

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE:** April 16, 2019

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**Major Milestone Met in Effort to Restore Walker Lake**

Walker River Decree Court Confirms Protection of Water Rights for Walker Lake

**Yerington, Nev.** – On April 16, 2019 the Walker Basin Conservancy, after many years of legal proceedings, was finally granted permission from the Walker River Decree Court to begin calling for the instream use of decreed water rights purchased from willing sellers to benefit wildlife and the restoration of Walker Lake. The Conservancy made its historic first formal call for instream water to the Federal Watermaster today.

In 2010, 7.745 cubic feet per second (cfs) of righted decree water was acquired under the authority of the Walker Basin Restoration Program (Program), now being implemented by the Conservancy, for the benefit of the Walker River and Walker Lake. On May 22, 2018 the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals approved the State Engineer's grant of the Program's water right change application #80700, which requested a change in beneficial use from irrigation to instream flow for wildlife benefit from the historic point of diversion at the Yerington Weir to Walker River and Walker Lake.

Monday, the Federal District Court formally modified the Walker River Decree to conform to the Conservancy's approved water right change, and marks the first time water acquired via the Program can be administered instream for the benefit of Walker River and Walker Lake.

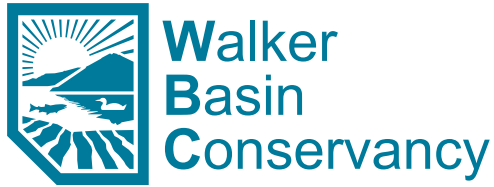
"We are thrilled that a portion of our Program water is now protected and will remain instream until it reaches Walker Lake. This is an exciting milestone for everyone who has dedicated time to restoring Walker Lake," said Jeff Bryant, Executive Director of Walker Basin Conservancy. "We have a lot of work ahead of us and look forward to engaging with stakeholders to ensure the rest of our water portfolio sees a similar outcome."

To date, the Conservancy's Program has acquired approximately 43.7% of the water needed to reach targeted restoration goals at Walker Lake and is actively working with willing sellers to reach goals to support the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout and other key wildlife species once again.

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**About the Walker Basin Conservancy:** The Walker Basin Conservancy is leading the effort to restore and maintain Walker Lake while protecting agricultural, environmental and recreational interests in the Walker River Basin. The Conservancy manages thousands of acres of land in the Basin and oversees revegetation activities, habitat enhancement and ongoing research. The Conservancy protects and





monitors acquired water resources to ensure that they are used as intended for riparian and watershed stewardship and to increase stream flows to Walker Lake.

**About Walker Lake:** Walker Lake is a natural lake located in the geographic low point of the Walker River Basin and is the terminus of the Walker River. Decades of water diversions have resulted in declining water levels and dramatic increases in Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) to a level where Walker Lake can no longer support native fish or waterfowl. The Walker Basin Conservancy is working to acquire and protect enough water to reintroduce a stable population of Lahontan cutthroat trout, and other keystone species, in Walker Lake.

