



Walker Basin
Restoration
Program

WALKER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM

Progress Report 2010—2011



NFWF

MISSION

The Walker Basin Restoration Program seeks to restore the ecological health of Walker Lake and its watershed while balancing agricultural, tribal, and community water needs for the future.

STRATEGY

The Program seeks to increase instream flows to Walker Lake through a comprehensive basin-wide strategy that relies on voluntary water transactions and water management initiatives; community-based conservation and stewardship; and applied research and demonstration projects. The Program is committed to addressing issues of local concern and to developing creative and lasting solutions to sustain the Basin's agricultural nature.

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About the Walker Basin Restoration Program

The Walker Basin Restoration Program (Program) was established by Congress as part of Public Law 111-85 in October 2009. The Program's core purpose is to restore and maintain Walker Lake, a natural desert lake in Nevada at the terminus of the Walker River stream system of Nevada-California. Walker Lake is critical to recovery of the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout, and has long been an important stopover for common loons and other migratory waterfowl; however, many decades of depleted freshwater inflows have resulted in declines of Lake elevation and increases in Lake salinity which today threaten its complete ecological collapse. The Program seeks to restore Walker Lake's ecological health by developing and implementing a comprehensive long-term restoration strategy supported by Congressional directives. Funding is provided through the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Desert Terminal Lakes (DTL) Program.¹ The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) coordinates with Reclamation under the grant funding for Program implementation support.

About the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that preserves and restores our nation's native wildlife species and habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. NFWF's method is simple and effective: we work with a full complement of individuals, foundations, government agencies, non-profits, and corporations to identify and fund the nation's most intractable conservation challenges.

¹ The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government. For additional information on the Desert Terminal Lakes Program please contact Ms. Caryn Hunt Decarlo (CHunttDecarlo@usbr.gov), DTL Program Manager, at Reclamation's Lahontan Basin Area Office in Carson City, Nevada.





In 2009, when Congress designated NFWF as the lead entity for developing and implementing the Walker Basin Restoration Program, we had a pretty good idea of the amount of work and dedication that would be required to get a Program of this magnitude off the ground. Over the next two years, our expectations were met and surpassed as we grappled with the intricacies of an aging irrigation system, a complex water rights system, and nearly two decades of ongoing water rights litigation between the Basin's major parties. As further described in the following pages, our accomplishments during this initial "start up" phase have included:

- Accepting full responsibility for all dimensions of the acquisition program portion of the Nevada System of Higher Education's Walker Basin Project;
- Negotiating purchase and sale agreements, completing all necessary due diligence, and closing escrow on six permanent water acquisition deals with willing sellers;
- Initiating revegetation projects on more than 600 acres of land in cooperation with willing landowners and the Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts;
- Entering into a \$2 million flood water Forbearance Agreement with the Walker River Irrigation District and participating landowners as an initial phase of a demonstration water leasing program;
- Negotiating a Land Title Conveyance Agreement with the Nevada Department of Wildlife to guide the donation and restoration of more than 800 acres of wildlife habitat to benefit the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area;
- Supporting ongoing research at the University of Nevada-Reno, the Desert Research Institute, and the U.S. Geological Survey to further development and integration of hydrologic simulation models for the Walker River Basin; and
- Filing the Program's first Water Rights Change Application before the Nevada State Engineer.

As we move forward in 2012, we know that continuing to acquire water from willing sellers will be crucial to long term success, as will working with agricultural and other interests on conservation and stewardship projects, water conveyance and ditch agreements, demonstration water leasing, and a host of related initiatives. We are committed to the Walker Basin and our Program's place in its future, knowing that with every success comes a new challenge, and with every challenge a new opportunity.

Sincerely,

David Yardas
Program Director

Joy Giffin
Program Manager

SELECTED PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS 2010-2011

Acquired more than **31 cubic feet per second** of natural flow decree rights; **2,500 AF (acre feet)** of storage water rights; **3,400 AF** of groundwater rights; and nearly **1,990 acres** of land from willing sellers.

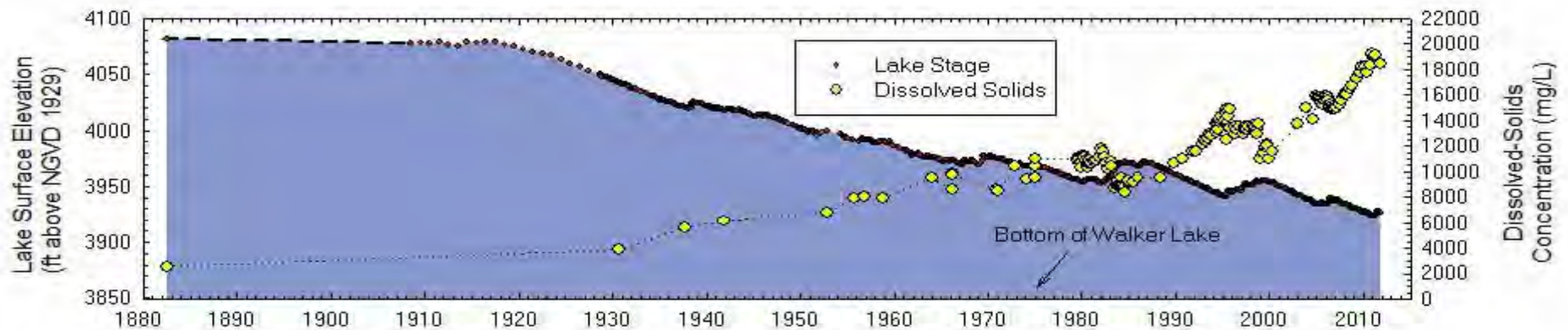
Initiated revegetation projects on almost **600 acres** of land, and completed initial agreements to donate and restore up to **800 acres** to benefit the Nevada Department of Wildlife's Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area.

Paid over **\$23.5 million** to willing sellers to acquire water rights, land and related interests; and expended nearly **\$3.5 million** under research, conservation and stewardship, and water forbearance agreements with local landowners, businesses, public entities, and private organizations in the Walker River Basin and elsewhere in Nevada.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Restoring Walker Lake's ecological health will involve a host of challenges that the Program is already working to address. Perhaps most significant is the need to acquire substantial amounts of water from willing sellers and protect it for the benefit of a terminal lake system which has been on the decline for over a century. The authority and resources provided by Congress give the Program a unique opportunity to meet these challenges by working closely with local interests to secure water for Walker Lake while concurrently addressing the needs of an aging irrigation system in the face of a changing climate and myriad other pressures, so that in the future a healthy Walker Lake (and its watershed) can co-exist with a strong, sustainable, and contemporary agricultural economy.

Walker Lake Surface Elevation and Total Dissolved Solids (1880-2012)



Graph courtesy of USGS

Estimated Lake-surface elevation highstand (4,089 to 4,108 feet per USGS)

1868

Irrigated agriculture dominates most of Mason Valley - estimated Lake-surface elevation is 4,080 to 4,086 feet based on earliest recorded lake depth reading taken in 1882

1880

WRID constructs Bridgeport Reservoir on East Walker River and Topaz Reservoir on West Walker River

1920s

Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) concentration reaches 10,000 mg/L at Lake-surface elevation 3,964 feet

1988

Walker Basin Restoration Program established - average TDS concentration reaches 17,800 mg/L at Lake elevation 3,929 feet

2009

Six initial water deals completed. High runoff and Forbearance Agreement result in +/- 4 foot increase in Lake-surface elevation over 2010 levels (approximately 3,926 feet)

2011

GEOGRAPHY

Linking geologic time to the present, Walker Lake sits 75 miles southeast of Reno in the Great Basin, America's largest desert. During the last ice age, its waters were part of Lake Lahontan and extended across most of this arid region. Over thousands of years, with shifts in climate and changes to the River's path, Walker Lake became isolated, and its elevation has gradually moved up and down.

Walker Basin



Map courtesy of USGS

Walker Lake is fed from snowmelt delivered by the Walker River, whose East and West forks begin on the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada in California and flow northeast into Nevada. The two forks join together in Mason Valley and continue northeast to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) gauge at Wabuska, where the lower Walker River turns south to Walker Lake.

Since the turn of the 20th century, human intervention has altered the lake's water level at a rapid, unprecedented pace. Irrigation diversions from the River, Walker Lake's primary source of water, have produced an acute, 150-foot drop in lake elevation since the late 1800s, severely disrupting its ecosystem.

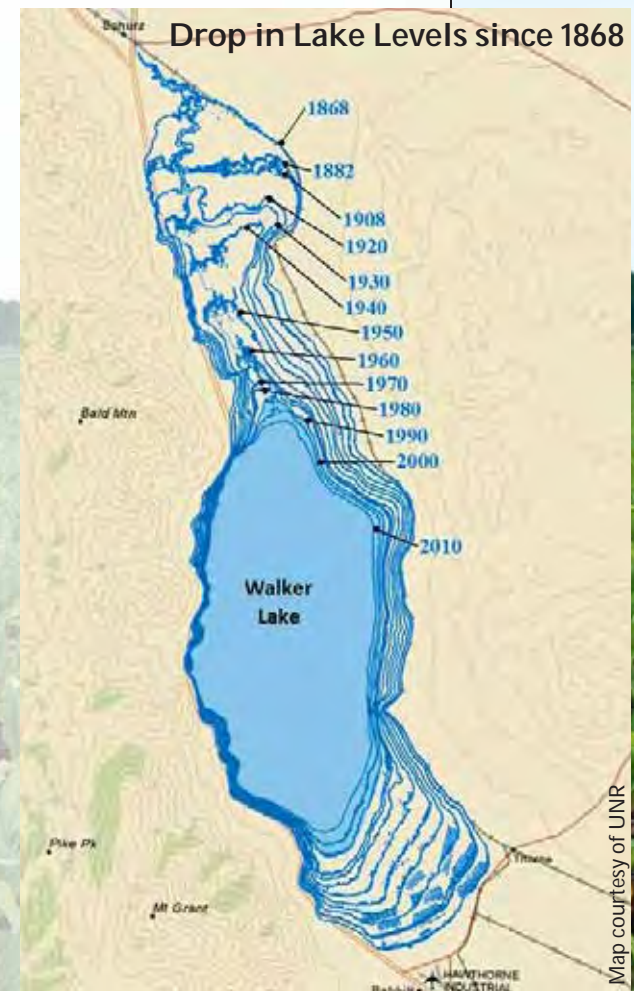
Walker Lake is a "terminal" lake, meaning that it has no outlet except through surface evaporation. It's a rare formation, one of just three desert terminal lakes in North America hosting a freshwater fishery, most notably the native Lahontan cutthroat trout. This fish evolved in the challenging alkaline environment of the Great Basin, and has thrived for millennia in Walker Lake, until recently.



BACKGROUND

During the last quarter of the 19th century, farmers and cattlemen established communities in the Walker River Basin, part of the ancestral home of the Northern Paiute people. They diverted natural flows from the Walker River to support hay, pasture, and other irrigated crops. In the 1920's, the newly-formed Walker River Irrigation District ("District" or "WRID") built a pair of dams near the headwaters of the East and West Walker River to store winter and early spring runoff for use later in the season when natural flows ran out.

For decades, diversions from the River have sustained a strong agricultural economy but produced an unintended consequence in Walker Lake's decline. With an elevation drop of more than 150 feet and the loss of 80 percent of its volume, salinity has increased to the point that the Lake can no longer support its native fish and wildlife populations. As Walker Lake has declined, so has the economy that once benefited from fishing and tourism. And the region's historical, cultural and ecological wealth has been compromised.



ACQUISITION PROGRAM

Public Law (PL) 111-85 directs the Program “to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin”¹ The initial responsibility under this legislation was to work through existing option agreements to purchase water rights from willing sellers that had been developed by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) and subsequently assigned to NFWF. Of these, five agreements were re-negotiated and the water was acquired by the Program. A variety of efforts were made to extend and restructure the other inherited agreements; however, all eventually expired or were terminated by the sellers.

Early in 2011 the Program began to explore new water acquisition agreements with the dozens of interested sellers who have approached the Program since early 2010. These new opportunities are being evaluated based on a variety of factors, including price, location, transferability, and expected instream benefit. New offers were provided to a number of interested sellers based on these evaluations and one of the resulting deals was completed in 2011. Future deals are anticipated to continue through a similar process.

In all, a total of six² deals were completed during the Program’s first two years (see summary chart below) at a combined total purchase price of nearly \$23.5 million.

Water Rights and Related Interests Acquired from Willing Sellers

Seller	Natural Flow Decree (Cubic Feet Per Second)	Non-Decree Water Rights (Acre Feet)				Land (Acres)	Associated Ditches
		Supplemental Storage	New Land Storage	Supplemental Groundwater	Primary Groundwater		
L&M	7.745	402.6	-	2,584.6	-	-	West Hyland
Sovereign	-	-	329.5	-	-	-	Saroni Canal
Sciarani	9.251	376.8	516.5	-	-	1,130.1	Dairy, Joggles, Nichol Merritt, SAB, Sciarani
Sunrise	3.312	149.2	191.5	-	586.3	-	Joggles
Aguiar 1	7.417	301.4	170.8	1,130.5	-	855.0	Joggles, Nichol Merritt
Aguiar 2	1.427	57.9	-	-	-	-	Joggles, Nichol Merritt
Farias	1.920	-	-	-	-	-	Colony
Totals	31.072	1,287.9	1,208.3	3,715.1	586.3	1,985.1	

“[R]ecently, more people have come to see that the situation needn’t be a zero-sum game pitting the lake against irrigators. Farmer Bryan Masini ... was the first to sell water rights to NFWF. He says he decided he could work with the foundation because they were committed to working with farmers. ‘NFWF just kept at it. Wherever the farmers moved, NFWF said [fine, let’s try it,’ Masini says.” - High Country News, August 8, 2011

¹ Section 208(a)(1)(A)(i) of PL 109-103, as amended by PL 111-85 (see page 19 for additional Excerpts from the Federal Legislation).

² One transaction (Aguiar) was completed in two parts due to title issues.

Acquisition Timeline

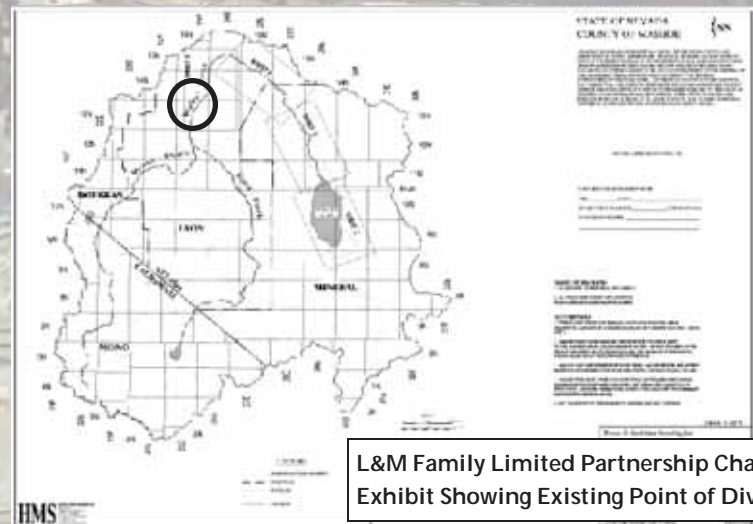


FIRST WATER RIGHTS CHANGE APPLICATION

The Program's first application to protect water rights for instream use was submitted to the Nevada State Engineer's Office in March 2011. The purpose of the application was to secure legal recognition of water acquired by the Program so that it will be protected instream to benefit the Walker River and Walker Lake. The application was published for public review so that interested parties could express their concerns through a formal protest process. The State Engineer has since held two pre-hearing conference to clarify concerns and issues prior to conducting a formal hearing, which is expected to take place in late 2012 or early 2013.

The Program continues to try to address and resolve concerns in advance of the formal hearing through negotiations with the Walker River Paiute Tribe ("Tribe" or "WRPT") (to move acquired water to Walker Lake through the Tribe's reservation on the lower Walker River) and through discussions with ditch companies and other individual protestants. The Program believes that many issues can best be resolved through open communication and dialogue, and that the prospects for mutual benefit are greater through collaboration than through contested legal proceedings.

Through this process, it is expected that issues involving the proposed changes from irrigation to instream use can be adequately addressed to allow the majority of acquired water to remain in the Walker River to Walker Lake. In the meantime, the Program is also working on a variety of strategies to allow such changes to take place on an interim, short-term basis.



Map courtesy of History Mapping Services

L&M Family Limited Partnership Change Application Exhibit Showing Existing Point of Diversion



CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

The Program's top priorities include soil conservation and revegetation efforts on lands where water has been acquired. To date, \$2.1 million has been awarded in Program funding to local partners to enhance conservation and stewardship efforts in the Basin.

The first large scale revegetation project has been initiated on 177 acres in Smith Valley and is being developed and implemented by the Smith Valley Conservation District under a grant agreement with NFWF. The Program has also provided funding to the Mason Valley Conservation District to assist in land stewardship projects on other properties in Mason Valley, along with outreach, planning and related stewardship initiatives. The revegetation efforts are building on initial research by the University of Nevada-Reno (UNR) and there is continued input from key researchers who are excited to see the scaled-up efforts being implemented.

Conservation and stewardship funds have also been provided to:

- Nevada Department of Wildlife's (NDOW's) Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area (MVWMA) as part of an ongoing project to conserve water at the north end of the Management Area for eventual discharge into the Walker River;
- City of Yerington for a project to remove accumulated sediment from the Yerington Weir at the north end of Mason Valley to reduce flood risks while improving conveyance of both leased and acquired water; and,
- Nevada Chapter of The Nature Conservancy for assistance in identifying critical habitats to help inform the Program's acquisition and stewardship efforts.

Finally, discussions are ongoing through the Walker Basin Stewardship Council, an advisory group that includes landowners, City and County representatives, and other local, state, and federal entities with particular expertise in land stewardship practices. The Council focuses on revegetation projects on retired farmland and on efforts to sustain agricultural production on core lands in conjunction with innovative water conservation efforts.

"The intent behind the program is that great efforts are going to be made to avoid any dust bowl and to avoid any kind of abandonment. A 9 to 10 page revegetation plan is in place for the Aguiar place. Working with NFWF, I am happy to say there's always a concern to do the right thing, and that has impressed me." -Steve Tomac, former Game Warden for NDOW and current NFWF Field Operations Supervisor (Mason Valley News, November 10, 2011)

STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

Sovereign Property: Approximately 177 acres are being revegetated under a 3-year agreement with the landowner. The land was seeded with oats in the spring of 2011 for soil stabilization and lightly irrigated during the summer months. The oats were harvested that fall and the stubble was left in the field, again for stabilization. The land was re-seeded with a mixture of native grasses in November 2011, and was also flash grazed (short duration, high-intensity grazing) by sheep to help work seeds into the ground. The property will be irrigated during the summer of 2012 as needed, and native shrubs will be planted in the fall of 2012.

Former Aguiar & Sciarani Properties: The first 800 acres of this nearly 2,000-acre parcel will be donated to the MVWMA in 2012, with an additional 800 acres planned for donation soon thereafter. A revegetation plan has been established by the Mason Valley Conservation District with the agreement of all associated parties. The plan focuses on plant species that provide key habitat for wildlife. After the plan has been implemented, the donated land will be open for public use as part of the MVWMA such as hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. A substantial portion of the donated land has never been intensively farmed and was used primarily as pasture land. These lands will be monitored for changes in vegetation following the shift to dry-land (upland wildlife) status. Grazing may continue on a limited basis where consistent with MVWMA management purposes.

Other Properties: The lands associated with other Program water transactions do not require revegetation: the properties had either previously been developed (so the appurtenant water rights were no longer being used), or the sellers had groundwater rights which were moved onto the properties to continue farming. Future transactions will include appropriate land stewardship agreements that will come into effect immediately upon close of escrow. The land stewardship agreements are each uniquely designed to address the long-term needs for the property including habitat restoration, dust control, and weed management.

"[The former Sciarani] property is a diamond of what habitat used to look like. It is the very best example of native habitat in the valley and that acquisition is a win-win for the public in so many ways. I think it's the very best example of game and wildlife habitat in Mason Valley and what the valley looked like prior to our settlement here." -Steve Tomac (Mason Valley News, November 17, 2011)

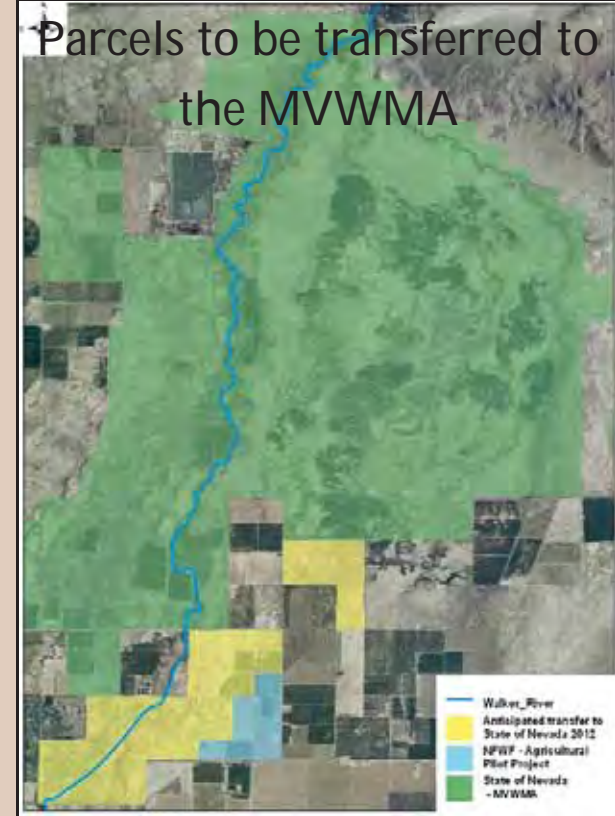
Sovereign - Spring 2011



Sovereign - Fall 2011



Parcels to be transferred to the MVWMA



RESEARCH

The Program entered into a grant agreement with the University of Nevada-Reno and Desert Research Institute (DRI) for Phase II research in 2010.¹ Key elements of the grant include:

- Modeling of surface-groundwater interactions to be used as a decision support tool for future water acquisitions, water leases, change approval, and monitoring (see page 12 for additional information);
- Research on alternative crops with potential for water conservation and for restoring retired farmland;
- Economic evaluation of new agricultural opportunities including identification of potential markets for less water-intensive crops; and,
- Ecological monitoring of the Walker River.

A series of Research Coordination meetings sponsored by the Program has helped to enhance communication between and among University researchers, agency representatives, and others involved in Walker Basin research. In addition, a Water Group was established in 2010 with participation from local, state, federal, and tribal entities involved in the technical aspects of water management in the Basin. The Water Group has been discussing the Program's water modeling and decision support needs, as well as current and additional monitoring that will be needed to ensure that acquired and leased water results in improved Walker River stream flows and increased Walker Lake inflows. The model is continually refined by new information attained through various activities and partnerships in the Basin.

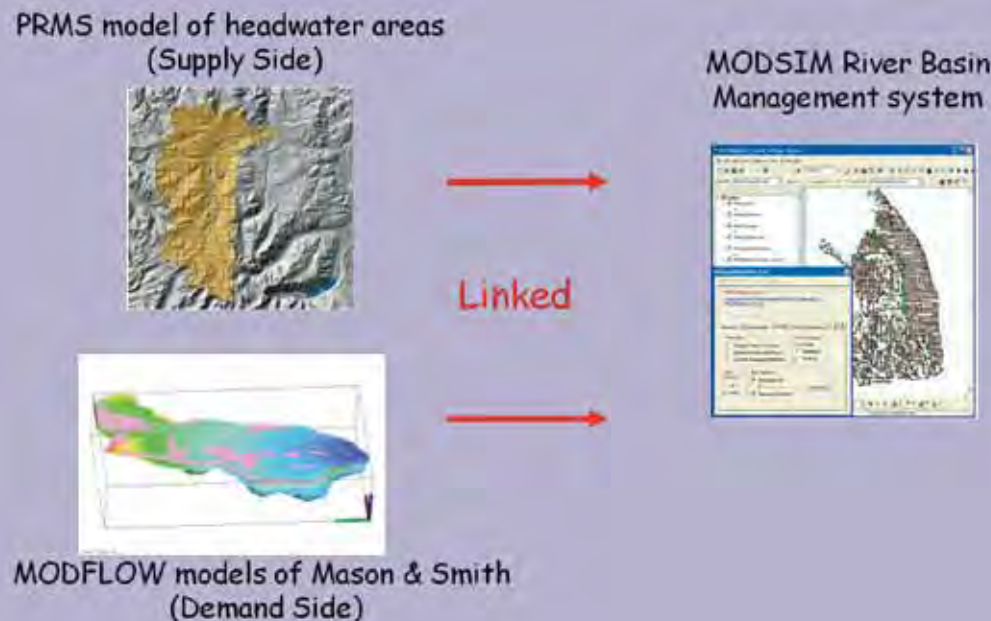
"The information we gather through the [Program] will be of value throughout western Nevada, an area with only four to five inches of precipitation a year. It's important we establish desirable vegetation on land instead of allowing noxious weeds to grow or leaving it as bare, blowing soil." - Jay Davison, Area Forage and Alternative Crops Specialist, University of Nevada Reno (Mason Valley News, August 20, 2010)

¹ Phase I research was completed as part of NSHE's Walker Basin Project.

WATER MODELING

University of Nevada Reno-Desert Research Institute's Decision Support Tool (DST): The UNR/DRI team is developing a comprehensive surface and groundwater model of the Walker Basin upstream of Wabuska to assist in informing water acquisition and leasing efforts. The DST team is also working to address questions and provide base knowledge to multiple user groups on potential outcomes associated with the water acquisition and leasing programs including the water rights change approval process. These efforts are facilitated through regular meetings of the Water Group and includes representation from (among others) the Nevada Department of Water Resources, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Federal Water Master's Office, Walker River Paiute Tribe, Walker River Irrigation District, Walker Lake Working Group, U.S. Geological Survey, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

U.S. Geological Survey: USGS is working on a hydrologic surface and groundwater interaction model for the lower Walker River (Wabuska to Walker Lake) under grants from Reclamation and the Program. One of the key objectives of USGS' current work is to integrate the UNR-DRI and USGS models in order to gain a better understanding of how water moves throughout the entire Walker River stream system.



How the DST Works

WATER LEASING DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Throughout 2010, the Walker River Irrigation District and NFWF continued to work on a framework for the Water Leasing Demonstration Program authorized as part of the Program under PL 111-85 (see page 19). In early 2011, however, a variety of landowner concerns over the negotiated framework led the District to reconsider its approach.

In April, with support from WRID's newly-established Landowner Advisory Committee, NFWF and the District reached agreement on a preliminary phase of the demonstration program to take advantage of anticipated high River flows following a winter with above-average snowpack. The agreement provided funds for willing landowners to be paid to leave such "flood waters" in the River throughout the spring snowmelt season. Roughly two-thirds of the District's 80,000 eligible acres enrolled in the program.

These enrollments left a significant amount of flood water in the River that would have otherwise been diverted to fields and farms. These reduced diversions combined with high spring runoff to result in a nearly four-foot increase in Walker Lake's surface elevation by the end July. This was a significant step forward by the District, participating landowners, and the Program to work together to improve River flows for the benefit of Walker Lake. Work on subsequent phases of the Water Leasing Demonstration Program also continued throughout 2011.¹

"I'm a strong supporter of the lease program. I think we should proceed with that. The water will stay in the farmers' hands with a control on the amount. There is a process for that." - Steven Fulstone, Board of Directors, WRID (Mason Valley News, October 15, 2010)

¹ The 3-year water leasing demonstration program period will begin when individual water leasing agreements are in place and the initial phase of the program is underway.

FUTURE OF THE PROGRAM

The Program has made significant progress over the last two years. Over the next two to three years the Program will further define its role and the long-term vision for restoration efforts in the Walker basin. Highlights of specific activities planned or underway include the following:

- Development of a comprehensive strategic plan to help inform the long-term goals and activities of the Program;
- Continued evaluation of offers from potential willing sellers, along with ongoing acquisition of water under voluntary, negotiated agreements when cost-effective and mutually beneficial;
- Further development of and support for revegetation, land stewardship, and habitat conservation initiatives;
- Work with local farmers and ranchers to reduce overall water use while supporting local agriculture through partnerships, demonstration projects, and community involvement;
- Ongoing work with the Walker River Irrigation District, its Landowner Advisory Committee, and other interested parties to support timely development and implementation of demonstration water leasing;
- Completion of negotiations with the Walker River Paiute Tribe to ensure appropriate conveyance of leased and acquired water through the Tribe's reservation to Walker Lake; and,
- Detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of the Program and identification of associated opportunities for economic development and improvement.

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES FY10 AND FY11

	<u>FY10</u>	<u>FY11</u>
GRANT AWARDS	\$4,681,043	\$4,651,475
WATER ACQUISITIONS/TRANSACTIONS	\$7,046,028	\$16,953,159
ADMINISTRATION AND CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	\$937,582	\$1,246,355
ASSESSMENTS, TAXES AND FEES	\$8,909	\$67,832
<hr/>		
TOTAL	\$12,673,562	\$22,918,821

GRANTEES, STAKEHOLDERS, AND PARTICIPANTS¹

Bureau of Reclamation	Bureau of Indian Affairs	City of Yerington
Desert Research Institute	Federal Water Master	Lyon County
Mason Valley Conservation District	Nevada Department of Wildlife	Mono County
Nevada Division of Water Resources	The Nature Conservancy	Trout Unlimited
Smith Valley Conservation District	University of Nevada-Reno	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Geological Survey	Walker Lake Working Group	Walker River Irrigation District
Walker River Paiute Tribe	Yerington Paiute Tribe	

¹ Includes Program grant recipients, members of the Walker Basin Stewardship Council, Water Group attendees, and Research Coordination meeting participants.

EXCERPTS FROM FEDERAL LEGISLATION

PURPOSES

"[T]he Secretary of the Interior ... shall provide [funds] to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ... for the primary purpose of restoring and maintaining Walker Lake ... consistent with protection of the ecological health of the Walker River and the riparian and watershed resources of the East, West and Main Walker Rivers."

"The amount made available ... shall be used, consistent with the primary purpose ... , to support efforts to preserve Walker Lake while protecting agricultural, environmental, and habitat interests in the Walker River Basin."¹

ACQUISITIONS

"[T]he Secretary of the Interior shall provide [funds to] the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ... to acquire from willing sellers land, water appurtenant to land, and related interests in the Walker River Basin, Nevada."²

"[I]n any case in which there are willing sellers or willing participants, [funds] may be used ... to purchase land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests [to benefit] at-risk natural desert terminal lakes and associated riparian and watershed resources."³

WATER LEASING

"[T]he Walker River Irrigation District, acting in accordance with an agreement between the District and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation," shall use the funds provided "to administer and manage a 3-year water leasing demonstration program in the Walker River Basin to increase Walker Lake inflows [and] for use in obtaining information regarding the establishment, budget, and scope of a longer-term leasing program."⁴

"[I]n any case in which there are willing sellers or willing participants, [funds] may be used ... to lease water [to benefit] at-risk natural desert terminal lakes and associated riparian and watershed resources."⁵

CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP

"In any case in which there are willing sellers or willing participants, [funds] may be used ... for efforts consistent with researching, supporting, and conserving fish, wildlife, plant, and habitat resources in the Walker River Basin."⁶

"[T]he Secretary of the Interior shall provide [funds to] the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation ... to design and implement conservation and stewardship measures to address impacts from [acquisition] activities ... in conjunction with willing landowners."⁷

"The amount[s] made available shall be used ... for associated conservation and stewardship activities, including water conservation and management, watershed planning, land stewardship, habitat restoration, and the establishment of a local, nonprofit entity to manage land, water and related interests acquired by, and to achieve the purposes of, the Walker Basin Restoration Program."⁸

ASSOCIATED RESEARCH

"The amount[s] made available ... shall be allocated ... to the University of Nevada-Reno, and the Desert Research Institute[:] (I) for additional research to supplement the water rights research conducted under [NSHE's Walker Basin Project]; (II) to conduct an annual evaluation of the results of the activities carried out under [the water leasing demonstration project and the water rights acquisition program]; and (III) to support and provide information to [the Program] to preserve Walker Lake and protect agricultural, environmental, and habitat interests in the Walker River Basin."⁹

¹ Section 208(a)(1) and Section 208(b)(1)(A) of Public Law [PL] 111-85

² Section 208(a)(1)(A)(i) of PL 109-103 (as amended by PL 111-85)

³ Section 2507(b) of PL 107-171 (as amended by PL 112-74)

⁴ Section 208(b)(1)(A)(i) of PL 111-85

⁵ Section 2507(b) of PL 107-171 (as amended by PL 112-74)

⁶ Section 2507(b)(3) of PL 107-171 (as amended by PL 110-246, PL 111-85, and PL 112-74)

⁷ Section 208(a)(1)(A)(iii) of PL 1109-103 (as amended by PL 111-85)

⁸ Section 208(b)(1)(B)(iv) of PL 111-85 (as amended by PL 112-74)

⁹ Section 208(b)(1)(B)(v) of PL 111-85. Annual evaluation of the water leasing and acquisitions programs has been deferred pending onset of the water leasing demonstration program.

GRANT AWARDS¹

Water Leasing Demonstration Program in the Walker River Basin

Walker River Irrigation District

\$2,051,328

Administer and manage a three-year water leasing demonstration program in the Walker River Basin to increase Walker Lake inflows and for use in obtaining information regarding the establishment, budget, and scope of a longer-term leasing program.

Walker Basin Research

University of Nevada-Reno and the Desert Research Institute

\$4,650,000

Evaluate potential water right acquisitions in the Walker River Basin through further development and refinement of the Decision Support Tool. Additional research projects will focus on monitoring the health of the Walker River aquatic life through incremental changes in river management; further investigation of the use of alternative agriculture and irrigation scheduling technology for water conservation in the Walker Basin; research that links water conservation in agricultural practices; and, other opportunities associated with water conservation in the Walker Basin.

Sediment Removal and Long-term Management in Yerington

City of Yerington

\$1,216,917

Dredge 48,000 tons of excess sediment from the Walker River near Yerington to reduce upstream flood concerns and improve conveyance of leased and acquired water to Walker Lake.

Retired Farmland Revegetation in Smith Valley, Nevada

Smith Valley Conservation District

\$180,972

Revegetate approximately 177 acres of previously retired farmland to prevent erosion and weed infestation in conjunction with Program water acquisition activities.

Restoration of Retired Farmland in Mason Valley, Nevada

Mason Valley Conservation District

\$352,257

Conduct conservation, stewardship, restoration, rehabilitation, education, and outreach tasks associated with the Walker Basin Restoration Program.

Conveyance of Water through Walker River Paiute Reservation

Walker River Paiute Tribe

\$200,000

Develop criteria and support negotiations towards an agreement to convey leased and acquired water through the Walker River Paiute Indian Reservation. Project is inclusive of interaction with other entities within the watershed.

¹ Amounts listed reflect total grant awards and may differ from the amounts expended to-date.

Walker River Basin Water Rights Administration

Nevada Division of Water Resources

\$616,043

Create a program to study water usage in Mason and Smith Valley using METRIC (Mapping EvapoTranspiration at high Resolution with Internalized Calibration) and support incremental costs associated with Program implementation activities.

Mason Valley Wildlife Area Water Conservation and Release

Nevada Department of Wildlife

\$50,000

Develop plans to conserve and release water from the Mason Valley Wildlife Management Area into the Walker River for use downstream into Walker Lake.

Securing Key Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Watersheds

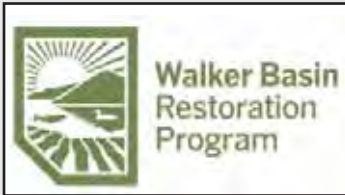
Trout Unlimited, Inc.

\$15,000*

Develop a strategy for restoring interconnected stream and lake systems including Walker Basin tributaries while managing threats from non-native species to ensure resilience of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout populations during rapid climate change.

*Also awarded \$32,303 in other funds (USFWS) for a total award of \$47,303

"The health of the Walker River Basin and Walker Lake depends on people working together ... [T]oday's legislation ... reflects the many ways farmers, ranchers, sports men and women, and agencies ... can choose ... to participate in a solution for the Basin that best serves their business, personal, and community's interests ... I believe it marks a new chapter of collaborative efforts in the Walker River Basin." - Senator Harry Reid, Congressional Record-Senate, July 29, 2009 (following Senate-enactment of legislation establishing the Walker Basin Restoration Program)



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