

Opinion: Playing the drought blame game

By Joe Mathews

I hate to play the blame game, but this drought is all your fault.

You are watering outdoors too much. You kept your lawn. You tore out your lawn – and put in hard surfaces that make your city hotter and the drought even worse.



Joe Mathews

And you, with the beautiful swimming pool you keep refilling before your sweet summer parties? I'm shaming you on Twitter as the person most responsible for the drought. Not so popular anymore, are you?

You're rich, and this drought is all the fault of you rich people, with your lush gardens, living in those wealthy water-wasting places like Beverly Hills and Newport Beach. You poor people, too, shouldn't be spared, since you're using all that water in those semi-arid places where you like to live, like the Antelope Valley. Why can't you spend thousands on low-flow toilets and low-water appliances and drip irrigation, like the rest of us?

Those are just the people who are alive. Now I'm using my Ouija board to talk to you dead folks – this is your fault, as

well. You just lie there, oblivious to the drought, in those lush grassy cemeteries.

You in the different California regions should shoulder the blame. You water-guzzlers in Sacramento are responsible for this drought – you only recently got water meters. You newlyweds and nearly-deads in Coachella, how dare you keep gardens and lawns in the desert? And don't look smug, you hippies in San Francisco and Santa Cruz. Yeah, you use less per household than most of us, but you're so holier than thou about it that I get all hot and angry, and I have to cool off with an irresponsibly long shower.

You guys in agriculture, in places like the San Joaquin and Imperial valleys, are the biggest villains. The very few of you use as much as 80 percent of the state's non-environmental water to grow something as unimportant as food. You farmers are growing all the wrong crops in the wrong places. Almond groves. Alfalfa. Dairy cows, drinking 35 gallons a day – Water Moo-ches, you gals are–to produce the milk, to make the cheese, for the pizzas Californians eat. When you think about it, you pizza delivery guys are unindicted co-conspirators in the great water heist.

And why do you fishermen insist that water stay in the rivers and the Bay, when people need it? You're almost as bad as the fish. Delta smelt why can't you be a little tougher instead of getting all endangered and making people have to do without water because of you?

Don't think you're getting away with this, Silicon Valley and Hollywood. Your dream factories have long seduced people to come to this land where anything is possible (and where lawns get over-watered). For all your creativity, have your industries figured a way out of this drought? No! The finest executive Hollywood has ever produced –Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise – put his mind to the question, and the best he could do was a water pipeline from Seattle that

would bankrupt the state. Maybe Spock could have solved the drought, but he died in February.

But why blame the drought entirely on fictional people from the future when you can blame old Delta families who have been farming there since the 19th century. You Delta folks just won't shut up – even after Jerry Brown told you to shut up – and let the governor build his two water-conveying tunnels under your homes and farms. Of, the drought is also all the fault of you, Gov. Brown, because you won't listen to anybody. You're a drought recidivist – we had one the first time you were governor too.

California state government, it's not just your policies that are letting this drought happen. You federal agencies are to blame too, with your regulations making it harder to move water around. You local water agencies didn't conserve fast enough and embrace tier-pricing quickly.

Don't try to hide, nature—I know it's you, not humans, who are responsible for this. Colorado River, how could you dry up on us? Hey, Sierra mountains, you can't call yourself Nevada (snowy) anymore.

Let's not forget who is responsible for rivers and mountains and the earth. This drought is on you, God. Not only do you fail to send California enough water, but also you deluge us with way too many possible culprits for this crisis.

If you can't make us examine our own culpability in this, couldn't you at least give us one clear-cut scapegoat, so we know exactly who to blame?

Joe Mathews is California and innovation editor for Zócalo Public Square, for which he writes the Connecting California column.

Calif. Legislature approves \$117.5 bil. budget

By Chris Megerian, Los Angeles Times

California lawmakers passed a new budget Monday, but the debate over state spending is far from over in the Capitol.

Shortly after the approval of a \$117.5-billion general fund, legislative leaders returned to negotiations with Gov. Jerry Brown in an attempt to reach a final deal.

"We're close," said Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins, D-San Diego.

Lawmakers' pay would have been docked had they not passed a budget by midnight. But the plan they approved is \$2.2 billion larger than what Brown proposed, and the governor has repeatedly expressed concern that the Legislature's ruling Democrats want to spend too much.

Read the whole story

CalFire quickly on top of small fire in Strawberry

CalFire crews made quick work of a fire in Strawberry off Highway 50 on Monday.

The tenth of an acre fire burned on state land. It was

reported in the early evening of June 15.

The cause is under investigation. It was not a burn day and no lightning was occurring.

“We want to make sure people do defensible space and do the right thing the right way, using the right power tools when doing clearances,” Brice Bennett with CalFire told *Lake Tahoe News*.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Eyeing Tesla, college offers 4-year degree in logistics

By Associated Press

RENO – A community college in Reno is becoming the first in Nevada to establish a new four-year degree in logistics to help meet anticipated demand for skilled workers at Tesla Motors and other high-tech companies moving distribution hubs to the region.

The state Board of Regents on Friday approved the Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Logistics Operations Management as well as a Bachelor of Applied Science degree in Emergency Management Homeland Security – Public Safety.

The new programs will be offered for the first time at Truckee Meadows Community College in the fall semester of 2016.

Truckee Meadows President Maria Sheehan said it's the

responsibility of community colleges to respond to changing economic climates as quickly as possible. "And that's the exciting part – when you can do something that is responsive that's going to address certainly jobs for the future and economic revitalization," she said.

The bachelor's degree in logistics will train students for operations planning, warehousing, sustainability, safety and operations.

"Logistics students have not had an option to continue to bachelor's studies in Nevada, and we want to keep these talented students in the state," said Mari Murgolo-Poore, dean of the college's Business Division.

The importance of such a program grew last fall when Tesla announced it's building a \$5 billion gigafactory at the Tahoe Reno Industrial Center along Interstate 80 east of Reno to manufacture lithium batteries to power its electric cars.

The community college said the Tesla gigafactory will bring 3,600 construction jobs and 6,500 factory jobs to northern Nevada in the next three to four years. The majority of those jobs will require more than a high school diploma, school officials said.

"There's an absolute tsunami coming of opportunities," said Michael Pender, the managing director of Porous Power Technologies who works with companies that are moving into the area. The vast majority are looking for a trained, experienced workforce, he said.

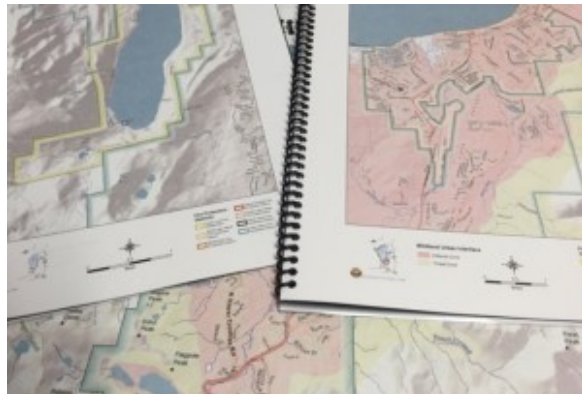
Applied logistics is an integral part of all distribution hubs, Pender said, and that's why his original company decided to locate in the area in the late 1990s. "Distribution and logistics are key to so many industries that are here now and industries that are coming," he said.

Tahoe fire officials coordinating plans

Creating a strategy for how best to fight a wildfire, knowing the resources available, and making plans to reduce potentially catastrophic blazes are some the particulars of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

While such a plan has existed, this is the first time every fire agency in the Lake Tahoe Basin has participated.

“It’s a living document. It’s more about how we do our planning,” South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief Jeff Meston told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Maps help fire officials identify at-risk areas.
Photo/LTN

The document is expected to be finalized this summer. The basin has been broken into quadrants, with each area focusing on issues specific to that geographic area.

The information will be updated as needed.

This document that fire officials are preparing delves into

what agencies have done to thin the forest to make it healthier and less susceptible to a devastating wildfire as well as how well prepared residents are. This then allows for other agencies to know what others are doing and the resources available. It also is an opportunity for the respective departments to assess where they could make improvements.

Prevention is a better tool than suppression for dealing with fires, officials sat.

“There’s a pretty good level of public apathy,” Meston said. This is a concern, especially as fuels are so dry because of the fourth year of drought.

In nine days it will be the eighth anniversary of the start of the Angora Fire that swept through the outskirts of South Lake Tahoe and took down 254 houses. And while those affected by that blaze won’t forget that particular Sunday, it’s not in the forefront of most people’s minds. One of the bigger hurdles, fire officials say, is to get absentee homeowners engaged in defensible space measures to reduce the threat of fire reducing their house to ash. Fire adaptive communities make the entire neighborhood safer.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Bay Area motorcyclist dies on Hwy. 50



A motorcyclist died June 13 in Zephyr Cove. Photo/Nevada Highway Patrol

A Bay Area woman died Saturday night when the motorcycle she was riding was struck by a vehicle going in the opposite direction on Highway 50 in Zephyr Cove near Martin Drive.

A 2015 silver Nissan Versa driven by Alma J. Jaramillo-Garcia, 31, of Moxee, Wash., was headed east in the left lane. For unknown reasons Jaramillo-Garcia drifted into the westbound lanes about 8pm June 13. Amber R. Hallmark, 53, of Antioch, was on a Harley-Davidson in that travel lane.

Hallmark was ejected from her motorcycle. She and the bike landed about 75 feet from the point of impact. She died at the scene. She was wearing a helmet.

Jaramillo-Garcia was transported to Barton Memorial Hospital with minor injuries.

Inattention and impairment are being investigated as a contributing factor in this fatal crash, according to the Nevada Highway Patrol. No charges have been filed.

Anyone who may have witnessed this incident or who may have information is asked to call 775.684.4661 or email ckelly@dps.state.nv.us.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Tahoe officer fatally shoots suspect at hotel



A South Lake Tahoe police officer fatally shot a man June 15. Photo/LTN

A South Lake Tahoe police officer this morning fatally shot a man at the Tahoe Hacienda Inn.

Officers were called to the hotel on Lake Tahoe Boulevard at 2:40am June 15 because of reports of a woman who was screaming and crying.

Ten minutes later an officer fired a single shot at a man in his early 20s who was trying to escape out of a hotel window. The man died a few hours later at Barton Memorial Hospital.

The victim's name is not being released until next of kin is notified.

The officer's name has also not been released. The officer has been put on paid administrative leave.

This is the first officer-involved shooting for the department since November 2004.

“This afternoon we are securing a search warrant so we can investigate the interior of the hotel room where the incident took place,” Police Chief Brian Uhler told *Lake Tahoe News*.

El Dorado County sheriff’s and district attorney’s detectives will be investigating the shooting aspect of the case.

A hotel employee about 8:30 Monday morning told *Lake Tahoe News* that officers had not told her what was going on. Yellow crime tape surrounded the entire hotel this morning, with part of the driveway open by the afternoon.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Rich Californians balk at water limits

By Rob Kuznia, Washington Post

RANCHO SANTA FE – Drought or no drought, Steve Yuhas resents the idea that it is somehow shameful to be a water hog. If you can pay for it, he argues, you should get your water.

People “should not be forced to live on property with brown lawns, golf on brown courses or apologize for wanting their gardens to be beautiful,” Yuhas fumed recently on social media. “We pay significant property taxes based on where we live,” he added in an interview. “And, no, we’re not all equal when it comes to water.”

Yuhas lives in the ultra-wealthy enclave of Rancho Santa Fe, a bucolic Southern California hamlet of ranches, gated communities and country clubs that guzzles five times more water per capita than the statewide average. In April, after

Gov. Jerry Brown called for a 25 percent reduction in water use, consumption in Rancho Santa Fe went up by 9 percent.

Read the whole story

Squaw spends half million to derail incorporation

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

An effort by some residents of Olympic Valley to turn the small Sierra Nevada community into a town has attracted notable opposition from Squaw Valley, the ski resort that would provide most of the new municipality's income.

The movement to create a town was born of opposition to Squaw Valley's plans to build new hotels, condos, commercial properties and a large recreation center over a 25-year period. Incorporation proponents, however, are downplaying that as a motivating factor, saying they need Squaw Valley's expansion to sustain the town and that they are driven instead by a desire to have "greater self-determination."

Executives of the ski resort said they're skeptical of the group's intentions and believe they can get a fairer review of their expansion from Placer County officials.

In a 12-month period ending in April, a Squaw-backed political action committee spent about \$570,000 in its effort to derail the incorporation bid, according to records filed with the Placer County elections office. The money has paid for attorneys and consultants.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



- Oyster.com lists Lake Tahoe as the second most beautiful lake in the United States.

- Truckee Elementary was named a STEM Honor Roll School by the Campaign for Business & Education Excellence.
- Fal Asrani is now deputy chief learning officer for Tahoe Truckee Unified School District.
- Mark Goldstein, 69, of El Dorado Hills has been reappointed to the Respiratory Care Board of California, where he has served since 2012.
- Tahoe Paradise Resort Improvement District is having a special meeting June 15 at 6pm at the park. Here is the agenda.