

SPARKS FLOOD CONTROL

Project to protect flood-prone area

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Initial work to redirect floodwater that regularly submerges parts of Sparks started Wednesday, with officials calling it a milestone in wider efforts to reduce flooding along the Truckee River.

Crews installed massive drainage culverts that will route floodwater near Sparks Boulevard. It is the first phase of improvements to the North Truckee Drain, which carries storm water to the river from Spanish Springs and east Sparks.

During floods the drain, which now empties into the river near its confluence with Steamboat Creek, causes water to back up and flood the Sparks industrial area as well as parts of University Farms across the river.

At a cost estimated between \$60 million and \$70 million, officials plan to move the drain's outlet about 1,400 feet downstream, substantially reducing flooding problems.

"It will prevent flooding. This project is very important," said Sparks City Councilman Ron Smith, chairman of a coalition of local governments pursu-



ANDY BARRON/RGJ

Workers place culverts at Sparks Boulevard and Interstate 80 as part of a project that will drain floodwater into the Truckee River.

ing the \$1.6 billion Truckee River flood-control project.

The initial phase of work is timed to coincide with a repaving project on Interstate 80 planned by the Nevada Department of Transporta-

tion. Installing culverts in the area now will save about \$200,000 that would have to be spent if the work were done after the highway project was complete, officials said.

North Truckee drain

Work started Wednesday to install new drainage culverts near Sparks Boulevard and Interstate 80. The project will relocate the drain's outlet to reduce flooding.



STEPHEN REICH/RGJ

Flood project officials are waiting for congressional approval of \$10 million to proceed with the next phase of the North Truckee Drain relocation. They hope the entire project can be finished in 2013.

While local officials have decried continued delays in the review of the larger flood project by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the North Truckee Drain is one of several improvements being pursued up front. Others include downstream river restoration efforts and a floodwall and levee where new Super Walmart is nearing completion.