

**MEDIA ADVISORY**  
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**Truckee-Carson Irrigation District builds new weir and clears Carson River to mitigate flood threats**

Churchill County, the City of Fallon, Truckee-Carson Irrigation District (TCID), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), US Navy, Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and local entities join forces to prevent flooding

- **WHO:** TCID, in partnership with local and regional organizations, and BOR
- **WHAT:** Construction of a new weir and clearing of the Carson River channel
- **WHERE:** Churchill County / Greater Fallon area
- **WHEN:** February – September 2017
- **WHY:** To mitigate flood threats by rerouting increased water from the Sierra Nevada Mountains

**Situation**

Northern Nevada has experienced record precipitation and increased water flow from the Sierra Nevada Mountains into Lahontan Reservoir. The Reservoir feeds over 700 miles of irrigation channels throughout Churchill County.

If Lahontan fills over its capacity, and inflows exceed the volume that can be released through the lower Carson River and project canal system, Churchill County may experience severe flooding. Currently, Lahontan Reservoir storage is approximately 242,000 acre-feet, with a maximum capacity of 300,000 acre-feet. Hydrologists predict over 500,000 acre-feet of water to come from the Sierras.

In an effort to mitigate flooding, TCID must release 4,400 acre-feet of water from Lahontan Reservoir each day. In order to accommodate the increased inflow of water, TCID responded with two preventative solutions.

In February 2017, TCID and Churchill County obtained a permit from the State to clean debris from the Carson River, increasing water flow from an average of 400 cubic feet per second to 800 cfs. The job, which should have taken more than 40 days to complete, was finished in just seven days.

At the end of February, TCID with help from Churchill County, began work on a 47x150-foot weir which would bifurcate water from the V-line canal (one of two major outflow channels of Lahontan) to surrounding outside lands, avoiding the City of Fallon and populated areas of Churchill County. Expected completion and usage of the weir is scheduled for Thursday, March 9.

The weir will redirect the water toward Sheckler Reservoir. Once Sheckler reaches capacity, it will flow through the desert and through newly built culverts under Hwy 95. From there, it will pass through the Carson Lake Pasture and toward the Stillwater Slough; out toward the Stillwater National Wildlife Refuge and eventually into the Carson Desert Sink.

Soil in snow run-off areas is already saturated and cannot accommodate additional water. The 2017 precipitation to date is the largest on record for all Snotels and any water year. A Snotel is a method in which the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the United States Department of Agriculture measures snow levels by remote sensors. The March 1, 2017 snowpack is larger than any year in the present Snotel record (1979 – present).

### **History & Water Level Comparisons**

The flood of 1907 left Churchill County and the City of Fallon under water. In 1915, the Lahontan Reservoir was built as a holding tank for the TCID canal system. It is important to note that Lahontan Reservoir and Dam were authorized by the United States Government as part of an irrigation district under Federal Reclamation Act 1902, and not as a flood control project. Lahontan Dam and Reservoir have since provided protection to the residents of Fallon and Churchill County.

The current water storage in Lahontan is very high considering the amounts of snowpack that must come down through the Carson River and drainage. See comparable water storage for past selected years.

- Feb. 1983: 195,000 acre-feet
- Feb. 1995: 108,600 acre-feet
- Feb. 2006: 245,282 acre-feet
- Feb. 2011: 131,046 acre-feet
- **Feb. 2017: 249,435 acre-feet**

### **Partners**

Flood mitigation is a collaborative effort between local and regional entities, including the City of Fallon, Churchill County, TCID, BOR, US Navy, NDOT, DEM, the school district and the hospital. All partners have acted proactively, which has severely decreased flood threats and puts Churchill County ahead of potential disaster.

For more information, visit [churchillcounty.org](http://churchillcounty.org), or [fallonnevada.gov](http://fallonnevada.gov).