Researchers: Nev. alpine lakes warmest in 7,000 years

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The alpine lakes high in Nevada's only national park are warmer now than they have been for thousands of years, according to findings by a team from Ohio State University.

For the past decade, the researchers have conducted a variety of studies at Great Basin National Park, 300 miles northeast of Las Vegas, aimed at reconstructing the climate record for the area over the past 7,000 or so years.

Using core samples of lake-bed sediment and other clues collected during annual visits to the park, they think they have identified a warming trend that began about 35 years ago and continues today.

"In Stella Lake, the temperatures are higher (now) than pretty much anything we're seeing going back about 2,000 years," said Scott Reinemann, an adjunct professor in Ohio State's Department of Geography. "They're probably the warmest temperatures in the past 7,000 years."

Their work could help predict the future of the park and its glaciers – including the shrinking remnant of the only exposed ice glacier left in Nevada – in the face of global warming.

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