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## **Wolf Rifkin Shapiro Schulman & Rabkin, LLP Attorneys Enhance Desert Lake Rights for Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe**

**LAS VEGAS, CA – August 6, 2013** – The Environmental Practice Group, led by Don Springmeyer, recently obtained two significant victories from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in water law cases paramount to the survival of Pyramid Lake and the well-being of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in Nevada. Springmeyer, from multispecialty law firm, Wolf Rifkin Shapiro Schulman & Rabkin, headed the team from The Environmental Practice Group in persuading the Court to award an additional 25,000 acre-feet of water to Pyramid Lake for the Tribe, and protecting the water supply from over-diversion.

“The United States Supreme Court described Pyramid Lake as ‘widely considered the most beautiful desert lake in North America,’ said Springmeyer. “It’s a privilege to fight for Pyramid Lake and the Pyramid Tribe. The Tribe’s unflagging dedication and our successful litigation battles have achieved results such as described by *The New York Times* in a recent article featuring the comeback from near-extinction of Pyramid’s Lahontan cutthroat trout.”

The [first](#) ruling withdrew the mandate in *United States v. Bell* and ordered the district court to recalculate the effect of gauge error to determine the amount of illegal excess water diversions by an irrigation district. The panel held that it was mistaken in its understanding of the gauge error, and awarded the Tribe an additional 25,000 acre-feet of water from the irrigation district. This addition brings the total award to the Tribe to over 335,000 acre-feet.

In the [second](#) ruling, the panel concluded that the district court correctly ruled that diversion of water for waterfowl habitat is not “irrigation.” This ruling protects the water supply for Pyramid Lake from over-diversion by others when irrigation rights are changed to another use.

“The lake deeply affects the livelihood and culture of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in Nevada, and it’s a pleasure fighting alongside the Tribe for the survival of Pyramid Lake and the endangered and threatened fish,” said Springmeyer.

### **About WRSS&R:**

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