



All photos courtesy of Mark Gamba



Walker Basin Restoration Program



Joy Morris
NWRA Annual Conference
Panel: Water and Agriculture in Nevada
February 5, 2014



NFWF

WBRP Partners

Local

- City of Yerington
- Lyon County
- Mason and Smith Valley Conservation Districts
- Mineral County
- Mono County
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trout Unlimited
- Walker River Irrigation District
- Walker Lake Working Group

Tribal/State

- Walker River Paiute Tribe
- Yerington Paiute Tribe
- Desert Research Institute
- Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Nevada Division of Water Resources
- University of Nevada, Reno

Federal

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Board of Water Commissioners
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- U.S. Geological Survey



National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is a federally chartered non-profit organization established by Congress in 1984 to further the conservation and management of the nation's fish, wildlife, plant and habitat resources for present and future generations.



Walker Basin Restoration Program

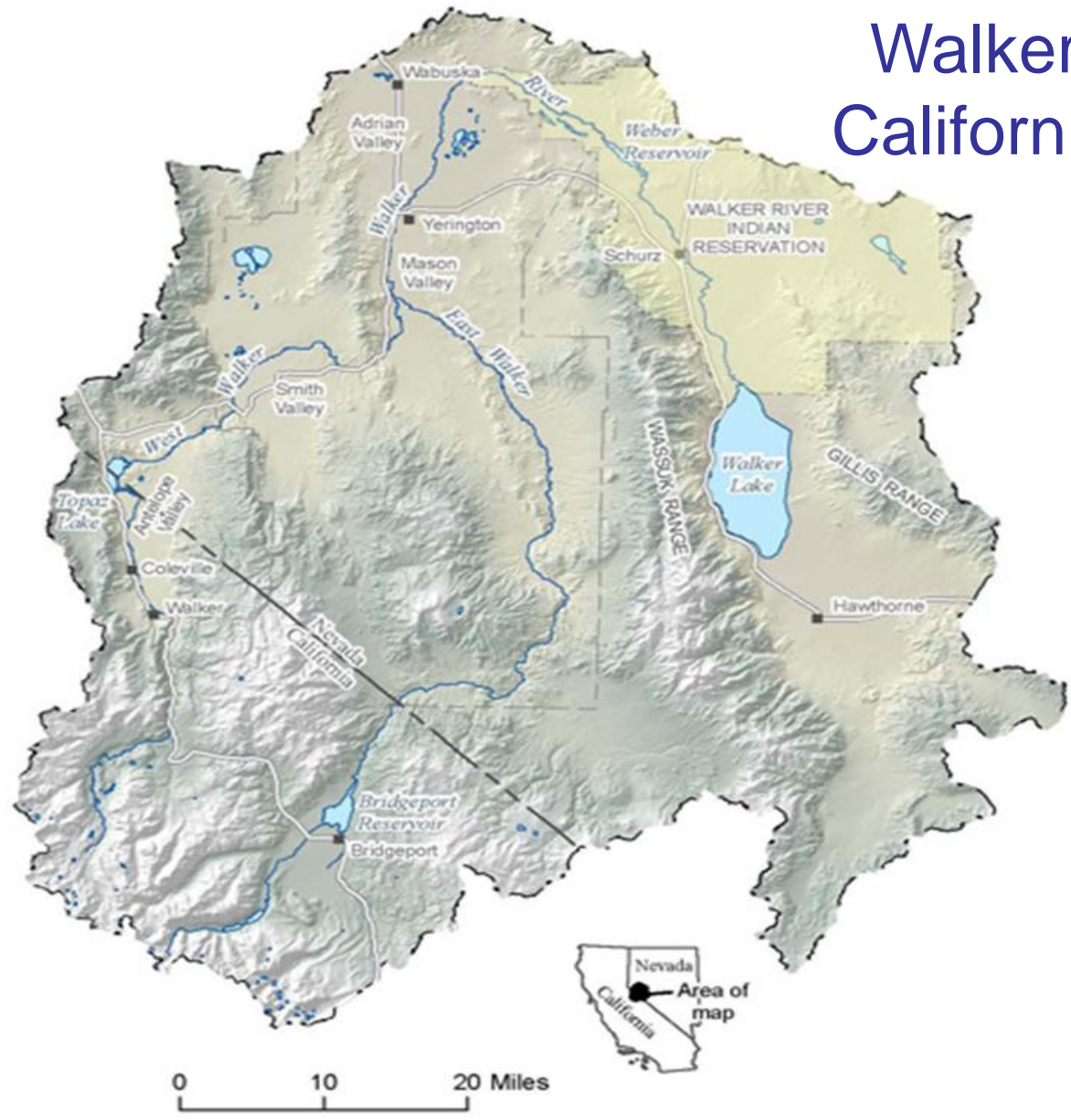


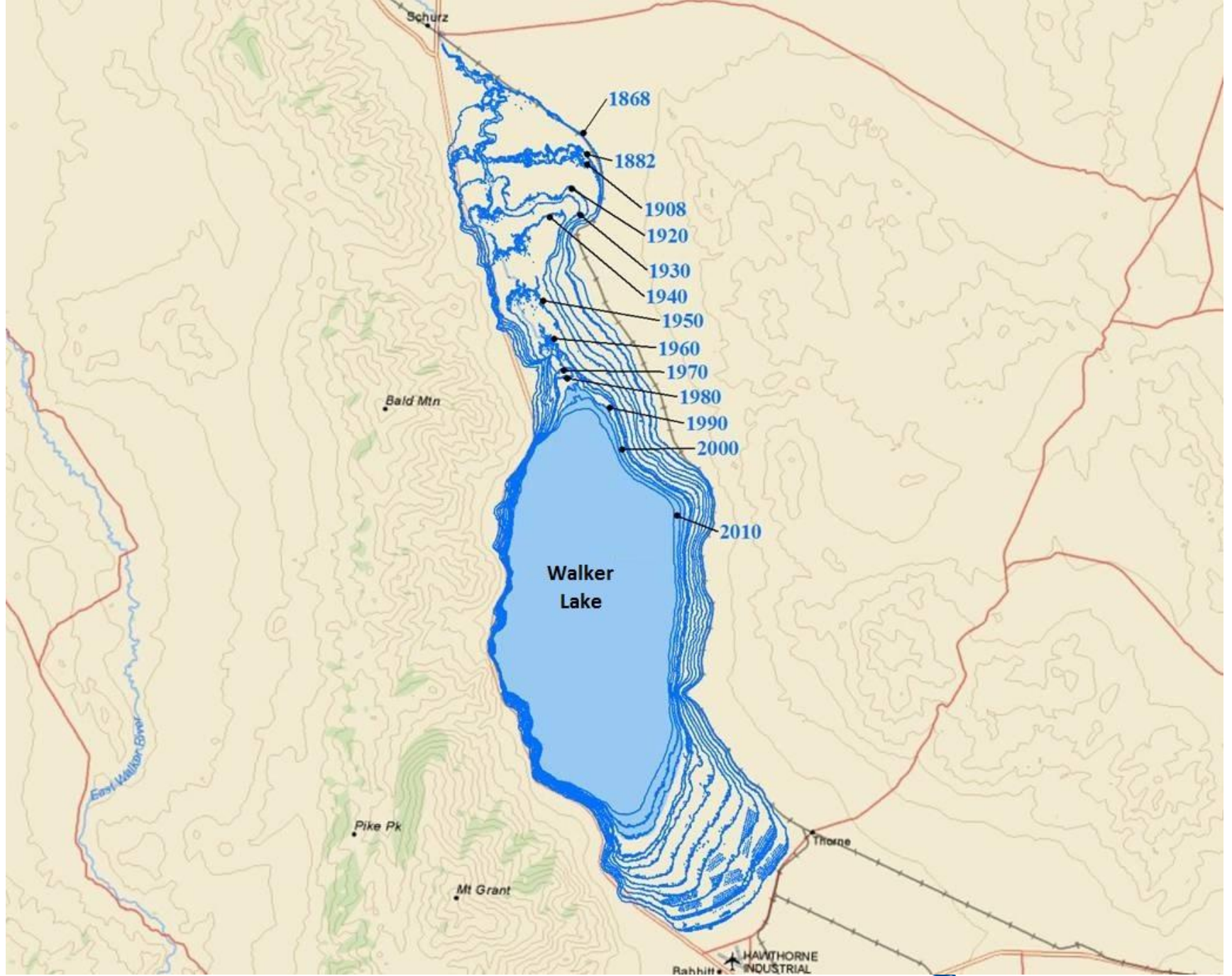
Reverse Walker Lake's decline by finding balance between the interests of landowners, water-user organizations, Indian Tribes, local, state & Federal Governments & agencies & non-profits.

- Water Acquisitions to increase freshwater inflows to the Lake.
- Three-year water leasing demonstration program developed and administered by the Walker River Irrigation District (WRID).
- Research, evaluation, modeling and decision support activities
- A conservation and stewardship program focused on land stewardship, water conservation, alternative agriculture, watershed improvement and establishment of a local non-profit.
- Funding from Bureau of Reclamation under Desert Terminal Lakes



Walker River Basin - California and Nevada





1882 Lake Elevation- 4080 ft



**Current Elevation- Approximately
3919 ft**



Water Acquisition and Storage Water Leasing

- NFWF has completed 10 Water deals to date –
 - 47 cfs
 - 5,200+ AF Storage
 - Additional Assets, ground water, land, etc.
- Walker River Irrigation District (WRID) Water Leasing
 - Floodwater Forbearance Program (2011)
 - System Improvements
 - WRID and NFWF signed an agreement to proceed with the \$23 million Storage Water Leasing Demonstration Program.
 - Third party appraiser contracted to establish a storage water value.
- Mono County Resource Conservation District (RCD) initiating baseline studies for water leases and acquisitions in California.



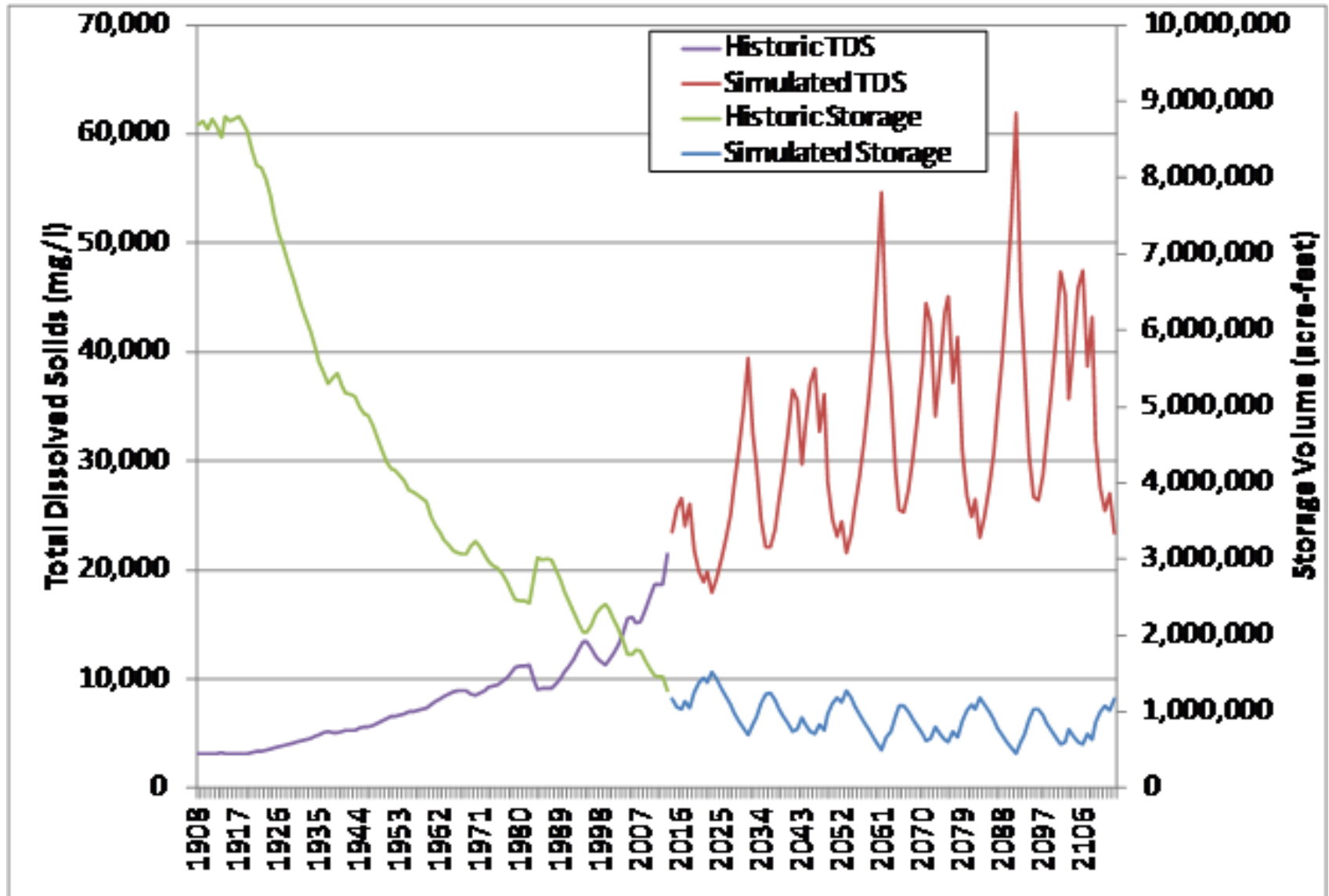
NFWF

Permanently Protecting Water to Walker Lake

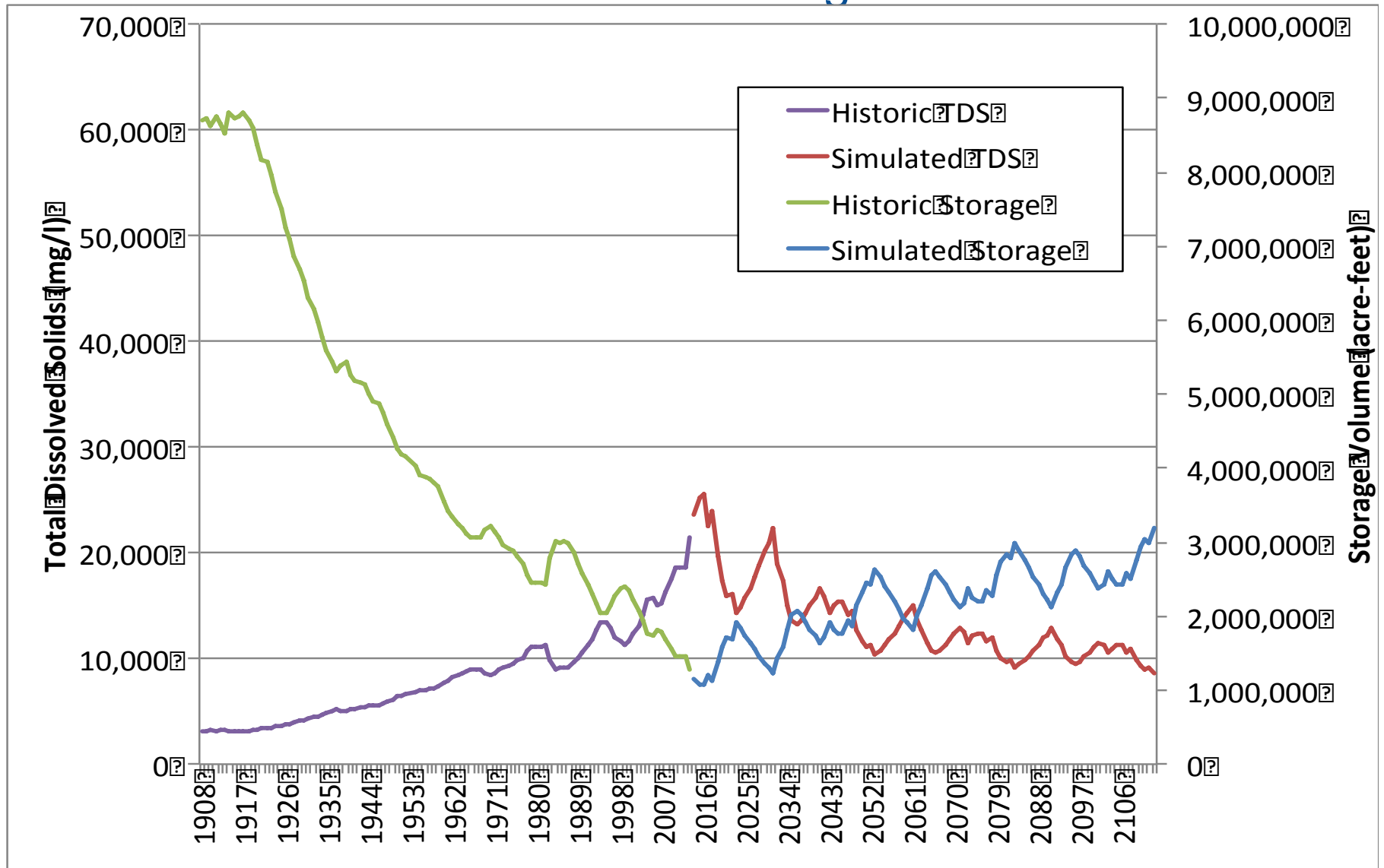
- Application to NV State Engineer Office (NSE) to change the purpose and place of use for all acquired water rights
- First hearing with the NSE in October 2013. Currently waiting for final ruling
 - Successfully negotiated a conveyance agreement with the Walker River Paiute Tribe
 - Agreed to Stipulation with WRID



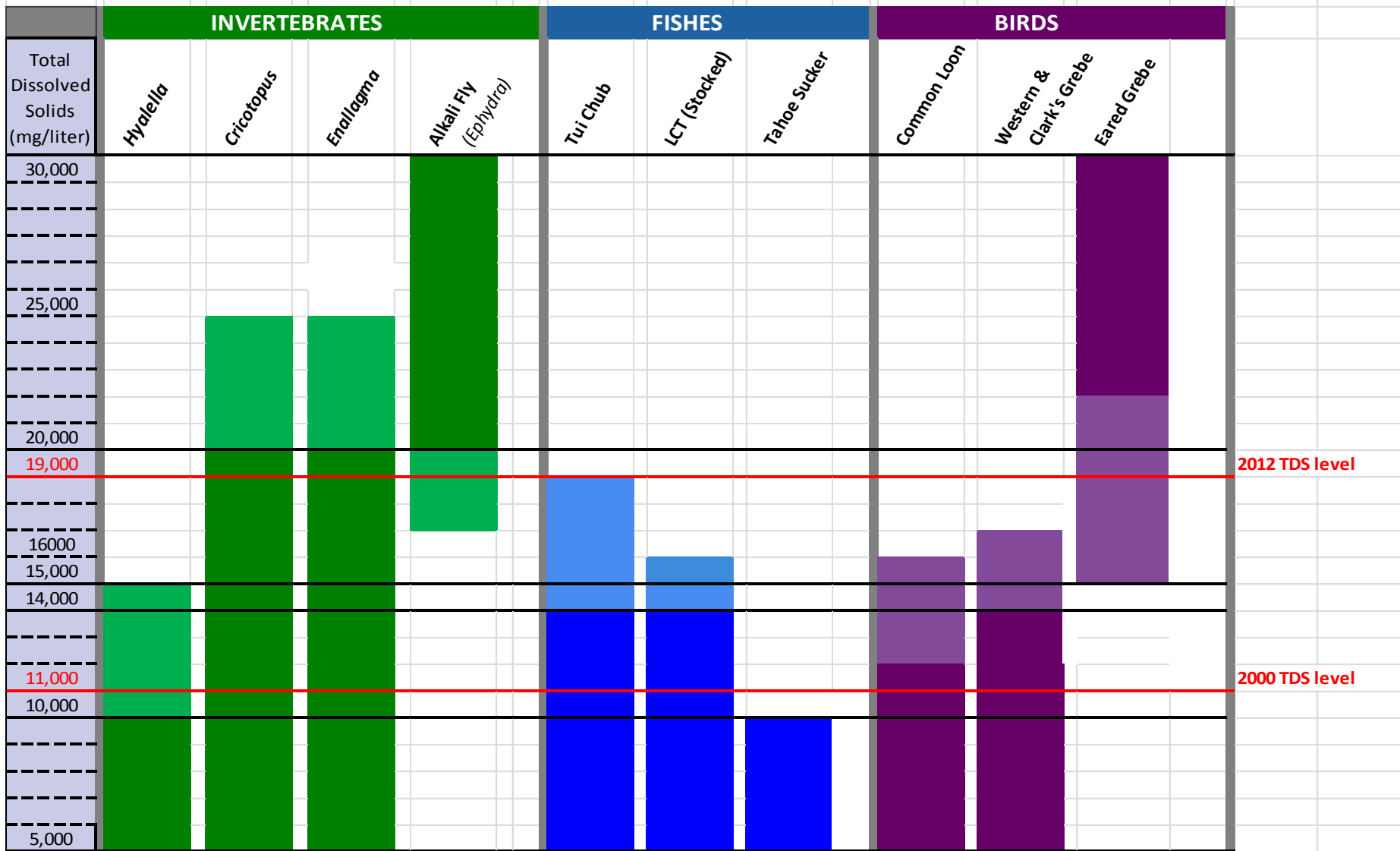
No Water Acquisition Program - Walker Lake Historic and Simulated Storage and TDS, Baseline



Hypothetical Water Acquisition Scenario - Historic and Simulated Walker Lake Storage and TDS



Walker Lake Salinity Effects on Key Indicator Species



What does this mean for agriculture and the community?



Conservation and Stewardship

- As of March 2013 - 1,600 acres of Program acquired land were donated to the Nevada Department of Wildlife including over three miles of river and upland wildlife habitat.
- 2013 irrigation season there were six re-vegetation sites (four of which were on land donated to NDOW) for a total of almost 800 acres actively in re-vegetation.
- NFWF is funding work on ditch consolidation, redesigning diversion take outs, piping ditches, etc.



NFWF

Local Activities:

- Money spent locally in Yerington and Lyon County
- Leases/deals with local farmers and ranchers
- Walker River Improvements Project – with Farr West Engineering
 - Sedimentation challenges



NFWF Local Expenses Since 2010

WRID	
Leasing Program (Flood Water Forbearance and Phase I)	\$1,364,393
Assessments	\$204,523
Ditch Assessments	\$30,582
Subtotal	\$1,599,498
City of Yerington	
Grant for dredge	\$1,216,917
Subtotal	\$1,216,917
Mason & Smith Valley Conservation Districts	
Re-vegetation grant	\$342,566
Subtotal	\$342,566
Lyon County	
Property Taxes	\$26,702
Subtotal	\$26,702
Local Expenses	
Land Surveys	\$26,024
Title Work	\$104,995
New Vehicle	\$26,000
Farm Operating Costs (supplies and hardware)	\$125,758
Farm Equipment Repair	\$3,774
Fuel and Propane Services	\$3,966
Pest Control	\$2,120
Catering/Room Rental/Tour Supplies	\$1,800
Computer & Office Services	\$3,185
Office Rental (w/cleaning)	\$43,488
Subtotal	\$341,110
Grand Total	\$3,526,793

*Numbers as of 09/2013



Farming/Ranching Business Transactions

\$161,704

NFWF has had agreements and transactions with approximately 10 local ranchers and farmers in the Mason Valley community.

Transactions Include:

- Grazing and farming leases
- Alfalfa (harvesting, production, sales)
- Equipment and field work
- Hiring of laborers
- Irrigation and ditch maintenance (direct contractors or through the Mason & Smith Valley Conservation Districts)



Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Project

- NFWF entered into a demonstration pilot project with Peri & Sons Farms
 - Peri & Sons bought 360 acres of land and primary ground water from the Program
- Converting land from alfalfa to onions and eventually leafy greens
- The purpose of the project is to evaluate water conservation measures and economic viability related to various crops in Mason Valley

Questions/Comments



WALKER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM
Water Rights and Related Interests Acquired from Willing Sellers

Seller	Natural Flow Decree (Cubic Feet per Second)	Non-Decree Water Rights (Acre Feet)				Land (Acres)	Associated Ditches
		Supplemental Storage	New Land Storage	Supplemental Groundwater	Primary Groundwater		
L&M	7.745	402.6	-	2,584.6	-	-	West Hyland
Sovereign	-	-	329.5	-	-	-	Saroni Canal
Sciarani	9.251	376.8	516.5	-	-	1,130.1	Dairy, Joggles, Nichol Merritt, SAB, Sciarani
Sunrise	3.312	149.2	191.5	-	586.3	-	Joggles
Aguiar	8.844	359.3	170.8	1,130.5	-	855.0	Joggles, Nichol-Merrit
Farias	1.920	-	-	-	-	-	Colony
Desert Creek	0.930	-	246.1	468.0	-	-	High
Turf Company	2.248	147.3	231.4	929.6	160.0	-	Hall
Rafter 7	11.984	211.8	1,667.7	3,692.0	-	3,222.9	East Walker
Stanley Ranch	0.823	-	205.9	321.0	-	198.0	River Pump
Totals	47.057	1,647.1	3,559.4	9,125.8	746.3	5,406.0	