

Hope alive to squeeze money from bankrupt Nevada Fire Safe Council for Tahoe businesses

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Fed up with waiting, Nevada lawmakers are ramping up efforts to have private companies, fire districts and others paid for work conducted years ago to reduce fire danger in vulnerable areas around Lake Tahoe.

The Legislature earlier this month passed a joint resolution urging Congress to pay contractors who performed extensive fuels treatment work in the wake of Tahoe's disastrous Angora Fire of 2007.

More than \$3.4 million is still owed for work conducted through the now-defunct Nevada Fire Safe Council, which filed for bankruptcy in 2012 after a federal audit uncovered financial irregularities in how U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management grants were handled by the nonprofit group.

"It's just really, really frustrating," said Brian Rye, president of Bushwhackers Tree Service, Inc., which is still owed more than \$16,000 for tree thinning and other fuel management work the firm performed several years ago at Tahoe.

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