



More than \$370,000 approved for emergency Caughlin Fire restoration

With dry weather continuing to provide a welcome window of time, officials Wednesday agreed to fund emergency restoration efforts across a vulnerable landscape burned by the Caughlin Fire.

Directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority agreed to fund a \$219,856 grant for emergency restoration projects. Reno and Washoe County will add to that with \$150,850 in labor costs.

"It is urgent," said Lynda Nelson, Washoe County's chief parks planner. "The rains will come eventually, and we want to have things in place."

The Caughlin Fire, which destroyed 30 southwest Reno homes Nov. 18 and damaged dozens of others, burned across nearly 2,000 acres of steep terrain with ferocious intensity, leaving areas subject to potentially serious erosion problems when winter rain and snow arrives.

The grant approved Wednesday comes from the water authority's Truckee River Fund -- established to finance projects protecting the river's water quality. Sediment-laden runoff from the fire area could flow into the river with the potential

to impact the utility's water treatment plants.

The Truckee River Fund also financed reseeding and other restoration efforts after the Hawken Fire, which burned 2,700 acres just west of the Caughlin Fire area in July 2007.

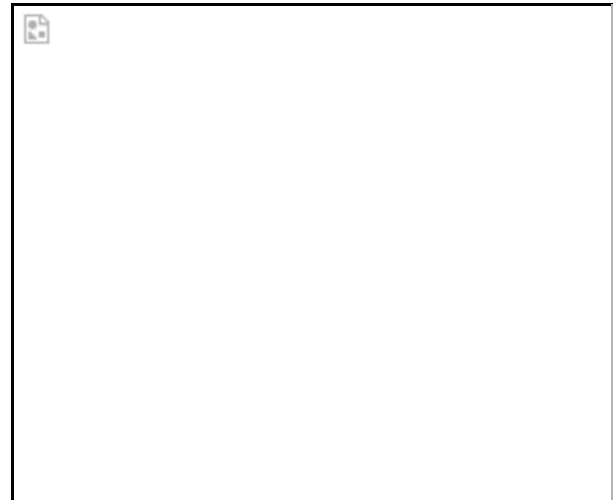
"Our support of that restoration effort did a lot for the health of the watershed," said Ron Penrose, TMWA project manager.

Needed restoration work was identified by a "burn area emergency response" team composed of experts from Reno and Washoe County, the Nevada Division of Forestry, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service and the North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

Burned areas in need of work include parts of Manzanita Canyon, the Evans Creek drainage and Windy Hill.

Some work is already under way, including construction of debris basins and dams in

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Manzanita Canyon.

This week, Washoe County crews installed a wall of cement construction barriers borrowed from the Nevada Department of Transportation to prevent rocks from rolling onto Lakeside Drive in the Windy Hill area.

Restoration will likely gear up to "full bore" after the holidays, Nelson said.

The Caughlin Fire poses particular erosion hazards because it burned so late in the year. Most fires burn in the summer months, giving officials plenty of time to have erosion-control measures in place before winter precipitation.

"We've been very fortunate with the weather," said Kyle West, an engineer for the city of Reno involved in restoration.

No significant storms are forecast for the region over the next week, though there is a slight chance of showers late Tuesday, according to the National Weather Service.



Workers install barriers along Lakeside Drive in the Bartley Ranch-Windy Hill area to guard against falling rock on the steep land burned by the

Caughlin Fire. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority on Wednesday will consider approval of a \$219,000 grant for erosion control and seeding of the area burned by the Caughlin Fire. / Andy Barron/RGJ

Caughlin Fire restoration

- » \$219,856 restoration grant from Truckee Meadows Water Authority to the Nevada Land Conservancy approved Wednesday.
- » Matching funds of \$150,850 to come from Reno and Washoe County.
- » Emergency effort to control erosion with debris basins, dams, channel clearing and straw barriers.
- » Hydroseeding of native plants planned.
- » Some aerial seeding might occur once snow falls.
- » Grant money from Truckee River Fund to protect water quality.
- » 76 projects worth \$7.3 million financed by Truckee River Fund.

Source: Truckee Meadows Water Authority

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