

Water planners work to enhance snowpack data

By Christine Souza, AgAlert

Access to precise, real-time data about the amount of water in the Sierra Nevada snowpack has become more critical than ever, California water managers say, in order to assist them in making informed decisions about an ever-less-predictable supply of water.

That's why water managers came to a panel discussion about advancements in snow-measurement technology during an Association of California Water Agencies conference in Sacramento last week. The discussion focused on the Airborne Snow Observatory, or ASO program, developed by researchers at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena.

Turlock Irrigation District Chief Hydrologist Wes Monier said TID, which co-owns Don Pedro Reservoir on the Tuolumne River, has taken advantage of the program for the past six years. Calling the ASO program "the best solution going forward for the next generation," Monier said the technology helps with flood control, minimizes downstream impacts, provides more flexibility and optimizes the system.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

• Sample the Sierra **early bird tickets** are on sale until July 5. This is Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce's

food to fork event in South Lake Tahoe.

- Truckee Donner Public Utility District is one of 240 of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities to earn the Reliable Public Power Provider designation from the American Public Power Association.

- Florence and The Machine will play at Harveys on Aug. 9 at 7:30pm.

- Truckee Home and Building show will be May 26-27, 10am-5pm at Truckee High School. Cost is \$6. For more info, go **online**.

- Lake Tahoe's Reggae Springsplash will feature Steel Pulse, Mike Love, Clear Conscience and DJ DubFyah at MontBleu in Stateline on May 24. Doors open at 7pm, show is at 8pm. Must be 21 to attend. Advance tickets are \$25, \$30 that night.

Forest loss can harm trees on the opposite coast

By University of Washington

Large swaths of U.S. forests are vulnerable to drought, forest fires and disease. Many local impacts of forest loss are well known: drier soils, stronger winds, increased erosion, loss of shade and habitat. But if a whole forest disappears, new research shows, this has ricocheting effects in the atmosphere that can affect vegetation on the other side of the country.

A University of Washington-led study published May 16 in Environmental Research Letters shows that forest die-offs in specific regions of the United States can influence plant

growth in other parts of the country. The largest impacts seen were from losing forest cover in California, a region that is currently experiencing dramatic tree mortality.

Read the whole story

Democratic congressional ad could lead to false impressions

By Emily Cadei, Sacramento Bee

Democratic candidate Regina Bateson has sent a mailer to voters in the 4th congressional district touting her credentials ahead of the June 5 primary election. The mailer repeatedly refers to Bateson as a “military security analyst” and says that after Sept. 11, she worked to keep the country safe from terrorism.



Regina Bateson

Bateson is one of four Democrats running for the 4th district seat, which is currently held by Republican Rep. Tom McClintock. The district stretches from suburban Sacramento into the Sierra Nevada mountains, and includes Roseville and

El Dorado Hills. Bateson and fellow Democrat Jessica Morse are locked in a contentious race to finish in the top two of the all-party primary, earning the right to advance to the general election against McClintock this fall. The district favors Republicans, but Democrats are hoping that local energy and unprecedented fundraising could spark an upset in November.

Read the whole story

Music institute to be part of Classical Tahoe

Classical Tahoe is launching a music institute this summer for all ages and abilities. It's an opportunity to actively engage with music and musicians.

The music institute is lead by Truckee native Lindsay McIntosh (née Hollingshead). McIntosh has a personal connection to the community as one of the only graduates of Truckee High to attend the Juilliard School on full scholarship. McIntosh is a historical oboist by trade and the deputy director of Classical Tahoe.

Venues and times for music institute events vary. Go **online** for more info.

The festival is July 8-Aug. 12.

Among the list of new opportunities is the inaugural Jazz Master Class, where renowned jazz musician Chris Brubeck will work with participants from Tahoe area high school jazz bands, teaching the art of jazz performance. The Classical Tahoe season concludes with a concert on Aug. 12 featuring the four

jazz masters of the Brubeck Brothers Quartet.

Concerts begin at 7pm at the Classical Tahoe Pavilion at Sierra Nevada College in Incline Village. Concert ticket prices are \$25, \$55, \$85 and \$120. Chamber music concerts are \$30. Student tickets half off.

The art of water-wise gardening

By Melinda Myers

Making a few changes in your garden care can yield great benefits. Less time and water wasted means more time for you to relax or entertain friends and family in your beautiful landscape. Water is critical throughout the life of a plant, but deciding when and how much water to provide each plant can be a bit overwhelming. Make this task easier and conserve moisture with these simple strategies.

Start by matching plants to your growing conditions. Selecting plants suited to your climate, soil moisture and average rainfall means healthier, better-looking plants and productive gardens with less supplemental water.



Drip irrigation systems allow you to slowly apply water right above the plant roots, encouraging the development of deep, drought-tolerant roots.

Photo/Gardener's Supply Company

Incorporate organic matter such as compost into the soil prior to planting. This helps the soil more efficiently absorb rainfall and irrigation water. Less runoff means less water wasted. Adding organic matter also increases the ability of fast-draining soil to hold moisture, extending the time between watering.

Mulch the soil with organic materials such as shredded leaves, evergreen needles or woodchips. Mulching helps conserve moisture while suppressing weeds and improving the soil as it decomposes. Plus, you'll be recycling landscape trimmings back into the landscape and the environment. It's green gardening.

There will still be times you need to lend nature a hand. Sprouting seeds, young seedlings and new transplants need consistent moisture to grow and establish a root system. Most annual flowers and vegetables also need consistent moisture throughout the season.

Newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs also need more attention and water than established plants with deeper roots able to absorb more moisture. During extended dry periods, even established plants will need supplemental water.

Providing the right amount of water at the right time can be a challenge. Doing it efficiently to avoid wasting time or water can help ensure your gardening success.

Take the guess work out of watering with a drip irrigation

system. Drip irrigation systems allow you to apply water to the soil right above the plant roots, exactly where it's needed.

Run a line next to each row of plants – or every 18 inch in planting beds. The water slowly seeps through the holes and into the soil below. The slow, steady flow moistens the root zone, encouraging the development of deep, drought-tolerant roots.

Just turn on the faucet, set the timer and let the irrigation system do the work. This reduces the risk of frequent, ineffective watering which leads to shallow roots growing just below the soil surface where they dry out quickly. High temperatures or missed irrigation can stress shallow rooted plants, reducing their beauty and productivity.

The use of appropriate irrigation, mulching and organic matter can make a huge difference in the quality of your landscape – and your enjoyment of your garden.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything" DVD series and the nationally syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" TV and radio segments.

Crystal Basin recreation closures may impact basin



Crystal Basin Recreation Area is being overhauled. Photo/Terra Breeden

By Terra Breeden

The Crystal Basin Recreation Area is getting a \$150 million makeover that could affect Tahoe while renovations are under way.

In an effort funded by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), the recreation area is being updated with new campsites, facilities, and installments. The massive renovation project is expected to take place over the next two decades.

This summer, Sunset Campground, the largest campground in Crystal Basin with 131 sites, will undergo the first renovation and be closed to the public during construction, which will take two years. More campgrounds are slated for renovations afterward. U.S. Forest Service officials predict that the recreation area closures will defer many visitors to Tahoe for outdoor activities.

“Considering people will be displaced from Crystal Basin, there will most likely be an increase in visitation to adjacent areas, including Lake Tahoe,” District Recreation Officer of the Pacific Ranger District Becky Shufelt said.

Crystal Basin welcomes about 350,000 to 500,00 visitors annually and is by far the most popular recreation zone in Eldorado National Forest. Offering an array of activities like hiking, biking, camping and horseback riding, and boasting nine reservoirs, the region is a haven for outdoor enthusiasts.

The area was designated as an outdoor destination in 1957 through a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and SMUD. Crystal Basin is part of the Upper American River hydroelectric project, founded by SMUD. The reservoirs and dams in the area provide electricity to homes in Sacramento and the Bay Area. Although the reservoirs were originally built to produce hydroelectricity, they have become a popular recreation zone in the decades since.

Will your favorite recreation site be closed?

Please pardon our dust while we make some exciting improvements to recreation sites associated with SMUD's Upper American River Project in El Dorado County. Over the next few years, many of the facilities will be upgraded, and several new features added for your future enjoyment. The work will require some sites to be partially or completely closed during construction within the timeframes below. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

- Azalea Cove Campground **closed 2018**
- Angel Creek Day Use Area **closed July – September 2018**
- Sunset Campground **closed 2018** (reopens Spring 2019)
- Gerle Creek Campground **closed after Labor Day 2018** (reopens Spring 2019)
- Northwind Campground **closed after Labor Day 2018** (reopens Spring 2019)
- Camino Cove Campground **closed 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- Lakeshore Drive **closed 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- North Union Valley Road **closed 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- Northshore RV Campground **closed 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- Wolf Creek Campground **closed 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- Slab Creek Reservoir (not on map) **closed Spring 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- West Point Boat Launch **closed after Labor Day 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)
- Yellowjacket Boat Launch **closed after Labor Day 2019** (reopens Spring 2020)

 Closures are subject to change.
Please check with the U.S. Forest Service for updates.
530-622-5061 | www.fs.usda.gov/eldorado

“When you create reservoirs, you create boating opportunities, and the SMUD partnership with the USFS is what made this

recreation area possible,” SMUD rep Darold Perry told *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, as popular as Crystal Basin is, it has not been renovated since its creation, and campgrounds and facilities are severely outdated. Recently, SMUD obtained a new license from the USFS to operate the Upper American River project in the area and part of the agreement was that SMUD would renovate the Crystal Basin recreation facilities for visitors. The result is an enormous construction project that will take up to 20 years.

“The old deteriorated campgrounds were built over 50 years ago. It will be nice to get those updated and improve the visitor experience,” Shufelt said.

For the renovations, the Crystal Basin campgrounds will be updated with new picnic tables, animal-proof storage lockers, and several group sites will be added. New restroom and shower facilities will be built, and in an initiative to help lessen trash and alleviate some of the wildlife issues that have been rising in recent years, recycling bins will be installed in all of the campgrounds.

However, all of these renovations require closures. The campgrounds, especially Sunset Campground, are usually fully booked through the summer and although there are a few sites that are first come, first serve, there is often a line out the gate to claim these spots. With all of the campground closures due to construction, most significantly Sunset Campground, Forest Service officials expect to turn away many visitors this year.

“We are a very busy area and with all of the construction activity we are urging people to rethink if this is the area for them to come to or not,” Shufelt said. “Having a large campground like Sunset be closed for almost two seasons has a huge impact. The public may want to go to some other areas

around the forest or explore neighboring national forests for their summertime recreation.”

Opinion: We may be trapped in a debt spiral

By George F. Will, Washington Post

From Scotland, where Adam Smith pioneered systematic thinking about economics, comes an adjective, “carnaptious,” that fits people who are allergic to economic euphoria. It means cantankerous. Let’s think carnaptiously about this fact: The interest rate on 10-year Treasury bonds recently rose briefly to 3 percent, and soon may move above this. This is more than evidence of the economy’s strength. It also is a harbinger of a coming day when the great driver of the national debt will be ... the national debt. Pour a Scotch and read on.

The economy’s growth, which slowed in 2018’s first quarter, is not brisk; it still is not even the 3 percent that is the low end of presidential boasting. At the end of this month, the economy will amble into the 10th year of the expansion that began in June 2009. This month is its 108th, making it almost twice as long as the average expansion (58 months) since 1945. Unless Mr. I Alone Can Fix It has banished the business cycle forever – modesty would not have prevented him from mentioning this – a contraction is somewhere in America’s future. It might begin in fiscal conditions resembling today’s because this is now normal: trillion-dollar annual budget deficits while the economy is at full employment. (The 4.1 percent unemployment rate is impressive, even given the decades-long decline in the work force participation rate.)

Read the whole story

Athletes are ditching ibuprofen for CBD

By Graham Averill, Outside

Andrew Talansky is almost always sore. The 29-year-old spent seven years as a professional cyclist racing for Slipstream Sports. He recently switched to triathlon and now spends hours training both on and off the bike. “I’m using muscles I haven’t used in years,” Talansky says. “My body is constantly inflamed.” Many athletes in his situation rely on common pain relief like ibuprofen, but when Talansky strained a hip flexor last fall, he reached for a bottle of cannabidiol (CBD), an extract from the cannabis plant, instead.

“I took it for a couple of weeks, and there was a noticeable difference immediately,” Talansky says. “And it wasn’t just that my hip was feeling better. I was less anxious, and I was sleeping better.”

Marijuana has long been considered an alternative pain medication, with THC, the principle psychoactive compound in the plant, getting most of the attention. CBD is another active component and could offer some of the same medical benefits (anti-inflammatory, anti-anxiety, analgesic), but without the side effect of getting high.

Read the whole story

7 riders to watch in the Tour of California



Cyclists start the Tour of California in Long Beach.
Photo/Ashton Lyle

By James Raia, Sacramento Bee

Climbers, sprinters, all-arounders, Olympic medalists, Tour de France stage winners, world titlists, new pros and peloton veterans.

The 17 men's teams and 15 women's squads in the 13th annual Amgen Tour of California are as diverse as the fields in any pro bike race.

The women and men will be in South Lake Tahoe on Friday.

Read the whole story