Opinion: Knowing when burn conditions are ideal

To the community,

A couple things to note here, and I want to make sure I address them since operations in Angora will be ongoing.



First, we completely understand that people get nervous when they see us conducting prescribed fire operations when it's windy. When we get the right mix of conditions, like last week, wind is good for two reasons: it helps to disperse smoke and it also helps the piles burn more completely. We also had significant precipitation on the way, which we knew would help extinguish the piles.

Besides getting rid of the piles, another goal of the prescribed fire operations in the Angora area is to reduce the brush that has regrown since the fire and allow native seedlings to grow. Conditions that allow fire to move between piles within the unit boundaries help to accomplish that.

Finally, before we begin prescribed fire operations, our protocols require us to make sure that sufficient resources are available to address contingencies. Unlike when a wildfire starts in windy conditions, our crews are already in place and monitoring the operation during a prescribed fire, rather than responding after the fact.

Cheva Heck, USFS LTBMU spokeswoman

More cooperation needed from lakes infested with invasive mussels

By Betsy Z. Russell, Spokesman-Review

BOISE – Tens of thousands of boat inspections later, Idaho and Washington have come through another boating season without getting invasive quagga or zebra mussels established in either state's waters – but there were plenty of close calls.

Idaho intercepted 24 mussel-contaminated boats entering the state, and Washington decontaminated 20. Most were coming from the heavily infested Great Lakes region; the rest came from federal waters in Arizona and Nevada.

That has officials in Washington and Idaho concerned.

"Mussel-fouled boats continue to leave infested waters without proper decontamination," Idaho Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould said. "The federal government needs to do a better job of containing infestations in their waters and preventing the spread of these species to the Pacific Northwest states."

Lake Mead, Lake Havasu and other federal waters in the lower Colorado River system are contaminated with the tiny, invasive mussels that multiply so quickly they can encrust and ruin beaches, pipes, equipment and more.

Washington, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming and Montana all have sent letters in the past three years to the National Park Service, which runs the Lake Mead National Recreation Area, appealing for help.

The park service at Lake Mead is now sending notifications to invasive species programs when there are boats bound for their

states. Idaho invasive species coordinator Amy Ferriter, however, said, “We inspected 65 boats from Lake Mead this season, and we only got a handful of notifications. So we’re still working on it, but we could definitely use some help from down south.”

Read the whole story

Turkey bingo at South Tahoe Rec Center

Win your holiday turkey at Kiwanis Club of Lake Tahoe’s Turkey Bingo on Nov. 12 from 3:30-5:30pm.

This event for kids of all ages is at the South Lake Tahoe Recreation Center on Rufus Allen Boulevard.

Admission is free and bingo cards are 25 cents per card per game. More than 20 turkeys will be given away along with pies as second prizes.

Proceeds to be donated to the South Tahoe High School football lights project.

Truckee man hurt jumping from

national park cliff

By Kate McGinty, Desert Sun

A 23-year-old man was hurt Monday when he jumped from a cliff in Joshua Tree National Park.

William Fleming was attempting “an unauthorized base jump” about 8am in the Oyster Bar area of the park, spokesman Joe Zarki said.

His parachute was blown by the wind into the rocks.

Fleming, who is from Truckee, was treated on the scene and lifted out by helicopter to a nearby parking area.

He was then taken by ambulance to Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs with minor injuries, Joe Zarki said.

Last Nevada Guardsman returns from Iraq

By Lenita Powers, Reno Gazette-Journal

When Lt. Col. Troy Ross returned to Reno last month, he became the last member of the Nevada National Guard to return from Iraq after President Barack Obama declared an end to the war on Oct. 21 and announced the withdrawal of all American military personnel by the end of this year.

Speaking for himself and not on behalf of the Nevada National Guard, Ross talked about his experiences during his two tours in Iraq, what he thinks about pulling out troops from Iraq and

how he hopes Americans will celebrate Veterans Day this coming Friday during a question-and-answer interview in his Nevada Army National Guard office.

Question: What did you do while you were in Basrah, Iraq, and when did you return to Reno?

Answer: I got back Oct. 26. In Iraq, I was basically a primary care doctor. I worked in the emergency department, the medical clinic, taking care of soldiers, and in that capacity I took whatever came in the door – traumas or minor illnesses, sports injuries. We were the one medical operation in southern Iraq.

Q: What is your most poignant memory from the 15 months you served in Baghdad and your last three-month tour in Basra?

A: I guess I would have to say that both times I was really impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of the young soldiers that I worked with – the infantry guys out doing patrols every day and the medics taking care of people. It was very encouraging to see, especially with some of them on their second, third or fourth deployments still being very committed to their jobs. They maintained their enthusiasm through all of it, being in very difficult living conditions – the heat and dirt. The temperature would get up to 120 and 125 degrees in the summertime, and just the time spent away from their regular lives. And when you're out on a patrol operating in those temperatures with all your gear on, it really wears on a person physically, and not having regular access to showers.

Read the whole story

Study: Elementary science education in California dismal

By Diana Lambert, Sacramento Bee

Few local educators are surprised by a recent UC Berkeley study that says most California children aren't getting a decent science education.

Gretchen Bly, a first-grade teacher at Rancho Cordova Elementary School, generally teaches about 90 minutes of science a week, integrating it into the curriculum as much as possible.

"If I had my druthers, we'd do it three or four hours a week," said Bly, who coordinates the school's annual Science Night and other science programs.

"With 32 students and less help in the classroom, our focus has to be on reading and writing," she said. "It's harder to address things like science."

The Berkeley research blames the pressure to score well on standardized tests in English and math for the little time spent teaching science. Forty percent of the California elementary teachers surveyed for the study say they spend 60 minutes or less teaching science each week.

Sixty-six percent of elementary teachers surveyed said they feel unprepared to teach science and 85 percent say they haven't received any training in the subject in the last three years.

The result: Only about 10 percent of elementary school classes are offering high-quality science instruction, according to the report.

“The entire landscape is looking relatively bleak,” said Rena Dorph, director of research evaluation and assessment at the Lawrence Hall of Science at UC Berkeley.

Read the whole story

Don’t forget to vote

It’s Election Day.

One of the key things that separates the United States from so many countries is the right to vote.



While it is a right, it is also a duty that should not be taken lightly.

Lake Tahoe News applauds all those who run for office or bring their issue (or opposition to an issue or candidate) to the people’s attention. It’s not easy to be a candidate. They don’t hide behind monikers on news sites like this one or others. They are the real deal – like them or not.

Next time you don’t like what is going on, ask yourself what you have done to try to change the situation. It takes a group effort to make things work – whether it’s a group of five board members or a group of concerned citizens. But it starts with one person. Be part of the solution. It starts with voting.

South Tahoe seeking dismissal of most of League's case

By Kathryn Reed

The League to Save Lake Tahoe amended its lawsuit against South Lake Tahoe in regards to the General Plan to state it has a right to contest the documents because the General Plan impacts the nonprofit's members who live within the city limits.

This led to the city having to refile its motion to dismiss the case.

"The city was not contesting their standing, so we did not view the changes as being substantive," City Attorney Patrick Enright told *Lake Tahoe News*.

A hearing is set for Dec. 5 in U.S. District Court in Sacramento.

The League contends the General Plan that was adopted in May is out of compliance with the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Regional Plan. The city at the time of adoption of the plan and during the years of planning always intended to create a forward-looking plan that would ideally be in compliance with the updated Regional Plan that is slated for adoption in December 2012.

The city also knew it could not approve any projects that did not comply with the current TRPA Regional Plan.

Carl Young, interim executive director of the League, did not return a call. No one at the League would confirm or deny if Amanda Royal is employed as the spokeswoman for the

conservation group. It is not known who now speaks for the League other than its attorneys.

Enright said if portions of the case the city wants dismissed are granted, it's possible the CEQA elements of the League's case could be heard in El Dorado County Superior Court in South Lake Tahoe. The city claims the federal court has no jurisdiction over most of the claims brought forth by the League.

In court documents, the city says, "… while Plaintiff claims that its members will be impacted by 'increased traffic, aesthetic impacts, increased pollution in Lake Tahoe's shore zone, increased air pollution, and increased urbanization and building heights', nowhere in its Complaint does Plaintiff explain how the General Plan's alleged violation of the Compact will result in such injuries."

Opinion: Community support makes the difference

To the community,

Thank you Ed Cook Tree Service, Zephyr Point Presbyterian Center, and Bijou Parents who helped create a wonderful log border (and balance beam) around Bijou's playground. We could not have created this wonderful play space without the generous donation of logs from Ed Cook, the equipment and tractors from the Zephyr Point Presbyterian Center, and the time and effort of our Bijou Parents (and Rotoract student) who came in 19-degree weather to help out.

I am continuously amazed at the constant community support and

dedication to the well-being and education of our children. Thank you all so much. You truly make a difference in the lives of children.

Kathy Haven, Bijou PTA member

LTUSD music instructors making a name for themselves

Lake Tahoe Unified School District music teachers Casson Scowcroft and Linda Kurek have been honored in recent months by their fellow Northern California music teachers.

They were each selected as conductors for regional honor bands, an honor bestowed on only the finest conductors and music educators.

Scowcroft was asked to conduct the Region 5 Junior High Select Honor Band at North Tahoe Middle School last school year. This band included 72 music students from the Quincy/Chester area to North Tahoe. Students for these bands are selected by an audition process and then they gather for two days of rehearsal and a culminating concert. Scowcroft took South Tahoe High School senior, Nick Sullivan, along to act as percussion instructor for the junior high school students.

Scowcroft and Kurek are helping South Tahoe High and South Tahoe Middle school music students prepare for taped auditions for the Northern California All State and Western United States Region Honor Bands and Orchestras.

Kurek was invited to be the guest conductor for the Western Slopes Music Educators Association 7th and 8th Grade Honor

Band last month. This is the third honor band in recent years Kurek has been invited to conduct. Eighty students from numerous schools on the West Slope were selected by live auditions to participate in this event which also involved two days of rehearsals and a concert for the parents.

STMS students Josh Kornbeck (baritone sax) and Mario Mangiaracini (tuba) participated in this event also.

Both instructors will be at tonight’s school board meeting to make a presentation. Students are expected to perform, too. The meeting starts at 6.