Sage grouse policy heading back to square one

By Scott Sonner, AP

Federal scientists and land managers who've been crafting strategies to protect a ground-dwelling bird's habitat across the American West for nearly two decades are going back to the drawing board under a new Trump administration edict to reassess existing plans condemned by ranchers, miners and energy developers.

Federal officials are wrapping up a series of public meetings with three sessions starting Tuesday in Utah ahead of a Nov. 27 cutoff for comment on Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's order last month to consider revisions to land management amendments for the greater sage grouse that were adopted under the Obama administration.

Zinke says he wants to make sure the amendments don't harm local economies in 11 western states and allow the states to have maximum control over the efforts within their borders.

Read the whole story

K's Kitchen: Red peppers and feta – perfect combo

By Kathryn Reed

This is going to be my new go-to recipe when I need to take an appetizer someplace or when I have friends over.

I made it recently for a tennis match. Even the opposing team wanted the recipe.

The only labor intensive part is actually roasting the peppers. I'm sure using jarred roasted peppers would work, but doing the roasting yourself really isn't that big of a deal.

The flavors together are outstanding; almost to the point you might want to eat it with a spoon instead of using crackers.

Roasted Red Peppers and Feta

4 red bell peppers
1 T, plus ¼ C olive oil
½ medium shallot, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
3 T red wine vinegar
Freshly ground black pepper
Kosher salt
6 ounces feta, crumbled
4 tsp fresh thyme, plus more for serving
Pita chips (for serving)

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Place bell peppers on a rimmed baking sheet and drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil. Roast peppers, turning every 15 minutes for at least an hour, until collapsed and tender. Let cool.

Whisk shallot, garlic, vinegar, black pepper, and remaining quarter cup oil in a small bowl. Season with salt.

Remove stems, skins, and seeds from bell peppers. Finely chop peppers. Place in a bowl.

Pour marinade over peppers. Gently toss in feta and thyme.

Cover and chill dip at least 15 minutes to allow flavors to meld. Garnish with thyme sprigs.

Serve with pita chips.

Can make up to a day in advance.

Sports betting isn’t legal nationwide, but firms are jockeying already

By Wayne Parry, AP

Some gambling technology companies expect the U.S. Supreme Court to legalize sports betting and are jockeying for position in the new industry months before a decision is even rendered.

A lawsuit filed Thursday in Atlantic City shines some light on the scramble. NYX Gaming Group Ltd., a company based on the British island of Guernsey, is suing London-based William Hill PLC over Las Vegas-based Scientific Games Corp.’s proposed acquisition of NYX.

William Hill owns stock in NYX and is threatening to use its voting shares to block the acquisition unless it receives certain assurances from Scientific Games about what the newly merged company will and won’t be able to do.

Read the whole story

Arctic Refuge subject of talk, film in Tahoe City

Alpenglow Sports' own Brennan Lagasse will be featured Dec. 14 at 6:30pm at the eighth Tailgate Talk of the season.

Lagasse will share his first experience in the threatened Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The night will include a showing of Patagonia's film about the Arctic Refuge, a slideshow about Brennan's adventure and activism, and short films about the Gwich'in people, the land, and the wildlife in the region.

A Night for the Refuge will bring Lagasse and several of his former students together to discuss their experience in Arctic Village in Alaska, the southernmost Native village on the border of the Arctic Refuge.

The event is free at the Tahoe City shop. Beer and pizza will be served with all proceeds benefiting the Gwich'in Steering Committee.

Climate change could decrease sun's ability to disinfect lakes

By Mary L. Martialay, Phys.Org

Increasing organic runoff as a result of climate change may be reducing the penetration of pathogen-killing ultraviolet sunlight in inland lakes, rivers, and coastal waters,

according to a study in the journal Scientific Reports. The findings, from a team including researchers at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, points to the potential for an increase in waterborne pathogens.

Scientists have already measured an increase in “browning” of the world’s waters, a phenomenon caused by more organic matter washing in from the surrounding land. The study, led by Miami University in Ohio, analyzed water samples and used a model based at the National Center for Atmospheric Research to quantify, for the first time, the impact of dissolved organic matter on the potential for UV radiation from the sun to kill pathogens in the water.

Not only does an increase in dissolved organic matter make it more difficult for sunlight to disinfect bodies of water, it also makes it more difficult for water treatment plants to work effectively, said lead author Craig Williamson, a Miami University ecologist.

Read the whole story

Chamber honors its own with Blue Ribbon Awards

Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce last week hosted the 10th annual Blue Ribbon Awards at Harrah’s Lake Tahoe.

Winners include:

Geotourism Award: Winner: Tahoe Rim Trail Association
Honorable Mention: Edgewood Tahoe

Tourism Award: Winner: The Coachman Hotel

Honorable Mention: Tahoe Sports

Experience Award: Winner: SOS Outreach
Honorable Mention: Over the Edge Tahoe

Entrepreneur Award: Winner: Matt Levitt, Tahoe Blue Vodka
Honorable Mention: Melinda Choy, Elevate Wellness Center

Customer Service (Business) Award: Winner: Antonio Valdivia, Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel
Honorable Mention: Maureen Froyum, Barton Skilled Nursing Facility

Customer Service (Public Agency) Service: Winner: Jeffrey Pollitt, Clean Tahoe Program
Honorable Mention: Michelle Risdon, Lake Tahoe Community College

Tallac Achievement Award: Winner: The Crossing at Tahoe Valley.

New this year was the Chairman's Award, selected by current Chamber board Chair Jason Drew. One individual and one business were honored for their "above and beyond" contributions to the South Shore business and broader community. Lodging executive Jerry Bindel was honored as the individual and Riva Grill received the business recognition.

Road Beat: Highlander Hybrid, best of both worlds



The 2017 Toyota Highlander Hybrid scores high in all categories. Photos/Larry Weitzman

By Larry Weitzman

Generally speaking, when performance goes up, fuel economy goes down and vice versa. But in the case of the Toyota Highlander Hybrid, it achieves better fuel economy and a gain in performance. And that comes with a 400-pound weight penalty from the hybrid system and battery.

Highlander is based on the Camry platform, albeit with some heavier duty components. In Hybrid form dimensions are 193 x 76 x 70 inches high with the shark fin antenna. Proportions are eye pleasing with a sleek window line hiding its two-box design. It’s a great looking ride and the horizontal grille treatment is massive and powerful as well as a welcome change from the current Toyota theme.

Power comes from three sources, the primary being Toyota’s 3.5L DOHC, 24 valve V-6 designed to run an Atkinson, higher

efficiency cycle, which uses higher compression and late closing intake valves. The other two sources are two electric motors, one (rated at 167 hp driving the front wheels and a 68 hp motor driving the rear wheels. Both power outputs are limited by the Nickel Metal Hydride battery output of 60 hp. No hp or torque rating is given for the 3.5L V-6, but because it is an Atkinson Cycle it is probably around 250 hp and when you combine that with a maximum battery output of 60 hp, total motive force becomes about 310 hp.

Transmitting the power to the front wheels is a CVT and rear wheel (axle) power comes solely from the rear electric motor. There is no drive shaft from the gas engine to the rear wheels.

Performance is outstanding with 0-60 mph coming up in 6.38 seconds, a bit quicker than the conventional Highlander tested two years ago (6.69 seconds). Passing performance is also improved with 50-70 mph level and uphill simulated passes taking just 3.45 and 4.79 seconds respectively compared to my prior test numbers of 3.65 and 5.28 seconds respectively. This hybrid is extremely responsive but because there is no mechanical rear wheel drive connection torque steer is apparent under strong and full throttle applications.



Specifications
Price $42,270
3.5L DOHC 24 valve V-6 est 250 hp @ 6,000 rpm

est 245 lb-ft of torque @ 4,500 rpm

Electric power

Nickel Metal Hydride Battery

Max output 60 hp (45 kW)

Transmission

CVT automatic

Configuration

Transverse mounted front engine/FWDAWD

Dimensions

Wheelbase 109.8 inches

Length 192.5 inches

Width 75.8 inches

Height 68.1 inches (add two inches for the shark fin antenna)

Ground clearance 8.0 inches

Track (f/r) 64.4/64.2 inches

Fuel capacity 17.2 gallons

Passenger volume (moon roof) 152.9 cubic feet

Cargo volume behind 1st row/ 2nd row/ 3rd row 83.2/42.3/13.8 cubic feet

Weight 4,910

Max Tow 3,500 pounds

Steering lock to lock 2.74 turns

Turning circle 38.7 feet

Co-efficient of drag 0.33

Performance

0-60 mph 6.38 seconds

50-70 mph 3.45 seconds

50-70 mph uphill 4.79 seconds

Top Speed Well into triple

digits
Fuel economy EPA rated 29/27/28 mpg city/highway/ combined. Expect 30 mpg on the highway at legal speeds 25-26 mpg overall in suburban driving.

Fuel economy is improved by 10-15 percent. EPA rates the Hybrid at 29/27/28 mpg city/highway/combined. Overall the Hybrid averaged about 25 mpg and as low as 23 mpg when driven extremely aggressively without the benefit of any freeway steady state driving, but mostly suburban stop and go. But on my trip over the Sierra to South Lake Tahoe and back, the Hybrid averaged a solid 26.8 mpg in fairly aggressive driving. All these numbers are slightly below the EPA test cycle numbers except for one and that is highway mileage where the Hybrid averaged 30 mpg at a constant 70 mph on a level highway in a two-way run. Compared to my conventional test of two years ago, the overall improvement is about 10 percent. The fuel tank loses 2 gallons of capacity down to a still acceptable 17.2 gallons.

Highlander has all the ingredients of good handling and it does. Quick steering (2.74 turns lock to lock), MacPherson struts up front and double wishbones in the rear, 18 x 7.5-inch alloys shod with wide 245/60 series rubber, it’s all there and in normal driving it handles well and nimbly. But push it hard and it needs your attention and guidance to go to that higher level of handling. It has the cornering power, it just doesn’t come as naturally. Most drivers will never get to that point, anyway. In around town and over the road driving, 99.8 percent will absolutely love this Highlander. If you want an absolute track/fun car see the Toyota 86. You will understand what I am getting at.

Ride and quiet are superb, especially when operating EV. This

is a think in a whisper vehicle. That trick suspension does its job on rough roads. Terrific. Smooth roads even better. A magic carpet. No tach so no engine speed at 70 mph, but you can bet it’s well below 2,000 rpm.

There is no compromise with Toyota Safety Sense. It has lane departure warning with steering assist and just about every other safety devise. Headlights were terrific with automatic high beam control and the brakes were huge and powerful.

Seating for eight was standard with leather in the first two rows along with heat up front. Very nice. Instrumentation was hybrid complete, but no tach. Trip computer operation was easy and the center stack was touch screen with standard nav. This is an almost luxury SUV (crossover), but if you are going to constantly use it to haul rear seat (third row) passengers, take a pass. Its massive interior makes this a dangerous vehicle for Home Depot/Lowe’s lovers as it has over 83 cubes behind the front row seating and over 42 cubes just behind the second row. There are still 14 cubes behind the third row.

Pricing for this Hybrid with everything mentioned is $41,330 plus $940 for the train from Princeton, Ind. My tester did come with a factory rear seat DVD set up, good for when hauling kids long distance, that added $1,810. If you don’t haul kids long distance on a regular basis, take a pass. And it’s a Toyota. Pretty amazing a 4,900-pound SUV that gets better than 25 mpg (30 mpg on the highway) and accelerates from 0-60 mph in almost six seconds flat. Need I say more?

Larry Weitzman has been into cars since he was 5 years old. At 8 he could recite from memory the hp of every car made in the U.S. He has put in thousands of laps on racetracks all over the Western United States.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

· *U.S. News & World Report* has Lake Tahoe in the top five for best small towns to visit in the U.S.

· Barton Health's survivors of suicide loss support group meets Dec. 28, 6-7pm at 2092 Lake Tahoe Blvd., Suite 400, South Lake Tahoe.

· Santa will be at Tahoe Donner's pancake breakfast on Dec. 25.

· California Harvest Tour 2017 will feature A-Plus (Hieroglyphics / Souls of Mischief) Aceyalone (Freestyle Fellowship) plus: Equipto, Z-Man, True Justice Tip-C and (R)Styles at Whiskey Dicks Saloon on Nov. 18. Must bet 21 to attend. Doors open at 9pm. Cost is $20.

· Here is the Sierra roadwork schedule from Caltrans for the week.

Tahoe Tails – Adoptable Pets in South Lake Tahoe



Buster

Buster is a 5-year-old pit bull mix. He is house trained and walks nicely on the leash even though he weighs about 90 pounds and is very strong. He likes other dogs and is very affectionate with people. With those beautiful blue eyes, it’s possible he has some Husky in him.

Buster 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 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

Ballot proposal would keep medicinal pot in SLT

By Kathryn Reed

A quest to put cannabis on the June ballot stems from the ongoing legal battle between South Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Wellness Cooperative owner Cody Bass.

“The ballot measure spells it out in very small words; it is a legal business and has property rights like any other business,” James Anthony, the attorney who crafted the ballot measure petition and represents Bass, told *Lake Tahoe News.*

The measure would ask city voters to permit medical cannabis storefronts. Today, South Lake Tahoe’s ordinance allows only the one dispensary, and then has myriad strings attached.

Essentially what Anthony submitted to the city was its own ordinance with certain passages struck out, along with some new verbiage. “No vested rights” was eliminated, and inserted is the wording, “Licensed medical marijuana dispensaries that have obtained a medical marijuana dispensary permit under this article are ‘grandfathered’ for all legal purposes and possess a vested right in the operation for which they have been permitted.”

It goes on to talk about cultivation, where the facility could be located, delivery of said medicine, and owner transfer rights.

The proposal is essentially an end-around to the legal quagmire between the city and Bass, and would give Bass more leverage if he were convicted on the criminal charges he faces because the initiative would allow him to transfer ownership.

Anthony said this proposal has nothing to do with **criminal**

issues the medicinal pot shop owner runs. Bass' arraignment, which is being handled by a different attorney, was set for last week. It was pushed back until January to give the defense time to review discovery.

The city attorney this week is expected to issue a title and summary for the initiative. Proponents have 180 days after it is issued to get signatures from 10 percent of the registered voters in the city based on the last General Election, so just more than 1,100 people. Those will then be verified by the county elections officials. Other paperwork is required as well.

The city contends Bass is operating without a valid permit because he does not have the landlord's signature. TWC's position is that the long-term lease where it states he is operating a medical cannabis facility is proof of permission by the landlord.

The dispute has been in the legal system for more than a year. Before El Dorado County Superior Court Judge Steve Bailey retired in August both sides could have let him rule, but the city said no.

Anthony sent a letter to the City Council on Nov. 7 regarding Tahoe Wellness Cooperative's permit. He went over Bailey's statements and his perception of former City Attorney Tom Watson and current attorney Nira Doherty's actions.

On Aug. 18, Bailey said, "It's patently unreasonable in the court's mind that this lease doesn't fit all of the requirements that the city needs to determine a valid consent by the landlord."

All councilmembers were asked by *Lake Tahoe News* to comment on the letter. Only Councilwoman Wendy David responded, saying it would be inappropriate to comment.

Doherty told *LTN*, "The City Attorney's Office does not plan to

respond to the letter sent from James Anthony. Judge Bailey asked both parties if they would waive the statutorily prescribed timelines for filing objections and the City determined it would not waive timelines. Because Judge Bailey was retiring before the timelines had run, a new judge was assigned to the lawsuit."

Both sides, though, say they are willing to talk about a settlement. Depending on that outcome, Anthony said the ballot measure might not be needed.

If the measure qualifies for the ballot, the city will then do a study to determine any financial ramifications.

The city also has its hands full with recreational marijuana.

The City Council is being proactive on this topic. While the voters of California a year ago approved pot to be used for reasons beyond medical needs, it isn't until this January that it becomes legal to do so. However, every city and county can make its own rules.

Because the state has been slow in devising laws to make recreational pot work, most jurisdictions are delaying sales and other aspects of the law. At the Dec. 12 council meeting the electeds are expected to enact a moratorium on pot sales, at least on an interim basis.

At the same time Councilmembers Brooke Laine and Tom Davis, who were appointed to head up a cannabis subcommittee, are going forward with that process. The subcommittee includes 15 community members who will meet about a half dozen times in the next few months. The outcome should be a set of recommendations that will provide a framework for the development of cannabis regulations for South Lake Tahoe.

This subcommittee, unlike the vacation home rental one, intends to work more in the open by putting updates on the **city's website**. This way there is more transparency and

members aren’t working in a silo of secrecy.