

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- El Dorado County issued a warning saying travel on the Rubicon Trail is not advised the next few days because of the weather.
 - Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Heavenly Mountain Resort, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board were presented with a 2016 Regional Forester Honor award for their work, dedication, and commitment to conserving and restoring natural resources for present and future generations.
 - KKFT 99.1-FM, broadcasting out of Carson City, will be airing "America Outdoors Radio" on Saturday mornings between 5 and 6.
 - Sam Slack is now vice president and general manager of Ridge Tahoe.
 - President Obama on Dec. 16 signed the federal water act that includes the \$415 million Lake Tahoe Restoration Act.
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A tale of two droughts in California

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

When California water officials assess the drought, the first place they look is the northern Sierra Nevada mountains.

Rain and snowmelt from the area feed into a complex system of rivers, canals and reservoirs that send water across the

state. And by almost all measures, the drought picture in Northern California has dramatically improved over the last two months, as a series of storms have helped replenish the state's two major water projects. So far this season, rain levels in the northern Sierra are 180 percent of average, with 23.5 inches of rain falling – and more on the way this week.

But the story is more grim in Southern California, which remains historically dry. Now water officials must figure out how to deal with the disparity and its implications for managing the drought. While Southern California still gets some water from the Sierra, about 50 percent of its supply comes from local sources such as groundwater and reservoirs.

Read the whole story

2 Squaw skiers in top 10 in downhill

By USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy – Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) snagged the podium on his favorite Audi FIS Ski World Cup track, finishing in third in Val Gardena. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) and Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) nailed the top 10.

It looked like Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway was going to take his first downhill win since his injury last season, but Max Franz of Austria spoiled his celebration, coming from bib 26 to win the race—his first World Cup victory of his career and the first Austrian win on the Saslong in eight years.

It was another beautiful day in the Dolomites with the U.S.

men performing well on the open downhill track. Nyman had a wild ride—threatening first place even after landing on his tails off a jump. But the hill is a perfect set up for the big man—built for strong gliders like Nyman. “I’m really happy with the performance,” said Nyman. “Val d’Isere was a big disappointment—I had some equipment issues I was dialing in. To resurrect that here and know I can ski at the top is really, really good and I want to carry that into Caterina.”

Ganong also had a great day, putting down an aggressive line to finish in seventh place. But his eyes are looking toward the win at Santa Caterina. “I know I have speed to be faster than anybody, but it’s having all the splits add up at the end,” said Ganong. “It’s close, it’s super close. I have to keep working at it and keep trying and it’ll come.”

The race was thrilling to the end, with Bennett skiing from bib 54 to finish eighth, right behind Ganong. This wasn’t Bennett’s first bibbo rodeo at Val Gardena. Last season, he started 57th to finish sixth on the track.

LTVA, TRTA awarded tourism grants

Lake Tahoe entities are the beneficiary of Nevada Commission on Tourism grants.

The state agency this week awarded \$504,230 in grants to rural Nevada tourism organizations for marketing efforts.

NCOT awarded funding to 89 marketing projects designed to increase overnight stays, boost brand awareness and expand marketing programs for communities in rural Nevada. Grants are

awarded twice a year, and this recent distribution is the second in fiscal 2017. A total of \$1.4 million was awarded in fiscal 2017.

Recipients include:

- Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority was awarded \$6,000 for public relations efforts around the Amgen professional cycling race; the agency will host the first two days of the 2017 women's race. This high-profile event raises awareness of the Lake Tahoe area as a world-class destination for recreation and elite cycling. To amplify that message, grant funds will be directed toward digital advertising, social media and public relations.

- The Tahoe Rim Trail Association was awarded \$7,500 to construct the group's new website. The Tahoe Rim Trail, a 165-mile rail around Lake Tahoe, is one of the premiere outdoor destinations in the region and a key contributor to Nevada's outdoor recreation economy – a \$14.9 billion business, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. A modern, updated website will help ensure the trail's continued success.

Grant recipients must provide a 50-50 match in funds or volunteer hours unless a waiver is approved. Funding for the Rural Grants Program does not come from the state's general fund. TravelNevada receives three-eighths of 1 percent of room tax revenue as its operations budget. A portion of those funds is used to offer the Rural Grants Program.

Funding spurs Hwy. 50-Pioneer Trail roundabout



This is what the Pioneer Trail-Highway 50 roundabout in Meyers could look like.

By Kathryn Reed

El Dorado County is moving forward with plans to construct a roundabout at the intersection of Highway 50 and Pioneer Trail in Meyers.

The county was just awarded a grant for \$2,932,840 from the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Safety Improvement Program. This was less than the requested amount of \$3,450,400.

"Right now we need to find some more money before we really dig in on this project; and we have to find it pretty soon," John Kahling, the county's deputy director of engineering, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The project will not move forward unless we are able to identify approximately \$600,000 in additional funding."

The entire project is estimated to cost \$4 million.

Other possible funding sources include state transportation block grant dollars, federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds, state maintenance funding, and Tahoe Regional Planning Agency mitigation funds.

The Board of Supervisors is expected to officially accept the federal grant after the first of the year. That will then start the three-year time clock for the county to have begun construction. If that deadline is not met, the money has to be returned.

While the bulk of the work affects the state highway, the county is taking the responsibility for the project.

"The county is the lead on this project because Caltrans does not currently have any plans for improving the intersection, and the county feels that improvements associated with safety, increased throughput, and pedestrian and bicycle use are appropriate," Kahling said.

Caltrans, though, will be involved in this project. (The state agency is the lead for the roundabout going in just west of here at the intersection of highways 50 and 89.)

"Local agencies often take the lead in interchange projects, especially when they're able to obtain funding. Caltrans will be the oversight agency on the project and ensure that the design plans meet our standards. Once construction begins, traffic management plans also will need to be approved by Caltrans," Steve Nelson, spokesman for Caltrans, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The exact number of lanes for the roundabout remains to be determined.

Today the crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists is dangerous based on where the crosswalks are, how trails connect and the lights. The roundabout will be designed to incorporate non-motorized travelers.

According to the Federal Highway Administration, “Roundabouts have fewer conflict points. A single lane roundabout has 50 percent fewer pedestrian-vehicle conflict points than a comparable stop or signal controlled intersection. Conflicts between bicycles and vehicles are reduced as well.”

Opinion: Noting Lake Tahoe's accomplishments

By Casey Beyer

Four years ago this month, TRPA approved the 2012 Regional Plan. The landmark plan charts a course to restore Lake Tahoe's environment and revitalize our communities and it was forged through Herculean work by California, Nevada, local governments, the public, and dozens of other partners.

Many Tahoe Basin stakeholders once questioned if we could work together, but the Regional Plan ushered in an era of collaboration. Today, the answer is how can we work together more efficiently. By building and strengthening partnerships we have made remarkable progress. This year was no different.



Casey Beyer

Just this week, the icing on the 2016 cake of success came by

Congress's reauthorization of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act. The bipartisan legislation authorizes up to \$415 million in future federal funding appropriations for environmental restoration and conservation projects. Eight years of negotiation went into this legislation's passage, which was possible only because of the partnerships strengthened in 2012.

Working together, TRPA and Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team partners have also secured nearly \$30 million in federal funding this year to remove hazardous fuels from Tahoe forests. These projects will improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and build upon the 65,000 acres of forest already treated. Next summer marks the tenth year since the Angora Fire. Work to reduce hazardous fuels and create fire-adapted communities is ongoing and it must remain a top priority as we confront the realities of a changing climate.

Local governments and highway departments are implementing transportation projects that benefit the environment, enhance our economy, and improve our quality of life. A new Class 1 bike path links South Lake Tahoe and Meyers and trails on the North and West shores continue to improve. Construction started this summer on a 3-mile trail from Incline Village to Sand Harbor. The showcase project will enhance recreation, improve safety, clean up stormwater pollution, and ease traffic and parking problems in one of Tahoe's most heavily-visited highway corridors.

TRPA's forthcoming regional transportation plan will further outline the projects and strategies needed to reduce traffic congestion and improve bike trails and transit for residents and a growing number of visitors to more easily travel around our communities and to popular recreation sites without having to get in their cars at all.

As I sat at the 20th annual presidential summit this August, I was inspired to hear President Obama give us his impression of

Lake Tahoe. The president's comments brought joyous cheers from more than 7,500 people in attendance. It was Tahoe's first presidential visit in a decade and put a national spotlight on the lake and its environmental issues. While the president was joined on stage by Sen. Harry Reid, Dianne Feinstein, and Barbara Boxer, as well as California Gov. Jerry Brown, it was the sheer energy of the crowd and the beauty of Lake Tahoe that shined brightly that day.

The Environmental Improvement Program was launched at the first presidential summit in 1997 and today it is one of the nation's most successful environmental programs. Much of its success has been fueled by the original Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2000. Through the program, local, state, federal, nonprofit, and private sector partners have completed hundreds of projects to remove hazardous fuels from forests; restore streams, wetlands, and marshes; protect the lake from invasive species; upgrade hundreds of miles of roads to reduce stormwater pollution; and build bike and pedestrian trails.

Partners around the basin are working together like never before to implement the Regional Plan and projects that benefit the environment and our communities. TRPA is committed to doing its part, and is working on strategic initiatives to accelerate environmental redevelopment, upgrade transportation infrastructure and transit services, improve the health and resilience of Tahoe's forests, and examine and improve how we measure the region's success.

Congress's vote to reauthorize the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act is the strongest sign yet that we are on the right track. It signals that our federal partners are committed to Lake Tahoe and that after two decades the lake's health remains a national priority. Collaboration is the cornerstone to our successes and it is the binding rule that we will see our progress grow in years to come.

Casey Beyer is the California Governor appointee to the TRPA

Scientists tie extreme events to changing climate

By Chelsea Harvey, Washington Post

A report published Thursday as a special edition of the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society provides some of the best evidence yet that climate change already has a hand in our worst weather. It points to a variety of extreme weather events in 2015 that were likely influenced by global warming, from heat waves in Australia to heavy rain in China to raging wildfires in Alaska.

The report, examining research on two dozen weather events, was compiled and edited by scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, as well as the Met Office Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research.

Climate scientists have long predicted that the progression of climate change would bring about changes in both the severity and frequency of extreme weather events around the world. In recent years, a new area of climate science has begun to emerge, one that seeks to figure out the likelihood that any given event was influenced by climate change.

Read the whole story

Editorial: Calif. looks to lead Trump resistance

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 9, 2016, New York Times.*

Nobody knows yet what Donald Trump is going to do to immigration enforcement. Only a month has passed since the election, and the president-elect is no different from the candidate: erratic, self-contradictory, hazy on principles and policies.

But states and cities that value immigrants, including the undocumented, do not have the luxury of waiting and hoping for the best. They are girding for a confrontation, building defenses to protect families and workers from the next administration.

They fear that Trump, who ran on a pledge of mass deportation, dehumanizing immigrants and refugees, will remove humane discretion from immigration enforcement. They understand that not all unauthorized immigrants are criminals, that not all should be detained or deported and that the country cannot enforce its way out of its failure to reform unjust immigration laws.

Read the whole story

Tourists questioned in

illegal shooting in Meyers

Gunshots heard in Meyers this afternoon led officers to track down some guys from Stockton who were target shooting.

“It wasn’t that far from houses,” El Dorado County sheriff’s Lt. Matt Underhill told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The men were firing off rounds at the end of Lost Lane at about 4pm Dec. 16.

Detectives are still investigating the incident. Underhill said two of the men had prior felonies that prohibited them from engaging in this activity.

Names of the suspects have not been released.

Lake Valley Fire Protection District has an ordinance prohibiting the discharge of weapons as a fire precaution in almost all areas of its jurisdiction. It is enforceable year round.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Environmentalists challenge Squaw’s expansion

By Brad Branan, Sacramento Bee

A Nevada City advocacy group has filed a legal challenge to Squaw Valley’s expansion plan, saying Placer County violated the California Environmental Quality Act by approving the development last month.

County supervisors approved construction of hotels, condominiums and housing of up to 1,500 rooms, up to 300,000 square feet of commercial space and a “mountain adventure center” of 90,000 square feet at the famed ski resort.

Sierra Watch, which was instrumental in organizing community opposition to the plan, filed the legal challenge Wednesday in Placer Superior Court.

Read the whole story