

Study: Sierra wildfires worse with climate change

By Henry Gass, Christian Science Monitor

Wildfires in California are burning at increasingly higher elevations, according to a study, with scientists saying the phenomenon is another signal of approaching climate change that could also have implications for how forests are restored after fires.



The Washington Fire this summer for several days threatened the town of Markleeville. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

The study, which analyzed 105 years of data, found that forest fires in the Sierra Nevada mountains rarely burned above the 8,000-foot elevation early in the 20th century. Fuel for fires were typically dryer and more abundant at lower elevations, but over the past three decades several fires each year have burned at or above the 8,000-foot elevation.

Mark Schwartz – lead author of the study and also director of the John Muir Institute of the Environment at the UC Davis – described the increase of higher-elevation forest fires as

“yet another harbinger of climate change” in a statement released with the study.

Read the whole story

Opinion: Douglas County addressing flooding

By Jim Nichols

I would like to first offer my sympathies to those who were affected by the recent flash flooding in Douglas County. Many of you have suffered damage to your property as a result of the recent flood events. Many of you have expressed your concerns and frustrations over this situation and I can assure you we are taking every measure in our power to respond, recover and develop a long term solution with-in our means.



Jim Nichols

Over the last weeks of storms and subsequent flooding, East Fork Fire and Paramedic District, Douglas County Sheriff's Department, Douglas County Road Department including roads and utilities, GIS, public information, and the Community Development Department staffs have been working countless hours to assist residents. Our main priority has been public

safety first and foremost followed by clean up. Questions have been asked of staff and so we have outlined a few common questions and answers for you below.

What is the Road Division doing to help with the clean up and how can I contact them if I have flood damage on my road or drains?

Our road division staff is in the process of removing dirt and debris from many of the drainage infrastructure, mainly flow lines and culverts. Along with re-establishing of flow lines, we are shoring up the road sides from the excessive erosion that occurred as a result of the flooding.

We have contracted with A&A Construction and they are removing some of the several thousands yards of soil that filled the detention basins/flow lines around Johnson Lane. We expect this work to take a minimum of two weeks, with occasional road closures Monday through Saturday, 7am to 3:30pm.

We had the National Department of Forestry crews working on clearing out buried culverts and opening up the ends of the culverts, both public and private.

Why does the Johnson Lane area keep flooding?

Johnson Lane floods because very short length, but high intensity storms bring high volumes of water quickly resulting in drainage facilities becoming overwhelmed. County drainage systems are generally sized for the 25-year, 24-hour storm which is a long, gentle rainfall with an intensity of about 0.1-inches per hour. Last year's flood event was a 100-year, two-hour rain event which delivered about 0.6-inches of rain fall an hour. This month's event was a 500-year, one-hour storm which dropped 1.12-inches of rain. These events are six to 12 times more powerful than what the drainage system in Johnson Lane is equipped to handle.

What is Douglas County's long-term plan to address the

flooding issues in Douglas County?

This will be discussed at the Aug. 6 board meeting. Currently no tax dollars are dedicated to storm drain improvements. The county has been 100 percent reliant on applying for and being awarded grants to fund storm water improvements. The county has been very successful in obtaining these grants, but generally these grants are awarded to improve flood issues along major transportation routes (highways 88, 395, 50) and the county has not been as successful in the Johnson Lane area. The first step in addressing flood issues in the county is to complete an area drainage master plan for Johnson Lane. This ADMP would provide a list of projects and potential cost and allow the county to prioritize construction.

Although these issues will not be resolved overnight, I can assure you Douglas County is doing everything we can to help our residents. We will be hosting a flood outreach event on Aug. 6 at the CVIC Hall from 3:30-7pm. We hope this event will allow residents to speak with several members of our staff about their concerns around the flooding.

Jim Nichols is the county manager of Douglas County.

Teacher uses outdoors as his classroom

By Moriah Balingit, Washington Post

As a child, Liam McGranaghan was obsessed with nature, bringing home critters he found near his home in Fairfax County, raising frogs and turtles in the yard and once coaxing an injured crow back to health.

In his adult life, his obsession was reduced to a hobby as he embarked on a meandering career that took him from a history degree at Virginia Tech to gigs in the construction business. During a lull in work, he started substitute teaching and discovered his passion. After getting a master's degree in biology, he was hired to teach biology and then environmental science, a career that combined his childhood obsession with his affinity for the classroom.

McGranaghan now teaches environmental science at Loudoun Valley High School, and his unorthodox class gets his teen students into the wild as much as possible. They take field trips in canoes and hike to the woods nearby to study trees and wildlife. Students even suit up in galoshes to wade into a nearby stream to measure its water quality.

Read the whole story

Study: Millennials less likely to leave the nest

By Dionne Searcey, New York Times

During the recession near the end of the last decade, many young adults facing a dreadful job market moved in with their parents to save money.

Now, jobs may be more plentiful and the economy has improved, but many members of the millennial generation have yet to leave the nest, according to a new study. In fact, even more of them are living at home now.

An analysis of census data by the Pew Research Center has

found that 18- to 34-year-olds are less likely to be living apart from family members than they were even during the depths of the recent recession, the worst economic downturn since the 1930s.

[Read the whole story](#)

Merged Utah resorts relying on familiar feel

By McKenzie Romero, Deseret News

PARK CITY – As they merge two iconic resorts into the largest ski area in the country, Park City Mountain Resort owners are relying on a familiar look and feel to convince skiers there is only one place they want to be this winter.

Park City's name, next to the swooping Canyons logo (which is now red), will brand the 7,300-acre resort that aims to be unparalleled starting this winter.

"There's only one community. There's only one resort. There's only one place like Park City," Bill Rock, chief operating officer of the merged resort, said to cheers and applause at the packed kickoff event in Park City on Wednesday.

[Read the whole story](#)

Road beat: Lexus sports car purrs



Lexus understands how to make a sports car for everyday driving. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Lexus has built sporty cars in the past such as the SC300 and SC400 and the second generation SC430. Now Lexus has a serious sports coupe in the guise of the RC350 and the RC-F. My tester is the super high performance F Sport model that comes standard with a rockin', honkin' 5.0L V-8 that cranks out 467 hp at a stratospheric 7,100 rpm. The RC350 uses the IS and GS 3.5L V-6 powerplant with a nothing to sneeze at 306 hp.

Unveiled at the 2013 Tokyo Auto Show, the new RC is based on the excellent IS platform, which happens to be my favorite Lexus. RC-F also borrows the front subframe from the GS platform as well. It is a sleek fastback two door hardtop design (meaning frameless windows) that has small intricate details like the three rectangular headlights on each side or

the front brake cooling ducts along with its massive six pot Brembo sourced brakes. It draws a crowd wherever it goes, even from a distance. People know it's a special car. Coefficient of drag is a moderate 0.33.



Specifications

Price \$43,715-\$75,000

Engine –F Sport

5.0L 32 valve DOHC V-8 467
hp @ 7,100 rpm

389 lb-ft of torque @
4,800-5,600 rpm

Transmission

Eight speed direct shift
automatic

Configuration

Longitudinal front
engine/RWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 107.5 inches

Length 185.2 inches

Width 72.6 inches

Height 54.7 inches

Track (f/r) 61.2/61.4 inches

Ground clearance 5.1 inches

Fuel capacity 17.4 gallons

Trunk capacity 10.1 cubic
feet

Weight 3,958 pounds
Weight distribution 55/45
Turning circle 35.4feet
Steering lock to lock 2.84
turns
Wheels (f/r) 9X19/10X19
inches
Tires (f/r)
255/35X19/275/30X19
Co-efficient of drag 0.33
Performance
0-60 mph 4.23 seconds
50-70 mph 1.94 seconds
50-70 mph uphill 2.34
seconds
Top speed Electronically
limited at 170 mph
Fuel economy EPA rated at
16/26/19 mpg
city/highway/combined Expect
21-22 mpg rural country
driving, expect 28-29 mpg at
legal speeds on a level
highway.

It rides on a shortened IS wheelbase of 107.5 inches while the body stretches out to 185 inches. Width is a tidy 72.6 inches as it stands almost 55 inches high. It's size could be called large compact.

What makes the RC-F powerplant is the ability to go from Otto cycle to Atkinson cycle. It's like having your cake and eating it too. Atkinson cycle engines use an extremely high compression ratio in the F's case 12.3:1. Most hybrids use Atkinson cycle engines with super high compression as by holding the intake valve open beyond bottom dead center of the compression stroke, it makes the ratio between the compression

stroke and the expansion (power) stroke even greater improving overall engine efficiency. Lexus can do this because of its super trick use of variable valve timing and lift system.

When the engine is cruising down the highway under light loads, it improves fuel economy. If you demand more from the engine room it instantly switches back to a more powerful Otto cycle mode.

In case you are interested this 5.0L monster motor also makes 389 pounds of twist anywhere from 4,800 to 5,600 rpm. How's that for a flat torque curve. Because the curve is flat, it is a good demonstration of how torque with rpm means nearly everything in performance, not just torque. It also demonstrates the extreme efficiency of the F's 5.0L V-8. At 4,800 rpm the V-8 produces 356 hp, but because the V-8 can maintain the same peak volumetric cylinder efficiency at 5,600 rpm it makes 415 hp. Identical torque but an additional 59 hp. Even at peak 467 hp rpm of 7,100, the V-8 is still making 345 pounds of torque. Good stuff.

With the engine supplying power via an eight-speed direct shift tranny which acts like a dual clutch in quickness of shifts, the F will arrive at 60 mph from a standing start in a world class 4.23 seconds. Passing performance is also world class with a 50-70 mph run taking less than two seconds at 1.94 seconds and the same run up a 6 percent grade only slowing that time by 0.4 seconds to 2.34 seconds. The F downright rocks.

Deserving special mention is the exhaust system. Normally all you hear is a muted burble. But get on the gas past about 4,000 rpm and an exhaust bypass opens and to its 7,200 rpm redline it sounds like a NASCAR, not quite as loud but with a better tone. Engineers must have worked hundreds of hours to produce that perfect V-8 sound. That alone is almost worth the price of admission. When showing the car to a high ranking politician who is also a gear head, he couldn't get

enough of that boisterous V-8. Perhaps the best he has heard.

Yet it is not a gas-guzzler. EPA says expect 16/25/19 mpg city/highway/combined, but my tester did much better. Overall it averaged about 22 mpg and in a round trip to South Lake Tahoe the F averaged 24.3 mpg with the upslope trip averaged 21.1 mpg. Even better is a two way highway run averaging 28.8 mpg at 70 mph with the engine spinning just 1,750 rpm. That is remarkable fuel economy. Perhaps the V-6 version might return a couple more mpg.

As sports cars go, the F is a bit heavy at 3,958 pounds, a couple of hundred more than the V-6 and 400 pounds more than the IS350. Weight distribution is also not perfect at 55/45 percent front to rear (with acceleration weight transfer 52/48 is ideal). But not to worry., the F gets the best of suspensions, double wishbone up front and a trick multilink system in the rear with gas filled shocks and coils at all four corners plus large stab bars at both ends. Guiding the F is an adjustable speed sensitive electric power rack that is a quick 2.84 turns lock to lock and a curb to curb turning circle of 35 feet. And then there are the huge 19 inch alloy wheels (9 inches wide up front and 10 inches wide in the rear) shod with super low profile 255/35 in front and 275/35 series in the rear with either specially designed Bridgestone Potenza or Michelin Pilot Sports, my two favorite sport tires.



There is more room in the

back seat than expected.

At seven- to eight-tenths driving it simple straightens out the twistiest roads. Body roll is almost non-existent. It simply goes where pointed. Understeer even considering the big engine up front is minimal at that aggressive pace. Turn in is extremely quick. It is confidence inspiring. It never got even close to complaining. And with that kind of prodigious power using the throttle to rotate the F was sublime.

Obviously the ride is firm, tighter than an IS. But it feels like a 12 inch thick bank vault wrapped in a half a foot of super dense foam. It was solid but never harsh. It was superbly controlled but never jarring. It was quite supple and compliant. This is a superb road car, made for Grand Touring. If there were a negative, it is tire noise on coarse roads.

GT cars like the F are inherently safer. First are the giant incredible brakes, four-wheel ventilated rotors of 15 and 14 inches in diameter. Brembo makes them and the aforementioned six pot calipers. While they don't cost a dime, they stop in one. Thirty-eight feet from 40 mph. Of course it has every electronic safety aid know to humankind and a few that will be incorporated into the International Space Station over the next few months (that might be a stretch). Besides its torque sensing differential (Torsen), it also has a torque vectoring differential available as well.

There are four drive modes, eco (are you kidding me?), normal where I spent most of my time, sport and sport plus. Sport modes remap the tranny holding it in gear too long. On the tract it would be great, but in normal ,driving normal is where to be. Trust me, if you gotta go, even in normal there are only a handful of cars and a few drivers that will be able to match the F, especially with some driving skill.

Inside are sublime leather seats that lock you in. Perfect. The IP centers on a large tach with a digital speedo inside.

The mouse system is a pad instead and much easier to use than the traditional mouse. Everything is of the highest quality with soft touch leather almost every, except for the carbon fiber.

As a two plus two, most people would think the rear seating is throwaway. Not so. While getting in and out might look difficult, it's easier than it looks. I got back there and it was actually usable with good outward visibility and a very comfortable seat. My brother also spent about 20 minutes back there with a 12-year-old boy and both enjoyed the ride. The trunk is over 10 cubic feet well shaped and has a pass through.

Pricing for the Radical Coupe 350 starts at \$42,790 for RWD and for AWD (only in the 350) add \$2,235. The F starts and ends at \$62,400 plus options. While 19 inch wheels are standard, if you want them hand polished add \$1,500. Pass. Leather over Nuluxe is \$800, buy it. The NAV plus the Mark Levinson sound system adds \$2,840, your choice. The gorgeous Ultrasonic Blue Mica paint adds \$95. There are six other colors, all really shiny. Premium package adds heated and ventilated seats, carbon fiber interior, BSM, rear cross traffic alert, those triple beam LED headlamps and a bunch more, \$400. The moon roof is \$1,100 and my skin doctor says no. With the \$925 shipping from Tahara, Japan, my tester totaled \$74,580. If you consider the competition and Lexus quality, it's well priced and quite the GT.

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Canoeist sets records on Lake Tahoe



Grant Korgan and Adam Freeman as they complete their circumnavigation of Lake Tahoe on July 30. Photo/Provided

World records were set when 38-year-old Grant Korgan paddled completely around the shoreline of Lake Tahoe in a one-man outrigger canoe.

The 14 hour, 15 minute journey began at 5:40pm on July 29 and ended this morning at 7:55 back at Waterman's Landing in Carnelian Bay. Korgan was accompanied throughout the entire circumnavigation by stand-up paddler Adam Freeman.

The goal of Full Circle, as the campaign is titled, was to raise money and awareness for Truckee-based High Fives Foundation. High Fives provides support and inspiration to mountain action sports athletes who have suffered life-altering injuries. So far Full Circle has raised more than \$21,000.

Korgan is in recovery from a spinal cord injury he sustained

in a snowmobiling accident in 2010. He has received numerous grants from the High Fives Foundation to empower his recovery goals.

The entire Full Circle campaign was documented for the Official Guinness World Records.

Circumnavigating Lake Tahoe set official Guinness World Records in the following categories:

- Fastest time for a spinal cord injured athlete to circumnavigate Lake Tahoe in a one-man outrigger canoe.
 - Fastest time to circumnavigate Lake Tahoe in a one-man outrigger canoe.
 - Fastest time to circumnavigate Lake Tahoe with human power.
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Tahoe ball field to be named after fallen deputy

The North Tahoe Public Utility District has partnered with the Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association to rename ball field No. 2 in the North Tahoe Regional Park "Placer County Detective Mike Davis Jr. Field."

Davis was killed while on duty on Oct. 24, 2014. He had been an employee at the North Tahoe Event Center and a volunteer firefighter with the North Tahoe Fire District prior to becoming a deputy. He moved to Kings Beach as a teenager.

On Aug. 22 the Placer County Sheriff's Office, Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association, and the 1035 Foundation will dedicate the field and play a benefit softball game. The community is invited to attend the dedication ceremony and the

game.

Placer County Deputy Sheriff's Association will come together for an annual work day each year to assist with maintenance of the field and host an annual fundraiser/charity game or tournament. In addition, the PCDSA has purchased a new scoreboard for the field with the new name and a plaque will be installed at the field remembering Davis.

Calif. landscapers making a mint off drought

By Steve Hargreaves, CNN Money

The drought's been rough for a lot of people in California. Farmers, gardeners, restaurant diners who just want a glass of water.

But there's one subset that's doing quite well: landscapers who specialize in ripping out water-guzzling lawns and replacing them with lush, native plants that require a fraction of the moisture.

"I'm falling behind on my design work because I'm fielding so many calls and emails," said Rob Moore, owner of California Native Landscape Design in Orange County.

Moore said he's on track to make over \$100,000 this year – double what he made last year – as people adopt native landscapes.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



· There will be a two-day Insect Adventure Camp at Northstar on Aug. 11-12, with Tahoe Institute for Natural Sciences providing the instruction. The camp is for ages 4-12. For more info, go **online**.

· San Diego-based elctro hiphop soul collective Vokab Kompany will headline the Fun First party at the Crystal Bay Club in Crystal Bay on Aug. 28 starting at 9pm. The summer bash is a project by Truckee hat company Bigtruck Brand.

· Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce is having a workshop Aug. 4 from 6-7:30pm about how to brand Truckee. The meeting is at the Truckee airport.

· Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce is hosting a workshop titled the Best Things in Your Website's Life are Free. It will be at the chamber office in Stateline on Aug. 11 from 5-7pm. For more info and to register, go **online**.