



July 4, 2010

## Water diversion project on tap

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A leaking wall of rubble used to divert water to the area's second-biggest water treatment plant will be replaced this summer, with work beginning this week.

When the \$3.7 million project is finished, a decidedly flawed structure will be replaced with a modern and environmentally friendly diversion serving the Glendale water treatment plant.

"It's just not an efficient structure. It leaks like a sieve," said Ron Penrose, a project manager for the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

The diversion, on the river just north of the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino, was first built for irrigation and expanded with the 1975 construction of the treatment plant.

Prior to the 1994 construction of the larger Chalk Bluff water treatment plant upstream near McCarran Boulevard, the Glendale plant was the Truckee Meadows' most important water treatment facility.

The existing rock-and-rubble diversion has many issues. During drought years when the river is low, it leaks water released from upstream reservoirs that should be stored for treatment in the Glendale plant.

It also limits the maximum amount of water that can be treated at the plant to 25 million gallons per day -- an amount that can be increased to 37 million gallons with an improved diversion, Penrose said.

"We can't deliver that kind of water with this structure. That's the main reason we're doing this," Penrose said.

The current diversion blocks movement of fish up the river, including Nevada's state fish, the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout.

It also serves as a barrier and safety hazard to rafters and other recreational users of the river.

Changes coming with new structure will allow free passage for both, Penrose said.

The new diversion will be a major improvement over the existing situation, said Bob Williams, director of the Nevada office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Once the new structure is built, fish should be able to pass the area year-round, Williams said.

"We're very pleased with it," Williams said. "Right now it pretty much completely blocks the river."

The new structure will also be able to survive floods much better than the existing diversion, which has required major repairs after previous floods.

During construction, the Truckee River's flow will be diverted down a channel that has been cut parallel to the river.

Penrose remembers gazing at the Glendale diversion back when he was a college student and being unimpressed.

"I looked at this thing and said there's got to be a way it can be improved," Penrose said. "Well, here we are."

## Additional Facts

Glendale Water Supply Improvement Project

- » Project will replace a 35-year-old rock and rubble diversion structure on the Truckee River.
  - » Drought storage capacity to be improved.
  - » Fish passage to be improved.
  - » Rafters, other river users will have safe and easy passage.
  - » \$3.7 million construction contract awarded to Q&D Construction, Inc.
  - » Project to be completed in before winter.
  - » Bikers and strollers using the bike path on the Truckee River's north bank will have to detour beginning Tuesday and through December between Fisherman's Park at 495 Galletti Way in Sparks.
  - » Rafters, inner-tubers and other recreational users of the river will need to exit the river at John Champion Park at 975 Kuenzli St. They can re-enter the river at Rock Park in Sparks.
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