Fecal matter detected in water near Fresh Ketch



Sewage last weekend went from the Fresh Ketch into Lake Tahoe. Photo/Provided

By Kathryn Reed

Elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria were found in the water where sewage flowed from the Fresh Ketch restaurant into Lake Tahoe for at least a 24-hour period that ended Saturday night.

Lahontan Regional Water Control Board today released results from water samples taken May 5. The highest measurement was 54 colony forming units (cfu) per 100 milliliters.

Lahontan's standards are 20 cfu per 100 ml and not more than 10 percent of all samples collected in a 30-day period to exceed 40 cfu/100 ml.

Sampling done in July at the marina showed fecal coliform bacteria levels below 20 cfu/100 ml.

Here are the May 5 results from testing at Tahoe Keys Marina	
Site	**Colonies/100 ml**

6 feet lake-ward of discharge point	29
6 feet lake-ward of discharge point – duplicate	19
6 feet lake-ward of discharge point – average	24
10 feet north of discharge point	22
40 feet north of discharge point	13
100 feet north of discharge point	12
350 feet north of discharge point	54
Lahontan Laboratory Technician: Lisa M. Petrusa	

More testing will be done this afternoon.

The risk of someone becoming ill is slightly elevated, according to Lauri Kemper with Lahontan.

She told *Lake Tahoe News* if people fishing or kayaking in the area get water on themselves that soap and fresh water is enough to wash away any contaminants.

The spill started May 2 when an overflow box behind the South Lake Tahoe restaurant failed. Sewage covered a back walkway near where the outdoor dining has expanded and then made its way into Lake Tahoe.

An employee at Tahoe Keys Marina said General Manager Robert Spinnato would never speak to *Lake Tahoe News*.

However, just moments after that a marina employee posted this comment on the two previous *LTN* stories regarding the spill, “The spillage was factual [stet] sabotage from a former Key [stet] Marina tenant who has just recently been evicted.

Because of his eviction he purposefully stuffed plastic bags down the drain, forcing the pipes to malfunction."

The truth of that statement is likely to come out later as the agencies continue their investigation. No matter what, the marina and restaurant, which are owned by the same people, allowed the sewage to spill into Lake Tahoe for at least 24 hours.

"We are trying to ascertain all the facts and are working with environmental health on corrective action," Kemper told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Besides Lahontan and El Dorado County Environmental Health Department, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency has also been involved.

"TRPA would want to see that some precautions are taken to avoid an incident like this in the future. In the case of the Tahoe Keys Marina, there is discussion of possibly a lock being added to the pipe," Jeff Cowen, spokesman for the bi-state regulatory agency, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

TRPA violation processes and fines are generally only used when it is the lead agency on a discharge or other matter.

Climate change assessment paints stark picture of

potential damage



Barren ground at last week's snow survey near Echo Summit. Photo/LTN

By Neela Banerjee and Kathleen Hennessey, Los Angeles Times

The warming of Earth, with human consumption of fossil fuels as the main cause, will have severe consequences for every region of the United States, according to the Third National Climate Assessment released Tuesday morning by the Obama administration.

Mandated by Congress and published every four years, the report is a science-based resource that is meant to inform public policy and private sector decisions.

The report concludes that extreme weather events influenced by climate change have grown more frequent and intense, including heat waves, drought and severe precipitation. "These and other aspects of climate change are disrupting people's lives and damaging some sectors of our economy," the report said.

Most Americans believe that climate change is happening or will happen in their lifetimes, according to a March Gallup poll. But only one in three sees it as "serious threat" to their way of life, the poll reported.

Read the whole story

Letter: Time to give where you live

To the community,

Today is the National Day of Giving. For 24 hours, people are asked to support nonprofit organizations that work to make their community a better place; Give Where You Live is El Dorado County's version.

You know that I believe art can change lives, and I'm writing to ask that you consider donating to the El Dorado Arts Council (EDAC). Newly elected to the board and at the moment its only South Lake Tahoe representative, I see firsthand the effect that this organization has had in our county through programming and grants for children, artists, writers, and other creative disciplines.

In addition, EDAC operates a dedicated ArtSpace in Placerville, which has been very supportive of Bona Fide Books and many South Lake Tahoe artists. EDAC has also funded local organizations like the Tahoe Tallac Association, the Tahoe Art League, and the Tahoe Arts Project, and I'd like to see it able to do more.

If you'd like to support EDACs mission as a catalyst and arts incubator for all of El Dorado County – you can find out more about EDAC at the link – please donate here.

Thank you!

Kim Wyatt, publisher Bona Fide Books

LTN publisher's note: ***Several South Shore nonprofits beyond the ones mentioned here are participating in Give Where You***

Live, such as Bread & Broth, CalStar and Live Violence Free.

Snapshot Day to test Tahoe's water quality

The 14th annual Snapshot Day is May 17 from 9am-noon.

Snapshot Day is a citizen-based environmental effort designed to take a "snapshot" at one moment in time of the water quality throughout the Lake Tahoe and Truckee River watershed. The goal is to stimulate citizen interest and participation in local water quality issues.

The information gathered by volunteers is compiled into long-term data sets on water quality conditions within the watershed. It is also intended to provide baseline data that potentially could be used in ongoing and future environmental projects, and to stimulate a large-scale collaborative educational effort.

Meet at Lake Tahoe Community College in South Lake Tahoe.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



• Barton Auxiliary is hosting a blood drive June 2 from noon-6pm at Lake Tahoe Resort Hotel in South Lake Tahoe.

• Kyle Mohagen will be the next principal of Kings Beach Elementary School.

• Tahoe Truckee Unified School District Superintendent Rob Leri received the public servant of the year award at the North Lake Tahoe 60th annual Community Awards Dinner.

• Tahoe Donner's 18-hole championship golf course will be open to the public seven days a week for the season starting May 16.

• Championship Course and the Mountain Course at Incline Village are set to open May 9. This will be the earliest for the Mountain Course to open and the first time both courses have opened on the same day.

Douglas County classified staff to receive 3% raise; teachers going to arbitration

By Kathryn Reed

Contracts with seven of the eight bargaining units within Douglas County School District should be complete after

today’s special meeting.

The board is meeting at 4:30pm May 6 in Minden to approve a two-year contract with the Douglas County Support Staff Organization. It calls for a 3 percent raise retroactive to July 1. Salaries would remain at that level for the 2014-15 school year.

Completed contracts:

- Bus drivers – 2½ percent raise.
- Classified supervisors – 2½ percent raise.
- Cabinet level administrators – 2½ percent raise.
- Confidential secretaries – 7 percent raise.
- Superintendent – did not seek raise.
- Administrators at the site level – five-year contract that goes through 2016. No salary increase. Four more paid days were added to the contract. Pay could be increased based on performance, which is mandated by the Legislature.

The teachers are the last to settle. And that may not happen until the start of next school year because an arbitrator will settle the dispute between teachers and the district. Arbitration is set for June 16, 17, 18, 23 and 24. It could be a month after that before a decision is made.

Salary is the main sticking point. But it has not been made public how far apart the two sides are.

The district offered fact finding where an independent third party would go over numbers and help resolve the dispute. The district also proposed mediation. The Douglas County Professional Education Association chose to go straight to arbitration from impasse.

Brian Rippet, president of DCPEA, did not respond to

questions.

Teachers have not had a raise for more than four years. However, those who have qualified still receive their step and ladder increases. These are automatic bumps in pay based on years of service and education levels.

Superintendent Lisa Noonan told *Lake Tahoe News* she is not allowed to talk specifics about the negotiations.

She said Assistant Superintendent Rich Alexander, CFO Holly Luna and often a principal are the district's representatives at the bargaining table.

In other news:

• The district is not issuing any pink slips this year; mostly because enrollment is stable. There is expected to be at least one teacher retirement at the lake.

• *U.S. News & World Report* ranked Whittell High School as No. 810 for best high school in the U.S. , and No. 2 in the state.

• Noonan does not anticipate additional personnel resources being brought in at Whittell, despite the seventh- and eighth-grade test scores being lackluster and the principal's request for more help. She questions whether the four-day school day is appropriate for this age group.

• The board is having another special meeting May 9 at 3pm at Carson Valley Middle School regarding the strategic plan.

Opinion: Safety tips to prevent dog bites

By Henry Brzezinski

With warmer weather and increased outdoor activities throughout the county, El Dorado County Animal Services is sharing safety tips with the public to prevent dog bites.

Between 300 and 400 dog bites typically occur in El Dorado County each year; most of these are avoidable.

It is critically important for members of the community to keep their dogs confined to their own property or on a leash when off property. Dogs running loose, particularly those acting aggressively, and all dog bites should be promptly reported to Animal Services. Animal Services strictly enforces county, Placerville and South Lake Tahoe leash laws.

If anyone is concerned about stray dogs or dog bites, they should contact our office. Life threatening animal emergencies should be reported immediately by calling 911 or Animal Services.

We are fortunate to live in a beautiful rural county and dog owners often mistakenly believe it is acceptable to let their dogs run at large or that their dog won’t cause a problem. But this creates a danger to the dog and other residents. Furthermore, the owner of the dog can be held financially liable if the dog injures someone. The county also has ordinances related to potentially dangerous and vicious dogs, with both costly civil consequences and/or severe criminal penalties.

Dogs can be unpredictable and even family pets that have never acted aggressively can bite. Children, particularly small children, are common victims and they can be seriously injured

if the dog bites (causing severe injury, muscle tears, disfiguring lacerations and ultimately corrective surgery), so parents need to educate them about proper behavior around dogs.

To keep everyone safe, Animal Services recommends the following tips:

- If you have a dog, keep it properly confined on your property.
- When walking your dog, keep it on leash. Do not allow your dog off-leash at any time in public places, including sidewalks, trails, parks, beaches and other locations except for designated off-leash areas.
- Instruct young children to never approach dogs without adult supervision and the adult asking about the dog's behavior.
- Never attempt to touch a dog that is eating or in the possession of a bone or a treat.
- Use caution with dogs with puppies.
- Instruct young children not to scream or run near dogs.
- Do not tease or taunt a dog. Never pull an animal's tail or fur.
- Keep your face away from the dog's face when approaching or playing with them.
- Ask the owner's permission first before approaching and petting a dog.
- When walking, consider calmly crossing the street rather than passing a dog, even when the dog is on-leash with its owner.
- If a dog threatens you, try to remain calm and back away slowly. Avoid eye contact with an aggressive dog.
- If a dog tries to bite you, put a barrier (a board, purse or whatever is available) between you and the dog and back away slowly and call for help.
- Be sure to maintain your dog's current license and rabies vaccination, in case your dog gets lost or bites

someone.
- Do not tether your dog; it promotes aggression and is illegal if done improperly.
- Spay or neuter your dog. Eight-five percent of dog bites are by un-neutered males.

For more dog bite prevention tips, or to report a lost, loose or aggressive dog, contact Animal Services at 530. 621.5795 on the West Slope of El Dorado County or at 530.573.7925 in South Lake Tahoe.

Henry Brzezinski is El Dorado County Animal Services chief.

Sanctuary being sought for 'Heavenly' the bear

The bear that was caught at Heavenly Mountain Resort earlier this year is back at Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.

The bear had been released into the wild, but was too acclimated to people.

He was caught in Nevada and returned to LTWC where he will be "taken care of until we can find a good permanent-care sanctuary who will give him a forever home," according to the Bear League.

The goal now is to find a sanctuary for the bear dubbed Heavenly.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

U.S. exporting water to Asia via crops

By Christi Turner, High Country News

Severe drought plagues California, the Colorado River is perilously low, and yet billions of gallons of water are being "virtually exported" via one of the West's thirstiest crops: alfalfa.

Robert Glennon, author of "Unquenchable: America's Water Crisis and What to Do About It", estimates about 50 billion gallons of Western water – enough to supply 500,000 families annually – were sent to China via alfalfa in 2012. China isn't the world's biggest hay buyer – land-poor Japan leads, followed by the United Arab Emirates – but its hunger is rapidly growing.

Water also leaves in the form of food exports such as rice, wheat or almonds, but alfalfa stands out as a low-value forage crop, Glennon says. China's consumption of milk and meat is skyrocketing, and it can't feed 42 million cattle on its own.

Read the whole story

Chimney fire quickly

extinguished

A chimney fire on Highlands Drive on the South Shore was quickly doused by Lake Valley firefighters on Monday afternoon.

The call came in at 4:19pm from a person driving by who saw smoke.

One person was at home. There were no injuries.

An ember landed on the shake roof and did some damage to the roof, but the house is habitable.

A Lake Valley firefighter told *Lake Tahoe News* there was no spark arrester on the chimney and that the roof will likely need to be replaced.

Several units responded to the May 5 fire to ward off the potential spread of the fire. Firefighters are on heightened alert – especially on such a windy day.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report