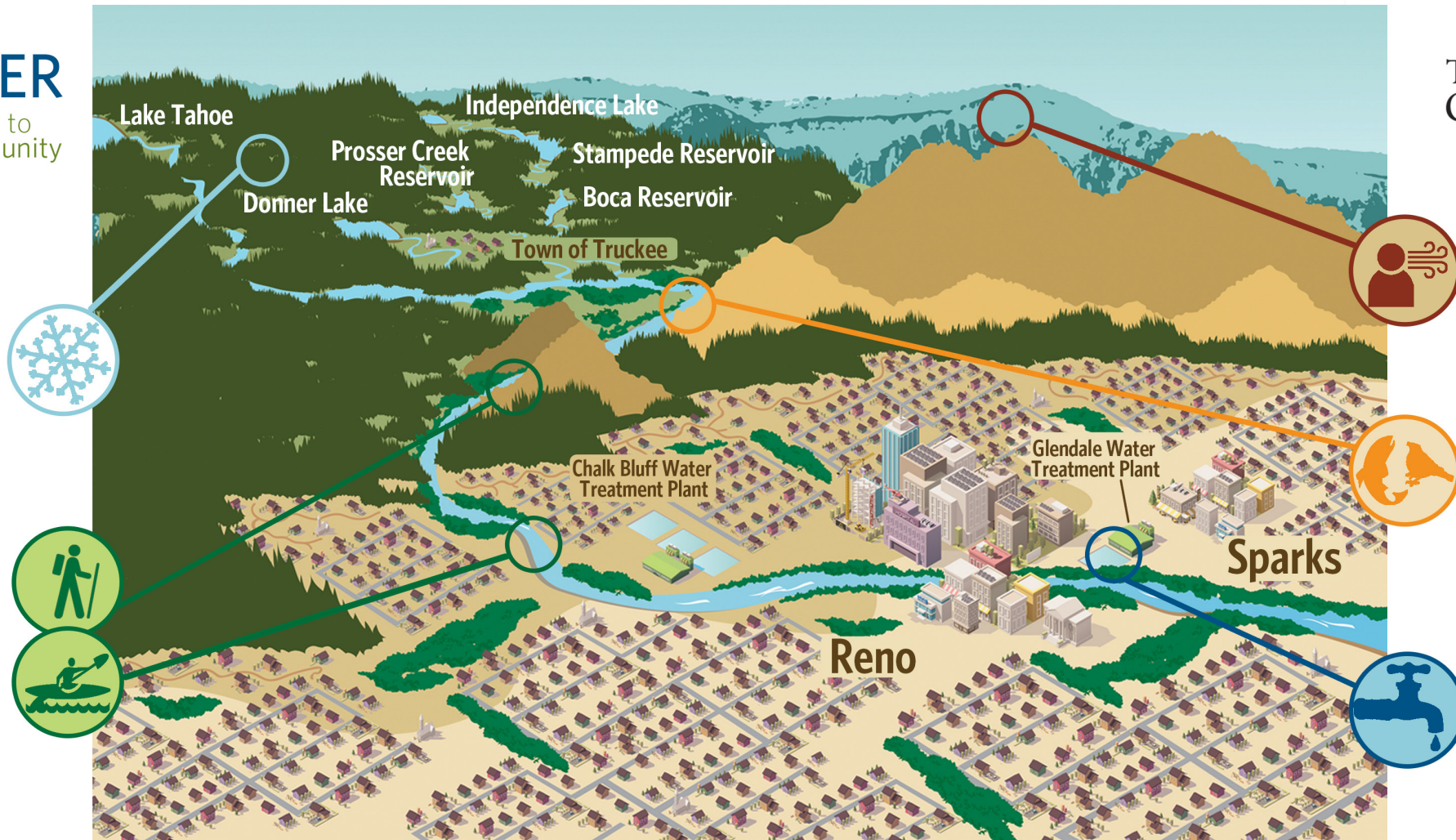


THE TRUCKEE RIVER

Restore Our Forest to
Protect Our Community

A healthy forest soaks up precipitation and releases it slowly over time, making water available longer, improving water quality, and reducing erosion from runoff.

The Truckee River, our reservoirs, and a scenic forest benefit recreation and tourism, which is just one way the river supports the Truckee Meadows' \$20 billion economy.



The Nature Conservancy 

Forests provide clean, fresh air for our communities.

Streams and forests provide habitat for fish and wildlife.

The Truckee River supplies 85% of the water for the Truckee Meadows, including 400,000 residents and 7,000 businesses.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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Cover Image: Independence Lake Preserve © Simon Williams/TNC

¹<http://www.lung.org/our-initiatives/research/monitoring-trends-in-lung-disease/estimated-prevalence-and-incidence-of-lung-disease/>; ² https://outdoorindustry.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/OIA_RecEcoState_NV.pdf; ³ Our forest study is funded by Truckee River Fund, Regional Water Management Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Bureau of Reclamation—Desert Terminal Lakes Program.



THE TRUCKEE RIVER YOU DEPEND ON
DEPENDS ON YOU

The Nature Conservancy 

The forest surrounding the Truckee River headwaters is crucial to life in the Eastern Sierra, including Reno, Sparks, and Truckee. The forest may be at risk for unnaturally large wildfires that threaten our water, air, nature, and way of life. The Nature Conservancy is working to help prevent such fires and seeks our community's support.

Why Do We Need a Healthy Watershed and Forest?

The forest that surrounds the Truckee River's headwaters is the key to the river's health. The forest is more than just trees. It's a water filter, soil stabilizer, air purifier, home for wildlife, and haven for people. The Truckee River, its tributaries, and our system of reservoirs—Boca, Stampede, Prosser Creek, Donner Lake, Independence Lake, and Lake Tahoe—**supply 85% of the water for the Truckee Meadows, our area's \$20 billion/year economy, 400,000 residents, and 7,000 businesses.** The forest is key to the well-being of our community.

Our Forest May Be at Risk

A century of fire suppression has left forests across the West—including our own in the Sierra—vulnerable to unusually large fires. The Truckee River headwaters forest is overly dense with trees, and they're stressed and dying from years of drought. These conditions increase the risk of unnatural, high-intensity fires that burn hotter and faster, destroy tree canopy and wildlife habitat, and send ash and sediment into waterways. Conservancy scientists are working with other forest experts to assess these risks and develop forest restoration and management strategies to reduce the chances of large wildfires.



Clockwise from top left Fishing at The Nature Conservancy's McCarran Ranch Preserve © Simon Williams/TNC; Unhealthy forests are at greater risk of unnaturally large fires. © USDA; Ash and sediment runoff into rivers—like the Rio Grande after NM's Las Conchas Fire—threatens nature, water, and our economy. © Army Corps of Engineers; Girl drinking water © iStock; Mountain bluebird © Tom Koerner/USFWS

Unnaturally Large Fires Are Costly for Nature and People

We can learn from Western cities like Portland, Denver, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe, where **unnaturally large fires in unhealthy forests cost those communities up to hundreds of millions of dollars.** Restoring forest health before these fires may have helped avoid or minimize damage, **saving time, nature, and money.** For New Mexico's Las Conchas Fire, for example, **the impact costs, at about \$1,900 per acre, were more than double what the costs of treatment before the fire would have been, about \$700 per acre.** Fires pose a **direct risk to homes, businesses, and schools,** as well as these other community interests:

CLEAN WATER

Sediment and debris from fires can increase the costs of municipal water treatment by degrading source water quality and, in extreme cases, can render water supply infrastructure unusable. Sediment and debris from fires increase the risk of flooding, and sediment can fill in reservoirs, reduce storage capacity, and require expensive dredging to correct.

CLEAN AIR

Any Nevadan who has experienced a recent fire season knows that when smoke fills our valley, the air can become nearly unbreathable. Lowered air quality threatens public health, especially for the very young, the elderly, and an estimated more than 55,000¹ people in our community with asthma or chronic lung disease.

FISH AND WILDLIFE

Fires destroy habitat for wildlife including black bears, mountain lions, and mule deer. Silt and ash runoff in streams can also reduce water quality and choke out fish like Lahontan cutthroat trout. Restoring unsightly or unusable scorched lands takes decades and can be more expensive than protecting them in the first place.

ECONOMY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Our area's top-notch outdoor recreation opportunities—including kayaking, boating, hiking, camping, wildlife watching, fishing, and skiing—can all be affected by fire and prolonged closures of burned areas. These activities and spending on gear, travel, tourist activities, fuel, and more play a large role in our economy. Statewide each year, outdoor recreation supports \$13 billion in spending and 87,000 jobs.²

The Nature Conservancy Offers Solutions to Protect Our Watershed

Fortunately, it's not too late to reduce the risk of unnaturally large wildfires in the Truckee River watershed. **Taking a lesson from other communities that have paid the price in the aftermath of damaging fires, we want to reduce the risk of large wildfires impacting our community.**

Planning for Our Future The Nature Conservancy—in collaboration with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and U.S. Forest Service—is **applying best-available science to assess the risk of high-intensity wildfires in the Truckee River watershed.** Our study³ will look at how a fire might affect our communities and identify strategies to reduce the chances of such fires and their negative impacts.

Leading With Examples from Around the Globe The Nature Conservancy has helped develop **24 watershed investment programs globally.** Our flagship project, the Rio Grande Water Fund, was developed in response to the 2011 Las Conchas Fire to generate funding to restore 600,000 acres of forest near Albuquerque. In just two years, the program has tripled the amount of acres restored annually and is boosting the local economy by creating jobs and generating wood for timber companies. The main difference we hope for is to create our local program before a devastating fire happens here.

Proven Track Record on the Truckee From protecting and restoring the forested lands around Independence Lake to revitalizing 11 miles of the river downstream of Reno and Sparks, at McCarran Ranch and other sites, **the Conservancy has been taking care of the Truckee River for decades. We're invested in the river's future for nature and for people.**

Join Us—You Can Be Part of What's Next

An investment in restoring forest health today could be our community's best insurance policy against post-fire impacts and costs tomorrow—and much cheaper in the long run.

The Conservancy will provide opportunities for you to get involved in our study over the course of 2017 and 2018. **Protecting the Truckee River, our well-being, and our quality of life will ultimately take all of us—the whole community—working together.**



Top and middle The Nature Conservancy is restoring the forest at our Independence Lake Preserve. © TNC
Bottom A healthy forest protects clean water for people and nature. © Simon Williams