

Festival in Baker fights ‘Water Grab’

JUNE 27, 2014 BY GARRETT ESTRADA

[HTTP://WWW.ELYNEWS.COM/2014/06/27/FESTIVAL-BAKER-FIGHTS-WATER-GRAB/](http://www.elynews.com/2014/06/27/festival-baker-fights-water-grab/)

Before the Snake Valley Festival parade even started, five teenagers from Baker unfurled several long paper signs. When they held them up end to end they read “Fountains in a desert no longer possible.” It was just one of many displays that Baker, like many surrounding towns, are not going to sit idly while Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) tries to siphon water from rural Nevada through a pipeline down to Las Vegas.

Breanna Conrad was one of the teenagers holding the sign. She said that her and her friends put it together to raise awareness about their fight against SNWA’s “water grab” and generate more support for her hometown.

“We made the sign to show people that we don’t have very much water,” Conrad said. “I think it is awesome that everyone comes out here to support us with what we have been going through.”

The Snake Valley Festival held in Baker from June 20-22 has become an annual way to turn that fight into something more. This year’s festivities included a music workshop, concerts, pie sales, a silent auction and a talent show. White Pine County Commissioner candidate Gary Perea stood in a giant water bucket float in the parade. He said that he is happy to see how the festival has grown to be about a good time while still having a strong underlying message.

“Part of the point of this festival is to raise awareness about the water pipeline because it hasn’t gone away. The good news is I think we have SNWA on their heels. We just need to get more people involved to make sure that the pipeline doesn’t happen,” Perea said.

The fight between rural Nevada counties and Las Vegas over water isn’t over, but recent “victories” such as an early December decision from Senior District Court Judge

Robert Estes that sent SNWA's pipeline plans back to the drawing board have give rural Nevadans hope.

Cecelia Phillips carried a sign in the parade that read "There is no more water." As she walked she led onlookers in a chant over and over declaring the same thing. As a kindegarden and first grade teacher in the area, she said she is passionate in her fight to protect the communities that she loves.

"If they take all of our water, there would be no more schools up here because no one would be able to live here," Phillips said. "It's not like once they get that straw in they are going to stop when we don't have enough water. We couldn't live here if they get the water and I love living here."