

NASA scientist to give talk in Incline

Simon Hook from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory will speak Nov. 13 at 6pm at the Tahoe Center for Environmental Sciences in Incline Village.

Hook uses Lake Tahoe as a validation site for earth observation satellites that measure surface temperature and recently used satellite surface temperature measurements made over the last 30 years to study large lakes as climate change indicators. He is currently building an instrument that will be deployed on the International Space Station in 2017 and produce the highest resolution surface temperature maps available from space to study vegetation health.

He will describe his work at Lake Tahoe and around the Earth using satellites measurements of surface temperature and discuss the new ECOSystem Spaceborne Thermal Radiometer Experiment on Space Station mission.

For more information, 775.881.7566.

‘The Judge’ – near perfect story, acting

By Jeremy Miller

Finally! I’ve waited for what feels like an eternity for something that really amazed me in theaters. Not since “Guardians” have I truly been blown away, until now.

Unsuspecting director David Dobkin (“Wedding Crashers,” “The Change-Up”) was behind the camera while Nick Schenk (Gran Torino) and Bill Dubuque manned the screenplay for “The Judge”. Right there you’ve got a pretty sure-fire recipe for success.

Hotshot lawyer Hank Palmer (Robert Downey Jr.) returns to his childhood hometown of Carlinville, Ind., when he received word that his mother passed. He’s met by brothers Glen (Vincet D’Onforio) and Dale (Jeremy Strong) and immediately you feel some seriously haunting backstory lingering.



The Miller Meter – 4.5
starts out of 5.

The most dominant conflict was between Hank and his father, the reputable Judge Joseph Palmer (Robert Duvall). Hank had obviously been excommunicated by the family for reasons untold until the very end (sorry, no spoilers). What Hank intended to be a cameo appearance turned into an obligatory extended stay when he received word that the Judge was suspected of murder.



In addition to the familial conflict Hank is trying to get a hold on, he’s met with some serious sexual conflict when he runs into his high school sweetheart Samantha played by the illustrious Vera Farmiga.

After long bouts of father vs. son, Hank finally convinces the Judge to let him represent him in court. Hank’s reputation and success rate lead him to believe it’ll be a quick case, but

he's proved wrong when he meets the opposition in the form of Dwight Dickham (Billy Bob Thornton) who's got a personal bone to pick with Hank due to Dwight's commitment to riding the right side of the law.

The rest of the flick is pure suspense in the courtroom mixed with sexual tension and familial conflict and revelation. Simply put, I've been waiting for this movie for a long time. The summer provided a couple big blockbusters, but nothing in the emotionally powerful department. This movie on the other hand was an absolute powerhouse. From start to finish I felt blown away by the characters and the story they told.



Robert Duvall brought so much electricity to this film I could barely take it, as did every member of the supporting cast. Robert Downey Jr. expectedly stole the show. His performance was hands-down the best of his career. I've never seen him so play as passionate a character.

For about the first 30 minutes I was genuinely concerned that RDJ was cast simply because Hank is a high power, filthy rich, makes every man jealous kinda guy, and I've seen him play that part for too long to see it again, especially outside of the Marvel Universe. Almost as quickly as I assumed that's how it would be, he turned it around. He played a vulnerable, flawed, average honest guy that I've always wanted to see him play, and he did it better than I've seen in longer than I can remember.

The chemistry between RDJ and Duvall was nothing short of spectacular and tore my heart into pieces throughout. Overall,

the film hits home with anyone and everyone who's had familial conflict, and for that reason I was completely captivated by it. My only hesitation from giving this thing a five was that for a few split seconds it got too cheesy and took away from the script's believability, but like I said, they were seconds. A perfect story backed by a perfect screenplay, presented with flawless acting and given to us with top notch directing lands this puppy a 4.5 on the meter.

South Lake Tahoe resident Jeremy Miller has more movie reviews [online](#).

Calif. to vote on lighter penalties to relieve prisons

By Michael B. Marois, Bloomberg

California voters are being asked to lighten criminal penalties for low-level drug possession and nonviolent thefts such as shoplifting, to help ease crowding in the state's prisons.

Support for the ballot initiative is uniting billionaires on opposite ends of the political spectrum, from financier George Soros and Netflix Inc. Chief Executive Officer Reed Hastings to Republican donor B. Wayne Hughes Jr., son of the founder of Public Storage, the largest self-storage business.

Proposition 47, reducing certain non-violent property and drug crimes from felonies to misdemeanors, is a turnabout for the state that enacted one of the first Three Strikes laws in

1994. It's one of six measures on the statewide ballot that also asks voters to sell bonds for water works, stash money away for a rainy day, restrict increases in health care insurance premiums, and boost malpractice civil judgments.

"This is incredibly significant," said Nichole Porter, director of policy advocacy for the Sentencing Project in Washington. "This could set the stage for the next 20 years in terms of rethinking the nation's approach to criminal justice policy. If the voters of California authorize this ballot measure, that will really change the conversation nationally."

Simple drug possession, bad checks under \$950, shoplifting and petty theft with the same limits would be misdemeanors, generally punishable by a fine or a term in county jail, rather than a felony, requiring a prison sentence.

Read the whole story

Time to clean the trails at Sierra

Sierra-at-Tahoe's Keep Sierra Clean Day is Oct. 19.

Staff and volunteers will hit the trails to pick up trash before the snow falls.

Registration begins at 10am, with the lift spinning at 10:30am.

Sierra will provide a free lunch, live music and giveaways on the Solstice Plaza. The event goes until 3pm.

In addition, there will be a ski swap in the parking lot from 2-3pm.

Opinion: EDC wrong to encourage secrecy

By Dave Jinkens

In a stunning step backward from transparency the El Dorado County Planning Commission, holding a difficult to attend morning weekday workshop on the draft Meyers Area Plan at City Hall in South Lake Tahoe on Oct. 16, recommended that any new Meyers Area Advisory Council formed by the Board of Supervisor after adoption of a Meyers Area Plan not be subject to California's Open Meeting Law, the Brown Act.

Three county supervisor appointed planning leaders present want any Meyers Area Council to work "informally" without notification requirements provided in state law for the news media and general public. Concerned Meyers Area residents present at the meeting were shocked at this disavowal of the public notification process by these county appointed leaders and their staff.



David Jinkens

The problem to date with the process used by the county of El Dorado in developing a Meyers Area Plan is that it has not been a transparent process. It has not complied with the customary and commonly used requirements of local government to notify the media and the general public under the Brown Act of area plan meetings, and it appears to be guided by back-door small group and special interest lobbying of county officials and staff outside of the public view.

The process used to date is not open and inclusive to the entire Meyers community. Sadly, some County government officials and staff to date have left the unfortunate impression that they know best what is good for Meyers, and they will decide what is best, not the community.

Concerned Meyers residents who have for months urged the Board of Supervisors and county staff to have a broader community-based and inclusive public input process were disappointed to learn their calls for democratic reform in the process have been ignored and will be perpetuated even after a new plan is adopted.

"If there is one thing the broader community appeared to support without question, it was that the future Meyers Advisory Council would be subject to the Brown Act," said Meyers area resident Jennifer Quashnick.

Meyers resident and business owner Angie Olson said, "We were surprised to see the county staff present this as option to the Planning Commission, and even more so when they selected the non-transparent, non-public option."

The South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce board of directors supports Meyers area residents and property owners who want a communitywide and unbiased Meyers survey to determine Meyers community views on a new plan. The South Tahoe chamber board does not wish to tell Meyers area residents what they need or want in a new plan. California's South Tahoe chamber supports

the right of Meyers Area residents to make that decision themselves in a democratic and transparent way.

In the end, it is the Meyers community as a whole that needs to decide their future, and they need their voice to be heard and listened to by county officials and their staff. The hope remains that the full Board of Supervisors will ultimately embrace open and legally noticed meetings and an inclusive Meyers Area Plan process.

On Oct. 28, the county of Board of Supervisors will hold a workshop on the Meyers Area Plan at City Hall in South Lake Tahoe and Meyers residents and property and business owners are encouraged to attend.

For more information about the concerns of Meyers community members, go online.

Dave Jinkens is the government affairs liaison volunteer for the South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce.

Prescribed fires to be ignited on South Shore

Tahoe Douglas Fire Protection District and U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit personnel will conduct prescribed fire operations in numerous locations around the Lake Tahoe Basin beginning today.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size.

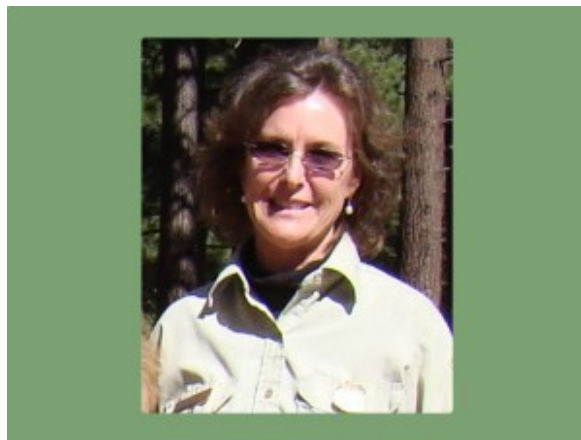
To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to

pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Project information:

- District 21 pile burns, multiple units off Tramway and South Benjamin, 20 acres of hand piles.
- Timberland ULM, Elizabeth Drive north of Tahoma, 26.02 acres of hand piles.
- Echo View, Sawmill Pond, 1.32 acres of hand piles.
- Angora Creek near Lake Tahoe Boulevard, 17.84 acres of hand piles. Bakersfield ULM
- Bakersfield Street near Lake Baron, 3.72 acres of hand piles.
- Waverly Drive off of Elks Club Road, 3.12 acres of hand piles.
- Genoa Peak Road, 25 acres of hand piles and underburn.

Lake Tahoe Forest Service chief retiring



Nancy Gibson is retiring from the U.S. Forest Service in January. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Relationships and collaboration are what have allowed Nancy Gibson to accomplish things her predecessors have not always been able to do.

While she has not done everything she has wanted, the forest supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit knows the job could never completely be done. Such are the hazards of managing one of the more complex forests in the United States.

Gibson took over the top job with the local Forest Service office in March 2011. She will retire Jan. 3, 2015, after 37 years with the agency. This is Gibson's second stint in Tahoe. She was on temporary assignment to LTBMU as deputy supervisor from November 2006 to March 2007.

But she's not going anywhere. She and her husband built a house in Meyers that they moved into last year. She plans to take the advice of friends to learn to say "no" and not do too much the first year other than have fun. Her husband has been retired for six years, so she knew it was time for her to do the same.

During her tenure with the agency she has seen many changes.

"This evolution of forestry, national resource management and science coming together to better synthesize all disciplines has been pretty remarkable," Gibson told *Lake Tahoe News*. "It's getting back to our roots, but also reinventing ourselves as a conservation agency."

Fifty years ago no one talked about climate change. Now it's an integral part of nearly every decision regarding the forest.

Lake Tahoe is unique in many ways. It is the only forest with urban lots. (There are 3,500 scattered throughout the 155,000 acres. Seventy-eight percent of the land in the basin is

managed by the USFS.)

What she'd like to do is teach tourists that dumping ashes from their vacation rental into the empty Forest Service lot next door is how wildland fires are started. It's a problem her counterparts in other jurisdictions don't have to deal with.

Fire is a huge part of this office – which is unusual for a forest supervisor's headquarters. Initial attacks are more the work of ranger stations. Not so here.

Gibson says the work of the basin fire chiefs group is beneficial to the area in terms of fuels reduction and firefighting efforts.

Having the hotshot crew become certified this year points to the significant role firefighters have in Tahoe.

Normally the more acreage a forest has, the more complex it is. Not so with Tahoe. Size-wise, this is a small forest. Issues-wise it is huge. Most forests are in one state, and if it does go into another, it usually isn't of much consequence.



TRPA chief Joanne Marchetta
and LTBMU head Nancy Gibson
at the 2014 Lake Tahoe
Environmental Summit.
Photo/Kathryn Reed

Also unique to Tahoe is the role of the Tahoe Regional

Planning Agency – another federal agency. That relationship has become more amicable through the years.

When Gibson arrived the hostility between the USFS and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board was palpable. That animosity evaporated with the leadership change at both organizations; which in turn filtered down to the rank and file employees.

“If we don’t have relationships, we don’t have the desired outcomes,” Gibson said.

Being able to work with her peers from other agencies has helped the USFS accomplish its goals. This is a new era in the basin where people are working together and being less territorial.

“All the players rely on each other to keep this environment sound,” Gibson said.

In a one-on-one with *LTN*, Gibson repeatedly spoke of the need to balance environmental, ecological and social concerns when it comes to making land management decisions.

When she arrived in Tahoe the discussions all focused on water. She helped change that so conversations center on forests. She said a holistic approach needs to be used when managing lands. Gibson pointed to how managing the uplands will ensure water clarity downstream.

Gibson’s employees are dealing with a forest that has more visitors per acre than any other forest in the United States.

When she got here there was no cohesive approach to dealing with Fourth of July, even though many visitors are spending time on a Forest Service beach. And it’s the busiest day of the year in the basin. It wasn’t until 2013 that the incident command system was put into place.

“Before we didn’t know where our employees were at all times,”

Gibson said.

She has spent every July 4 in the field to witness what her employees are contending with.



Nancy Gibson plants trees
at Lake Tahoe.
Photo/Provided

She is proud to be at the helm as work on the Forest Service's reach of the Upper Truckee River started after having been in the planning stages for years. Implementation of the 10,000-acre South Shore Fuels Reduction project is another accomplishment.

While she had hoped the Zephyr fire lookout would have been moved to White Hill on Spooner Summit during her watch, that is doubtful because of an ownership dispute. Gibson said the Forest Service has documentation that the feds are the rightful owner. She is hoping for an amicable resolution so the lookout will be accessible to the public.

She also would have liked for the Forest Plan to be in place. That isn't likely to happen until 2015 after she has moved on.

Gibson's eyes light up when she speaks of continuing the work started with Generation Green, the youth program, and other

times in her career when she has helped young people succeed and communities move forward. She can see doing something along those lines in retirement.

A replacement for Gibson has not been named. She's hoping the next supervisor will be on board before she turns in her Forest Service greens for civilian clothing so she can introduce that person to the players in the basin, explain some of the nuances of the job and ease the transition into this unique forest.

Then it will be time for her to spend time with her two children, other family in Arizona and Montana, friends, as well as appreciate the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit from an entirely different perspective. While the demands of work only allow her to get out in the woods about one weekend a month, she plans see more of it after the first of the year.

Letter: Vote Laine for South Tahoe council

To the community,

Our city needs Brooke Laine on the City Council. Her integrity, experience and business background are assets we need to keep.

She was born and raised in South Lake Tahoe and is passionate about the future of our community. She's committed, and she can do the job.

We urge you to vote for Brooke Laine for City Council Nov. 4.

Carolyn and Mort Meiers, South Lake Tahoe

Letter: County taking action on Meyers

To the community,

Reporting from the Oct. 16 El Dorado County Planning Commission meeting:

After a member of the Planning Commission commented that he gives more weight to the comments of the public members who were able to attend today (vs. the public feedback provided at all previous meetings, the community “vote” on height last spring, the surveys collected by both the EDC and our community), the Planning Commission recommended the following to the Board of Supervisors for our Meyers plan:

1. Do not create a Meyers Advisory Council that is subject to public process rules (e.g. the Brown Act) – in other words, keep it as an informal group, “encourage them” (but do not require) to post agendas, do not require minutes, etc.
2. Move the maximum height to 42 feet (majority community response to date = 35 feet max);
3. Move the maximum density (units per acre) for tourist units (hotels/motels) back up to 40 units/acre for entire community center (majority community response to date = 15 units/acre or less);
4. It was uncertain, but they appeared to discuss re-considering the extras for the incentive project (aka Catalyst Project) in the Plan. We will confirm but it appears they decided to leave this decision to the Board of Supervisors (at the upcoming Oct. 28 hearing).

Our concern continues to be a transparent, clear, public process for our community. We are concerned that the community input to date was mostly ignored. How many people simply had to work Thursday morning and could not attend?

We strongly encourage you to attend the Oct. 28 Board of Supervisors meeting. If you cannot attend, then please send comments in advance – we are happy to provide email addresses and/or mailing addresses.

Thank you,

Jennifer Quashnick, Moya Saunders and Angela Olson, Meyers residents

Suspect fires at EDC deputy; no injuries

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

A search is under way for a man who Friday morning shot at an El Dorado County sheriff's deputy.

At about 8am Oct. 17, the deputy contacted a man near Cable Road in Camino. A struggle began with the 6 feet 2 inch 225 pound man.

The man then retrieved a handgun and fired at the deputy, missing him, according to a sheriff's office press release.

[Read the whole story](#)