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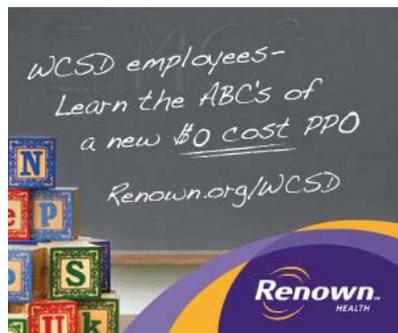
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\$14 million water bypass proceeds in Mogul

BY JEFF DELONG • JDELONG@RGJ.COM • OCTOBER 26, 2009

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A vulnerability in the region's water supply made clear by an earthquake is being fixed by crews in Mogul.



Workers are laboring on part of a \$14 million effort to bypass an old canal and flume that has fed the Reno area with raw Truckee River water for decades. Along with other improvements, the project will substantially increase the amount of water conveyed to the plant while protecting water quality, said officials with the Truckee Meadows Water Authority.

The old system's shortcomings were underscored in April 2008 when an earthquake triggered a rock slide that collapsed a wooden water flume in Mogul, threatening to leave Reno and Sparks high and dry as hot summer weather approached.

The new system will bypass Mogul, feeding the Chalk Bluff water treatment plant via an underground pipeline. The system's capacity will grow from the 55 million gallons per day to 95 million gallons per day.

"It just raises the reliability to a much higher level than what was there before," said Brent Eisert, construction administrator at the water authority. "We consider this pipeline the most important one in our inventory."

The gravity-fed pipeline also will save the utility an estimated \$400,000 per year in costs currently associated with pumping water from the Truckee River. That "green" component of the project allowed the utility to secure a \$3 million zero-interest loan in federal stimulus funds to aid with construction.

Because water now will be carried within an enclosed pipeline, water quality problems associated with trash or debris getting into an open canal will disappear. Water will not be heated by sunlight on its way to the treatment plant.

The old flume was taken out by a magnitude 4.7 quake -- part of a swarm of temblors shaking the Mogul area at the time -- that hit April 25, 2008.

The event had utility officials scrambling to rig up temporary systems to ensure adequate water supplies were available during the summer of 2008.

"We had to jump through some hoops," Eisert said. "There was a lot that had to happen real quickly there."



Large piping laying along the Interstate 80 will be used for the Mogul bypass pipeline that will carry Truckee River water to the Chalk Bluff water treatment plant. The project was accelerated after an April 25, 2008, earthquake collapsed the old wooden water flume. (Provided to the Reno Gazette-Journal)

MOGUL BYPASS

- Project includes 8,400 feet of pipeline and 1,400 feet of reinforced concrete boxes. Pipeline is 69 inches in diameter.
 - Contractor is Reno Tahoe Construction. Project created about 35 jobs.
- What's next
Crews will continue laying pipeline for the new water bypass. The temporary system carrying Highland Ditch water to Chalk Creek treatment plant will be dismantled. The project will be finished and water flowing down the pipeline by next spring.



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Recent work involved the touchy task of placing a portion of the pipeline under the Truckee River. Eisert said the utility took pains to ensure the river and its fish were protected during the job.

"You have to take care of the river," he said. "It's always first on our mind to take care of this river."

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