

Congress will get peek at Nev. land transfer bill

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The House Committee on Natural Resources will get a sneak-peek at a bill that would transfer millions of acres of federal land to the state of Nevada.



Mark Amodei

The committee scheduled a hearing for today on H.R. 1484, the Honor the Nevada Enabling Act of 1864.

The bill by Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Carson City, is controversial because conservation groups say it would undermine important federal oversight on land throughout the state.

Proponents say it would provide state and local officials more control over public land. Currently the federal government owns about 85 percent of land in Nevada, among the highest percentage of any state.

Read the whole story

Search calls surge with wilderness rookies



After running from law enforcement, the SAR team rescued two suspects who suffered from hypothermia. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Inappropriate clothing and shoes, no plan for if things go wrong, and unrealistic expectations that a cell phone will reach help that is nearby.

This is increasingly what search and rescue teams with El Dorado County are finding. It's the result of more people in the woods and so many of them being unprepared. The movie "Wild" has helped perpetuate the idea that inexperienced hikers will survive.

This fall two women had to be rescued near Cascade Falls because they weren't prepared for the storm that came in even though forecasters had been talking about it for days. They

said they didn't know about the pending storm and thought spandex leggings would be sufficient. They got disoriented and told rescuers they were going to die. They didn't – thanks to volunteers who brought them back to safety.

That's a routine call.

The number of calls El Dorado County search and rescue crews go on has doubled since 2010. In 2015, EDSO SAR was called 89 times. (That doesn't mean they went out each time.) In the first 10 months of 2016, SAR has been called 130 times. Most of those people don't live in the area.



Training is necessary to keep the team sharp.
Photo/Provided

"People are coming to the area without physical fitness or the experience to recreate safely," sheriff's Deputy Greg Almos told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Almos runs the El Dorado County Sheriff's Department SAR program. It's made up about 30 volunteers in Tahoe; of those about a dozen are active on a regular basis.

Eagle Falls is where they go to the most; with twisted ankles a routine issue. Many people are less than a mile from the trailhead. Their lack of fitness contributes to the initial

injury and then not being able to make it out, Almos said. The altitude and weather are other contributing factors.

The veteran SAR leader is an advocate for getting people outdoors, but he also believes there needs to be responsibility and common sense. This means education before getting on the trail.



A hiker who suffered a foot injury this summer at Eagle Falls is carried to the trailhead. Photo/Provided

People go for day hikes without bringing another layer for when the temperatures in the mountains drop. They don't have packs with the essentials – like enough water, food, a flashlight, even a map. Nor do they have a plan in case they don't make it out.

“It's amazing how many people I talk to when I discuss a save your life plan over the phone and they cannot fathom why we

are not there. When I say it will take several hours to get there and that they need to make preparations to survive, and I tell them what to expect and say it could be four hours, I get arguments,” Almos said. “After 20 minutes they call to say ‘where are you?’ I ask them how long it took to get to the top of Tallac. They say six hours. I’ve had people straight up say where is the helicopter. This isn’t Uber. People have a hard time understanding that.”

Then there are the times when people don’t know where they are. It’s getting harder to trace cell phone numbers because of privacy laws. Search warrants can sometimes be obtained after the fact. That is why dispatchers ask for consent to track people’s phones.



The helicopter arrives to transport a lost person from Maggie's Peak in February. Photo/Provided

A relatively new phenomenon searchers have been dealing with is “meet-up groups.” These are Internet-based groups where random people meet for a certain activity. They aren’t abiding by the basic protocols of hiking at the speed of the slowest person and making sure everyone returns to the trailhead.

“We are getting people who are leaving people out there. This is an epidemic I think we are going to see an awful lot more of,” Almos said.

Descriptions of what they were wearing or looked like are often vague.

Compounding the problem is friends and relatives back home who might call to report the person overdue often don't know where the person was exactly going or with whom.

About a dozen of these calls are now happening annually.

Nothing is routine, and it's not unusual for rescues to require technical skills – especially at Lover's Leap and the cliff area at Vikingsholm. Climbers get stuck.

Their rescuers aren't getting paid. Search team members provide their own gear.

It's not unusual in the busy summer season to get back-to-back calls. Sometimes they are on a call for consecutive days. They receive training, but they all come to the “job” with a love for the outdoors and a desire to help others.

All of the volunteer search and rescue members are on-the-ground team. There is the management team that runs the command post and sets up the coordination, a Nordic team, snowmobile group, mountain rescue unit that handles extreme weather backcountry cases, and K-9 teams. The West Slope has an equestrian group and OHV.

And the people they rescue are not charged a dime.

Letter: Getting on board with reality of development

To the community,

Wow, what a doozy of a letter in the *Sierra Sun* from **Thomas Greg Traxler** on Nov. 3, "Unless Lake Tahoe builds a wall, redevelopment is reality."

In it, Traxler starts with the false premise that all new development is "re-development." Martis Valley West (760 units plus 6.6 acres commercial) on lands zoned conservation on our forested ridge is not redevelopment.

Traxler thinks we need to "get on board." Really? Tahoe's only choice to save our environment is to build a wall? Tahoe residents had better get on board or get out of the way because 6,000 units are either currently approved or in the Tahoe-Truckee pipeline. I guess this logic comes under the heading of: The beatings will continue until morale improves.

Traxler is entitled to his opinion. He is a Realtor selling shared ownerships, etc., at the formerly bankrupt East-West Partner's projects at Northstar and Old Greenwood. East-West has morphed into Mountainside Partners, the developer behind Martis Valley West. The project will throw another 1,900 new residents onto the already clogged Highway 267 corridor.

Traxler's specious rationalizations, if accepted by residents and government, will inevitably result in the destruction of our dark night skies, foul lake clarity, cause traffic gridlock, and make it difficult if not impossible for Basin residents to make it out in case of wildfire.

We don't have to "get on board" with overdevelopment. This isn't the lawless Old West. The public has a say through a number of channels to protect the environment and public

safety. Unfortunately in the case of Martis Valley West, all but one member of the Placer County Board of Supervisors ignored their own Planning Commission, their Environmental Report, the California attorney general, five conservation groups and hundreds of citizens.

It's a terrible loss for Lake Tahoe.

Ann Nichols, North Tahoe Preservation Alliance

Death Valley heat record comes under fire

By Henry Brean, Las Vegas Review-Journal

A new analysis of a 103-year-old weather observation is throwing cold water on Death Valley National Park's claim to the world record for heat.

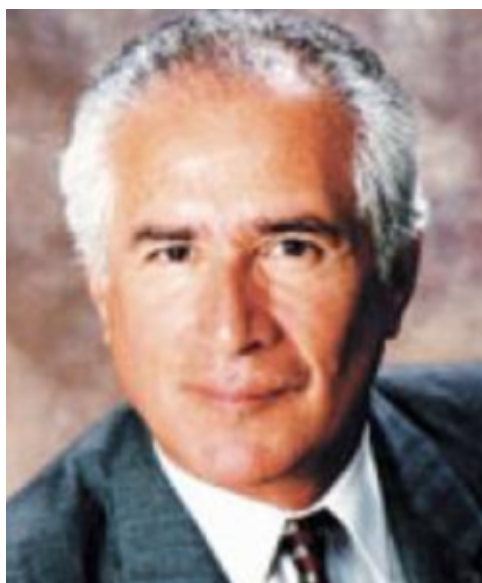
According to the United Nations' World Meteorological Organization, the official keeper and verifier of global climate extremes, the highest air temperature recorded anywhere in the world is 134 degrees at Death Valley's Greenland Ranch on July 10, 1913.

But California climatologist and storm chaser William T. Reid believes the record is bogus, and he's got decades of exhaustive research to back him up.

"It's essentially not possible from a meteorological perspective," Reid said.

Read the whole story

John Joseph Castellanos – 1949-2016



John Joseph Castellanos

Longtime South Lake Tahoe attorney John Joseph Castellanos died Nov. 5, 2016. He was 67.

Castellanos was born Oct. 31, 1949, in Stockton. He was the second of six children born to Jose Juan and Lucille Castellanos.

Castellanos spent his early years in Stockton, attending local schools. He graduated from St. Mary's High School, attended San Joaquin Delta College and enlisted in the U.S. Army.

Upon his return from military service he completed his undergraduate work at Sacramento State College. He then graduated from Lincoln Law School.

He practiced in Sacramento before moving to South Lake Tahoe.

Castellanos was an avid golfer.

He believed in making the world a better place, in helping people and in the importance of family and friends. He strongly believed in the power of hope and love.

Castellanos is survived by his wife, Lisa; son Zach; stepson Michael Wood; daughter and son-in-law Sara and Carlos Cortez; granddaughters Luz and Sofia; brothers and sisters Stephan (Linda Derivi), Christine, Susan Gonyo (Bill), David (Sharon) and Catherine (Kevin Heverin); and numerous nieces and nephews, including Gian and Anna Derivi-Castellanos, Allyson and Kevin Gonyo, Joshua and Emma Castellanos-Rose, and Miles and Gabriel Heverin.

Funeral services will be Nov. 16 at 1pm at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe. A reception will at Tep's Villa Roma.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Heart Association.

Treasury finds troubles with TARP in Nevada

By Daniel Rothberg, Las Vegas Sun

Seeking to address the housing crisis in the states most affected by unemployment, the federal government created a fund in 2010 to help homeowners pay mortgages. Nevada stood to benefit from an allocation of about \$200 million as part of the Hardest Hit Fund. But six years later, half the funding has yet to be disbursed, with many homeowners turned away from

the program.

Although the fund – controlled by the nonprofit Nevada Affordable Housing Assistance Corp. (NAHAC) – approved payouts for thousands of homeowners in its first three years, assistance plunged after 2014, a trend that prompted federal and state inquiries into the fund's management and day-to-day operations. Under new management, it is in the process of reforms.

In a harsh September report detailing wasteful spending, an auditor for the Treasury Department criticized the fund for acting with “a sense of entitlement and no appreciation for the fact that it was taking funds for itself from the homeowners the program intended to help.”

Read the whole story

Barton's grants help with prevention, intervention

Barton has distributed grants totaling \$40,000 to help address the community's most pressing health needs – mental health, substance abuse, and access to services.

The grants were awarded to nine South Shore organizations. Recipients included Live Violence Free, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – El Dorado Chapter, SOS Outreach, South Tahoe Family Resource Center, Tahoe Art League, Tahoe Magic, Tahoe Turning Point, and Tahoe Youth & Family Services.

It is estimated more than 4,500 children and adults in the

South Lake Tahoe area will benefit from the money.

This cycle's grant recipients addressed the themes of prevention and intervention.

Essay contest worth a lifetime hunting license

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Wildlife Officers Foundation are co-sponsoring the annual Passing on the Tradition essay contest for young hunters.

The grand prize winner will receive a lifetime California hunting license.

This year's contest has entrants sharing their favorite hunting memory.

The contest is open to all junior hunting license holders, as well as youths under 18 who have earned a hunter education certificate. Entrants must submit an essay of 500 words or less, describing a past hunting experience (either their own or observing a mentor) that was particularly memorable or special.

Entries should be submitted via email to john.nores@wildlife.ca.gov by Dec. 16 at 5pm. Applicants must provide date of birth and a contact telephone number. The winners will be notified by telephone.

For additional information, contact Lt. John Nores at 408.591.5174.

Climate change and oceans subject of talk

Oceans are warming, becoming more acidic, and are being depleted of oxygen. How aquatic life reacts to these changes can help people understand more about this issue.

Andrew Whitehead, associate professor UC Davis Department of Environmental Toxicology, is a comparative genome biologist and molecular ecotoxicologist. He will be discussing Developing Models for Climate Change Research Using Ocean Species on Dec. 8 at Sierra Nevada College.

The program will begin at 6pm, with refreshments and no-host bar from 5:30-6pm at 291 Country Club Drive in Incline Village.

A \$5 suggested donation will be collected at the door. **Registration** is necessary.

**Jill Stanton-Bricker –
1968-2016**



Jill Stanton-Bricker

Jill Stanton-Bricker, age 48, of South Lake Tahoe, passed peacefully on Nov. 9, 2016, with her family by her side.

Jill loved Tahoe and called it home for over 20 years; after growing up in a town near Cleveland, Ohio, and attending Bowling Green University. She enjoyed skiing and adventuring, both the beaches and the mountains.

She was a great mother and friend, who could make anyone laugh. She made many strong bonds with people, as she was a very friendly person. You could sense her presence when she walked into a room due to her outgoing personality. Jill could turn a serious situation into one filled with laughter and smiles. She impacted many people's lives for the better.

Jill is survived by her daughters, Korinne and Ashley; brother, Tim; parents, Nancy and Jack; ex-husband, Scott; along with nieces, nephews, uncles, aunts, cousins, and many loving friends.

The family appreciates the dedicated service and staff of the Reno's Renown Regional Medical Center. A private serve is to be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made in Jill's memory to **Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care** or **Protect our Winters**.

We will always carry your spirit in our hearts. We love you, Jill.