager. If there is an opportunity to work on that, that is an area to work on.”

Eight days later, three women filed sexual harassment complaints against Clinger.

Mayor Hillary Schieve, however, was only complimentary of Clinger’s performance.

“We have had results from you and very, very significant ones,” Schieve said. “I sat on this body before and I will tell you it is night and day from where we have come.”

Schieve was a councilwoman for two years before being elected mayor.

Clinger was hired in 2011 by the previous Reno City Council. He was tapped because of his expertise as state budget director in guiding an organization through a financial crisis.

And he did just that in his first couple of years with the help of finance director Robert Chisel. Together they rescued the city budget, reduced debt, kept the Redevelopment Agency from falling into insolvency and began putting money toward significant unfunded liabilities.

As the economy began to recover, the city has had to shift from crisis mode to managing the growth. Under Clinger’s leadership, the city has begun to hire new police officers and firefighters, labor relations have vastly improved, a new job training program for the homeless is graduating workers, neighborhood cleanups have been undertaken and the city has engaged wide swaths of the community as it redrafts its master plan.

Clinger said he’s helped council come up with a strategic plan and must now turn the city’s attention to implementing it.

In an interview with the Reno Gazette-Journal, Clinger bristled at suggestions his leadership is lacking, asking instead that his position be viewed in the context of what’s happening at the council level.

“It has been for me a difficult transition, for sure,” Clinger said. “This is a very different council, and adjusting from the prior group to this group has certainly been challenging for me.

Nevada agency uses laser mapping to track water usage

LAS VEGAS - The Southern Nevada Water Authority is using a combination of aerial photography and laser mapping to track water usage in the Las Vegas area.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reports that the laser mapping is useful for making detailed maps that include elevation. The region's wholesale water supplier uses the imagery to see what is growing in the area and how much water the plants might need, then determine where and how pipelines, pumps and reservoirs should be built.

The water authority is also using the technology to aid conservation efforts by identifying areas that would be ideal targets for the Water Smart Landscapes Program, which pays people to rip out grass and replace it with desert plants.

TIMELINE: A LOOK BACK AT ANDREW CLINGER'S TENURE AT THE CITY

A look at the highs and lows of Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger's five years at the helm of the city.

- [MAY 2011](#)

CLINGER HIRED AS CITY MANAGER

Before he came to the city, Clinger served as state budget director for three governors. In 2011, he was tapped by Mayor Bob Cashell to become the new city manager. At the time, Reno was facing a severe financial crisis. Clinger was sought after for his expertise in helping steer government through troubled financial times.

Photo: Clinger, left, sits with former Gov. Jim Gibbons and former HHS director Mike Willden in 2008.

- [AUGUST 2011](#)

CLINGER ADDRESSES DEBT, INSOLVENT RDA

With its finances in shambles after taking on crippling debt prior to the recession, Reno was on the brink of a state take over. Clinger, working with his new finance director Robert Chisel, laid out a new plan to address the debt and fix the finances. Most notably, they found an overlooked state law that required the county to make a higher payment to the Redevelopment Agency. That was key to rescuing the RDA.

- [MAY 2012](#)

FEDERAL GRANT SAVES FIREFIGHTER JOBS

As the city of Reno and Washoe County fought through a bitter deconsolidation of their joint fire service, Clinger was forced to contemplate laying off up to 80 Reno firefighters. He ultimately was saved from going through with that plan when the city won a federal grant that funded 64 positions.

Photo: Clinger with former Reno Mayor Bob Cashell.

- [JULY 2012](#)

FIRE DIVORCE

After several failed deals to save the city and county's consolidated fire services, Clinger was at the helm of the acrimonious "fire divorce." The fallout from the bitter parting of ways lasted for more than three years.

- [SEPTEMBER 2012](#)

FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

Clinger launched new city web applications that allow users to see city payroll data and invoice information.

- [JANUARY 2013](#)

COZY WITH BASEBALL DEVELOPERS

A Reno Gazette-Journal public information request netted a cache of emails between Clinger and the developers of the Aces Ballpark that showed a tight knit relationship between city staff and the developers. At the time, the developers were negotiating a new public financing deal for the stadium after the original expected tax revenue for the project never materialized. The city now pays baseball about \$1 million a year to mitigate the developers' construction costs.

- [APRIL 2014](#)

RENO LOSES FIRE GRANT

While Clinger relied on a federal grant to save 64 firefighter positions in 2012, he failed to work out a plan to keep those jobs in place should the grant go away. That's exactly what happened in April 2014. The loss of the federal money left Reno on the brink

of slashing 35 firefighters from the payroll. The firefighter union ultimately sued and a judge prevented the city from following through with the layoffs. Revenue improved and the city wound up keeping the positions.

Photo: Clinger and former Fire Chief Michael Hernandez

- [JUNE 2014](#)

DOUBLE-DIPPING POLICE CHIEF

The Reno City Council declared a critical shortage of police chief candidates, without doing an actual recruitment or search, in order to keep department veteran Steve Pitts as chief. Under the declaration, Pitts was able to collect both a salary and his retirement pension payment. The police chief is selected by the city manager and confirmed by the council.

Photo: Steve Pitts

- [NOVEMBER 2014](#)

ELECTION USHERS IN NEW COUNCIL

The November 2014 election was a key turning point in Clinger's tenure as city manager. Hillary Schieve was elected mayor and two new council members won seats, ending Mayor Bob Cashell and his coalition's 12-year run. The new council is largely Democratic, while the last council was mostly Republican. And everyone on the council is in their first term.

- [DECEMBER 2014](#)

REINING IN RETIREMENT BENEFIT COSTS

Clinger made it a priority to begin sharing the burden of retirement benefit cost increases with city workers, as well as to begin funding the city's looming unfunded liability for retirement health benefits. As labor relations improved under the new council, Clinger was able to negotiate such cost sharing with most of the city's bargaining groups.

- [MARCH 2015](#)

KIEV MISSION SCUTTLED

The council was incensed when it became clear that Chief Steve Pitts had sent a team of Reno police officers to Kiev, Ukraine to help train a new civil police force in the war torn country. Concerns about the city's liability and the officers' safety prompted the council to order the officers home. Clinger was caught in the middle. Pitts had asked Clinger's permission via a brief text message exchange, rather than through a formal briefing.

- [APRIL-MAY 2015](#)

POLICE CHIEF QUILTS, UNION LEADER HIRED

Amid the controversy over the Kiev training mission, Police Chief Steve Pitts decided to move up his retirement date. To fill his shoes, Clinger picked Officer Jason Soto, an 18-year veteran of the force who was the head of the local police union. Soto did not meet the minimum qualifications for the position, however, with no college degree and no executive police training. Clinger gave Soto two years to obtain his associate's degree and executive certification.

- [APRIL 2015](#)

BUDGET SURPLUS

Just 12 months after the city tried to layoff firefighters because it didn't have the money to pay them, Clinger's staff found a \$10.9 million surplus. Revenue had come in at a higher clip than forecasted, resulting in the surplus. The news was a surprise and Clinger took heat for not initiating more public input before recommending how the money should be spent.

- [JANUARY 2016](#)

FIRE DIVORCE FINALLY ENDS

After brokering an automatic aid agreement between the city and county fire departments, Clinger also helped settle the long standing dispute over who owned money to whom in the fire divorce.

- [JUNE 2016](#)

CLINGER GETS A RAISE

The council voted unanimously to allow Clinger's contract to automatically renew and also gave him a 3 percent pay raise.

- [JUNE 29, 2016](#)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FILED

Three women filed a sexual harassment complaint against Clinger. The Reno City Attorney, without taking the matter to the council, hired an outside lawyer to investigate. That lawyer found Clinger had not violated the city's policy.

- [JULY 29, 2016](#)

ALLEGATIONS BECOME PUBLIC

An attorney for the three women filed a complaint with the Nevada Attorney General claiming the Reno City Council violated the Open Meeting Law in an attempt to keep the complaints against Clinger from public scrutiny. It was the first time the existence of the complaints became public. Clinger vigorously defended his innocence, calling the allegations "utterly ridiculous."

- [AUG. 10, 2016](#)

COUNCIL HIRES OUTSIDE LAW FIRM

The Reno City Council voted unanimously to hire Kamer Zucker Abbott out of Las Vegas to manage the investigation into the misconduct allegations. They planned to spend \$50,000. A few days later, Clinger agreed to take a voluntary paid leave of absence.

- [SEPT. 6, 2016](#)

INVESTIGATION COSTS TRIPLE

The Reno City Council voted unanimously to increase the contract amount to Kamer Zucker Abbott to \$100,000 and hire a new investigator for \$50,000.

- [SEPT. 8, 2016](#)

CLINGER ANNOUNCES HIS RESIGNATION

Clinger agrees to step down from his position after the council scheduled a meeting to consider his employment with the city.

• Anjeanette Damon

[Anjeanette Damon](mailto:adamon@rgj.com), adamon@rgj.com 8:49 a.m. PDT September 9, 2016



(Photo: Jason Bean)

116CONNECTTWEETLINKEDIN 1COMMENTEMAILMORE

Friday 8:30 a.m. Update:

Under the terms of the separation agreement signed by outgoing Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger, the city would pay him six months severance as well as \$30,000 to cover his attorneys fees.

Clinger signed the separation agreement on Thursday, after being served notice that Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve planned to call a special meeting to consider his removal from office.

The notice warned that the council would "discuss any items germane" to the decision to remove him, including his "character, alleged misconduct and professional competence" at the meeting.

Under the city Charter and state law, the council would have to adopt a preliminary resolution to remove Clinger from office by a majority vote at a public meeting.

That meeting was avoided when the two sides reached the separation agreement Thursday. While Clinger has signed the agreement, the council must vote to approve it during a special meeting at 9 a.m. Wednesday.

Under the agreement, obtained by the Reno Gazette-Journal on Friday morning, the city will pay Clinger the severance he's entitled to under his employment contract. That includes six months salary worth about \$103,000, as well as any accrued sick and vacation leave. The city also will make a contribution to his retirement account. The full dollar amount of his severance wasn't available Friday morning.

In addition to his severance, the city agrees to pay Clinger \$30,000 to cover the cost of his personal lawyer, who has represented him throughout the ongoing misconduct investigation.

The investigation is expected to take until mid-October. Reno City Attorney Karl Hall said the results of the investigation will be made public.

Original Story:

Editor's note: This story has been updated with comments from Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve and other council members.

Reno City Manager Andrew Clinger said Thursday he has agreed to end his employment with the city of Reno amid a continuing misconduct investigation that has taken more than two months and is expected to cost the city more than \$150,000.

"I have enjoyed my time as City Manager and take great pride in the accomplishments of this city over past years," Clinger said in a written statement. "Councils past and present have come together in times of crisis and opportunity to move Reno forward and greet each challenge and opportunity with passion and care. I am proud to call Reno my home and grateful to work and raise my family here. So, it will be with a heavy heart that I announce I will be leaving the City Manager's position effective Oct. 9th.

"Obviously, the last few weeks have been challenging for me and my family. No one enjoys having their name sullied or their professional conduct questioned. However, I have complete confidence my reputation will be cleared when this process is completed."

The Reno City Council will hold a special meeting on Wednesday to consider the settlement agreement reached between Clinger and Reno City Attorney Karl Hall that will outline the terms of his departure.

Under his contract, Clinger is entitled to six months severance pay. That would cost the city about \$103,000.

The settlement agreement was reached Thursday evening after the city served Clinger a notice on Wednesday that Mayor Hillary Schieve planned to call a meeting to consider his employment.

Hall said the city would continue its investigation into the sexual harassment and retaliation claims by three women employees.

That's a necessary condition for Councilman Paul McKenzie.

"We still owe the employees a thorough investigation of their complaints," McKenzie said when asked for a reaction to Clinger's departure.

Schieve said she called the special meeting to consider Clinger's employment to keep the city focused on moving forward.

"We have accomplished many great things under Andrew's leadership, and we want to thank him for his service to our city," she said in a written statement. "I believe we are at a turning point and that it is imperative that city staff and the City Council stay focused on the health and vibrancy of our organization. Therefore, I have called for a Special Meeting as a necessary step to ensure the organization remains solely focused on moving Reno forward."

Clinger has steadfastly maintained his innocence, calling the allegations by three women "utterly ridiculous" and accusing them of trying to ruin his reputation with "outright lies."

An initial investigation by an outside lawyer found Clinger did not violate the city's harassment policy.

A lawyer for the women, however, raised concerns about how that investigation was conducted without council oversight. The lawyer, Bill Peterson, contended that gave Clinger undue influence over the process.

After Peterson filed a complaint with the Nevada Attorney General accusing the council of violating the Open Meeting Law, the council took public action and hired a Las Vegas law firm to manage the ongoing investigation. That law firm is costing the city up to \$100,000.

Most recently, the council voted to spend \$50,000 to hire a new investigator to look into retaliation claims filed by the women.

The Washoe County Sheriff's Office also is investigating whether documents supporting one of the women's complaints were stolen from her office. Those documents were reported missing on July 29, about the same time the sexual harassment complaints were made public.

Hall said it is still important for the city to gather the facts of what happened.

"We are going to continue with the investigation," Hall said. "We are duty bound to investigate any allegations to make sure we don't have a hostile work environment. So we're going forward with that."

Clinger said he is counting on the full investigation to clear his name.

"The findings of the initial investigation now known to most all involved found no evidence of wrong doing, because none occurred," Clinger said in his statement. "Given that, I look forward to the full public release of this investigation in the coming days, so that everyone will know the real facts in this case."

Clinger concluded his statement by wishing the mayor and council well.

Clinger has been on voluntary leave since Aug. 8. Assistant city manager Bill Thomas has been named acting city manager.

Councilwoman Jenny Brekhus said she had no comment on Clinger's resignation.

"I have no details," she said. "I just heard this."

Councilman David Bobzien said Clinger's resignation is "welcome news."

"Ultimately it came down to the mayor and council have a duty to the citizens and we had to find a way to move forward," Bobzien said. "We were in a bit of a standstill with everything and there was concern that there were key initiatives that were potentially stalling. We felt, despite the fact we need to take our time and conduct the investigation properly, in terms of city operations, we didn't want to lose a step."

Councilwoman Neoma Jardon praised Clinger's tenure.

"Andrew's leadership was instrumental in guiding the city through some very difficult times," she said in a written statement. "I am sad for his departure, and I wish he and his beautiful family all the best. As we move past this, we must remain focused on key initiatives, projects, services and opportunities that will continue to move our community forward."

Councilman Oscar Delgado echoed Jardon's sentiment.

"Mr. Clinger was a great asset to the city during a difficult economic time and we thank him for his service," he said in a written statement. "Making hard decisions in order to improve and move forward is the hallmark of leadership. We are at a place where these hard decisions are being made to do exactly that and move Reno forward in the best direction."

Nick Olive

Wow, finding a new city manager might be a tough sell. Will Hillary be able to find someone willing to compromise their morals and continue to go along with the illegal (against city code anyway) appointment and retention of an unqualified police chief? We don't need \$30,000 studies to know how corrupt she and Clinger are - - good luck finding another one who will also disregard city codes to keep the queen happy.

[Like](#) · [Reply](#) · 7 hrs

John C. Gardner ·

Works at Retired

Great coverage and “look back” at Clinger’s tenure as City Manager, but the City Attorney’s central role in all of this is oddly missing. What appears to be a rapid “cave in” to the plaintiffs’ attorney could suggest the City Attorney’s actions left something to be desired, and left the Mayor/Council exposed. Did he fail to inform/involve the Council? Was there something in the steps he took that actually provided a basis for plaintiffs’ argument that Clinger had undue influence on the investigation? Why the sudden special meeting regarding Clinger’s employment? Surely not to “keep the city moving forward”, as the Acting City Manger should be able to do so.

At this point, it appears to me that the plaintiffs may or may not be victims, but Clinger certainly is

Ask Joe: Are pumps working properly at Virginia Lake?

BY JOE HART FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9TH 2016

-
-
-

From the Ask Joe file, one of our viewers has a question about the conditions at Virginia Lake.

Amber Bradley wrote in asking why did they turn off the pumps at Virginia Lake. Amber says it's gross again!

ADVERTISING

[inRead invented by Teads](#)

Here's what I found out:

I spoke with Dave Barrett, he's the park maintenance supervisor for Virginia Lake. After we called, city staff went out and checked things out and both fountains are working. They do have a temporary shut-off feature to protect the motors but Barrett says they monitor that very closely to make sure they turn them back on if they get shut-off.

Keep in mind water flows into Virginia Lake from the Truckee River through a pipe at Sierra Street. And this time of year when the river level drops there may be little or no water flowing into the lake at its North inlet. So it could be that our viewer noticed no water flowing in and thought perhaps that the pumps weren't working.

So that's the situation. All of the equipment is working properly right now. They did have one fountain that broke down shortly after it was installed so it was sent back to the manufacturer. Once the city gets that back there will be three working fountains. Those fountains help to keep the water circulating.

But the bottom line is water flows into the lake naturally and when river levels drop there will be less water flowing into Virginia Lake

From: Charpentier, Robert
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 11:10 AM
To: 'Tell the Board'; Olsen, Marlene; Gebhardt, Andy
Subject: RE: Tell the Board Submission

Hello Mr. Dahlbeck,

I'm very sorry to hear you had a bad experience when trying get information on Donner Lake water levels. I would like to follow up with whomever you spoke with but it's a little unclear in your email who that was. Did you call someone here at TMWA or did you talk to the Federal Water Master? Though TMWA does have rights to the storage water at Donner Lake, the Water Master manages the actual releases and does not work for TMWA. If you can let me know who you talked to, I will be much better able to address your concerns.

Please give me a call if you want to discuss this further.

rc

Robert Charpentier
Communications Specialist
Truckee Meadows Water Authority
1355 Capital Blvd. | Reno, NV 89502
O: (775) 834-8092, M: (775) 741-3380
rcharpentier@tmwa.com | www.tmwa.com



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

From: Tell the Board [<mailto:>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 12:07 PM
To: Olsen, Marlene; Charpentier, Robert; Mazeris, Kim
Subject: Tell the Board Submission

Name: Gary [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Comments: The management company for our vacation home in Truckee sends out a regular newsletter. The most recent included a section about the drop in Lake level at Donner. The management company said when they called to ask why the lake was being dropped so early compared to most years they were told by your new Water Master that he could take it, the water, whenever he wanted. Please remind your arrogant new Water Master that he actually works for the people. People like him give public servants a bad name. A simple, polite explanation would have sufficed but instead he has to be a dick. Please reign in this guy.