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## **Walker Basin Conservancy Hires Jeff Bryant as New Executive Director**

Reno, Nevada – December 8, 2016 - The Walker Basin Conservancy (WBC) Board of Directors is pleased to announce the hiring of Jeff Bryant as its new Executive Director. As Executive Director, Bryant will be responsible for overseeing all of WBC's efforts related to Walker Basin Restoration Program (Program) implementation with the support of grant funding from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF).

"The Conservancy continues to expand and grow in responsibility and the Board is excited to see what the WBC will become under Jeff Bryant's leadership," said David Yardas, WBC Board President. "Jeff's previous experience and long-standing commitment to the Walker Basin and agricultural sustainability make him exceptionally qualified to lead the WBC forward. Next year will see all local staff and most Program activities managed by WBC, and reaching this transition is an important milestone in long-term efforts to restore Walker Lake while protecting agricultural and watershed interests."

Bryant comes from a background deeply rooted in the Great Basin. He grew up in the Walker Lake community of Hawthorne and is intimately familiar with the Lake's decline and the associated issues that come with decades of insufficient inflows to support a once-vibrant resource.

"Having been raised in Hawthorne, I have developed a personal connection and deep passion for the health of the Walker Basin, both environmental and economic," said Bryant. "I believe deeply in the mission of WBC and applaud the efforts of NFWF to restore Walker Lake while also supporting local farming communities. I am honored and humbled to be part of the solution that addresses the issues of long-term water sustainability that the Walker Basin and local residents face."

Bryant developed an understanding of the deep correlation of sustainable agriculture practices and long-term conservation efforts in the region while working for the Great Basin Institute, leading crews on projects throughout the Great Basin, Mojave Desert and the central Pacific coast of Mexico. Based on his passion and his success at the Institute, he was offered the opportunity to build a non-profit teaching farm, Urban Roots, from the ground up. Through Urban Roots Bryant developed a lasting relationship with the University of Nevada and led research initiatives on water efficient crops, played an instrumental role in the development of the University's High Desert Farming Initiative, and mentored and trained over 100 young adults through FarmCorps, a national service program designed specifically to meet the needs of northern Nevada. Working at Urban Roots Bryant recognized the lack of opportunity for young adults in urban settings to get involved in agriculture. To address this issue and build upon the successes of Urban Roots, Bryant founded the Polygrarian Institute, an agricultural non-profit focused on cultivating community based food systems through education, research and civic engagement.

In addition to his passionate work for non-profits, Bryant also serves on the Renown Health Community Advisory Committee, Nevada Food & Agriculture Council, and is a founding board member of Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation. He was a recipient of the Young Professionals Network *Twenty Under 40 Award* in 2013. For his work and service to the community, Bryant was recognized as the Reno Gazette Journal's *2015 Citizen of the Year*.

