

# North Tahoe wastewater treatment facility workers fed up



Five member districts collect wastewater that flows to TTSA through the Truckee River interceptor along Highway 89. Photo/Provided

**By Meghan Herbst, Moonshine Ink**

Board meetings at the Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency are usually sparsely attended and over in 30 minutes. In June, employees and concerned citizens piled into the modest board room at TTSA, and the monthly meeting turned into a two-hour standoff.

The players: The TTSA board of directors, under the leadership of 28-year president of the board Oz Butterfield, supported by General Manager LaRue Griffin; and the majority of employees who have been attempting, since February, to gain formal recognition from the board that they are now a union-represented workplace. Employees say they have followed the letter of the law when it comes to representation – the majority of workers included in the bargaining unit voted by authorization card in February to join the International

Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Chapter 1245.

As North Tahoe's only wastewater treatment plant, TTSA provides a crucial service to the public – filtering and processing sewage and keeping the Truckee River watershed free from related pollutants. But this key public agency is facing serious internal unrest, stemming from what employees say has become a culture of secrecy and harassment, rife with mismanagement and favoritism that poses a threat to TTSA's level of service to the community.