

## John Regan: The high cost of Centennial Dam

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Nevada Irrigation District (NID) Director [John Drew's defense of NID's controversial scheme to build Centennial Dam](#) on the Bear River (The Union, May 27 & June 3) reminded me of another plan to flood a natural treasure.

Sixty years ago, dam builders sought to inundate the Grand Canyon, promising tourism and recreation.

Opponents pithily asked, "Should we flood the Sistine Chapel to get closer to the ceiling?"

Drew neglected to mention Centennial's steep price tag: dozens of homes bought or seized through eminent domain; native American sites eradicated; wildlife habitat destroyed; six miles of free-flowing river gone forever; and hundreds of millions of dollars flowing out of NID's customers' wallets.

Drew promises Centennial Reservoir would be a recreational gem, but California already has hundreds of reservoirs – Nevada County alone has a dozen – and we have precious few free-flowing rivers. They are the real gems, and they are worth protecting.

Thirty-five years ago this community formed the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) to fight new dams on the South Yuba River. We prevailed, proving that "People Can Save a River." Now we are coming together to prove that people can save another river — the Bear River — from an unnecessary, expensive and destructive dam.

John Regan, board secretary

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