

USFS seeks input from users of forest lands

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is conducting recreation visitor surveys throughout the summer and into the fall.

The information will be used for forest and local community tourism planning. The goal is to provide the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest recreation staff with an estimate of how many people actually visit the forest and what activities they engage in. The survey results will also show levels of visitor satisfaction and the impact forest visitors have on the local economy.

Questions include: where people recreated on the forest, how many people they traveled with, how long they were on the forest, what other recreation sites they visited, and how satisfied they were with the facilities and services provided. About a third of the visitors will be asked to complete an additional survey on recreation spending during their trip.

The interview lasts about 8 to 12 minutes.

Traffic counters on roads are collecting information about how many vehicles access different parts of the forest for recreational activities.

Immigration court ruling could affect Nevada

By Alexander S. Corey, Las Vegas Review-Journal

The U.S. Supreme Court could soon rule in a case involving the legality of President Barack Obama's 2014 immigration plan to protect millions of undocumented immigrants from deportation.

The decision could affect thousands of people in Nevada, where 8 percent of the population is undocumented –the highest percentage in the country – according to Pew Research Center.

Francisca Sanchez, 41, knows firsthand how the program could benefit her family. At a park near her home, with her daughter in tow, Sanchez described the day a few years ago when her husband left for work, but didn't come home for nearly a month after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained him.

Read the whole story

Enviro docs study Placer County redevelopment

Public comments on the draft environmental impact report/environmental impact statement for the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan and Tahoe City Lodge will be taken until Aug. 15.

The county's goal is to spur sustainable redevelopment in Kings Beach and Tahoe City. The environmental document analyzes impacts of the Tahoe Area Plan and the Tahoe City

Lodge project.

“The environmental analysis for the Tahoe Area Plan is at a programmatic level – reflecting its influence on a variety of projects over a long timeframe – and includes analysis of a design concept for redevelopment of the Placer County-owned Kings Beach Center. The environmental analysis for the Tahoe City Lodge is at a project level, meaning it separately addresses the impacts of a fully discrete project,” county officials said in a press release.

The proposed Tahoe City Lodge project is a private project that would redevelop an existing commercial complex into a 118-unit lodge and would also redevelop the Tahoe City Golf Course clubhouse facility.

There will be public hearings about the draft EIR-EIS on:

- July 13, 9:30am: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Advisory Planning Commission, 128 Market St., Stateline.
- July 27, 9:30am: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Regional Plan Implementation Committee, North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- July 27, 9:30am: Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board, North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- July 28, 10am: Placer County Planning Commission, North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.
- Aug. 11, 6pm: Placer County North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council, North Lake Tahoe Event Center, 8318 North Lake Blvd., Kings Beach.

The draft EIR/EIS is available **online**.

Tests show target shooting can start fires

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

If you're wondering about the relationship between target shooting and wildfire risk you don't have to rely on speculation or anecdotal reports.

The U.S. Forest Service has a thorough scientific study of the question that seemingly provides an answer.

And the answer is, yes, firing bullets into dry vegetation can result in ignition.

Read the whole story

TOCCATA selects arrangement for music fest

Building on its June Go4Baroque Summer MusicFest kickoff series, TOCCATA will continue its 21-concert Summer MusicFest with TOCCATA BOPS, featuring best of Broadway, opera hits, pops and patriotic selections.

The first concert is July 3, 7pm on the Village Green in Incline Village as part of Red, White and Tahoe Blue, and opens with a patriotic medley for orchestra and chorus and Chaminades Concertino for Flute and Orchestra performed by principal flute from the Puerto Rico Symphony, Josue Casillas. Brad Perry and Emzy Burroughs will sing of everlasting friendship in Bizet's duet from his opera the Pearlfishers.

Sopranos Joy Strotz and Becky Earl and mezzo soprano Liudmila Mullin delight the audience with operatic arias and popular songs.

The concert continues with hits for the SummerFest chorus: "Amazing Grace", "Going Home" theme from Dvorak's 9th Symphony, and "Alleluia-Regina Coeli" from Mascagnis Cavalleria Rusticana. The concert concludes with Sousa's "Stars and Stripes", a new Matt Mullin arrangement of "God Bless America", and an audience singalong of "America the Beautiful" featuring the newly formed North Lake Tahoe Children's Chorus.

Other concerts in the series will be presented on July 5, 7pm at Bartley Ranch Amphitheater (6000 Bartley Ranch Road, Reno), as part of Artown, and July 8, 7pm, at St. Theresa Catholic Church in South Lake Tahoe (1041 Lyons Ave). The final presentation will be July 10, 4pm at Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Carson City (3596 N. Sunridge Drive). Maestro James Rawie will conduct all performances.

The Red, White and Tahoe Blue concert will be free of admission charge. The Bartley Ranch Artown concert, which is supported by grants from John and Diane McCall and the Robert Z. Hawkins Foundation, offers free admission for all lawn areas and upper gallery seating, with lower gallery preferred seating at \$40.

Other concerts have tickets available at the door or **online**. General admission is \$30 adults and \$25 for seniors. Youth/students under age 24 are \$5 and those under 18 enter free. Preferred seating is \$40 and \$15 for youth/students.

League to host native garden party

The League to Save Lake Tahoe's 4th annual Summer Kickoff – Native Garden Celebration is June 24 from 5-8pm.

It's an opportunity to learn about native landscapes, tour the Leagues' native garden and learn more about the League.

Bring your friends and family while we get together to recognize our dedicated volunteers and enjoy

There will be live music, food and beverages. Those who ride a bike will get a prize. The League is at 2608 Lake Tahoe Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Garden party attire is encouraged.

For questions, email events@keeptahoeblue.org otherwise **RSVP**.

Sierra streams take dangerous turn

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

Charles Williams' hike went from sunny to scary in an instant.

He had been hiking all day on the Pacific Crest Trail when he reached the south fork of the Kings River near Mather Pass, south of Bishop.

Williams, 46, of Quincy is an avid hiker with high-altitude experience and while the stream looked daunting he thought finding the right location would allow him to cross without incident.

So he hiked along the river until he found a spot where two islands divided the stream into smaller channels and started to cross.

Then, almost as quickly as he got swept away, the river spit him out of the current and close to some overhanging brush.

Read the whole story

Beach party, fireworks coming to Kings Beach

Kings Beach will start the Independence Day holiday on July 3. Festivities take place from 4-10pm at the North Tahoe Event Center.

North Tahoe Business Association hosts the Beach Party as a Kings Beach Fireworks fundraiser. The event is open to all ages and features preferred fireworks seating, food vendors, a beer/wine and mixed drink garden, free watermelon eating and sand castle building contests, music, and glow toys. The event is capped off by the fireworks display at 9:30pm.

Entrance into the Beach Party is free.

Preferred fireworks seating is available for \$15/person. Ticket holders may secure their seats starting at 4pm and will also have access to indoor restrooms at the North Tahoe Event Center. There are a limited number of tickets available. All

Beach Party proceeds support the Kings Beach fireworks.

Fireworks cost approximately \$1,000 per minute.

For more information, a schedule of events, or to volunteer, call 530.546.9000.

USFS makes plans to upgrade Taylor, Tallac creek areas

The U.S. Forest Service is proposing to restore Taylor and Tallac creek ecosystems, and maintain and improve visitor services.

Comments are being taken on the environmental assessment until July 17.

Taylor and Tallac channels were historically connected through a series of four swales, which formed a large wetland complex. The Forest Service proposes to restore this connection by removing culverts that are impeding water flow, replacing them with crossing structures, and recontouring and revegetating swales. The project would include stream restoration in Taylor and Tallac creeks, renovating the fish ladder at the Fallen Leaf Lake Dam, and removing portions of the Lucky Baldwin Dam to restore connectivity to Fallen Leaf Lake.

The project proposes to improve wildlife habitat by eradicating or controlling aquatic invasive species, protecting Tahoe yellow cress through physical barriers, installing nest and perch structures for waterfowl and sensitive raptors, and installing bat boxes.

At Baldwin Beach, the Forest Service proposes to construct a multi-use path from Highway 89 to the east and west parking lots, construct pedestrian pathways, formalize and upgrade the picnic area, provide foot-washing stations at restrooms and install best management practices throughout the site.

Restoration efforts at Taylor Creek Visitor Center would include upgrading the stream profile chamber to meet contemporary building codes and reconfiguring the Rainbow Trail to reduce impacts to the stream environment zone, such as raising sections of trail or replacing them with boardwalks.

More info is available **online**.

Search crews may add drones to tool box



Wildland Fire crews with Drone America's DAX8 in Lake Tahoe.

By Jessie Marchesseau

If you happen to get lost in the wilderness and need to call search and rescue sometime in the future, it's possible you may spot a drone overhead looking for you.

As unmanned aerial systems, also known as drones, become more commonplace, the various uses for them are quickly multiplying. From monitoring wildlife populations to taking photos of available real estate, there seems to be no shortage of uses for these lightweight flying devices.

Even in an industry such as search and rescue which relies mainly on manpower to complete its missions, UAS may be able provide useful insights, adding another layer to rescue efforts.

In fact, in July 2015, El Dorado County SAR was able to use a National Guard drone for the first time in a search and rescue mission. The search was for a missing motorcyclist in the northern part of El Dorado County. Deputy Greg Almos, assigned officer to emergency services and search and rescue for El Dorado County, said that while the drone did not locate the subject, it did give them clues regarding where to look.

"In every search and rescue, the use of human beings, equipment or technology is really just a clue-finder that leads to finding an individual," he told *Lake Tahoe News*.

That search proved to be a unique situation where the UAS was available and there was an urgent need in the particular situation. The opportunity to use a drone for aiding a search in El Dorado County has not come up since. Almos said it would not be ideal for all situations, but he could see a UAS being useful for future searches in areas such as Horsetail Falls and Eagle Falls, both popular hiking areas in the summer months.



Photo by Kevin Clifford/Drone America

Drone America and their Phoebe Mk.III at UNR.

Photo/Kevin Clifford/Drone America

Carol Caman, a rescue member of the Douglas County Search and Rescue, recalled one rescue effort in particular where she believes a drone would have been helpful. When an aircraft went down in Lyon County a few years ago, it took SAR volunteers and helicopters three days to locate the wreckage, partly due to a winter storm moving through. A drone, she said, would have been able to fly lower and slower than the helicopters and do it in the storm with less danger to humans, possibly locating the downed plane much sooner.

In April, Caman attended the first annual UAS Search and Rescue Symposium in Reno hosted by the UNR's Nevada Advanced Autonomous Systems Innovation Center.

Warren Rapp, business development director for NAASIC, said they decided to put on the symposium because the center is constantly being contacted by search and rescue organizations with questions about UAS.

The symposium was free to SAR volunteers and covered a number of topics including FAA regulations.

The FAA has allowed limited use of UAS for public missions such as firefighting, disaster relief and search and rescue since 1990. Recently, drones were used during the Texas and Louisiana floods to locate stranded individuals and to distribute essential supplies such as water to those people.

Rapp suggested that such delivery of supplies is another way drones could aid search and rescue operations. The larger fixed-wing drones would be able to carry much-needed first aid kits, small heaters or water to someone in the wilderness quicker than a team could reach them on foot, in some cases alleviating the need for a rescue party altogether.

However, he and Caman stressed that UAS would not in any way replace the humans of search and rescue operations. Rather, they would act as another tool to help people in need.

“It will save you man hours,” Rapp told *Lake Tahoe News*. “If your crew is only seven and you have a thousand acres to search, a drone may help you funnel people to a certain area with clues.”

Caman compared it to another recent technological advancement: cell phone forensics. Lost or stranded individuals can now often be located via the GPS in their cell phones. This technology has only been available to SAR teams for a few years, but has become an integral part of their search operations. Many subjects are now located very quickly thanks to this technology.

“I think it’s a good idea to get the best tools you can to help people out,” Caman told *LTN*.

The Douglas County SAR is currently discussing the possibility of getting a UAS or acquiring one in conjunction with another nearby SAR, however they are still in the early stages of the

process. There are a lot of questions to answer and hurdles to overcome in order to make that happen, Caman said.

One is financing. Drones cost anywhere from a couple hundred dollars to more than a hundred thousand depending on type and what it needs to be equipped with.

This raises the question, which kind is right for the varied terrain of Douglas County? Some have infrared cameras, heat-sensing cameras, or high-def cameras. There are quad-copters and fixed wing. Some are good for flying in tight areas like along cliffs and down ravines. Other fly best low and flat. Once a style and price is in sight, they must decide if the cost is worth the benefit gained from it.

There is also the question of manpower to use it, necessary training, and the issue of FAA rules for UAS being currently up in the air.

While no one interviewed reported having experienced resistance to the use of drones within the search and rescue community, they do still see a lot of unknowns. El Dorado County SAR has discussed the prospect of acquiring a drone, but is not moving forward with anything at the moment, choosing to wait until some of these questions are answered. And though Douglas County is moving forward with their discussions, they are doing so slowly.

"We want to make sure we buy the right equipment for here in Douglas County and that we incorporate it into our team rather than make it the focus of our team," Caman said.

So while you may not see a fleet of search and rescue drones buzzing around Lake Tahoe in the very near future, it is on the horizon.