

Drought along the Pacific Crest Trail

By Mary Emerick, High Country News

We had barely covered the first 10 miles of trail, hiking north from the California-Mexico border, when my hiking partner, Flash, and I found the first Pacific Crest Trail casualty. A man in his 20s, face flushed red from heat, watched us approach with clear embarrassment.

He sat in a small patch of shade next to a pack bristling with a solar charger and the latest, most expensive gear. “You wouldn’t happen to have any water, would you?” he asked.

Flash and I eyed each other. We were each carrying six liters, enough to easily take us the first 20 waterless miles to the Lake Morena campground. We had planned our water carry days before. One liter for every five miles, with a little extra to account for the early April heat. It was before noon, and a big climb out of Hauser Canyon awaited us. How much could we spare?

It was impossible to walk away without helping. The hiker watched precious water trickle into his bottle and drained it. We gave him more. That morning he had set off on a journey of more than 2,600 miles, determined to make it to Canada, but a few hours later he had called friends for a pick up at Lake Morena. He was leaving the trail.

Read the whole story

Tahoe earthquake 'domino effect' studied

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

With the frightening potential of a massive earthquake and tsunami striking the Pacific Northwest under increasing discussion, scientists are also focusing attention on possible connections between that area and dangerous faults at Lake Tahoe.



Graham Kent, a South Tahoe High grad, is in charge of UNR's seismic lab. Photo/LTN file

There, like along the coastlines of Washington, Oregon and Northern California, a big quake could someday trigger a deadly tsunami, with some preliminary research suggesting seismic connections between the areas.

"If everything in this region is synchronized, all of a sudden there could be a domino effect" after a big quake in the northwest, said Graham Kent, director of the Nevada Seismological Laboratory at UNR.

"We know these things have a long arm," Kent said.

Fall doesn't mean gardening is over for the year

By Melinda Myers

Don't pack away that shovel and trowel. Fall is a great time to plant a few new additions in the landscape. Here are just a few ideas for adding immediate and long term beauty to your garden.

Add cool season annuals like pansies, snapdragons, ornamental kale and stocks to brighten the fall garden. Those in milder regions will enjoy them throughout the winter. Consider adding cold hardy pansies. They provide color in the fall garden, survive most winters, and are back blooming in the spring just as the snow melts.



Plant daffodils and other spring flowering bulbs in the fall for extra color next spring. Photo/Melinda

Myers LLC

Fall is also a good time to plant perennials, trees and shrubs. The soil is warm and the air cooler, so the plants are less stressed and establish more quickly. Select plants suited to the growing conditions and be sure to give them plenty of room to reach their mature size.

Plant trees so the root flare, the place where the roots curve away from the trunk, is even with the soil surface. Dig a hole, the same depth as the rootball, and two to five times wider. Roughen the sides of the hole and backfill with the existing soil. Water thoroughly and spread a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch over the soil surface, keeping the mulch away from the tree trunk.

Follow a similar planting procedure for shrubs. Plant these so the crown, the place where the stems meet the roots, is even with the soil surface. And be sure to keep the mulch away from the stems.

Plant daffodils, tulips, hyacinths and other bulbs in fall for extra color next spring. Set the bulbs at a depth of 2 to 3 times their height deep. Then cover them with soil and sprinkle on a low nitrogen slow release fertilizer. This organic nitrogen fertilizer promotes rooting without stimulating fall growth subject to winter kill.

Start planting spring flowering bulbs after the nighttime temperatures hover between 40 and 50 degrees. Be patient – waiting until the soil cools reduces the risk of early sprouting that often occurs during a warm fall.

Those tired of battling the animals may want to plant resistant bulbs such as daffodils, hyacinths, Fritillaria, alliums, Camassia, glory-of-the snow, snow drops, squills, and grape hyacinths. You may find it is easier to avoid the problem than battle the animals with repellents and scare

tactics.

Plant a few short season vegetables in your garden for fresh-from-the garden flavor this fall. Simply count the days from planting to the average first fall frost to determine how many growing days are left in your area. Select vegetables that will mature and can be harvested in that amount of time. Leaf lettuce, spinach, mustard greens, radishes and carrots are fast growing, cool weather tolerant vegetables that make great additions to the fall garden and your dinner plate.

Get these vegetables off to a good start with a side dressing of low nitrogen fertilizer. Incorporate it into the soil prior to planting or sprinkle a narrow band along the row of plants. This organic nitrogen will provide needed nutrients without damaging the tender seedlings.

Extend the harvest season with the help of floating row covers. These fabrics allow air, light and water through while trapping the heat around the plants. No construction is needed; just loosely cover the plants with the fabric, secure the edges with pipes, boards or landscape staples and let the plants provide the support.

So be sure to get a jump on next spring's garden season with a bit of fall planting now.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books.

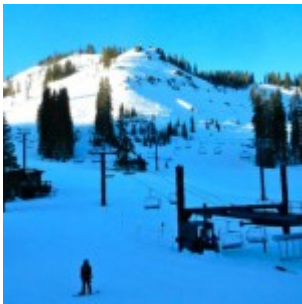
Paddleboard event to benefit Cancer League

Paddleboarders will be raising money for the South Lake Tahoe Cancer League on Sept. 12.

The \$50 entry fee includes lunch. All proceeds benefit the nonprofit that provides rides to cancer patients for treatment and gives financial grant to cancer patients.

Stand Up to Cancer Paddle Board event is at El Dorado Beach in South Lake Tahoe. Registration begins at 9am.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Sugar Bowl Resort has hired Greg Dallas, the former COO of Mammoth Mountain and June Mountain, as its chief executive officer.

- The Hi-Landers 4WD Club was recognized by the Eldorado National Forest as a model for responsible stewardship of public lands.

- Carson River Watershed Snapshot Day is Oct. 16. Multiple monitoring teams will assess water quality and habitat throughout the Carson River Watershed at the same time. For more info, contact Mary Kay Wagner at 775.6879454 or mkwagner@ndep.nv.gov.

- Horses returned to Fredrick's Meadow near Fallen Leaf

Lake this week as part of the Camp Richardson Corral permit reissuance. The horses will be there through Nov. 15.

• South Lake Tahoe Moose Lodge's 14th annual Kid's Fishing Derby is Sept. 13 at Lake Baron at Tahoe Paradise Park. It is free to kids 16 and younger. Register at 7am.

NV Energy bills about to be less expensive

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

NV Energy will rebate \$110.8 million to customers on their power bills in October, according to the company's Public Utility Commission filings.

Residential customers could see \$2 to \$3 knocked off their bills, while large customers like hotels and casinos could receive credits of up to \$113,000.

The rebate is the result of NV Energy paying less than projected for fuel.

Read the whole story

NDOT working to improve

safety on Hwy. 28

The Nevada Department of Transportation this week started to construct pedestrian and safety enhancements on Highway 28 in Incline Village.

The project will relocate a crosswalk on Highway 28 west of Village Boulevard closer to existing bus stop and pedestrian crossing points. The crosswalk east of Village Boulevard will remain in place to serve an existing bus stop. Both crosswalks will be enhanced with pedestrian crossing warning signs equipped with rapid flashing beacons activated when pedestrians push the crossing button.

Street lighting and sidewalk ramps will be added, along with enhanced pedestrian crossing signs in advance of the crosswalks.

Left turn lanes from Country Club Drive to Highway 28 will also be installed with new traffic detection systems to help drivers most efficiently and safely get through the intersection.

Construction is projected to complete by the end of fall. Drivers should expect minor, intermittent travel delays during construction.

Patrollers optimistic deal will be struck before ski

season

By Bubba Brown, Park Record

When the Canyons Professional Ski Patrol Association sat down with Vail Resorts to negotiate this spring, Pete Earle, president of the association, was hopeful a deal would be struck before the ski season ended.

But, for a number of reasons, the two sides were not able to come to an agreement. And since several of the negotiators for the association – which is a member of the union chapter United Professional Ski Patrols of America and has long patrolled the ski area that is now known as Canyons Village at Park City – were out of town over the summer, the parties agreed to table discussions and reconvene this fall.

This summer's merging of Canyons Resort and Park City Mountain Resort was one factor that muddled the negotiations, as the sides were uncertain how that would affect the association, Earle said.

[Read the whole story](#)

SLT bike park to be dedicated for Wendell



Tom Wendell

By Kathryn Reed

Tom Wendell left an indelible mark when it came to cycling on the South Shore.

To honor this man who died two years ago at the age of 62 the city of South Lake Tahoe is dedicating the Bijou Bike Park in his name. A sign will be unveiled when the park opens Sept. 19. The top will say the park is dedicated to Wendell, followed by a tribute written by his brother, Ted.

In the middle will be a list of people who helped bring the park to fruition, with the donor list next to it.

Wendell promoted recreation when no one was listening. He was relentless with his passion and desire to get the powers that be to understand this area was an outdoor playground that needed to be promoted, developed – in the sense of trails, appreciated and maintained.



The following activities are planned for Sept. 19:

10am Parade starts at the Y; **11:30am** Parade ends at Bijou Community Park; **12:30pm** Ribbon cutting for bike park; **1pm** Bijou bike course open to public; **1:30pm** Bike rodeo for kids; **2-3pm** Jump Jam on slopestyle line with world-class athletes; **3:30pm** BMX race starts; **All day** 4th annual Deep Blue Derby Tournament hosted by the Sierra Regional Roller Derby.

“We know this would have been important to him. He talked about more bike parks all the time,” City Manager Nancy Kerry told *Lake Tahoe News*. “When you have people who are true advocates for a cause, they champion it. They make sure city officials are listening. Tom did that for biking.”

After Wendell died in August 2013 there was much talk by people of wanting to name something for him. The park dedication is the city’s way of recognizing Wendell’s contributions through the years to the cycling community.

In 2001 he helped form Tahoe Region Advocates for Cycling with Bob Kingman, Karen Fink, Pete Fink, Jeff Miner and Gary Bell.

That was the predecessor to the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition, of which Wendell was part.

Wendell was seldom seen in his car – even in the winter. His hybrid bike was like an extension of him. The trails around Cold Creek and Powerline were his regular stomping grounds when he was mountain biking.

Wendell has many people who are carrying his torch for him now. Ben Fish spent hours to make the bike park a reality. Then there is Ty Polastri, Curtis Fong, Pete Fink and Gary Bell – just to name a few – who walked alongside Wendell in his endeavors and today do more than their share to make road and mountain biking a reason to live at and visit Lake Tahoe.

Opinion: Ex-electeds want to stay at public trough

By Larry Weitzman

For the past year and a half I have followed the county government machinations fairly closely, but prior to that time my interactions with the county were somewhat limited. There were a few supervisors who were less than impressive, but there were some good ones. Also impressive were some department heads. When I built a house 10 years ago the building and safety department was very helpful in every respect.

But things have gone downhill since then and it's due to poor county leadership, starting right at the top. In February termed out BOS member **Ron Briggs** filed a claim for “back wages,” saying he wasn't paid the correct amount of salary as

a member of the BOS by \$178,333. Briggs has gone through some rough times, with personal foreclosures and with only a high school diploma and being nearly 58 years old his after government employment prospects don't look very good. On top of that recent domestic issues haven't helped. The filing of this bogus claim could be evidence of his desperate situation. Briggs was foreclosed out of his home and is renting a home near El Dorado Hills. Is he planning a run for supervisor in another district?



Larry Weitzman

In his quest to be elected county treasurer, a position according to Government Code Section 27000.7 he was statutorily unqualified for, never mind being qualified to collect and invest a billion dollars for the county and local agencies. One of Briggs' moves as a supervisor was to create county salary levels for the elected department heads and in doing so remove incentive pay, like for being a CPA. It wouldn't affect Briggs if he won the office of county treasurer as he doesn't have such a professional license, but it would have hurt the then county treasurer who won re-election. But in doing so (the resolution was later repealed) he created another county snafu by adding out-of-county work credit toward salary and longevity pay for county employees. The correction was supposed to be made by HR (whose director benefits from this uncorrected snafu) several months ago, but is now two months overdue. Without the correction, it could cost the county hundreds of thousand dollars.

Because of the Briggs claim, it was recently reported that

Norma Santiago, ex-District 5 supervisor, has filed an identical claim. During her tenure on the board Santiago supported ex- spendthrift CAO Terri Day through Daly's hiring binge, series of expensive raises (15 percent) and some of the worst hiring decisions in county history, all done without proper background checks. Daly hired high level department people who were basically unemployable elsewhere all with the transparency of a brick wall lined with krypton. Santiago supported Daly to the end, saying on her dismissal that Daly was the "loyal champion of EDC employees. " Daly was supposed to work for the taxpayers and citizens of EDC.

By the way, in my several columns on the budget this year's closing numbers were worse than I predicted for salary and benefits by \$3 million at \$144.7 million or almost \$27 million more than the average salaries and benefits paid (\$118 million) for the FY 2010 to 2013. Next fiscal year when the full effect of the 15 percent raise kicks in, salaries and benefits will have climbed to over \$150 million. Santiago did a great job along with the allegedly conservative Briggs in giving away other people's money.

Santiago and Briggs are currently understood to be unemployed.

As to their bogus claims, they are meritless as all the county raises they are referring to were the result of county resolutions. But the California Constitution in Article II, Section 4(b) requires "that all legislative action taken with regard to a board member's salary must be adopted via a duly noticed ordinance." That quote was from a county counsel letter dated July 30 to Briggs' attorney.

Santiago's claim was also denied, but an email inquiry by Santiago could lead one to believe perhaps there might have been a quid pro quo between certain county employees and Santiago to the effect that if you file a claim, there would be a quick settlement. The email was to County Counsel Robyn Drivon. It stated, "This is just a quick follow up on that

claim. Additionally, I would like to know how close you are to a resolution as we are quickly approaching the 30 days you had hoped this would be cleared up. Live long and prosper. May the force be with you! Take care, Norma." A "resolution in 30 days?" Sounds like a deal to me.

And if that don't beat all, the infamous Ray Nutting filed a claim for damages against EDC for "malicious prosecution/abuse of process" and other torts because was acquitted by a jury on some charges brought by a criminal grand jury and filed jointly by the state Attorney General's Office and the EDC District Attorney. Although Nutting was acquitted of some of the charges, had a hung jury on a felony and was found guilty on some misdemeanors, the criminal grand jury indictment creates probable cause and bars the filing of a civil suit. There is more to this story and that will come later.

When you have politicians who had real jobs before election and being a politician isn't their only job or source of income, it makes for politicians that have limited or no self-interest. The founding fathers envisioned our republic in the same fashion, part-time legislators with real jobs on the outside, not politicians who become dependent on being politicians.

Larry Weitzman is a resident of Rescue.