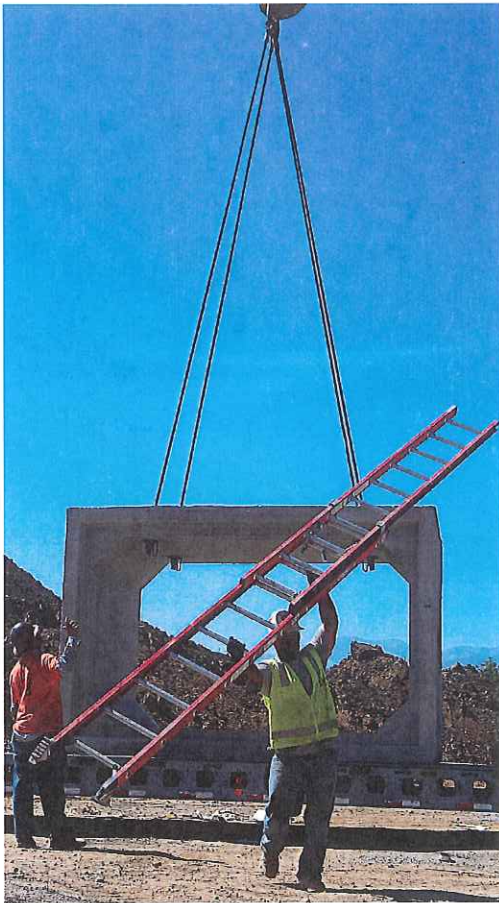


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Draining the flood plain

by [Nathan Orme](#)

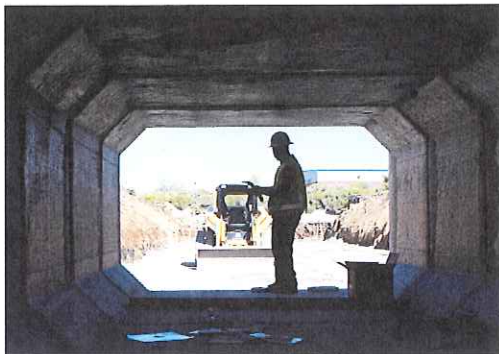
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SPARKS — The Truckee River Flood Project took some major first steps on Wednesday with the laying of large culverts that will redirect water away from previously flooded areas of the Truckee Meadows.

Roughly 100 concrete culverts measuring 10 feet by 6 feet were laid end to end in a carefully sculpted ditch by workers from Sierra Nevada Construction. This portion of the North Truckee Drain Project is located underneath the Sparks Boulevard offramp from westbound Interstate 80. The culverts will provide more capacity to get water from the north side of I-80 to the south side of I-80 where it will be carried away by the current to the North Truckee Drain before the drain is later realigned. later in the project.

This is phase one of the drain, which project administrators said is being done now to cut down on costs. Doing this work at the same time as a Nevada Department of Transportation crack and seal job on the Sparks Boulevard offramp is cutting about \$200,000 off the phase's \$1 million price, according to Mike Glock, construction manager for Diversified Consulting Services, the design firm on the project.



“By pushing forward now and not delaying we’re getting the lowest cost

for the taxpayer,” said Naomi Duerr, executive director of the project.

Deputy flood project director Jay Aldean said the current cost savings are impact in two areas. The first area is in decreased labor and materials costs, Aldean said, which are a direct result of the current economic downturn. The other area is in piggybacking with the NDOT project, which is cutting out between \$100,000 and \$200,000. If done later, the road work by NDOT would have had to be torn up and redone.

Phase two of the North Truckee River Drain project will include work on the south side of I-80 and is not anticipated to be completed until 2011.

The project is a regional effort to restore the Truckee River and build flood protection structures to prevent floods such as the ones that occurred in 1997 and 2005, which caused more than \$1 billion in total damage.

According to flood project reports, the 1997 New Year's Day flood caused \$500 to \$600 million in damage, led to the layoff of more than 800 people and affected 15,000 additional jobs. The flood also damaged more than 7,000 acres of land.

The entire flood control project is estimated to cost \$60 million.

Sparks City Councilman Ron Smith, the chair of the flood project board of directors, said he is often asked why people who don't live in the flood areas should contribute money to the flood control project.

"When it floods it affects other areas of Washoe County," Smith said. "Sixty percent of the people who work there are from out of the area."

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