

## Two Cents Worth: Feds were so wrong about our resolve

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I have been writing about water, the public lands bill and wilderness for almost the past year, and am not sure it has made a whole lot of difference, although we have seen our congressional delegation bow to public interest.

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And, I'd like to think at least the public is better informed and has moved toward a definite area of support or civil disobedience when it comes to government. You have stood united.

Never forget, the ballot box is the final judge!

I got involved at my own request by asking my brother David if I could write 4 to 6 columns about the all-important Walker River Basin Project and the potential for devastation of Mason and Smith Valleys thanks to a one-sided political decision by U.S. Senator Harry Reid to take our water and send it downstream. This is column No. 46. Little did I know"».

I don't care what anybody has said since last June/July, what the powerful senator had proposed would destroy agriculture as we know it here and take with it our base economy and our beloved lifestyle"».all for an effort to enhance his "green" legacy and assure his reelection via the deep-pocket support of national environmentalists -- without any real proof his idea will actually work.

But, Senator Reid did not count on the public outcry that would accompany first the WR water issue and then any public lands bill which includes wilderness designations. He and his cronies were confident the "little people" would simply roll over and acquiesce to their desires.

He and those others were so wrong.

They didn't count on the public

Where the wilderness issue is concerned, they didn't count on you, the public, finding a common voice and expressing it so well and so loudly. They didn't count on a county commission which actually showed real guts in saying no. They didn't count on a ground-roots effort like the Citizens for Public Access being able to gather 750 people in rural Nevada -- all with the same common purpose. They didn't count on more than one rural Nevada county standing to fight their ideas. They didn't count on the ground-swell movement taking fight to where it has become a statewide issue via a well-reasoned and well-stated resolution by a vote of the Nevada Association of Counties UNANIMOUSLY.

There will not be another public lands bill with wilderness designations rubber stamped anywhere in the Silver State UNLESS it is locally generated and locally supported. Isn't that really the way government is supposed to work"»from the bottom up, not dictated from the top down.

You, the people, have made this an issue you are willing to fight for or against. You drew a line in Nevada's desert sands and dared them to cross it. And, when they did you smote them.

Everyone is taking notice now. That's because of each and every one of you.

The top senator in Congress has even taken notice of our concerns where the Walker River Basin Project is concerned. Whether that means anything has changed will only be known when we see the draft legislation. Either he's concerned about "everyone" on the system or we still get the shaft.

There is an old saying that you cannot fight city hall. Bull"»!. If enough of you make your voices heard, even the almighty in Washington, D.C. will grudgingly stand up and take notice.

In my humble opinion, Senators Reid and Ensign have already begun "damage control" in their home state. The top Democrat in the U.S. Senate faces a 2010 reelection effort and would like the support of rural Nevadans. The state's Republican senator hangs on Reid's coattails and doesn't need us for another couple of years, but his time will come when we will expect him to actually become an independent thinker. Our northern GOP Congressman is the only one who has gone public consistently on our side, and his Democratic opponent is forced to do no less if she wants a shot at the post. Remember, Dean Heller was the first! But consistently remind him that he needs us, too.

I thought I sensed a little shift in the approach used by Harry's staff at a recent meeting in Hawthorne. I challenged him to respond to my feeling, expecting his office to provide the standard political spin about how he has always been concerned about those of us upstream, so there could be no recent shift. Instead, we heard nothing, nada, zip"».

But, Senator Reid has come through with some cash for local governments in recent weeks and months, particularly for the City of Yerington. If you or anyone else is expecting me to criticize local government