

9 projects highlighted for environmental excellence

Nine projects were awarded Best in Basin awards this week from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The program recognizes and showcases projects that demonstrate exceptional planning and implementation and compatibility with Lake Tahoe's environment and communities.

Winners are:

Granlibakken – energy upgrades: Working with Sierra Business Council, Placer County, and the mPOWER program, Granlibakken upgraded its heating and air conditioning systems and kitchen appliances with more energy-efficient units. The project results in an estimated 43 percent reduction in energy use and annual savings up to \$44,000. The resort has also been recognized by the U.S. Department of Energy as one of its Better Buildings Challenge showcase projects.

Bijou Bike Park – South Lake Tahoe: Volunteers with the Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association, and Elite Trax built this highly-popular recreation site. The bike park includes a world class BMX track, two pump tracks, three slopestyle jump lines, and a perimeter of loop trail—all nestled in five acres of forested land in Bijou Community Park, a convenient location in the center of the South Lake Tahoe community.

Central Incline Village Phase II Water Quality Improvement: Washoe County and partners installed infiltration basins, sediment cans, inlets, and infiltration galleries, pervious concrete road shoulders, filters, and monitoring equipment to reduce stormwater pollution in 244 acres of Incline Village.

Sawmill 2B Bike Path and Erosion Control Project: El Dorado County and partners built 1.2 miles of Class 1 bikeway,

completing an important transportation link connecting South Lake Tahoe and Meyers. The bikeway connects neighborhoods, schools, and popular recreation sites. The project included water quality improvement features to reduce erosion and stormwater pollution and also thinned thick forested areas along the bikeway to help reduce wildfire risk.

Middle Rosewood Creek Area A Stream Environment Zone Restoration: Nevada Tahoe Conservation District and its partners restored more than 2,100 feet of stream channel and floodplain to improve water quality, fish passage, and wildlife habitat. This stretch of Middle Rosewood Creek was severely degraded before the project and had the potential to deliver thousands of cubic yards of sediment into Lake Tahoe over the next two decades, making it a high-priority restoration area.

Lower Chipmunk and Outfall Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners completed this project to capture stormwater and reduce sediment loads from Lower Chipmunk Street, Brockway Vista East, and Highway 28 that previously washed into Lake Tahoe.

Incline Creek Restoration, Highway 28 Culvert: Incline Village General Improvement District and its partners relined and upgraded this culvert to prolong its service life and also improve fish passage, stream habitat, and water quality. Before the project, the culvert dropped water more than four feet down on the other side. The project built a series of riffle and pool step sections to gradually raise the stream bed up to the culvert, creating low-flow fish passage for longer periods of migration.

Lake Forest Water Quality Improvement: Placer County and partners improved water quality and erosion control and restored stream environment zones in a 173-acre area around Lake Forest Beach. The project installed filters, drop inlets, sediment cans, and curb and gutter to reduce stormwater

pollution, upgraded compacted dirt road shoulders with pervious concrete that allows for stormwater infiltration and roadside parking at this popular recreation site, and also restored a wet meadow area.

Angora Burn Area Restoration Phase III: Following the Angora Fire in 2007, the U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit took immediate steps to manage the 3,100 acre burn area to address immediate erosion risks. Over the last nine years the Forest Service, working with community and government partners, has reforested 672 acres, restored 44 acres of aspen and meadow, completed 1,400 acres of fuels reduction and forest thinning to reduce wildfire risk, relocated roads and trails out of stream zones and upgraded them with best management practices, installed new wayfinding signage for better recreation access, and restored 2,000 feet of stream channel.

Forecasters: Wet winter a 'crapshoot'

By Ryan Sabalow, Sacramento Bee

Last year at this time, weather forecasters had a pretty good idea of what was in store as California headed into the rainy season. The Pacific Ocean surface was warming, and they were predicting one of the strongest El Niño weather patterns in recorded history.

El Niño ended up making an appearance, but it wasn't the series of gully washers for which some had hoped. This year, the forecast is even less certain.

“It really is a crapshoot,” said Michelle Mead, a meteorologist with the Sacramento office of the National Weather Service. “We don’t know what exactly we’re going to get, and it’s going to be storm-by-storm dependent.”

In other words, there’s nearly as much chance that California experiences average precipitation or even flooding as there is for another dry winter akin to 2015 when Gov. Jerry Brown stood on a patch of bare grass where several feet of Sierra snow should have been and declared a statewide drought emergency.

Read the whole story

Problem people a threat to Tahoe bears

People – bears are unpredictable, wild animals and that may attack you, your children and your pets if they feel threatened.

That’s the message being delivered by wildlife authorities, especially on the South Shore. Human interactions with bears at the Taylor Creek Visitor Center during the kokanee salmon spawn have become a public safety concern.

If a bear becomes aggressive, even if the reason is because a human provoked it, that bear is likely to be killed.

According to the U.S. Forests Service, visitor center staff routinely encounter unsafe situations when guest ignore posted instructions and get close to bears to take photos and videos. Their advise – stay away from bears, as they are dangerous

animals.

If visitors continue to disregard directions to stay away from bears at Taylor Creek, the Forest Service may close the area for public safety.

Snow expected to reach lake level Sunday

The first snow of the season at lake level may arrive on Sunday.

Clouds will be moving in on Oct. 2, with moisture coming later. According to the National Weather Service in Reno there is a 50 percent chance of rain and snow showers after 11am.

The overnight low Sunday is expected to be 25 degrees in South Lake Tahoe. The high that day is forecasted to be 46 degrees.

The moisture is expected to continue until late morning Monday.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Stateline casinos outperform state in August

By Associated Press

State officials say Nevada gambling revenue was down 5 percent in August after Las Vegas Strip revenues took a sizable dip.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board said Thursday that the state's casinos won just \$861 million in August.

Stateline revenue rose 27 percent to \$24 million in August.

Revenue on the Las Vegas Strip fell 15 percent year-over-year, to \$450 million. Downtown Las Vegas winnings notched up 7 percent to \$43 million.

Reno casino revenue stayed virtually flat at \$51 million.

The state collected \$48 million in tax money based off the August winnings, which is down 8 percent from the same time last year.

Troubled HR director leaving El Dorado County

By Kathryn Reed

Two key positions in El Dorado County are going to be vacant in October.

Pamela Knorr, human resources director, and Steve Pedretti, director of Development Services, are leaving. It's up to the Board of Supervisors to hire for these positions. Even so, it will be staff in the chief administrative office that handles the bulk of the recruiting.



Pamela Knorr

Knorr, who has been **controversial** almost since she started with this county, is going to Butte County. In 2015, the **grand jury** came out with a scathing report about Knorr's department. Her last day is Oct. 11.

Pedretti has been hired by Placer County. His last day is Oct. 31.

For the Butte job, Knorr used the last name of Heselton. While she has been married for a few years, this is not a name she has used in recent jobs or in El Dorado County. The three-year Butte contract comes with a salary of \$158,512, and a guaranteed 2 percent increase effective Feb. 11.

Knorr was recently the interim chief administrative officer for El Dorado County. She is the one who brought in Larry Combs as the next interim. He helped to further run the county into an economic quagmire by failing to address issues regarding the budget. Combs has since been replaced by Don Ashton.

The Board of Supervisors, though, also let the Knorr-Combs combo operate despite numerous articles pointing out their deficiencies.

Knorr is still involved in a lawsuit from her days as CAO of Alpine County. A settlement could not be reached this summer. The trial is expected to start at the end of the year.

Robert Levy, former undersheriff of Alpine County, in a 19-page lawsuit alleges Knorr along with three supervisors at the

time and a private citizen violated his civil rights, conspired to do so, discriminated against him based on age, failed to prevent discrimination and retaliation, violated the Public Safety Officers' Procedural Bill of Rights Act, and defamed him.

STR to offer interest free bear box loans

By Kathryn Reed

Homeowners in South Tahoe Refuse's service area at Lake Tahoe are expected to soon have the opportunity to take out an interest free loan for bear boxes.

The South Lake Tahoe Waste Management Authority board this month approved the concept. Actual language for the program is expected to be solidified at the board's November meeting.

The JPA will front \$70,000 for the program that will be administered by the garbage company. Homeowners – whether they live in Tahoe full time or not – will be eligible to apply for a loan up to \$1,200. It must be paid back in five years.

There was some discussion whether the program should be open to second homeowners.

"The point is to eliminate bears getting into garbage. Anything this agency can do to further that on the South Shore is being proactive," Nancy McDermid said. She is Douglas County's rep to the JPA. (El Dorado County and South Lake Tahoe are the other partners in the JPA.)

The South Shore ordinance is in large part following what

Tahoe Truckee Sanitation District is doing in Placer County.

"If the homeowner doesn't make a payment even though it is interest free, then there is 10 percent interest and a late fee," explained Tom Bruen, attorney for the JPA. "It's not a smart thing for the homeowner to skip out on the fee."

It would also be possible to put a lien against the house so the refuse company could recoup its costs at the time of sale.

Homeowners who are currently delinquent with trash bills would not be eligible for the program.

There will be a non-refundable \$50 application fee. If a homeowner goes forward with the bear box loan, that \$50 will be applied to the \$150 administrative fee. That \$150 pays for STR to process the paperwork, have a site visit and work with the contractor as to where the box will go. Of that, \$100 can be rolled into the overall loan.

It will be possible for people to order less or more expensive boxes, but the loan will not exceed \$1,200.

STR at the meeting asked for the stipulation that boxes not be farther than 10 feet from the street. This has to do with crews having to carry the cans to the truck. The farther away the cans are the greater chance for injury.

Another regulation STR wants to ensure is that the cans in the boxes are 32 gallons.

The exception to this rule will be in the Tahoe Keys. The homeowners' association has architectural guidelines for residents stating bear boxes are not allowed. Those rules are being rewritten with input from STR and the city of South Lake Tahoe. Proposals include having the boxes closer to the house and larger totes – 64 gallons. This route would be accessed by a special truck.

A sticking point on finalizing the Tahoe Keys pilot program is

the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Coverage is a bugaboo for the bi-state regulatory agency.

STR officials at the meeting pointed out that as more bear boxes are installed it will take longer to service the routes. This is because there is no way for crews to know if the box has garbage in it so they have to check each one.

When *Lake Tahoe News* asked STR President Jeff Tillman if a flag like what is used on mailboxes could be employed on bear boxes he said no because opponents to this idea have safety concerns. They believe an indicator saying there is no trash is the equivalent to telling would-be burglars there is no one home.

Opinion: Measure P makes recreation possible

By Rich Bodine

On Nov. 8, local voters will have the opportunity to vote on Measure P to expand recreation in South Lake Tahoe without increasing taxes paid by residents and businesses. We encourage a yes vote.

Our stunning natural environment and vibrant community make South Lake Tahoe a wonderful place to live, visit and do business. At its core, our community values the freedom to enjoy the ample recreation opportunities that our city has to offer. Measure P enhances and improves recreation for all residents. Voting yes on P will help protect our quality of life and property values, and will also boost our economy.

Measure P approves a modest 2 percent increase in the hotel tax paid by visitors to South Lake Tahoe. By law, funds from this measure may only be used for recreation in South Lake Tahoe, and priority will be given to the construction of a new recreation and swim complex on Rufus Allen Boulevard. Measure P does not increase taxes paid by residents and businesses by one penny.

Our current recreation facilities are over 40 years old and are in dire need of expensive repairs. Without increasing our taxes, Measure P will replace our aging facilities with a new, year-round recreation and swim complex for use by residents and visitors. This new complex will have space for after school and vacation youth programs to be offered by the Boys & Girls Club and the Parks and Recreation Department to all residents. The competitive sports facilities within the new recreation center will be equipped to host tournaments and attract visitors to stimulate our local economy all year long. This low-cost event space can be used for celebrations and gatherings, and will provide affordable exercise facilities to our community.

Measure P also requires strict fiscal accountability. No funds can be taken by the state or used for other purposes, and annual audits will ensure funds are used as promised.

We encourage a yes vote on Measure P because we value the opportunity to expand recreation in South Lake Tahoe, protect our quality life and property values and boost our economy. When a yes vote can do all of this without increasing taxes at all for local residents and businesses, the clear choice is to offer our full support.

In addition to being supported by the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association, Measure P is also supported by city of South Lake Tahoe Mayor Wendy David, Boys & Girls Club President Terri Arnold, and 40-Year resident and active recreation center user Valerie Rudd.

By mail or on Nov. 8, join us in voting YES on Measure P.

Rich Bodine is president of the South Lake Tahoe Lodging Association.

SLT woman's stolen credit card used in Carson Valley



Douglas County deputies are searching for this woman.

Douglas County sheriff's investigators are looking for a woman who used a credit card in Gardnerville that had been stolen in South Lake Tahoe.

The victim lost her credit card Sept. 13 in the parking lot of a 7-Eleven in South Lake Tahoe. The bank could not locate her account information and was unable to close the account, according to deputies. The next morning the victim discovered that there was a \$481.12 purchase on her account made at the Wal-Mart on Grant Avenue in Gardnerville..

The female suspect is described as Caucasian, in her 20s, wearing a hooded top and black baseball cap. She was

accompanied by a male in his 20s wearing dark clothing.

A reward is being offered to anyone with information leading to the arrest and/or conviction of the suspect(s). Anyone with information is urged to call DCSO dispatch at 775.782.5126 or Douglas County Secret Witness at 775.782.7463.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*

Remote chance of cyberattacks affecting election

By Sandra Chereb, Las Vegas Review-Journal

CARSON CITY –The nation’s secretaries of state are trying to reassure voters that despite talk of cyberattacks and “rigged” systems in this contentious election cycle, the prospect of outside hackers skewing the outcome is remote.

In a letter to Congress from the National Association of Secretaries of States delivered Monday, top election officials said they are working with national security agencies “to address any attempts by nation-state adversaries to disrupt the presidential election and call its integrity into question.”

The association downplayed any suggestion that hacking could manipulate the election tally.

[Read the whole story](#)