

Why is Reno's Idlewild pond empty when Truckee River is full?

[Mark Robison](#), mrobison@rgj.com Published 10:25 a.m. PT Feb. 22, 2017 | Updated 15 hours ago



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Geese and ducks waddle around the edge of the mostly empty lower pond at Idlewild Park near downtown Reno on Feb. 21. (Photo: Mark Robison/RGJ) Buy Photo

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Why is the pond at Reno's Idlewild Park practically empty when the nearby Truckee River is close to flood stage?

- **Short answer:** The city is intentionally keeping the pond — it's actually considered two ponds — empty to test why it isn't retaining water as well as it used to.

Full question

Debby Whitsitt of Reno writes, "I've been wondering this for the longest time: What is the water source that feeds into the pond at Idlewild Park? The river is practically overflowing these days but the pond is still not full."

Full reply

"In addition to precipitation, the primary water source for the Idlewild Park ponds is the Truckee River," says City of Reno spokesman Matthew Brown. "However, for the last couple months, City of Reno staff — Parks and Public Works — has manually kept the ponds from naturally filling up. Some water has been let into the upper pond, but the City is keeping the lower pond closed.

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"The City needs the surface of the pond to dry out in order to take coring samples that will help explain why the ponds don't retain water like they once did. The City will then devise a plan to reseal them. The exceptionally rainy winter is keeping the ponds muddy and delaying the drying process. As soon as it dries out, which could be several weeks, the City will ask a geotechnical contractor to do an investigation."