

Smoke filling basin; arsonist strikes again

Smoke is filling the skies in the basin, Truckee and Reno. Mostly it's from the prescribed fires in the Eldorado National Forest.

Firefighters in the surrounding area have also been working manmade and lightning caused fires.

The South Shore firebug continues to confound fire investigators. A fire on the north side of Lake Tahoe Airport burned about one-quarter of an acre on Oct. 12. The U.S. Forest Service is investigating.

The feds along with CalFire are trying to find the person responsible for starting the rash of fires that first began in late summer. Most have been on state or federal lands. No suspects have been identified.

On Oct. 11 a 50 foot x 50 foot swath of California Tahoe Conservancy land behind Motel 6 in South Lake Tahoe was charred.

The Salt Fire burning on the Amador Ranger District north of Salt Springs Reservoir in the Mokelumne Wilderness was detected Oct. 3. It is at about 20 acres. Lightning started the blaze. It poses little threat to the public, private property or surrounding infrastructure, and is being managed under a confine-contain fire suppression strategy. It is expected to grow up to 50-100 acres over the next few days.

The series of storms that are expected to arrive in the Tahoe area starting Thursday could be a mixed blessing for firefighters. Moisture is good, wind is not.

"With the dry fuels still on the ground we are urging caution

with any warming style fires in your yards. The winds will have the potential to push any embers into dry vegetation," the Truckee Fire Department said in a statement. "Similar wind driven fire events were seen in Reno a few years ago burning numerous structures. There is still a burn ban in effect until significant moisture ends fire season per CalFire."

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*