



West Fork Carson River Vision Project

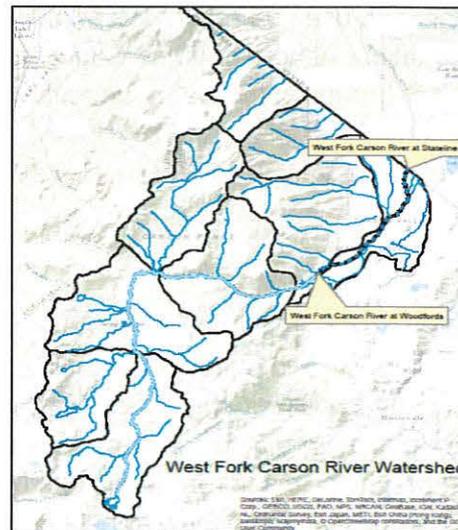
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board staff is in the process of addressing water quality impairments in the West Fork of the Carson River as part of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration, and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List.

Overview

In 2013, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) announced a new collaborative framework for implementing the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 303(d) program with states called the Long-Term Vision for Assessment, Restoration, and Protection under the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program (https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-07/documents/vision_303d_program_dec_2013.pdf) [The Vision]. The Vision focuses attention on priority waters and acknowledges that states have flexibility in using available tools in addition to Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) to attain water quality restoration and protection. TMDLs are water quality restoration plans required by the CWA to ensure attainment of water quality standards in impaired surface waters. Surface waters are evaluated as part of the Integrated Report water quality assessment process and placed on the 303(d) List of impaired waters when they do not meet water quality standards. In 2015, Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) staff identified the West Fork Carson River to be addressed through the Vision Program (Vision Project). The Vision Project Plan is estimated to be completed by 2022.

What are the impairments in the West Fork Carson River in California?

Segment	2012 303(d) Listings for Impairment	Beneficial Uses Impaired*
Carson River, West Fork (Headwaters to Woodfords)	Chloride, Nitrate, Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids, Turbidity	Cold Freshwater Habitat
Carson River, West Fork (Woodfords to Paynesville)	Chloride, Fecal Coliform, Nitrate, Nitrogen, Sulfates, Total Dissolved Solids, Turbidity	Cold Freshwater Habitat and Water Contact Recreation
Carson River, West Fork (Paynesville to State Line)	Fecal Coliform	Water Contact Recreation



Map of West Fork Carson River watershed in CA. Map includes locations where there are Lahontan Basin Plan site specific objectives.

*These are the current beneficial use impairments listed in the Integrated Report. Additional beneficial use impairments will be re-analyzed after a complete data assessment.



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What are some of the potential sources of impairment?

Sources of impairment in this watershed are likely contributed by non-point sources and storm water runoff. Sources of phosphorus loading in the West Fork Carson River may include eroded sediment from streambanks, road and highway maintenance, construction sites, forest fires, storm water runoff and atmospheric deposition. Possible sources of nitrogen are septic systems, erosion, storm water, agricultural storm water, historic livestock grazing, treated effluent supplied for irrigation and natural nitrogen fixing by plants and soil bacteria. One likely source of fecal coliform is livestock waste. Other possible sources include wildlife, septic systems and recreational users of the watershed. Chloride, sulfate, total dissolved solids (TDS), and turbidity are likely caused by sources similar to the erosion factors mentioned above.

Why was the West Fork Carson River chosen as a Vision Project?

Water Board staff identified the West Fork of the Carson River as a good candidate for a Vision Project because of the dynamic restoration projects in the watershed, the high stakeholder involvement, and a robust data set characterizing water quality in the watershed. In 2015, American Rivers completed the first stream bank restoration project along with the West Fork Carson on California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA DFW) land in Lower Hope Valley. In 2016, a second major restoration project was constructed in Upper Hope Valley by American Rivers in collaboration with the US Forest Service consisting of about 25 treatments for bank stabilization and riparian restoration along approximately a one mile section of US Forest Service land. Friends of Hope Valley has a history of completing restoration projects in this watershed including willow matting and willow staking in riparian areas. Restoration project planning has been funded for other projects in the watershed and data is being collected to determine high use recreation areas to plan for additional watershed management implementation. Although Alpine County is sparsely populated, there are many environmental stakeholder groups in the watershed actively committed to protecting and enhancing the Carson River watershed. These groups include, but are not limited to, the Alpine Watershed Group, Friends of Hope Valley, the Washoe Tribe, and the Carson Water Subconservancy District (CWSD).

What happens next?

Water Board staff are in the early stages of developing the Vision Project and are assessing previous, current, and planned restoration projects in the watershed while working closely with USEPA to clearly identify the goals of a Vision Project. Stakeholder participation is a very important component of this project, especially during the development process. Water Board staff has begun initial informal outreach, but plan on developing a more formalized stakeholder outreach strategy is scheduled to be implemented as soon as Summer 2018. During the initial stages of this project, Water Board staff welcomes any initial comments or questions. Please contact staff members Cindy Wise (cindy.wise@waterboards.ca.gov / 530-542-5408) or Daniel Sussman (daniel.sussman@waterboards.ca.gov / 530-542-5466) for more information.