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Late notice: THE JOY OF DISCOVERY

Tintin 'danger tourist' leaves Coke can for world's most isolated tribe



Lake Powell at Wahweap Marina as seen in December 2021. Dwindling streamflows and falling reservoir levels have made it more likely that what some experts call a Colorado River Compact "tripwire" will be hit in 2027. Credit: Heather Sackett/Aspen Journalism

ARE LAWMAKERS IN DEEP THOUGHT ON DEEP BRINES IN NV AND UT LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS?

Water warriors.

We have good news and plenty of moxie. So even as we navigate unfamiliar terrain and challenges ahead, we do so with hope and gusto. The divides of others will not segregate us from our mission. And like the waters we champion, we believe in the connections that the naked eye can't always see.

We know drought will persist this summer. But so can we.

This week we have updates on our discussions about groundwater pumping across the west, water conservation efforts advancing out of committee in the Nevada Legislature, the brine mining bill that passed Utah's legislature, efforts to limit restrictions on evaporative cooling in Las Vegas, and pro-sprawl policies in the Nevada Legislature.

Runoff from snowpacks across the mountain west are beginning. So take some time in April to see peak flows in person. Send us pictures or videos of the waters you love.

GETTING SALTY: CAN LAWMAKERS CONCENTRATE ON BRINES?

Bill proposals this year in Nevada and Utah have sparked a conversation about the regulation of pumping brines that exist deep in the earth's crust.

This conversation comes as companies now have drilling and processing techniques that allow machines to access, extract, and profit from places that were once infeasible. These brines — the remains of water resources that can be many millennia in age — are concentrates of saline waters that are chalk full of prized minerals like lithium, magnesium, barium, boron, and strontium.

Companies can pump the water, extract the minerals, and return the water without much consumptive usage. Companies will need freshwater to process. But, because they can return water underground, some interests in corporate America tout these technologies as something that should not cause anyone concern.

Some hydrologists will tell you that there's no such thing as a non-consumptive water use. That's because the very removal of water, even temporarily, forever changes the nature of an aquifer system. Regulators must ask hard questions of entities that want to pump and reinject water. Just because brines come from deep in the earth doesn't mean that there isn't a connection with other waters.

Regardless, companies cast these forms of extraction as clean and green. And, while they are

different than traditional hard rock mining operations synonymous with deep pits and tailings piles, there are still public interest considerations to weigh — especially when it comes to water in the nation's driest places.

The drafters of our water laws could not have had this type of extraction in mind when they created the cornerstones of our appropriation regimes. So now we are tasked with figuring out what's best.

The magnitude of human-induced phenomena — like pumping water thousands of feet deep — changes geologic formations. There is nothing universal when it comes to localized hydrogeologic considerations. There are connections between deep groundwater and shallower aquifers in some places. There are pressure gradients and geologic formations that, when deprived of the water, change in ways that can have hydrologic implications in each stratigraphic instance. These are complex mosaics.

GBWN conceptually proposed <u>AB109</u> in the Nevada Legislature and had a significant interest in <u>HB478</u> in Utah. Both pieces of legislation focus on public participation, property rights, and the public interest. Both bills have implications for our work to ensure that companies are not undermining the core tenets of our laws and impacting communities — plant, animal and human.

Again, non-consumptive uses of water don't preclude detrimental impacts. This is a novel conversation. But what's new today will be standard tomorrow. We must regulate with complexity in mind.

which passed in the final hours of Utah's legislative session, expands a program that lawmakers created in 2024. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bridger Bolinder and David Hinkins, provides clarity on many much-needed functions of law for companies and members of the public. GBWN knows first-hand about the gaps that existed in Utah law prior to the passage of HB478. We are litigating over matters regarding deep lithium brines that exist below the Green River and a radioactive waste site. Some of these gaps are the subject of our litigation.

The bill offers clarity on general oversight of brine mining by the Division of Oil Gas and Minerals, royalties, multi-mineral development areas, the limits of local regulation (versus that of the state), and much of the nitty-gritty regarding permitting. For GBWN, most importantly, the bill affirmed that brine operations must go through the standard water rights permitting process that exists for all water users. This requirement sends an important message to other states across the west that regulators must be weighing impacts of non-consumptive rights for deep brine extraction.

This will ensure that regulators can consider hydrologic connectivity, the implications of non-consumptive proposals, and other place-based hydrologic factors.

On a large scale, while we can't see what's happening below the earth's crust, we can make

educated guesses. Nevertheless, there is always uncertainty associated with drilling, pumping and removing water/minerals from those depths of the earth.

Considering their age and depth, it's fair to say that brines are, for the most part, not renewable resources. No matter what you believe about mineral extraction, you can agree with GBWN that regulating the extraction of deep waters and minerals should be done carefully and with proper oversight.

NEVADA AB109: WATER RIGHTS FAIRNESS ACT

Democrat Assemblywoman Selena La Rue Hatch championed <u>the legislation</u> to help us guarantee proper permitting and regulation for companies looking to tap deep brines.

Right now, there are loopholes in Nevada law regarding this matter. Specifically, there is statutory uncertainty about water permitting requirements for the geothermal industry and some brine extractors that can claim zero-consumptive use. Specifically, we know that some of their uses of deep brine water can go un-permitted. That is a major loophole that is problematic for other water users that have gone through the process of getting a permit. Again, pumping water from deep underground sources can cause surface-level problems for existing water users and wildlife and changes to groundwater systems. It is negligent to ignore the actions of industrial users on our water supplies.

AB109 mandates that brine pumpers — even if they re-inject the water — must follow the existing rules required of farmers, hard-rock miners, cities and many other water users. This is standard for other non-consumptive uses, like hydropower operators, that siphon water from rivers or streams to spin turbines and then return that water back to the river or stream.

We need to account for all industrial water users: Where is the water diverted, where is it returned, and how is it used? These are basic questions.

What we want is nothing new.

But of course, the mining and geothermal industries are opposed for now. Go figure.

A COOL DOWN ON EVAPORATIVE COOLING BANS?

Among the poorly conceived water bills in the Nevada Legislature this session is a proposal to prevent local governments from prohibiting businesses that use evaporative cooling. Think of <u>AB385</u> as a prohibition on a moratorium from the bill sponsor, Republican Assemblymember Lisa Cole.

Evaporative cooling is highly water-consumptive at scale compared to some emerging techniques for cooling. Data centers, businesses and homes use different variations of the technology, which comes at a high cost for electricity and water.

In 2023, Southern Nevada prohibited new businesses from using evaporative cooling machinery because of its water usage.

But now, as we've seen with other water-saving measures, there is pushback. The legislation would ban the ban, per se, across the state. That's a problem for Las Vegas. The Southern Nevada Water Authority has done its long-term planning analysis with this prohibition on evaporative cooling in mind. This would essentially mean that Las Vegas would use more water than was once predicted, which could impact its share of the Colorado River. Nice.

Tell Assemblymember Cole that you oppose this bill.

On March 24, lawmakers serving on the Assembly Natural Resources Committee passed AB9, legislation that would allow farmers to conserve water on a temporary and voluntary basis for the benefit of wildlife, flow and quantity.

This is a major first step and has been the result of partnerships with Eureka County and the support of the Nevada Farm Bureau and a number of other public interest groups. It will now move to the floor of the Assembly.

This is especially important for GBWN because in 2007 the founders of the organization led the effort to create the framework for this program, getting the bill passed with rural and urban interests aligned and in support.

We thank committee members who supported the bill and look forward to its potential advancement in the Nevada Senate.

sprawl at sloan.com

Sprawl unites politicians unlike other topics in the nation's driest state.

In the past month, Democrats and Republicans in the Nevada congressional delegation introduced legislation to sell off large tracts of public lands in rural and urban counties throughout the state. And one lawmaker in the State Legislature is pushing <u>a resolution</u> championing one of those efforts, urging President Trump to approve land federal sell-offs near Las Vegas that could have major implications on long-term water supplies.

est. The legislation poses many questions about the impacts on land and water in dry times. The proposal from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto and Rep. Susie Lee, Democrats, approves the potential sale of tens of thousands of acres near Las Vegas in some of the driest patches of the Mojave Desert. And the same can be said for Republican Rep. Mark Amodei and his proposals to sell off land in Northwestern Nevada.

In the Nevada Legislature, <u>AJR10</u>, sponsored by Democrat Sandra Jauregui, implores the federal government to dispose of more federal land via the legislation from the congressional delegation. This symbolic, resolute gesture will certainly get support from both sides of the aisle in the State Legislature. We are hearing that there might not even be a

hearing in the Assembly and that it will go straight to the floor for a vote.

We live in a society where many people in power find public participation to be more of an inconvenience than a necessity. Robust participation is what GBWN exists to protect. While lawmakers have a right to put forth bills, that process should be accompanied by thorough discussion. In Congress, shamefully, it is not an aberration for lawmakers to hold hearings on bills that aren't even yet publicly available. And when Congress does hold hearings, private citizens aren't stepping up to a podium to give comment. But the friends of lawmakers are often giving testimony.

Coincidentally, the whole concept of passing federal bills to sell off public lands is about cutting out a public process that otherwise guides federal land sales, in the instance of the BLM, via the Resource Management Plan process.

Major federal land sales should first be considered in Resource Management Plans and subjected to extensive public review and participation. But congressional bills override that.

In Nevada and Utah, GBWN believes it is capricious to say that there is unbridled opportunity for private-sector growth on public lands. Why? There is not unlimited water. Nor is there money to cover the costs of sprawling. Nevada is a unique case study because a special section of law has allowed the Bureau of Land Management to sell off more than 30,000 acres of public lands since 1998 in Las Vegas. Housing prices, utility costs, road building, school funding and many other factors are not without their problems. And adding another million people to Vegas isn't likely to fix the problem.

Ask the people of Vegas if they'd like the government to build more homes for California expats. Many of them will point you to Lake Mead.

<u>Tell congressional offices</u> to keep away from selling our public lands. And tell <u>Assemblymember</u> <u>Jauregui</u> to do the same.

Thank you for joining us this week dear reader. Don't forget to send us your photos or videos of runoff to info@greatbasinwater.org

And remember: The sand stays, the water goes. Kyle

A century before Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl offered his hard-won assurance that "everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances," Dostoyevsky writes:

Brother! I'm not despondent and I haven't lost heart. Life is everywhere, life is in us ourselves, not outside. There will be people by my side, and to be a human being among people and to remain one forever, no matter in what circumstances, not to grow despondent and not to lose heart — that's what life is all about, that's its task. I have come to recognize that. The idea has entered my flesh and blood... The head that created, lived the higher life of art, that recognized and grew accustomed to the higher demands of the spirit, that head has already been cut from my shoulders... But there remain in me a heart and the same flesh and blood that can also love, and suffer, and pity, and remember, and that's life, too!

Tahoe awaits details following California state of emergency proclamation to expedite fuels reduction projects

"The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team is awaiting details from California Gov. Gavin Newsom's office and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) after the governor issued a Proclamation of a State of Emergency at the start of March in response to the Los Angeles fires in January. The March 1 proclamation states immediate action is needed to prevent similar events with millions of housing units in high or very high fire hazard severity zones within wildland urban interfaces throughout California. The proclamation suspends statutory and administrative requirements to the extent necessary for expediting critical fuels reduction projects. This applies to the California Environmental Quality Act. "The partners welcome any new policies," Milan Yeates said with the multi-partner Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, "that will accelerate the pace and scale of forest health and community protection projects in the basin and see this proclamation as a potential new tool in the toolbox." ... "Read more from the Tahoe Daily Tribune.

Commentary: Tahoe agency seeks state funds to advance development agenda couched as environmentalism

Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos, a Washoe County resident and advocate working to protect Lake Tahoe, writes, "A sobering Lake Tahoe investigative journalism series by CalMatters arrived at an inopportune time for the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The deep dive into how public monies are used at Lake Tahoe landed as the agency comes before Nevada and California legislatures seeking millions of dollars for its operating budget. TRPA will be in Carson City on April 2. As explained in an NPR CapRadio interview, a team of reporters spent months requesting and analyzing documents from the agency and submitting public records requests to federal, state and county sources. What came to light is that the Tahoe agency and a "myriad" of funders from both states and the five counties in the Tahoe basin along with deep-pocketed private interests (which include resort executives and developers on non-profit boards) have established a closed loop system for advancing pet projects. Items include: a consultant-generated rebranding of tourism as 'sustainable'; photo opp summits; trail construction into once pristine shorelines and forests; and, despite a court order to cease and desist: poisoning water in the Tahoe Keys to ease boat access. ... "Read more from the Nevada Current.

Data farm proposed near Salton Sea could be first major development in Lithium Valley "The first major development in Imperial County's vaunted but stalled Lithium Valley may have nothing to do with lithium. Instead, a massive data server farm could replace hay fields on a 315-acre patch along Highway 111 at West Sinclair Road, the "gateway" to the proposed industrial zone in the Southern California desert. CalETHOS president and chief operating officer Joel

Stone told The Desert Sun that the publicly traded start-up aims to break ground on a 200,000-

square-foot data center by 2026, part of a \$5.5 billion, million-square-foot "first phase" campus. Eventually the company wants to build a whopping 3 to 4 million square feet of buildings — the equivalent of 60 football fields worth — in Lithium Valley's boundaries. What's drawing the Tustin-based company to this blazing hot, impoverished county? "We could care less about the lithium ... We care about the power," Stone said, referring to a vast, boiling brine reserve tucked deep underground that can be used to extract reliable steam power. ... "Read more from the Desert Sun.

Dwindling water supply, legal questions push Colorado River into 'wildly uncharted territory'

"Time is ticking for states that share the shrinking Colorado River to negotiate a new set of governing rules. One major sticking point, which has the potential to thrust the parties into a protracted legal battle, hinges on differing interpretations of a few sentences in a century-old agreement. In a recent letter, the river's Lower Basin states – California, Nevada and Arizona – asked federal officials to analyze the effects of a hypothetical legal concept known as a "compact call." The problem? The 1922 Colorado River Compact says nothing about a compact call. And although the phrase often looms like a threat over Colorado River discussions, there is no agreed-upon definition of the term, what would trigger a compact call nor how one would play out. In fact, the Upper Basin states – Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming – don't believe the laws governing the river even contemplate it. ... " Continue reading from Aspen Journalism.

How much water flows down the Colorado River? The right answer is more important than ever

"With their funding source under review by the Trump administration, states and the federal government are continuing a mission to better understand how much water flows in the Colorado River, and how much of that water gets used before it reaches Arizona. As the possibility of legal battles on the Colorado River grows, competing states could use water data to back up their arguments, including claims that Arizona should bear the most water cuts in future shortages. The Upper Colorado River Commission — a body that represents the four states in the upper Colorado River basin — is in its third year beefing up the measurement of stream flows, water consumption by crops, and water diversions that its states use to regulate their water use. Though the Trump administration is reviewing the federal funding designated for the projects, the commission says it has continued its work. ... "Read more from the Arizona Republic.

Canada, U.S. Columbia River Treaty negotiations in jeopardy



"The United States government has paused

negotiations with Canada to finalize the renewal of a long-standing treaty covering the use of the

Columbia River in the wake of President Donald Trump's trade war with Canada and threats to annex the northern neighbor. The United States and Canada <u>last July reached an agreement in principle</u> to manage the mighty Columbia River, an economic and environmental powerhouse that starts in Canada and flows through Washington and Oregon on its journey to the Pacific Ocean. The two countries negotiated for six years to update the 60-year-old treaty. But talks to finalize the treaty are "currently paused" while the Trump administration reviews all pending international agreements, said Adrian Dix, head of the British Columbia Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions in Canada. ... "Read more from Cascade PBS.

'Chaos': Trump cuts to NOAA disrupt staffing and weather forecasts

"A sense of chaos has gripped the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Noaa), one of the world's premier research agencies, with key staff hastily fired and then rehired, cuts to vital weather forecasting operations and even a new, unsecured server that led to staff being deluged by obscene spam emails. Noaa is currently being upended by Donald Trump's desire to slash the federal government workforce, with more than 1,000 people already fired or resigning from the agency and 1,000 more staffers are expected to be removed as the purge continues. In total, this represents around 20% of the Noaa's workforce. ... "Read more from The Guardian.]

As Trump's national parks cuts deepen, a Calif. desert town decides to fight back (interesting strategy; other entities could transfer to tribes!)

Extract: Twentynine Palms City Council took a precautionary step toward protecting the visitor center from the impacts of these potential cuts last week, by transferring the lease of the city-owned building used for the visitor center out of the hands of the National Park Service. The hope is that moving the lease into the hands of a nonprofit supporting Joshua Tree National Park will ensure that it stays open, even if the National Park Service itself can no longer staff it.

Buried within the government bureaucracy of a lease changing hands is the broader uncertainty of what sweeping changes and cuts to the National Park Service under the Donald Trump administration could mean for Twentynine Palms and other communities bordering national parks.

The U.S. is home to over 1,000 gateway communities within a mile of a national park, many of them heavily reliant on tourism dollars from park visitors. In 2023, parkgoers spent an estimated \$26.4 billion in these communities across the country, supporting around 415,000 jobs, according to the National Park Service.

 $\frac{https://www.sfgate.com/national-parks/article/twentynine-palms-joshua-tree-visitor-center-20204791.php}{}$

Nevada's only Native American youth shelter gets lifeline as it fights for survival

The donation from the NV Energy Foundation follows reporting from The Nevada Independent and will give the tribe time to find permanent funding

An empty boys dorm room at Stepping Stones Emergency Youth Shelter on Aug. 5, 2024, in Fallon on the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Reservation. (David Calvert/The NevadaIndependent)

Nevada's only shelter for Native American youth will remain open through the end of the year thanks to a quarter-million dollar donation from the NV Energy Foundation.

The 10-bed facility, located about 20 miles outside of Fallon, was <u>scheduled</u> to close in mid-September amid a budgetary disagreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) that led to a loss of funding.

Vice Chairman of the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe Andrew Hicks said the donation is a much-needed lifeline that will allow the shelter to continue serving Native American children while navigating its dispute with the BIA and working to ensure the shelter's finances are sustainable moving forward.

"We have felt alone and frustrated in this battle," Hicks said in an interview with *The Nevada Independent*. "We are so grateful and overwhelmed by the generosity, support and compassion demonstrated by NV Energy to make our native foster children their priority, too."

Ryan Bellows, the vice president of government and external relations at NV Energy, has served as a judge overseeing juvenile and family services cases for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe since 2009.

Bellows said he's seen firsthand how the shelter provides life-saving services for children needing an emergency removal from a family setting because of abuse, neglect or are at risk of harm, but didn't know the extent of the problem until he read about the shelter's financial issues in *The Nevada Independent*.

The reporting, he said, showed an opportunity for the company's foundation to help. Shortly thereafter, the foundation's board unanimously voted to fund the shelter through the end of the year.

"If Stepping Stones isn't around, these folks don't know where to go," Bellows said. "(Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe) Social Services itself can't house these children."

What's next

Owned and operated by the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe since 1992, the Stepping Stones Emergency Youth Shelter is one of the country's few facilities exclusively serving at-risk tribal children ages 4 to 18, many of whom are in and out of the foster care system.

Since its founding, the 24-hour shelter has housed more than 1,000 Native American children. Yvonne Mori, the shelter's director, said many of the residents have had to return for repeat stays and belong to tribal communities in Northern Nevada, though some have come from as far away as Southern Nevada or neighboring states such as Idaho and California.

Mori said the foundation's support will help the shelter rehire staff and bring back children who were sent away because of limited staffing. She said the timeline for when children will be able to return to the shelter will depend on how soon she can hire more staff members once the money arrives.

"We're going to move as fast as we possibly can because our goal is to get the doors back open and start accepting kids," Mori said.

Bellows said the donation is part of the foundation's \$5 million in annual contributions but is meant as a bridge to allow members of Nevada's federal delegation to help find a permanent funding solution.

"We wanted to make sure that this bridge funding that we're providing through this grant wasn't just going to postpone the eventual demise of the shelter at the year's end," Bellows said.

He added that the shelter is working with officials at Nevada Medicaid and is pursuing other revenue streams, which also gives him confidence that it will find long-term, sustainable funding.

In statements to *The Nevada Independent*, media representatives for Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV) and Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV) applauded the foundation's support of the shelter and said the senators are committed to ensuring federal funds are made available to keep the shelter operating.

In response to requests for information about its policies, BIA representatives said the agency "recognizes and values" Stepping Stone's work, but cannot provide comment because of the ongoing dispute.

While family and tribal community members often step up to help care for Native American children needing an alternative placement, Bellows said the shelter ensures they can live in a setting that will support their heritage if there's not a tribal foster option.

"It's just so critical to keep these children with the culture and heritage and traditions that they're used to and accustomed to," he said. "It's few and far between the times when we have to use Stepping Stones, but when we need them, we need them."

Sorry for late notice: THE JOY OF DISCOVERY

Join Us at the Nevada Museum of Art In Person! April 5, 2025

<u>https://www.nvsteam.org/</u> Schedule next page

https://www.nvsteam.org/
Saturday, April 5, 2025, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM
Opening Remarks and Keynote with Nik Hafermaas
Saturday, April 5, 2025, 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM
A Musical Field Journal
Cultivating Awe Through Slow Looking with the National Gallery of Art
How and Why to Use Archives in the Classroom with the Nevada Museum of Art
Mining for Bright Spots in the Classroom: The Joy of Discovering "what's right
<u>here"</u>
Nature, Art and SEL in Your Classroom

Storytelling for Resilience: Bridging Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Science

<u>Unlocking Creativity: Dive into Discovery Education's STEAM Resources!</u>

Using Field Notes in Classrooms and Galleries with the Nevada Museum of Art

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

Working Lunch

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Keynote 2: Science, Art, and the Fake Barrier Between with Kiersten Formoso

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM

A Musical Field Journal

Cultivating Awe Through Slow Looking with the National Gallery of Art

How and Why to Use Archives in the Classroom with the Nevada Museum of Art

Mining for Bright Spots in the Classroom: The Joy of Discovering "what's right here"

Nature, Art and SEL in Your Classroom

Storytelling for Resilience: Bridging Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Science

Unlocking Creativity: Dive into Discovery Education's STEAM Resources!

Using Field Notes in Classrooms and Galleries with the Nevada Museum of Art

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 4:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Closing Synthesis

CNN

US tourist arrested after allegedly attempting to contact 'world's most isolated' tribe

An American tourist has been arrested after allegedly traveling to a remote island in the Bay of Bengal and attempting to contact one of the world's most isolated tribes.

Pictured: The Tintin 'danger tourist' who left Coke can for world's most isolated tribe



Mykhailo Viktorovych Polyakov tried to make contact with the reclusive indigenous inhabitants of North Sentinel Island

https://www.yahoo.com/news/pictured-tintin-danger-tourist-left-182937805.html