

Tips for fire prevention at Lake Tahoe

By Lisa Herron

Summer officially arrived this week and recreational activities are in full swing in the Tahoe basin. The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team would like to take this opportunity to remind visitors and residents that wildfires pose a serious threat to Lake Tahoe neighborhoods and communities and we need help to prevent any unwanted fires this summer.

Whether camping, hiking or participating in some other activity in the forest, keep in mind the following advice to keep Tahoe fire safe.

Fireworks

The Fourth of July holiday is right around the corner. All fireworks including sparklers and firecrackers, are illegal in the Tahoe basin because of the wildfire danger they pose to our forests. Please leave fireworks at home and instead attend one of the amazing fireworks shows around the lake this July 4 holiday.

Campfires

Sadly, illegal campfires continue to be the cause of over 90 percent of all wildfires here at Lake Tahoe. Please remember that campfires and portable charcoal grills are only allowed within metal fire rings and/or standup grills provided in designated campgrounds. Campfires and portable charcoal grills are not allowed on National Forest beaches, in Desolation Wilderness, Meiss Country, along Genoa Peak Road and the Tahoe Rim Trail, or in the general forest. Gas or propane stoves are allowed in all areas with a free, valid California Campfire Permit available at any Forest Service office.

In addition, during periods of high fire danger, campfires in designated areas may be restricted. Before building a campfire, be sure to check with local fire districts or the Forest Service office to find out if restrictions are in place.

Learn to properly build, maintain and extinguish campfires and always keep a bucket of water and a shovel nearby. Select an open location away from trees and overhanging tree branches, logs, brush or dry vegetation. Keep the fire small and be sure that all logs fit within the fire ring. Never leave the campfire unattended and completely extinguish it using the "soak, stir and feel" method before leaving. Soak the fire with water and stir thoroughly. Using the back of your hand, feel for any remaining heat. Repeat as needed until the fire is completely extinguished and no hot spots remain.

Sparks

Did you know that 95 percent of all wildfires are caused by human activity? Things like lawn equipment, debris burning, target shooting and vehicles can all cause sparks that may ignite a wildfire when used under the wrong conditions.

Lawn mowers, weed-eaters, chain saws, grinders, welders, tractors, and trimmers can all spark a wildland fire when used during hot, dry and windy weather. This type of equipment should be operated before 10am when the humidity is higher and never when it's excessively dry, hot and/or windy.

Residential burning is only allowed under specific conditions and in certain areas with a valid permit. Check with your local fire district to determine if burning is allowed in your area and if restrictions are in place.

Target shooting under hot, dry conditions can spark a fire. When target shooting, be sure to choose an area free of dry vegetation and avoid shooting on hot, windy days. Use proper targets, such as clay pigeons and avoid shooting at metal

targets or rocks.

Vehicles should be properly maintained with nothing dragging on the ground. Dragging chains or any other type of metal can cause sparks that may ignite a wildfire. Practice proper towing by using appropriate safety devices and hitches that secure chains or other equipment. Don't drive or park vehicles on dry vegetation. Hot exhaust pipes, mufflers and catalytic converters may ignite grasses and other vegetation. Properly maintain brakes and tires. Exposed wheel rims and brakes worn too thin can cause sparks.

Lisa Herron works for the U.S. Forest Service.

LTCC students receive \$126,000 in scholarships

Eighty-one Lake Tahoe Community College students are receiving scholarships this year.

This is a record year for scholarship fundraising for the LTCC Foundation, with donors supporting the 120 awards worth more than \$126,000.

Many of the students are continuing at LTCC to earn a two-year degree or vocational certificate. Some will attend the Lisa Maloff University Center this fall on LTCC's campus to start work on their bachelor's degree. More will be transferring from LTCC to earn their advanced degrees from other colleges and universities, including a variety of University of California and California State University schools.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- Lake Tahoe Unified School District board of education on June 26 is expected to extend the contract of Superintendent Jim Tarwater by another year, making the contract good through June 30, 2021. He will receive a 1 percent raise retroactive to July 1, 2017.
- South Shore businesses and agencies may obtain a no-cost onsite solar assessment with no strings attached. Interested parties are invited to schedule an assessment or learn more at a meeting on June 26 at 5:30pm at the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce board room in Stateline.
- The California Tahoe Conservancy this month reviewed Executive Director Patrick Wright. There was no reportable action after that closed session.
- Great Basin Institute now serves as the interpretive association for the Taylor Creek Visitors Center, offering visitor services and educational programs for the public at the South Shore facility.
- Here are the **El Dorado-Tahoe** and **Sierra** roadwork schedules for the coming week.

Shared kitchen facility opens

in Truckee

Kitchen Collab, a member-based commercial kitchen makerspace, is now open in Truckee.

Membership offers 24/7 access to workspace, equipment and steward services. It is designed to help small culinary businesses grow and thrive. The building features a drive bay that allows caterers, food trucks and others to load and unload product into the kitchen space. Private event space, shared work space, and an educational library are also on-site.

The 1,800 square foot kitchen space was designed with three hot lines, 11 prep spaces, a 26 x 10 walk-in cooler and access to 1,200 pounds of ice per day. Of the 11 prep spaces, five have their own refrigeration and two are butcher block bakery spaces with marble inserts. Specialty equipment includes a rotisserie, worktop sheeter, smoker, steam injected bread oven and blast freezer – all of which are available for use by all members.

For more info, go **online**.

Letter: State of Jefferson against 3-way split

To the community,

By a unanimous vote, the 23 State of Jefferson County committees have announced their strong opposition to Draper's 3-Way State split initiative, as proposed.

Last week, Draper received news that his proposal to split California into three states, had qualified for the November ballot.

State of Jefferson (SOJ) encompasses 23 counties from Mariposa in the south and Siskiyou to the north. State of Jefferson dba Citizens for Fair Representation is the largest and only movement in the state, seeking equal/fair representation for all citizens living in California's 58 counties.

California has the worst imbalance of representation in their state Legislature of all 50 states. In May 2017, Citizens for Fair Representation (CFR) filed a lawsuit against Secretary of State Alex Padilla for lack of representation and dilution of vote. In a hearing on June 14, in the U.S. District Court in Sacramento Judge Kimberly Mueller denied the state/s attorneys motion to "dismiss with prejudice" CFR's case against Padilla.

Mueller has yet to rule on CFR's attorney's request for their case to be heard before a three-judge court, as ruled in the case Shapiro v. McManus. An action filed challenging the constitutionality of reapportionment of congressional and state Legislature districts. Under Title 3, Section 2284, cases involving representation or dilution of vote cannot be heard by a single judge and must be heard before a three-judge court.

Jefferson has always been about forming the 51st State and representation for all in California's 58 counties. In January 2016, 21 counties filed declarations with the California secretary of State, seeking equal/fair representation and/or to separate (not secede) from the state of California. All went ignored by their elected representatives, leading CFR to take legal action. Mariposa and Stanislaus joined SOJ this year, bringing the total to 23 Counties.

State of Jefferson is in favor of splitting California into smaller, separate state(s). However, Draper's initiative does

nothing to resolve the imbalance of representation, not only within the boundaries he established for those in the 23 Jefferson counties, but also those in Draper's two other proposed states.

Draper does not resolve the issue of the high costs incurred for candidates running for a state office. There are 11 counties in Northern California, represented by State senator. Any incumbents and/or their opponents, must pay filing fees in each of those 11 counties in order to have their candidates statement appear on the voters sample ballot pamphlet. Compare this to Los Angeles County, with 15 Senators representing one single county and candidates only having to pay one fee. This deters many good people from running for office.

Draper is fully aware of SOJ's well established policy's for their new state – smaller government, part time legislature, fewer regulations, no corporate business tax, to mention just a few. A business friendly state, where the voices of the people will be equally represented, respected and heard. In no way will this be the case in Draper's plan, that includes Jefferson's 23 counties in the same state with the greater San Francisco Oakland Bay Area, Santa Clara County, Silicon Valley and Sacramento.

Terry Gherardi, State of Jefferson

Voters give CTC more cash to spend at Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

KINGS BEACH – Voters earlier this month infused the California

Tahoe Conservancy budget with \$27 million.

This was through Proposition 68, which in total is a \$4 billion bond for parks, environmental protection and restoration, water infrastructure, and flood protection.

The CTC board on June 21 received an update about Proposition 68 at the meeting in Kings Beach. This came after approving its 2018-19 program budget authorization.

There are some strings attached with the new bond money. Language in the initiative says 20 percent of the money must be allocated to communities with a household income of less than 60 percent of the statewide average of \$39,980 in 2016. In CTC's jurisdiction, South Lake Tahoe and Kings Beach qualify as disadvantaged communities.

Board member Lynn Suter said, "I think we need to pay attention to this in a big way." She said the Legislature is adamant that disadvantaged communities be paid attention to.

As such the Conservancy staff has come up with a revision to the mission statement that says, "All communities have equitable access to the lake."

It remains to be seen how this will look in terms of future projects using Proposition 68 dollars.

In Proposition 68 the focal areas are:

- Acquire open space and create greenway corridors
- Outreach to diverse populations
- Mentoring diverse new leaders
- Creating new partnerships to expand access
- Implement improvements to increase access
- Expand use of appropriate educational materials

- Promote youth engagement and empowerment
- Identify possible staff liaisons.

Key projects the Conservancy plans to work on in this next fiscal year that starts July 1 include:

- Restoration of the Upper Truckee River Marsh
- South Tahoe Greenway, phase 1b/2
- Tahoe Pines Restoration project
- Lakeview Lookout/Connelly Beach.

CTC has \$15.4 million in capital outlay and local assistance funding. This comes from just more than \$9 million in bond funds, about \$1.87 million in special funds dedicated to the Conservancy, and \$4.56 million in grants from the Federal Trust Fund and other reimbursements.

There is another nearly \$7.93 million in continuing “baseline” funding from various bonds, special funds, and revenue sources dedicated to the CTC.

The state agency based in South Lake Tahoe spends about \$3.4 million on personnel, with \$3.2 million for other operating expenses.

Opinion: Work must continue to preserve Lake Tahoe

By Joanne Marchetta

Lake Tahoe is one of the clearest lakes in the world, known

around the globe for its spectacular scenery. The lake's water clarity is one of the many attributes that make the Tahoe basin such an amazing natural resource and a mecca for outdoor recreation.

For half a century, TRPA and its many partners have worked to protect Tahoe's famous clarity and to restore the clarity that was lost because of impacts from logging, cattle grazing, and early uncontrolled development in the Tahoe Basin. In that same time, research partners have closely monitored Tahoe's clarity each year as a widely-recognized indicator of the watershed's health and our progress to restore it.



Joanne
Marchetta

Clarity is measured by the depth to which a 10-inch white disk remains visible below the lake's surface and it can vary widely from season to season and year to year. Several major factors converged in 2017 to cause the lowest annual average clarity ever recorded—59.7 feet.

Last year, Tahoe saw the end of the most extreme drought in at least 1,200 years followed by one of the wettest winters on record. The five-year drought is thought to have caused large amounts of sediment to accumulate in Tahoe's tributaries. Record-setting rain and snow from dozens of atmospheric rivers that winter not only flooded streets and neighborhoods, but also flushed those sediments out into the lake, causing reduced clarity.

Interestingly, the record drought and record winter were not

enough to cause the record low clarity average for 2017. Winter and summer clarity last year were 10 feet better and 3 feet better than the record lows for those seasons. These seasonal results show that projects to reduce stormwater pollution and restore streams, meadows, and wetlands are working to keep sediment out of the lake. Those projects build resilience to the kind of extreme weather events that we saw in 2017 that could become more frequent in the future because of climate change.

The other major factor in last year's clarity readings was record high summer temperatures and unusually low wind speeds. Together, they caused Lake Tahoe's surface waters to remain warmer than normal into September. Normally, clarity improves as Lake Tahoe cools in the fall. That pattern changed in 2017 because higher water temperatures kept lake sediments near the surface where they reduced clarity—an outcome that was predicted by past research and a phenomenon TRPA and its research partners will work to explore more.

The record-low clarity reading shows Lake Tahoe is not immune to climate change and the extreme weather that touched every part of the globe last year. But it also shows the importance of work to reduce storm water pollution and to restore the streams, meadows, and wetlands that play an integral role in Lake Tahoe's health and water clarity.

Sediment particles that wash into streams and the lake with storm water are the biggest contributor to Lake Tahoe's clarity declines. Over the past 20 years partners at Tahoe have significantly reduced the amount of polluted storm water reaching the lake. As a result of our collective work, the lake's five-year running average for clarity is 70 feet.

Through the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program and the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load Program, partners around the Tahoe basin have upgraded more than 730 miles of roads to prevent erosion and reduce storm water pollution and

built a growing network of area-wide systems to capture and treat storm water before it reaches the lake. We have restored thousands of feet of stream channel damaged by historic logging and cattle grazing to reduce soil erosion and sediment loads and restored large areas of meadows and wetlands that help filter water before it reaches the lake.

These projects are keeping hundreds of thousands of pounds of fine sediment particles out of the lake each year and last year's clarity readings would have been worse without them. TRPA and dozens of partners are working to accelerate this progress. There is much more to do as we work to restore Lake Tahoe's clarity back to its historic level of 97 feet by 2076, and now is not the time to backtrack on that commitment.

While last year's average clarity registered a new low because of the convergence of a record drought, record winter, and record-high summer temperatures, the longstanding annual declines in lake clarity have stabilized.

Lake Tahoe is rightfully cherished as a natural treasure. Its water is among the clearest and cleanest in the world. With local, state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector partners all working together we have made significant progress in protecting and restoring Lake Tahoe's environment and we count on you joining us in doing everything possible to continue that progress in the decades to come.

Joanne Marchetta is executive director of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Water a question for home building west of Tahoe

By Ryan Sabalow, Dale Kasler and Tony Bizjak, Sacramento Bee

It's like a new city springing to life: 11,000 homes and apartments, three public schools, a pair of fire stations, a police station, a slew of office and commercial buildings and 1,000 acres of parks, trails and other open space. Expected population: 25,000.

But will it have enough water?

As construction begins this month on the first model homes at Folsom Ranch, a 3,300-acre development in the city of Folsom south of Highway 50, state regulators continue to have questions about the project's water supply. They still aren't convinced the city has secured enough water to keep showers and spigots flowing as California contends with increasing uncertainty about rain and snowfall.

Read the whole story

Homeless camps dismantled behind Stateline casinos

Harrah's Lake TAhoe and Douglas County Sheriff's Office employees recently teamed up to clean up the forested area behind the Stateline casinos.

In years past homeless people have camped there illegally. Volunteers and DCSO SWAT members cleaned up the make-shift

campsites which contained bedding, furniture, drug paraphernalia and rubbish. An illegal camping citation was issued to one person.

Harrah's provided four dump trucks for trash, and each was filled to capacity.

El Dorado County bird tests positive for West Nile

El Dorado County health officials received confirmation June 22 that a bird found in the El Dorado Hills tested positive for West Nile virus.

The songbird, was collected on June 13.

So far this year, West Nile virus activity has been detected in 22 dead birds in California; El Dorado (2), San Mateo (2), Alameda (4), Humboldt (1), Los Angeles (1), Sacramento (6), Stanislaus (1) and Santa Clara (5).

Confirmation of the West Nile virus positive bird means the virus is circulating between birds and mosquitoes and there is heightened risk of infection in humans. West Nile virus can be transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes get the virus when they feed on infected birds. The illness is not spread from person-to-person.