Scorching year continues with hottest summer on record

By Tom Randall Brian K Sullivan, Bloomberg

This is what global warming feels like.

Last month was the hottest August on record, topping out the hottest summer on record, according to data released on Thursday by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It was the sixth month this year to set a new record: February, March, May, June, July, and August. This has been the hottest start to a year on record and the hottest 12 months on record. It follows the hottest calendar year (2014), and the hottest decade.

In 136 years of global temperature data, we are in uncharted territory. And this year's extremes are likely to continue as a strong El Niño weather pattern in the Pacific Ocean continues to rip more heat into the atmosphere. There's now a 97 percent chance that 2015 will set yet another record, according to NOAA.

Read the whole story

Northstar tennis tourney an international affair

TRUCKEE – A bevy of top ranked players played in last weekend's 35th annual Northstar Open Tennis Tournament.

Players were locals, from the Bay Area and international,

including Belarus Davis Cup player Anton Stryhas.

There was prize money in the Open Division.

French talent Sylvan Malroux and Moez Chargui, former No. 1 player for UNR, won the final match of the day in a thrilling 7-5, 6-4 contest over Guillaume Tonelli and Philip Frayssinoux.

Local Northstar director and teammates Zeke Straw and Eric Park's won the 4.5 men's doubles 6-3, 6-2 over Ray Fugitt and Ross Rittiman who play for Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

Men's 4.0 singles was won by local icon John Doughery. Ryan Johnson of South Lake Tahoe claimed the title in men's 4.5 singles by defeating Mert Ceglar of Reno 6-3, 6-2.

In the 5.0 mixed doubles, the husband-wife combo of Stryhas and Maryia Meliuk (former No. 1 player for Sac State) prevailed over Straw and Holly Tretten from Reno.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· The final version of Placer County's $816 million annual budget was approved Sept. 15 by the Board of Supervisors.

· Reno chef and restaurant owner Mark Estee will be the featured chef Jan. 31, Feb 1-2 during the Chefs Holidays at the Ahwahnee at Yosemite National Park. For more info, go

online.

· From Space.com: “A total lunar eclipse will spawn a rare and dramatic supermoon blood moon on Sept. 27. Supermoons occur when the moon reaches its full phase at or near the satellite’s closest approach to Earth, and appears abnormally large and bright as a result. The Sept. 27 event is quite special; the last supermoon eclipse occurred in 1982, and the next won’t take place until 2033.”

· The 2016 dates for the American Century Championship have been moved. Mark your calendar for July 19-24.

· Nevada is the ninth most friendly tax state, while California is the least friendly, according to Kiplinger.

Regulators OK $1.5 million fine against Caesars

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada regulators on Thursday approved a $1.5 million state fine against Caesars Entertainment Corp. because of lapses in the company’s anti-money-laundering efforts.

The Treasury Department’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, also known as FinCen, announced last week that Caesars would be fined an $8 million federal penalty for failing to properly defend itself against money laundering at its flagship Caesars Palace casino.

The Nevada Gaming Commission on Sept. 17 approved the additional state penalty Caesars agreed to pay over the same charges, which dealt in part with private gaming salons at

Caesars Palace that catered to high rollers.

Read the whole story

Mourning the dead in California's wildfires

By Frank Shyong, Hailey Branson-Potts and Paige St. John, Los Angeles Times

As firefighters continued to make progress on two deadly wildfires in Northern California, there was mourning for those who could not outrun the flames and were killed.

Citing the five deaths in the Lake and Butte fires, officials urged people to heed evacuation orders.

Capt. Buck Condit, a spokesman for CalFire, said there's little firefighters can do to help people who don't leave.

Two of those killed in the Butte fire – 82-year-old Owen Goldsmith and 66-year-old Mark McCloud of Mountain Ranch – "were in the evacuation areas and did not heed those warnings," CalFire spokesman Daniel Berlant said.

The other three known deaths resulted from the Valley Fire.

Read the whole story

Gaming Commission approves regulations for skill-based slot machines

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Nevada’s foray into skill-based slot machines took a big step forward today when state regulators gave final approval to the rules that will govern the new games.

The Nevada Gaming Commission unanimously approved a set of regulations previously crafted by the Gaming Control Board over the course of multiple public meetings. The entire process was kicked into motion earlier this year when the state Legislature passed Senate Bill 9, which directed regulators to adopt rules promoting “innovative, alternative and advanced technology” in casino games.

The regulations create three distinct game categories: traditional chance-based games, skill games, where a player’s abilities largely govern the outcome, and hybrid games, where a combination of skill and chance affect the result.

Read the whole story

LTCC launches AA in environmental technology and

sustainability

When classes start next week at Lake Tahoe Community College students will have the opportunity to obtain an associate of arts or certificate in environmental technology and sustainability.

The concentrations of study include biological resources, physical resources, and sustainability.

The ETS program is designed to offer the skills and knowledge needed to help students make an impact in today's increasingly populated and complex world.

For more info, call 530.541.4660, ext. 231.

Nevada foreclosure rate is back to No. 1

By Eli Segall, Las Vegas Sun

For the first time in almost a year, Nevada is back on top of America's foreclosure heap as lenders repossess a rising number of homes.

One in every 507 homes statewide received a foreclosure-related filing last month, up 16 percent from July and 4 percent from August 2014, according to a new report from RealtyTrac.

Nevada's foreclosure rate was highest in the country last month and more than double the U.S. average. One in every 1,205 homes nationally had a foreclosure filing in August,

down 12 percent from July and 6 percent year-over-year.

Read the whole story

Millions being spent to reinvigorate Kings Beach



A new water filtration system has been installed near the obsolete pier that State Parks wants to replace in Kings Beach. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Millions of dollars in state money has been funneled into Kings Beach to improve aesthetics, keep sediment out of Lake Tahoe and upgrade the infrastructure. Even more work is planned for the area, which in large part will be designed to upgrade the recreation opportunities.

The California Tahoe Conservancy board and others on Sept. 17

went on a tour to see sites that are done, ones that are a work in progress and what is planned.

Standing on the pier that only covers sand, Steve Muillami with State Parks in Sacramento told the group that when the general plan process starts next month for the Kings Beach State Recreation Area it begins an in depth analysis of what should be done with the 12½ acre site. Also included in the planning will be the plaza area.

“The difference with this plan is that it goes beyond what we typically do,” Muillami said. “This plan will be much more detailed. We will be looking at how elements fit together. Environmental documents will look at the project level.”

The general plan is expected to be completed in December 2017. One of the main things to be looked at is replacing the pier. The goal is to build one that can be used more than a few months a year, if not year-round. The drought has made it useless 12 months a year.

Today the boat ramp ends at sand, not water. That too will be addressed in the general plan. With Boating and Waterways now being part of State Parks instead of a standalone agency, the ramp will seamlessly be incorporated into the general plan.



The community voted on design features of road

improvements like colored pavers.

The last time this area had a general plan written was in 1980. The new document is expected to have a 20-year lifespan.

An environmental impact report and environmental impact study will be done to satisfy state and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency mandates.

How best to incorporate special events at the property while also allowing visitors to use the area will be studied. Events like this weekend's Lake Tahoe Ironman and last weekend's Bike Big Blue bike ride use the Kings Beach State Recreation Area annually. It's the start site for the triathlon swim and a major stop for the biannual bike rides put on by Curtis Fong.

Property ownership in the area is a mishmash including State Parks, CTC, Placer County, North Tahoe Public Utility District and private entities. It makes putting together a cohesive plan difficult at times. The beaches the CTC owns are now managed by State Parks.

The goal is to make things seamless for the public so there is no obvious property boundary – at least among the public parcels.

State Parks is working with Placer County to make the gateways on either ends of its property blend, which will be a future project.

Dan LaPlante, an engineer with the county, pointed out some of the more than $51 million worth of work that is being done in town. Some of that funding came from the CTC – so the board and staff were able to see how that money has been spent.

Near the start of the pier is a redesigned outfall that uses new technology, along with planting native plants. Rock is at the end of the pipe. Today it looks like stormwater will just run onto the beach. When the lake returns to a more normal

level, that water will flow into it.

Stormwater vaults have been installed to the right of the events center. This is where filters called jellyfish have been placed to capture the fine sediment before the water flows under the paving stones of the walkway and into the lake via the new outfall.

This is one of seven treatment systems in Kings Beach.



Highway 28 went from four lanes to three through Kings Beach.

Besides water quality, the goals of the improvements throughout the core area were to improve the look of the town, and increase the walkable-bikeable options.

With Highway 28 being decreased from four lanes to three, the county also initiated traffic control plans in neighborhoods.

The current phase of the project is slated to be done by Nov. 1, with overall completion at the end of the next building season.

CTC is the agency that started the funding for this work.

Because a county snowplow driver was injured and the rig

damaged last year going through one of the roundabouts, all of them have been altered this summer. The curbs were flattened two weeks ago to solve the problem.

Another component of the project is the development of six community parking lots. Two are being built now. The county accomplished this by purchasing lots in the last 10 years. The money to do so came from the former Redevelopment Agency and North Lake Tahoe Resort Association.

A benefits assessment district was voted into place by the property owners to pay for the maintenance of the sidewalks and other public places through town. Placer County will be responsible for doing the actual work.

Opinion: Tahoe a leader in fighting AIS

By Joanne Marchetta

Aquatic invasive species are one of the most serious challenges facing Lake Tahoe. They continuously threaten to damage its unique environment and famed water clarity and degrade the world-class recreational experiences residents and millions of visitors enjoy each year.

Fortunately, Tahoe is a national leader in fighting AIS, with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and 40 public and private partners working to prevent, detect, and remove harmful infestations.



Joann
Marchetta

That partnership was showcased this month when the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species had its yearly conference at Tahoe. The conference brought together nearly 100 experts from public and private agencies and academic institutions who are dedicated to fighting AIS in the Western United States.

The gathering helped those visiting experts learn more about our invasive species successes and challenges at Tahoe, informed us about what programs are working in other areas, and allowed us all to build relationships so we can better work together on a broader scale.

Fighting AIS at Tahoe is making a difference and our collaborative AIS program is often touted as a national model. TRPA recently joined the Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species and has been invited to join the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, a federal advisory group that helps guide national AIS policies.

Tahoe’s boat inspection program has successfully prevented the introduction of any new invasive species since its creation in 2008, overseeing the safe launch of nearly 200,000 boats. This program helps ensure contaminated boats are kept out of Tahoe, and the importance of frontline prevention cannot be overstated. One contaminated boat carrying an aquatic hitchhiker could set in motion dire consequences for our environment.

The boat inspection program is now sustainably funded through a mix of boater fees and public state funding because California and Nevada see its value in protecting our shared resource from aquatic invaders. With the inspection program in place stopping the introduction of new AIS, Tahoe agencies are turning attention to finding funding for added control projects to combat AIS already in the Lake before they spread and do any more harm. Two new initiatives will help us meet Tahoe's AIS challenge.

Last month, researchers at UNR released the Implementation Plan for the Control of AIS in Lake Tahoe. This important plan provides a science-based roadmap for TRPA and its partner agencies to fight the invasive species that found their way into Lake Tahoe before our boat inspection program was created. It identifies the species we have the best chance to control or possibly eradicate and where we should pursue projects over the next three to five years for the greatest possible effect. It will be updated as progress is made and new, more effective treatment methods are discovered.

The plan points to the control of aquatic invasive weeds Eurasian watermilfoil and curlyleaf pondweed as well as the warm water fish that follow their spread as the highest priority actions. These are harmful species we can efficiently control or eradicate with the right projects in the right places. The plan proposes additional research to discover more effective methods to control other invasive species such as Asian clams, signal crayfish, and bullfrogs, and recommends agencies continue to fight the spread of those invaders in iconic locations such as Emerald Bay.

In another milestone step, the Tahoe Keys Property Owners Association is creating an integrated weed management plan to address its invasive weed problem, long considered ground-zero for AIS problems in Tahoe. While still in draft stages, the plan seeks a comprehensive approach to get the extensive weed infestation in the Keys under control and keep it from

spreading to other parts of Lake Tahoe. The approach combines different techniques and could include hand removals, bottom barriers, and potentially even the limited use of herbicide in select areas if found to be environmentally safe and approved by permitting agencies.

While the final plan to address invasive species in the Keys remains to be seen and fully considered, we applaud these property owners for starting this critically important process to address the issue. Doing nothing is not an option. The negative impact invasive species can have at Tahoe is clear, and history shows we can tackle the problem working together.

In 2010, several acres of Emerald Bay’s sandy beaches and clear waters were choked with a spreading infestation of Eurasian watermilfoil that fundamentally altered its habitat and made the heavily-visited area increasingly unappealing to boaters and swimmers. Working together we got rid of that infestation and the area remains weed free today. We can achieve that same level of success in other areas by fully confronting our AIS challenge at Tahoe and by working together to meet the challenge for the continued health and enjoyment of our Lake for generations to come.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.