

Opinion: Restoring forests to tame wildfires means more water

By Richard Bailey, Fresno Bee

Californians have the ability to greatly reduce the likelihood of wildfire devastation in the Sierra Nevada. Making the forests a safe, healthy resource again may seem impossible, but forest restoration in other states is already producing excellent results. Besides cleaner air, healthy woodlands come with the benefit of higher levels of runoff water available to local farms and cities – exactly what our thirsty state needs.

A hundred years of fire suppression in an effort to protect homes and cities near wooded areas has created dense stands of trees and brush – kindling for the megafires in the Central Sierra for the last decade, causing long-term damage to our forests and watersheds. Restoration in the Central Sierra promises smaller, less-destructive fires, more snowmelt, improved air quality and jobs.

“Restoration” refers to the combined thinning of trees and brush, to produce healthy forests aiming for densities of about 100 years ago. Idaho, Arizona, North Dakota, Hawaii, Wyoming, Kansas and Washington are using such programs, and California appears ready to follow suit.

Read the whole story

Con artists have snowbirds in their sights

By Sid Kirchheimer, AARP Bulletin

Snowbird season kicks off this month, as millions of retirees migrate to warm-temperature states like Florida and Arizona. But while escaping the cold, they also weather more risks—at both locales.

“There’s a definite increase in scams against snowbirds, many by organized outfits that specifically focus on older, seasonal residents,” says Joe Roubicek, who spent 30 years investigating scams as a Fort Lauderdale police detective and investigator for the Florida State Attorney’s Office.

Enlist a “what if” contact. Roubicek suggests making a list of what could possibly go wrong—and whom you would call when it does. “What if you’re in an accident, are robbed at a rest stop or need medication?” he asks.

“The biggest mistake made by snowbirds is not proactively arranging for a back-home contact to help in emergencies.” Share your designee’s contact information with the local police department, plus your doctors, pharmacy and family members. To reduce the chance that you’ll need to call on the person, pack copies of prescriptions, important medical records and financial account numbers (all personal data should be stored in a safe place).

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

- South Tahoe Chamber of Commerce is hosting a forum Oct. 25 from 5:30-7:45pm at the Lake Tahoe Community College's cafeteria for South Lake Tahoe City Council, Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Lake Tahoe Community College and South Tahoe Public Utility District candidates.
 - State Sen. Ted Gaines, R-El Dorado, has earned an A grade for the 10th year in a row on the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association's 2016 Legislative Report Card.
 - Dan Garrison, the Ridge Tahoe's senior vice president-general manager, is retiring in December after 34 years at the resort.
 - Maribeth Gustafson, former Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit forest supervisor, received the Abraham Lincoln Honor Award from secretary of Agriculture for creating a regional leasing strategy that reduces office space and lease costs on hundreds of buildings over a 20-year lease cycle. Gustafson now works for the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado.
 - Elizabeth Stork has been hired to run the human resources department at Barton Health.
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La Niña may make an appearance this winter

By Dianne de Guzman, San Francisco Chronicle

Forecasts are already showing a possibility of La Niña in our future, with the Climate Prediction Center for the National

Weather Service rating our chances at about 70 percent.

The system is predicted to be weak and short-lived, possibly arriving early next month. La Niña is not expected to make it through the winter, and forecasters gave it about a 55 percent chance of it lasting past December.

Read the whole story

Hwy. 89 undercrossings built to save animals

Two undercrossings designed to help reduce animal-vehicle collisions on a busy 25-mile stretch of Highway 89 between Truckee and Sierraville have been built.

The \$2.8 million project is the second in a series of planned mitigation and research efforts by the Highway 89 Stewardship Team. The highway goes through the Tahoe National Forest, which covers more than 1,300 square miles of woodland, valleys and lakes, and is home to many different kinds of wildlife, including the Loyalton-Truckee mule deer herd.

Prior to the construction of the undercrossings, more than 1,000 mule deer died in the last 27 years along Highway 89 in the Loyalton-Truckee area.

According to the Western Transportation Institute, every year in the United States roughly 200 people are killed in as many as 2 million wildlife-vehicle collisions at a cost of more than \$8 billion.

In addition to the undercrossings, crews installed 1.3 miles of fencing along both sides of the highway to guide animals to

safe passage under the highway.

Hotel-apartment project planned for Truckee

Comments are being taken on a proposed 76,500-square-foot, 127-room hotel and five three-story apartment buildings with 138 rental units adjacent to the Truckee Cemetery.

Maryland-based Triumph Development wants to develop the 10 acres at 10470 E. Jibboom St.

The CEQA document for the project has been released. People have until Nov. 14 to comment on the mitigated negative declaration.

The tentative map shows the property being subdivides into two parcels; 2.76 acres for the hotel and 7.57 acres for the residential component.

The apartment buildings would have 33 studios, 54 one-bedroom units, 42 two-bedroom units, nine three-bedroom units, and common amenities such as barbecue and picnic areas, a bocce ball court, a volleyball court, playground, and rooftop decks.

East Jibboom Street is proposed to be extended from the current end of the road south of the Truckee Cemetery, through the project property, to Donner Pass Road. A roundabout is also proposed at the future intersection of Donner Pass Road/Stockrest Springs Road/East Jibboom Street.

More plan details are available [here](#).

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Douglas County going after impaired drivers

Over the next two weeks, expect to see double the normal law enforcement presence as Douglas County sheriff's deputies crack down on impaired driving.

Increasing law enforcement presence during these weeks supports the overall state goal of reaching zero fatalities.

Officials offer these tips:

- Call a taxi.
- Call a sober friend or a family member.
- Call 911 if a drunken driver is seen on the road.
- Take advantage of community sober ride programs, or use public transportation.
- Take the keys or assist in making other arrangements for someone who is about to drive who is impaired.

Legalized pot raises DUI concerns

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

The defendant told an LAPD officer he had smoked pot five hours before he was pulled over on Melrose Avenue for driving erratically. A blood test found a significant level of the chemical THC in his system, and a drug recognition expert

ruled he was too impaired to drive safely.

But a Los Angeles County Superior Court jury deadlocked on whether the young, off-duty valet had committed a crime by driving under the influence of marijuana, which he said he smokes for back pain and anxiety.

Similar outcomes are being seen all over California by law enforcement officials who say an initiative that would legalize recreational use of pot fails to properly address the issue of drugged driving.

Read the whole story

Commission aims to accelerate new casino games

By Thomas Moore, Las Vegas Sun

Getting new casino games in front of gamblers faster is the idea behind a change in regulations being considered by the Nevada Gaming Commission on Thursday.

The commission will meet in Carson City to vote on amendments to regulations that would create a New Innovation Beta process intended to speed up the development of new games by letting game makers quickly test their products in the real world.

At present, game makers use field trials to see if games can technically stand up to real-world use and to see if gamblers find them easy and fun to play. However, games are required to meet all of Nevada's regulatory standards before field trials can begin.

CalFire lifts burn suspension

Effective this week the burn suspension in Amador, El Dorado, Sacramento and Alpine counties has been lifted by CalFire.

Those possessing current and valid agriculture and residential burn permits may resume burning on permissible burn days. Agriculture burns must be inspected by CalFire prior to burning until the end of the peak fire season. Inspections may be required for burns other than agriculture burns.

CalFire burn permits will be required until the end of peak fire season.

Pile burning requirements:

- Only dry, natural vegetative material such as leaves, pine needles and tree trimmings may be burned.
- The burning of trash, painted wood or other debris is not allowed.
- Do not burn on windy days.
- Piles should be no larger than 4 feet in diameter and in height.