

Improv show in Meyers

Tahoe Improv Players are returning for the 25th year of comedy.

The first show of 2018 will be March 16 at Lake Tahoe Golf Course in Meyers. Doors open at 7pm, show is at 7:30pm. The \$15 tickets are available **online**. The shows are appropriate for all ages.

Six players of the original cast members are still with the troupe: Colin Burrows, Dave Hamilton, Johnny Bolton, musical director Fabrizio, and co-founders Gerry Orton and Frank Riley. Bbecause scenes are made up on the spot, every show is new.

In addition to the Lake Tahoe Golf Course show, the Tahoe iMPRoV Players, will perform shows in Valhalla's Boathouse Theater as part of the Valhalla Tahoe Summer Arts Festival on June 30, July 10, July 24 and July 31.

Complaints hit Nev. sports betting mutual funds

By Todd Prince, Las Vegas Review-Journal

Former clients of Bettor Investments, one of the first sports betting mutual funds in Nevada, are accusing its founder of going "radio silent" and not responding to requests to return their money.

Nine clients said Reno-based Matt Stuart has not responded to emails and calls to pay back promissory notes, according to a

January email chain the investors shared with the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

Two clients have filed a complaint with the Nevada secretary of state and the attorney general.

Read the whole story

A Miracle March is not something to bet on

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

In late February of 1991, the snowpack in the Lake Tahoe, Truckee, Carson and Walker basins was about 16 to 20 percent of normal.

By April 1, after a month of seemingly non-stop snowstorms, the snowpack recovered to as much as 80 percent of normal in some places.

When looking at the dismal snowpack numbers from the winter of 2017-18, it's tempting to take comfort in the possibility of another Miracle March, similar to 1991.

Tempting, but not very comforting when you consider the odds. There's a reason people called March 1991 a miracle.

Read the whole story

Deceased person found outside SLT business

Police officers say the death of a South Lake Tahoe man found on a local sidewalk Sunday is not suspicious.

An autopsy on Douglas Knapp, 55, is scheduled to determine the exact cause of death.

His body was found about 6:45am Feb. 25 on Emerald Bay Road in front of Enchanted Florist.

Overnight temperatures have been well below freezing in the basin.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Best in Basin nominations being sought

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency will be accepting project nominations for its annual Best in Basin awards through March 31.

TRPA created the awards program as a way to recognize projects that demonstrate exceptional planning and design and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities.

The program has five award categories for projects completed in 2017: Building and general construction projects; water quality restoration and erosion control projects; defensible space and forest health projects; public and environmental

improvement program projects; and sustainability actions and projects. Projects must have been completed in 2017 to be eligible for an award.

Lake Tahoe residents interested in volunteering to judge projects should contact Tom Lotshaw at tlotshaw@trpa.org.

More information is available **online**.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Frankie

Frankie is an 8-month-old Catahoula leopard dog mix. He is an energetic and skinny puppy, and would benefit from some training. He prefers girl dogs to boys, and would probably chase cats.

Frankie had an injury on his hip that is still healing, but he has been checked by the vet and it should heal completely.

Frankie is neutered, microchipped, tested for heart worm, and vaccinated. He is at the El Dorado County Animal Services shelter in Meyers, along with other dogs and cats who are waiting for their new homes. Go to the Tahoe animal 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

Scientists investigate fire, long-term resilience

By Sherri Eng

As the state recovers from devastating fires in the north and south, a team of California-based scientists is taking a deeper look at forest resilience in the face of future fires.

A collaborative team of multidisciplinary researchers from the California Academy of Sciences and the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Southwest Research Station are investigating a forested Northern California watershed—and its birds—to determine how prescribed fire may contribute to healthier forest ecosystems and reduce the risk of high intensity wildfires. By surveying birds and local conditions in a forest targeted for prescribed fire, the team will capture a multi-year picture of what fuel-heavy ecosystems look like before a

fire, how they respond to prescribed fire in the near-term, and how they might change if a wildfire occurs down the road.

“California forests are treasures to the wildlife and people of our state,” says Durrell Kapan, senior research fellow at the California Academy of Sciences and a co-leader of the resiliency project. “There couldn’t be a more important time to research the impacts of forest fires—especially the role of supervised, prescribed fires to reduce the risk of extreme burns. Our group is interested in understanding how to manage forests in a healthy way so we can avoid the devastating megafires that often follow drought and disease.”

The first survey results point to the importance of regular prescribed burns to keep healthy forests thriving and nearby communities safer from catastrophic wildfires. The five-year scientific survey and outreach program, which launched this past spring on the 20,236-acre Caples Creek watershed along the South Fork of the American River, will continue in spring 2018.

Fire, climate, and a ‘study’ forest

The frequency and intensity of the West’s wildland fires is increased by global climate change. Earth’s changing climate has contributed to more variable bouts of extreme wet or drought, which can include drier soils and longer fire seasons—conditions that increase the likelihood of intense, more dangerous fires that are difficult to control. Combined with our country’s long history of suppressing fire in our forests, current conditions are making way for severe, record-breaking wildfires up and down California.

In the face of climate impacts, widespread regional tree death, and longer, more catastrophic fire seasons across the state, scientists from the academy and PSW teamed up to identify a study region that might be used as a stand-in for forests elsewhere. Unlike some forests in its nearby neighbor,

the Lake Tahoe Basin, much of the forest land in the Caples Creek watershed has been fire-free for more than 80 to 100 years, meaning the forest floor has a large amount of “fuel”—dead trees and layers of vegetation built up over time—and is susceptible to major fires in the future.

“The Caples Creek watershed has a long history of fire suppression, but otherwise it has not been significantly altered by people,” says Pat Manley, PSW’s Conservation of Biodiversity research program manager. “It has incredible natural resources, biodiversity, and a variety of forest types that are a great fit for this type of study of how to use prescribed fire to maintain and enhance forest resilience.”

Birds as ecosystem indicators

In summer 2017, scientists from the Academy—including Kapan and Jack Dumbacher, curator of ornithology and mammalogy—joined PSW in surveying the birds of the Caples Creek study area before any scheduled prescribed burns. The team is interested in how birds currently depend on the watershed’s diverse habitats, as well as how they will respond to future fire. Eighty-three study sites throughout the 20,236-acre watershed were chosen both inside and outside the area planned for prescribed fires. Over the course of the first summer survey, the team detected 45 bird species (from 1,700 individual birds) and measured vegetation at each site to see how fire changes ecosystems over time.

“There’s a method to the madness of surveying forest birds,” says Dumbacher. “We spend 10 ultra-quiet minutes in each site, and watch and listen for any birds around us. When we look at the data from the first pre-burn survey, we see that different birds depend on all different parts of a healthy forest to survive. We’ll return to these sites to see what changes in the years to come as prescribed burns roll out and the ecosystem changes.”

A five-year plan

One way to reduce severe fires is to decrease fuel wood by reintroducing smaller fires to the forest at the right time of year—during times when the forest floor and woody vegetation have a lot of moisture from rain or snow. This past fall, the Forest Service launched its five-year project of prescribed fire in the Caples Creek watershed with hand tools and careful planning. Managers take into account winds, moisture, and temperature to minimize the risk of burning more than accumulated forest fuel.

“Forests need fire to thrive and keep our human communities safer,” says Kapan, “but we need a better understanding of how certain management techniques impact wildlife. Forest managers, scientists, private landowners, and communities, you name it—we’re all adapting to a new climate and fire reality in California. Forests are always cycling and changing, and we want to help identify the most natural, cost-effective path to lasting resilience.”

Following a pre-survey this spring, academy and PSW scientists will return for the second year of bird surveys during late spring. The academy, an institution with a history of more than 150 years of California biodiversity research, and the team from PSW hope to continue monitoring the impacts of multi-year fuel reduction on the forest ecosystem—birds, trees, and more—through 2022.

Sherri Eng is with the Pacific Southwest Research Station of the USFS.

Opinion: More funds means less money for USFS projects

By Randy Moore

Last year, more than 1,500 wildfires burned over 640,000 acres on National Forest System lands in California, including the Thomas Fire, the largest fire in California's recorded history. The surrounding communities are still dealing with damage from debris flows caused by a charred and barren landscape that no longer has the protection of trees, grass and other vegetation.



Randy Moore

We see and empathize with those affected, and are working to reduce the potential for future loss by performing hazardous fuel reduction treatments which include thinning overstocked forests and prescribed burning.

The Forest Service is increasingly challenged to provide the personnel and management needed to maintain these services; infrastructure, such as roads, trails and campgrounds; and the health and resiliency of our public forests. The Pacific Southwest Region spent in excess of \$500 million preventing or suppressing wildfires over the past year. While nationally, Forest Service suppression costs exceeded \$2.4 billion last year, more than ever before. Fire alone accounted for 57 percent of the agency's budget in 2017, up from just 16 percent in 1995. At this rate, suppression costs will take up

67 percent of the Forest Service's budget by 2021.

Currently, 10 million acres of National Forest System lands in California are at moderate to high risk from insects, disease or fire. The science, data and monitoring shows that hazardous fuel treatments positively affect fire behavior and lowers the catastrophic risk of fire damage. Essentially, the more acres we treat, the healthier our forests become, contributing to safer and more resilient communities. In 2017 alone, we performed fuels reduction treatments on over 310,000 acres of Forest Service lands across the state, but there is more to be done.

Funding for suppression efforts performed by the Forest Service on National Forest System lands as well as those under other ownership, comes from the agency's overall budget which means less money for other Forest Service programs and services. The Forest Service is the only federal agency that is required to fund its entire emergency management program through its regular appropriations. About a third of the Forest Service's total spending on fire goes toward 1 to 2 percent of the fires it fights.

Megafires, like the Thomas Fire, are national disasters. It would make sense to deal with them as such: through a separate national emergency fund to stop the drain on the funding for the work we care most about. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and the Forest Service deeply appreciate the ongoing work of Congress to pass new legislation to reform the way wildfire suppression is funded, supporting our efforts to meet the many different needs of the communities we serve, for the benefit of generations to come.

Randy Moore is regional forester for the Pacific Southwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service.

Universities purging library resources

By Michael Rubinkam, AP

A library without books? Not quite, but as students abandon the stacks in favor of online reference material, university libraries are unloading millions of unread volumes in a nationwide purge that has some print-loving scholars deeply unsettled.

Libraries are putting books in storage, contracting with resellers or simply recycling them. An ever-increasing number of books exist in the cloud, and libraries are banding together to ensure print copies are retained by someone, somewhere. Still, that doesn't always sit well with academics who practically live in the library and argue that large, readily available print collections are vital to research.

"It's not entirely comfortable for anyone," said Rick Lugg, executive director of OCLC Sustainable Collection Services, which helps libraries analyze their holdings. "But absent endless resources to handle this stuff, it's a situation that has to be faced."

Read the whole story

Sound wall built to protect homes that don't exist

By Joe Hart, KRNV-TV

As sound walls go, the new one on the south end of the Carson City freeway is impressive. It stretches for roughly half a mile and is decorated with artwork to make it aesthetically pleasing.

Construction costs came in just shy of \$1 million. The wall borders the southern stretch of the new freeway on one side, and acres of dirt and sagebrush on the other side.

"I've never seen a wall extend that far with absolutely nothing that it's protecting," said Carson City resident Gary Kolb. "I mean, if you look over there, there's nothing there."

Read the whole story