

Nevada warned about threat of wildfires



Kit Bailey is the fire guru for U.S. Forest Service in the Lake Tahoe Basin.
Photo/LTN file

By Ray Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

The ongoing drought, warmer-than-usual weather conditions and the fuel for fire those conditions produce could lead to a “perfect storm” this summer where multiple states in the West could be having large, simultaneous fires, state and federal fire officials told Gov. Brian Sandoval Monday.

“The system is going to be heavily taxed this year,” said Kit Bailey of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit. “We have preparedness levels of one through five and I’m a little concerned that we may get to an unprecedented level, a level six, and that is kind of a worst-case scenario.

“We have been preparing for and have had dialogue on what is going to look like when Southern California, Northern California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington all have simultaneous large fire events,” Bailey said.

Despite the seriousness of the situation, Sandoval left the

2015 Governor's Wildlife Fire Briefing knowing that the various state and federal agencies are prepared for the worst.

Read the whole story

Time to be aware of waking bears

By Carol Singleton

May is Be Bear Aware Month and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife reminds the public to act responsibly when in bear country. Spring is the time of year when California's black bears emerge from their winter dens in search of food. Because bears are attracted to anything edible or smelly, their search often leads them into campsites and residential neighborhoods, where trash and food is readily available.

There are an estimated 35,000 bears in California. Throughout spring and summer, CDFW receives many calls when bears break into homes, rummage through trash bins and raid campsites. These bears are often labeled "nuisance" bears, but in reality they are just doing what comes naturally to them, foraging for food.

"During this extreme drought, it is particularly important that people who visit or live near bear habitat keep their food and trash secure at all times," said Jesse Garcia, CDFW's Bear Program manager. "These dry conditions are forcing some bears to travel longer distances in search of food and water, and sometimes these forays lead them into populated areas where bear-human conflicts occur. Bears that become conditioned to human sources of food and lose their fear of

people can become dangerous and often must be killed in order to protect public safety.”

Tips for bear-proofing your home, rental or time share:

Bears have keen noses and can smell an easy meal from miles away. They can easily tear a front door off its hinges if they smell food left out on the kitchen counter. The best defense against bear break-ins is not to attract them to your property by following these tips:

- Purchase and properly use a bear-proof garbage container.
- Wait to put trash out until the morning of collection day.
- Don't leave trash, groceries or animal feed in your car.
- Keep garbage cans clean and deodorize them with bleach or ammonia.
- Keep barbecue grills clean and stored in a garage or shed when not in use.
- Only provide bird feeders during November through March and make them inaccessible to bears.
- Don't leave any scented products outside, even non-food items such as suntan lotion, insect repellent, soap or candles.
- Keep doors and windows closed and locked.
- Consider installing motion-detector alarms and/or electric fencing.
- Harvest fruit off trees as soon as it is ripe, and promptly collect fruit that falls.
- Securely block access to potential hibernation sites such as crawl spaces under decks and buildings.

Tips for bear-proofing a campsite:

No one wants to worry about housekeeping on a camping trip, but maintaining a clean campsite is the responsible and safe thing to do when visiting black bear country. Here are a few

tips for bear-proofing your campsite:

- Use bear-proof garbage cans whenever possible or store your garbage in a secure location with your food.
- Store food (including pet food) and toiletries in bear-proof containers or in an airtight container in the trunk of your vehicle if bear lockers are not available.
- Clean dishes and store food and garbage immediately after meals.
- Clean your barbecue grill after each use.
- Never keep food or toiletries in your tent.
- Change out of clothes you cooked in before going to bed.

Facts about black bears:

There are two sub-species of American black bear in California: the northwestern black bear and the California black bear. They range in color from blonde to black, with cinnamon brown being the most common.

- There are an estimated 35,000 bears in California.
- Black bears will seek to avoid confrontation with humans. If encountered, always leave them an escape route.
- Males are much larger than females and can weigh up to 500 pounds, although average weight is about 300 pounds.
- Black bears can sprint up to 35 mph and they are strong swimmers and great tree climbers.
- A typical wild bear diet consists of berries, plants, nuts, roots, honey, honeycomb, insects, larvae, carrion and small mammals.
- As winter approaches, bears will forage for food up to 20 hours a day, storing enough fat to sustain them through hibernation. Bears often hibernate in large hollow trees 40 to 60 feet off the ground.
Bears that are accustomed to people can become too bold and lose their fear of humans.

Carol Singleton works for the California Department of Fish

and Wildlife.

USFS thinning projects to resume this month

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit will resume work on the Carnelian, Incline and South Shore Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Healthy Forest Restoration projects this month. These projects authorize thinning of trees and brush on National Forest System lands in the Lake Tahoe Basin to reduce the risk of severe wildfire and create healthier forests.

On the South Shore, hand thinning will take place near Angora Ridge, Twin Peaks, Fountain Place, Lower Echo Lake, Christmas Valley and Luther Pass. Mechanical cut-to-length thinning will take place near Pope Beach, 15th Street, Sawmill Pond, Spring Creek Tract and Christmas Valley. Mechanical whole tree removal will take place along Fallen Leaf Lake Road.

On the North Shore, hand thinning will take place near Kings Beach, north of Speckled Avenue and off Highway 431 near the Tyrolian Village in Incline Village. Mechanical cut-to-length thinning will take place on the east side of Highway 267 at the end of Beaver Street above Kings Beach. Whole tree removal will take place in Cedar Flat, near Forest Road 74 (Old County Road) and on the north side of Highway 267, near Forest Road 16N52 (Gasline Road).

The Forest Service will post closure orders for mechanical work online.

In addition to short-term impacts to recreational access,

major impacts from fuels reduction projects include changes to the appearance of basin forests. Treated areas look disturbed at first, but recover visually within a few years.

TOCCATA practicing for 10th Summer MusicFest

TOCCATA – Tahoe Symphony Orchestra and Chorus – will kick off its 10th Summer MusicFest with Going For Baroque-Summer Solstice. This is a tribute to the classical and Baroque masters.

The series will feature guest flutist Josue Casillas, among many other soloists. Works of Vivaldi, Teleman and J.S. Bach will be featured. “Papa” Bach’s well known Cantata BWV 9, Es ist das Heil, will be performed by the Toccata Chamber Chorus, with vocal soloists Joy Strotz and Anna Helwing, soprano, and Stuart Duke, baritone.

The series runs from June 17-23.

All concert series will be performed at venues in Reno, Incline Village, South Lake Tahoe and Carson. Maestro James Rawie will conduct all performances. Programs are subject to change. Call 775.313.9697 or go online for programs, times, venues, and price information.

Bike Challenge offers chance to win a cruiser



Spottin
g one of the above banners could win someone a cruiser bike.

This is all part of the annual Tahoe Bike Challenge.

When you see one of these banners at a business, email info@tahoebike.org with your name, email, phone number, and where you spotted the banner to be entered into the raffle. Emailing a picture with you and the banner is worth two raffle entries.

The banners will be rotated at businesses throughout the Tahoe region and Truckee.

The drawing will take place at the Cycle Celebration on June 20 at Heavenly Village in South Lake Tahoe.

The bike challenge is June 1-14. For information and to register, go online.

Will Sandoval run for Senate?

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

As a handsome, popular, moderate politician of Latino

heritage, Republican Gov. Brian Sandoval often is the subject of political speculation.

Even before his overwhelming re-election win, people were guessing about his ambitions to run for U.S. Senate.

Then Sen. Harry Reid announced his retirement, making a potential Senate run even more attractive to Sandoval.

For now, only Sandoval knows what his next move will be. He refuses to answer questions about his political aspirations, and his inner circle insists he is focused on the job Nevadans elected him to do.

But with Sandoval's history of exiting office early to win a more powerful seat, pundits speculate he could make a 2016 power play for Reid's seat.

Read the whole story

USDA nutrition labels not working

By Adam Roy, Outside

Kind's fruit-and-nut bars have won loyal fans among hikers, bikers, and climbers for their taste, simple ingredient list, and ability to banish hunger for hours. But now, the very thing that leaves athletes satiated – their fat – has landed them in the Food and Drug Administration's doghouse.

The FDA recently warned Kind that four of its products, including its Kind Fruit & Nut Almond & Apricot, and Kind Plus Dark Chocolate Cherry Cashew + Antioxidants bars, were in

violation of federal labeling regulations. Among a laundry list of mostly minor complaints: Kind had improperly labeled all of them as “healthy,” and used the word “plus” in the name of two. But instead of punishing Kind for its word choice, the FDA should be looking inward at the heart of the issue: labeling that confuses rather than informs consumers.

When it comes to food packaging, “healthy” is one of a handful of terms that the FDA keeps on a tight leash. For an energy bar or other snack to legally include the word on its label, it must have less than 1 gram of saturated fat and 3 grams of total fat per serving.

Read the whole story

Postal workers putting on 1-day food drive

The nation’s largest one-day food drive will be May 9. Fill a bag – or any container – with nonperishable food, and leave it for your letter carrier at home or work or bring food to the local post office.

In 2014, Nevada carriers collected more than 440,000 pounds of food. Nationally, 78 million pounds of food was collected by postal carriers, feeding an estimated 30 million people.

Food banks and pantries often receive the majority of their donations during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. By springtime, many pantries are depleted, entering the summer low on supplies at a time when many school breakfast and lunch programs are not available to children in need.

Gluten changing people's relationship with food

By Roberto A. Ferdman, Washington Post

Gluten, which gives bread, pizza dough and other starchy foods their chewiness, is one of the most beloved proteins in the world. But it's also quickly becoming one of the most feared – at least here in the United States. An estimated 20 million Americans believe that eating it causes them distress. And 100 million people, meanwhile, say that they are actively working to eliminate gluten from their diet.

Roughly 1 percent of humans suffer from celiac disease, an autoimmune disease that damages the body's small intestine when gluten is digested. But the gluten-free movement has gone far beyond those who suffer from celiac, becoming a pervasive part of how Americans eat.

And yet there is a growing sense that people – in particular those who don't suffer from celiac disease – are being a bit ridiculous about avoiding the protein.

Is there a scientific basis for all the gluten fear-mongering? Is it wrong to avoid gluten if avoiding it makes you feel better? And are people actually feeling better, or is it all just in their heads?

Read the whole story

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Mishka

Mishka is a 6-year-old German shepherd and he is a big fluffy lovable boy.

Like most German shepherds, he is smart, loyal, and somewhat independent. He was found as a stray and his people never looked for him.

Mishka is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with many other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe shelter's Facebook page to see photos and descriptions of all pets at the shelter.

Call 530.573.7925 for directions, hours, and other information on adopting a pet.

For spay-neuter assistance for South Tahoe residents, go online.

– Karen Kuentz