Scientists track drought's impact on Sierra fish

By Edward Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

SONORA – With a fish net in one hand and backpack in the other, UC Davis fish biologist Peter Moyle set out across the dry Sierra foothills Thursday to look for a fish he feared was destined for extinction because of drought.

What he found puzzled him.

On a dry hill, with the sun blazing, he came across a thriving creek – with plenty of water and fish.

The fish in question is the Red Hills roach, which is found only in the creeks and pools amid the serpentine rock-lined hills south of Highway 120, west of the town of Sonora.

Because of the intense drought, Moyle feared that most of the creeks and pools the fish thrive in were now just rocky bottoms. "We were pessimistic we would even find anything," said Moyle. "So we brought buckets and an ice chest with an aerator in it to take fish back."

Whatever fish he could find he planned to bring back to UC Davis.

If none was found, it would have been the first fish extinction in California since the High Rock Spring tui chub disappeared in 1989.

Experts say climate change will eventually threaten many fish species in California.

Read the whole story

Biking, hiking trails open in Tahoe



Cyclists on the Fallen Leaf Lake path. Photos/U.S. Forest Service



Monument Trail connects to the TRT.

The U.S. Forest Service has been busy completing paved and dirt trails in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The new Fallen Leaf Bike Path is approximately 2,000-feet long and 10-feet wide. It connects the Fallen Leaf Campground to

the Pope Baldwin National Recreation Trail.

At just more than 3 miles, the Monument Pass Trail connects High Meadows to the Tahoe Rim Trail on the southeast end of Lake Tahoe. The trail is part of a larger group of trail projects known as the Trail Access and Travel Management Plan, a process used by the Forest Service to plan, review, design and construct trail systems in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Tips for preserving summer's harvest

By Melinda Myers

The cucumbers have filled the vegetable drawer, you've run out of cabbage recipes and your family is refusing to eat one more BLT. Or maybe you just couldn't resist that special deal on a bushel of tomatoes, potatoes or apples at the farmer's market. So what is a gardener or shopper to do with all that produce?

Since properly stored vegetables will hold their flavor and nutritional value longer than those left in a plastic bag or set on the sunny kitchen counter, consider preserving some for the long winter ahead using one of several methods.

Storage orchard racks and slatted crates placed in a cool dark location have long been used to store squash, onions and potatoes. The stackable nature or drawers provide ample storage space so fruits and vegetables do not touch. Keeping stored fruit separated prevents rot from spreading from one fruit to the next. Plus, the slatted sides allow airflow to extend storage longevity.

Those in colder climates can store carrots and parsnips right in the garden. Once the soil gets a bit crunchy, cover them with straw or evergreen boughs for easier digging in winter. Then dig as needed or harvest during the first winter thaw. If this isn’t possible or not your style, try out a root vegetable storage bin. The root crops are layered in sand or sawdust and placed in a cool dark location. Just remove and use as needed. No snow shoveling needed.

Drying is one of the oldest food preservation techniques. Most of us have grabbed a few bundles of herbs to hang and dry. Expand your drying endeavors to include fruits and vegetables. The goal is to quickly remove moisture without cooking the food. You can make your own dehydrator or purchase one. Research has shown that blanching vegetables and fruit before drying helps destroy harmful bacteria. Blanching involves a steam or boiling water bath followed by a cold water bath. Timing varies with the fruit or vegetable you are preparing.

Another ancient food preservation technique, fermentation, is experiencing a comeback. Cultures around the world have fermented fruits and vegetables for thousands of years. Unique flavors, storage options and health benefits have many gardeners revisiting this tradition. Fermenting cucumbers into pickles, cabbage into sauerkraut, and berries into preserves are just a few options. The ingredients can be as simple as water, salt, and spices. All you need is a vessel, vegetables and fermenting culture. You can jump-start your efforts with a fermentation crock kit which includes the crock, cover and weights to make sure your veggies stay safely submerged in water.

Or quickly lock in the flavor and nutrition of your fruits and vegetables with freezing. You’ll need airtight containers or bags that are durable, don’t leak and won’t become brittle in cold temperatures. Some produce does not freeze well and others may need to be blanched before they are packed in the freezer bag or container. But frozen items can easily be

retrieved from the freezer and included in your winter meals.

Canning is a bit more involved, but can be lots of fun. This process preserves the food and keeps it safe by preventing the growth of undesirable bacteria, yeast and mold. The sealed jars keep the flavor in and bad microorganisms out. So gather your produce, jars, pressure cooker, canner and friends to create tomato sauce, salsa, jams and jellies to enjoy or give as gifts.

Whatever method you choose, do a bit of research before you start. You'll have greater success and a lot more fun. The National Center for Home Food Preservation website provides all the basic information for storage and food preservation.

Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and has written more than 20 gardening books.

Bocce tourney benefits High Fives

The 6th annual Bocce Tournament presented by GoPro and the Truckee River Winery is Sept. 14.

The event raises money and awareness for athletes who have suffered a life-altering injury while pursuing a dream in the winter action sports community. Money raised supports a variety of High Fives Foundation endeavors such as the purchase of rehabilitative and adaptive equipment as well as funding for alternative healing and therapies.

Register at the CR Johnson Healing Center or call 530.587.4453. The cost to participate is $100 per two-person

team. Space is limited to the first 40 teams to register. New for this year's tournament, contestants can dress up for a chance to win a prize.

The tournament begins that Sunday at noon, with registration at 10am.

Republicans' 'Fire Harry Reid' campaign grows

By Amber Phillips, Las Vegas Sun

WASHINGTON – Sen. Harry Reid is not running for re-election, but Republicans are turning up the volume on a new campaign slogan to "Fire Harry Reid."

With momentum recently swinging to their side to take back the Senate in November, the Republican National Committee is sending out a memo to reporters and donors daring Democrats in tough re-election campaigns to distance themselves from the Senate leader. The committee launched the anti-Reid campaign in late July with robocalls and a social media push, #FireReid.

The strategy is to paint Reid, the Senate majority leader, as the boogeyman, especially for voters in Republican-leaning states with contested Senate races that could decide the future of the Senate, said Michael Short, an RNC spokesman.

"He's not a very popular figure, he's the face of Senate Democrats," Short said.

Kristen Orthman, a Reid spokeswoman, said Republicans are attacking Reid because he calls them out for not helping get

legislation passed. Reid also said on the Senate floor in May that Republicans' attacks against him are a sign nothing else is working.

Read the whole story

LTN subscriber wins Tough Mudder headphones

Sometimes listening to music to drown out the groans of competitors is the only way to get through a Tough Mudder competition.

The annual obstacle course event at Northstar is this weekend. And Sol Republic headphones is one of the sponsors. The company designed a set of headphones specifically for Tahoe's Tough Mudder.



"We're very excited to be working with Tough Mudder," Seth Combs, Sol Republic's co-founder and CMO, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "Every great challenge demands intense preparation, and we want to bring superior sound to every Mudder's ears as they compete in this event and train for the next. We partnered with Tough Mudder because it's an intense racing challenge that pushes athletes to their limits and we hope to inspire everyone with great sound."

Lake Tahoe News teamed up with Sol Republic to give away a pair of headphones. Darla Sadler, a subscriber to *LTN*, is the lucky winner.

“Some people from my boot camp are doing the Tough Mudder this weekend. I’ve never done it. And I’m pretty sure I don’t want to as I do not want to get electrocuted and I don’t want to drown in 4 inches of muddy water,” Sadler said. Still, the headphones are bound to come in handy at boot camp and elsewhere.

LTN subscribers help support Lake Tahoe’s only daily news source. Subscribers then qualify for random giveaways like the Sol Republic headphones. Fill out a paid subscriber form to join.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit lifted a closure order on about 340 acres on the east side of Brockway Summit north of Speckled Avenue near Kings Beach. Work will resume in the spring.
• Cherry Peak Resort, Utah’s 15th ski resort, is scheduled open mid-December. The privately-held resort is near the Utah-Idaho border.
• The 8th annual American River Music Festival on the South Fork of the American River will include 30 live music performances. The event is Sept. 12-14 at Lotus Park. More info is online.
• On Aug. 17 Valhalla presents the final free Concert on the Lawn series from noon-2pm. It is a special kids concert featuring the Banana Slug String Band.

Bruno Mars shakes up Lake Tahoe

By Kim Wyatt

STATELINE – If there is a population explosion in Tahoe nine months from now, Bruno Mars is to blame. The charismatic showman and his fantastic band delivered a romance-drenched retro pop fest to devotees young and old Aug. 14 at Harveys Lake Tahoe Outdoor Arena.

In Mars' Tahoe debut, he put on the kind of joyous, sexy show that's sure to spark sales and grow new fans. The stripped-down stage, reminiscent of "Soul Train," ensured that the front man and his stellar musicians were front and center the entire evening, and their smooth choreographed dance moves conjured the Jackson Five at their infectious best.

The Moonshine Jungle Tour showcased songs from Mars' second album, the double-platinum "Unorthodox Jukebox," including the hits "Locked Out of Heaven" and "Treasure." With only two albums behind him, Mars has created already a bestselling body of work, with five No. 1 singles. It doesn't hurt that the songs are all great when performed live, perhaps even better.



Bruno Mars with his band the Hooligans deliver a sexy, high-energy show Aug. 14 at Harveys. Photos/Kim Wyatt

And Bruno delivered. Born and raised in Hawaii by a family of musicians, the singer-songwriter has amassed quite a following, with many in the full house singing along to every song. Mars' faithful fans swooned, arms in the air, as if they were at a revival. It's a good time for an earnest singer-songwriter who croons about love and heartbreak without irony – maybe every generation needs one.

Mars' 13-song set was funk, R&B, Motown and pop-infused. I heard the influences of James Brown, the Police, Earth, Wind & Fire and the Bee Gees. But rather than sound like something old, the songs sounded like something new. Mars' eight-man band, the Hooligans, matched him step-by-step. This hardworking group had a great time and it was contagious. The high-stepping lineup of horn players and funk guitarists made great music look easy, right down to their '70s stylings. A few of them even seemed to be wearing polyester slacks, or some kind of miracle fabric that emphasized their swiveling hips and musculature.

Speaking of fashion, this was a well-appointed, fedora-wearing

crowd. Seriously, there were a lot of fedoras, even on children. Maxi-dresses and makeup were more Miami than mountain girl, and I saw several clean-shaven young men sporting tiny pompadours getting their groove on. Mars, wearing a Panama hat and shiny penny loafers sans socks, offered a straight-up, genuine connection with the audience and his band, stopping several times to chat up the crowd, encouraging lovers to love one another, and to let the band take care of the rest.



Bruno Mars delivers like a veteran musician.

“Tahoe, it’s time to get your freak on,” Mars cajoled, and many gladly obliged.

Mars’ energy never flagged, not after executing flawless dance moves, wailing on an electric guitar, or performing emotional vocals. Is there anything Mars’ can’t do? If so, we weren’t aware of it at this show. The encore featured two of his most popular numbers, “Locked Out of Heaven” and “Gorilla,” my least favorite song in his oeuvre. While Mars’ music is known more for its sincerity and pop hooks than its depth, the lyrics of this song never fail to make me laugh or cringe, depending on the day. I think it’s supposed to be Prince-like, but … no. It’s too bad because I like the tune. I’m probably not the intended demographic. I did see several young women in the audience clutching stuffed gorillas.

Norwegian duo Nico & Vinz – they called themselves “Afro-Vikings” – primed the crowd with good vibrations and infectious pop, the kind of music you want to listen to in the summer with an umbrella in your drink. They ended their set with their hit, “Am I Wrong,” to the delight of a sing-along audience. It’s a real treat when an unknown opening group turns out to be so charming and talented, and a great introduction to what turned out to be masterful show.

It will be fun to see what Bruno Mars does next. In the meantime, having a little soul doesn’t hurt, and the world could use more love. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m off to buy a polyester suit.

Opinion: Marijuana growers need a permit

By Brian Uhler

Marijuana is a major concern for many in our city. As part of the City Code, our City Council provided for a safer community by allowing marijuana grow operations only after a permit is obtained. The permit process provides for a building official to inspect for things like:

1. Safe wiring – Adding a large number of “grow lights” overburdens conventional electric outlets and can cause fires.

2. Proper ventilation – Too many marijuana plants in an area where people live can be hazardous, so the law limits the total square footage for a grow operation to be smaller than

10 percent of the available space.

3. Proper permission – Especially in the case of rentals, the permit process requires that the owner gives permission to grow marijuana. Many home owners have been left with extensively damaged homes from illegal marijuana growing.

4. Minimal impact to neighbors – The code requires growers to filter or control odors that may impact neighbors.



Brian Uhler

In South Lake Tahoe, there are currently only two permitted grow operations. The police department estimates that there are approximately 300 actual grow operations within the city. This said, we ask for two things:

1. People who have a grow operations should get their permit. They can do so by calling the city's permit center at 530.542.6020 or 530.542.6010.

2. People who know of a grow operation in their neighborhood should call SLEDNET at 530.542.6029. (Leave a message after hours.) Or log onto the city's website, click the communications tab at the top of the page and use "report a concern."

Your police department and SLEDNET have continued the effort to locate and close illegal and unsafe marijuana grows. This will continue to be a priority because our community's safety depends upon it.

Last month, we reported on the Live at Lakeview event and

concerns about either not enough or too much police presence. I’m pleased to say that the community responded well to the concerns raised. Despite several issues during the first two events, the events throughout July have been good events and as family friendly as possible.

Brian Uhler is the police chief for South Lake Tahoe.

Utility districts putting on water workshop

The North Tahoe Public Utility District and the Tahoe City Public Utility District have partnered with Tahoe Resource Conservation District and the University of California Extension Master Gardeners to bring a Water Wise Landscaping Workshop to Tahoe City on Aug. 28 from 6-8pm.

The workshop will be at the Tahoe City Public Utility District’s board room on Fairway Drive.

The purpose of the event is to provide people with some hints and tips to meet mandatory water conservation plans. People will be told about water wise landscaping and landscape styles, how to design a water wise landscape, how to irrigate efficiently, and receive information on the conservation programs and services available to residents in both districts.

This event is free and open to the public.