

Winds whip Markleeville fire to 6,500 acres

Updated 11:45pm

The Washington Fire had consumed 6,500 acres as of late Sunday.

The blaze nearly 10 miles south of Markleeville continues to be a threat to multiple structures.

“The entire fire area is under extreme winds. The fire is continuing short uphill runs and single tree/group torching,” authorities said.

Winds on June 21 were from the south, with the fire burning northeast.

Updated 5:45pm

Sustained winds are making it difficult for firefighters to get a handle on the fire burning south of Markleeville. By Sunday afternoon 3,500 acres had burned.

No structures have burned, but about two dozen remain threatened.

A spot fire started on the west side of Highway 4, forcing the evacuation up the Carson River to the north end of Markleeville. Protecting that town – the county seat of Alpine County is the highest priority right now.

The fire is in the Bagley Valley, having moved to the north side of Highway 89.

Monitor pass is closed at Highway 89 and Highway 4 is closed.

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The Washington Fire burning about 10 miles south of Markleeville has grown to more than 1,300 acres.

Five residences are threatened and evacuated, and an additional 15 historic cabins are threatened.

The fire started in a remote and rugged area in the Silver Creek Drainage, which is making hard for crews get a handle on the blaze. The fire is now in the Wolf Creek Drainage. Five helicopters and three air tankers are working the fire along with crews on the ground.

The cause of the fire that started the night of June 19 is still unknown. However, there was no lightning a that time.

Highway 4 is closed to the top of Ebbetts Pass. Campgrounds have been evacuated.

This has been declared a red flag day – meaning a severe fire threat because of winds and humidity.

The U.S. Forest Service is the lead agency.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Acoustic guitarist Beppe Gambetta performs at the Boathouse Theatre on the South Shore on June 24 at 7:30pm. Opening the show is songwriter and piano virtuoso Richie Lawrence. For more info, go online.

- Tahoe Resource Conservation District received \$200,000 from the California Tahoe Conservancy for aquatic invasive species projects.

- Family Caregiver Support Groups are provided in El Dorado County on the second Thursday of every month from 5:30-7:00pm at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center, 3050 Highway 50. Call 800.621.6192 for information.

- The El Dorado County Area Agency on Aging offers assistance to seniors through the Information & Assistance program. For more information, call 530.621.6369.

- Truckee fine art photographer Elizabeth Carmel created six wall-size photographic murals for the Donner Memorial State Park Museum in Truckee.

Major paving project in Kings Beach

In an effort to wrap up construction activities along Highway 28 through Kings Beach before the July 4 weekend, Q & D plans to repave the eastern portion of the highway this week.

This work will require the grinding of the existing road section between Coon and Beaver streets, and then repaving

with asphalt to match the concrete curb and gutter along the edges of the highway. This will require Q & D to work from 6am to 6pm. The highway paving is anticipated to be completed June 26.

During this week's paving operations and up until July 2, crews will complete as much of the sidewalk improvements as possible on the south side of Highway 28 between Coon Street and the Minnow Avenue parking lot. Placer County Department of Public Works' goal is to have this section of sidewalk open for use by the Fourth of July weekend.

Although a goal of the project is to provide as much on-highway parking as possible during construction, motorists must be aware that vehicles parked along the south side of the highway between Coon Street and Bear Street, are parked illegally as they block the designated bike lane.

'Sixth mass extinction' may wipe out 75% of animal species

By Alan Neuhauser, U.S. News and World Report

From rhinos to tigers to elephants, three out of four "familiar" animal species – those commonly thought of and well understood by human beings – will be extinguished within three human lifetimes, a new study finds, confirming that Earth is in the midst of what's become known as the "sixth mass extinction" driven by runaway development, shrinking animal habitats and climate change.

“Scientists never like to say anything for sure, but this is close as we’re ever going to get to saying, ‘We’re certain that this is a huge problem,’” says study coauthor Anthony Barnosky, a paleontologist at UC Berkeley, calling the problem “quite dire.”

The hundreds of species eliminated in the past century alone would otherwise have lasted at least another 800 to 10,000 years, the study found. Coral reefs “are in danger of annihilation” as soon as 2070, Barnosky says, potentially erasing a quarter of the ocean’s species.

Read the whole story

Incline house severely damaged in fire



No one was hurt in the June 21 house fire in Incline.
Photo/Provided

A fire caused substantial damage to a house in Incline Village on Sunday.

The blaze was reported at 6:30am June 21 at 101 Pinion Drive.

The fire was contained to the single-family residence.

Assisting North Lake Tahoe firefighters were crews from Tahoe Douglas, North Tahoe Fire and Truckee Meadows.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Study: Reduce teen smoking by upping sales age

By Nicholas Bakalar, New York Times

A study has found a simple way to significantly reduce teenage smoking: raise the tobacco sales age to 21. In 2005, Needham, Mass., did just that, while surrounding communities kept their age limit at 18.

Researchers surveyed 16,000 high school students in Needham and 16 surrounding communities four times between 2006 and 2012, gathering data on their smoking habits. The study is in Tobacco Control.

Over the seven years, the number of children under 18 buying cigarettes in Needham decreased to 11.6 percent from 18.4 percent, while in the surrounding communities it hardly changed – down to 19 percent from 19.4.

Read the whole story

Foothill wineries win at State Fair competition

El Dorado and Amador county wineries scored well in the annual California State Fair Commercial Wine Competition.

This year's wine competition consisted of 2,881 wine entries from 743 winery brands. Seventy-two judges on 18 panels awarded 57 double golds and 254 golds.

The first State Fair Wine Competition was in 1855. The competition is the oldest and one of the most prestigious wine events in the country. Top wines including Best of Region and Best of California winners will be featured at the State Fair, July 10-26.

Regional winners include:

Best of Show

Best of Show Red

- Double Gold 98, Lewis Grace, 2012 Tempranillo, El Dorado

Best of Show Pink

- Double Gold 98, Gold Hill Vineyard, 2014 Barbera Rosé, El Dorado

Best Microwinery Other

- Double Gold 98, Red Bucket Wine, 2012 Barbera Rosé, El Dorado County

Best of Region

Best of Sierra Foothills Red

- Double Gold 98, Lewis Grace, 2012 El Dorado, Tempranillo

Best of Sierra Foothills White

- Gold 95, Helwig Vineyards & Winery, 2014 Shenandoah Valley, Amador County, Sauvignon Blanc

Best of Other California Red

- Gold 94, Heringer Estates Family Winery, 2012 Clarksburg, Aglianico

Best of California Wines

Best Cabernet Sauvignon

- Double gold 98, Lewis Grace, 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Estate, El Dorado

Best Italian Red Varietal Blend

- Gold 94, Nello Olivo, 2012 Toscanello , El Dorado County.

Best Red Generic

- Double gold 98, Zucca Mountain Vineyards, 2013 Sorprendere Sierra Foothills

Best Traditional Vintage Port

- Double gold 98, St. Amant Winery, 2013 Bootleg Port, Amador County.

Court: Signs are a matter of free speech

By Hans von Spakovsky, Daily Signal

In a unanimous decision, the Supreme Court struck down a town's sign ordinance as an unconstitutional, content-based regulation of speech. This ruling for free speech means the government can't pick and choose what speech deserves more protection based on the content of the speech.

Like most other towns in America, Gilbert, Ariz., regulates when, where and how signs may be displayed around town. Temporary non-commercial signs are classified by their content, and each category has its own set of regulations.

Real estate signs, for example, may be up to 80 square feet, and political signs may be up to 32 square feet; political signs may be displayed for four and a half months before an election, including in the public right of way; and homeowners' association event signs may be displayed for 30 days.

Read the whole story

Drum circle at Unity's labyrinth

Two years ago Unity at the Lake built a labyrinth next to the sanctuary on Rufus Allen Boulevard in South Lake Tahoe.

This labyrinth was created by for the greater Lake Tahoe community to use and enjoy. Walking the labyrinth is a walking meditation.

There is a welcoming bench on which to rest and reflect before and after walking.

The community is also welcome June 26 from 7-8pm for the drum circle and meditation at the labyrinth. Bring a chair, drums/rattles and a water bottle.

Donations will be accepted.

Carson City trail network to be dedicated

The official opening of the Kings Canyon/Waterfall Trailhead will be celebrated June 24 at 8:30am.

Located at the western end of Kings Street, the facility on Carson City Open Space and U.S. Forest Service land provides multi-use road and trail access for off highway vehicles, bikes, hikers and equestrians. The trailhead also features a

newly refurbished Fireman Memorial that honors the three firefighters who lost their lives battling the 1976 King Fire.

The new trails, kiosk and memorial are the result of a collaboration of federal, state and local agencies working together to enhance recreational access while improving safety and water quality.

The waterfall area has become an extremely popular recreation area in Carson City. A new trail was built in 2010, and a few years later, the Great Basin Institute AmeriCorps program, in collaboration with the USFS, added an additional trail loop for the hiking public from the waterfall trailhead.

In the spring of 2014, Carson City Public Works requested assistance from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection to formalize the trailhead and trails, install water quality improvements and provide public education regarding the importance of the creek to the city's drinking water supplies.

Great Basin Institute AmeriCorps provided hundreds of hours of volunteer labor and contracted hundreds of hours of trail crew time to construct the trail and build the erosion control enhancements. NDEP provided funding for the kiosk panel, fencing to assist in guiding the users, signage on the trail and timber materials to improve and stabilize the slopes. The U.S. Forest Service's Carson Ranger District provided pavers to enhance the trailhead to better present the Memorial and interpretive theme. The Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF) provided many hours of conservation crew time to construct the trailhead and place the two kiosks, completing the trailhead in May.